

# The US-NATO War of Aggression against Yugoslavia

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*I visited that hospital, one year after the bombing in June 2000 and saw with my own eyes how they did it with utmost accuracy. These are war crimes using NATO’s so-called smart bombs.*

*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.*

*Today, our thoughts are with the People of Serbia.*

*On the 21st of October 2022, the book was launched in Belgrade under the auspices of The Belgrade Forum, Conference Centre of the Moskva Hotel, [To view the presentation click here.](#)*

Michel Chossudovsky, Belgrade, October 21, 2022

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# **The US-NATO War of Aggression against Yugoslavia**

by

Michel Chossudovsky

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Michel Chossudovsky

# THE US-NATO WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA



BELGRADE FORUM FOR THE WORLD OF EQUALS



Мишел Чосудовски

# АГРЕСИЈА САД И НАТО НА ЈУГОСЛАВИЈУ



БЕОГРАДСКИ ФОРУМ ЗА СВЕТ РАВНОПРАВНИХ

## Preface



*Twenty-two years ago in the early hours of March 24, 1999, NATO began the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. "The operation was code-named "Allied Force " – a cold, uninspired and perfectly descriptive moniker" according to Nebosja Malic.*

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*I visited that hospital, one year after the bombing in June 2000 and saw with my own eyes how they did it with utmost accuracy. These are war crimes using NATO's so-called smart bombs.*

*In Yugoslavia, the civilian economy was the target: hospitals, airports, government buildings, manufacturing, infrastructure, not to mention 17th century churches and the country's historical and cultural heritage.*

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



It is important to note that a (corrupt) segment of self-proclaimed "progressives" in Western Europe and North America were part of this disinformation campaign, presenting NATO military intervention as a necessary humanitarian operation geared towards protecting the rights of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

The intervention was in violation of international law. President Milosevic at the 1998 Rambouillet talks had refused the stationing of NATO troops inside Yugoslavia.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)

The demonization of Slobodan Milošević has served over the years to uphold the legitimacy of the NATO bombings as well as conceal the crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). It has also provided credibility to "a war crimes tribunal" under the jurisdiction of those who committed extensive war crimes in the name of social justice.

Slobodan Milosevic was arrested and deported to The Hague Tribunal ICTY detention Centre. The Just War thesis was also upheld by several prominent intellectuals who viewed the Kosovo war as: “a Just War”.

In turn the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was upheld as a bona fide liberation movement, supported by Western intelligence, financed and trained by the US and NATO. The KLA had ties to organised crime. It also had links to Al Qaeda. KLA leader Hashim Thaci has been on the Interpol list in the 1990s.

## The Death of Milošević

On March 11, 2006, Milošević was found dead in his prison cell. According to his lawyer, who had been in contact with him, Milosevic had been poisoned. Exactly ten years later on March 24, 2016, [The Hague ICTY Tribunal exonerated Milosevic](#) stating that [he was innocent of the crimes he was accused of.](#)

In a bitter irony, former KLA leader Hashim Thaci was rewarded for his crimes, appointed prime minister of Kosovo in 2008, and then president in early April 2016.



Meanwhile, the United States established Camp Bondsteel in 1999, “the **largest** and the most expensive foreign **military base** built in Europe since the Vietnam War”.

It took the “international community” more than twenty years to acknowledge that Hashim Thaci had committed extensive crimes against humanity.

In June 2020, Kosovo President Hashim Thaci “was charged with 10 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the country’s conflict in the 1990s” by the Kosovo Tribunal in The Hague. He continues to be described as a wartime hero.

Twenty years later, it is now well established that the war on Yugoslavia was waged on a fabricated humanitarian pretext and that extensive war crimes were committed by NATO and the US.

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In retrospect, the war on Yugoslavia was a “dress rehearsal” for subsequent US-NATO sponsored “humanitarian wars” including Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), Libya (2011), Syria (2011), Ukraine (2014), Yemen (2015).

Who are the war criminals? In a bitter irony, the so-called International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague is controlled by those who have committed extensive war crimes.

According to Nuremberg jurisprudence, the ultimate war crime consists in starting a war. According to William Rockler, former prosecutor of the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal:

“The [1999] bombing war violates and shreds the basic provisions of the United Nations Charter and other conventions and treaties; the attack on Yugoslavia constitutes the most brazen international aggression since the Nazis attacked Poland to prevent “Polish atrocities” against Germans. The United States has discarded pretensions to international legality and decency, and embarked on a course of raw imperialism run amok.”

According to Nuremberg jurisprudence, NATO heads of State and heads of government are responsible for the supreme crime: “the crime against peace.”

### Reagan’s NSDD 133 (1984) “Secret and Sensitive”

There is evidence that the US administration in liason with its allies took the decision in the early 1980s to destabilise and dismantle Yugoslavia. (See Chapter I )

The decision to destroy Yugoslavia as a country and carve it up into a number of small proxy states was taken by the Reagan administration in the early 1980s.

A “Secret Sensitive” National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 133) entitled “US Policy towards Yugoslavia.” (Declassified) set the foreign policy framework for the destabilization of Yugoslavia’s model of market socialism and the establishment of a US sphere of influence in Southeastern Europe.

Yugoslavia in the wake of World War II was in many regards “an economic success story” of market socialism. In the two decades before 1980, annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 6.1 percent, medical care was free, the rate of literacy was 91 percent, and life expectancy was 72 years.

While NSDD 133 was in itself a somewhat innocuous document, it provided legitimacy to the imposition of “free market reforms”. A series of covert intelligence operations were also implemented, which consisted in creating and supporting secessionist paramilitary armies, first in Bosnia then in Kosovo.

These covert operations were combined with the destabilization of the Yugoslav economy discussed in Chapter I below. The application of strong economic medicine under the helm of the IMF and the World Bank ultimately led to the destruction of Yugoslavia’s industrial base, the demise of the workers’ cooperatives and the dramatic impoverishment of its population.

### Kosovo “Independence”

The record of US-NATO war crimes is important in assessing recent developments in Kosovo.

From the outset of their respective mandates in June 1999, both NATO and the UN Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK) have actively supported the KLA, which has committed numerous

atrocities.

Since 1999, State terrorism in Kosovo has become an integral part of NATO's design.

The destruction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is characterised by three interrelated processes:

- 1) the destabilization of Yugoslavia's national economy which started in the early 1980s,
- 2) the covert support to armed insurgencies in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia,
- 3) the 1999 NATO bombing campaign.

This E-book is a retrospect. It takes the reader back in history. Several of the texts were written at the height of 1999 bombing campaign or shortly thereafter.

In Chapter 1 which was written in 1995 (subsequently updated), we review the destruction and partition of the federal Republic of Yugoslavia including the engineered bankruptcy imposed by the World Bank, which led to the demise of Yugoslavia's industrial sector in the late 1980s.

On January 1, 1990, the IMF launched its "shock treatment" economic package which required the suspension of transfer payments from Belgrade to the governments of the Republics and Autonomous Provinces. In one fell swoop, the reformers had engineered the collapse of Yugoslavia's federal fiscal structure and mortally wounded its federal political institutions.

Chapter II, focuses on the role of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The ties of the KLA to organized crime were not only known, they were actively fostered by the US and NATO.

Chapter III examines the issue of war crimes resulting from NATO's March-June 1999 "humanitarian bombings" largely directed against civilians. Up to thirty percent of those killed in the bombings were children. In addition to the use of cluster bombs, the Alliance used toxic radioactive shells and missiles containing depleted uranium.

Chapter IV reviews "NATO's Reign of Terror" in Kosovo in the wake of the 1999 war. The massacres directed against Serbs, ethnic Albanians, Roma and other ethnic groups were conducted on the instructions of the military command of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

Chapter V focusses on the installation of a de facto "Mafia State" in Kosovo.

Chapter VI analyses the environmental catastrophe resulting from US-NATO bombings of the Pancevo chemical weapons plant close to Belgrade.

Chapter VII focusses on the spread of radioactive dust from the use of Depleted Uranium ammunition during the 78 days bombing raids. These bombing raids resulted in a significant incidence of cancer particularly among children.

Chapter VIII analyses the 2001 terrorist attacks in Macedonia led by the National Liberation Army (NLA), an affiliate of the Kosovo based KLA.

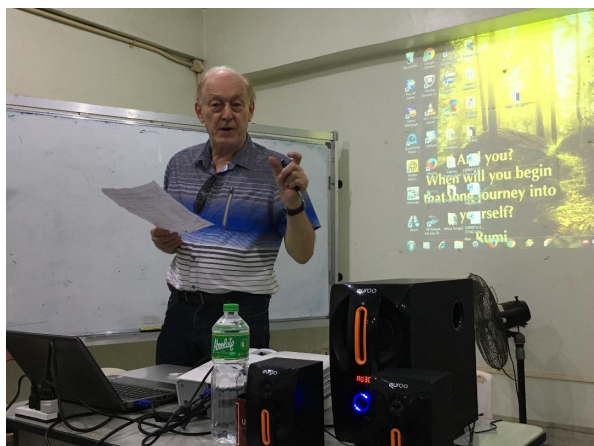


Chapter IX focusses on the central role of Al Qaeda and its links to the armed insurgencies in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Except for minor editing, these chapters were written from 1995 to 2001. Several chapters were written at the height of the 1999 bombing campaign.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, Montreal, March 24, 2021

About the author:



*Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), He is the author of eleven books including The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order (2003), America's "War on Terrorism" (2005), Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War (2011), The Globalization of War, America's Long War against Humanity (2015). He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

*His writings have been published in more than twenty languages.*

*In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia.*

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, March 2021, [crgeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:crgeditor@yahoo.com)

See [Michel Chossudovsky, Biographical Note](#)

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The preface and Introductory chapter can be crossposted with a link to the complete E-book.

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## **Table of Contents**

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Preface

Author's Introductory Note

.

Chapter I

Economic War Crimes: Dismantling Former Yugoslavia, Recolonizing Bosnia-Herzegovina

Chapter II

Kosovo "Freedom Fighters" Financed by Organised Crime

Chapter III

NATO's War of Aggression against Yugoslavia: Who are the War Criminals?

Chapter IV

NATO has Installed a Reign of Terror in Kosovo

Chapter V

The Installation of a Mafia State in Kosovo

Chapter VI

NATO Willfully Triggered an Environmental Catastrophe In Yugoslavia

Chapter VII

Low Intensity Nuclear War, NATO War Crimes in the Balkans

Chapter VIII



## **Chapter I**

### **Economic War Crimes:**

### **Dismantling Former Yugoslavia, Recolonizing Bosnia-Herzegovina**

This chapter was first published by Covert Action Quarterly, Spring 1996, revised and updated, Global Research on February 19 2002

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*As heavily-armed US and NATO troops enforced the peace in Bosnia, the press and politicians alike portrayed Western intervention in the former Yugoslavia as a noble, if agonizingly belated, response to an outbreak of ethnic massacres and human rights violations. In the wake of the November 1995 Dayton peace accords, the West was eager to touch up its self-portrait as savior of the Southern Slavs and get on with “the work of rebuilding” the newly “sovereign states.”*

But following a pattern set early on, Western public opinion had been skillfully misled. The conventional wisdom exemplified by the writings of former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmermann, held that the plight of the Balkans was the outcome of an “aggressive nationalism”, the inevitable result of deep-seated ethnic and religious tensions rooted in history.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, much was made of the “Balkans power-play” and the clash of political personalities: “Tudjman and Milosevic are tearing Bosnia-Herzegovina to pieces”.<sup>2</sup>

Lost in the barrage of images and self-serving analyses are the economic and social causes of the conflict. The deep-seated economic crisis which preceded the civil war had long been forgotten. The strategic interests of Germany and the US in laying the groundwork for the disintegration of Yugoslavia go unmentioned, as does the role of external creditors and international financial institutions. In the eyes of the global media, Western powers bear no

responsibility for the impoverishment and destruction of a nation of 24 million people.

But through their domination of the global financial system, the Western powers, in pursuit of national and collective strategic interests, helped bring the Yugoslav economy to its knees and stirred its simmering ethnic and social conflicts. Now it is the turn of Yugoslavia's war-ravaged successor states to feel the tender mercies of the international financial community.

As the world focused on troop movements and cease-fires, the international financial institutions were busily collecting former Yugoslavia's external debt from its remnant states, while transforming the Balkans into a safe-haven for free enterprise. With a Bosnian peace settlement holding under NATO guns, the West had in late 1995 unveiled a "reconstruction" program that stripped that brutalized country of sovereignty to a degree not seen in Europe since the end of World War II. It consisted largely of making Bosnia a divided territory under NATO military occupation and Western administration.

### Neocolonial Bosnia

Resting on the Dayton accords, which created a Bosnian "Constitution," the US and its European allies had installed a full-fledged colonial administration in Bosnia. At its head was their appointed High Representative, Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister and European Union representative in the Bosnian peace negotiations.<sup>3</sup> Bildt was given full executive powers in all civilian matters, with the right to overrule the governments of both the Bosnian Federation and the Republika Srpska (Serbian Bosnia). To make the point crystal clear, the Accords spelled out that *"the High Representative is the final authority in theater regarding interpretation of the agreements."*<sup>4</sup> He is to work with the multinational military implementation force (IFOR) Military High Command as well as with creditors and donors.

The UN Security Council had also appointed a "Commissioner" under the High Representative to run an international civilian police force.<sup>5</sup> Irish police official Peter Fitzgerald, with UN policing experience in Namibia, El Salvador, and Cambodia, was to preside over some 1,700 police from 15 countries. Following the signing of the Dayton Accords in November 1995, the international police force was dispatched to Bosnia after a five-day training program in Zagreb.<sup>6</sup>

The new "Constitution" included as an Appendix to the Dayton Accords handed the reins of economic policy over to the Bretton Woods institutions and the London based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The IMF was empowered to appoint the first governor of the Bosnian Central Bank, who, like the High Representative, "shall not be a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina or a neighboring State."<sup>7</sup>

Under the IMF regency, the Central Bank is not allowed to function as a Central Bank: "For the first six years ... it may not extend credit by creating money, operating in this respect as a currency board."<sup>8</sup> Neither was Bosnia to be allowed to have its own currency (issuing paper money only when there is full foreign exchange backing), nor permitted to mobilize its internal resources. Its ability to self-finance its reconstruction through an independent monetary policy was blunted from the outset.

While the Central Bank was in IMF custody, the EBRD heads the Commission on Public Corporations, which supervises since 1996, operations of all public sector enterprises in



Bosnia, including energy, water, postal services, telecommunications, and transportation. The EBRD president appoints the commission chair and is in charge of public sector restructuring, i.e., the sell-off of state- and socially-owned assets and the procurement of long-term investment funds.<sup>9</sup> Western creditors explicitly created the EBRD “to give a distinctively political dimension to lending.”<sup>10</sup>

As the West proclaimed its support for democracy, actual political power rests in the hands of a parallel Bosnian “state” whose executive positions are held by non-citizens. Western creditors have embedded their interests in a constitution hastily written on their behalf. They have done so without a constitutional assembly and without consultations with Bosnian citizens’ organizations. Their plans to rebuild Bosnia appear more suited to sating creditors than satisfying even the elementary needs of Bosnians. The neocolonization of Bosnia was a logical step of Western efforts to undo Yugoslavia’s experiment in “market socialism” and workers’ self-management and to impose the dictate of the “free market”.

### Historical background

Multiethnic, socialist Yugoslavia was once a regional industrial power and economic success. In the two decades before 1980, annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 6.1 percent, medical care was free, the rate of literacy was 91 percent, and life expectancy was 72 years.<sup>11</sup> But after a decade of Western economic ministrations and a decade of disintegration, war, boycott, and embargo, the economies of the former Yugoslavia were prostrate, their industrial sectors dismantled.

Yugoslavia’s implosion was partially due to US machinations. Despite Belgrade’s non-alignment and its extensive trading relations with the European Community and the US, the Reagan administration had targeted the Yugoslav economy in a “Secret Sensitive” 1984 National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 133) entitled “US Policy towards Yugoslavia.” A censored version declassified in 1990 elaborated on NSDD 64 on Eastern Europe, issued in 1982. The latter advocated “expanded efforts to promote a ‘quiet revolution’ to overthrow Communist governments and parties,” while reintegrating the countries of Eastern Europe into a market-oriented economy.<sup>12</sup>

The US had earlier joined Belgrade’s other international creditors in imposing a first round of macroeconomics reform in 1980, shortly before the death of Marshall Tito. That initial round of restructuring set the pattern.

Secessionist tendencies feeding on social and ethnic divisions, gained impetus precisely during a period of brutal impoverishment of the Yugoslav population. The economic reforms “wreaked economic and political havoc... Slower growth, the accumulation of foreign debt and especially the cost of servicing it as well as devaluation led to a fall in the standard of living of the average Yugoslav... The economic crisis threatened political stability ... it also threatened to aggravate simmering ethnic tensions”.<sup>13</sup>

These reforms accompanied by the signing of debt restructuring agreements with the official and commercial creditors also served to weaken the institutions of the federal State creating political divisions between Belgrade and the governments of the Republics and Autonomous Provinces. “The [Federal] Prime Minister Milka Planinc, who was supposed to carry out the program, had to promise the IMF an immediate increase of the discount rates and much more for the Reaganomics arsenal of measures...”<sup>14</sup> And throughout the 1980s, the IMF and World Bank periodically prescribed further doses of their bitter economic

medicine as the Yugoslav economy slowly lapsed into a coma.

From the outset, successive IMF sponsored programs hastened the disintegration of the Yugoslav industrial sector. Following the initial phase of macro-economic reform in 1980, industrial growth plummeted to 2.8 percent in the 1980-87 period, plunging to zero in 1987-88 and to a negative 10 percent growth rate by 1990.<sup>15</sup> This process was accompanied by the piecemeal dismantling of the Yugoslav welfare state, with all the predictable social consequences. Debt restructuring agreements, meanwhile, increased foreign debt, and a mandated currency devaluation also hit hard at Yugoslavs' standard of living.

### Mr. Markovic goes to Washington

In Autumn 1989, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Yugoslav federal Premier Ante Markovic met in Washington with President George Bush to cap negotiations for a new financial aid package. In return for assistance, Yugoslavia agreed to even more sweeping economic reforms, including a new devalued currency, another wage freeze, sharp cuts in government spending, and the elimination of socially owned, worker- managed companies .<sup>16</sup>

The Belgrade nomenclature, with the assistance of Western advisers, had laid the groundwork for Markovic's mission by implementing beforehand many of the required reforms, including a major liberalization of foreign investment legislation.

"Shock therapy" began in January 1990. Although inflation had eaten away at earnings, the IMF ordered that wages be frozen at their mid November 1989 levels. Prices continued to rise unabated, and real wages collapsed by 41 percent in the first six months of 1990 .<sup>17</sup>

The IMF also effectively controlled the Yugoslav central bank. Its tight money policy further crippled the country's ability to finance its economic and social programs. State revenues that should have gone as transfer payments to the republics went instead to service Belgrade's debt with the Paris and London clubs. The republics were largely left to their own devices. The economic package was launched in January 1990 under an IMF Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) and a World Bank Structural Adjustment Loan (SAL II). The budget cuts requiring the redirection of federal revenues towards debt servicing, were conducive to the suspension of transfer payments by Belgrade to the governments of the Republics and Autonomous Provinces.

In one fell swoop, the reformers had engineered the final collapse of Yugoslavia's federal fiscal structure and mortally wounded its federal political institutions. By cutting the financial arteries between Belgrade and the republics, the reforms fueled secessionist tendencies that fed on economic factors as well as ethnic divisions, virtually ensuring the de facto secession of the republics. The IMF-induced budgetary crisis created an economic fait accompli that paved the way for Croatia's and Slovenia's formal secession in June 1991.

### Crushed by the Invisible Hand

The reforms demanded by Belgrade's creditors also struck at the heart of Yugoslavia's system of socially-owned and worker-managed enterprises. As one observer noted, 'the objective was to subject the Yugoslav economy to massive privatization and the dismantling of the public sector. "The Communist Party bureaucracy, most notably its military and intelligence sector, was canvassed specifically and offered political and economic backing



on the condition that wholesale scuttling of social protections for Yugoslavia's workforce was imposed." 18 It was an offer that a desperate Yugoslavia could not refuse. By 1990, the annual rate of growth of GDP had collapsed to -7.5 percent. In 1991, GDP declined by a further 15 percent, industrial output collapsed by 21 percent.<sup>19</sup>

The restructuring program demanded by Belgrade's creditors was intended to abrogate the system of socially owned enterprises. The *Enterprise Law* of 1989 required abolishing the "*Basic Organizations of Associated Labor (BAOL)*". The latter were socially-owned productive units under self-management with the Workers' Council constituting the main decision making body. The 1989 Enterprise Law required the transformation of the BOALs into private capitalist enterprises with the Worker's Council replaced by a so-called "*Social Board*" under the control of the enterprise's owners including its creditors.<sup>20</sup>

### Overhauling The Legal Framework

Advised by Western lawyers and consultants, a number of supporting pieces of legislation were put in place in a hurry. The Financial Operations Act of 1989 was to play a crucial role in engineering the collapse of Yugoslavia's industrial sector, it was to provide for an "equitable" and so-called "transparent trigger mechanism" which would steer so-called "insolvent" enterprises in bankruptcy or liquidation. A related act entitled the Law on Compulsory Settlement, Bankruptcy and Liquidation was to safeguard "the rights of the creditors". The latter could call for the initiation of bankruptcy procedures enabling them to take over and/or liquidate the assets of debtor enterprises.<sup>21</sup>

The earlier 1988 Foreign Investment Law had allowed for unrestricted entry of foreign capital not only into industry but also into the banking, insurance and services' sectors. Prior to the enactment of the law, foreign investment was limited to joint ventures with the socially- owned enterprises.<sup>22</sup> In turn, the 1989 Law on the Circulation and Management of Social Capital and the 1990 Social Capital Law allowed for the divestiture of the socially-owned enterprises including their sale to foreign capital. The Social Capital Law also provided for the creation of "Restructuring and Recapitalisation Agencies" with a mandate to organize the "valuation" of enterprise assets prior to privatization. As in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, however, the valuation of assets was based on the recorded "book-value" expressed in local currency. This book-value tended to be unduly low thereby securing the sale of socially-owned assets at rock-bottom prices. Slovenia and Croatia had by 1990 already established their own draft privatization laws.<sup>23</sup>

The assault on the socialist economy also included a new banking law designed to trigger the liquidation of the socially-owned Associated Banks. Within two years, more than half the country's banks had vanished, to be replaced by newly-formed "independent profit-oriented institutions." 24 By 1990, the entire "three-tier banking system" consisting of the National Bank of Yugoslavia, the national banks of the eight Republics and autonomous provinces and the commercial banks had been dismantled under the guidance of the World Bank. A Federal Agency for Insurance and Bank Rehabilitation was established in June 1990 with a mandate to restructure and "*reprivatize*" restructured banks under World Bank supervision.<sup>25</sup> This process was to be undertaken over a five- year period. The development of non-banking financial intermediaries including brokerage firms, investment management firms and insurance companies was also to be promoted.

