

So Goes Old Europe

Last December 10, after four months of futile shuttle diplomacy, the mediating effort by the U.N. Contact Group “troika” to reach an agreement on the final status for Kosovo predictably collapsed. “Neither party was able to cede its position on the fundamental question of sovereignty,” the U.S.-E.U.-Russian group reported to the U.N. Secretary General. The European Union leaders reached the same conclusion on December 14 and made a feeble offer to Serbia—immediately rejected by Belgrade—of accelerated E.U. membership in exchange for “flexibility” over Kosovo’s status.

All negotiations were doomed to fail because, as Condoleezza Rice declared from the outset, independence would be reached “one way or another.” The Kosovo Albanian leaders—war criminals and heroin kingpins with jihadist ties—could afford to sit back and dismiss out of hand any proposal that fell short of what the Americans had promised.

The Albanians will likely proceed with a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) after the second round of the presidential election in Serbia (February 2), with the U.S.-imposed delay calculated to ensure the reelection of Serbia’s “reformist, pro-Western” President Boris Tadic. The UDI will be recognized by the United States, by the Islamic world, and by some—but by no means all—E.U. countries.

Serbia’s Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica has a number of options. They range from the blockade of the secessionist province—which gets two thirds of its food, consumer goods, and electricity from central and northern Serbia—to the declaration, supported by parliamentary vote, that Serbia is no longer seeking E.U. membership and will henceforth develop closer political, economic, and military ties with Russia.

Russia, China, and India, and doz-

ens of Asian and African countries with secessionist problems—including the most populous predominantly Muslim country, Indonesia—will deem the secession of Kosovo illegal and invalid. The theory that outside powers can award part of a state’s sovereign territory to a violent ethnic or religious minority, if that minority is able to provoke a violent government response and secure a “humanitarian” intervention from abroad, would put in question the borders of some two-dozen states.

By accepting at face value the standard claim of “genocide” by, say, Tamils, Chechens, Palestinians, Kurds, Kashmiris, etc., the “International Community” will create endless problems for itself. Furthermore, the theory that parts of a state’s sovereign territory should belong to a “repressed” ethnic or religious minority with a localized plurality would also be an argument for the extension of “Aztlán” or La Repubblica del Norte to the San Francisco Bay Area, Denver, and Dallas.

Several E.U. members (Spain, Slovakia, Rumania, Greece, Cyprus, Malta) will not toe the line. Israel is understandably apprehensive of the precedent of outside countries imposing a solution to an intractable political and territorial quarrel, even if one of the parties rejects the proposed solution as contrary to her vital national interests.

On balance, a U.S.-sponsored Republic of “Kosova” is likely to be as stillborn legally as it is already collapsed economically, socially, and morally. We are facing yet another Balkan drama of mainly American making that promises to be highly destabilizing for the region, detrimental to European security, and incomprehensible to at least half the world. State Department bureaucrats still claim that Kosovo would not set a precedent, but their words cannot change reality. The “frozen conflicts” in the for-



mer Soviet Union may be defrosted instantly, and the best Kosovo could hope for is to become a frozen conflict itself.

Why are U.S. policymakers so hell-bent on doing the wrong thing? Are they seriously hoping that they can curry favor in the Islamic world by being generous to Bosnia’s Muslims or Kosovo’s Albanians? Such a notion betrays an incredible naiveté about the jihadist mind-set, which has never been impressed by concessions, as our relations with Osama bin Laden have shown over the years. Don’t they see that a victory in Kosovo would merely stimulate the jihadists’ demand for further concessions elsewhere?

Only a week after September 11, the *Washington Times* reported that the hijackers were “connected to [an] Albanian terrorist cell”:

Albania is one of several places U.S. intelligence agencies are focusing their resources . . . Islamic radicals, including supporters of bin Laden, have been supporting Albanian rebels fighting in the region, including members of the Kosovo Liberation Army . . . KLA members have been trained at bin Laden training camps in Afghanistan . . . As of last year [2000], the group operated a residence in Tirana, and the CIA has been pressing Albania’s government to expel all associates of the Islamic terrorists.

Two months later, we learned of “Al Qaeda’s Balkan Links” (in the European edition of the *Wall Street*

Journal), and, in March 2002, Conrad Black's *National Post* ran a piece entitled "U.S. Supported al-Qaeda Cells during Balkan Wars, Fought Serbian Troops":

Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network has been active in the Balkans for years, most recently helping Kosovo rebels battle for independence from Serbia with the financial and military backing of the United States and NATO . . . In the years immediately before the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, the al-Qaeda militants moved into Kosovo . . . to help ethnic Albanian extremists of the KLA mount their terrorist campaign against Serb targets in the region.

