



In theory the European Union is horrified at the prospect of the Radical Party of Serbia (Srpska radikalna stranka, SRS) becoming not only the strongest party in the country's parliament—which it already is—but also the majority partner in a new ruling coalition after the general election on May 11. In practice, the EU officials in Brussels and in Kosovo are acting as if this is the outcome they earnestly desire.

The claim that it is possible for Serbia to continue her “process of European integrations,” regardless of the status of Kosovo or of the leading EU member-states' position on this issue—is the pillar of the election campaign by the Democratic Party (Demokratska stranka, DS) of President Boris Tadic and his “pro-Western” allies. They claim that it is possible for Belgrade to conduct a dual-track policy, whereby the refusal of Serbia to accept Kosovo's independence would not influence—and therefore would not hinder—the process of getting closer to EU.

That this claim is false is evident from the fact that all key EU countries except Spain have recognized Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. With the EU heavyweights, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, opening their embassies and trade missions in “the Republic of Kosovo,” it is unthinkable that they would accept Serbia as a fully-fledged member of the Union unless Belgrade first “normalizes relations with all its neighbors”—Eurospeak for accepting the finality of Kosovo's independence and opening an embassy in Pristina.

More importantly in the short term, the European Union—acting under an entirely self-created mandate—is attempting to insert its own “Rule of Law mission,” Eulex, into the province to replace the one authorized by United Nations Security Council in 1999. The EU mission composed of two thousand police, customs officers and judicial personnel is based on the provisions of the failed Ahtissari Plan, which was rejected by Serbia and never formally considered, let alone authorized, by the UNSC. The situation is legally and politically

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unprecedented. Imagine the United States deploying peacekeepers in the West Bank and Gaza in accordance with Bill Clinton's proposed Camp David agreement . . . after that agreement was rejected by one of the parties.

If the European Union had wanted to help its friends in Serbia who nevertheless keep swearing by their country's "European perspective," it would have refrained—until May 11, at least—from doing or saying anything contrary to their wishful thinking and surreal rhetoric. This would be cynical, of course, but not unprecedented: the final decision on Eulex was initially supposed to be taken on January 28, but the EU decided to postpone it in order not to undermine Boris Tadic's chances of reelection in the second of Serbia's presidential election on February 3. Literally hours after the election was over, a Council Joint Action was approved , paving the way for the deployment process.

Far from helping Tadic and his Europhile coalition in the current campaign, the Brussels machine is driving them to exasperation with statements and acts that appear almost calculated to help their those political forces that have been warning of the EU double game in the Balkans:

- On April 7, Dutch diplomat Pieter Feith who represents the European Union in Kosovo, thus declared that Kosovo is "an independent, sovereign state, recognized by more than 30 of the most important democracies and economies in the world." This was remarkable for three reasons. First of all, the authority for Feith's statement is unclear since the European Union has not adopted a formal, consensual decision to recognize Kosovo and a number of EU member countries still refuse to do so (Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Malta). Secondly, Feith's statement elicited no comment from Brussels , let alone a denial, rebuke, or clarification. Thirdly, the President of Serbia and his protégé, the foreign minister, far from lodging a protest with the EU, studiously avoided acknowledging Feith's outbursts in any manner.

- On April 8 the EU foreign policy supremo Javier Solana told the European Parliament , "We have to do everything **to create the impression with the people in Serbia** that we want them as close as possible to us." [emphasis added] Sr. Solana went on to say that if the Radical Party win the elections general Mladić would not be extradited to The Hague Tribunal (ICTY), and for that reason the EU should help the pro-European forces by offering the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) for signature before May 11. The EU high representative—who is best known to the Serbs for the fact that, as Secretary-General of NATO, he formally authorized the beginning of the bombing campaign against Serbia in March 1999—went on to say that he "loved Serbia, even though it was prone to looking backwards instead of forwards." He concluded by reiterating that EULEX will be deployed all over Kosovo regardless of Serbian objections, and repeating the old mantra that it does not set a precedent: "The European Union has said it a thousand times that Kosovo is a unique case and that is why Kosovo will remain an exception and not a rule in international relations."

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- On April 17 the EU Enlargement Commissioner Ollie Rehn declared that Serbia “faces a crucial choice in the parliamentary elections on 11 May, turning either to the European future or risking self- isolation.” Addressing a conference in Brussels on civil society in South Eastern Europe that he opened together with George Soros, Rehn went on to praise “Kosovo's commitment to a democratic and multi-ethnic society [which] is enshrined in the recent Constitution. The EU supports Kosovo to stand on its own feet and wants to help Kosovo to help itself.”