## The Bankruptcy Program

Industrial enterprises had been carefully categorized. Under the IMF-World Bank sponsored reforms, credit to the industrial sector had been frozen with a view to speeding up the bankruptcy process. So-called “*exit mechanisms*” had been established under the provisions of the 1989 Financial Operations Act.<sup>26</sup> Under the new law, if a business was unable to pay its bills for 30 days running, or for 30 days within a 45-day period, the government would launch bankruptcy proceedings within the next 15 days.<sup>19</sup> This mechanism allowed creditors (including national and foreign banks) to routinely convert their loans into a controlling equity in the insolvent enterprise. Under the Act, the government was not authorized to intervene. In case a settlement was not reached, bankruptcy procedures would be initiated in which case workers would not normally receive severance payments.<sup>27</sup>

In 1989, according to official sources, 248 firms were steered into bankruptcy or were liquidated and 89,400 workers had been laid off.<sup>28</sup> During the first nine months of 1990 directly following the adoption of the IMF program, another 889 enterprises with a combined work-force of 525,000 workers were subjected to bankruptcy procedures.<sup>29</sup> In other words, in less than two years the World Bank’s so-called “*trigger mechanism*” (under the Financial Operations Act) had led to the lay off of 614,000 (out of a total industrial workforce of the order of 2.7 million). The largest concentrations of bankrupt firms and lay-offs were in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo.<sup>30</sup>

Many socially owned enterprises attempted to avoid bankruptcy through the non payment of wages. Half a million workers representing some 20 percent of the industrial labor force were not paid during the early months of 1990, in order to meet the demands of creditors under the “settlement” procedures stipulated in the Law on Financial Organizations. Real earnings were in a free fall, social programs had collapsed, with the bankruptcies of industrial enterprises, unemployment had become rampant, creating within the population an atmosphere of social despair and hopelessness.

The January 1990 IMF sponsored package contributed to increasing enterprise losses while precipitating many of the large electric, petroleum refinery, machinery, engineering and chemical enterprises into bankruptcy. Moreover, with the deregulation of the trade regime, a flood of imported commodities contributed to further destabilizing domestic production. These imports were financed with borrowed money granted under the IMF package (i.e. the various “*quick disbursing loans*” granted by the IMF, the World Bank and bilateral donors in support of the economic reforms). While the import bonanza was fuelling the build-up of Yugoslavia’s external debt, the abrupt hikes in interest rates and input prices imposed on national enterprises had expedited the displacement and *exclusion of domestic producers from their own national market*.

### “Shedding Surplus Workers”

The situation prevailing in the months preceding the Secession of Croatia and Slovenia (mid 1991) (confirmed by the 1989-90 bankruptcy figures) points to the sheer magnitude and brutality of the process of industrial dismantling. The figures, however, provide but a partial picture, depicting the situation at the outset of the “*bankruptcy program*” which continued unabated in Yugoslavia’s successor States in the years following the Dayton accords.

The World Bank had estimated that there were *still* in September 1990, 2,435 “loss-making” enterprises out of a *remaining* total of 7,531.<sup>31</sup> In other words, these 2,435 firms with a

combined work-force of more than 1,3 million workers had been categorized as “insolvent” under the provisions of the Financial Operations Act, requiring the immediate implementation of bankruptcy procedures. Bearing in mind that 600,000 workers had already been laid off by bankrupt firms prior to September 1990, these figures suggest that some 1.9 million workers (out of a total of 2.7 million) had been classified as “redundant”. The “insolvent” firms concentrated in the Energy, Heavy Industry, Metal processing, Forestry and Textiles sectors were among the largest industrial enterprises in the country representing (in September 1990) 49.7 percent of the total (*remaining and employed*) industrial work-force.<sup>32</sup>

As 1991 dawned, real wages were in free fall, social programs had collapsed, and unemployment ran rampant. The dismantling of the industrial economy was breathtaking in its magnitude and brutality. Its social and political impact, while not as easily quantified, was tremendous. Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic warned that the reforms were “having a markedly unfavorable impact on the overall situation in society.... Citizens have lost faith in the state and its institutions.... The further deepening of the economic crisis and the growth of social tensions has had a vital impact on the deterioration of the political-security situation.”<sup>33</sup>

### The Political Economy of Disintegration

Some Yugoslavs joined together in a doomed battle to prevent the destruction of their economy and polity. As one observer found, “worker resistance crossed ethnic lines, as Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Slovenians mobilized ... shoulder to shoulder with their fellow workers.”<sup>34</sup> But the economic struggle also heightened already tense relations among the republics and between the republics and Belgrade.

Serbia rejected the austerity plan outright, and some 650,000 Serbian workers struck against the federal government to force wage hikes.<sup>35</sup> The other republics followed different and sometimes self-contradictory paths.

In relatively wealthy Slovenia, for instance, secessionist leaders such as Social Democratic party chair Joze Pucnik supported the reforms: “From an economic standpoint, I can only agree with socially harmful measures in our society, such as rising unemployment or cutting workers’ rights, because they are necessary to advance the economic reform process.”<sup>36</sup>

But at the same time, Slovenia joined other republics in challenging the federal government’s efforts to restrict their economic autonomy. Both Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman and Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic joined Slovene leaders in railing against Belgrade’s attempts to impose harsh reforms on behalf of the IMF.<sup>37</sup>

In the multiparty elections in 1990, economic policy was at the center of the political debate as separatist coalitions ousted the Communists in Croatia, Bosnia and Slovenia. Just as economic collapse spurred the drift toward separation, separation in turn exacerbated the economic crisis. Cooperation among the republics virtually ceased. And with the republics at one another’s’ throats, both the economy and the nation itself embarked on a vicious downward spiral.

The process sped along as the republican leadership, deliberately fostered social and economic divisions to strengthen their own hands: “The republican oligarchies, who all had visions of a ‘national renaissance’ of their own, instead of choosing between a genuine



Yugoslav market and hyperinflation, opted for war which would disguise the real causes of the economic catastrophe.”<sup>38</sup>

The simultaneous appearance of militias loyal to secessionist leaders only hastened the descent into chaos. These militias (covertly financed by the US and Germany), with their escalating atrocities, not only split the population along ethnic lines, they also fragmented the workers’ movement.<sup>39</sup>

### “Western Help”

The austerity measures had laid the basis for the recolonization of the Balkans. Whether that required the breakup of Yugoslavia was subject to debate among the Western powers, with Germany leading the push for secession and the US, fearful of opening a nationalist Pandora’s box, originally arguing for Yugoslavia’s preservation.

Following Franjo Tudjman’s and the rightist Democratic Union’s decisive victory in Croatia in May 1990, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, in almost daily contact with his counterpart in Zagreb, gave his go-ahead for Croatian secession.<sup>40</sup> Germany did not passively support secession; it “forced the pace of international diplomacy” and pressured its Western allies to recognize Slovenia and Croatia. Germany sought a free hand among its allies “to pursue economic dominance in the whole of Mittel Europa.”<sup>41</sup>

Washington, on the other hand, “favored a loose unity while encouraging democratic development ... [Secretary of State] Baker told Tudjman and [Slovenia’s President] Milan Kucan that the United States would not encourage or support unilateral secession ... but if they had to leave, he urged them to leave by a negotiated agreement.”<sup>42</sup> In the meantime, the US Congress had passed the 1991 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act which curtailed all financial assistance Yugoslavia. The provisions of the Act had been casually referred to by the CIA as “a signed death warrant” for Yugoslavia. <sup>43</sup> The CIA had correctly predicted that “a bloody civil war would ensue”.<sup>44</sup> The law also demanded the IMF and the World Bank to freeze credit to Belgrade. And the US State Department had insisted that the Yugoslav republics (considered as de facto political entities) “uphold separate election procedures and returns before any further aid could be resumed to the individual republics”.<sup>45</sup>

### Post War Reconstruction and the Free Market

In the wake of the November 1995 Dayton Accords, Western creditors turned their attention to Yugoslavia’s “successor states”. Yugoslavia’s foreign debt had been carefully divided and allocated to the successor republics, which were strangled in separate debt rescheduling and structural adjustment agreements. <sup>46</sup>

The consensus among donors and international agencies was that past IMF macroeconomics reforms inflicted on federal Yugoslavia had not quite met their goal and further shock therapy was required to restore “economic health” to Yugoslavia’s successor states. Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia had agreed to loan packages to pay off their shares of the Yugoslav debt that required a consolidation of the process begun under Ante Markovic’s bankruptcy program. The all too familiar pattern of plant closings, induced bank failures, and impoverishment has continued unabated since 1996. And who was to carry out IMF diktats? The leaders of the newly sovereign states have fully collaborated with the creditors.

In Croatia, the government of President Franjo Tudjman was obliged to sign already in 1993

at the height of the civil war, an agreement with the IMF. In return for fresh loans largely intended to service Zagreb's external debt, the government of President Franjo Tudjman agreed to implementing further plant closures and bankruptcies, driving wages to abysmally low levels. The official unemployment rate increased from 15.5 percent in 1991 to 19.1 percent in 1994.<sup>47</sup>

Zagreb had also instituted a far more stringent bankruptcy law, together with procedures for "the dismemberment" of large state-owned public utility companies. According to its "Letter of Intent" to the Bretton Woods institutions, the Croatian government had promised to restructure and fully privatize the banking sector with the assistance of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank. The latter had also demanded a Croatian capital market structured to heighten the penetration of Western institutional investors and brokerage firms.

Under the agreement signed in 1993 with the IMF, the Zagreb government was not permitted to mobilize its own productive resources through fiscal and monetary policy. The latter were firmly under the control of its external creditors. The massive budget cuts demanded under the agreement had also forestalled the possibility of post-war reconstruction. The latter could only be carried out through the granting of fresh foreign loans, a process which has contributed to fuelling Croatia's external debt well into the 21st Century.

Macedonia had also followed a similar economic path to that of Croatia. In December 1993, the Skopje government agreed to compress real wages and freeze credit in order to obtain a loan under the IMF's Systemic Transformation Facility (STF). In an unusual twist, multi-billionaire business tycoon George Soros participated in the International Support Group composed of the government of the Netherlands and the Basel-based Bank of International Settlements. The money provided by the Support Group, however, was not intended for "reconstruction" but rather to enable Skopje to pay back debt arrears owed the World Bank.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, in return for debt rescheduling, the government of Macedonian Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski had to agree to the liquidation of remaining "insolvent" enterprises and the lay off of "redundant" workers -which included the employees of half the industrial enterprises in the country. As Deputy Finance Minister Hari Kostov soberly noted, with interest rates at astronomical levels because of donor-sponsored banking reforms, *"it was literally impossible to find a company in the country which would be able to (...) to cover [its] costs (...)"*.<sup>49</sup>

Overall, the IMF economic therapy for Macedonia was a continuation of the "bankruptcy program" launched in 1989-90 under federal Yugoslavia. The most profitable assets were put on sale on the Macedonian stock market, but this auction of socially owned enterprises had led to industrial collapse and rampant unemployment.

And global capital applauds. Despite an emerging crisis in social welfare and the decimation of his economy, Macedonian Finance Minister Ljube Trpevski proudly informed the press in 1996 that "the World Bank and the IMF place Macedonia among the most successful countries in regard to current transition reforms".<sup>50</sup>

The head of the IMF mission to Macedonia, Paul Thomsen, agreed. He avowed that "the results of the stabilization program were impressive" and gave particular credit to "the

efficient wages policy” adopted by the Skopje government. Still, his negotiators had insisted that despite these achievements, even more budget cutting was necessary. 51

## **Reconstruction Colonial Style**

But Western intervention was making its most serious inroads on national sovereignty in Bosnia. The neocolonial administration imposed under the Dayton accords and supported by NATO’s firepower had ensured that Bosnia’s future would be determined in Washington, Bonn, and Brussels rather than in Sarajevo.

The Bosnian government had estimated in the wake of the Dayton Accords that reconstruction costs would reach \$47 billion. Western donors had initially pledged \$3 billion in reconstruction loans, of which only a part was actually granted. Moreover, a large chunk of the fresh money lent to Bosnia had been tagged to finance some of the local civilian costs of IFOR’s military deployment as well as repay international creditors. 52

Fresh loans will pay back old debt. The Central Bank of the Netherlands had generously provided “bridge financing’ of \$37 million to allow Bosnia to pay its arrears with the IMF, without which the IMF will not lend it fresh money. But in a cruel and absurd paradox, the sought-after loans from the IMF’s newly created “Emergency Window” for “post-conflict countries” will not be used for post-war reconstruction. Instead, they will repay the Dutch Central Bank, which had coughed up the money to settle IMF arrears in the first place. 53

Debt piles up, and little new money goes for rebuilding Bosnia’s war torn economy.

While rebuilding is sacrificed on the altar of debt repayment, Western governments and corporations show greater interest in gaining access to strategic natural resources. With the discovery of energy reserves in the region, the partition of Bosnia between the Federation of Bosnia- Herzegovina and the Bosnian-Serb Republika Srpska under the Dayton Accords has taken on new strategic importance. Documents in the hands of Croatia and the Bosnian Serbs indicate that coal and oil deposits have been identified on the eastern slope of the Dinarides Thrust, retaken from Krajina Serbs by the US-backed Croatian army in the final offensives before the Dayton accords. Bosnian officials had reported that Chicago-based Amoco was among several foreign firms that subsequently initiated exploratory surveys in Bosnia.54

“Substantial” petroleum fields also lie “in the Serb-held part of Croatia” just across the Sava River from Tuzla, the headquarters for the US military zone.55 Exploration operations went on during the war, but the World Bank and the multinationals that conducted the operations kept local governments in the dark, presumably to prevent them from acting to grab potentially valuable areas. 56

With their attention devoted to debt repayment and potential energy bonanzas, both the US and Germany have devoted their efforts –with 70,000 NATO troops on hand to “enforce the peace”– to administering the partition of Bosnia in accordance with Western economic and strategic interests.

While local leaders and Western interests share the spoils of the former Yugoslav economy, they have entrenched socio-ethnic divisions in the very structure of partition. This permanent fragmentation of Yugoslavia along ethnic lines thwarts a united resistance of Yugoslavs of all ethnic origins against the recolonization of their homeland.



But what's new? As one observer caustically noted, all of the leaders of Yugoslavia's successor states have worked closely with the West: "All the current leaders of the former Yugoslav republics were Communist Party functionaries and each in turn vied to meet the demands of the World Bank and the IMF, the better to qualify for investment loans and substantial perks for the leadership." 57

## **From Bosnia to Kosovo**

Economic and political dislocation has been the pattern in the various stages of the Balkans war: from the initial military intervention of NATO in Bosnia in 1992 to the bombing of Yugoslavia on "humanitarian grounds" in 1999. Bosnia and Kosovo are stages in the recolonization of the Balkans. The pattern of intervention under NATO guns in Bosnia under the Dayton accords has been replicated in Kosovo under the formal mandate of United Nations "peace-keeping".

In post-war Kosovo, State terror and the "free market" go hand in hand. In close consultation with NATO, the World Bank had carefully analyzed the consequences of an eventual military intervention leading to the occupation of Kosovo. Almost a year prior to onslaught of the war, the World Bank had conducted relevant "simulations" which *"anticipated the possibility of an emergency scenario arising out of the tensions in Kosovo"*.<sup>58</sup> This suggests that NATO had already briefed the World Bank at an early stage of military planning.

While the bombing was still ongoing, the World Bank and the European Commission had been granted a special mandate for *"coordinating donors' economic assistance in the Balkans"*<sup>59</sup> The underlying terms of reference did not exclude Yugoslavia from receiving donor support. It was, however, clearly stipulated that Belgrade would be eligible for reconstruction loans *"once political conditions there change"*.<sup>60</sup>

In the wake of the bombings, "free market reforms" were imposed on Kosovo largely replicating the clauses of the Rambouillet agreement which in turn had in part been modeled on the Dayton Accords imposed on Bosnia. Article I (Chapter 4a) of the Rambouillet Agreement stipulated that: *"The economy of Kosovo shall function in accordance with free market principles"*.

Along with NATO troops, an army of lawyers and consultants was sent into Kosovo under World Bank auspices. Their mandate: create an "enabling environment" for foreign capital and ensure Kosovo's speedy transition to a *"thriving, open and transparent market economy."* 61 In turn, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) provisional government had been called upon by the donor community to "establish transparent, effective and sustainable institutions" 62 The extensive links of the KLA to organized crime and the Balkans narcotics trade was not seen by the "international community" as an obstacle to the installation of "democracy" and "good governance".

In occupied Kosovo under UN mandate, the management of State owned enterprises and public utilities was taken over by appointees of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The leaders of the Provisional Government of Kosovo (PGK) had become "the brokers" of multinational capital committed to handing over the Kosovar economy at bargain prices to foreign investors.

Meanwhile, Yugoslav State banks operating in Pristina had been closed down. The

Deutschmark was adopted as legal tender and almost the entire banking system in Kosovo was handed over to Germany's Commerzbank A.G which gained full control over commercial banking functions for the province including money transfers and foreign exchange transactions.<sup>63</sup>

## **Taking over Kosovo's Mineral Wealth**

Under Western military occupation, Kosovo's extensive wealth in mineral resources and coal was slated to be auctioned off at bargain prices to foreign capital. Prior to the bombings, Western investors already had their eyes riveted on the massive Trepca mining complex which constitutes *"the most valuable piece of real estate in the Balkans, worth at least \$5 billion."*<sup>64</sup> The Trepca complex not only includes copper and large reserves of zinc but also cadmium, gold, and silver. It has several smelting plants, 17 metal treatment sites, a power plant and Yugoslavia's largest battery plant. Northern Kosovo also has estimated reserves of 17 billion tons of coal and lignite.

Barely a month after Kosovo's military occupation under NATO guns, the head of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Bernard Kouchner issued a decree to the effect that: *"UNMIK shall administer movable or immovable property, including monetary accounts, and other property of, or registered in the name of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or the Republic of Serbia or any of its organs, which is in the territory of Kosovo"*.<sup>65</sup>

No time was lost, a few months after the military occupation of Kosovo, the International Crisis Group (ICG) a think tank supported by Financier George Soros, issued a paper on *"Trepca: Making Sense of the Labyrinth"* which advised the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) *"to take over the Trepca mining complex from the Serbs as quickly as possible and explained how this should be done"*.<sup>66</sup> And in August 2000, UNMIK Head Bernard Kouchner sent in heavily armed "peacekeepers" ("wearing surgical masks against toxic smoke") to occupy the mine on the pretense that it was creating an environmental hazard through excessive air pollution.

Meanwhile, the United Nations had handed over the management of the entire Trepca complex to a Western consortium. With a stake in the Trepca deal was Morrison Knudsen International, now regrouped with Raytheon Engineering and Construction. The new conglomerate is the Washington Group, one of the World's most powerful engineering and construction firms as well as a major Defense contractor in the US. Junior partners in the deal are TEC-Ingenierie of France and Sweden's consulting outfit Boliden Contech.

## **The Installation of a Mafia State**

While Financier George Soros was investing money in Kosovo's reconstruction, the George Soros Foundation for an Open Society had opened a branch office in Pristina establishing the Kosovo Foundation for an Open Society (KFOS) as part of the Soros' network of "non-profit foundations" in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Together with the World Bank's Post Conflict Trust Fund, the Kosovo Open Society Foundation (KOSF) was providing "targeted support" for *"the development of local governments to allow them to serve their communities in a transparent, fair, and accountable manner."*<sup>67</sup> Since most of these local governments are in the hands of the KLA which has extensive links to organized crime, this program is unlikely to meet its declared objective.<sup>68</sup>

In turn, "strong economic medicine" imposed by external creditors has contribute to further

boosting a criminal economy (already firmly implanted in Albania) which feeds on poverty and economic dislocation.

With Albania and Kosovo at the hub of Balkans drug trade, Kosovo was also slated to reimburse foreign creditors through the laundering of dirty money. Narco-dollars will be recycled towards servicing Kosovo's debt as well as "financing" the costs of "reconstruction". The lucrative flow of narco-dollars thus ensures that foreign investors involved in the "reconstruction" programme will be able reap substantial returns.

### Neoliberalism, the Only Possible World?

Administered in several doses since the 1980s, NATO-backed neo-liberal economic medicine has helped destroy Yugoslavia. Yet, the global media has carefully overlooked or denied its central role. Instead, they have joined the chorus singing praises of the "free market" as the basis for rebuilding a war shattered economy. The social and political impact of economic restructuring in Yugoslavia has been carefully erased from our collective understanding. Opinion-makers instead dogmatically present cultural, ethnic, and religious divisions as the sole cause of war and devastation. In reality, they are the consequence of a much deeper process of economic and political fracturing.