Why, then, are so many Western leaders on both sides of the Atlantic so persistent in supporting an illegal, immoral, and self-defeating act that will create a new base for jihadism? The real answer is that they hate the Serbs, and they hate the Serbs because they hate their own past.

Soon, the *reliquiae reliquiarum* of the Serbs' demographically exhausted state will comprise only those lands on which nobody else can establish any kind of claim. The West is demanding that they accept and absorb postmodern cultural matrices to prove that they are fit to be integrated, politically and economically, into "Europe"—which is constantly used as misleading shorthand for the European Union.

The upholders of postmodernism see the continued existence of a distinctly Serbian cultural space as an unpardonable anachronism and a potential threat to those lands (Germany, Sweden, and Holland, for instance) where the grand *Gleichschaltung* has been completed. No defiant village that remembers old songs and myths, that remembers ancestors and celebrates old battles, is allowed to remain in the shadow of the Euro-legions.

In the meantime, the old E.U. "core" is rapidly morphing into a cultural wasteland in which historical amnesia

and aesthetic relativism are promoted to the detriment of creativity: There is no French writer worth reading today, no Dutch painter worth sponsoring, no German composer worth hearing. If the process is so far advanced in those countries that used to define "the West" or "Europe," the promoters of the Frankfurtian Long March rightly hope that Serbia, too, will relent and replace her obsolete and dangerous mythical consciousness with a new, global one. They claim that only by discarding the burden of their mythologized history, and the illusion that they are in any way special—except, perhaps, in the magnitude of their crimes—can the Serbs become "normal" and cease to be a threat to themselves and others.

Blissfully unaware of the cultural tectonic shift that has taken place in "the West," many Serbian political leaders, analysts, and institutions keep invoking old-fashioned arguments in support of their position that Kosovo ought to remain part of Serbia. They point out that Kosovo was the heartland of the Serbian medieval state; that it contains many priceless monuments of Christian art and architecture, which define Serbia's contribution to the common European heritage; and that, as "Serbia's Jerusalem," Kosovo must not fall to the insurgent *jihad*. The Serbs imagine that they are talking to the Westerners of another era, the era that produced De Gaulle and Mitterrand, Adenauer and Schmidt, Rebecca West and Alfred Sherman—and others born in the quarter-century before 1920, with whom such arguments could be reasonably expected to resonate. The problem is that they are dead and have been replaced by a new breed of Westerner, who is distinguished from his predecessor by his rejection of the value and importance of the historical, cultural, spiritual, and civilizational legacy of our common civilization.

Those who argue that they should be entitled to keep a land because

they have a centuries-long historical bond to it, because their ancestors had built lovely Christian churches on it, because its heritage underpins their moral code and spirituality based on Christian martyrdom, and because they are defending themselves against an aggressive and resurgent Islam . . . to this new Western mind-set, anyone who makes those arguments is unconsciously arguing in favor of having that territory taken away.

The Serbs' arguments—especially when presented eloquently and logically—only prove that Kosovo must be detached from Serbia permanently. Whatever is said to support Serbia's historical, cultural, spiritual, and civilizational right to Kosovo is received among the Western elite class as yet further proof why Kosovo must be given to the Albanians, who, by virtue of being overwhelmingly Muslim (of the "moderate" variety), are perceived as perfectly natural allies of the Western elite class.

The U.S. and E.U. policies toward Kosovo, Bosnia, Chechnya, Cyprus, and other hot spots where Islam confronts traditionally Christian communities are not the only display of Western self-hatred and Islamophilia: The pathology is evident in their own countries—or, to be more precise, in the countries over which they rule but to which they no longer feel any natural bond of kinship and obligation. Europe's multilateralists and Washington's neoconservatives share the same distaste for traditional, naturally evolving societies and cultures. Divisions between them arise only with regard to the best means of accomplishing their common goal.

Serbia must not give up Kosovo. By doing so, she would encourage the spirit that seeks the death of Europe and its surrender to the regional totalitarianism of Brussels today, and the global totalitarianism of Muhammad's successors tomorrow. Not for the first time, the Serbs are fighting a fight in Kosovo that is not theirs alone. ☞

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CHRISTIANITY

Enemies of the *Motu Proprio*

by Alberto Carosa

In a private conversation before the release of the *motu proprio* “*Summorum Pontificum*,” a leading personality of U.K. Catholicism predicted that the reinstatement of the Traditional Latin Mass would grant again such an abundant flow of graces that it would even effect the restoration of society on sound Christian principles. While that outcome remains to be seen, the release of the *motu proprio* has certainly sparked a series of controversies and debates—especially in Italy, the heart of Catholicism, and that goes a long way in showing how sensitive the issue is among faithful and nonfaithful alike.