- From April 17 to 19 an EU parliamentary delegation visited Kosovo. Its leader, German Christian Democrat Doris Pack, said matter-of-factly , after meeting the Albanian leaders of Kosovo's self-proclaimed state (president, prime minister and the speaker of the assembly), that she discussed with them “the situation after the declaration of independence.” She repeated as fact their claims that the unrest in the Serb-inhabited northern part of Mitrovica on March 17 was instigated by “outsiders,” and expressed hope that the Serbs will become reconciled to the new reality after May 11.

- And finally, on April 23 the International Crisis Group—a pro-independence, quasi-independent institution partly financed by Mr. Soros and formerly headed by none other than Mr. Ahtisaari of the Kosovo Plan fame—published a briefing paper which argues that the EU should not offer a Stabilization and Association Agreement or any other similar inducement to Belgrade without Serbia's prior full co-operation with the ICTY, because “appeasement has failed in the Balkans for over a decade and a half”.

All of the above indicates that Brussels is following a sustained, deliberate, and more or less open policy of actively supporting Kosovo's independent statehood, even in the absence of any formal EU document declaring this to be the case. That is exactly what Prime Minister Kostunica and his allies have been saying for months, and this is what finally caused the collapse of the coalition government in early March.

There is still no real debate in Serbia on the EU, however; and what discussion there is remains highly ideological. No matter what Messrs Feith, Solana, Rehn and others do or say, Tadic and the DS will refuse to discuss the problem. Any attempt at critical examination of the policies pursued from Brussels elicits a quick “anti-European” label from their camp, just as any attempt at critical examination of the policies pursued by the communist regime two or three decades ago invited the accusation of “anti-socialist enemy propaganda.” Ironically but unsurprisingly, today's most enthusiastic pro-EU neoliberals are often the same people as yesterday's zealous Titoists, or else their spiritual or biological heirs.

By now the mantra that “European integrations have no alternative” is wearing thin, however. It is beginning to irritate many urbane and by no means nationalist Serbs who had previously supported the “European course” for the country, but who look upon Sr. Solana's professions of affection and thinly veiled political inducements, as insulting and shameful. According to the

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latest opinion poll by the Belgrade-based Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, CESID, the Radicals, together with the “popular block” of Prime Minister Kostunica and his junior coalition partner, Nova Srbija, may get enough votes on May 11 for a simple combined majority in the next parliament.

On current form that is exactly what Brussels and Washington want. They hope to see their “pro-European” friends defeated and their “nationalist” opponents enthroned, in order to justify, however retroactively, their illegal and self-defeating Kosovo policies. If the Radicals enter government in Belgrade in late spring or early summer 2008, it will be the explanation for encouraging Albanians not to negotiate with Belgrade in 2007, the reason for prodding them to declare independence on February 17, 2008, and the justification for recognizing their separatist entity after that date.

The precedent exists, of course. It is the manner in which Sr. Solana's splendid little NATO war against Serbia in '99 came to be retroactively justified by the “humanitarian disaster” in Kosovo that *started after the bombing, and was caused by the bombing* .

The problem Borist Tadic and his “pro-Western” allies face today in relation to the European Union is identical to the one faced by Serbia's tiny collaborationist movement during World War II occupation (1941-1944) vis-a-vis the “New European Order.”

- In both cases Serbia was treated with vindictive disdain, as an untrustworthy, disruptive and fundamentally illegitimate entity;
- In both cases, large tracts of Serbian-inhabited lands were carved up and given to their marauding neighbors, such as Albanians, who were regarded as far more reliable partners of the “European” powers-that-be.
- In both cases, gross mistreatment of Serbs in those lands and their mass expulsion was tolerated by “ Europe ,” and some of the worst offenders (Pavelic then, Haradinaj now) were treated as allies.
- In both cases the supporters of the “European” project in Serbia claimed that integration was possible, and in fact inevitable, but that the main problem was with Serbia herself.
- In both cases the conditions for any such future integration were left vague by “ Europe ” (Berlin in 1941, Brussels today) and predicated upon the Serbs constantly proving themselves worthy of such honor.
- Finally, in both cases the leaders of “Europe” did little to help their self-avowed allies in Serbia , treating them with condescension or studied contempt.

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The good news is that the final outcome is no more cast in stone today than it was in 1941. Yes, the “ Republic of Kosova ” will linger on for a few years, as an extravagant experiment costing West European taxpayers a few billion a year. Yes, it will continue developing—not as a functional economy, of course, but as a black hole of criminality and terrorism. In the end the experiment will prove as enduring as that earlier Greater Albania, 67 years ago.

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