Such false consciousness not only masks the truth, it also prevents us from acknowledging precise historical occurrences. Ultimately, it distorts the true sources of social conflict. When applied to the former Yugoslavia, it obscures the historical foundations of South Slavic unity, solidarity and identity in what constituted a multiethnic society.

At stake in the Balkans are the lives of millions of people. Macroeconomic reform combined with military conquest and UN "peace keeping" has destroyed livelihoods and made a joke of the right to work. It has put basic needs such as food and shelter beyond the reach of many. It has degraded culture and national identity. In the name of global capital, borders have been redrawn, legal codes rewritten, industries destroyed, financial and banking systems dismantled, social programs eliminated. No alternative to global capital, be it Yugoslav "market socialism" or "national capitalism", will be allowed to exist.

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6. According to a United Nations statement, United Nations, New York, 5 January 1996. See also Seattle Post Intelligencer, 16 January 1996, p. A5.
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- 15 World Bank, Industrial Restructuring Study: Overview, Issues, and Strategy for Restructuring, Washington, D C, June 1991, pp. 10,14.
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18. Ralph Schoenman, Divide and Rule Schemes in the Balkans, The Organizer, San Francisco, Sept. 11,1995
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20. See Barbara Lee and John Nellis, Enterprise Reform and Privatization in Socialist Economies, The World Bank, Washington DC, 1990, pp. 20-21.
21. For further details see World Bank, Yugoslavia, Industrial Restructuring, p. 33.
22. World Bank, Yugoslavia, Industrial Restructuring, p. 29.
23. Ibid., p. 23.
24. Ibid., p. 38.
25. Ibid., p. 39.
26. Ibid., p. 33.
27. Ibid., p. 33.
28. Ibid., p. 34. Data of the Federal Secretariat for Industry and Energy. Of the total number of firms, 222 went bankrupt and 26 were liquidated.
29. Ibid., p. 33. These figures include bankruptcy and liquidation.
30. Ibid., p. 34.
31. Ibid., p. 13. Annex 1, p. 1.

32. "Surplus labor" in industry had been assessed by the World Bank mission to be of the order of 20 per cent of the total labor force of 8.9 million, – i.e. approximately 1.8 million. This figure is significantly below the actual number of redundant workers based on the categorization of "insolvent" enterprises. Solely in the industrial sector, there were 1.9 million workers (September 1990) out of 2.7 million employed in enterprises classified as insolvent by the World Bank. See World Bank, Yugoslavia, Industrial Restructuring, Annex 1.

33 British Broadcasting Service, Borisav Jovic Tells SFRY Assembly Situation Has Dramatically Deteriorated, 27 April 1991.

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65. Quoted in Diana Johnstone, How it is done, Taking over the Trepca Mines: Plans and Propaganda, <http://www.emperors-clothes.com/articles/johnstone/howitis.htm> Emperors Clothes, 28 February 2000.

66. See Johnstone, op cit. For the ICG report see <http://www.emperors-clothes.com/articles/johnstone/icg.htm>

67. World Bank, KOSF and World Bank, World Bank Launches First Kosovo Project, Washington, <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/extme/097.htm> November 16, 1999 News Release No. 2000/097/ECA. 68 Out of the 20 million dollars budget for this program, only one million dollars was being provided by the World Bank.

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## Chapter II



## **Kosovo “Freedom Fighters”**

### **Financed by Organised Crime**

*An earlier version of this article was published at the height of the NATO bombings of Yugoslavia in 1999*

*Deafening silence of the Western corporate media. The links of the KLA to organized crime, which were confirmed by the European Parliament’s investigation were known and documented by Interpol and the US Congress prior to the onslaught of the 1999 war on Yugoslavia.*

*The KLA insurgency was an initiative of NATO. The KLA killings were directed against Albanian, Serbian and Roma civilians.*

*These killings were ordered by NATO. Blamed on the Serbian police and armed forces, the killings of civilians were used as a pretext and justification to wage a “humanitarian war” on Yugoslavia.*

*The ties of the KLA to organized crime were not only known, they were actively fostered by the US and NATO. The result was the formation of what is best described as a “Mafia State”.*

*The leader of the KLA, Hashim Thaci, “The Snake”, who subsequently became Prime Minister was a protégé of Madeleine Albright.*



*Thaci and Albright, Rambouillet, December 1998*

Supported by the United Nations, NATO’s project was to spearhead a terrorist organization linked to Albanian and Italian crime syndicates, into the realm of civilian politics. The KLA was chosen by NATO to form a government integrated by known criminals.

The Kosovo Democratic Party headed by former KLA Commander Hashim Thaci is essentially

an outgrowth of the former Kosovo Liberation Army.

The Kosovo Democratic Party (KDP) retained its links to organised crime.

All three Kosovo Prime Ministers, in recent history, Ramush Haradinaj, Agim Ceku and Hashim Thaci are known criminals.

Hashim Thaci became president of Kosovo in 2016.



Hashim Thaci and former EU Secretary-General Javier Solana

In the year preceding the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia, the KLA was quite openly supported by the Clinton administration:

Some members of the Kosovo Liberation Army [headed by the current Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci], which has financed its war effort through the sale of heroin, were trained in terrorist camps run by international fugitive Osama bin Laden — who is wanted in the 1998 bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa that killed 224 persons, including 12 Americans.

The KLA members, embraced by the Clinton administration in NATO's 41-day bombing campaign to bring Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to the bargaining table, were trained in secret camps in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere, according to newly obtained intelligence reports.

The reports also show that the KLA has enlisted Islamic terrorists — members of the Mujahideen — as soldiers in its ongoing conflict against Serbia, and that many already have been smuggled into Kosovo to join the fight. ....

The intelligence reports document what is described as a “link” between bin Laden, the fugitive Saudi millionaire, and the KLA — including a common staging area in Tropoje, Albania, a center for Islamic terrorists. The reports said bin Laden's organization, known as al-Qaeda, has both trained and financially supported the KLA. (Washington Times, May 4, 1999)

The Christian Science Monitor in an August 14, 2000 report describes the criminal network controlled by Thaci:

**UN police suspect that much of the violence and intimidation has come from former KLA members, especially those allied with Hashim Thaci**, the former KLA leader and head of the Democratic Party of Kosovo, one of the KLA's political offshoots.

In one recent incident, **the shop of an LDK activist in Mr. Thaci's home village was sprayed with automatic gunfire** — the second such attack since November.

Thaci's party potentially has much to lose in the elections, which are for

municipal offices only. After Serb forces withdrew last year, the KLA occupied town halls and public institutions across Kosovo and set up its own provincial government.

Although the UN has gradually asserted its own authority and placed representatives of other political groups in local governments, in places like Srbica ex-KLA members affiliated with Thaci's party still exercise virtual complete control.

"These guys are not going to give up power that easily," says Dardan Gashi, a political analyst with the International Crisis Group, a US-based research organization with an office in Pristina.

**UN police also suspect organized crime is involved in some of the violence. They say that criminal groups engaged in racketeering, smuggling, and prostitution rely on close links to some people in power.** The prospect of losing these connections – and the income they generate – may make them ill-disposed toward the LDK.

**Officials say the problem is the worst in the Drenica region of Kosovo, the KLA's heartland and a stronghold of Thaci's party.** Srbica, where Koci is the local LDK president, is one of the main towns in Drenica. (emphasis added)

The Heritage Foundation in a May 1999 report acknowledges that the KLA is a criminal organization. It nonetheless called for the support of the KLA by the Clinton administration:

Should the U.S. harness the KLA's military potential against Milosevic's brutal regime, **despite the KLA's unusual ideological roots and apparent ties to organized crime?** ... The KLA does not represent every group seeking an end to Milosevic's brutal campaign and is known to have committed some atrocities of its own, it is the most significant force resisting Yugoslav aggression within Kosovo. **Moreover, the scale and scope of its crimes have been dwarfed** by the systematic campaign of terror unleashed by Yugoslav military, paramilitary, and police forces inside Kosovo. which Washington has done consistently since the 1999 war. (Heritage Foundation Report, 13 May 1999)

Shunning the KLA now will deprive the United States of the benefits of cooperating with a resistance force that is capable of ratcheting up the pressure on Milosevic to negotiate a settlement (Ibid)

Heralded by the global media as a humanitarian peace-keeping mission, NATO's ruthless bombing of Belgrade and Pristina goes far beyond the breach of international law. While Slobodan Milosevic is demonised, portrayed as a remorseless dictator, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is upheld as a self-respecting nationalist movement struggling for the rights of ethnic Albanians. The truth of the matter is that the KLA is sustained by organised crime with the tacit approval of the United States and its allies.

Following a pattern set during the War in Bosnia, public opinion has been carefully misled. The multibillion dollar Balkans narcotics trade has played a crucial role in "financing the conflict" in Kosovo in accordance with Western economic, strategic and military objectives. Amply documented by European police files, acknowledged by numerous studies, the links of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to criminal syndicates in Albania, Turkey and the

European Union have been known to Western governments and intelligence agencies since the mid-1990s.

" ... The financing of the Kosovo guerrilla war poses critical questions and it sorely tests claims of an "ethical" foreign policy. Should the West back a guerrilla army that appears to partly financed by organised crime." [1]

While KLA leaders were shaking hands with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at Rambouillet, Europol (the European Police Organization based in The Hague) was "preparing a report for European interior and justice ministers on a connection between the KLA and Albanian drug gangs." [2] In the meantime, the rebel army has been skilfully heralded by the global media (in the months preceding the NATO bombings) as broadly representative of the interests of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

With KLA leader Hashim Thaci (a 29 year "freedom fighter") appointed as chief negotiator at Rambouillet, the KLA has become the de facto helmsman of the peace process on behalf of the ethnic Albanian majority and this despite its links to the drug trade. The West was relying on its KLA puppets to rubber-stamp an agreement which would have transformed Kosovo into an occupied territory under Western Administration.

Ironically Robert Gelbard, America's special envoy to Bosnia, had described the KLA last year as "terrorists". Christopher Hill, America's chief negotiator and architect of the Rambouillet agreement, "has also been a strong critic of the KLA for its alleged dealings in drugs." [3] Moreover, barely a few two months before Rambouillet, the US State Department had acknowledged (based on reports from the US Observer Mission) the role of the KLA in terrorising and uprooting ethnic Albanians:

" ... the KLA harass or kidnap anyone who comes to the police, ... KLA representatives had threatened to kill villagers and burn their homes if they did not join the KLA [a process which has continued since the NATO bombings]... [T]he KLA harassment has reached such intensity that residents of six villages in the Stimlje region are "ready to flee." [4]

While backing a "freedom movement" with links to the drug trade, the West seems also intent in bypassing the civilian Kosovo Democratic League and its leader Ibrahim Rugova who has called for an end to the bombings and expressed his desire to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the Yugoslav authorities. [5] It is worth recalling that a few days before his March 31 Press Conference, Rugova had been reported by the KLA (alongside three other leaders including Fehmi Agani) to have been killed by the Serbs.

#### Covert financing of "freedom fighters"

Remember Oliver North and the Contras? The pattern in Kosovo is similar to other CIA covert operations in Central America, Haiti and Afghanistan where "freedom fighters" were financed through the laundering of drug money. Since the onslaught of the Cold War, Western intelligence agencies have developed a complex relationship to the illegal narcotics trade. In case after case, drug money laundered in the international banking system has financed covert operations.

According to author Alfred McCoy, the pattern of covert financing was established in the



Indochina war. In the 1960s, the Meo army in Laos was funded by the narcotics trade as part of Washington's military strategy against the combined forces of the neutralist government of Prince Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao.[6]

The pattern of drug politics set in Indochina has since been replicated in Central America and the Caribbean. "The rising curve of cocaine imports to the US", wrote journalist John Dinges "followed almost exactly the flow of US arms and military advisers to Central America".[7]

The military in Guatemala and Haiti, to which the CIA provided covert support, were known to be involved in the trade of narcotics into Southern Florida. And as revealed in the Iran-Contra and Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI) scandals, there was strong evidence that covert operations were funded through the laundering of drug money. "Dirty money" recycled through the banking system-often through an anonymous shell company-became "covert money," used to finance various rebel groups and guerrilla movements including the Nicaraguan Contras and the Afghan Mujahadeen. According to a 1991 *Time* magazine report:

"Because the US wanted to supply the mujehadeen rebels in Afghanistan with stinger missiles and other military hardware it needed the full cooperation of Pakistan. By the mid-1980s, the CIA operation in Islamabad was one of the largest US intelligence stations in the World. 'If BCCI is such an embarrassment to the US that forthright investigations are not being pursued it has a lot to do with the blind eye the US turned to the heroin trafficking in Pakistan', said a US intelligence officer.[8]

#### America and Germany join hands

Since the early 1990s, Bonn and Washington have joined hands in establishing their respective spheres of influence in the Balkans. Their intelligence agencies have also collaborated. According to intelligence analyst John Whitley, covert support to the Kosovo rebel army was established as a joint endeavour between the CIA and Germany's Bundes Nachrichten Dienst (BND) (which previously played a key role in installing a right-wing nationalist government under Franjo Tudjman in Croatia).[9] The task to create and finance the KLA was initially given to Germany: "They used German uniforms, East German weapons and were financed, in part, with drug money".[10] According to Whitley, the CIA was subsequently instrumental in training and equipping the KLA in Albania.[11]

The covert activities of Germany's BND were consistent with Bonn's intent to expand its "Lebensraum" into the Balkans. Prior to the onset of the civil war in Bosnia, Germany and its Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher had actively supported secession; it had "forced the pace of international diplomacy" and pressured its Western allies to recognize Slovenia and Croatia. According to the Geopolitical Drug Watch, both Germany and the US favoured (although not officially) the formation of a "Greater Albania" encompassing Albania, Kosovo and parts of Macedonia.[12] According to Sean Gervasi, Germany was seeking a free hand among its allies "to pursue economic dominance in the whole of Mitteleuropa." [13]

#### Islamic fundamentalism in support of the KLA

Bonn and Washington's "hidden agenda" consisted in triggering nationalist liberation movements in Bosnia and Kosovo with the ultimate purpose of destabilising Yugoslavia. The latter objective was also carried out "by turning a blind eye" to the influx of mercenaries

and financial support from Islamic fundamentalist organisations.[14]

Mercenaries financed by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had been fighting in Bosnia.[15] And the Bosnian pattern was replicated in Kosovo: Mujahadeen mercenaries from various Islamic countries are reported to be fighting alongside the KLA in Kosovo. German, Turkish and Afghan instructors were reported to be training the KLA in guerrilla and diversion tactics.[16]

According to a Deutsche Press-Agentur report, financial support from Islamic countries to the KLA had been channelled through the former Albanian chief of the National Information Service (NIS), Bashkim Gazidede.[17] "Gazidede, reportedly a devout Moslem who fled Albania in March of last year [1997], is presently [1998] being investigated for his contacts with Islamic terrorist organizations." [18]

The supply route for arming KLA "freedom fighters" are the rugged mountainous borders of Albania with Kosovo and Macedonia. Albania is also a key point of transit of the Balkans drug route which supplies Western Europe with grade four heroin. Seventy-five percent of the heroin entering Western Europe is from Turkey. And a large part of drug shipments originating in Turkey transits through the Balkans. According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), "it is estimated that 4-6 metric tons of heroin leave each month from Turkey having [through the Balkans] as destination Western Europe." [19] A recent intelligence report by Germany's Federal Criminal Agency suggests that: "Ethnic Albanians are now the most prominent group in the distribution of heroin in Western consumer countries." [20]

#### The laundering of dirty money

In order to thrive, the criminal syndicates involved in the Balkans narcotics trade need friends in high places. Smuggling rings with alleged links to the Turkish State are said to control the trafficking of heroin through the Balkans "cooperating closely with other groups with which they have political or religious ties" including criminal groups in Albanian and Kosovo.[21] In this new global financial environment, powerful undercover political lobbies connected to organized crime cultivate links to prominent political figures and officials of the military and intelligence establishment.

The narcotics trade nonetheless uses respectable banks to launder large amounts of dirty money. While comfortably removed from the smuggling operations per se, powerful banking interests in Turkey but mainly those in financial centres in Western Europe discretely collect fat commissions in a multibillion dollar money laundering operation. These interests have high stakes in ensuring a safe passage of drug shipments into Western European markets.

#### The Albanian connection

Arms smuggling from Albania into Kosovo and Macedonia started at the beginning of 1992, when the Democratic Party came to power, headed by President Sali Berisha. An expansive underground economy and cross border trade had unfolded. A triangular trade in oil, arms and narcotics had developed largely as a result of the embargo imposed by the international community on Serbia and Montenegro and the blockade enforced by Greece against Macedonia.

Industry and agriculture in Kosovo were spearheaded into bankruptcy following the IMF's lethal "economic medicine" imposed on Belgrade in 1990. The embargo was imposed on

Yugoslavia. Ethnic Albanians and Serbs were driven into abysmal poverty. Economic collapse created an environment which fostered the progress of illicit trade. In Kosovo, the rate of unemployment increased to a staggering 70 percent (according to Western sources).

Poverty and economic collapse served to exacerbate simmering ethnic tensions. Thousands of unemployed youths “barely out of their teens” from an impoverished population, were drafted into the ranks of the KLA ...[22]

In neighbouring Albania, the free market reforms adopted since 1992 had created conditions which favoured the criminalisation of state institutions. Drug money was also laundered in the Albanian pyramids (ponzi schemes) which mushroomed during the government of former President Sali Berisha (1992-1997).[23] These shady investment funds were an integral part of the economic reforms inflicted by Western creditors on Albania.

Drug barons in Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia (with links to the Italian Mafia) had become the new economic elites, often associated with Western business interests. In turn the financial proceeds of the trade in drugs and arms were recycled towards other illicit activities (and vice versa) including a vast prostitution racket between Albania and Italy. Albanian criminal groups operating in Milan, “have become so powerful running prostitution rackets that they have even taken over the Calabrians in strength and influence.”[24]

The application of “strong economic medicine” under the guidance of the Washington based Bretton Woods institutions had contributed to wrecking Albania’s banking system and precipitating the collapse of the Albanian economy. The resulting chaos enabled American and European transnationals to carefully position themselves. Several Western oil companies including Occidental, Shell and British Petroleum had their eyes riveted on Albania’s abundant and unexplored oil-deposits. Western investors were also gawking Albania’s extensive reserves of chrome, copper, gold, nickel and platinum.... The Adenauer Foundation had been lobbying in the background on behalf of German mining interests.[25]

Berisha’s Minister of Defence Safet Zoulali (alleged to have been involved in the illegal oil and narcotics trade) was the architect of the agreement with Germany’s Preussag (handing over control over Albania’s chrome mines) against the competing bid of the US led consortium of Macalloy Inc. in association with Rio Tinto Zimbabwe (RTZ).[26]

Large amounts of narco-dollars had also been recycled into the privatisation programmes leading to the acquisition of state assets by the mafias. In Albania, the privatisation programme had led virtually overnight to the development of a property owning class firmly committed to the “free market”. In Northern Albania, this class was associated with the Guegue “families” linked to the Democratic Party.

Controlled by the Democratic Party under the presidency of Sali Berisha (1992-97), Albania’s largest financial “pyramid” VEFA Holdings had been set up by the Guegue “families” of Northern Albania with the support of Western banking interests. VEFA was under investigation in Italy in 1997 for its ties to the Mafia which allegedly used VEFA to launder large amounts of dirty money.[27]

According to one press report (based on intelligence sources), senior members of the Albanian government during the presidency of Sali Berisha including cabinet members and members of the secret police SHIK were alleged to be involved in drugs trafficking and illegal arms trading into Kosovo:

(...) The allegations are very serious. Drugs, arms, contraband cigarettes all are believed to have been handled by a company run openly by Albania's ruling Democratic Party, Shqiponja (...). In the course of 1996 Defence Minister, Safet Zhulali [was alleged] to have used his office to facilitate the transport of arms, oil and contraband cigarettes. (...) Drugs barons from Kosovo (...) operate in Albania with impunity, and much of the transportation of heroin and other drugs across Albania, from Macedonia and Greece en route to Italy, is believed to be organised by Shik, the state security police (...). Intelligence agents are convinced the chain of command in the rackets goes all the way to the top and have had no hesitation in naming ministers in their reports.[28]

The trade in narcotics and weapons was allowed to prosper despite the presence since 1993 of a large contingent of American troops at the Albanian-Macedonian border with a mandate to enforce the embargo. The West had turned a blind eye. The revenues from oil and narcotics were used to finance the purchase of arms (often in terms of direct barter): "Deliveries of oil to Macedonia (skirting the Greek embargo [in 1993-4] can be used to cover heroin, as do deliveries of kalachnikov rifles to Albanian 'brothers' in Kosovo".[29]

The Northern tribal clans or "fares" had also developed links with Italy's crime syndicates.[30] In turn, the latter played a key role in smuggling arms across the Adriatic into the Albanian ports of Dures and Valona. At the outset in 1992, the weapons channelled into Kosovo were largely small arms including Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles, RPK and PPK machine-guns, 12.7 calibre heavy machine-guns, etc.

