

## Imperial Democracy

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The breakup of Yugoslavia and the de facto secession of Kosovo-Metohija from Serbia mark significant episodes in the post-Cold War struggle between three major world-historical forces: US-led globalization, jihad, and the old nation-state system. These three forces are the current expressions of the three civilizations that have competed for pre-eminence in the Balkan peninsula for a thousand years: the West, Islam, and the Orthodox East. The Orthodox nations of Eastern Europe, which still retain characteristics of “whole” societies based in common language, ethnicity, territory, and religion, remain one of the few genuinely conservative forces on the world stage. In simplified but meaningful terms, the Orthodox East has once again found itself squeezed in a vice between two imperialistic, violent ideologies, happy to wreck Balkan civilization for their own misguided self-interests.

Despite its Christian elements, the West has once again shown itself willing to undermine the Christian East even while strengthening Islam, the ancient enemy of both. To that end, during the Yugoslav civil wars of the 1990s, the US-led West a) encouraged the violent, as opposed to pacific, breakup of Yugoslavia; b) supported a hard-core Islamic supremacist, Alija Izetbegovic, president of Bosnia, in his efforts to build the first Islamic state in Europe; and c) supported diplomatically and militarily Muslim terrorists in Bosnia and Kosovo in their efforts to kill and ethnically cleanse Serb civilians. US-led Western policy continued in a similar vein during the Bush administration with the recognition of Kosovo, and, sadly, shows few signs of changing under the Obama administration.

To some extent, the Western-backed assault on Yugoslavia of the 1990s may be regarded as exploitation of a target of opportunity. By 1991, Communism was falling apart all over Europe; one of the Yugoslav republics, Croatia, was an old ally of a newly-reunified, resurgent Germany, who was happy to bring her old confederate into the Western fold; and Yugoslavia itself had endeavored to cauterize its internal ethnic and religious fault lines with only incomplete success. The West’s villainization of the Serbs was easy. First, the Serbs posed no conceivable threat to Western interests, so there was no danger in antagonizing them; second, they showed themselves unable to present their side of the story to Western audiences with any efficacy. Villainizing them, therefore, was basically costless. It is far easier to pick on a weak, largely innocent party than a strong, culpable one with the capacity to retaliate. By throwing the Serbs under the bus, one of the West’s objectives was evidently to court Islamic world opinion.

Commenting on US support for the secession of Kosovo from Serbia, the late Tom Lantos, Chairman of the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, put it this way:

Just a reminder to the predominantly Muslim-led government[s] in this world that here is yet another example that the United States leads the way for the creation of a predominantly Muslim country in the very heart of Europe. This should be noted by both responsible leaders of Islamic governments, such as Indonesia, and also for jihadists of all color and hue. The United States' principles are universal, and in this instance, the United States stands foursquare for the creation of an overwhelmingly Muslim country in the very heart of Europe.

In short, the West has been trying to appease the Islamic world by supporting their cause in the Balkans in the hope of benefiting from, one supposes, more freely available oil and fewer aircraft crashed into crowded office buildings. The West's continued persecution of Serbia, however, years after Yugoslavia's demise, indicates deeper forces at work. America's support of Muslim Albanian terrorists in Kosovo, in particular, bears noting. It is clear that, beyond even horribly distorted considerations of realpolitik, there is an ideological affinity between the contemporary West and Islam that has escaped most observers. This affinity has enabled the West and Islam to work hand in glove against a common enemy, namely, the old nation-state system and its leading representatives in the Orthodox Christian, Slavic East. Understanding this affinity is key to understanding Western motives in the Balkans and the continued anti-Russian, anti-Slavic, anti-Orthodox attitude prevalent in the West, especially the United States.

At first blush, the claim that the West and Islam would be able to cooperate in any significant way appears insupportable. The West and Islam seem to be polar opposites. Islam, in its traditional form, mandates the imposition of Sharia law over the globe, which includes stoning for adultery, amputation of limbs for theft, a blanket moratorium on the construction of Jewish and Christian houses of worship and all evangelism, the forcible conversion of pagans and atheists on pain of death, the proscription of usury, and the execution of apostates - to start with. While Islam seeks the political supremacy of "god" and his law, the West today seems intent on shoving God and His laws as far out of the public square as possible. Western man is now sovereign; he can do no wrong. Needless to say, he wouldn't last long under Sharia.

