

Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?  
By Kathryn Albrecht

Did the 78-day bombing campaign of spring 1999 disturb you?  
Do you believe NATO should rule Yugoslavia?  
Do you realize the degree to which it already does?

Read on and take action.

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Part I

September 1999

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[INTRO]

Last spring, during the fourth week of the daily bombing of Yugoslavia, I awoke to the horror. Until then, I had assumed, "O.K., we'll stop now, right? Enough already." After all, we had recently only bombed Sudan and Afghanistan for an hour or two. And Iraq -- well, let's not think about Iraq.

But in mid-April, I suddenly woke up! "Oh, my God. Yugoslavia! We haven't stopped bombing! Like Vietnam, we're doing it again!" So I made my perfunctory call to the White House to plead for peace. In May, I sent my condolences to Serb friends -- exchange students America had hosted in better times. In June, my daughter and I marched from the Washington Vietnam Memorial to the Pentagon on the seventy-third day of bombing. There we rallied with hundreds of Serbs and Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonians -- all veterans of the disintegration of Yugoslavia -- all certain that NATO's bombing was not the answer for Kosovo.

Now, a year of research has brought me to this conclusion: if the U.S. and the misnamed North Atlantic Treaty Organization do not cease and desist in eastward expansion of armed power toward Asia, we will have provoked the defenses of several nuclear-armed states. And expanding toward the oil-rich Caspian region is exactly what we are up to in the Balkans.

With the supposed end of the Cold War, our country's "peace dividend" was reinvested in a unilateral arms race now costing America \$300 billion a year. This is what the new buzz-phrase "Stockpile Stewardship" is all about -- continued R&D, virtual weapons testing, raising the nuclear stakes. The social programs citizens clamor for only wither for want of funding. The Columbine High School killings occurred during the bombardment of civilian Yugoslavia. What hypocrisy that we beg our nation's youth to disarm!

BALKAN BALDERDASH

Suppose the actual reason for bombing the Balkans nearly 40,000 times in the past six years was not really "humanitarian intervention"? What if a ruse, designed by capitalist governments and public relations firms and executed by the mainstream media, concealed an entirely different agenda? But are the Serbs not monsters? Have they not raped and pillaged their way across "the former Yugoslavia," dumping bodies into Hitler-esque mass graves as they go?

Let's step back from the spin doctors, lift the old Lace Curtain of slavish Central Europe, and see if there's not another reality worth considering ...

The West's warplanes ceased bombarding Yugoslavia from 30,000 feet early last June. NATO "peace keepers" struggle to police the shattered province of Kosovo, now cleansed of most Serbs, battling a high homicide rate fueled by the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army). To the north, Serbia bestirs itself to drag out cranes and attempt repairing the effects of 78 consecutive days of missile strikes, without "one red cent" of the reconstruction assistance withheld by President Clinton, who politically conditions any chance of aid on Slobodan Milosevic's ouster. The Danube at Novi Sad now sports the first handhewn wooden bridge to cross her since 1770.

Winter is receding from the northern hemisphere. America has all but forgotten its nervous invigoration over Y2K and is enjoying springtime. But shadowing the national subconscious is a question surfacing a couple of times per week deep in our daily newspapers: What's to become of the Yugoslavia we bombed last year? Only time -- and a lot of international maneuvering, of course -- will tell. But there is another sad question -- actually the more important one -- haunting the Western democracies: "What became of Yugoslavia?"

#### THE IDEA OF UNITY INHABITED

The second Yugoslavia once hummed along, a tidy federation of six equally semi-autonomous republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. Serbia also contained two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Historically, geographic boundaries on the Balkan Peninsula had been periodically redrawn by Ottoman Turks, Austro-Hungarian monarchs, Czarist Russia, plus Britain, France, Germany, Greece, and Italy. However, pan-Slavic unity coalesced in 1918 when the first Yugoslavia, "The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" was formed by the Treaty at Versailles.

During World War II, these and additional nationalities of the Balkans were galvanized by a visceral and triumphant struggle to drive the Nazis and the Fascists out of the peninsula. In 1945, these peoples united to create an expanded Yugoslav federation under Partisan hero, Josip Broz ("Tito"). Tito set about developing a union of diverse but equal states, uninterested in joining the Soviet bloc. Tito would tolerate no Stalinist dissent; the pro-Soviet opposition was jailed. Stalin had Yugoslavia expelled from the Warsaw Pact in 1948. Thus began what many of her former citizens still call "The Golden Age of Yugoslavia."

Political processes within the federation included parliament, assemblies, referenda, and a recognition of the right of self-determination within the republics. Although basically a one-party state, this second Yugoslavia developed peacefully and grew economically for over 40 years. Ethnic tensions ran at a low ebb. In a nation of over two dozen minorities, none held the majority. Even young survivors of the federation recall a pervasive atmosphere of respect for each others' ethnic origins. The United States traded with non-aligned Yugoslavia and tolerated her as a buffer state between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. She was a founding signatory to the United Nations Charter.

### FLIES IN THE BUTTERMILK

Although rigorously socialist in developing her industrial base, Yugoslavia allowed a certain amount of capitalist incursions, in the spirit of pluralism. This openness to western investment, however, sowed the seeds of the federation's demise. Infusions of foreign capital over the years were not minor anomalies in the planned economies of the six republics. Foreign indebtedness acted as a timed-release toxin, gradually corroding the functioning of the state.

Meanwhile, Yugoslavia enjoyed stability and peace. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the growth of Yugoslavia's gross domestic product averaged 6.1%. There was 91% literacy and an average life expectancy of 72 years. The state provided housing, health care, education, and child care. Citizens lived well on a per capita income of \$3,000 a year (in 1980 dollars), with one month paid vacation, plus a year's maternity leave, if needed. Respect for workers was a central concern of government and society.

But Marshal Tito, who designed, fine-tuned, and ruled this orderly state with a firm hand for 35 years, passed on in May of 1980. Western powers quickly altered their stance toward Yugoslavia. Since the country's socialist core had not precluded financial relationships with the West, indebtedness to foreign banks had been increasing gradually for decades. At the time of Tito's death, the U.S. and other international creditors imposed the first of many "macro-economic reforms" on Yugoslavia. This "debt restructuring" demanded the currency be devaluated. As reported in a World Bank study, *Strategy for Restructuring*, the economy sputtered and stalled. But that was just the beginning.

Enter Cold Warrior Ronald Reagan. In 1982, Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive 54, a "Secret Sensitive" document. The Directive advocated "expanded efforts to promote 'a quiet revolution' to overthrow Communist governments while reintegrating the countries of Eastern Europe into a market-oriented economy." In 1984, the Reagan administration directly targeted Yugoslavia with NSDD 133, "United States Policy toward Yugoslavia", calling for increased intervention (*Covert Action Quarterly*, Winter 1992). With Tito gone, the U.S. moved to reorganize this sovereign nation. A successful socialist state outside the Western bloc would not be tolerated.

The International Monetary Fund became the chief weapon used to destroy Balkan unity. Increased ethnic friction, then, can be seen as only a secondary cause of the

dismemberment of Yugoslavia. As British economist and political analyst Sean Gervasi has stated, "Foreign intervention was designed to create precisely the conflicts which the Western powers decried."

IMF austerity measures were imposed in autumn 1989. The currency was further devalued, wages frozen, and state industries deemed "unprofitable under structural adjustment" (worker-owned companies) were closed. Unemployment immediately rose 20%. The federal government in Belgrade regularly transferred treasury payments to the republics and autonomous regions. Those payments were now stopped, the funds mandated by the IMF to service foreign debt. As the Berlin Wall was falling, wages in Yugoslavia fell 41%.

At this juncture, Prime Minister Ante Markovic visited Washington and reported worriedly that ethnic tensions were rising in the republics (New York Times, 10/14/89). George Bush convinced Markovic of the wisdom of more debt restructuring. An emergency foreign aid package was negotiated when Markovic promised to return home and liberalize constitutional controls on foreign investments. Markovic's ensuing legislation forced over one thousand by-then insolvent enterprises into bankruptcy. These companies could subsequently be purchased 'for a song' by Western investors.

Next, 650,000 Yugoslav workers struck. Although travail was increasing within the republics due to the precipitous decline, workers united in solidarity across all ethnic lines. It was in this atmosphere that Communist party leader Slobodan Milosevic came to power in the fall 1990 elections, railing against the dire conditions. Milosevic's gravest error was in not building upon worker solidarity at this juncture by appealing for the unity of all Yugoslavians. He lacked either the decency or the diplomacy to address each republic's complaints as the federation groaned and strained under economic duress. At a time when nationalist/separatist tendencies were flaring up in the republics, Milosevic fanned the flames by calling only for a united Serbia.

#### THE BREAKING POINT

Meanwhile, the economy plummeted. Eastern European Economics reported industrial production declined to a negative 10% growth rate and the GDP to a negative 7.5%. Then Milosevic took a bold step, one which would irrevocably condemn him in the eyes of Western monetary powers: he halted the IMF and U.S.-mandated reforms. He brought "structural adjustment" to a standstill.

