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The following addresses the historical inaccuracies regarding Cyprus, in the December 12 op-ed by John Laughland. In 1923, at the Lausanne negotiations, Ankara completely renounced all claims to Cyprus. Cyprus is eighty percent Greek, and has been Greek speaking and a bastion

of Hellenic culture since classical times. In 1955, in response to the campaign for Cypriot freedom by Greek Cypriots George Grivas and Archbishop Makarios, the British instituted a policy of repression in their effort to crush the democratic aspirations of the Cypriot people. Furthermore, the British fomented tensions between the Greek majority and the Turkish minority to prevent the Cypriot people from achieving the desired unity with Greece. Turkey's twin invasions of 1974 were not in any way defensive. Turkish expansionist plans were expressed as early as 1955 when a political party in Turkey named "Cyprus is Turkish" was

formed. Turkish demands for Cyprus, in complete disregard of the fact that four out of five Cypriots

were Greek, demonstrates that the Turkish invasions are acts of blatant and unprovoked aggression.

Turkey has settled over 100,000 settlers from Ankara into the homes of Greek Cypriots who were

driven out by the ethnic cleansing which resulted from the July and August 1974 invasions.

The destruction of over 550 Greek Orthodox Churches in Cyprus by the Turkish occupation forces, as part of the effort to obliterate the Greek past of the ethnically cleansed occupied north,

proves that the Turkish invasions were offensive in nature and scope. The brutal murders of several

Greek demonstrators in August 1996 by the notorious ultra-nationalist Grey Wolves, affirms Turkey's

supporting of terrorists in Cyprus. Mr. Laughland is doing his readers a tremendous disservice by

mischaracterizing the historical realities on Cyprus over the past five decades .

Theodore G. Karakostas

TKarakosta@aol.com

Member of HEC Executive Council

www.greece.org

Kosovo's Independence Will Stir Up Trouble. Who Will Benefit?

From the desk of [John Laughland](#) on Wed, 2007-12-12 20:20

Perhaps the most striking things about the impending declaration of independence about Kosovo is that is happening at all. Why should the Kosovo Albanians be striving for independence from Belgrade now, since there has been peace in the province for eight years (interrupted only in 2004, when a mob of Albanians killed 25 Serbs) and since the regime in Serbia, of which the Kosovo Albanians are citizens, has been democratic and pro-European since 2000?

Why, indeed, did the Kosovo Albanians spend the whole of the first part of the 1990s in peace, when the rest of Yugoslavia was in flames? If their desire for independence had really been so intense as their national propaganda claims, then surely the time to act would have been when the Yugoslav federation was collapsing in 1992-1992, or during the Bosnian civil war of 1992-1995.

For that matter, why did the Albanians inside Serbia, who are in the majority in the area around the Southern towns of Presevo and Bujanovac, start their attacks there in 2001, a year after the fall of Slobodan Milošević's fall from power, whereas they had been left in peace during the civil war between Serbs and Albanians in neighbouring Kosovo in 1998-1999?

None of this seems to make any sense.

One thing is certain: the Kosovo Albanians would not have threatened to declare independence if they were not certain that they would receive diplomatic recognition from the United States and most European states. The Kosovo leadership (which means the leadership of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the guerrilla force whose head, Hashim Thaci, is now the "Prime Minister" of Kosovo) has very close ties to the West. Thaci famously kissed Madeleine Albright during the Kosovo war of 1999 and also visited Tony Blair at Number 10; one of his predecessors as Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, who has since been indicted by The Hague for war crimes, is known as a major CIA asset.

No doubt the Kosovo Albanians have some claim to independence, although it is notable how seldom they refer to the persecution of which they were supposedly the victims in 1999 under Milošević. This is no doubt because everyone knows that those claims of genocide bore as much relation to reality as did the claim made in 2002-2003 that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Indeed, the charge of genocide turned out to be so unsustainable that it was

never even included in the indictment against Milošević.

The loss of Kosovo by Serbia would be a terrible blow to the values of Christian civilisation, since that region is itself a symbol of the victory over the European spirit over the superior military force of Islam, having been the scene of Serbia's historic battle against the Turks in 1389. The province contains some of the jewels of European architecture, the monasteries of Peć, Dečani and Gračanica. But the truth is that the new battle of Kosovo was lost a long time ago, when the Serbs, like most Europeans, stopped having babies while the Albanians, like many other Muslim peoples, continued having them – and at a vast rate. The demographic battle having been lost, there is very little the government in Belgrade can do now to halt the inevitable.

Worse, perhaps, is the effect which the independence of this small province will have on the region and the wider world. The anger of Bosnian Serbs is inflamed by the West's double-standards. While it demands autonomy and now secession for the Kosovo Albanians, it is pushing ever greater centralisation and curtailment of autonomy in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbs there have been told they must never hold a referendum on independence from Bosnia, while the EU-backed "High Representative" is determined to abrogate what remains of the autonomy of Republika Srpska. Independence for Kosovo will, in all likelihood, lead to the fragmentation of the artificial and largely bogus state of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But the double-standards are not confined to the Balkans. The narrative in Cyprus is almost identical to that in Kosovo: a Muslim population there, the Turks, was the subject of persecution by its Orthodox co-nationals, the Greeks, until they were protected by military intervention according to international law: Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 and invoked the terms of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee (between Britain, Turkey and Greece) which guaranteed the constitution of Cyprus. Yet Northern Cyprus (the Turkish part) has been the victim of an embargo and international isolation ever since then, an international pariah while Kosovo's leaders are the toast of the world's chancelleries.

The same goes for Transnistria. Transnistria is a small sliver of land along the left bank of the Dniestr river, North-West of Odessa. When the Romanian province of Bessarabia was illegally annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, according to the terms of the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Transnistria became part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova. It had never before in history been governed from the Moldovan capital, Chişinău, and most of its inhabitants speak Russian. The Soviet Union started to collapse in 1990 precisely when Moscow admitted, after years of denial, the existence of the secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and this led to the secession of the Baltic states and, eventually, the dissolution of the USSR itself. Transnistria naturally said that its incorporation into Moldova was as illegal as Moldova's incorporation into the Soviet Union and demanded independence. Although it has indeed been de facto independent since 1992, the West has consistently told it that it will not allow it to secede from Moldova. Ditto for Nagorno-Karabakh (formally part of Azerbaijan, populated now exclusively by Armenians), South Ossetia (part of Georgia but culturally linked to North Ossetia, which is inside Russia) and Abkazia (also part of Georgia but

de facto independent since 1992).

Encouraging independence for Kosovo will only re-ignite the conflict which has been basically frozen there since 1999, as well as the similarly frozen conflicts in the Balkans, in Moldova and the Caucasus. What is the point of this when the other option is to let sleeping dogs lie? Does someone have an interest in causing trouble?

The only common denominator in all these various conflicts, indeed, is attitudes to Russia. Russia supports Serbia on Kosovo and Bosnia; it is broadly supportive of Transnistria and the other non-recognised states on the territory of the former Soviet Union (although it has done little concrete to help them). Any trouble in these area is trouble for Moscow in its own backyard, which President Putin told me in September is the last thing he wants. Maybe that is why the West is determined to provoke it.

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