Yet while there are major differences between Islam and the West, there are powerful similarities. Islam from its beginnings aspired to global mastery. According to Muhammad and the Koran, the law of Allah is prescribed for the globe; any nation or individual who does not submit to Islamic rule is ipso facto in a state of rebellion with Allah and must be brought into obedience by force. Islam, in short, constituted an early form of globalization. Islam does not recognize the legitimacy of nations, peoples, or governments except insofar as they submit to Islamic overlordship. So it is with the West today. Only if a nation-state is willing to play ball with the West on its terms is it considered legitimate. Like Islam, the West's ambitions are global: there is no longer any long-term accommodation possible between the West and alternative systems. The West employs its parochial definitions of "human rights," "democracy," "free markets," etc. to cajole and

browbeat nations that refuse to submit to its economic and strategic hegemony, or it employs economic pressure and, if that fails, military force.

Nations such as China, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and Saudi Arabia, whose record on “human rights,” etc., is checkered at best, escape serious Western pressure thanks to their willingness to play the West’s political and economic ballgame.

The common ground then between the West and Islam is that they are both programs of globalization that have as their object the destruction of the old nation-state system based on the sovereignty of states and nationhood defined by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and territorial commonalities. Both Islam and the contemporary West are essentially empires that seek global hegemony and do not recognize the legitimacy of alternative forms of political, social, and cultural organization if they refuse to submit to the suzerainty of the larger system. With this in mind, it is not hard to see how the West and Islam would connive in the destruction of independent nation-states such as Yugoslavia and Serbia that have historically resisted both systems (they may be considered, in Marxian language, “objective allies” in this common aim). Following the breakup of Soviet Communism, the Eastern European countries, especially the Orthodox countries, became the leading champions of the old nation-state system. Thanks to the Iron Curtain, these countries were relatively preserved from the poisonous effects of Western consumerism, multiculturalism, and general social-cultural suicide. Since the fall of Soviet Communism, most of the former east-bloc states have been falling over themselves to jump on the Western bandwagon. Those former Communist states such as Russia and Serbia that retained more of their Slavic, Orthodox, and national consciousness, and which consequently present the greatest potential resistance to Western and Islamic expansion, attract the special antipathy of both.

We should bear in mind that Western policies for the past thirty years have been substantially pro-Islam and pro-jihadist: US support for the mujahideen fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan; EC and later EU encouragement of Muslim immigration into Europe and the propagation of Islamic identity among European Muslims; the replacement by Western force of the relatively secular regime of Saddam Hussein with a government based in Sharia; criticism of Russia for effective counter-jihad measures in Chechnya and the Caucasus; support for elections in the Palestinian territories with the resulting success of the jihadist group Hamas; etc.

Furthermore, it is easily demonstrated that, for all the bluster about fighting the “war on terror,” the US is not really that serious about reducing the threat of Islamic terrorism. Former Vice President Richard Cheney remarked shortly after leaving office that another major terrorist attack is not a question of if but when.

Yet reducing the likelihood of another such attack would be hugely aided by a few simple steps that the US and the West refuse to adopt. Years following September 11, the most spectacular national-security-intelligence failure in world history, the United States, the most awesome economic and military power of all time, has yet to gain control of its borders or to name the enemy that it is supposedly fighting. Rather, it insists on largely uncontrolled borders and in affirming, time and again, the preposterous notion that Islam is “a religion of peace” in contradiction to the

religion's own core texts and historical record. In such an absurd context, continuing US support for Muslim expansion in the Balkans is almost unsurprising.

The failure to implement serious border-control measures or to name the enemy indicates that the US is less interested in protecting itself from terrorist attack than it is in advancing the cause of its own global empire, what might be called imperial democracy. The uncomfortable reality is that the building of the empire is significantly aided by the persistence of a grass-roots, violent, religious ideology such as Islam. By abetting the growth of jihadist culture both in the Islamic world and in the West, the Western empire both undermines old national identities and fosters a justification for its own ever-expanding power. Islam is a perfect foil for Western imperialism: it provides a powerful solvent to the old nation-states that beautifully compliments the cultural alienation that is the West's weapon of choice. Islam's global pretensions help justify Western overseas military and intelligence adventures worldwide, i.e., the "global war on terror."