Revenge was swift. One month later, in early November 1990, the U.S. Congress passed Foreign Operations Appropriations Law 101-513. Annual "foreign operations" appropriations facilitate U.S. corporate control of many of the world's economies by granting -- or withholding -- major funding to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian, African and Inter-American Development Banks. Section 599a of this Act cut off all aid, credit, and loans to Yugoslavia and demanded immediate, separate elections in each of the country's six republics. The U.S. State Department

would alone determine the validity of each election and resume aid to individual regions if the victors were deemed "democratic."

Hence, in areas of Yugoslavia already severely destabilized by a dislocated economy, with strains of micro-nationalism fracturing the political and social landscape, a major influx of U.S. dollars went directly to those right-wing secessionist parties who won these cobbled-up elections. This was in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia. The effect of Section 599a was as if deftly placed wedges had been inserted by the U.S. exactly along fissures of nationalism and ethnic identity and a sledge brought down on each. The economy entirely collapsed, recriminations broke out on all sides and, with separatist tendencies ignited by interventionism, the CIA in *The New York Times* of November 28, predicted civil war in Yugoslavia.

Germany had long been attempting to bring Slovenia and Croatia into its sphere of influence, which would give Germany more power over the Rhine/Danube Canal, where 3,000 ton ships will ultimately pass from the North Sea to the Black Sea. Germany exerted discernible pressures on the increasingly disaffected republics, openly encouraging secessions and, in fact, gave Croatia a \$2 billion, interest-free loan which was never reported to the central government as required by law (T.W. Carr, *Defense and Foreign Affairs Publications*, London).

In March 1991, the Croatian nouveau-fascist party, sporting the old Utasha flag of Nazi-occupied Croatia, called for the overturning of the socialist federation and the expulsion from Croatia of all Serbs, as that ethnicity was associated with the seat of the federal government in Belgrade. Two months later, Croat separatists besieged a series of military bases and, naturally, the federal army was ordered to respond.

On June 25, 1991, Croatia and Slovenia, the wealthiest of the republics, seceded from the federation. Germany was the first nation to recognize their independence. Croatia immediately denied citizenship, jobs, pensions, land ownership, and passports to the large Serb minority. Serbs there began arming themselves, remembering the Nazis' concentration camp of WW II at Jasenovac, Croatia, where nearly a million Jews, Serbs and Gypsies lost their lives.

In Slovenia, meanwhile, Milosevic ordered in the Yugoslav army, the JNA, to resist secession. Croatia's and Slovenia's declarations of independence had violated the Yugoslav constitution, which outlines specific procedures for republics seeking separation from the federation. The JNA, manned by 18-year-old conscripts who serve, after a month's training, for one year, fought for ten days in Slovenia. But the European Union demanded Belgrade let the separatists go their way, or lose all trade with Europe. 60% of Yugoslav trade was with Western Europe. Concurrently, war Mothers-in-Black marched in Belgrade, protesting the deaths of 200 JNA soldiers, beseeching Milosevic to withdraw. While the Yugoslav army was thus dissuaded from preserving its territory, Germany rapidly built up Slovene and Croat forces. Today, Germany owns 30% of industrial plants in these first two "former Yugoslav republics." (E.H. Solano, *Media War Against the Serbs*, p.64)

These first flurries of civil war came after a decade of Western fiscal and political manipulation had led to utter desperation in the republics. By June 1991, according to a World Bank Industrial Restructuring Study, the Yugoslav economy had "lapsed into a coma." 2,435 socialist industrial enterprises had been liquidated. The Christian Science Monitor reported that, in one year, the GDP had slipped from minus 7.5 to minus 22.5%. Inflation was 200% and 600,000 people had lost their jobs.

Yugoslavia had once been an integrated economy. Now the carefully coordinated and interlocking weave of natural resources, factories, and distribution was completely shredded. With federal political institutions and fiscal structures mortally wounded, militias loyal to secessionist leaders, funded and armed by Western interests, split populations along ethnic lines by committing numerous atrocities. As a rule, workers knew better than to opt for disunion. But labor finally saw their solidarity shatter as U.S. Law 101-135 cut the financial arteries between Belgrade and the republics, sounding the death-knell for the federation.

More secessions were to come. Harsher economic, political, and military sanctions loomed. Yugoslavia had not yet hit bottom.

Part II of "Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?" will focus on the complex dynamics of the civil wars and clarify the Bosnia/Croatia quagmire. A third Yugoslavia emerges, as do shadowy U.S. military "contractors". The work of public relations firms and the corporate media will be brought to light, for together they so effectively vilified Milosevic and the Serbs as to dehumanize them in the American mind. How else could years of ferocious sanctions and months of aerial bombardment of civilians, rivaled only in Iraq and Vietnam, have been condoned?

-- by Kathryn Albrecht

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Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?

By Kathryn Albrecht

Part II

October 1999

This is a war story, with its share of valor and untimely death, futility and improbable aspirations. But rather than fully recount the concurrent civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia, Part II of this series examines America's and other Western powers' involvement there from 1991 through 1995. It is cliché that truth is the first casualty of war. In the midst of

the United States' ongoing military engagement in Yugoslavia, let us attempt to reclaim the truth that has been lost.

How could so much strife and chaos engulf so many former countrymen -- longtime neighbors, co-workers, in-laws? Yugoslavs were a tightly knit nation for 46 years -- ethnic groups of farmers and city folk whose forebears lived side by side for several centuries. Part I of "Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia" examined the Western economic pressures brought to bear on that maverick socialist federation, which had shown little inclination after the Cold War, of imitating other Communist countries' break-ups. But south Slavic unity was ultimately shattered, and this war story resumes as Yugoslavia's second, third, and fourth republics break away.

The disintegration of the federation vies for most-reported news story of the 1990s; scarcely a day passed void of newsprint angst over Yugoslavia's problems. So why is it so difficult to recall the Bosnian and Croatian wars with acuity? Was it one war or two? It was all so complex. Yet Americans were critically involved, and over 10,000 of us are still there in uniform, providing "stability" to partitioned Bosnia. Will Kosovo mirror Bosnia? Revisiting these wars casts light on America's and NATO's new commitments in Kosovo, where bombs rained for eleven weeks last spring.

What is easy to recall is the common thread running through that decade's mainstream reportage of Yugoslavia's travail: fear and loathing of President Slobodan Milosevic. What was not commonly reported here is that, by the time the UN, the U.S., and NATO decided to intervene militarily in Bosnia, and more subtly in Croatia, Slobodan and his boys had packed up and gone home to Serbia, where they remained. So if the Bosnian and Croatian wars were not truly about Milosevic, what were they about?

Here is a thumbnail sketch: Croatia's independence in 1991 is met with dismay by her Serb minority. They fight for separate independence from what appears to be a neofascist Croatia for four years, with early assistance of federal and renegade forces. Neighboring Bosnia declares independence from Yugoslavia in 1992. Her Serb minority is fearfully unhappy about disunion and takes up arms. Moderate Muslims cannot support the Islamic fundamentalist the U.S. picks for president; they form a parallel government in dissent. Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo, falls under the three-year siege of Bosnian Serb irregulars, who inherited arms from the retreating federals. To cut off any support to Serb rebels in the warring states, rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is embargoed by the UN. Croatia senses a rare opportunity to seize Bosnian territory and aligns itself with the Bosnian Serbs and moderate Muslim dissidents.

Bosnian Serbs attempt to clear a narrow, 300-kilometer-long corridor through mountains, connecting the two historic Serb sectors. This results in charges of "ethnic cleansing" -- driving Muslim villagers and their defenders out of the corridor. The United States cajoles "our" Croat and Bosnian governments into forming an alliance. The new "allies" are rewarded thusly: Croatia is assisted by U.S. forces in "cleansing" itself entirely of the Serb minority fighting for their independence. And a U.S.-NATO air war greatly intensifies over Bosnia. With Bosnian Serbs and moderate Muslims exhausted and near defeat, Clinton calls all factions to the table in Dayton, Ohio, of all places. Slobodan

Milosevic, who washed his hands of the whole mess years before, acts as peace broker but fails to get sanctions lifted. Bosnia is divided, not quite equally, in two. Its Serbs get the short end. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization stations 34,000 "stabilization" troops there in 1996. NATO is still policing Bosnia today.

That's the short of it. However, this neat summary overlooks some information extremely pertinent to citizens of an informed democracy. Or have Americans been disinformed? Keep this thumbnail chronology in mind as we examine some lesser known details of Western intervention in the Balkan wars.

