

The War on Yugoslavia 24 years Ago: Milosevic Exonerated by the ICTY, as the NATO War Machine Moves on

By [Neil Clark](#)

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On the 24th of March 2023, the people of Serbia will be commemorating NATO's illegal and criminal invasion of Yugoslavia.

Twenty-four years ago in the early hours of March 24, 1999, NATO began the bombing of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia.

When Belgrade was bombed, the children's hospital was the object of air attacks. It had been singled out by military planners as a strategic target.

The causes and consequences of this war against the people of Yugoslavia have been the object of a vast media disinformation campaign, which has sought to camouflage NATO and US war crimes.

What was US-NATO's Strategic Objective: Undermine and destroy Yugoslavia's "Market Socialism" which ensured free medical care, education, employment and housing. Yugoslavia was considered as a "Success Story" with a higher rate of growth than many Western European countries.

Today, our thoughts are with the People of Yugoslavia whose country was deliberately fragmented and destroyed.

Slobodan Milosevic died in his prison cell at the height of his trial.

That was the official version. The evidence points to assassination.

He was denied the right of "self defense".

The Legacy of Slobodan Milosevic will Live.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, March 19, 2023

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The ICTY's exoneration of the late Slobodan Milosevic, the former President of Yugoslavia, for alleged war crimes committed in the Bosnia war, proves again we should take NATO claims regarding its 'official enemies' not with a pinch of salt, but a huge lorry load.

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For the past twenty odd years, neocon commentators and 'liberal interventionist' pundits have been telling us at every possible opportunity, that Milosevic (a democratically elected leader in a country where over 20 political parties freely operated) was an evil genocidal dictator who was to blame for ALL the deaths in the Balkans in the 1990s. Repeat after me in a robotic voice (while making robotic arm movements): 'Milosevic's genocidal aggression' 'Milosevic's genocidal aggression'.

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But the official narrative, just like the one that told us that in 2003, Iraq had WMDs which could be launched within 45 minutes, was a deceitful one, designed to justify a regime change-op which the Western elites had long desired.

The ICTY's conclusion, that one of the most demonized figures of the modern era was innocent of the most heinous crimes he was accused of, really should have made headlines across the world. But it hasn't. Even the ICTY buried it, deep in its [2,590 page verdict](#) in the trial of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic who was convicted in March of genocide (at Srebrenica), war crimes and crimes against humanity.

There was no official announcement or press conference regarding Milosevic's exoneration. We've got journalist and researcher [Andy Wilcoxson](#) to thank for flagging it up for us.

How very different it all was when the trial of the so-called 'Butcher of the Balkans', began in February 2002! Then, you'd have to have been locked in a wardrobe not to be aware of what was going on.

CNN provided blanket coverage of what was described as *"the most important trial since Nuremberg."*

Of course, Milosevic's guilt was taken as a given.

"When the sentence comes and he disappears into that cell, no one is going to hear from him again," declared US lawyer Judith Armatta from the [Coalition for International Justice](#), an organization which had the former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, as an advisory board member.

Anyone who dared to challenge the NATO line was labeled a *"Milosevic apologist"*, or worse still, a *"genocide denier"*, by 'Imperial Truth Enforcers'.

But amid all the blather and the hype surrounding the 'trial of the century' it soon became apparent the prosecution was in deep, deep trouble. The Sunday Times quoted a legal expert who claimed that *"Eighty percent of the prosecution's opening statements would*

have been dismissed by a British court as hearsay.” That, I believe, was a generous assessment.

The problem was that this was a show trial, one in which geopolitics came before hard evidence. It’s important to remember that the original indictment against Milosevic in relation to alleged Kosovo war crimes/genocide was issued in May 1999, at the height of the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia and at a time when war was not going to plan for the US and its allies.



The indictment was clearly designed to exert pressure on Milosevic to cave into NATO’s demands.

The trouble for NATO was that by the time Milosevic’s trial was due to start, the Kosovo narrative had already unraveled. The lurid claims made by the US and its allies about genocide and hundreds of thousands being killed, catalogued by the great John Pilger [here](#), had been shown to be false. In September 2001, a UN court officially held that there had been [no genocide](#) in Kosovo.

So in an attempt to beef up their weakening case against Milosevic the prosecutors at The Hague had to bring in new charges relating to the war in Bosnia, accusing ‘Slobo’ of being part of a ‘joint criminal conspiracy’ to kill/ethnically cleanse Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims in pursuance of a ‘Greater Serbia’ project.

In normal criminal prosecutions evidence is collected and then, if it’s deemed sufficient, charges are brought. But the opposite happened in the case of Milosevic: he was charged for political reasons and the hunt for evidence then followed.

The irony is that the former Yugoslav President had already been praised by President Clinton for his role in brokering a peace deal in Bosnia in 1995, which was signed in Dayton, Ohio.

The truth is that Milosevic was no hardcore Serb nationalist but a lifelong socialist, whose commitment was always to a multi-racial, multi-ethnic Yugoslavia.

His aim throughout his time in power was not to build a ‘Greater Serbia’, but to try and keep Federal Yugoslavia together, as the ICTY now belatedly acknowledges.