However, while the ideologies of Islam and the contemporary West both aspire to global mastery, the fact is that the latter is increasingly the only game in town. While small groups of Orthodox Muslims continue to press their violent, jihadist agenda sporadically around the globe - with the occasional spectacular success - Western economic, cultural, and military power is, for the most part, carrying everything before it. The Islamic states themselves, with only a few exceptions, are integrating themselves into the Western-dominated global game. The Islamic world, while still possessed of an abiding religious orientation, remains fragmented and largely incapable of bringing new nations into the Islamic fold save for the tactic of populating them with Muslims (and this only insofar as other nations permit them, e.g. Western Europe). Islam is increasingly emptying from the center. Islamic governments tread a fine line between the mandates of Sharia, which are fundamentally impractical, and the overwhelming military and economic power of the West. More and more, Islamic states are showing themselves willing to play ball with the West while pushing strict Sharia and jihad to the periphery and into Dar al Harb, The House of War, the non-Muslim world. Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and most Islamic countries are pretty well integrated into the Western-dominated economic and military global order even while significant elements in those countries wax nostalgic for the good old days when Sharia ruled much of the known world and Dar al Islam made the infidel nations tremble. The distinctly Islamic policies of those states, such as they are, come mainly in the form of enforcing as much Sharia at home as needed to pacify Muslim conservatives and subsidizing jihadist terrorism abroad. Their leaders are happy to meet and shake hands with the leading infidel powers because they know those powers hold the economic and military trump cards.

These trump cards are played with remarkable consistency almost regardless of the partisan orientation of particular Western governments. Whatever the differences between the major poles of "mainstream" political thought in the West today, advancing the cause of imperial democracy is a point of general agreement,

especially in the US. Under a right-wing US administration, imperialism assumes an "America-first" veneer; under a left-wing administration, "multi-lateralism," "co-operation," and "engagement" serve as its cover. President Clinton's Yugoslav adventures were generally portrayed as "humanitarian" actions; the Asian wars of the two Bushes were painted as "patriotic" wars to safeguard US interests and get the bad guys. Grains of truth in all cases, of course, atop heaps of falsehood. US-led Western imperialism thus takes on different shades depending on the partisan flavor of the sitting administration, but the overall program advances largely unhindered.

Neither the left nor the right can provide effective resistance to the general imperial program. On the left, we have the running criticism of US-led foreign and defense policy as provocative, destructive, and unjust. There is much truth there. Unhappily, bound up with such criticism is a standing apology for everybody else, including the Islamic world, as innocent victims of US aggression, and a contempt for the remaining noble elements of the West such as Christianity and genuine patriotism. On the right, there is recognition (more so) of the dangers and distortions of non-Western ideologies, such as Islam, and of the progressive cultural suicide of the West, yet there is little understanding of the failures of American policy or of the destructiveness of Western military adventurism. The errors of the one are pounced on by the other, and vice versa, such that the inane left-right ping pong match proceeds unimpeded. The actual policies of both wings, however, prove remarkably similar. The US administrations since the end of the Cold War have all engaged, at one time or another, in a major overseas adventure that directly involved US combat forces. The continuity goes back even further, but, with the decline of Soviet Communism, there is no major counterweight to American-led power, and the imperial tendencies of the West have burst into the open. Gulf War I, the NATO campaign against the Bosnian Serbs, the NATO campaign against Serbia, Afghanistan, Gulf War II, and now the Obama administration's new Afghan offensive are really aspects of the same program even while Republican and Democratic administrations find somewhat different ways of justifying them. Imperial democracy rolls on.