The proceeds of the narcotics trade has enabled the KLA to rapidly develop a force of some 30,000 men. More recently, the KLA has acquired more sophisticated weaponry including anti-aircraft and anti-armor rockets. According to Belgrade, some of the funds have come directly from the CIA "funnelled through a so-called 'Government of Kosovo' based in Geneva, Switzerland. Its Washington office employs the public-relations firm of Ruder Finn-notorious for its slanders of the Belgrade government".[31]

The KLA has also acquired electronic surveillance equipment which enables it to receive NATO satellite information concerning the movement of the Yugoslav Army. The KLA training camp in Albania is said to "concentrate on heavy weapons training-rocket propelled grenades, medium caliber cannons, tanks and transporter use, as well as on communications, and command and control". (According to Yugoslav government sources).[32]

These extensive deliveries of weapons to the Kosovo rebel army were consistent with Western geopolitical objectives. Not surprisingly, there has been a "deafening silence" of the international media regarding the Kosovo arms-drugs trade. In the words of a 1994 Report of the Geopolitical Drug Watch: "the trafficking [of drugs and arms] is basically being judged on its geostrategic implications (...) In Kosovo, drugs and weapons trafficking is fuelling geopolitical hopes and fears"...[33]

The fate of Kosovo had already been carefully laid out prior to the signing of the 1995 Dayton agreement. NATO had entered an unwholesome "marriage of convenience" with the mafia. "Freedom fighters" were put in place, the narcotics trade enabled Washington and Bonn to "finance the Kosovo conflict" with the ultimate objective of destabilising the Belgrade government and fully recolonising the Balkans. The destruction of an entire country is the outcome. Western governments which participated in the NATO operation bear a heavy burden of responsibility in the deaths of civilians, the impoverishment of both



the ethnic Albanian and Serbian populations and the plight of those who were brutally uprooted from towns and villages in Kosovo as a result of the bombings.

#### Notes:

1. Roger Boyes and Eske Wright, Drugs Money Linked to the Kosovo Rebels, The Times, London, Monday, March 24, 1999.
2. Ibid.
3. Philip Smucker and Tim Butcher, "Shifting stance over KLA has betrayed' Albanians", Daily Telegraph, London, 6 April 1999
4. KDOM Daily Report, released by the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, Office of South Central European Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, December 21, 1998; Compiled by EUR/SCE (202-647-4850) from daily reports of the US element of the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission, December 21, 1998.
5. "Rugova, sous protection serbe appelle a l'arret des raides", Le Devoir, Montreal, 1 April 1999.
6. See Alfred W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, Harper and Row, New York, 1972.
7. See John Dinges, Our Man in Panama, The Shrewd Rise and Brutal Fall of Manuel Noriega, Times Books, New York, 1991.
8. "The Dirtiest Bank of All," Time, July 29, 1991, p. 22.
9. Truth in Media, Phoenix, 2 April, 1999; see also Michel Collon, Poker menteur, editions EPO, Brussels, 1997.
10. Quoted in Truth in Media, Phoenix, 2 April, 1999).
11. Ibid.
12. Geopolitical Drug Watch, No 32, June 1994, p. 4
13. Sean Gervasi, "Germany, US and the Yugoslav Crisis", Covert Action Quarterly, No. 43, Winter 1992-93).
14. See Daily Telegraph, 29 December 1993.
15. For further details see Michel Collon, Poker menteur, editions EPO, Brussels, 1997, p. 288.
16. Truth in Media, Kosovo in Crisis, Phoenix, 2 April 1999.
17. Deutsche Presse-Agentur, March 13, 1998.
18. Ibid.
19. Daily News, Ankara, 5 March 1997.
20. Quoted in Boyes and Wright, op cit.
21. ANA, Athens, 28 January 1997, see also Turkish Daily News, 29 January 1997.
22. Brian Murphy, KLA Volunteers Lack Experience, The Associated Press, 5 April 1999.
23. See Geopolitical Drug Watch, No. 35, 1994, p. 3, see also Barry James, in Balkans, Arms for Drugs, The International Herald Tribune, Paris, June 6, 1994.
24. The Guardian, 25 March 1997.
25. For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, La crisi albanese, Edizioni Gruppo Abele, Torino, 1998.
26. Ibid.
27. Andrew Gumbel, The Gangster Regime We Fund, The Independent, February 14, 1997, p. 15.
28. Ibid.
29. Geopolitical Drug Watch, No. 35, 1994, p. 3.
30. Geopolitical Drug Watch, No 66, p. 4.
31. Quoted in Workers' World, May 7, 1998.
32. See Government of Yugoslavia at <http://www.gov.yu/terrorism/terroristcamps.html>.
33. Geopolitical Drug Watch, No 32, June 1994, p. 4.

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## Chapter III

### NATO's War of Aggression against Yugoslavia:

#### Who are the War Criminals?

*This text was written in May 1999 at the height of the bombing campaign (15 May 1999)*

#### Low Intensity Nuclear War

*With NATO air-strikes entering their third month, a new stage of the War has unfolded. NATO's "humanitarian bombings" have been stepped up leading to mounting civilian casualties and human suffering. Thirty percent of those killed in the bombings are children.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the use of cluster bombs, the Alliance is waging a "low intensity nuclear war" using toxic radioactive shells and missiles containing depleted uranium. Amply documented, the radioactive fall-out causes cancer potentially affecting millions of people for generations to come. According to a recent scientific report, "the first signs of radiation on children including herpes on the mouth and skin rashes on the back and ankles" have been observed in Yugoslavia since the beginning of the bombings.<sup>2</sup>*

In addition to the radioactive fall-out which has contaminated the environment and the food chain, the Alliance has also bombed Yugoslavia's major chemical and pharmaceutical plants. The bombing of Galenika, the largest medicine factory in Yugoslavia has contributed to releasing dangerous, highly toxic fumes. When NATO forces bombed plants of the Pancevo petrochemical complex in mid-April "fire broke out and huge quantities of chlorine, ethylene dichloride and vinyl chloride monomer flowed out. Workers at Pancevo, fearing further bombing attacks that would blow up dangerous materials, released tons of ethylene dichloride, a carcinogen, into the Danube."<sup>3</sup>

#### NATO to the "Rescue of Ethnic Albanians"

Ethnic Albanians have not been spared by NATO air raids. Killing ethnic Albanians in Kosovo is said to be "inevitable" in carrying out a "humanitarian operation on behalf of ethnic Albanians". In addition to the impacts of the ground war between the KLA and the Yugoslav Armed Forces, the bombings and the resulting radioactive fall-out in Kosovo have been more devastating than in the rest of Yugoslavia.

Presented as a humanitarian mission, the evidence amply confirms that NATO's brutal air raids of towns and villages in Kosovo have triggered the exodus of refugees. Those who have fled their homes to refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania have nothing to return to,

nothing to look forward to... An entire country has been destroyed, its civilian industry and public infrastructure transformed into rubble. Bridges, power plants, schools and hospitals are displayed as “legitimate military targets” selected by NATO’s Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) in Vicenza, Italy and carefully “validated prior to the pilot launching his strike.”

With the “diplomatic shuttle” still ongoing, the Alliance is intent on inflicting as much damage on the Yugoslav economy (including Kosovo) as possible prior to reaching a G8 brokered “peace initiative” which will empower them to send in ground troops. “Allied commanders have steadily widened their list of economic targets... Increasingly, the impact of NATO air strikes has put people out of work... causing water shortages in Belgrade, Novi Sad and other Serbian cities. ... [T]he effect was to shut down businesses, strain hospitals’ ability to function and cut off water...”<sup>4</sup>. Some 115 medical institutions have been damaged of which several have been totally demolished. And hospital patients –including children and the elderly– are dying due to the lack of water and electricity...<sup>5</sup>

General Wesley Clark, NATO’s Supreme commander in Europe, confirmed in late May that “NATO’S air campaign has not reached its peak yet and the alliance should be prepared for more civilian casualties.”<sup>6</sup>. General Clark also confirmed that “he would be seeking to increase the number of air strikes in Kosovo and expand the range of targets.”<sup>7</sup> As the bombings entered their third month, there was also a noticeable change in “NATO rhetoric”. The Alliance had become increasingly unrepentant, NATO officials were no longer apologising for civilian casualties, claiming that the latter were contributing to “helping Milosevic’s propaganda machine.”

### Extending the Conflict Beyond the Balkans

Drowned in the barrage of media images and self-serving analyses, the broader strategic interests and economic causes of the War go unmentioned. The late Sean Gervasi writing in 1995 had anticipated an impending War. According to Gervasi, Washington’s strategic goals stretched well beyond the Balkans. They largely consisted in “installing a Western-style regime in Yugoslavia and reducing the geographic area, power and influence of Serbia to a minimum....”<sup>8</sup>

In this context, the installation of American power in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean also constitutes a step towards the extension of Washington’s geopolitical sphere of influence beyond the Balkans into the area of the Caspian Sea, Central Asia and West Asia.

In this regard, NATO’s military intervention in Yugoslavia (in violation of international law) also sets a dangerous precedent. It provides “legitimacy” to future military interventions. To achieve its strategic objectives, national economies are destabilised, regional conflicts are financed through the provision of covert support to armed insurgencies... In other words, the conflict in Yugoslavia creates conditions which provide legitimacy to future interventions of the Alliance into the “internal affairs of sovereign nations”.

The consolidation of American strategic interests in Eastern Europe, the Balkans (and beyond) was not only marked by the enlargement of NATO (with the accession of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic as NATO members) barely two weeks before the beginning of the bombings, the War in Yugoslavia also coincided with a critical split in geopolitical alignments within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

In late April, Georgia, the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova signed a pact in Washington, creating GUUAM, a regional alliance which lies strategically at the hub of the Caspian oil and gas wealth, "with Moldova and the Ukraine offering [pipeline] export routes to the West".<sup>9</sup> This geopolitical split bears a direct relationship to the crisis in Yugoslavia. The region is already unstable marked by nationalist conflicts and separatist movements.

The members of this new pro-NATO political grouping not only tacitly support the bombings in Yugoslavia, they have also agreed to "low level military cooperation" with NATO while insisting that "the group is not a military alliance directed against any third party, namely Moscow."<sup>10</sup>

Dominated by Western oil interests, the formation of GUUAM is not only intent on excluding Russia from the oil and gas deposits in the Caspian area but also in isolating Moscow politically thereby potentially re-igniting Cold War divisions...

### The War Has Stalled Nuclear Arms Controls

In turn, the War in Yugoslavia has significantly stalled nuclear arms-control initiatives leading to the cancellation of an exchange program "that would have had US and Russian nuclear weapons officers in constant contact at year's end to prevent any launches as a result of Year 2000 computer troubles."<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, Russia's military has also voiced its concern "that the bombing of Yugoslavia could turn out in the very near future to be just a rehearsal for similar strikes on Russia."<sup>12</sup>

According to Dr. Mary-Wynne Ashford, co-president of the Nobel Peace Prize winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the impact of NATO bombings of Yugoslavia "on nuclear weapons policy is an extremely serious development... Russians feel a sense of betrayal by the West... because NATO took this action outside the UN."<sup>13</sup>

Aleksander Arbatov, deputy chairman of the Defence Committee of the Russian State Duma U.S.-Russian relations describes the War in Yugoslavia as the "worst most acute, most dangerous juncture since the U.S.-Soviet Berlin and Cuban missile crises."<sup>14</sup> According to Arbatov:

"START II is dead, co-operation with NATO is frozen, co-operation on missile defence is out of the question, and Moscow's willingness to co-operate on non-proliferation issues is at an all-time low. Moreover, anti-U.S. sentiment in Russia is real, deep and more wide-spread than ever, and the slogan describing NATO action - "today Serbia, tomorrow Russia," is "deeply planted in Russian's minds."...<sup>15</sup> Mary-Wynne Ashford also warns that whereas Russia was moving towards integration with Europe, they [the Russians] now:

".... perceive their primary threat from the West. Officials in [Russia's] Foreign Affairs (Arms Control and Disarmament) told us that Russia has no option but to rely on nuclear weapons for its defence because its conventional forces are inadequate.... Even if the bombings stop now, the changes in Russia's attitude toward the West, its renewed reliance on nuclear weapons with thousands on high alert, and its loss of confidence in international law leave us vulnerable to catastrophe.... This crisis makes de-alerting nuclear weapons more urgent than ever. To those who say the Russian threat is all rhetoric, I reply that rhetoric is what starts wars".<sup>16</sup>



## The Media War: “Silencing the Silent Majority”

This war is also “a War against the Truth”. With protest movements developing around the World, NATO has reinforced its clutch over the mass media. In a stylised (“wag the dog”) media masquerade, the Alliance is relentlessly portrayed as “the saviour of ethnic Albanian Kosovars”. A full-fledged “cover-up operation” has been set in motion with a view to thwarting public debate on the War. The hidden agenda is to “silence the silent majority.” The Western media heeding to the Alliance’s demands has blatantly misled public opinion. Casually portrayed on TV screens, civilian deaths are justified as inevitable “collateral damage”. According to the Pentagon, “there is no such thing as clean combat.”<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, anti-war commentators (including former ambassadors and OSCE officials) have been carefully removed from mainstream public affairs programmes, TV content is closely scrutinised, the images of civilian deaths and destruction relayed from Belgrade are seldomly and selectively displayed, journalists are under tight supervision. While the media does not hesitate to criticize NATO for having committed “errors” and “tragic mistakes”, the legitimacy of the military operation and its “humanitarian mandate” are not questioned:

“Public opinion is confronted with a loaded question which allows only one answer. In the present war, that question is, “Doesn’t ethnic cleansing have to be stopped?” This simplification allows the media to portray Yugoslavia rather than NATO as the aggressor. The alliance, in a complete inversion of reality, is presented as conducting an essentially defensive war on behalf of the Kosovar Albanians...” when in fact ethnic Albanians are the principle victims of NATO’s “humanitarian bombings.”<sup>18</sup>

According to NATO’s propaganda machine, “ethnic Albanians do not flee the bombings” and the ground war between the KLA and the Yugoslav Army. According to Diana Johnstone this makes them “nearly unique [because] throughout history, civilians have fled from war zones.... No, as we have heard repeatedly from NATO spokesmen and apologists, Kosovo Albanians run away from only one thing: brutal ethnic cleansing carried out by Serbs.”<sup>19</sup>

The refugee crisis we are told by NATO is limited to Kosovo. Yet the evidence (withheld by the Western media) confirms that people throughout Serbia are fleeing major cities:

Reliable estimates put the number of refugees who have left Belgrade to escape the bombing at 400,000. Most are women and children. At least another 500,000 have left Serbia’s other cities, notably Novi Sad and Nish, where NATO bombing has caused air pollution, cut the water supply, and struck purely civilian targets such as market squares. Altogether, according to the Italian daily “Il Manifesto”, the NATO bombing has produced at least a million refugees in Serbia. Predrag Simic, foreign policy adviser to Serbian opposition leader Vuk Draskovic, told a Paris conference [in late May] that Kosovo was being so thoroughly devastated by NATO bombing that nobody, neither Albanians nor Serbs, would be able to go back and live there”.<sup>20</sup>

## Who is Responsible for War Crimes?

Public “disapproval” of NATO bombings is immediately dismissed as “Serb propaganda”. Those who speak out against NATO are branded as “apologists of Milosevic”. While most anti-War critics in NATO countries are not defenders of the Milosevic regime, they are nonetheless expected to be “balanced” in their arguments. “Looking at both sides of the

picture is the rule”: anti-war commentators are invited to echo NATO’s fabricated media consensus, to unequivocally “join the bandwagon” against Milosevic. Under these circumstances, an objective understanding and analysis of the role of the Milosovic government since the civil War in Bosnia and in the context of the present crisis in Kosovo has been rendered virtually impossible.

Media double standards? Whereas President Milosevic and four members of his government were indicted by the Hague International Criminal Tribunal (ICTY) (late May) for allegedly organising a policy of “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo, the news media failed to mention that several parallel law suits were launched at The Hague Tribunal (ICTY), accusing NATO leaders of “crimes against humanity.”<sup>21</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that the UK government (whose Prime Minister Tony Blair is among the list of accused in one of the parallel law suits) has provided The Hague Tribunal with “intelligence on the situation within Kosovo” since the beginning of the bombings.<sup>22</sup> Part of this intelligence material was relayed by the KLA with which British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has been in frequent contact as well as through British Special Forces (SAS) directly collaborating with the KLA.

#### Law Suit Directed Against NATO Leaders

In May [1999], a group of 15 Canadian lawyers and law professors together with the American Association of Jurists (with members in more than 20 countries) launched a suit against NATO leaders at the ICTY in the Hague.<sup>23</sup> The suit points to “open violation” of the United Nations Charter, the NATO treaty, the Geneva Conventions and the “Principles of International Law Recognized by the Nuremberg Tribunal”. The latter makes: “planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances” a crime.<sup>24</sup>

The list of crimes allegedly committed by NATO leaders includes:

“wilful killing, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, extensive destruction of property,... employment of poisonous weapons [implying radioactive fall-out] or other weapons to cause unnecessary suffering, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity,...”<sup>25</sup>

Under the terms of reference of the ICTY “a person who planned, instigated, ordered, committed or otherwise aided and abetted in the planning, preparation or execution of a crime shall be individually responsible for the crime” and “the official position of any accused person, whether as Head of State or Government or as a responsible Government official, shall not relieve such person of criminal responsibility or mitigate punishment.”<sup>26</sup>

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson (and former President of Ireland) confirmed in Geneva on 30 April that the Prosecutor of the War Crimes Tribunal (ICTY) has the mandate not only to prosecute Serb forces but that the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and NATO may also come under scrutiny, “if it appears that serious violations of international humanitarian law have occurred.”

According to Walter J. Rockler, former prosecutor of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials:

“The bombing war also violates and shreds the basic provisions of the United Nations Charter and other conventions and treaties; the attack on Yugoslavia constitutes the most brazen international aggression since the Nazis attacked Poland to prevent “Polish atrocities” against Germans. The United States has discarded pretensions to international legality and decency, and embarked on a course of raw imperialism run amok.”<sup>27</sup>

### Shaky Evidence of a “Humanitarian Catastrophe” Prior to the Bombings

In the course of “covering-up” the real motivations of NATO in launching the War, the international media has also failed to mention that an official intelligence report of the German Foreign Ministry (used to establish the eligibility of political refugees from Kosovo) confirmed that there was no evidence of “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo in the months immediately preceding the bombings. Who is lying? German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer had justified NATO’s intervention pointing to a “humanitarian catastrophe”, yet the internal documents of his own ministry say exactly the opposite:

“Even in Kosovo an explicit political persecution linked to Albanian ethnicity is not verifiable. The East of Kosovo is still not involved in armed conflict. Public life in cities like Pristina, Urosevac, Gnjilan, etc. has, in the entire conflict period, continued on a relatively normal basis. The actions of the security forces [were] not directed against the Kosovo-Albanians as an ethnically defined group, but against the military opponent [KLA] and its actual or alleged supporters.”... “<sup>29</sup>

[W]ith an agreement made with the Serbian leadership at the end of 1998 ... both the security situation and the conditions of life of the Albanian-derived population have noticeably improved... Specifically in the larger cities public life has since returned to relative normality.”<sup>29</sup>

The above assessments are broadly consistent with several independent evaluations of the humanitarian situation in Kosovo prior to the onslaught of the bombing campaign. Roland Keith, a former field office director of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), who left Kosovo on March 20th reported that most of the violence in Kosovo was instigated by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA):

“Upon my arrival the war increasingly evolved into a mid intensity conflict as ambushes, the encroachment of critical lines of communication and the [KLA] kidnapping of security forces resulted in a significant increase in government casualties which in turn led to major Yugoslavian reprisal security operations... By the beginning of March these terror and counter-terror operations led to the inhabitants of numerous villages fleeing, or being dispersed to either other villages, cities or the hills to seek refuge... The situation was clearly that KLA provocations, as personally witnessed in ambushes of security patrols which inflicted fatal and other casualties, were clear violations of the previous October’s agreement [and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199]. The security forces responded and the consequent security harassment and counter-operations led to an intensified insurrectionary war, but as I have stated elsewhere, I did not witness, nor did I have knowledge of any incidents of so-called “ethnic cleansing” and there certainly were no occurrences of “genocidal policies” while I was with the KVM in Kosovo. What has transpired since the OSCE monitors were evacuated on March 20, in order to deliver the penultimate warning to force Yugoslavian compliance with the Rambouillet and subsequent Paris documents and the commencement of the NATO air

bombardment of March 24, obviously has resulted in human rights abuses and a very significant humanitarian disaster as some 600,000 Albanian Kosovars have fled or been expelled from the province. This did not occur, though, before March 20, so I would attribute the humanitarian disaster directly or indirectly to the NATO air bombardment and resulting anti-terrorist campaign.”<sup>30</sup>

## Chronology of Nato Planning

### [Kosovo's "Independence": Dilemmas of NATO's Aggression in 1999](#)

Carefully removed from the public eye, preparations for both “the air campaign” and “the ground War” have been ongoing for almost a year prior to the beginning of NATO’s “humanitarian bombings” on March 24th 1999.