### UPSETTING APPLE CARTS

We begin with the simple secession, by referendum, of Macedonia in the autumn of 1991. She was legally independent by January, peacefully let go by Milosevic because of several factors. Macedonia is small, landlocked, relatively poor, and nonstrategic. Her communist/socialist governance had been retained in the U.S.-mandated elections the previous year. Relations between Belgrade and this southernmost state were noncombative. So roads, rail, and the border with Serbia remained open and unmilitarized after independence. For a year, that is, until 1,000 UN peacekeepers suddenly came to Macedonia to "guard" her borders with Serbia. Uninvited and unnecessary, they remained ("Eastern Europe," Lonely Planet Guidebooks, 1999).

Next arose the problem of American diplomats upsetting the apple cart of an early, painstakingly negotiated peace accord, mediated by the European Community (EC), between the Bosnian belligerents. On the eve of a dreaded civil war, in Lisbon in March 1992, all parties signed an accord which would have preserved Bosnia as a union of several autonomous provinces, partitioned along ethnic lines (Facts on File, 4/92, p. 252). But the United States co-opted one of the signatories, Alija Izetbegovic, a former Nazi collaborator. This man was thrice imprisoned between 1946 and 1983 for "inciting racial hatred" and for advocating an "ethnically pure Bosnia" (NATO in the Balkans, Wilson, 1998). Nonetheless, the Americans promised Izetbegovic supreme presidential power in Bosnia, with American military support, if he withdrew his signature from the accord. Izetbegovic did just that. The Lisbon Accord dissolved and three and a half years of civil war ensued, claiming tens of thousands of lives.

Why did the U.S. not favor a multilateral, EC-brokered peace in Bosnia in 1992? A Pentagon policy document leaked to The New York Times that March casts some light. "We seek to prevent the emergence of European-only security arrangements." What a shame! General Charles Boyd, deputy chief of the U.S. European Command during those years, wrote in Foreign Affairs magazine (9/95) that the moderate Muslim co-signatory at Lisbon, opposition leader Fikret Abdic, led "one of the few examples of successful multi-ethnic cooperation in the Balkans." And Abdic and the Bosnian Serbs had agreed that peace was possible.

### BAD PRESS

Another factor swaying the course of history, of which the American public is largely unaware, is the work of East Coast public relations firms in shaping our perception of Yugoslavia's troubles. With dollars pouring into the seceding republics as promised reward for throwing off "communist oppression" via "free" elections, Croatia, Bosnia, and the Serbian province of Kosovo hired American spin doctors. (Kosovo had held an irregular election for a government in exile.) Hill & Knowlton, Waterman & Associates, and Ruder Finn Global Public Affairs are being retained by their client states at sums upwards of \$10,000 per month. The object? Sway American public opinion, influence the U.S. Congress and the United Nations, and appeal to international human rights groups. James Harff, director of Ruder Finn, in an interview in *The Spectator* (2/12/93), revealed that his firm's efforts to vilify the Serbs were aimed at "persuading and convincing the UN to take proper measures." (Voilà -- sanctions!) Distorted and falsified "news" is systematically fed by these companies, via press release, to hundreds of journalists, humanitarian organizations, politicians, and academics. Many distortions and falsehoods reportedly originate at the State Department, the CIA, or the Pentagon.

Harff was interviewed by Jacques Merlino on French TV2 in April 1993. When asked what is Ruder Finn's most gratifying PR campaign involving Yugoslavia, Harff replied, "In July 1992, we outwitted three big Jewish organizations -- the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress ... We suggested they publish an advertisement [alleging Serb atrocities] in *The New York Times* ... That was a tremendous coup! We could promptly equate the Serbs with the Nazis in the public mind ... Almost immediately there was a clear change of language in the press, with use of words with high emotional content such as 'ethnic cleansing,' 'concentration camps,' etc."

When Merlino pointed out that no actual evidence had been found to confirm the existence of Serb concentration camps, James Harff replied, "Our work is not to verify information; our work is to accelerate the circulation of information favorable to our clients. We are not paid to moralize." A letter from the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society in Belgrade to the American Jewish Committee at that time warned: "Anti-Serb propaganda is a twin sister of anti-Semitism."

The complicity of the U.S. mainstream media in distorting public opinion and blaring sensational reports without checking facts is best illustrated in the reporting from rural Muslim villages in Bosnian Serb-held areas throughout 1992. One purported "death camp" at Trnopolje was visited that August by Paddy Ashdown, a British Liberal leader. He reported in both *The Independent* and *The Guardian* that this camp was actually an unfenced refugee center on school grounds, where Bosnian Muslims were being protected by their Serb neighbors and the Red Cross. A photo splashed around the world showed an emaciated "Islamic" behind barbed wire at Trnopolje. In fact, the photo was proved to be doctored; the barbed wire was faked. The man was actually a tubercular Serb looter in prison elsewhere (*Foreign Policy Journal*, 9/94).

This calls into question the charges that up to 50,000 Muslim women had been raped by Serb militias, reported in *Newsweek* (1/4/93). *Ms.* magazine also ran a cover story. The

rumor was based on an EC inquiry estimating that 20,000 women had been violated. No coverage, however, was given to the fact that the one dissenting member on the investigative team, Simone Veil, president of the European Parliament, protested that this estimate was based on interviews with only two women. The panel's statistical extrapolation was untenable. French television reporter Jerome Bony traveled to Tuzla, Bosnia, to investigate. He found only four individuals who would admit to being raped or witnessing rape. Helsinki Watch firmly refutes the charge that rape was de rigueur in this war.

#### LOWERING THE BOOM

Nonetheless, the severest of sanctions were brought down on a shrunken Yugoslavia to the east. In the spring of 1992, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 757, a sanctions vote rushed through by the U.S. delegation two days before an awaited UN report would certify that Belgrade was in full compliance with demands that all federal troops withdraw from Bosnia. The World Court had also just ruled that Yugoslavia was not the aggressor in the Bosnian conflict. Resolution 757 banned all exports and imports, including oil; froze all assets; banned all financial contacts and international travel; and suspended all scientific and cultural exchanges, including sports. Noncombatant Yugoslavia became the first country ever to be expelled from the United Nations. In late 1992, a full naval blockade shut down shipping on the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, affecting 74,000 vessels. A no-fly zone, along with the blockade, was enforced by the U.S. Sixth Fleet. These measures cost at least seven neighboring countries billions in lost trade. The West, in fact, now controlled all of Serbia's border crossings and communications, along with the airspace and waterways. In December, Yugoslavia received the dubious affront of being expelled from the International Monetary Fund, just in time for Christmas.

On the day sanctions were levied, George Bush declared a U.S. state of emergency. He announced, "The grave events in Serbia and Montenegro constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States." Our foreign policy was obviously going to hell in a handbasket, but how a penniless rump 4,000 miles away could possibly threaten our national security defies explanation. Serbias' per capita income had declined to \$700 per year. Unemployment was 60%. Inflation was a phenomenal 363 quadrillion percent (that's 15 zeros). Once stewards of the finest health care system in southern Europe, Serbs now endured a 37% increase in infectious fatalities. Their caloric intake had fallen 28% (NATO in the Balkans, Becker, p.121).

Just how strategic the Balkans are to the U.S. military was revealed in a New York Times opinion piece (11/9/92). Former Air Force Chief-of-Staff Michael Dugan revealed the plan for U.S.-NATO expansion eastward toward the Caucasus and stated, "A win in the Balkans would establish U.S. leadership in the post-Cold War world in a way that Operation Desert Storm [the initial bombing of Iraq] never could." Soon Madeline Albright, then ambassador to the UN, visited wartorn Sarajevo and declared, "Your future and America's future are inseparable!"

## COVERT OPS

In the second year of the Bosnian and Croatian civil wars, a unique and mysterious type of Pentagon contractor set up shop in the Balkans. Incorporated as "a private military company" in Virginia, Military Professional Resources, Inc. (MPRI) is a collection of former Pentagon top-brass, retired generals, mostly. A map on their Website shows Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Macedonia as their major foci. Throughout 1993, MPRI trained, outfitted, and heavily armed the nascent armies of Bosnia and Croatia. This was clandestine work; NATO would not enter its first-ever active combat (over Bosnia) for yet another year. Six MPRI retired brass, in violation of a UN ceasefire, planned and provided air cover for Izetbegovic's offensive against the liberal Muslim opposition in Bihac in 1994. This was reported by newspapers in Britain, France, and Germany but not in the U.S. MPRI then moved quietly across the border to again plan, prepare for, and provide the airstrikes in Croatia's massive ethnic cleansing of nearly 200,000 Serbs from Krajina in August 1995 (The Progressive, 8/26/99). MPRI's business in the Balkans had just begun. We will hear of them again in relation to the KLA and Kosovo in Parts III and IV of this series.

The Croatian war, itself costing 10,000 lives, gradually faded from the news. The Vance-Owen peace plan basically took hold there. But President Clinton opted against Vance-Owen for Bosnia and U.S. bombers pummeled Bosnian Serb positions 4,000 times in 1995 "to hasten peace." Finally, in November, with 150,000 NATO troops stationed throughout the Balkans, far outside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's chartered boundaries of defense, the Dayton Accord partitioned Bosnia, rewrote its constitution in Ohio, and appointed foreign administrators. As Lonely Planet's 1999 guidebook on "Eastern Europe" so accurately describes, "Bosnia-Herzegovina is essentially ruled by the West."

