

## International recognition of the right to self-determination is Slovenia's best defence

*From Professor Aleksandra Kornhauser and others*

Sir: Slovenia has been militarily attacked. The army was sent against this small country that peacefully declared independence on 26 June, after free elections and a 98 per cent vote in favour of independence in a free plebiscite.

The decision to attack Slovenia was taken after more than a year of repeated attempts by Slovenia to negotiate and compromise with the federal government, which did not react seriously to dreadful violations of the federal constitution and laws carried out by Serbia (eg annexing the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, cruel repression of Albanians in Kosovo, robbery of more than \$1bn from the federal monetary system, blocking the normal succession in the federal presidency — the election of the Croat, Stipe Mesic — and continuing a nationalist-totalitarian communist system, fomenting nationalistic unrest in Croatia).

However, this federal government has sent tanks and warplanes against the democracy in small, peaceful and hard-working Slovenia, and instructed the soldiers of the federal army that they have to fight Slovenia because of the danger of attack from Austria and Italy.

Considerable damage has been done in Slovenia already in the first three days of this war. Hundreds of dead and seriously wounded, among them civilians, including foreign tourists, are the tragic result. Slovenia, which did not start the military action, is threatened with far more severe attacks, not excluding the use of chemical weapons.

A most important defence of

Slovenia is world opinion. We are very sorry that only now, and only slowly, does the world recognise the true situation in this part of the world. We hope you will help us prevent the catastrophe, and to achieve international recognition of the right of Slovenian self-determination.

Sincerely yours,  
ALEKSANDRA KORNHAUSER  
JANEZ PEKLENIK  
VITO TURK

Ljubljana, Slovenia  
30 June

*The writers are Slovenian members of Academia Europaea.*

*From Mr Boris Novak and others*

Sir: Serbian colleagues have informed us that the Serbian media have been systematically creating the impression that the Slovene nation is at war with Serbia. We, the undersigned, as Slovene authors who know their culture and deeply feel its present suffering, stress that Slovenia is not at war with any nation. We are at war with the Yugoslav army coup, which started this criminal aggression against the Slovenian nation and its citizens.

In spite of our distress at the unnecessary and tragic deaths, both military and civilian, of Slovenes, we also sympathise with the young men from other nations. They are cynically forced by the army's senseless coup to risk, and even give, their lives to a war on foreign land that is not their own.

Yours faithfully,  
BORIS A. NOVAK, DRAGO JANCAR,  
NIKO GRAFENAUER, JAROSLAV  
SKRUSNY, DANE ZAJC, RUDI  
SELIGO, TOMAZ SALAMUN, ALES  
DEBELJAK

Ljubljana, Slovenia  
2 July

*From Dr Marko Hawlina*

Sir: The example of Slovenia places several uneasy questions on the table of democratic Europe: is it possible that, even in 1991 in the middle of Europe, people must die to prove that their nation deserves the basic right of self-determination, as provided by the United Nations charter? How many members of a nation have to die to pay the price of European or US recognition?

Is not this yet another example of cynicism in the history of "great and democratic countries", which believe that only they are entitled to decide the destiny of small nations? For Slovenia this has turned out to be a new Yalta, after which, for the convenience of a deal with Stalin, in addition to hundreds of thousands of Cosacks, more than 25,000 Slovenes were forcibly repatriated and slaughtered after the war by the communists. An unwanted deal with communist generals has now again been responsible for the crime against this nation.

It is obvious that, after the latest events, Slovenia cannot turn back. Forcing Slovenia into any form of cohabitation with Serbia would now be deeply immoral. Yugoslav unity, so stubbornly enforced by Western policy and Mr Baker, has finally proven tragically misguided. This was also reflected in the television statement by Mr Douglas Hurd on 30 June. The democratic face of Europe could solely be shown by recognition of the right and will of all nations, big or small, for self-determination and independence.

Could Slovenia be the last warning to "the big" that a new diplomacy must be adopted for the solution of the national questions?

Is it not an imperative that those European nations still waiting in a queue for acknowledgement of their right to self-determination and freedom after Yalta-like treaties, achieve this without a need to go through a horrible bloodbath, as just seen in Slovenia?

Yours faithfully,  
MARKO HAWLINA,  
London, SW9  
1 July

*From Mr Taras Kuzio*

Sir: The crisis in Yugoslavia serves to remind us of the need for Western governments to re-evaluate their positions with regard to their promotion and support for "territorial integrity" in international affairs. This has served to paralyse Western foreign policy in relation to the Soviet Union, Iraq and now Yugoslavia and has made Western governments act only in a "reactive" manner to events as they unfold, often far too slowly.

Western support for the "territorial integrity" of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has, in effect, meant support for a communist, imperial centre against republics that have embraced Western democracy and economic reforms, and have held referenda in favour of national independence. Whereas these genuine and freely determined aspirations by Balts, Ukrainians, Georgians, Croats, Slovenes and others are guaranteed by numerous international agreements, the UN and CSCE process. No manner of military repression will recork these aspirations and continue to hold these two bankrupt communist empires — the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia — together indefinitely.

Is it not time that the West played a more active role in pre-

venting the drift towards violence by demanding in international forums that nations that adhere to democratic norms and freely express their wish to independence be given the right to do so in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union — in the manner that the West allowed its former colonies to do after the Second World War?

Yours faithfully,  
TARAS KUZIO  
Director  
Ukrainian Press Agency  
London, W11  
3 July

*The writer is British representative, Ukrainian Popular Movement (Rukh), Kiev.*

*From Dr W. Larasdad*

Sir: Please, Europe, do not allow Slovenia to be over-run by Balkan Stalinists. Serbs may be good sportsmen and women, but their leaders are not famous for playing cricket when it comes to the rights of their antagonists. Stand down Saddam!

I write as a botanist and a tourist, who has been once in Slovenia. The unspoilt natural beauty of the orchid-rich meadows, the bear-haunted forests, the spectacular karst and the clean air all contribute to one of Europe's most outstanding areas of natural beauty. The friendly and non-aggressive Slovenes belong to this landscape.

If Europe is to stand by and watch the area fall under Balkan generals, whether under their tanks or their jurisdiction, then one can surely forget any rays of optimism for the New Europe.

Yours faithfully,  
W. LARASDAD  
Kumasi,  
Ghana  
2 July