

US-NATO SPONSORED CRISIS: “Hunger Games” March in the Balkans

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SARAJEVO – For ten days now, Bosnian veterans have picketed the country’s parliament and government buildings. They hold position at night, sleeping outside on a variety of tarps, blankets, foil and field jackets. It is tempting to compare them to WW1 “bonus marchers” in the U.S. – but it would also be wrong. Many others have protested in front of the parliament; what sets this group of Bosnians apart is the extent to which they’ve been wronged, and by whom.

These men had fought against each other in the Bosnian War. In 2004, they set aside their differences to serve in the country’s reformed, joint armed forces. But neither the Bosnian government, nor the Empire, made any provisions for their continued employment past the age of 35, unless they’ve attained a rank of at least a corporal. Instead of promoting those who wanted to stay career soldiers, the Armed Forces simply discharged these men and promised them retirement checks – which never came.

It took years to pass a law providing for the payment of their pensions out of the joint budget. The problem appears to be that some Bosnian Serb officials, currently in charge of the country’s finances, are disputing the law in the name of thrift. It isn’t an ethnic issue, either, as there are plenty of Serbs among the betrayed veterans. Denying veterans their pensions is financially insignificant, but politically a disaster – making those who advocate it appear petty, heartless and stupid.

Props and Appearances

Bosnia does have severe financial woes. Unemployment is rampant, industrial production is dwindling, imports are vastly greater than exports, and on top of that the country likely has the most government per capita than anywhere else in the world. A crushing 17% VAT – the media are already talking about an increase (!) – is extracted from everything, from food and utilities to luxury goods, and the money thus looted is used mostly to service foreign debt.

Statistics mentioned in the media recently suggest that 30% of Bosnia’s population is straddling the poverty line, while 60% are already below it. Yet across the street from the government complex in Sarajevo a glitzy shopping center opened in 2009, while yet another is being built a block over by the Saudi conglomerate Al-Shiddi.

Furthermore, the very armed forces that discharged and forgot their first volunteer members just sent a reinforced platoon – 45 men and women – to Afghanistan, with much pomp and ceremony, and Imperial ambassador in attendance. This token force will make

zero operational difference in the Afghan debacle, but it does serve to prop up Empire's credibility. Except that every day of the betrayed veterans camp-out is a reminder to their colleagues playing Imperial extras that they, too, will be out in the cold one day.

Tempest in a Teacup

The contempt in which most Bosnian politicians hold their electorate was illustrated last week by a media circus surrounding Zeljko Komsic, one of the country's three rotating presidents. Out of the blue, Komsic announced his irrevocable resignation from all duties in the Social Democratic Party (the senior partner in the Federation government), though he didn't resign his party membership.

After two days of conferring with the party, Komsic said he'd overreacted and changed his mind. But his tantrum gave the opportunity to the predominantly hostile capital media to eviscerate the SDP and devote much time and column inches to groundless speculation about troubles within the party. Perhaps after this, the SDP might consider cleaning house – or at least hiring a spin doctor.

Corrupt "Leadership"

Meanwhile, the neighboring Croatia is prosecuting its former PM Ivo Sanader for corruption and embezzlement, while his party is struggling to elect a new leader following a crushing defeat last December. The big news mid-March was that two of the people indicted alongside Sanader had turned state's witness. Another scandal rocked the country's foreign ministry this week, as the special anti-corruption task force arrested a dozen embassy and consular officials allegedly involved in selling passports and citizenships.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Vesna Pusic was visiting Washington and telling the public at home how the Empire considered Croatia a major partner and leader in the region. In a couple of examples of such "leadership," Pusic snubbed Belgrade by endorsing the Lithuanian candidate for Speaker of the UN General Assembly (over Serbia's current FM Vuk Jeremic) and commenting on the Serbian judicial inquiry into the WW2 royalist resistance leader Draza Mihailovich by calling him a "quisling and Nazi and Fascist collaborator."

Electoral Contortions

Strange, then, that Mihailovich had a German bounty on his head of 100.000 gold Reichsmarks – same as the Communist leader Tito, in fact. He was respected by Roosevelt and DeGaulle, decorated by Truman, betrayed by Churchill, and executed by the Communists in 1946. Recent efforts to overturn the verdict of the Communist courts declaring Mihailovich a traitor have little to do with establishing historical truth, however, and everything to do with the upcoming general elections. Having systematically looted and betrayed the country, the current government is hoping to appear "patriotic" by making a meaningless gesture such as legally exonerating Mihailovich.

In a similar vein, briefly commenting on the 13th anniversary of the 1999 NATO bombing, President Tadic called it "a crime". He refused to elaborate, because that might have offended his Imperial backers. In return, he was honored with the "North-South Prize" by the Council of Europe, for "contributions to reconciliation in the Balkans and European integration". Whatever that means.

The specter of the elections in five weeks is distorting everything in Serbia, with the government feigning patriotism and the official opposition feigning having a clue. The only people not pandering to voters are the openly quisling “Reversal” loons, now arguing for making Serbia a federation between its core and the “Republic of Vojvodina” in the north.

Law and Disorder, Episode 1244

On March 24, Kosovo “president” Hashim Thaci gave thanks to NATO and the Empire for “liberating” that Serbian province and turning it over to his crime syndicate. Thaci also called the efforts of Serbia to hold local elections in the province an “act of aggression.” His words were echoed by the “Albanian National Army” (UCK) – declared a terrorist organization even by the Empire. But then, the Empire itself has demanded of Belgrade to desist from holding elections in Kosovo, it supposedly being an “independent country,” while Thaci’s police arrested several Kosovo Serb officials carrying voter lists.

On the other hand, the EU “law and order mission” (EULEX) has released Fatmir Limaj, former commander of Thaci’s terrorist KLA, rejecting evidence of his involvement in murdering and cremating Serb and Albanian civilians in Klecka. Not only that, but they’ve cleared Limaj to run in the upcoming “Kosovian” elections. The principal witness against Limaj was oh-so-conveniently murdered by “persons unknown.”

If This Goes On...

Clearly it has been a busy March in the Balkans – and that’s not even getting into massive protests against government corruption in Montenegro, calls to create a Greater Albania, militant Islam, Slovenian electoral shenanigans, or the growing Albanian violence in Macedonia. True to form, the region began heating up as soon as the winter snows – unusually heavy this year – had melted.

For twenty years, the Empire has twisted and hammered the region into a mold of its own making, imposing a virtual reality entirely different from the actual one. Governments across the peninsula, absorbed in their power games and eager to please foreign sponsors, give little or no thought to their populace, disenfranchised, dispossessed and desperate.

There is no way this can end well.

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