Researcher Sara Flounders of the International Action Center, in "Bosnia Tragedy" (1995), claimed that: "U.S. involvement in the Balkans is not about helping any of the people in the region -- Muslims, Croats, Serbs, or Albanians. The only interest of the Pentagon is in creating weak, dependent puppet regimes in order to dominate the entire region economically and politically. Only the giant multinational corporations will benefit."

Is that sad prognosis true? There is more evidence to ponder. Part III of "Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?" examines whether the new nations within old Bosnia are functional under the Dayton Accord. Why did massive aerial bombardment nearly devour spring last year in Europe? What are the roots of Kosovo's conflict and why did a massive Gandhian peace movement fail to deter another civil war? Stay tuned.

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Part III

November 1999

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PAX AMERICANA

(Sidebar to Part III)

Dayton Accords rule Nuevo Bosnia:

LESSONS FOR KOSOVO

The U.S.-brokered Dayton Accords, which ended the Bosnian civil war late in 1995, created a pair of odd, not-quite-nations. Bosnian Serbs received the territory their forces had been fighting for, a crenelated, saddlebags-shaped area from which most Muslims had fled or been driven. The Republika Srpska (or RS) is roughly half of the original Bosnia. The American-forged alliance of Bosnian Croats and Muslims was allocated the other half, named The Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina (or BH). The Muslim-Croat federation was also granted a permanent two-thirds majority in the joint Parliament of BH/RS.

Dayton stipulates that refugees on either side of the partition boundary should return home. Few feel safe in doing so. Two million persons remain displaced, inside and outside Bosnia. The wounds of war are slow to heal. Dayton's refugee-return proviso also applies to Croatia. 600,000 ethnic Serbs are homeless, destitute and scattered throughout Serbia, driven from Croatia in 1995 (or having fled from Bosnia and now Kosovo). But Croatia has refused to repatriate non-Croat refugees, accord or no accord.

The constitution of BH/RS was crafted in Ohio by non-Bosnian negotiators, without the constitutional assembly of, nor ratification by the people it is intended to govern. The UN-appointed High Representative (the country's chief administrator), is not a native and the Foreign Minister is American. Call Dayton a "designer peace plan," by which its Western framers intended Bosnians to recover and thrive. But the nation of BH/RS "is a vast zoo of international organizations falling over each other," reports a Brussels diplomat. Why?

The currency throughout "liberated Yugoslavia" is now the deutschmark. The International Monetary Fund appoints a governor of the Bosnian Central Bank (who is not Bosnian). The Bank cannot extend credit to its citizens until 2001. So the federation/republic cannot manage its reconstruction via independent economic development, although the region is rich in coal, iron, bauxite, manganese, copper,

chromium, lead, and zinc. (Amoco and other western concerns mine these minerals today.) The European Union Development Bank runs all postal, energy, communications and transportation services in "the new Bosnia."

Since pacification, many western investor-owned companies have set up shop in BH/RS, where post-war citizens work for low wages. Many once-vigorous state and worker-owned industries have been liquidated, erasing most traces of "market socialism." Soon after Dayton was signed, U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown led a junket of 35 investment bankers, American CEOs, government and CIA officials to war-ravaged Croatia and Bosnia. Their helicopter crashed near the border, killing all on board and leaving "many unanswered questions" concerning "unspoken pressures," in the words of The New York Times (4/6/96). The heads of Riggs International, AT&T, Parsons Corporation, and Bechtel died, apparently scouting for corporate bonanzas.

But bonanzas are difficult to sustain in the western Balkan "designer" republics. The New York Times reported last August that Volkswagen and other internationals, disappointed by government corruption, lack of productivity and workers' low morale, may pull out of BH/RS. The ubiquitous McDonald's has refused to venture there. An American "anti-fraud unit" reports up to \$1 billion in international aid stolen or appropriated by Bosnian officials and bankers. The government in Sarajevo borrows from The World Bank to make pension payments. The Croatian mafia imports the country's oil and gas, untaxed of course. The judicial system is overwhelmed; in Tuzla alone, there is a backlog of 30,000 cases of organized and violent crime.

Trying to whip that far-off place into shape, USAID is attempting to seize the assets of entrepreneurial companies behind on their loan payments. The High Representative has dismissed 15 democratically elected officials suspected of corruption or has prevented them from taking office in the first place. UN mission chief Jacques Klein opined, "Dayton stopped the violence but did not end the war... Bosnia and Hercegovina is a patient on life support." 34,000 armed NATO troops remain its police force. The New York Times complained that Muslim, Croat, and Serb nationalists "keep Bosnia rigidly partitioned into three antagonistic enclaves," yet the Accords created those enclaves, calling only for "eventual unity." Obviously the road from partition to unity is fraught with logistic challenges. This does not bode well for Kosovo, where NATO and Western administrators now, likewise, run the show.

[End Sidebar]

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Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?  
Part III

## BOMBS OVER KOSOVO!

NATO's bombardment of what remains of Yugoslavia consumed 11 weeks of springtime last year and directly killed over 5,000 people. Many were soldiers, the rest civilians, including Kosovars the bombing was supposed to save. 2,000 civilians were killed beyond Kosovo in Serbia and Montenegro. 33,000 American-led sorties dropped 19,200 tons of explosives on, among other targets, 300 elementary schools, a dozen health care facilities, and four of the most biodiverse national parks in the world. Thousands of pounds of unspent explosives were jettisoned into the Adriatic Sea by bombers returning to base in Italy.

With refineries, petrochemical plants, and generating stations being prime targets of NATO, a black cloud laced with phosgene, heavy metals, PCBs, various chlorides, and hydrofluoric acid lingered over Serbia for weeks (Sylvia Poggioli, National Public Radio). A 12-mile long toxic oil slick oozed down the Danube, through four countries, into the Black Sea (Der Spiegel, 5/3/99). \$64 billion in damage was done to Yugoslavia at a cost of \$3 billion to NATO allies. The \$58 million reconstruction package allotted Kosovo by the world's eight wealthiest nations amounts to less than America's expense for one day's bombing (Blood Rites, Barbara Ehrenrich, 1999). Aid, of course, is offered Kosovo alone; Serbia "does not deserve reconstruction while Slobodan Milosevic is President of Yugoslavia" (G8 Summit, Cologne, 6/19/99).

## GREATER ALBANIA OR SERB HEARTLAND?

What sorrows in the history of Kosovo led to the exodus, under duress of NATO air war, of nearly a million ethnic Albanians, from March to June, 1999? Kosovo, in southern Serbia, is the cradle of Serb culture and identity. Ancient monasteries and nunneries of the Serbian Orthodox Church are there. During World War II, Nazi and Fascist occupiers of the Balkans administered Albania and neighboring Kosovo as one unit. A "Greater Albania" was promised sympathizers as reward for complicity with the Hitlerites. After the Partisans, led by Marshal Tito, expelled the Axis powers from the Peninsula in 1941, the province of Kosovo reverted to Serbia. But that dream of a Greater Albania, for some, never died.

Strategically, Kosovo is rich in coal and gas. Tito encouraged Albanian migration up into Kosovo, his objective being to integrate and mix well the various nationalities of Yugoslavia, thereby discouraging racist or separatist tendencies. But Tito's Kosovo policy failed to create parity. He did not anticipate the consequences of neighboring Albania's perennial poverty, the porous border, and Muslim families' higher average birthrate (six births per mother). By 1990, 85% of Kosovo was ethnic Albanian and 15% were Roma (gypsies) and ethnic Serbs.

Another contributor to population imbalance in Kosovo is decades of harassment of the Serb minority by certain factions of Albanian society. Serbs have been victims of murder, rape, robbery, and industrial sabotage (National Catholic Reporter, 6/18/99). The intimidation is intended to drive Serbs out of Kosovo. Indeed, between 1966 and 1989,

130,000 Serbs left Kosovo for good. The New York Times quoted a Kosovar official in 1982 explaining the harassment's objective is "an ethnically clean Albanian republic and merger to form a greater Albania." For the next seven years, the Nexis database attributes to Albanian nationalists each use of the terms "ethnic cleansing" or "ethnically clean." The Times reported in November 1987 that Muslim officials "have manipulated regulations to take land belonging to Serbs... Wells have been poisoned and crops burned... As Slavs flee the protracted violence, Kosovo is becoming an ethnically pure Albanian region."

