

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### A useful reminder to the Europeans

*UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's Berlin speech exposes the disinterest of European politicians.*

**E**uropeans should ask themselves whether they are satisfied with the world as it is, or with the way it is going. If not, they surely should do something to make their influence more effective." These remarks were delivered at the Berlin Adlon Hotel on April 26, by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Engaged in emergency diplomacy to de-escalate the ongoing Balkans air war before it develops into a full-scale ground war, which has the potential of drawing the big powers into another world war, Annan had come to Germany for three days, on his way to talks in Moscow, which began on April 29.

The Europe which Annan had in mind in his Berlin speech, is one which most of the politicians in Europe simply do not live up to—otherwise, they would not have allowed themselves to get drawn into this Balkans adventure, which has been staged by London and its co-thinkers among the Anglophiles in the United States and on the European continent. Granted, the remarks that President Bill Clinton made in San Francisco on April 15, on a new Marshall Plan for southeastern Europe, sparked a positive response throughout Europe, and the German government will be hosting an international conference on a Marshall Plan for the Balkans in Bonn on May 27. But the prevalent view of the German government is also, for the time being, that the air war against Serbia is to be upgraded.

Granted, Germany is involved in de-escalation diplomacy, but the government is also absorbed with repairing the damage caused on March 30, when Chancellor Gerhard Schröder

flatly rejected a Balkans cease-fire proposal by Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov.

The problems that keep the Germans hostage to London-centered geopolitics (which they may not like, but follow, nevertheless), are the same that prevail elsewhere in Europe. Annan addressed aspects of those problems: "Often people speak as if it were simply a question of deploying military force," he said. "No doubt the ability and will to do that, in extreme circumstances, is important. But there are many other ways for one people to exercise influence over others—through trade, through culture, through diplomacy, and so on." Annan criticized European Union institutions for giving "the impression of a Union preoccupied with its own affairs, which does not play the role in the wider world that could be expected of it."

The way EU politicians have approached eastern and southeastern Europe after the Iron Curtain came down in 1989, has led many nations in those parts of Europe to conclude that western Europe does not want them, Annan said. "In many of those countries, a sense of exclusion has taken root. People see little or no chance of ever being admitted to the Union, in any meaningful time-scale. . . . That state of affairs is deeply worrying. It should be especially worrying to the peoples, and the leaders, of the European Union. European unity is a fine and inspiring slogan. It would be sad, indeed, if in practice, it led only to a new division, with one side a comfortable, prosperous, democratic Europe—or West and Central Europe—and on the other side an impoverished, war-torn,

resentful eastern and southeastern Europe."

"It should not have required the present horrors in the Balkans, to bring forth imaginative proposals for the reconstruction of southeastern Europe. How much might have been avoided, if such ideas had been actively pursued earlier," Annan said. He told the Europeans that the attitude of neglect toward reconstruction would, in the near future, confront Europe with problems in the Mideast and North Africa as well.

Still, Annan's remarks were very polite, and did not even name the names that should be named, in a really in-depth critique of politics in the EU today. What he said, however, reveals how low the level of political discussion has fallen among most EU politicians, because they show an intense resistance to addressing problems even in the polite way that Annan chose. A few years ago, there was at least a handful of prominent Germans who would name London geopoliticians as responsible for the disasters in the Balkans of the early 1990s. This kind of debate has died out, and outside of *EIR* and the LaRouche movement and its supporters, it is almost impossible to find such candor.

This has to change, because otherwise, there won't be any Marshall Plan for the Balkans that amounts to anything. The immediate barrier is the International Monetary Fund and its conditionalities. The IMF ruined the positive impulses of the 1995 Dayton Accords on Bosnia, and it will do the same with whatever is being formulated for the Balkans, assuming a cease-fire is reached.

To date, Europeans have been unwilling to tackle the IMF issue seriously, because, since 1989, they have been unwilling to design a long-term reconstruction program for eastern and southeastern Europe.