Hopes that a new Democratic administration would reconsider the program of imperial democracy have not been borne out. Having been promised "change," President Obama's supporters have in fact got pledges to keep 50,000 troops in Iraq indefinitely and of a much wider war in Afghanistan. The Obama administration has not so much rethought the wisdom of imperial democracy as rehashed it. Of special relevance to the unhappy plight of the Serbs is the return of Clintonian logic to American policy in the Balkans. Lamentations about the Bush administration's "disengagement" from the Balkan scene have been giving way to new calls to "re-engage," which can only mean bad news for the Serbs and the general health of the region. Calls for the US to reassume leadership in Bosnia by Balkan perennials Paddy Ashdown and Richard Holbrooke as well as various think-tankers eager to relive the glory days of Clintonian anti-Serb strong-arm diplomacy all have the same thrust: the Serbs – whether in Belgrade, Republika Srpska, or the remnant in Kosovo

- still haven't learned their lesson. As long as Serbs desire to remain Serbs - to retain their distinctive ethnic, linguistic, cultural inheritance - they shall remain personae non gratae. Writing in early 2009 in the Wall Street Journal, Morton Abramowitz and Daniel Serwer, while correctly pointing out the Bosnian Muslim leadership's program of undermining the power-sharing arrangement with Republika Srpska in the federal republic, hasten to blame Serbs for the ongoing tensions in both Bosnia and Kosovo: "The root cause for most of this instability still rests in Belgrade." Nowhere, it seems, is anyone willing to consider whether the Dayton accords actually settled anything or whether the imposed partition of Serbs between Serbia, Republika Srpska, and Kosovo-Metohija amounts to anything more than a divide-and-conquer stratagem by the West. The persistent "tensions" in the region are substantially Western-induced iatrogenesis guaranteed to leave underlying issues unresolved and the way cleared for generations of Western diplomatists to peddle their hackneyed wares. The recent high-level visit to the region by Vice President Biden - one of the most vociferous antagonists of the Serbs during the Clinton years - affirms that US policy towards the Serbs is once again serious and seriously misguided.

The Western war against the Serbs is part of a general program that the Western empire would very much like to extend to the current champion of the nation-state system and historic ally of the Serbs, Russia. What distinguishes Russia from other countries today is a) she is a nation-state - a territorial, ethnic, linguistic, religious whole - and b) she has demonstrated both a will and a capacity to remain that way. Like Serbia, her national-religious consciousness runs deeper than most Westerners can fathom. Following the disastrous 1990s in which Russia adopted Western-style "reforms," Vladimir Putin led his nation back onto a path of national regeneration that has stirred the ire of the Western globalizers. One of Russia's greatest offences is the rejection of the Western "separation" of church and state. In the Orthodox tradition, the nation is an organic whole that cannot be categorically compartmentalized into political versus religious, secular versus spiritual. To "separate" the church from the state is akin to separating the soul from the body, i.e., to kill it. The fruits of the West's "separation" are everywhere apparent: abandonment of churches, rising crime and delinquency, divorce, climbing suicide rates, and the waning of the social survival impulse in the form of collapsing birth rates. These problems are not unique to the West, but they prevail in proportion to the extent to which a given society has adopted the contemporary Western program of moral-cultural suicide.

The ongoing US-led persecution of the Serbs is closely linked with the one of the most persistent strains of Western policy, namely, its Russophobia. Since the collapse of Soviet hegemony in Europe, the US-led West has instituted a series of highly aggressive policies that evince a total disregard for Russia's traditional sphere of influence. The expansion of NATO to Russia's borders, for example, will directly involve the United States and all of Western Europe in any conflict between Russia and the Baltic countries, territories that Russia directly ruled for centuries. For Westerners to get some idea of the extreme lengths US-led anti-Russian policy has reached since the close of the Cold War, they should try to see things from

Russia's point of view. How would America react, one wonders, if the old USSR had effected policies comparable to America's since 1989? Try this: Twenty years ago, the democratic regimes of the NATO countries disintegrate and are replaced with pro-Soviet regimes that expel American troops. Next, in 1991, the United States itself suffers an internal upheaval that sees a massive economic contraction and the secession of Alaska, Hawaii, and Texas. During this time of US weakness, civil war breaks out in the United Kingdom in which the Warsaw Pact intervenes and facilitates the breakup of the country. In 1998, the US defaults on its debt and the dollar collapses. Then, in 1999, unhappy with English "oppression" of the Scots, the USSR bombs London for seventy-nine days. The Soviet Union then extends Warsaw Pact guarantees to Western Europe, Canada, and the former US states of Hawaii and Alaska. Now the USSR is talking about concluding a mutual defense agreement with Texas and building a missile shield in Quebec to safeguard against rogue Latin American states. Absurd? The foregoing is a fair approximation of how Western policy appears from a Russian standpoint. That such an aggressive policy is sincerely defended in the West as reasonable and defensive testifies to the unlimited extent of Western aims.