A foundation for poor relations was laid in 1952 when an Interior Minister and his secret police began terrorizing Kosovars. Tito sacked the minister in 1966 and began to redress the situation. In 1974, a new constitution granted increased autonomy to Kosova (the Albanian spelling will be used interchangeably here). By 1980, a Pristina University professor proclaimed, "Not a single minority in the world has achieved the rights the Albanian nationality enjoys in socialist Yugoslavia!" (New Military Humanism, Chomsky, p.24, 1999) But with Tito's death that year, the situation began to deteriorate. Relations between Muslims and Slavs and Muslims' ties to the Federation grew increasingly strained. Austere debt "restructuring" imposed on Yugoslavia by the International Monetary Fund cut-off most of Belgrade's financial support to Kosova, worsening matters. University riots broke out in 1981 and dozens were killed. In 1982, a twelve-year-old Serb boy was set on fire. In 1985, a Serb policeman was mutilated. In 1987, an Orthodox nunnery was burned down. The Kosova independence movement was heating up.

In 1987, then-Communist Party chair, Slobodan Milosevic, gave a key speech at the most sacred Serbian cultural site in Kosovo, warning that Serbia would never let Kosovo go. That prophetic declaration sent shudders through the Yugoslav republics which, under increased economic duress, were considering looser confederation with, if not separation from, Belgrade. The Kosova resistance remained intransigent and in 1989, Milosevic abolished Kosovo's autonomous status. He fired a hundred thousand ethnic Albanian workers and banned the use of their language in schools. Dozens more died protesting these proscriptions.

#### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

A fascinating twist then developed in the annals of Balkan history: a Gandhian non-violent movement led by Muslim intellectual Ibrahim Rugova. In late 1990, eschewing force, Kosova declared herself independent, although still "within the framework of Yugoslavia." Rugova was elected "President of The Republic of Kosova" with 99% of the Islamic vote. A dozen parallel governmental, educational and medical structures were created for Muslim society. Patriarchal patterns were reexamined and 2,000 "blood feuds" publicly reconciled by 1992. Milosevic tolerated (or ignored) the movement.

In early 1991, the West abruptly recognized the secessions of Slovenia and Croatia, without discussions on the fate of the Serb minorities there. When Muslim Kosova voted for sovereignty, Albania immediately recognized the prospective state. Serbs were skittish and it was hoped they would pull up stakes and migrate north. It may come as a

surprise that the United States -- bombing notwithstanding -- has never advocated Kosova's independence. Montenegro, Greece, and Macedonia each contain large Albanian minorities. The U.S. has not wished to encourage ethnic Albanian uprisings threatening stability in those states.

But eight years' non-violent action got Albanian Kosovars virtually nowhere in international circles, nor onto the map. They were politely ignored and then betrayed by NATO states. Rugova and delegation were relegated to a side room with TV monitor at a United Nations Balkans crises conference in London (Lessons from Kosovo, Chomsky, p.25, 1999). Neither the Dayton Accords nor Rambouillet (the negotiations preceding recent bombing) offered to legitimize Kosova independence. Only the return of autonomy under Belgrade was ever proposed. "The reward for non-violence was international neglect" (Current History, p.277, 4/99).

Rugova visited Washington in 1993 pleading for mediation of the worsening conflict with the central government. He went away empty-handed and grew retiring in his leadership of the non-violent movement. Rather than maintain the momentum of huge civil demonstrations of the early nineties, Rugova called less frequently for actions. Having guided the creation and sustenance of alternative universities and social services, he stalled expanding independent economic development and nixed possible alternatives to immediate independence, such as phased changes in constitutional status. Popular organizations continued to take non-violent resistance to the streets, right to the bitter end last spring. Students and professors initiated marches joined by hundreds of thousands. Throughout 1997 and 1998, streets would fill with men waving branches and women bearing loaves of bread to Serb refugees from other republics. Sit-ins packed the squares. The example of Gandhi's legendary patience was not lost on the ethnic Albanian peace movement.

#### THE KLA IS BORN

Yet not being included in the Dayton negotiations, where Milosevic represented Serbia, had broken many a pacifist's heart in Kosova. An armed guerrilla movement awaited those who lost patience. Formed from the decades-old Albanian resistance, with roots in large rural clans, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, or UCK in Albanian) grew rapidly. The armed revolt was funded by the Albanian diaspora and through drug dealings. According to the State Department, the KLA controls Afghani heroin routes into Zurich. The guerrillas partly trained with Pentagon contractors, Military Professional Resources, Inc., using weapons transferred from Bosnia in 1996, according to retired Army Colonel David Hackworth in a Fox Network interview. Militant Islamics in Iran and Pakistan also provided early training to the insurgents (A History of Kosovo, Miranda Vickers, 1998). Much of the KLA's armament was gleaned during Albania's social chaos in 1996, when collapsing pyramid schemes wiped out most Albanians' life savings. During the disorder, state armories were opened and pilfered.

KLA/UCK attacks on Serbs in Kosovo began in 1996. Postal workers, forest service employees, municipal police, and ethnic Albanian "traitors" (those who worked cooperatively with Serbs) were targeted. In February, simultaneous bombs went off in

five refugee camps in Kosovo housing victims of the recent cleansing of Krajinan Serbs from Croatia. The KLA, 40,000 strong, controlled a third of Kosova. With another ambush of Serbian police, the Yugoslav federal government decided to go to war. Fighting began near villages assumed sympathetic to the KLA. These rural areas swapped hands repeatedly as federal and guerrilla forces ebbed and surged.

In 1998, 10,000 Serbian Interior police (later the notorious "ethnic cleansers" during NATO bombing) entered the fray. Still, U.S. envoy Robert Gelbard declared the KLA "without any question a terrorist group." Milosevic apparently interpreted Washington's opinion as a green light to vanquish the rebels. A 50-person massacre among the Jashari clan, a "roots" family of the KLA, ignited a general uprising in the countryside. Summer saw villages torched in Serb offensives, but KLA territory gradually increased.

In October 1998, the U.S. arranged a ceasefire. Serb troops withdrew a prescribed distance; the zone was to remain demilitarized. But KLA forces advanced and resupplied these positions within hours. The breaking point came on January 15, when 45 ethnic Albanians were killed, apparently by Serb forces in the village of Recak, "at a time when human rights violations were occurring on both sides" (The New Yorker, 5/10/99). Threatened with NATO bombing, the belligerents came to the table at Rambouillet, France, beginning two months of deliberations. The agenda: Where do we go from here?

#### THE ELEVENTH HOUR

Washington's proposed answer resembled more an ultimatum to Yugoslavia than a peace plan. It mandated immediate withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Kosovo. Milosevic agreed. It demanded the return of Kosova autonomy. Again, Milosevic agreed. However, Rambouillet did not provide for a UN presence in Kosovo. Milosevic balked. Washington's proposal instead allowed NATO military occupation of the entire country. Appendix B, paragraph 8, reads: "NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and access throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including associated airspace and territorial waters."

Yugoslavia accepted all stipulations of Rambouillet except this last demand. No sovereign nation would agree to such capitulation. The Yugoslav constitution states: "No person possesses the right to accept the occupation of Yugoslavia." A Senate foreign policy aide revealed that "a senior Administration official told media at Rambouillet, under embargo, 'We intentionally set the bar too high for the Serbs to comply. They need some bombing and that's what they're going to get' " (Jim Jatras, Cato Institute address, 5/18/99). The press corps dutifully complied with the request that it not report that the "peace initiative" was rigged. Rambouillet was intentionally designed to be unacceptable to Belgrade and was therefore intended to precipitate bombing.

The American press also failed to inform the American people of a key, eleventh-hour initiative of the Yugoslav National Assembly to head off bombardment the night before the war began. Late on March 23, the Assembly approved a ten-page resolution requesting immediate return of UN monitors to Serbia (and therefore Kosovo) "to

facilitate a peaceful diplomatic settlement." The resolution promised Kosova full autonomy with comprehensive guarantees of human rights. News of the legislature's desperate resolution went out on wire services worldwide, but received no coverage in the national press here. Americans awoke to the news on March 24 that the bombing of Yugoslavia had begun "because Milosevic refused to accept...or even discuss an international peacekeeping plan" at Rambouillet (New York Times, 3/24/99).

NEXT TIME: CIVILIANS TAKE THE FLAK ONCE AGAIN. The lucrative illegality of war, and Kosovo's effect on the community of nations. Why did the bombing not end sooner? And where in this world are NATO and the U.S headed?-- all in the fourth installment of "Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?"

-- Kathryn Albrecht, educated in the hot-bed of the Sixties at UCLA.

Last update 3/2003

Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?

By Kathryn Albrecht

Part IV

December 1999

"ETHICAL" AIR WAR SHOCKS THE WORLD

Socialist Serbia, geostrategically positioned between Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the Mediterranean states, has never committed an act of foreign aggression. Yet its decade-long chastisement by the West resumed with a vengeance on March 24, 1999. Under the guise of "humanitarian intervention" in the province of Kosovo, American-flown NATO jets attacked. A CIA insider proclaimed, "Everything in the country is a target."

