

tions of the former communist Serbian-Yugoslavian leadership. And so, the World Bank and IMF are now demanding that an exhausted Bosnia immediately implement a "normalization of its international financial relations" as a precondition for receiving reconstruction assistance.

Negative factors, but also new options

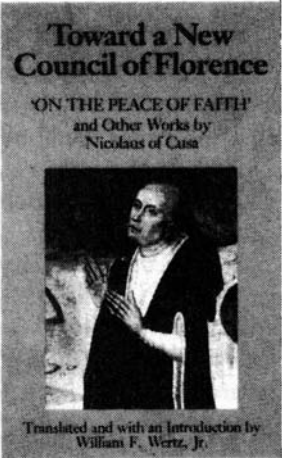
Typically, on Nov. 22, the British government made similar statements, also demanding that it be given a leading role in deciding Bosnia's fate on economic and financial questions. This same cynical attitude was evident in commentaries appearing in the British media, such as the London *Times*, which often serves as a mouthpiece for the British Foreign Office. These same media, which for three years have been demanding that Bosnia-Herzegovina finally capitulate and accept "military defeat," are now fulminating against "the arrogance of Clinton," who is "selling out" Bosnia's "vital interests," and who wants to turn the country into an "American protectorate."

In conclusion, it should be emphasized, once again, that the Dayton agreement is a transitional step—albeit a very important one—in the political, economic, and military development of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and of Serbia as well. There is no denying the negative factors; but at the same time, it opens up new opportunities for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia which must now be followed up aggressively.

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Algeria

Election farce may prove serious

by Anna Varga

The Algerian civil war was ignited when the military government unilaterally suspended elections at the end of 1991, which the opposition Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. The second round, scheduled for January 1992, never took place. Instead, a bloody confrontation was launched, through the use of terrorists known as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GIA, which represents the notorious "afghansi" networks created during the Afghanistan War, have been deployed in Algeria by sectors of Algerian military security known as the "eradicators," those who desire the physical elimination of the opposition through such a staged conflict. Over the past four years, the Algerian population has been subjected to atrocities of unprecedented brutality by both sides, and the result has been the death of an estimated 50,000 people, mostly civilians.

In mid-November, the Algerian regime staged elections under Liamine Zeroual, who was appointed President in 1994. The aim of the unusual elections, was to give Zeroual an aura of respectability and legitimacy, particularly in the international arena. French President Jacques Chirac, who had planned to meet Zeroual in New York during the U.N. General Assembly, but cancelled the meeting because it would have constituted political support for the regime, made known that he would have pushed the Algerian strongman to stage Presidential elections, and to follow them up with parliamentary elections. This way, the process of democratic restoration was supposed to be restarted.

The elections, according to the opposition inside Algeria and abroad, were anything but fair and free. First, only three candidates in addition to Zeroual were allowed to run; the entire country was placed under military control as 300-400,000 soldiers were deployed to patrol major cities, and intimidation was practiced, to corral reluctant citizens to vote, particularly in rural areas. The opposition parties had called for abstention, as a sign of protest against elections held under conditions of martial law. According to opposition sources, only 37% of the eligible voters went to the polls, although government reports claimed exactly twice that number. The results, too, betrayed signs of computer manipulation, as the four candidates were attributed almost exactly five times what their parties or corresponding political formations had tolled in 1991. Thus Sheikh Nahnah, whose Hamas party was given 5% in 1991, got 25% this

time; Zeroual was given 7 million votes, about five times the 1.5 million which the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) got in 1991, and so forth. As Nahnah commented, "Last December a plane was hijacked and now votes and ballot boxes were hijacked."