Responding to broad strategic and economic objectives, the Alliance’s first priority was to secure the stationing of armed combat troops in Macedonia on the immediate border with Kosovo. US Secretary of Defense William Cohen had travelled to Skopje in late December 1997 for discussions with the Macedonian government and Military. These high levels talks were followed a few months later by the visit of Macedonia’s Defense Minister L. Kitanoski to Washington for meetings at the Pentagon. On the agenda: the establishment of a NATO base in Macedonia.<sup>31</sup>

No time was lost: on May 6, 1998, the NATO Council met “to review alliance efforts” in the region; a major military exercise entitled “Cooperative Best Effort” was slated to take place in Macedonia in September. NATO nonetheless “reassured the international community” that the military exercise was not meant to be “a rehearsal”, rather it was to enable “NATO military authorities to study various options. Decisions on whether to execute any of those options would be a matter for future decision.”<sup>32</sup>

Largely the consequence of KLA terrorism, the deterioration of the security situation in Kosovo conveniently provided NATO with a pretext to build up its ground forces in Macedonia (composed largely of British and French troops). According to NATO, it was therefore necessary to envisage “a more complicated and ambitious [military] exercise [in Macedonia] to send a clear political signal [to Belgrade] of NATO’s involvement”.<sup>33</sup>

## The Role of the Kosovo Liberation Army

In parallel with the setting up of its military operations in Albania and Macedonia, NATO had established direct links with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). A US Department of Defense briefing confirms in this regard that “initial contacts” between the KLA and NATO had taken place by mid-1998:

“...the realization has come to people [in NATO] that we [NATO] have to have the UCK [acronym for KLA in Albanian] involved in this process because they have shown at least the potential to be rejectionists of any deal that could be worked out there with the existing Kosovo parties. So somehow they have to be brought in and that’s why we’ve made some initial contacts there with the group, hopefully the right people in the group, to try and bring them into this negotiating process. <sup>34</sup>

While these “initial contacts” were acknowledged by NATO officially only in mid-1998, the



KLA had (according to several reports) been receiving “covert support” and training from the CIA and Germany’s Bundes Nachrichten Dienst (BND) since the mid-nineties.<sup>35</sup>

The concurrent building up of KLA forces was part of NATO planning. By mid-1998 “covert support” had been gradually replaced –despite the KLA’s links to organised crime– by official (“overt”) support by the military Alliance in violation of UN Security Council Resolution UNSCR 1160 of 31 March 1998 which condemned: “...all acts of terrorism by the Kosovo Liberation Army or any other group or individual and all external support for terrorist activity in Kosovo, including finance, arms and training.”

On 24 September 1998, another key UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1199) was adopted which called “upon the authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community urgently to enter without preconditions into a meaningful dialogue on political status issues.” It also required Belgrade to withdraw its troops from Kosovo.

Following a renewed wave of KLA terrorism, the Yugoslav authorities were blamed for the “crackdowns on ethnic Albanians” providing NATO defense ministers meeting in Vilmoura Portugal (September 24th on the same day as the adoption of UNSCR 1199) with the “justification” to issue an “activation warning” for a campaign of air strikes against Serb positions. The Vilmoura statement called upon Belgrade to “take immediate steps to alleviate the humanitarian situation..., stop repressive actions against the population and seek a political solution through negotiations with the Albanian majority”.<sup>36</sup>

This so-called “activation warning” was followed in mid-October by “an activation order” by the North Atlantic Council authorising NATO’s Supreme Commander for Europe General Wesley Clark to initiate “limited air strikes” and a “phased air campaign” ... should the Yugoslav authorities refuse to comply with UNSCR 1199.<sup>37</sup>

Under the impending threat of air strikes, a partial withdrawal was carried out by Belgrade (following the adoption of UNSCR 1199) creating almost immediately conditions for the KLA to occupy positions previously held by retreating Serb forces. In turn, the strengthening of the KLA was accompanied by renewed terrorist activity and a consequent “worsening of the security situation”. NATO’s hidden objective, in this regard, was to use the KLA insurgency to further provoke ethnic tensions and generate social strife in Kosovo.

In the meantime, US envoy Richard Holbrooke had entered into discussions with President Milosovic. Forged under the threat of NATO air strikes, negotiations on Kosovo’s political status had also been initiated in Pristina between a Serbian delegation led by President Milan Milutinovic and Ibrahim Rugova, President of the Democratic League (DLK) representing ethnic Albanians. While Mr Christopher Hill, the US envoy had been invited as an observer to these meetings, Milutinovic had insisted that the negotiations (which proceeded from UNSCR 1199) were an internal matter.

Following the agreement between US envoy Richard Holbrooke and President Slobodan Milosevic, Yugoslavia was to complete negotiations on “a framework for a political settlement” by the 2nd of November 1998. Moreover, a Verification Mission to establish compliance with resolutions UNSCR 1160 and UNSCR 1199, was put in place in Kosovo under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). A parallel NATO air verification mission (complementing the OSCE verification mission) was established following an agreement signed in Belgrade on 15 October 1998 by the Yugoslav Chief of General Staff and NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General Wesley

Clark.

The terms of both the OSCE and NATO verification agreements were subsequently embodied in UNSCR 1260 of October 24th. Whereas Belgrade was given a 96 hour “deadline for compliance”, the Alliance decided to postpone the initiation of air strikes following talks in Belgrade (October 25-26) between President Slobodan Milosevic and General Wesley Clark. According to the Alliance statement: “NATO will remain prepared to carry out air operations should they be necessary” 38. In the meantime, NATO launched Operation Eagle Eye using unarmed aircraft and unmanned predator aerial vehicles (UAVs). Eagle Eye surveillance activities were coordinated with the “ground verification” mission conducted by OSCE observer teams and by the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission (KDOM).

#### A Former “Iran-Contragate” Official Heads the OSCE Verification Mission

In the meantime, a career US diplomat, Ambassador William G. Walker was appointed Head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). A tailor-made assignment: Walker was well-known for his role in the “Iran-Contragate” scandal during the Reagan administration. The KLA insurgency was in many regards a “carbon copy” of the Nicaraguan Contras which had also been funded by drug money with covert support from the CIA.

Well documented by court files, William G. Walker –in association with Oliver North– played a key role in channelling covert funding to the Nicaraguan Contras while serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs in the Reagan Administration. In this capacity, he became a special assistant to Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams, “a figure whose name would soon be making its way into the headlines on a daily basis in connection with ... the “Iran-Contra” affair.”39

William G. Walker had been involved in the so-called Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office (“NHAO”) in the State Department which was a cover-up fund whereby covert military aid was supplied to the Contras. The objective was to circumvent the so-called “Boland Amendments”, -ie. “riders” to the Department of Defense Appropriation Act, “which prohibited the [US] government from spending money for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua”. 40 Confirmed by files of the US Court of Appeal (District of Columbia), “Walker attended some meetings of the Restricted Interagency Group for Central America, of which Oliver North was a member”.41

Walker was never indicted for criminal wrong-doings in the Iran- Contragate scandal. Upon completing his work with Oliver North, he was appointed US Ambassador to El Salvador. His stint in El Salvador coincided with the rise of the death squadrons and a period during which the country was virtually “under the grip of US sponsored State terror.”42

In Kosovo, William G. Walker applied his skills in covert operations acquired in Central America. As head of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), Walker maintained close links to the KLA military command in the field.43 From the outset of his mission in Kosovo, he used his position to pursue the interests of the Alliance.

#### “The Racak Massacre”

The so-called “Racak massacre” occurred shortly before the launching of the Rambouillet “peace initiative”. although it turned out to be a fake, the Racak massacre nonetheless played a key role in “setting the stage” for NATO’s air raids. William Walker declared (in his

capacity as head of KVM) that the Yugoslav police had carried out a massacre of civilians at Racak on January 15th. The Yugoslav authorities retorted that local police had in fact conducted an operation in this village against the Kosovo Liberation Army and that several KLA soliders had died in cross-fire. As later reported by several French newspapers (Le Monde, Le Figaro and Liberation), it was confirmed that the "Racak massacre" was indeed a fake put together with a view to discrediting Belgrade:

"Eventually, even the Los Angeles Times joined in, running a story entitled "Racak Massacre Questions: Were Atrocities Faked?" The theory behind all these exposés was that the KLA had gathered their own dead after the battle, removed their uniforms, put them in civilian clothes, and then called in the observers."<sup>44</sup>.

### The Rambouillet Process

On January 22, senior officials of the so-called "Contact Group" of six countries (including the US, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and Italy) meeting in London called for a peace conference which would bring together the Yugoslav government and "representatives of ethnic Albanians." In turn, NATO warned that it was "ready to act" if the peace plan to be finalised by the Contact Group were rejected. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan concurred during a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels that the threat of force was "essential" to press both sides into a settlement.<sup>45</sup>

In the meantime, while supporting the KLA insurgency on the ground, the Alliance had also contributed to spearheading KLA leader Hashim Thaci (a 29 year "freedom fighter") into heading the Kosovar delegation to Rambouillet, on behalf of the ethnic Albanian majority. The Democratic League headed by Ibrahim Rugova had been deliberately side-stepped. The Alliance was relying on its KLA puppets (linked to organised crime) to rubber-stamp an agreement which would have transformed Kosovo into an occupied territory under NATO military rule.

While negotiations were ongoing in Rambouillet, NATO decided to increase the readiness of its assigned forces "so as to make them able to execute the operation within 48 hours".<sup>46</sup> In other words, "peace negotiations" had been initiated in Rambouillet (contrary to the Vienna Convention) under the threat of impending air strikes. NATO had granted a three weeks period to the parties meeting in Rambouillet to conclude negotiations.

On February 19, one day prior to the deadline, NATO Secretary General Javier Solano reaffirmed that, "if no agreement is reached by the deadline set by the Contact Group, NATO is ready to take whatever measures are necessary to avert a humanitarian catastrophe".<sup>47</sup> And on 22 March 1999, NATO'S North Atlantic Council authorised "the Secretary General to decide, subject to further consultations, on a broader range of air operations if necessary."<sup>48</sup>

And on 23 March 1999, NATO'S Secretary General directed the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe General Wesley Clark to initiate air operations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Air operations commenced on 24 March 1999 under the nickname "Operation Allied Force."<sup>49</sup>

### Sending in Ground Troups Under a G-8 "Peace Plan"

Since the brutal onslaught of the air campaign on March 24, the Alliance has continued to

build up its ground combat troops on the Macedonian border in anticipation of an impending military invasion. Initially NATO had envisaged a Kosovo occupation force of 50,000 troops which could be increased to 60,000 with a larger US share than the 4,000 initially envisaged under Rambouillet.

In other words, the proposed invasion force was to be more than double that under Rambouillet (28,000 troops) while also enforcing all the normative clauses of the initial Rambouillet agreement including the “free movement” of NATO combat units throughout Yugoslavia.

In the meantime, NATO’s military establishment was forcing the pace of international diplomacy. The Alliance hinted in May that a ground offensive could be launched prior to reaching a “peace agreement” sanctioned by the G8 and ratified by the United Nations Security Council.

In addition to the 16,000 ground troops already stationed (well before the beginning of the bombings) in Macedonia (of which almost half are British), some 7000 NATO troops and “special forces” were also present in Albania, not to mention the NATO troops stationed in Bosnia-Herzegovina under Operation Joint Endeavour:

“We’ve already put quite a lot of troops in Macedonia as the nucleus of that operation”, said British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. “There are over 12,000 there already... and last weekend [14-15 May] we committed another two and a half thousand to go there. We need to build up – actually we need to build up now...”<sup>50</sup>.

In late May, the 60,000 troops target was revised to 150,000. Alliance officials estimating that “if the alliance later decides to mobilize for a land attack ... an invasion force could number more than 150,000 soldiers.”<sup>51</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair in a separate statement had (without any form of parliamentary debate) confirmed the sending of 50,000 British troops as part of the 150,000 invasion force.

In early June, a NATO led invasion under a bogus G8-UN peace initiative was put forth. While the latter served to appease and distract public opinion, it usefully provided the Alliance with a semblance of legitimacy under the UN Charter. It also purported to overcome the hesitation of elected politicians including German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Italian Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema. The US Administration also required the “rubber stamp” of the United Nations Security Council so as to acquire the assent of the Republican dominated Congress:

“House and Senate Democrats agree there is little support at this point for launching ground troops... even if Clinton and other NATO leaders could reach a consensus on such a dramatic shift in tactics. For now, Clinton has said he is opposed to ground troops.”<sup>52</sup>

The US House of Representatives (in what appeared to be a partisan “anti-Clinton” vote) has declined to even endorse the air campaign while signifying its refusal to authorize a “ground war” without congressional approval. In early April, Republicans and Democrats joined hands in the House and threw out a proposed “declaration of war on Yugoslavia” by an overwhelming 427-2 vote.

In late May [1999], seventeen members of Congress launched a suit against President Clinton pointing to the blatant breach of the US Constitution:

“that the Defendant, the President of the United States, is unconstitutionally continuing an offensive military attack by United States Armed Forces against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without obtaining a declaration of war or other explicit authority from the Congress of the United States as required by Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution, and despite Congress’ decision not to authorize such action.” 53

The law suit launched in District Court (District of Columbia) also pointed to the violation of the War Powers Resolution of 1973, a Vietnam War-era legislation which requires “the sitting President congressional approval for the “introduction into hostilities” of the U.S. armed forces for longer than 60 days”:

Plaintiffs also seek a declaration that a report pursuant to Section 1543(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution was required to be submitted on March 26, 1999, within 48 hours of the introduction into hostilities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of United States Armed Forces. Additionally, Plaintiffs seek a declaration that, pursuant to Section 1544(b) of the Resolution, the President must terminate the use of United States Armed Forces engaged in hostilities against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia no later than sixty calendar days after March 26, 1999. The President must do so unless the Congress declares war or enacts other explicit authorization, or has extended the sixty day period, or the President determines that thirty additional days are necessary to safely withdraw United States Armed Forces from combat.<sup>54</sup>

NATO as “Peace-keepers”

Echoing the barrage of self-serving NATO propaganda, the media scam now consists in skilfully portraying Alliance ground troops as bona fide “peace-keepers”. Public opinion should not be deluded as to the meaning of a G8-UN brokered diplomatic solution.

An “international presence” consisting largely of NATO troops under the G8 proposal (ratified by the Serbian Parliament in early June) could include a token participation of “non-NATO forces” including Russia and the Ukraine. While Moscow agreed in early June that all Yugoslav forces be withdrawn from Kosovo alongside the disarmament of the KLA, Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin nonetheless insisted that the command structure of the proposed international force be under the control and jurisdiction of the United Nations.

Despite his perfunctory condemnation of NATO bombings, Russian President Boris Yeltsin is a Western puppet. Chernomyrdin writing in the Washington Post had earlier warned that a continuation of the air raids could hurt US-Russian relations: “The world has never in this decade been so close as now to be on brink of nuclear war...” adding that “Russia would pull out of the negotiating process if NATO bombing, which started March 24, doesn’t stop soon.”<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime, the Alliance, however, had persisted in maintaining a unified NATO command structure (which was unacceptable to Moscow and Belgrade). NATO has also stepped up the bombings as a means of pressuring Belgrade into accepting (without prior negotiation) NATO’s “five conditions”.



If the G-8 proposal were to be ratified, NATO would first send in US Marines into Kosovo from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit in the Adriatic Sea. The Marines would be part of a so-called “Enabling Force” prior to the moving in of a force of 50,000 troops.

A G-8 “peace proposal” (implying a de facto military occupation of Kosovo) could be formally ratified at the Cologne G7-G8 Summit in mid-June. All G7 heads of government and heads of State together with President Boris Yeltsin will be in attendance at Cologne in what is hoped to be a highflown display of unity in favour of a (G8 sanctioned) NATO led invasion. NATO nonetheless warned in early June that should the diplomatic initiative not succeed, the Alliance would proceed with a ground invasion involving 150,000 troops....

### The Sending in of “Special Forces”

In the meantime, an incipient undeclared ground War has already commenced: special British, French and American forces were reported to be advising the KLA in the conduct of ground combat operations against regular units of the Yugoslav Army. To support this initiative, a Republican sponsored bill was launched in the US Congress to provide direct military aid to the KLA.

These “special forces” are “advising the rebels at their strongholds in northern Albania, where the KLA has launched a major recruitment and training operation. According to high-ranking KLA officials, the [British] SAS is using two camps near Tirana, the Albanian capital, and another on the Kosovar border to teach KLA officers how to conduct intelligence-gathering operations on Serbian positions”.<sup>56</sup> In May, three French special forces officers wearing uniforms of the French Armed Forces (“Parachutistes”) were reported killed on the Albania-Yugoslavia border by the Yugoslav daily Vecernje Novosti. According to the French daily Libération, the three men were allegedly “instructors in charge of coordinating ground war activities by the KLA...”<sup>57</sup>.

### An Unholy “Marriage of Convenience”

In addition to the dispatch of Western special forces, Mujehadeen mercenaries and other Islamic fundamentalist groups (financed inter alia by Iran and Saudi financier Osama Bin Laden) have been collaborating with the KLA in the ground war.

“[B]y early December 1997, Iranian intelligence had already delivered the first shipments of hand grenades, machine-guns, assault rifles, night vision equipment, and communications gear... Moreover, the Iranians began sending promising Albanian and UCK [KLA] commanders for advanced military training in al-Quds [special] forces and IRGC camps in Iran...”<sup>58</sup>.

Bin Laden’s Al Qa’ida allegedly responsible for last year’s African embassy bombings “was one of several fundamentalist groups that had sent units to fight in Kosovo, ... Bin Laden is believed to have established an operation in Albania in 1994 ... Albanian sources say Sali Berisha, who was then president, had links with some groups that later proved to be extreme fundamentalists”.<sup>59</sup>

### Nato in Close Liaison with KLA Ground Operations

According to Jane Defence Weekly (10 May 1999), the KLA’s new chief of staff is former Croatian Armed Forces Brigadier General Agim Ceku (an ethnic Albanian) who is currently

under investigation by the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague (ICTY) for his role in “summary executions, indiscriminate shelling of civilian populations and ‘ethnic cleansing’ during the War in Bosnia.”<sup>60</sup>

NATO spokesman Jamie Shea’s response to the appointment of a War criminal as KLA chief of staff was communicated in a Press Briefing:

“I have always made it clear, and you have heard me say this, that NATO has no direct contacts with the KLA. Who they appoint as their leaders, that is entirely their own affair. I don’t have any comment on that whatever.”<sup>61</sup>

Shea’s statement that NATO has “no direct contacts with the KLA” is a lie. It is in overt contradiction with other Alliance statements: “I speak regularly to Hashim Thaci, the leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army who’s in Kosovo. I spoke to him at the end of last week” said British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.<sup>62</sup>

Operations on the ground (led by the KLA and NATO Special forces) are now being carefully coordinated with the air campaign. Moreover, some 50 Canadian armed forces “are working with the KLA in Kosovo” to help report “where the bombs are falling” so they can better target “where the next bomb should go.”<sup>63</sup>

#### Pentagon Sponsored Mercenaries in Kosovo

The KLA has also been provided with “a long-term training deal with Military and Professional Resources International [MPRI], a mercenary company run by former American officers who operate with semi-official approval from the Pentagon and played a key role in building up Croatia’s armed forces [during the War in Bosnia].”<sup>64</sup> And General Brigadier Agim Ceku (despite his role in “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia), is currently collaborating closely with the Pentagon’s mercenary outfit MPRI on behalf of the KLA.

#### The KLA to Form a “Post-conflict Government”

A self-proclaimed provisional KLA government of Kosovo has been established. With KLA leader Hashim Thaci as Prime Minister designate, the KLA has already been promised a central role in the formation of a “post-conflict government”.

While openly promoting a “freedom movement” with links to the drug trade, NATO was also intent in bypassing the civilian Kosovo Democratic League and its leader Ibrahim Rugova who had earlier called for an end to the bombings. Rugova was branded as a “traitor” by the KLA. According to Albanian state-run TV, the KLA had sentenced Rugova to death accusing him of being “an agent of the regime in Belgrade.”<sup>65</sup>

In April, Fehmi Agani, one of Rugova’s closest collaborators in the Democratic League was killed. The Serbs were blamed by NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea for having assassinated Agani. According to Skopje paper Makedonija Danas quoting reliable sources in Albania: “Agani was killed... on the orders of Tirana where Thaci is located with the members of his illegal government.”<sup>66</sup>

According to a report of the Foreign Policy Institute:

“...the KLA have [no] qualms about murdering Rugova’s collaborators, whom it accused of the “crime” of moderation. Most recently, although Rugova’s recent meeting with Milosevic may well have been under duress, the KLA declared Rugova a “traitor” – yet another step toward eliminating any competitors for political power within Kosovo.”<sup>67</sup>

The KLA military regime had replaced the duly elected (by ethnic Albanians) civilian provisional Kosovar government of President Ibrahim Rugova. In a statement issued in April, the KLA considered the (parallel) “parliamentary elections” organised by the Democratic League and held in March 1998 to be invalid.

The self-proclaimed Kosovar administration is made up of the KLA and the Democratic Union Movement (LBD), a coalition of five opposition parties opposed to Rugova’s Democratic League (LDK). In addition to the position of prime minister, the KLA controls the ministries of finance, public order and defence. In the words of US State Department spokesman James Foley:

‘We want to develop a good relationship with them [the KLA] as they transform themselves into a politically-oriented organization,’ ..‘[W]e believe that we have a lot of advice and a lot of help that we can provide to them if they become precisely the kind of political actor we would like to see them become.’<sup>68</sup>

With the KLA poised to play a central role in the formation of a “post conflict” government, the tendency is towards the installation of a “Mafia State” with links to the drug trade. The US State Department’s position is that the KLA would “not be allowed to continue as a military force but would have the chance to move forward in their quest for self government under a ‘different context’” meaning the inauguration of a de facto “narco-democracy” under NATO protection: “If we can help them and they want us to help them in that effort of transformation, I think it’s nothing that anybody can argue with.”<sup>69</sup>

In recent developments, the Alliance, however, has sought through the intermediation of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to reconcile divisions between Thachi, Rugova and other ethnic Albanian leaders “primarily with a view to strengthening its [the Alliance’s] own position in the region.”<sup>70</sup>

### Imposing “Free Market” Reforms

Wall Street analysts concur that “war is good for business” particularly during a period of “economic slowdown”. The US Congress has approved increased budgetary allocations to finance the War in Yugoslavia which will result in multi-billion contracts for America’s Defense industry. In turn, the War will boost the military-industrial complex and its related high tech sectors in the US and Western Europe. A ground war combined with a prolonged military occupation (as in Bosnia) will prop up military spending. In turn, covert support and financing of “freedom fighters” (extending beyond the Balkans into Central Asia and the Middle East) will contribute to boosting the lucrative contraband in small arms for an expanding market of insurgent nationalist movements.