Once bombardment began, it developed a momentum all its own. Milosevic "cried Uncle" numerous times and was consistently ignored. On March 29, his Prime Minister appeared on Russian TV declaring, "Yugoslavia is prepared to resume talks on the Kosovo province if NATO calls off air strikes." Bombing intensified. On April 7, Milosevic requested a ceasefire for Orthodox Easter. Request denied. Jesse Jackson secured the release of three captured American servicemen and suggested Yugoslavia be rewarded with a ceasefire. Bombing intensified the next day. In May, 11 U.S. Congressmen met with Russian Duma members and representatives from Belgrade. The Serbs said they were "ready to deal." NATO ignored the opening. German voters, as NATO constituents, approved a referendum calling for a halt to bombing. U.S. pilots answered by flying 900 sorties the following day.

Before the bombing, U.S. and British intelligence agents trained the KLA (ethnic Albanian rebels) to guide NATO "smart bombs" to their targets (Covert Action Quarterly, Diana Johnstone, Summer 1999). Throughout the air war, the Yugoslav army vigorously sought, among other objectives, to neutralize the KLA's ability to coordinate the bombing of Kosovo. Refugees flooded out of the province and onto television screens worldwide. In some cases, Serb troops forced the evacuations. But the editor of the military journal NATO Nations acknowledged: "Increasingly, evidence is accumulating that NATO action unleashed the major ejection of refugees and most of the massacres" (International Herald Tribune, Frederick Bonnart, 6/28/99). Predictable charges of Serb rape were made by President Clinton. But Dr. Richard Munz, a surgeon serving in the Macedonian refugee camp, told the German daily Die Welt that he encountered "not a single case of rape" among the 60,000 ethnic Albanians there.

Late in April, the House of Representatives refused to authorize a wider war. Despite relentless lobbying by the White House and Democratic leaders and the call-up of 30,000 reservists, a close vote precluded the use of American ground troops in Kosovo, making de-escalation inevitable. NATO's actions were being condemned around the globe. The governments of Greece and Italy, both NATO states, formally protested continued bombing. Macedonia refused NATO the use of its airspace. The Nation magazine criticized "NATO's careless, cowardly war!" Headlines across Europe revealed dissent. "The European Union Died in Kosovo" (Le Monde). "First War of Globalization" (Financial Times). The most chilling analysis came from The Guardian Weekly early in May: "There is little sign that voters or governments understand the long-term consequences of the West's assuming responsibility for the Balkans. It means rearmament in Europe ... the close of a decade of delusion."

Secretary of State Madeline Albright's mentor, Georgetown's Dean of Foreign Service, Peter Krogh, broke with his protegee over this war. He told the Wall Street Journal in May, "I cannot recall a time when our foreign policy was in less competent hands... It is a policy of sermons and sanctimony accompanied by the brandishing of Tomahawks." If Albright was stung by this reproach, she could take comfort in her supportive relationship with Senate hawk Jesse Helms. Time magazine described their friendship as "kinship, a bond" ("Madeline's War," 5/15/99).

#### ABOVE INTERNATIONAL LAW?

The outcry against bombing Yugoslavia was all the louder because myriad U.S. and international laws were flouted by the action. Aside from infringing the Constitution, Article I, Section 8, which limits the President's power to make war without the advice and consent of Congress, Clinton violated the War Powers Act, which bans the commitment of American forces longer than 60 days without consent of Congress. NATO violated its own charter and the North Atlantic Treaty, the Nuremberg Convention, the Hague Convention of 1949, and the Stockholm Declaration of 1972. However, during its 50th anniversary gala in Washington last April, NATO amended its Charter, codifying two fundamental changes: NATO is no longer "a defensive

organization" and now gives itself permission to strike outside its "sphere of influence" (Alliance Strategic Concept and Defense Capabilities Initiative, 4/25/99). The Balkans are, *prima facie*, an "out of area" theater for NATO.

The illegalities abound. The Geneva Convention prohibits destroying civilian infrastructure such as water supply, among principal targets in Serbia proper. Eight articles of the United Nations Charter and the General Assembly "Declaration of Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States" were run over roughshod. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (in spite of the war being trumpeted as "humanitarian intervention") rounds out a list of violations four pages long, prepared by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Additionally, two types of weapons used in the bombing are illegal under international law: cluster bombs and weapons tipped with depleted uranium (DU). Suspected of being a chief cause of Gulf War Syndrome, DU (developed by Nazis as an anti-tank weapon) was first used by the U.S. against Iraq. Its active ingredient is known to cause, among other maladies, leukemia, encephalitis, lung cancer, and birth defects. DU bombs are outlawed by UN General Assembly Resolution 96. A cluster bomb, whose 202 colorful "bomblets" resemble children's parachute toys, has a 5% unexploded dud rate. An estimated 10,000 lethal bomblets litter Yugoslavia today. Geneva, Hague, and Nuremberg ban such ordnance.

Extraordinary misfortune, of course, transpired throughout the 78 days of NATO air raids. The death of civilians became commonplace. They were eviscerated on bridges, on trains and buses loaded with refugees, at campsites where laser-guided bombs found them. Four hundred times more ethnic Albanians fled Kosova during the bombing than fled two years of Serb/KLA civil war beforehand. Six of the seven alleged massacres in the war crimes indictment of Milosevic occurred after bombing began. Perhaps 2,000 Muslims, mostly male, lost their lives. Yet at war's end in June, the U.S. claimed over 10,000 had been murdered. Why the large discrepancy?

#### WHO'S COUNTING?

The source of the distortion appears to be the KLA. The Trepca mines, where KLA promised the discovery of 700 bodies, contained none whatsoever. A grave in Ljubenic, said to contain 350, held seven corpses. The satellite image of purported freshly-dug tombs at Pusto Selo was not of graves after all. No mass graves were located at Izbica or Kraljan nor at Klina, where 328 were supposedly massacred. But a grave of 22 civilians was discovered at Klecka -- Serbians killed by KLA. They don't count. Thirty-six ethnic Albanian "Serb sympathizers" were shot by KLA and thrown into the Radonjic canal. Neither do those bodies "count" for Tribunal purposes. Pacifica Radio's Jeremy Skahill reported that two municipal employees told him the mass grave located in their jurisdiction contained the bodies of 40 Serb and KLA soldiers, killed in uniform in a firefight, whom the municipal workers had themselves buried. Yet they refused to tell this to Tribunal investigators for fear of retribution by the KLA. Better for world opinion if the dead are "Serb-massacred civilians".

Throughout last summer and fall, forensic experts from 15 countries combed Kosovo for the dead. Genocide is difficult to conceal; in Germany, Cambodia, and Rwanda massacres left massive, undeniable evidence. But half of Kosovo's reported graves have

been exhumed and the body count is "disappointingly" low, under 1,000. Since the "most promising" sites were excavated first, investigators now expect to find less than 2,000 Kosovar dead, and many of those from bombing raids. (Toronto Star, Richard Gwyn, "No Genocide, No Justification for War on Kosovo," 11/3/99)

Los Angeles Times correspondent Paul Watson stole back into Kosovo after bombing began and the press was expelled. The only Western journalist to experience the entire bombardment (on the receiving end), Watson recalls: "I was able to reach all of Kosovo's main cities and towns. I saw a much more complicated picture than the one relayed by refugees fleeing across the border... I lived with constant fear of my own country and its allies, and festering doubts about their claim to the moral high ground... It seemed like calling a plumber to fix a leak and watching him flood the house... No independent witnesses ever managed to see Serb atrocities... Even in Kosovo, I couldn't escape the sound of [NATO spokesman Jamie] Shea's voice on satellite TV, denying things I knew to be true, insisting on others I had seen were false". (L.A. Times, "A Witness to War," 6/20/99)

The western world is primed for the vilification of Belgrade only. This mass-mailed funding appeal from Amnesty International must have proved lucrative during the war. "URGENT: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF HORRIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES WILL...BRING THE GUILTY TO JUSTICE IN THE HAGUE... THESE ARE CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY!...AMNESTY'S PRESENCE IN THE BALKANS...IS PUTTING A SEVERE STRAIN ON OUR BUDGET. PLEASE HELP!"

#### HAND OVER FIST

Others cashed in on Kosovo as well. Midpoint in the war, Boeing stock hit a 52-week high. Shares of British Aerospace gained 43% during the bombing (Santa Fe Council on International Relations). NBC, which lavishly covered the war, is owned by General Electric, who builds NATO jet engines. And the newest members of NATO, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary are now required to invest \$10 billion in NATO jets. Call it "membership dues." No surprise that the CEO of Lockheed Martin sits on the NATO Expansion Committee.

All this prosperity does not come cheap. On June 4, the day the Kosovo Peace Plan was signed, Congress granted Bill Clinton the \$112 billion he requested "to pay for our part in this war." Republicans were feeling magnanimous that day and threw in an extra \$37 billion. This \$149 billion will come, not from the touted "budget surplus," but from domestic spending cuts, because the Balanced Budget "firewall" (protecting domestic programs from military spending increases) was dismantled by companion legislation. American health, education, and welfare took across-the-board 11% cuts. The next six years will see these programs shrink by 20% to 30%. (Richard Becker, International Action Committee, 7/31/99).