Not only was Milosevic not responsible for ethnic cleansing which took place in Bosnia, he actually spoke out against it. The ICTY noted Milosevic’s *“repeated criticism and disapproval of the policies made by the Accused (Karadzic) and the Bosnian Serb leadership.”* Milosevic, a man for whom all forms of racism were anathema, insisted that all ethnicities must be

protected.

But in order to punish Milosevic and to warn others of the consequences if they dared to oppose US power, history had to be re-written. The pro-Yugoslavia socialist who had opposed the policies of the Bosnian Serb leadership had to be turned, retrospectively, into the villain of the Bosnian War and indeed blamed for all the bloodshed which took place in the Balkans. Meanwhile, the aforementioned US Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, whose malign intervention to scupper a diplomatic solution helped trigger the Bosnian conflict got off scot-free.

The 'Blame it All on Slobo' campaign saw facts simply thrown out of the window. One article, written, I kid ye not, by an Oxford University Professor of European Studies even had Milosevic as leader of Yugoslavia in 1991 (the year that Slovenia broke away). In fact the Bosnian Croat, Ante Markovic, was the leader of the country at the time.

Inevitably, Milosevic was likened to Hitler. *"It was just like watching the evil strutting Adolf Hitler in action,"* wrote the News of the World's political editor, when Milosevic had the temerity to defend himself in court. *"There were chilling flashes of the World War Two Nazi monster as the deposed Serb tyrant harangued the court."*

To make sure readers did get the Milosevic=Hitler point, the News of the World illustrated their diatribe with a picture of Hitler 'The Butcher of Berlin', in front of a concentration camp, with a picture of Milosevic 'The Butcher of Belgrade' superimposed on a picture of an [alleged] Bosnian concentration camp, [which in fact was a refugee camp]

Very conveniently for the prosecution, Milosevic died suddenly in his cell in March 2006.

[There was evidence that he was assassinated. Who was behind his assassination? M.Ch, GR]

Going by what we had seen at the trial up to that point, it's inconceivable that a guilty sentence could have been passed. A whole succession of 'smoking gun' witnesses had turned out to be dampest of damp squibs.

As I noted in an earlier piece:

Star witness Ratomir Tanic was exposed as being in the pay of Western security forces, whilst ex-Yugoslav secret police chief Rade Markovic, the man who was finally going to spill the beans on Milosevic and reveal how his former master had ordered the expulsion of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, in fact did the opposite and testified that he had been tortured to tell lies and that his written statement had been falsified by the prosecution.

In addition, as I noted [here](#), the former head of security in the Yugoslav army, General Geza Farkas (an ethnic Hungarian), testified that all Yugoslav soldiers in Kosovo had been handed a document explaining international humanitarian law, and that they were ordered to disobey any orders which violated it.

Farkas [also said](#) that Milosevic ordered no paramilitary groups should be permitted to operate anywhere in Kosovo.

When Milosevic died, his accusers claimed he had *"cheated justice"*. But in fact, as the ICTY

has now confirmed, the injustice was done to Milosevic.

While he had to defend himself against politically-motivated charges at The Hague, the US and its allies launched their brutal, illegal assault on Iraq, a war which has led to the death of up to one million people. Last year a report from Body Count revealed that at least 1.3 million people had lost their lives as a result of the US-led 'war on terror' in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Those sorts of figures help us get Kosovo into some kind of perspective. Even if we do hold Milosevic and the Yugoslav government responsible for some of the deaths there in 1999, (in a war which the West had clearly [desired and provoked](#)) far, far, greater death and destruction has been caused by the countries who were the keenest to see the President of Yugoslavia in the dock. As John Pilger [noted](#) in 2008, the bombing of Yugoslavia was the "perfect precursor to the bloodbaths in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Since then we've also had the NATO destruction of Libya, the country which had the highest living standards in the whole of Africa and the backing of violent 'rebels' to try and achieve 'regime change' in Syria.

You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to see a pattern here.

Before a US-led war or 'humanitarian intervention' against a targeted state, a number of lurid claims are made about the country's leader and its government. These claims receive maximum media coverage and are repeated ad nauseam on the basis that people will bound to think they're true.

Later it transpires that the claims were either entirely false (like the Iraq WMD ones), unproven, or greatly exaggerated. But the news cycle has moved on focusing not on the exposure of the fraudulent claims made earlier but on the next aggressive/genocidal 'New Hitler' who needs to be dealt with. In 1999 it was Milosevic; now it's Assad and Putin.

And guess what, dear reader? It's the same people who defend the Iraq war and other blood-stained Western military interventions based on lies, unproven claims or great exaggerations, who are the ones doing the accusing.

As that very wise old saying goes: When you point one finger, there are three fingers pointing back to you.

Neil Clark is a journalist, writer, broadcaster and blogger. He has written for many newspapers and magazines in the UK and other countries including The Guardian, Morning Star, Daily and Sunday Express, Mail on Sunday, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, New Statesman, The Spectator, The Week, and The American Conservative. He is a regular pundit on RT and has also appeared on BBC TV and radio, Sky News, Press TV and the Voice of Russia. He is the co-founder of the Campaign For Public Ownership @PublicOwnership. His award winning blog can be found at www.neilclark66.blogspot.com. He tweets on politics and world affairs @NeilClark66

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