While those aims entail the subversion and ultimate destruction of strong nation-states such as Russia, the process of national disintegration is not only for foreign consumption. The West so far has been most successful in undermining its own constituent nation-states. The general strategy of the empire is to undermine the natural and organic means of political and social organization so as to leave its own power unchecked – even at the expense of its own constituent nation-states. Imperial democracy is truly supranational. The nation-states in the West are almost as much targets for social, political, economic, and territorial dissolution as non-Western nation-states. The Western-sponsored ideological movements of multiculturalism and moral relativism (to name but two) serve to delegitimize the principles of common ethnicity, language, religion, and territory around which peoples and nation-states have historically organized. By leaving the official institutions outwardly intact while eviscerating them from within, the empire can implement its aims without fear of effective organized resistance from within the legal/constitutional channels of power. The money and media interests that serve the empire's agenda have become the true centers of power, the real government, even while the official legislative, executive, and judicial institutions retain the appearance of authority. The beauty of "democracy" is that it engenders a constantly shifting landscape that is easily manipulated. The delegitimation of ethnicity (in particular among the dominant Western ethnicity, whites), language, religion (in particular, traditional forms of Christianity), and territory forestalls any attempt by representatives within the official institutions to reclaim their national inheritances.

The Western imperial program to wreck what is left of the nation-state system on a global scale leaves Western conservatives in a bind. During the Cold War, it was still possible to regard the West, the adversary of revolutionary Communism, as a conservative force in the world. With the aggressive and highly destructive

extension of the Western empire in the post-Soviet period, however, this position is no longer tenable. Western conservatives are now in the position of defending the actions of the world's leading revolutionary force. True-blooded Western conservatives need to reject the assumptions that have elevated Western-style democracy to the level of a religion with a global mandate. For all the reasons that Western conservatives mistrusted Communism and should mistrust Islam, they must discard the false god of imperial democracy as well. The "neo-conservatives" that insist on pushing Western democracy on the rest of the world at the point of a gun must be rudely dismissed from conservative ranks. The uncomfortable reality is that, for Western conservatives to remain conservative, they must be willing to take up the cause of the truly conservative powers left in the world, namely, those nation-states intent on resisting the Western empire and retaining their historic identity. Acknowledging the West's crimes against the Serbs, the continuing injustices of the unbalanced Hague war crimes tribunal, and the imperialistic nature of the Western occupation of Kosovo would be the right places to start. Supporting the national and religious reawakening of Russia, as a healthy model for nation-states everywhere, would be another.

The unyielding expansion of the Western empire is today the greatest threat to peace and freedom in the world. The diplomatic and military campaigns directed against the Serbs during the past eighteen years, and the West's willingness to ally itself with as alien and destructive an ideology as Islam, are some of the most vivid examples of the lengths to which the US-led West will go to impose its will on nations that seek to resist imperial democracy. The West's treatment of the Serbs should be a cautionary tale for nations such as Russia, who have so far resisted Western pressure by virtue of their greater size and power. The West now offers the nations of the world two options: submit to Western economic and strategic dominance and remain intact, or seek to remain outside the Western orbit and face destruction. In either case, the result - the loss of independence and nationhood - is the same. It is the same sort of "choice" that revolutionary ideologies from Islam to Communism have offered and it should galvanize resistance from true conservatives everywhere. Like all revolutionary programs that have sought world mastery, imperial democracy can only culminate in material and spiritual oblivion. The Western political and economic order is already showing the strain. The question is whether genuine forces of conservation in the West can succeed in reigning in the excesses of imperial democracy before a Western internal collapse or a violent confrontation with Russia. So far, there is not much ground for optimism.

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