The news, which occupied a full page in *La Stampa* (November 26), that three priests went on an unprecedented “Mass strike” over the issue is still sending shock waves. The priests were not striking in protest of the *motu proprio*, as one might presume; instead, diocesan priests in the area of Domodossola (in northwestern Italy’s Piedmont region) who were already celebrating the older (or “extraordinary,” as termed in the *motu proprio*) form of the Roman Rite on a daily basis were protesting against their bishops, who would like them to celebrate the *Novus Ordo* (the “ordinary” form of the Roman Rite, as described in the *motu proprio*) and to say the Old Mass only once on Sundays and other feast days. Other Italian bishops have been even more defiant, plainly and openly criticizing the *motu proprio* and prohibiting the Traditional Latin Mass from being celebrated in their dioceses at all.

Each of these three priests may be overreacting to his bishop’s decision to limit the number of Masses (a re-

striction that is not justified by the provisions of the *motu proprio*), but the recalcitrant bishops are directly resisting the will of Benedict XVI. This subversion was aptly described as “disobedient and proud” by Archbishop Albert Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don, secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. The senior archbishop, a close aide to Benedict in the implementation of the *motu proprio*, told the Catholic News Agency (November 23, 2007) that he decried the action “and even rebellion” of many bishops who are trying to limit access to the Old Mass. “On the part of some dioceses, there have been interpretive documents that inexplicably aim to limit the *Motu Proprio* of the pope,” he noted. His comments come in response to “interpretations” of the *motu proprio* supported by the bishops of England and Wales that priests still needed to ask permission from their bishops to celebrate the Tridentine Mass. Archbishop Ranjith said that, in these dissents, “there hide, on the one hand, ideological prejudices and, on the other hand, pride, which is one of the most serious sins.” He reminded the bishops that they, “in particular, have sworn fidelity to the pontiff . . .”

In contrast to the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, Benedict has not given in to such intimidation and promises to stay the course, so much so that the Vatican, through the secretary of the Pontifical Commission “*Ecclesia Dei*,” Msgr. Camille Perl, has announced that an additional document is being prepared and will be published by the commission explaining some specific points of *Summorum Pontificum*, including what criteria may be used to identify a stably existing group of the faithful (whose request for the older form of the Mass is supposed to be granted) and clarifications regarding the differences between the calendars of the two forms of the Roman Rite. This follow-up document, said Monsignor Perl, is in sharp response to “Too many disobedient bishops

and priests.”

“You’d have to ask them,” was the senior prelate’s diplomatic answer when asked why so many bishops and priests are opposing the *motu proprio*. “Personally, I believe that the problem is of a more general nature,” he opined. “Today, in many spheres of society, the sense of obedience and respect of authority has been lost. Few truly are, so to say, able to obey.” The Second Vatican Council never abolished the previous missal, he pointed out. “I hold that Pope Benedict XVI has done well to lift its restrictions, thus underscoring the value of a patrimony, a jewel of the Church.”

In an interview in the Holy See’s daily *L’Osservatore Romano* (November 19-20), Archbishop Ranjith did not hesitate to say that the liturgical abuses and lack of respect for the norms of the ordinary rite of the Mass help explain why Pope Benedict XVI decided to lift the restrictions on the celebration of the rite of St. Pius V. “[T]hroughout the years, the liturgy suffered too many abuses that were ignored by the bishops,” he said, so “Benedict XVI could not remain silent.” This was compounded by the fact that requests for the ancient rite “were increasing over time” in direct proportion to the “lack of fidelity and the loss of the sense of beauty” in the liturgy. So it was not only traditionalist groups who were asking for the Old Mass but those who were scandalized by the priests’ lack of respect for the rubrics of the *Novus Ordo*.

In a speech entitled “*Geloof, gehoorzaamheid en theologie*” (“Faith, Obedience, and Theology”), delivered at the annual meeting of the Dutch Latin Liturgy Association (Vereniging voor Latijnse Liturgie) on October 6, 2007, Archbishop Ranjith went even further. “What the Holy Father says, has to be obeyed in the Church,” he contended.

If we do not follow this principle, we will allow ourselves to be used as instruments of the devil,