It is ironic that such an obviously fraudulent election, may contribute to ending a civil war situation, which was sparked by the abolition of elections. Regardless of the ballot box stuffing, the election is being used, by both government and opposition, as a ruse, to find a solution. Immediately after the results were broadcast, that Zeroual had "won" over 60% of the votes, he announced his willingness to open a dialogue with the opposition. Former Prime Minister Abdelhamid Brahimi told *EIR* from London, that the government had two alternatives before it: either to continue the eradication policy, leading the country to certain ruin, or to open up a real dialogue with the opposition. The same message was sent Zeroual by the editor of a legal opposition newspaper, *L'Opinion*, who recommended that the President use the legitimacy provided him by the elections, to seek national reconciliation, with all parties.

The FIS made no bones about its intentions to exploit the potential in the situation. Speaking from Germany, where he is in political exile, FIS speaker Rebah Kebir characterized Zeroual as "the valid negotiator to lead the talks on the side of the effective power," i.e., of the group which, legally or illegally, retains power in the country. Kebir added that the FIS was "ready for a global solution negotiated between the effective power and the opposition, a solution that could lead to peace and stability." He hinted at the possibility that his movement would call for parliamentary elections when he said, "This would allow the Algerian people to choose, in a free and peaceful atmosphere, their representatives and their course and therefore contribute to stabilize and consolidate State institutions."

Anwar Haddam, FIS parliamentarian based in the United States, commented that "the only solution, if they want a solution, must be within the framework of the Rome Accords," referring to the agreements reached by opposition party leaders during meetings held in Rome in late 1994 and early 1995. Spokesmen for the Community of Saint Egidius, the Catholic lay organization which had sponsored the Rome meetings, also said they thought that the Algerian elections "could mark a positive step if it is followed by a phase of real resumption of dialogue, including with all opposition groups." The Rome platform calls for ending the state of emergency, releasing political prisoners, and returning to democratic rule, through free elections.

Zeroual, though loudly proclaiming victory over the opposition, through his rigged election results, has painted himself into a corner: If he wishes to preserve his democratic credentials, he must make a serious gesture to the real opposition. To do this, Zeroual must come to terms with the "eradicators" among the military who put him in power in 1994.

The fact that the possibility of dialogue is seriously being

mooted now, both by the FIS and the regime, indicates that some reorganization among the military may be taking place. FIS spokesmen in the past have specified repeatedly that there are "wise men" and truly patriotic forces even among the military, who could dissociate from the disastrous policy course of the last four years. Now is the time, clearly, for such forces to step forward.

Documentation

FIS appeals to Zeroual

This open letter was sent to Algerian President Liamine Zeroual on Nov. 21 by Rebah Kebir, president of the Executive Abroad of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS):

Mr. President,

Following your election to the Presidency of the Republic, in an election upon which we do not want to dwell, since you are in possession of the details relative to the way it unfolded and its results, the message of the Algerian people, both through their boycott and through their participation in the vote, is a desire for peace, democracy, and liberation from poverty and oppression. We implore the Almighty to make this event of far-reaching importance a prelude to good and a blessing for Algeria, its territory, and its children. We rejoiced in the grace that was manifested during the days of the elections, when the blood of Algerians was spared, and we hope that God will favor us, through faith, peace, security, and Islam forever. We have also learned with satisfaction of the expression of your sentiments, on the weight of responsibility that voters conferred on you, on your certainty that the solution to the crisis goes beyond individuals, groups, and clans, and on your determination to open up, to help all Algerians find their role in the construction of the country. We are convinced that the sincere return to this Muslim people can only lead to well-being and good. If one part of the population has had the advantage of rejoicing, there is, on the other side, another part, also very important, which has remained frustrated and unhappy. We estimate that the popular support which you have received may constitute, both for the government and the opposition, a great opportunity for overcoming the obstacles which have thus far prevented the national dialogue from reaching its objectives, of returning to peace, liberty, and entente. Finally, we confirm our permanent willingness for dialogue, consultation, and mutual aid with the forces in power and the opposition, with the aim of eliminating the causes of tension in our society, wiping away the pain of our people, and allowing them to fulfill their desires for peace, well-being, justice, and democracy, as well as for sparing future generations from deadly struggles.