### “Economic Reconstruction”

The “post conflict” agenda (under the proposed G8 “peace initiative” consists in establishing

in Kosovo an occupied territory under Western administration (broadly on the same model as the 1995 Dayton Agreement imposed on Bosnia-Herzegovina).

“Free market reforms” are envisaged for Kosovo under the supervision of the Bretton Woods institutions. Article I (Chapter 4a) of the Rambouillet Agreement stipulates that: “The economy of Kosovo shall function in accordance with free market principles”.

“Civilian administration [in Kosovo] and reconstruction would be carried out by non-military bodies including the EU and the OSCE, with input from the World Bank and the IMF to rebuild war-damaged infrastructure and rehouse refugees.<sup>71</sup>

In close liaison with NATO, the Bretton Woods institutions had already analyzed the consequences of an eventual military intervention leading to the military occupation of Kosovo: almost a year prior to the beginning of the War, the World Bank conducted “simulations” which “anticipated the possibility of an emergency scenario arising out of the tensions in Kosovo”.<sup>72</sup> The “simulations” conducted in Washington have in fact already been translated into a panoply of “emergency recovery loans” for Macedonia and Albania, and there is more to come... Since the imposition of the embargo, Yugoslavia, however, is no longer considered a member of the Bretton Woods institutions and will not be eligible for IMF-World Bank loans until the sanctions are lifted.

The proposed “Marshall Plan” for the Balkans is a delusion. We recall that in Bosnia, the costs of reconstruction were of the order of 50 billion dollars. Western donors initially pledged \$3 billion in reconstruction loans, yet only a meagre \$518 million dollars were granted in December 1995, part of which was tagged (under the terms of the Dayton Peace Accords) to finance some of the local civilian costs of the Implementation Force’s (IFOR) military deployment as well as repay debt arrears with international creditors.<sup>73</sup>

The eventual “reconstruction” of Yugoslavia formulated in the context of the “free market” reforms and financed by international debt largely purport to create a safe haven for foreign investors rather than rehabilitate the country’s economic and social infrastructure. The IMF’s lethal “economic medicine” will be imposed, the national economy will be dismantled, European and American banks will take over financial institutions, local industrial enterprises which have not been totally destroyed will be driven into bankruptcy. The most profitable State assets will be transferred into the hands of foreign capital under the World Bank sponsored privatisation programme. In turn, “strong economic medicine” imposed by external creditors will contribute to further boosting a criminal economy (already implanted in Albania and Macedonia) which feeds on poverty and economic dislocation.

“The Allies will work with the rest of the international community to help rebuild Kosovo once the crisis is over: The International Monetary Fund and Group of Seven industrialized countries are among those who stand ready to offer financial help to the countries of the region. We want to ensure proper co-ordination of aid and help countries to respond to the effects of the crisis. This should go hand in hand with the necessary structural reforms in the countries affected — helped by budget support from the international community.<sup>74</sup>

In turn, the so-called “reconstruction” of the Balkans by foreign capital will signify multi-billion contracts to multinational firms to rebuild roads, airports and bridges which will

eventually be required (once the embargo is lifted) to facilitate the “free movement” of capital and commodities.

The proposed “Marshall Plan” financed by the World Bank and the European Development Bank (EBRD) as well as private creditors will largely benefit Western mining, petroleum and construction companies while fuelling the region’s external debt well into the third millennium. And the countries of the Balkans are slated to reimburse this debt through the laundering of dirty money in the domestic banking system which will be deregulated under the supervision of Western financial institutions. Narco-dollars from the multi-billion dollar Balkans drug trade will be recycled (through the banking system) and channelled towards servicing the external debt as well as “financing” the costs of “reconstruction”.

The pattern for Kosovo is, in this regard, similar to that of Macedonia and Albania. Since the early 1990s, the IMF’s reforms have impoverished the Albanian population while spearheading the national economy into bankruptcy. The IMF’s deadly economic therapy transforms countries into open territories. In Albania and Macedonia it has fostered the growth of illicit trade and the criminalisation of State institutions.

Moreover, even prior to the influx of refugees, NATO troops in Macedonia and Albania had already occupied civilian facilities (including hotels, schools, barracks and even hospitals) without compensating the national governments for the use of local services.<sup>75</sup>

In a cruel irony, a significant part of these incurred costs as well as those associated with the refugee crisis are now to be financed not by the Alliance but by the national governments on borrowed money:

“[T]he Albanian government’s formal structures have been paralysed by the crisis. The country’s treasury has been emptied by the initial efforts to help the refugees.”<sup>76</sup>

#### Who Will Pay War Reparations?

The extensive destruction of Yugoslavia, would normally require the Alliance to “pay war reparations” to Belgrade. However, following a pattern set in both Vietnam and Iraq, the Alliance will no doubt compel Belgrade “to pay for the costs” of Operation Allied Force (including the cruise missiles and radioactive shells) as a condition for the “normalisation of relations” and the lifting of the economic embargo.

We recall in this regard that whereas Vietnam never received War reparations payments, Hanoi was compelled –as a condition for the “normalisation” of economic relations and the lifting of the US embargo in 1994–, to recognize the “bad debts” of the defunct Saigon regime which were largely used to finance the US War effort. By recognizing (in a secret Paris Club agreement negotiated in 1993) the legitimacy of these debts, Vietnam had accepted “to pay war reparation damages” to her former enemy.<sup>77</sup>

Similarly Baghdad has been “billed for the costs of the Gulf War”, – i.e. accumulated Iraqi debts including private claims against Iraq have been carefully recorded by a special unit of the UN Security Council. The recognition of these debts by Baghdad at some future date will be a condition for the lifting of sanctions on Iraq.



## Notes

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## Chapter IV

### NATO has Installed a Reign of Terror in Kosovo

*This text was presented to the Independent Commission of Inquiry to Investigate U.S./NATO War Crimes Against The People of Yugoslavia, International Action Center, New York, July 31, 1999.*

#### PART I: MASSACRES OF CIVILIANS IN KOSOVO

While the World focusses on troop movements and war crimes, the massacres of civilians in the wake of the bombings have been casually dismissed as “justifiable acts of revenge”. In occupied Kosovo, “double standards” prevail in assessing alleged war crimes. The massacres directed against Serbs, ethnic Albanians, Roma and other ethnic groups have been conducted on the instructions of the military command of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

NATO ostensibly denies KLA involvement. These so-called “unmotivated acts of violence and retaliation” are not categorised as “war crimes” and are therefore not included in the mandate of the numerous FBI and Interpol police investigators dispatched to Kosovo under the auspices of the Hague War Crime’s Tribunal (ICTY). Moreover, whereas NATO has tacitly endorsed the self-proclaimed KLA provisional government, KFOR the international security force in Kosovo has provided protection to the KLA military commanders responsible for the atrocities. In so doing both NATO and the UN Mission have acquiesced to the massacres of

civilians. In turn, public opinion has been blatantly misled. In portraying the massacres, the Western media has casually overlooked the role of the KLA, not to mention its pervasive links to organised crime. In the words of National Security Advisor Samuel Berger,

“these people [ethnic Albanians] come back ... with broken hearts and with some of those hearts filled with anger.”<sup>1</sup>

While the massacres are seldom presented as the result of “deliberate decisions” by the KLA military command, the evidence (and history of the KLA) amply confirm that these atrocities are part of a policy of “ethnic cleansing” directed mainly against the Serb population but also against the Roma, Montenegrins, Goranis and Turks.

Serbian houses and business have been confiscated, looted, or burned, and Serbs have been beaten, raped, and killed. In one of the more dramatic of incidents, KLA troops ransacked a monastery, terrorized the priest and a group of nuns with gunfire, and raped at least one of the nuns. NATO’s inability to control the situation and provide equal protection for all ethnic groups, and its apparent inability or unwillingness to fully disarm the KLA, has created a serious situation for NATO troops...<sup>2</sup>

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), confirms in this regard that:

“more than 164,000 Serbs have left Kosovo during the seven weeks since... the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered the province... A wave of arson and looting of Serb and Roma homes throughout Kosovo has ensued. Serbs and Roma remaining in Kosovo have been subject to repeated incidents of harassment and intimidation, including severe beatings. Most seriously, there has been a spate of murders and abductions of Serbs since mid-June, including the late July massacre of Serb farmers.”<sup>3</sup>

### Political Assassinations

The self-proclaimed Provisional Government of Kosovo (PGK) has also ordered assassinations directed against political opponents including “loyalist” ethnic Albanians and supporters of the Kosovo Democratic League (KDL). These acts are being carried out in a totally permissive environment. The leaders of the KLA rather than being arrested for war crimes, have been granted KFOR protection.

According to a report of the Foreign Policy Institute (published during the bombings):

“...the KLA have [no] qualms about murdering Rugova’s collaborators, whom it accused of the ‘crime’ of moderation... [T]he KLA declared Rugova a ‘traitor’ yet another step toward eliminating any competitors for political power within Kosovo.”<sup>4</sup>

Already in May [1999], Fehmi Agani, one of Rugova’s closest collaborators in the Kosovo Democratic League (KDL) was killed. The Serbs were blamed by NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea for having assassinated Agani. According to Skopje’s paper Makedonija Danas, Agani had been executed on the orders of the KLA’s self-appointed Prime Minister Hashim Thaci.<sup>5</sup>



“If Thaci actually considered Rugova a threat, he would not hesitate to have Rugova removed from the Kosovo political landscape.”<sup>6</sup>

In turn, the KLA has abducted and killed numerous professionals and intellectuals:

“Private and State properties are threatened, home and apartment owners are evicted en masse by force and threats, houses and entire villages are burned, cultural and religious monuments are destroyed... A particularly heavy blow... has been the violence against the hospital centre in Pristina, the maltreatment and expulsion of its professional management, doctors and medical staff.”<sup>7</sup>

Both NATO and the UN prefer to turn a blind eye. UN Interim Administrator Bernard Kouchner (a former French Minister of Health) and KFOR Commander Sir Mike Jackson have established a routine working relationship with Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and KLA Chief of Staff Brigadier General Agim Ceku.

Atrocities committed against the Roma

Ethnic cleansing has also been directed against the Roma (which represented prior to the conflict a population group of 150,000 people). (According to figures provided by the Roma Community in New York). A large part of the Roma population has already escaped to Montenegro and Serbia. In turn, there are reports that Roma refugees who had fled by boat to Southern Italy have been expelled by the Italian authorities.<sup>8</sup> The KLA has also ordered the systematic looting and torching of Romani homes and settlements:

“All houses and settlements of Romani, like 2,500 homes in the residential area called ‘Mahala’ in the town of Kosovska Mitrovica, have been looted and burnt down”.<sup>9</sup>

With regard to KLA atrocities committed against the Roma, the same media distortions prevail. According to the BBC: “Gypsies are accused by [Kosovar] Albanians of collaborating in Serb brutalities, which is why they’ve also become victims of revenge attacks. And the truth is, some probably did.”<sup>10</sup>

Installing a KLA Paramilitary Government

As Western leaders trumpet their support for democracy, State terrorism in Kosovo has become an integral part of NATO’s postwar design. The KLA’s political role for the post-conflict period had been mapped out well in advance. Prior to Rambouillet Conference, the KLA had been promised a central role in the formation of a post-conflict government. The “hidden agenda” consisted in converting the KLA paramilitary into a legitimate and accomplished civilian administration. According to US State Department spokesman James Foley (February 1999):

“We want to develop a good relationship with them [the KLA] as they transform themselves into a politically-oriented organization, ...[W]e believe that we have a lot of advice and a lot of help that we can provide to them if they become precisely the kind of political actor we would like to see them become.”<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the US State Department had already slated the KLA “provisional government” (PGK) to run civilian State institutions. Under NATO’s “Indirect Rule”, the KLA has taken over municipal governments and public services including schools and hospitals. Rame Buja, the KLA “Minister for Local Administration” has appointed local prefects in 23 out of 25 municipalities.<sup>12</sup>

Under NATO’s regency, the KLA has replaced the duly elected (by ethnic Albanians) provisional Kosovar government of President Ibrahim Rugova. The self-proclaimed KLA administration has branded Rugova as a traitor declaring the (parallel) Kosovar parliamentary elections held in March 1998 to be invalid. This position has largely been upheld by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) entrusted by UNMIK with the postwar task of “democracy building” and “good governance”. In turn, OSCE officials have already established a working rapport with KLA appointees.<sup>13</sup>

The KLA provisional government (PGK) is made up of the KLA’s political wing together with the Democratic Union Movement (LBD), a coalition of five opposition parties opposed to Rugova’s Democratic League (LDK). In addition to the position of prime minister, the KLA controls the ministries of finance, public order and defence. The KLA also has a controlling voice on the UN sponsored Kosovo Transitional Council set up by Mr. Bernard Kouchner. The PGK has also established links with a number of Western governments.

Whereas the KLA has been spearheaded into running civilian institutions (under the guidance of the OSCE), members of the duly elected Kosovar (provisional) government of the Democratic League (DKL) have been blatantly excluded from acquiring a meaningful political voice.

#### Establishing a KLA Police Force to Protect Civilians

Under NATO occupation, the rule of law has visibly been turned up side down. Criminals and terrorists are to become law enforcement officers. KLA troops which have already taken over police stations will eventually form a 4,000 strong “civilian” police force (to be trained by foreign police officers under the authority of the United Nations) with a mandate to “protect civilians”. Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien has already pledged Canadian support to the formation of a civilian police force.<sup>14</sup> The latter which has been entrusted to the OSCE will eventually operate under the jurisdiction of the KLA controlled “Ministry of Public Order”.

#### US Military Aid

Despite NATO’s commitment to disarming the KLA, the Kosovar paramilitary organisation is slated to be transformed into a modern military force. So-called “security assistance” has already been granted to the KLA by the US Congress under the “Kosovar Independence and Justice Act of 1999”. Start-up funds of 20 million dollars will largely be “used for training and support for their [KLA] established self-defence forces.”<sup>15</sup> In the words of KLA Chief of Staff Agrim Ceku:

“The KLA wants to be transformed into something like the US National Guard, ... we accept the assistance of KFOR and the international community to rebuild an army according to NATO standards. ... These professionally trained soldiers of the next generation of the KLA would seek only to defend Kosova. At this decisive moment, we [the KLA] do not hide our ambitions; we want the participation of international military structures to assist in the pacific and

While the KLA maintains its links to the Balkans narcotics trade which served to finance many of its terrorist activities, the paramilitary organisation has now been granted an official seal of approval as well as “legitimate” sources of funding. The pattern is similar to that followed in Croatia and in the Bosnian Muslim-Croatian Federation where so-called “equip and train” programmes were put together by the Pentagon. In turn, Washington’s military aid package to the KLA has been entrusted to Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) of Alexandria, Virginia, a private mercenary outfit run by high ranking former US military officers.

MPRI’s training concepts which had already been tested in Croatia and Bosnia are based on imparting “offensive tactics... as the best form of defence”.<sup>17</sup> In the Kosovar context, this so-called “defensive doctrine” transforms the KLA paramilitary into a modern army without however eliminating its terrorist makeup.<sup>18</sup> The objective is to ultimately transform an insurgent army into a modern military and police force which serves the Alliance’s future strategic objectives in the Balkans. MPRI has currently “ninety-one highly experienced, former military professionals working in Bosnia & Herzegovina”.<sup>19</sup> The number of military officers working on contract with the KLA has not been disclosed.

## PART II. FROM KRAJINA TO KOSOVO

The massacres of civilians in Kosovo are not disconnected acts of revenge by civilians or by so-called “rogue elements” within the KLA as claimed by NATO and the United Nations. They are part of a consistent and coherent pattern. The intent (and result) of the KLA sponsored atrocities have been to trigger the “ethnic cleansing” of Serbs, Roma and other minorities in Kosovo.

KLA Commander Agim Ceku referring to the killings of 14 villagers at Gracko on July 24, claimed that: “We [the KLA] do not know who did it, but I sincerely believe these people have nothing to do with the KLA.”<sup>20</sup> In turn, KFOR Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson has commended his KLA counterpart, Commander Agim Ceku for “efforts undertaken” to disarm the KLA. In fact, very few KLA weapons have been handed in. Moreover, the deadline for turning in KLA weaponry has been extended. “I do not regard this as noncompliance” said Commander Jackson in a press conference, “but rather as an indication of the seriousness with which General Ceku is taking this important issue.”<sup>21</sup>

Yet what Sir Mike Jackson failed to mention is that KLA Chief of Staff Commander Agim Ceku (although never indicted as a war criminal) was (according to Jane Defence Weekly June 10, 1999) “one of the key planners of the successful ‘Operation Storm’” led by the Croatian Armed Forces against Krajina Serbs in 1995.

General Jackson who had served in former Yugoslavia under the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was fully cognizant of the activities of the Croatian High Command during that period including the responsibilities imparted to Brigadier General Agim Ceku. In February 1999, barely a month prior to the NATO bombings, Ceku left his position as Brigadier General with the Croatian Armed Forces to join the KLA as Commander in Chief.

From Krajina to Kosovo: The Shape of Things to Come

According to the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Operation Storm resulted in

the massacre of at least 410 civilians in the course of a three day operation (4 to 7 August 1995).<sup>22</sup> An internal report of The Hague War Crimes Tribunal (leaked to the New York Times), confirmed that the Croatian Army had been responsible for carrying out:

“summary executions, indiscriminate shelling of civilian populations and “ethnic cleansing” in the Krajina region of Croatia....”<sup>23</sup>

In a section of the report entitled “The Indictment. Operation Storm, A Prima Facie Case.”, the ICTY report confirms that:

“During the course of the military offensive, the Croatian armed forces and special police committed numerous violations of international humanitarian law, including but not limited to, shelling of Knin and other cities... During, and in the 100 days following the military offensive, at least 150 Serb civilians were summarily executed, and many hundreds disappeared. ...In a widespread and systematic manner, Croatian troops committed murder and other inhumane acts upon and against Croatian Serbs.” <sup>24</sup>

US ‘Generals for Hire’

The internal 150 page report concluded that it has “sufficient material to establish that the three [Croatian] generals who commanded the military operation” could be held accountable under international law.<sup>25</sup> The individuals named had been directly involved in the military operation “in theatre”. Those involved in “the planning of Operation Storm” were not mentioned:

“The identity of the “American general” referred to by Fenrick [a Tribunal staff member] is not known. The tribunal would not allow Williamson or Fenrick to be interviewed. But Ms. Arbour, the tribunal’s chief prosecutor, suggested in a telephone interview last week that Fenrick’s comment had been ‘a joking observation’. Ms. Arbour had not been present during the meeting, and that is not how it was viewed by some who were there. Several people who were at the meeting assumed that Fenrick was referring to one of the retired U.S. generals who worked for Military Professional Resources Inc. ... Questions remain about the full extent of U.S. involvement. In the course of the three year investigation into the assault, the United States has failed to provide critical evidence requested by the tribunal, according to tribunal documents and officials, adding to suspicion among some there that Washington is uneasy about the investigation... The Pentagon, however, has argued through U.S. lawyers at the tribunal that the shelling was a legitimate military activity, according to tribunal documents and officials”.<sup>26</sup>

The Tribunal was attempting to hide what had already been revealed in several press reports published in the wake of Operation Storm. According to a US State Department spokesman, MPRI had been helping the Croatians “avoid excesses or atrocities in military operations.”<sup>27</sup> Fifteen senior US military advisers headed by retired two star General Richard Griffiths had been dispatched to Croatia barely seven months before Operation Storm. <sup>28</sup> According to one report, MPRI executive director General Carl E. Vuono: “held a secret top-level meeting at Brioni Island, off the coast of Croatia, with Gen. Varimar Cervenka, the architect of the Krajina campaign. In the five days preceding the attack, at least ten meetings were held between General Vuono and officers involved in the

campaign..."<sup>29</sup>

According to Ed Soyster, a senior MPRI executive and former head of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA):

"MPRI's role in Croatia is limited to classroom instruction on military-civil relations and doesn't involve training in tactics or weapons. Other U.S. military men say whatever MPRI did for the Croats and many suspect more than classroom instruction was involved it was worth every penny." Carl Vuono and Butch [Crosbie] Saint are hired guns and in it for the money," says Charles Boyd, a recently retired four star Air Force general who was the Pentagon's No. 2 man in Europe until July [1995]. "They did a very good job for the Croats, and I have no doubt they'll do a good job in Bosnia."<sup>30</sup>

### The Hague's Tribunal's Coverup

The untimely leaking of the ICTY's internal report on the Krajina massacres barely a few days before the onslaught of NATO's air raids on Yugoslavia was the source of some embarrassment to the Tribunal's Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour. The Tribunal (ICTY) attempted to cover up the matter and trivialise the report's findings (including the alleged role of the US military officers on contract with the Croatian Armed Forces). Several Tribunal officials including American Lawyer Clint Williamson sought to discredit the Canadian Peacekeeping officers' testimony who witnessed the Krajina massacres in 1995.<sup>31</sup>

Williamson, who described the shelling of Knin as a "minor incident," said that the Pentagon had told him that Knin was a legitimate military target... The [Tribunal's] review concluded by voting not to include the shelling of Knin in any indictment, a conclusion that stunned and angered many at the tribunal"...<sup>32</sup>

The findings of the Tribunal contained in the leaked ICTY documents were downplayed, their relevance was casually dismissed as "expressions of opinion, arguments and hypotheses from various staff members of the OTP during the investigative process".<sup>33</sup> According to the Tribunal's spokesperson "the documents do not represent in any way the concluded decisions of the Prosecutor." <sup>34</sup>

The internal 150 page report has not been released. The staff member who had leaked the documents is (according to a Croatian TV report) no longer working for the Tribunal. During the press Conference, the Tribunal's spokesman was asked: "about the consequences for the person who leaked the information", Blewitt [the ICTY spokesman] replied that he did not want to go into that. He said that the OTP would strengthen the existing procedures to prevent this from happening again, however he added that you could not stop people from talking".<sup>35</sup>

### The Use of Chemical Weapons in Croatia

The massacres conducted under Operation Storm "set the stage" for the "ethnic cleansing" of at least 180,000 Krajina Serbs (according to estimates of the Croatian Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International). According to other sources, the number of victims of ethnic cleansing in Krajina was much larger.