Meantime, wages in Serbia proper fell from \$100 per month to \$50 per month during the war. Belgrade halted pension payments, but managed to make food available. This

winter, Yugoslavia surpassed Albania as the poorest nation in Europe. It has been a long fall to the bottom. Serbian officials announced the establishment last July of a reconstruction fund of but \$4.3 million. When the International Criminal Tribunal garnished the supposed assets of Milosevic and four cronies in Swiss banks, no assets were uncovered. (The Tribunal is in no way associated with the International Court of Justice, or World Court, also located in The Netherlands.)

#### TREACHEROUS TRUCE

As the war wound down in early June, hundreds more died during three last days of carpet bombing after the Peace Plan was signed, but before the Allies' fury was spent. At issue, delaying the cease fire, was President Milosevic's insistence that the United Nations, not NATO alone, take part in the administration of Kosovo, as promised in said Plan. Washington had secretly abrogated that clause and finally only vaguely restored it. (New Military Humanism, Chomsky, p.127, 1999)

"KFOR" (Kosovo Force) now occupies Kosovo. With 50,000 NATO personnel, it is the largest military operation in Europe since World War II. However, KFOR has been unable to wrest control of the province from the Kosovo Liberation Army, although the Peace Plan calls for the KLA to disarm. The Yugoslav federal army withdrew ahead of schedule, but as the deadline passed for the KLA to surrender their weapons, they were openly importing more, right in front of KFOR border guards. (Albuquerque Journal, 6/18 and 6/19/99) Besieged by murder, arson and beatings, including the massacre of 14 wheat-harvesting Serb farmers in the village of Gracko in July, over three-quarters (200,000) of Kosovo's resident Serbs have fled, mostly into impoverished Serbia. A study published by Human Rights Watch identifies the KLA as chief perpetrators in the "postwar" killing of over 400 Roma and ethnic Serbs. Other estimates tally the Serb dead at over 700. (Boston Herald, 2/23/00)

Thousands of Serbs remaining in Kosovo are trapped in ghettos inside two perimeters, the first guarded by KFOR, the outer manned by armed KLA. At Orahovac, where the KLA marched in right alongside KFOR in June, 3,000 Serb and Roma civilians were detained for over seven months in a cramped compound. Water, food, electricity, telephone, medical and mail services were severely rationed and no one was allowed to leave (Orahovac Committee, Amsterdam, Holland). Inside and outside such enclaves, the murder of Serbs remains rampant. (The New Mexican, "Mob Killing/Kosovo," 12/6/99)

Officially, the KLA metamorphosed in September into the Kosovo Protection Corps, or KPC, under UN auspices. Ostensibly "civilian," the KPC was nonetheless trained by Military Professional Resources, Inc., the mercenary Pentagon contractor who organized the purge of Serbs from Croatia in 1995 and then trained the nascent KLA. The KPC's head, Agim Ceku, is under investigation by the International Criminal Tribunal for war crimes in Croatia. Five months after the KLA's metamorphosis, UN Secretary Kofi Annan has received an official report that the KPS is involved in "killings, torture, intimidation, and hate speech" against minorities in Kosovo. (The London Observer, 3/12/00)

## WHITHER CAPITALIST EXPANSION?

President Clinton's succinct definition of American military priorities at the turn of the millennium is reflected in a statement he made as bombing began: "It's globalism versus tribalism." But surely, the current of U.S. foreign policy runs deeper than that. So much money, so many lives, such great sensitivities are at stake. (Recall China's outrage after its Belgrade embassy was cluster-bombed.) Is there a method to this madness?

There is, in fact, clear evidence that the U.S. and NATO are moving toward Eastern Europe and beyond the Caucasus, into former Soviet southern Asia. Why attempt dominance there? The world's greatest untapped reserve of oil lies beneath Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, bordering the Caspian Sea. Along with rich natural gas deposits, Kazakhstan contains an estimated 10,000 tons of gold. Exxon, Texaco, and Amoco are busy prospecting, but the route of an oil pipeline has not been firmly determined. China signed contracts to pump the oil eastward. But the West plans to locate the pipeline terminus in Turkey. Kurdish territory, so viciously disputed there, lies along the way.

If Russia is seen as a geopolitical obstacle, access to the Black Sea through the Bosphorus must be assured. Dominance over the Balkan states, linking the Rhine-Danube river system and the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas, would guarantee Western access to Transcaucasia and her riches. Retired Army General William Odom, head of the National Security Agency under Reagan, affirmed at the time of the Dayton Accords that NATO occupation of the Balkans is part of a plan for U.S. domination of Europe and the former Soviet Union. He described the entire strategy as securing the resources of the Caspian Sea and "stabilizing, ultimately, Russia". (New York Times, 12/5/95)

Although the United States threatens several nuclear-armed states in this quest, the U.S. military is larger than the next sixteen greatest powers combined. With 300,000 troops abroad, new bases have been established in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Macedonia. Seeing the writing on the wall, Romania, Bulgaria, and Azerbaijan, seek NATO membership. Yugoslavia has held out against quixotic capitalist/military expansion. Now that ties to collective identity throughout the Balkans are effectively unraveled, the transformation of all of Yugoslavia into an American military outpost appears inevitable.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor under Carter, recently wrote: "America's emergence as the sole global superpower makes a comprehensive strategy for Eurasia imperative... The task is to insure that no state or combination of states gains the ability to expel the U.S. or diminish its decisive role" (Crimes of War, Gutman & Rieff, 1999). Countering this hegemonic worldview is Dennis Kucinich, Croat-American Congressman from Ohio, writing in the August issue of *The Progressive*: "One lesson I learned [from Kosovo] is that Congress must reclaim its authority to declare war... Another lesson is that the peace movement must reassert itself."

-- by Kathryn Albrecht

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Whatever Happened to Yugoslavia?

By Kathryn Albrecht

Part V

May 2000

Mass Expulsion of Serbs Continues in Kosovo

One year ago this month, the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia was proceeding full-bore. Throughout May, bombing of the countryside intensified. Maternity wards, elementary schools, villagers out for a Sunday stroll — no effort was spared to bring the Yugoslav government to its knees. The air war lasted 10 days longer than the Nazi blitz of London.

Such destruction was wrought in order to "halt ethnic cleansing" in the province of Kosovo, where a struggle over secession had dragged on. The exodus of ethnic Albanians, so thoroughly documented on Western television, coincided precisely with the bombing. Unreported was the fact that, as a percentage of the prewar population, proportionately more minority Serbs fled Kosovo during the bombardment than did ethnic Albanians. Everyone was fleeing the bombs.

At armistice, the federal army surrendered the heartland of Serbia to 40,000 NATO troops (the Kosovo Force or KFOR). The recently-televised refugees and half a million fresh Albanian immigrants, plus countless humanitarian organizations, the UN Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK), and the Kosovo Liberation Army en masse flooded into Kosovo. Conversely, Kosovo's remaining ethnic Serbs, along with Roma (gypsies), Jews, Torbesh Turks, Slavic Muslims, the Ashkali minority, and dissident ethnic Albanian moderates began exiting Kosovo on pain of death. 300,000 such Kosovars are now displaced. Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia proper house most of the refugees under pressing conditions. (Serbia and Montenegro languish under embargo.)

The Kosovo Liberation Army has metamorphosed, by UN decree, into the Kosovo Protection Corps, or KPC — a supposedly unarmed civilian "guard." But a February UN report charged the KLA/KPC with the post-war murders of over 800 Kosovar Serb civilians and their neighbors (London Observer, 3/12/00). Over 700 victims are missing, while more than 600 have been wounded in attacks. The report lists dozens of Serbian Orthodox churches and cemeteries destroyed since KFOR arrived in June. Hence, the

reverse ethnic cleansing, if you will, of Kosovo's minorities. Stragglers remain virtually ghettoized in enclaves heavily guarded by KFOR against KLA attack.

Why are thousands of NATO peacekeepers impotent in restoring order and the rule of law to Kosovo? Perhaps it is the very armored nature of this force — its tanks and personnel carriers, the new Camp Bondsteel — America's 755-acre base near Pristina, beyond whose perimeter troops venture in riot gear. Perhaps the problem is Kosovo's judiciary, lately excised from the federal legal system and packed with secessionist appointees. None dare prosecute ethnic Albanian human rights abusers, lest judges end up in a ditch face-down, victims of the familiar retribution of the KLA/KPC. A UNMIK spokeswoman admits, "We made a mistake. It turned out that local judges, because of intimidation and threat, have not been able to operate" (Newsday, 4/2/00).

Yes, it's wild over there on the frontier. But the KPC (nee KLA) are determined revolutionaries born of age-old clans who rule the porous borderlands of southern Kosovo where Albania and Serbia meet. A Greater Albania, "cleansed" of Slavs and other minorities, has been their dream since the Nazi/Fascist era gripped the Balkans over 50 years ago. NATO became the ideal enabler of KLA aspirations — vanquishing the Yugoslav military, prying loose Belgrade's hold on its province and turning a blind eye to the exodus of terrorized Serbs and other dissidents.