Moreover, there is evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the Yugoslav civil war (1991-95).<sup>36</sup> Although there is no firm evidence of the use of chemical weapons against



Croatian Serbs, an ongoing enquiry by the Canadian Minister of Defence (launched in July 1999) points to the possibility of toxic poisoning of Canadian Peacekeepers while on service in Croatia between 1993 and 1995:

“There was a smell of blood in the air during the past week as the media sensed they had a major scandal unfolding within the Department of National Defense over the medical files of those Canadians who served in Croatia in 1993. Allegations of destroyed documents, a coverup, and a defensive minister and senior officers...”<sup>37</sup>

The official release of the Department of National Defence (DND) refers to possibility of toxic “soil contamination” in Medak Pocket in 1993 (see below). Was it “soil contamination” or something far more serious? The criminal investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) refers to the shredding of medical files of former Canadian peacekeepers by the DND. In other words did the DND have something to hide? The issue remains as to what types of shells and ammunitions were used by the Croatian Armed Forces ie. were chemical weapons used against Serb civilians?

#### Operation Storm: the Account of the Royal Canadian Regiment

Prior to the onslaught, Croatian radio had previously broadcasted a message by president Franjo Tudjman, calling upon “Croatian citizens of Serbian ethnicity... to remain in their homes and not to fear the Croatian authorities, which will respect their minority rights.”<sup>38</sup> Canadian peacekeepers of the Second Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment witnessed the atrocities committed by Croatian troops in the Krajina offensive in September 1995:

“Any Serb who had failed to evacuate their property were systematically “cleansed” by roving death squads. Every abandoned animal was slaughtered and any Serb household was ransacked and torched”.<sup>39</sup>

Also confirmed by Canadian peacekeepers was the participation of German mercenaries in Operation Storm:

“Immediately behind the frontline Croatian combat troops and German mercenaries, a large number of hardline extremists had pushed into the Krajina. ...Many of these atrocities were carried out within the Canadian Sector, but as the peacekeepers were soon informed by the Croat authorities, the UN no longer had any formal authority in the region.”<sup>40</sup>

How the Germans mercenaries were recruited was never officially revealed. An investigation by the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) confirmed the that foreign mercenaries in Croatia had in some cases “been paid [and presumably recruited] outside Croatia and by third parties.”<sup>41</sup>

#### The 1993 Medak Pocket Massacre

According to Jane Defence Weekly (10 June 1999), Brigadier General Agim Ceku (now in charge of the KLA) also “masterminded the successful HV [Croatian Army] offensive at Medak” in September 1993. In Medak, the combat operation was entitled “Scorched Earth” resulting in the total destruction of the Serbian villages of Divoselo, Pocitelj and Citluk, and

the massacre of over 100 civilians.<sup>42</sup>

These massacres were also witnessed by Canadian peacekeepers under UN mandate:

“As the sun rose over the horizon, it revealed a Medak Valley engulfed in smoke and flames. As the frustrated soldiers of 2PPCLI waited for the order to move forward into the pocket, shots and screams still rang out as the ethnic cleansing continued. ...About 20 members of the international press had tagged along, anxious to see the Medak battleground. Calvin [a Canadian officer] called an informal press conference at the head of the column and loudly accused the Croats of trying to hide war crimes against the Serb inhabitants. The Croats started withdrawing back to their old lines, taking with them whatever loot they hadn’t destroyed. All livestock had been killed and houses torched. French reconnaissance troops and the Canadian command element pushed up the valley and soon began to find bodies of Serb civilians, some already decomposing, others freshly slaughtered. ...Finally, on the drizzly morning of Sept. 17, teams of UN civilian police arrived to probe the smouldering ruins for murder victims. Rotting corpses lying out in the open were catalogued, then turned over to the peacekeepers for burial.”<sup>43</sup>

The massacres were reported to the Canadian Minister of Defence and to the United Nations:

“Senior defence bureaucrats back in Ottawa had no way of predicting the outcome of the engagement in terms of political fallout. To them, there was no point in calling media attention to a situation that might easily backfire. ...So Medak was relegated to the memory hole no publicity, no recriminations, no official record. Except for those soldiers involved, Canada’s most lively military action since the Korean War simply never happened.”<sup>44</sup>

### PART III. NATO’S ‘POST CONFLICT’ AGENDA IN KOSOVO.

Both the Medak Pocket massacre and Operation Storm bear a direct relationship to the ongoing security situation in Kosovo and the massacres and ethnic cleansing committed by KLA troops. While the circumstances are markedly different, several of today’s actors in Kosovo were involved (under the auspices of the Croatian Armed Forces) in the planning of both these operations. Moreover, the US mercenary outfit MPRI which collaborated with the Croatian Armed Forces in 1995 is currently on contract with the KLA. NATO’s casual response to the appointment of Brigadier General Agim Ceku as KLA Chief of Staff was communicated by Mr. Jamie Shea in a Press Briefing in May:

“I have always made it clear, and you have heard me say this, that NATO has no direct contacts with the KLA. Who they appoint as their leaders, that is entirely their own affair. I don’t have any comment on that whatever.”<sup>45</sup>

While NATO says it “has no direct contacts with the KLA”, the evidence confirms the opposite. Amply documented, KLA terrorism has been installed with NATO’s tacit approval. The KLA had (according to several reports) been receiving “covert support” and training from the CIA and Germany’s Bundes Nachrichten Dienst (BND) since the mid-nineties. Moreover, MPRI collaboration with the KLA predates the onslaught of the bombing campaign.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the building up of KLA forces was part of NATO planning. Already by mid-1998, “covert support” had been replaced by official (“overt”) support by the military

Alliance in violation of UN Security Council Resolution UNSCR 1160 of 31 March 1998 which condemned: "...all acts of terrorism by the Kosovo Liberation Army or any other group or individual and all external support for terrorist activity in Kosovo, including finance, arms and training."

NATO officials, Western heads of State and heads of government, the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan not to mention ICTY chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour, were fully cognizant of General Brigadier Agim Ceku's involvement in the planning of Operation Storm and Operation Scorched Earth. Surely, some questions should have been asked...

Yet visibly what is shaping up in the wake of the bombings in Kosovo is the continuity of NATO's operation in the Balkans. Military personnel and UN bureaucrats previously stationed in Croatia and Bosnia have been routinely reassigned to Kosovo. KFOR Commander Mike Jackson had previously been responsible as IFOR Commander for organising the return of Serbs "to lands taken by Croatian HVO forces in the Krajina offensive".<sup>47</sup> And in this capacity General Mike Jackson had "urged that the resettlement [of Krajina Serbs] not [be] rushed to avoid tension [with the Croatians]... while also warning returning Serbs "of the extent of the [land] mine threat."<sup>48</sup> In retrospect, recalling the events of early 1996, very few Krajina Serbs were allowed to return to their homes under the protection of the United Nations.

And a similar process is unfolding in Kosovo, ie. the conduct of senior military officers conforms to a consistent pattern, the same key individuals are now involved in Kosovo. While token efforts are displayed to protect Serb and Roma civilians, those who have fled Kosovo are not encouraged to return under UN protection... In postwar Kosovo, "ethnic cleansing" implemented by the KLA has been accepted by the "international community" as a "fait accompli"...

While calling for democracy and "good governance" in the Balkans, the US and its allies have installed in Kosovo a paramilitary government with links to organised crime.

The foreseeable outcome is the outright "criminalisation" of civilian State institutions and the establishment of what is best described as a "Mafia State". The complicity of NATO and the Alliance governments (namely their relentless support to the KLA) points to the de facto "criminalisation" of KFOR and of the UN peacekeeping apparatus in Kosovo. The donor agencies and governments (eg. the funds approved by the US Congress in violation of several UN Security Council resolutions) providing financial support to the KLA are, in this regard, also "accessories" to the de facto criminalisation of State institutions. Through the intermediation of a paramilitary group (created and financed by Washington and Bonn), NATO ultimately bears the burden of responsibility for the massacres and ethnic cleansing of civilians in Kosovo.

#### State Terror and the "Free Market"

State terror and the "free market" seem to go hand in hand. The concurrent "criminalisation" of State institutions in Kosovo is not incompatible with the West's economic and strategic objectives in the Balkans. Notwithstanding the massacres of civilians, the self-proclaimed KLA administration has committed itself to establishing a "secure and stable environment" for foreign investors and international financial institutions. The Minister of Finance Adem Grobozci and other representatives of the provisional government invited to the various donor conferences are all KLA appointees. In

contrast, members of the KDL of Ibrahim Rugova (duly elected in parliamentary elections) were not even invited to attend the Stabilisation Summit in Sarajevo in late July.

“Free market reforms” are envisaged for Kosovo under the supervision of the Bretton Woods institutions largely replicating the structures of the Rambouillet agreement. Article I (Chapter 4a) of the Rambouillet Agreement stipulated that: “The economy of Kosovo shall function in accordance with free market principles”. The KLA government will largely be responsible for implementing these reforms and ensuring that loan conditionalities are met.

In close liaison with NATO, the Bretton Woods institutions had already analysed the consequences of an eventual military intervention leading to the military occupation of Kosovo: almost a year prior to the beginning of the War, the World Bank conducted “simulations” which “anticipated the possibility of an emergency scenario arising out of the tensions in Kosovo.”<sup>49</sup>

The eventual “reconstruction” of Kosovo financed by international debt largely purports to transfer Kosovo’s extensive wealth in mineral resources and coal to multinational capital. In this regard, the KLA has already occupied (pending their privatisation) the largest coal mine at Belacevac in Dobro Selo northwest of Pristina. In turn, foreign capital has its eyes rivetted on the massive Trepca mining complex which constitutes *“the most valuable piece of real estate in the Balkans, worth at least \$5 billion.”*<sup>50</sup> The Trepca complex not only includes copper and large reserves of zinc but also cadmium, gold, and silver. It has several smelting plants, 17 metal treatment sites, a power plant and Yugoslavia’s largest battery plant. Northern Kosovo also has estimated reserves of 17 billion tons of coal and lignite.

In the wake of the bombings, the management of many of the State owned enterprises and public utilities were taken over by KLA appointees. In turn, the leaders of the Provisional Government of Kosovo (PGK) have become “the brokers” of multinational capital committed to handing over the Kosovar economy at bargain prices to foreign investors. The IMF’s lethal “economic therapy” will be imposed, the provincial economy will be dismantled, agriculture will be deregulated, local industrial enterprises which have not been totally destroyed will be driven into bankruptcy. The most profitable State assets will eventually be transferred into the hands of foreign capital under the World Bank sponsored privatisation programme. “Strong economic medicine” imposed by external creditors will contribute to further boosting a criminal economy (already firmly implanted in Albania) which feeds on poverty and economic dislocation.

“The Allies will work with the rest of the international community to help rebuild Kosovo once the crisis is over: The International Monetary Fund and Group of Seven industrialized countries are among those who stand ready to offer financial help to the countries of the region. We want to ensure proper coordination of aid and help countries to respond to the effects of the crisis. This should go hand in hand with the necessary structural reforms in the countries affected helped by budget support from the international community.”<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, the so-called “reconstruction” of the Balkans by foreign capital will signify multibillion contracts to foreign firms to rebuild Kosovo’s infrastructure. More generally, the proposed “Marshall Plan” for the Balkans financed by the World Bank and the European Development Bank (EBRD) as well as private creditors will largely benefit Western mining, petroleum and construction companies while fuelling the region’s external debt well into the

third millennium.

And Kosovo is slated to reimburse this debt through the laundering of dirty money. Yugoslav banks in Kosovo will be closed down, the banking system will be deregulated under the supervision of Western financial institutions. Narcodollars from the multibillion dollar Balkans drug trade will be recycled towards servicing the external debt as well as “financing” the costs of “reconstruction.” The lucrative flow of narcodollars thus ensures that foreign investors involved in the “reconstruction” programme will be able reap substantial returns. In turn, the existence of a Kosovar “narco State” ensures the orderly reimbursement of international donors and creditors. The latter are prepared to turn blind eye. They have a tacit vested interest in installing a government which facilitates the laundering of drug money.

The pattern in Kosovo is, in this regard, similar to that observed in neighbouring Albania. Since the early 1990s (culminating with the collapse of the financial pyramids in 1996-97), the IMF’s reforms have impoverished the Albanian population while spearheading the national economy into bankruptcy. The IMF’s deadly economic therapy transforms countries into open territories. In Albania and to a lesser extent Macedonia, it has also contributed to fostering the growth of illicit trade and the criminalisation of State institutions.

#### Notes

1. Jim Lehrer News Maker Interview, PBS, 26 July 1999.
2. Stratfor Commentary, “Growing Threat of Serbian Paramilitary Action in Kosovo”, 29 July 1999.
3. Human Rights Watch, 3 August 1999.
4. See Michael Radu, “Don’t Arm the KLA”, CNS Commentary from the Foreign Policy Research Institute, 7 April, 1999).
5. Tanjug Press Dispatch, 14 May 1999.
6. Stratfor Comment, “Rugova Faced with a Choice of Two Losses”, Stratfor, 29 July 1999.
7. Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Yugoslav Daily Survey, Belgrade, 29 June 1999.
8. Hina Press Dispatch, Zagreb, 26 July 1999.
9. Ibid.
10. BBC Report, London, 5 July 1999.
11. New York Times, 2 February 1999.
12. Financial Times, London, 4 August 1999.
13. See Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mission in Kosovo, Decision 305, Permanent Council, 237th Plenary Meeting, PC Journal No. 237, Agenda item 2, Vienna, 1 July 1999.
14. Statement at the Sarajevo Summit, 31 July 1999.
15. 106th Congress, April 15, HR 1425.
16. Interview with KLA Chief of Staff Commander Agim Ceku, Kosovapress, 31 July 1999.
17. See Tammy Arbucki, “Building a Bosnian Army”, Jane International Defence Review, August 1997.
18. Ibid.
19. Military Professional Resources, Inc, “Personnel Needs”, <http://www.mpri.com/current/personnel.htm>
20. Associated Press Report.
21. Ibid.
22. The actual number of civilians killed or missing was much larger.
23. Quoted in Raymond Bonner, War Crimes Panel Finds Croat Troops Cleansed the Serbs, New York Times, 21 March 1999).
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Raymond Bonner, op cit.



27. Ken Silverstein, "Privatizing War", The Nation, New York, 27 July 1997.
  28. See Mark Thompson et al, "Generals for Hire", Time Magazine, 15 January 1996, p. 34.
  29. Quoted in Silverstein, op cit.
  30. Mark Thompson et al, op cit.
  31. Raymond Bonner, op cit.
  32. Ibid.
  33. ICTY Weekly Press Briefing, 24 March 1999).
  34. Ibid.
  35. Ibid.
  36. See inter alia Reuters dispatch, 21 October 1993 on the use of chemical grenades, a New York Times report on 31 October 1992 on the use of poisoned gas).
  37. Lewis MacKenzie, "Giving our soldiers the benefit of the doubt", National Post, 2 August 1999.
  38. Slobodna Dalmacija, Split, Croatia, August 5 1996.
  39. Scott Taylor and Brian Nolan, The Sunday Sun, Toronto, 2 November 1998.
  40. Ibid.
  41. United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Fifty-first session, Item 9 of the provisional agenda, Geneva, 21 December 1994).
  42. (See Memorandum on the Violation of the Human and Civil Rights of the Serbian People in the Republic of Croatia,  
<http://serbianlinks.freehosting.net/memorandum.htm>
  43. Excerpts from the book of Scott Taylor and Brian Nolan published in the Toronto Sun, 1 November 1998.
  44. Ibid.
  45. NATO Press Briefing, 14 May 1999.
  46. For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, Kosovo `Freedom Fighters' Financed by Organized Crime, CAQ, Spring-Summer 1999.
  47. Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol 25, No. 7, 14 February 1996.
  48. Ibid.
  49. World Bank Development News, Washington, 27 April 1999.
  50. New York Times, July 8, 1998, report by Chris Hedges.
  51. Statement by Javier Solano, Secretary General of NATO, published in The National Post, Toronto May 1999.
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## **Chapter V**

### **The Installation of a Mafia State in Kosovo**

*The following text written in March 2000, focussed on the formation of a Kosovar Mafia State integrated by former members of the KLA. It was presented at the June 10 Tribunal for US-NATO War Crimes in Yugoslavia. Kosovo is not a mafia state in its own right, it is a US/EU protectorate under NATO military rule. The government of Kosovo, which has extensive links to organized crime, serves the interests of the US-NATO occupation.*

The United Nations in a recent [2000] report submitted to Secretary General Kofi Annan now concedes that the Kosovo Protection Force (KPC) (inaugurated under UN auspices in September 1999) has been involved in “criminal activities-killings, ill-treatment/torture, illegal policing, abuse of authority, intimidation, breaches of political neutrality and hate speech”<sup>1</sup>.

And in a cruel irony, “the United Nations is paying the salaries of many of the gangsters.”<sup>2</sup> The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) –known for its connections to organized crime and the Balkans narcotics traffic was officially dissolved and transformed into the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) modelled on the US National Guard. Funded by US military aid, the KPC is trained by Military Professional Resources Inc (MPRI), a mercenary outfit based in Alexandria, Virginia.

The KPC was slated by the United Nations to become –in the words of UNMIK Special Representative Bernard Kouchner [now France’s Minister of Foreign Affairs] “a civilian, disciplined, uniformed and multi-ethnic emergency response... with a mandate to “providing humanitarian assistance... and contributing to rebuilding infrastructure and communities....”<sup>3</sup>

Shift in military labels. KLA Commander Agim Ceku was appointed Chief of Staff of Kosovo’s newly created Armed Forces. In the words of Bernard Kouchner during the inauguration ceremony: I look to him [Agim Ceku] to lead the new members of the Corps in the footsteps of Cincinnatus, the model citizen-soldier of ancient Rome — who left his plow standing in the field to answer the call to arms & and at the end of the war refused all honors in order to return to his civic duties.<sup>4</sup>

Barely a few weeks later, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) announced it was “investigating Ceku for alleged war crimes committed against ethnic Serbs in Croatia between 1993 and 1995.” <sup>5</sup> The information, however, was known to military and intelligence analysts well in advance of Ceku’s appointment. It had been withheld from public opinion by the ICTY during the mandate of Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour. Jane Defence Weekly (10 May 1999) had confirmed that Ceku had “masterminded the successful HV [Croatian] offensive at Medak [in 1993] and in 1995 was one of the key planners of the successful Operation ‘Storm ‘. United Nations Special Representative Dr. Bernard Kouchner (who is a 1999 Nobel Peace Laureate for his role as co-founder of Doctors without Borders) must have known.

The UN and NATO had access to the files of the ICTY. The Tribunal’s Chief Prosecutor knew and had the responsibility under the statutes of the ICTY of reporting the matter to the UN Secretary General. In a cruel irony, the United Nations had casually proceeded with the appointment of an individual who according to the files of a United Nations body (namely the ICTY) was an alleged war criminal. Surely some questions should have been asked.

When the information was released barely a few weeks after Ceku’s appointment: “a diplomat close to Bernard Kouchner the UN special representative [declared] “If we lose him {Agim Ceku} it will be a disaster,” ... “When you get to the second level of the TMK [Kosovo Protection Corps], you’re down to a bunch of local thugs.”... <sup>6</sup> “American diplomats... have suggested any indictment of Ceku would most likely be “sealed” and thereby kept out of the public domain... “[T]he NATO-led peacekeeping force, could not contemplate a public relations disaster with the Albanians by arresting Ceku”.<sup>7</sup> According to the Sunday Times (London), “[t]he possibility that Ceku, a respected figure in Kosovo, could be accused of war

crimes, [had] sent shivers through the international community... “8.

Meanwhile, the ICTY had reassured public opinion that the “[T]he court’s inquiries ... relate[d] to atrocities committed in Krajina, ... between 1993 and 1995”... Ceku’s record in Kosovo itself is not thought to be in question, although the office of Carla del Ponte, the new chief prosecutor, said an investigation into his activities with the KLA could not be ruled out...”<sup>9</sup>

#### War Criminals call the Shots

Visibly what was shaping up in the wake of the bombings in Kosovo was the continuity of NATO’s operation in the Balkans as well as its reliance on war criminals in its “peace-keeping” undertakings. Military personnel and UN bureaucrats previously stationed in Croatia and Bosnia had been routinely reassigned to Kosovo.



From Left to Right: Hashim Thaci, Bernard Kouchner, Lt. Gen. Michael Jackson, Agim Ceku, Gen Wesley Clark

Lieutenant General Mike Jackson was posted to Kosovo as KFOR Commander following his earlier stint in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia. In the immediate wake of the 1995 ethnic massacres in Krajina (for which Agim Ceku is under investigation by the ICTY), General Michael Jackson was put in charge as IFOR commander, for organising the return of Serbs “to lands taken by Croatian HVO forces in the 1995 Krajina offensive”.<sup>10</sup>

And in this capacity Jackson had “urged that the resettlement [of Krajina Serbs] not [be] rushed to avoid tension [with the Croats]” while also warning returning Serbs “of the extent of the [land] mine threat.”<sup>11</sup> In retrospect, recalling the events of early 1996, very few Krajina Serbs were allowed to return to their homes under the protection of the United Nations. According to “Veritas” (a Belgrade based organization of Serbian refugees from Croatia), some 10,000-15,000 Serbs were able to resettle in Croatia. Jackson’s experience in “ethnic warfare,” however predates the Balkans. From his earlier posting in Northern Ireland

as a young captain, Jackson was second in command in the “Bloody Sunday” massacre of civilians in Derry in 1972.