UNMIK chose KLA hero Agim Ceku to lead the freshly-organized KPC. But Ceku is under investigation by the War Crimes Tribunal concerning atrocities committed in Croatia between 1993 and 1995. Ceku's troops and Military Professional Resources, Inc. (MPRI), a Pentagon contractor, carried out the thorough expulsion of 200,000 Krajinan Serbs from Croatia in the summer of 1995. 15,000 Serbs were murdered in the operation, which utilized American air cover and naval support. The refugees are still encamped and destitute throughout the Balkans. KFOR will not risk KLA reprisals by arresting Ceku. A diplomat confided that any indictment will "most likely be sealed and kept out of the public domain" (London Times, 10/10/99). And MPRI now has the contract to train the KPC.

Professor of Economics Michel Chossudovsky, University of Ottawa, observes, "The U.S. and its allies have worked through the UN to install a paramilitary government with links to organized crime. The outcome is the outright criminalisation of State institutions in Kosovo."

Why set heroin-smuggling thugs (Mother Jones, Jan./Feb.'00) as despots over a shattered Balkans backwater? In a word: money. Throughout the former republics of Yugoslavia, the West has eagerly opened "free markets" to multinational corporations. If the KPC eventually imposes some semblance of order on "liberated" Kosovo, through intimidation or otherwise, Serbia's heartland can be opened to global capital. In exchange? Ethnic Albanians will one day, with the support of G.I.s from Camp Bondsteel, inherit an independent Kosovo. It's on the agenda, folks; the consideration, within three years, of Kosovo independence was written into the Accord ending the bombing last June.

Kosovo appears in American newspapers rarely now, but there was one fracas this winter which made headlines for days. Mitrovica is a northern city bordering Serbia proper. Multi-ethnicity has survived there. Thousands of ethnic Serbs and dissident Muslims fleeing the perilous south co-exist in the predominantly Serb part of town across the Ibar River. On February 2, a rocket hit a UN bus in Mitrovica, killing two Serb civilians on board. Typical KLA stunt. (UNMIK and KFOR insist they cannot guarantee the safety of Serbs in transit. No military escorts are provided those attempting to leave Kosovo or seeking medical attention, the two chief reasons Serbs move about.) Riots broke out. French KFOR troops set up a barricade at the bridge over the Ibar, separating the refugees from the traditionally-Albanian side of town. The KLA emerged and opened fire on French troops. Fire was returned; a KLA gunman was killed and two French soldiers wounded. The French arrested 45 ethnic Albanians and one Serb.

Western governments and press bristled that the French favor the Serbs. The French commander responded that he favors reclaiming the peace. The State Department announced, illogically, that Slobodan Milosevic was to blame. KFOR contingents from elsewhere rushed to Mitrovica and built a footbridge for the exclusive use of ethnic Albanians desiring to cross without French scrutiny.

This could be the clearest indication yet of the North Atlantic alliance fraying over conflicting concepts of "keeping peace" in Europe. Footnote: On February 15, the French seized a KLA ambulance near the Ibar bridge, packed with weapons: 14 rocket launchers, 180 grenades, and 3000 rounds of ammunition. Indeed, the KLA has been raiding Albanian-majority villages in Serbia proper, with the apparent aim of spreading the revolution.

Why was Mitrovica a flashpoint? Ah, the Trepca mines, richest piece of real estate in the Balkans! Mitrovica is a "company town" (hence, multi-ethnic) and gateway to a vast complex of forty mines and factories producing cadmium, coal, copper, gold, lead, silver, and zinc. Owned by Yugoslavia and a Greek concern, securing Trepca tantalizes Albanian nationalists and several Western organizations occupying Kosovo at this time. The mine's director, Novak Bjelic, states, "The war in Kosovo is about the mines, nothing else. This is Serbia's Kuwait" ([www.originalsources.com](http://www.originalsources.com)).

Romans, Turks and later, Nazis coveted Trepca. Why not Western Europe and the United States? Just after the bombing, UNMIK chief Bernard Kouchner decreed: "UNMIK shall administer movable and immovable property of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the territory of Kosovo. KFOR should implement a rapid and categorical takeover of the Trepca complex" ("Taking Over the Mines," Diana Johnstone, 2/28/00).

So with time comes greater understanding of what is transpiring in Yugoslavia. Quelling "ancient ethnic hatreds" simply has not sufficed as rationale for NATO engagement there. Rather, evidence points to U.S. covert instigation of the Kosovo affair. What the State Department claims was a Serb massacre of civilians in the village of Racak in January

1999, appears now to have been a CIA/KLA-coordinated ruse, staged to precipitate NATO's crackdown.

During the ceasefire of autumn 1998, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) officially monitored Kosovo. Madeleine Albright, however, named an American, William Walker, as OSCE chief-of-mission. Walker's entire career had been spent in Latin America. He remained at controversial embassies through the Reagan-Bush years while fellow diplomats rotated, as required by regulation, to other stations around the globe. A stationary embassy employee is understood in the Foreign Service to be a CIA operative.

Walker was deputy chief-of-mission in Honduras throughout formation there of the Contra rebel force which reversed the Nicaraguan revolution. By 1985, he was embroiled in Iran-Contra, illegally funneling Oliver North's procurements to the Contras from a Salvadoran airstrip. In 1988, he became ambassador to El Salvador. When the Salvadoran army massacred six Jesuit priests and their housekeepers, Walker dismissed the assassinations as "management control problems," recommending the U.S. not investigate "past deaths." Ironic, for a man who recently set in motion events sending the U.S. to war in Yugoslavia over an occurrence of "past deaths."

The French newspaper Le Figaro broke the story: 43 Serb-massacred civilians at Racak, lying in a ditch. William Walker observed the scene and declared it "a crime against humanity!" But two days later, Le Figaro retracted their story. Seems the French journalist believes he was duped, along with other reporters who were shown the bodies. Once they compared notes back in Pristina that night, OSCE's version just didn't add up. A reporter from Le Monde had visited Racak the day of the alleged travail and found it calm, uneventful. Journalists also found no witnesses to a massacre, nor blood or shell casings in the trench. The bodies had clearly been moved there some time after death.

Belgrade maintains that the corpses at Racak were killed in a KLA-army firefight the previous day. The Serbian media service had even invited reporters to Racak, anticipating a rout of the KLA which might make good press. Such transparency doesn't jibe with plotting crimes against humanity. But William Walker's pronouncement sealed Serbia's fate. Sabers rattled loudly in Washington. Only the Los Angeles Times acknowledged Le Figaro's retraction stateside: "Racak Massacre Questions: Were Atrocities Faked?"

The London Sunday Times reported March 12, 2000, that American intelligence agents admit training the KLA after infiltrating the ceasefire verification team. The rebels were given satellite telephones, global positioning systems and the mobile phone number of General Wesley Clark. "It was a CIA front," declares one agent. An OSCE monitor complains he was "suckered in." Dynacorps, another Pentagon mercenary contractor from Virginia, coordinated the effort. Even William Walker, when asked in a BBC documentary aired March 12 if the CIA could have been in Kosovo, bragged, "Sure they could. It's their job!" KLA/KPC commander Agim Ceku, with considerably more decorum, added, "The ceasefire was very useful to us. It helped us to get organized, to consolidate and grow."

The Walker/Racak revelations seriously compromise American diplomatic credibility worldwide. So, too, the now-confirmed absence of mass graves in Kosovo. Even the War Crimes Tribunal investigating Yugoslavia has acknowledged, "The allegations of indiscriminate mass murder and rape have not been borne out" (Christian Science Monitor, 12/31/99). So much for the Clinton administration's cause célébré.

Large protests and the repression thereof dogged the President as he "took a victory lap" in November through Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria, ending in Kosovo. Tens of thousands of police insulated Clinton at all times from thousands of protesters who were forbidden to assemble and march in each "democratic" country. Tear gas was employed. Over 400 were arrested. These tactics were intensified the following week when Clinton encountered World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. Rubber bullets accompanied the tear gas and over 600 were jailed in one city. Washington security forces repeated the performance last month during protests of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. So much for our Bill of Rights.

Europe may soon reject the Clintonian vision of its security. Fully a third of NATO members are trading with Belgrade, ignoring U.S.-imposed sanctions. And the European Union began in November developing a Defense Initiative independent of NATO. European military analysts Pavel Felgenhauer and Nebojsa Malic offer disturbing, post-Kosovo observations:

"The people in the Russian military believe sincerely that they need to try to stop the U.S. now, before it goes on a real rampage around the world. That the U.S. is striving for world domination, no one has any doubt." And "The U.S. is trying to consolidate its strength in Kosovo to prepare for further attacks on Yugoslavia, gaining control of the formerly Socialist East and preventing a unified and effectively powerful Europe from emerging." (The Emperor's New Clothes, 2/12/00 & 2/17/00)

Considering that so very few Americans aspire to global empire, let us firmly reassert a populist's vision of world peace.

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