Under the orders of Lieutenant Colonel Derek Wilford, Captain Jackson and thirteen other soldiers of the parachute regiment opened fire “on a peaceful protest by the Northern Ireland civil rights association opposing discrimination against Catholics. In just 30 minutes, 13 people were shot dead and a further 13 injured. Those who died were killed by a single bullet to the head or body, indicating that they had been deliberately targeted. No weapons were found on any of the deceased.”<sup>12</sup> Jackson’s role in “Bloody Sunday” “did not hinder his Military career.”<sup>13</sup> From his early stint in Northern Ireland, he had been reassigned under United Nations auspices to the theatre of ethnic warfare first to Bosnia and Croatia and then to Kosovo...

In Kosovo, the conduct of senior military officers conforms to the Croatian and Bosnian patterns, the same key individuals were reassigned to “peace-keeping” roles in Kosovo. While General Jackson displayed token efforts to protect Serb and Roma civilians, those who fled Kosovo during his mandate were not encouraged to return under UN protection... In post-war Kosovo, the massacres of civilians was carried out by the KLA (and subsequently by the KPC) under the auspices of NATO and the UN. It was accepted by the “international community” as a “fait accompli”.

### **The Installation of a Mafia State**

While calling for the installation of democracy based on “transparency” and “good governance”, the US and its allies have installed in Kosovo a self proclaimed civilian paramilitary government with links to organised crime. The outcome is the outright “criminalisation” of State institutions in Kosovo and the establishment of what is best described as a “Mafia State”. The complicity of NATO and the Alliance governments (namely their relentless support to the KLA provisional government) points to the de facto “criminalisation” of KFOR and of the UN peace-keeping apparatus in Kosovo.

The donor agencies, the United Nations and Western governments in providing financial support to the KPC are, in this regard, also “accessories” to this criminalisation of State institutions. Through the intermediation of a paramilitary group (created and financed by Washington and Bonn), NATO and the UN bear the burden of responsibility for the massacres of civilians and the prevailing reign of terror in Kosovo.

### **Notes**

1. Quoted in John Sweeney and Jen Holsoe, Kosovo Disaster Response Service Stands Accused of Murder and Torture, the Observer, 12 March 2000.
2. Ibid.
3. Statement by Bernard Kouchner, 21 September 1999 on the occasion of the inauguration of the KPC, see <http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/pages/kosovo5.htm> )
4. Ibid
- 5, AFP, 13 October 1999
6. Tom Walker, “Kosovo Defence Chief Accused of War Crimes, Sunday Times, 10 October 1999.
7. Ibid
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Jane Defense Weekly, Vol 23, No. 7, 14 February 1996.

11. Ibid

12. Julie Hyland, "Head of NATO Force in Kosovo was Second-in-command at "Bloody Sunday" Massacre in Ireland", World Socialist Website, 19 June 1999.

13. Ibid.

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## Appendix to Chapter V

### America's Bondsteel Military Base in Kosovo

Kosovo is home to one of America's largest military bases, Camp Bondsteel.

Bondsteel was built on contract to the Pentagon by Halliburton, through its engineering subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR). Camp Bondsteel is considered to be "the largest and most expensive army base since Vietnam." with more than 6000 US troops.

"Camp Bondsteel, the biggest "from scratch" foreign US military base since the Vietnam War (...) It is located close to vital oil pipelines and energy corridors presently under construction, such as the US sponsored Trans-Balkan oil pipeline. As a result defence contractors—in particular Halliburton Oil subsidiary Brown & Root Services—are making a fortune.

In June 1999, in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of Yugoslavia, US forces seized 1,000 acres of farmland in southeast Kosovo at Uresevic, near the Macedonian border, and began the construction of a camp.

Camp Bondsteel is known as the "grand dame" in a network of US bases running both sides of the border between Kosovo and Macedonia. In less than three years it has been transformed from an encampment of tents to a self sufficient, high tech base-camp housing nearly 7,000 troops—three quarters of all the US troops stationed in Kosovo.

There are 25 kilometres of roads and over 300 buildings at Camp Bondsteel, surrounded by 14 kilometres of earth and concrete barriers, 84 kilometres of concertina wire and 11 watch towers. It is so big that it has downtown, midtown and uptown districts, retail outlets, 24-hour sports halls, a chapel, library and the best-equipped hospital anywhere in Europe. At present there are 55 Black Hawk and Apache helicopters based at Bondsteel and although it has no aircraft landing strip the location was chosen for its capacity to expand. There are suggestions that it could replace the US airforce base at Aviano in Italy.

(See Paul Stuart, Camp Bondsteel and America's plans to control Caspian oil, [WSWS.org](http://WSWS.org), April 2002,





Camp Bondsteel was not the outgrowth of a humanitarian or “Just War” on behalf of Kosovar Albanians. The construction of Camp Bondsteel had been envisaged well in advance of the bombings and invasion of Kosovo in 1999.

The plans to build Camp Bondsteel under a lucrative multibillion dollar DoD contract with Halliburton’s Texas based subsidiary KBR were formulated while Dick Cheney was Halliburton’s CEO.

Construction of Camp Bondsteel was initiated shortly after the 1999 invasion under the Clinton administration. Construction was completed during the Bush administration, after Dick Cheney had resigned his position as Halliburton’s CEO:

The US and NATO had advanced plans to bomb Yugoslavia before 1999, and many European political leaders now believe that the US deliberately used the

bombing of Yugoslavia to establish camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.. According to Colonel Robert L. McCure, "Engineering planning for operations in Kosovo began months before the first bomb was dropped." (See Lenora Foerstel, Global Research, January 2008)

Note: The text on Camp Bondsteel was written in 2008

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## Chapter VI

# NATO Willfully Triggered an Environmental Catastrophe In Yugoslavia

First published in June 2000

*The environmental catastrophe at the Pancevo petrochemical plant was neither the result of 'collateral damage' (that is, an accident of war) nor a case of criminal negligence (that is, resulting from criminal disregard of consequences).*

Rather, the evidence is compelling. NATO willfully blew up with meticulous accuracy containers of toxic chemicals with the intention of creating an ecological nightmare.

At the outset of the War, NATO had reassured World opinion that "precise targeting" using sophisticated weaponry was intended to avoid "collateral damage" including environmental hazards:

*"We do everything we possibly can to avoid unnecessary collateral damage. We take it very seriously, work very hard at doing that, spend a lot of time planning for the missions."*<sup>1</sup>

At the Pancevo petrochemical complex located in the outskirts of Belgrade, however, exactly the opposite occurred. "State of the art" aerial surveillance and satellite thermal image detection were not only used to disable Yugoslavia's petrochemical industry; they were willfully applied to trigger an environmental disaster.

The air raids on the Pancevo complex started on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1999 and continued relentlessly until the 7<sup>th</sup> of June. The Pancevo complex also included an oil refinery facility (built with technical support from Texaco) and a Nitrogen Processing Plant producing fertilizer for Yugoslav agriculture. The petrochemical plant was bombed extensively (41 bombs and 7 missile attacks). The bombed areas were within less than two hundred meters from residential buildings.

At the beginning of the war, workers at the plant were actively involved in removing toxic materials from the site, emptying several large tanks and containers of chemicals precisely

to avert the risks of *“collateral damage”*. Little did they realize that NATO was watching them through air-to-ground surveillance systems and satellite images. Using thermal detection, NATO military planners knew which of the containers had been emptied and which remained full.

How does this work?

All objects in the Pancevo plant –including the containers of toxic chemicals– emit infrared radiation. A thermal imager from a spy satellite or an aircraft can detect infrared radiation emitted from any object situated on the petrochemical plant and convert its readings into a high-resolution video or snap picture.

The thermal imager can detect temperature differentials as small as 0.1 degrees centigrade which enables NATO planners to easily “categorize” and distinguish between full and empty containers. NATO warplanes were equipped with various advanced imaging systems including infrared/electro-optical sensors. Thermal satellite images were relayed to the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) in Vicenza, Italy where the bombing raids had been carefully scheduled. Other advanced surveillance systems were used including small unmanned predator (UAV) drones and high altitude U2 spy planes. In the words of a Pentagon spokesman, the U2

*“snaps a picture from very high altitude, beams it back in what we call a reach-back, to the States where it is very quickly analyzed”*. And from there, *“the right targeting data”* is relayed to the CAOC in Vincenza which then *“passes [it] on to people in the cockpit”*.<sup>2</sup>

NATO planners also had detailed information on the layout of the plant, which had been designed and built on contract with a US multinational engineering company Foster Wheeler (a firm specializing in the construction of petrochemical and polymer plants). NATO knew exactly where things were. In a cruel irony, US investment in Yugoslavia (financed with loans from the World Bank) was being bombed by Uncle Sam. Did the pilots sitting in the cockpit know that they were destroying a plant which was *“Made in America”*?

A large number of the containers had been emptied. By using thermal images, NATO was able to identify which of the tanks were still filled to the brim with toxic chemicals. Among these noxious liquids were containers of ethylene-dichloride (EDC), ethylene, chlorine, chlorine-hydrogen, propylene and vinyl chloride monomers (VCM). Well documented by environmentalists, the VCM monomer used to produce plastics (eg. PVC resin) is a dangerous cancerogenic contaminant (see photo 2). Vinyl chloride also has the potential to cause neurological and liver damage, as well as damage to the fetus causing serious birth defects.

If NATO’s intent were solely to disable the plant without risking “collateral” environmental damage, they could have done it by smart bombing the equipment and machinery. Why did they also decide to hit with utmost accuracy the tanks containing noxious liquids?

The “smart bombs” were not dumb; they went where they were told to go.

NATO had scrupulously singled out the containers, tanks and reservoirs, which still contained toxic materials. According to the petrochemical plant director, NATO did not hit a single empty container:

*“This was not accidental; they chose to hit those that were full and these chemicals*

*spilled into the canal leading to the Danube".*

Moreover, according to the plant director, the ethylene-dichloride (EDC) spillovers had contaminated 10 hectares of land on and in the vicinity of the plant. 3

When the smart bombs hit their lethal targets at Pancevo (see photos below), noxious fluids and fumes were released into the atmosphere, water and soil. The containers were deliberately blown up or perforated.



A 'smart bomb' hit this container with perfect accuracy. (Pancevo petrochemical complex ( ©Michel Chossudovsky, March 2000 )



The container above targeted by NATO because it was full of highly cancerogenic VCM (images, Michel Chossudovsky, Pancevo, March 2000 )

The soil at the petrochemical complex is still soaked with toxic ethylene-dichloride. According to a report of the Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC):

*"More than one thousand tons of ethylene dichloride spilled from the Pancevo petrochemical complex into the Danube [through the canal which links the plant to the river]. Over a thousand tons of natrium hydroxide were spilled from the Pancevo petrochemical complex. Nearly 1,000 tons of hydrogen chloride spilled from Pancevo into the Danube River"4*

Eight tons of mercury also escaped from the petrochemical complex spilling into the soil. The wastewater treatment plant was also bombed thereby contributing to exacerbating the ecological impacts. 5

NATO military strategists knew precisely what they were doing and what would be the likely consequences. At the neighboring oil refinery, two NATO missiles had hit on April 4<sup>th</sup> the refinery's control rooms killing three staff members. The strikes had set the plant on fire, reducing it to a toxic wreck. The objective was not to avoid an environmental disaster. The objective was to create an environmental disaster (see photos). NATO was expecting that by ruthlessly bombing Pancevo among other civilian sites, this would intimidate Belgrade into accepting the Rambouillet Agreement including its infamous Military Appendix which essentially gave NATO the right to occupy all parts of Yugoslavia.

In the wake of the bombings, the Greens from Germany and experts from the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) as well as other groups visited the Pancevo plant. The UNEP report dismissed the environmental impacts caused by the bombings while underscoring in its main conclusions that Pancevo and other petrochemical plants in the country were an ecological hazard prior to the bombings due to lax environmental standards.6

The UNEP report is a carefully worded cover-up. It whitewashes NATO; it downplays the seriousness of the environmental catastrophe, while placing the blame (without supporting

evidence) on the Yugoslav authorities. Tacitly upholding the legitimacy of the Western military alliance, UNEP's findings are in overt contradiction with those of other scientific studies including that of the Regional Environment Center for Central And Eastern Europe (REC) prepared for the European Commission (see footnote 4).

The complicity of UNEP –a specialized agency of the UN with a track record of integrity– is yet another symptom of the deterioration of the United Nations system which now plays an underhand in covering up NATO war crimes.

#### Notes

1. Statement of General Charles Wald of the Pentagon, Department of Defense Press Briefing, Washington, 12 April 1999.

2. Department of Defense Press Briefing, Washington, May 14th, 1999.

3. Interview conducted by the author in Pancevo, March 2000.

4. See the report of the REC entitled *Assessment of the Environmental Impact of Military Activities During the Yugoslavia Conflict* at <http://www.rec.org/REC/Announcements/yugo/background.html> )

5. Interview conducted by the author in Pancevo, March 2000.

6. The UNEP report entitled *The Kosovo Conflict: Consequences for the Environment & Human Settlements prepared for the European Commission* can be consulted at [www.grid.unep.ch/btf/final/index.html](http://www.grid.unep.ch/btf/final/index.html)<http://www.grid.unep.ch/btf/final/index.html>

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## **Chapter VII**

### **Low Intensity Nuclear War, NATO War Crimes in the Balkans**

*This article was originally published by Telepolis (Germany) on 15 March 2001 and by Global Research on 20 August 2002.*

*The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) convey the illusion (contrary to scientific evidence) that the health risks of depleted uranium can easily be dealt with by cordoning off and "cleaning up" the "affected areas" targeted by the US Air Force's A-10 "anti-tank killers." What they fail to mention is that the radioactive dust has already spread beyond the 72 "identified target sites" in Kosovo. Most*



*of the villages and cities including Pristina, Prizren and Pec lie within less than 20 km. of these sites, confirming that the whole province is contaminated, putting not only “peacekeepers” but the entire civilian population at risk.*

The death from leukemia of eight Italian peacekeepers stationed in Bosnia and Kosovo sparked an uproar in the Italian Parliament, following the leaking of a secret military document to the Italian newspaper La Repubblica. In Portugal, the Defense Ministry was also involved in what amounted to a deliberate camouflage of “the cause of death” of Portuguese peacekeeper Corporal Hugo Paulino. ““Citing ‘herpes of the brain’, the army refused to allow his family to commission a postmortem examination.”<sup>1</sup> Amidst mounting political pressure, Defense Minister Julio Castro Caldas advised NATO Headquarters in November that he was withdrawing Portuguese troops from Kosovo: “They were not, he said, going to become uranium meat”. <sup>2</sup>

As the number of cancer cases among Balkans “peacekeepers” rises, NATO’s cover-up has started to fracture. Several European governments have been obliged to publicly acknowledge the “alleged health risks” of depleted uranium (DU) shells used by the US Air Force in NATO’s 78-day war against Yugoslavia.

The Western media points to an apparent “split” within the military alliance. In fact there was no “division” or disagreement between Washington and its European allies until the scandal broke through the gilded surface.

Italy, Portugal, France and Belgium were fully aware that DU weapons were being used. The health impacts –including mountains of scientific reports– were known and available to European governments. Italy participated in the scheduling of the A-10 “anti-tank killer” raids (carrying DU shells) out of its Aviano and Gioia del Colle air force bases. The Italian Defense Ministry knew what was happening at military bases under its jurisdiction.

Washington’s European partners in NATO including Britain, France, Turkey, Greece have DU weapons in their arsenals. Canada is one of the main suppliers of depleted uranium. NATO countries share full responsibility for the use of weapons banned by the Geneva and Hague conventions and the 1945 Nuremberg Charter on war crimes. <sup>3</sup>

Since the Gulf War, Washington launched a “cover-up” on the health impacts of DU toxic radiation known as the “Gulf War Syndrome”, with the tacit endorsement of its NATO partners.

While NATO had until recently denied using DU shells in the 1999 war against Yugoslavia, it now admits that although it did use DU ammunition, the shells “have negligible radioactivity...and [a]ny resulting debris posing any significant risk dissipates soon after the impact.” <sup>4</sup> While casually denying “any connection between illness and exposure to depleted uranium”, the Pentagon nonetheless concedes –in an ambiguous statement– that “the main danger posed by depleted uranium occurs if it is inhaled.” <sup>5</sup>

And who inhales the radioactive dust, which has spread across the Land?

The shrouded statements from European governments convey the uncomfortable illusion that only peacekeepers “might be at risk”, –i.e. radioactive particles are only inhaled by military personnel and expatriate civilians, as if nobody else in the Balkans were affected. The impacts on local civilians are not mentioned.

In docile complicity, a new media consensus has unfolded: the mainstream press concurs without further scrutiny that only “peace-keepers” breathe the air. “But what about everybody else.”<sup>6</sup> In Kosovo some 2 million civilian men, women and children have been exposed to the radioactive fallout since the beginning of the bombing in March 1999. In the Balkans, more than 20 million people are potentially at risk:

“The risk in Kosovo and elsewhere in the Balkans is augmented by the uncertainty of where DU was dropped in whatever form and what winds and surface water movements spread it further. Working the fields, walking about, just being there, touching objects, breathing and drinking water are all risky. A British expert predicted that thousands of people in the Balkans will get sick of DU. The radioactive and toxic DU-oxides don’t disintegrate. They are practically permanent.”<sup>7</sup>

Keep in mind that the heavily armed “peacekeepers” together with United Nations staff and civilian personnel of “humanitarian” organisations entered Kosovo in June 1999. The spread of radioactive dust from DU, however, started on “day one” of the 78 day bombing of Yugoslavia. With the exception of NATO Special Forces –who were assisting the KLA on the ground– NATO military personnel was not present on the battlefield. In other words, there was no radioactive exposure to NATO troops during a “push button” air war, which the Alliance forces waged from the high skies. Yugoslav civilians are, therefore, at much greater risk because they were exposed to radioactive fallout throughout the bombings as well in the wake of the war. Yet the official communiqués suggest that only KFOR troops and expatriate civilians “might be at risk” implying that local civilians simply do not matter. Only servicemen and expatriate personnel have been screened for radiation levels.

### Childhood Cancers

The first signs of radiation on children, including herpes on the mouth and skin rashes on the back and ankles have been observed in Kosovo.<sup>8</sup> In Northern Kosovo –the area least affected by DU shells (see Map ) — 160 people are being treated for cancer.<sup>9</sup> The number of leukemia cases in Northern Kosovo has increased by 200 percent since NATO’s air campaign, and children have been born with deformities.<sup>10</sup> This information regarding civilian victims –which the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been careful not to reveal— refutes NATO’s main “assumption” that radioactive dust does not spread beyond the target sites, most of which are in the Southwestern and Southern regions close to the Albanian and Macedonian borders.



Map of Contaminated Areas “Map Of Sites As Being Targeted  
By Ordnance Containing Depleted Uranium during the 1999 Kosovo Conflict”

CLICK MAP TO ENLARGE

These findings are consistent with those from Iraq, where the use of depleted uranium weapons during the 1991 Gulf War resulted in “increases in childhood cancers and leukemia, Hodgkin’s disease, lymphomas, and increases in congenital diseases and

deformities in fetuses, along with limb reductional abnormalities and increases in genetic abnormalities throughout Iraq.<sup>11</sup> Pediatric examinations on Iraqi children confirm that:

“childhood leukemia has risen 600% in the areas [of Iraq] where DU was used. Stillbirths, births or abortion of fetuses with monstrous abnormalities, and other cancers in children born since [the Gulf War in] 1991 have also been found.”<sup>12</sup>

## Cover-up

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have tacitly accepted NATO-Pentagon assumptions concerning the health impacts of depleted uranium. When UNEP conducted its first assessment of DU radiation in Kosovo in 1999, NATO refused to provide the mission with maps indicating the locations of “affected areas” (points of impact where DU shells had fallen).

On the pretext that “there was insufficient data available to comprehensively address the issue of the impacts of depleted uranium ordnance,” UNEP produced an inconclusive and noncommittal “desk study” which was appended to the 1999 Balkans Task Force Report (BTF) on the environmental impacts of the War.<sup>13</sup> UNEP’s desk study pointed to the “possible use of DU” thereby implying that it was still unsure as to whether DU shells had actually been used.

UNEP’s evasiveness -claiming lack of sufficient data- contributed, in the wake of the bombings, to temporarily dissipating public concern. More generally, the UNEP-UNCHS Balkans Task Force report tends to downplay the seriousness of the environmental catastrophe triggered by NATO. Amply documented, the catastrophe was the deliberate result of military planning.<sup>14</sup>

NATO maps (indicating where DU shells had been targeted) were not required for UNEP and the WHO to conduct an investigation on the health impacts of depleted uranium radiation. A study of this nature -inevitably requiring a team of medical specialists in pediatrics and cancer working in liaison with experts on toxic radiation- was never carried out. In fact, UNEP’s stated “scientific” assumption precluded from the outset a meaningful assessment of the health impacts. According to UNEP:

“the effects of DU are mainly localized in the places DU has been used and the affected areas are likely to be small”.<sup>15</sup> See the 1999 desk study, op. cit.)

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This proposition (which is presented without scientific proof) is shared by UNEP’s sister organization, the WHO:

“You would have to be very close to a damaged tank and be there within seconds of it being hit...These soldiers were very unlikely to have been exposed.”<sup>16</sup>

These statements by UN bodies (quoted by NATO and the Pentagon to justify the use of DU weapons) are part and parcel of the camouflage. They convey the illusion that the health risks to peacekeepers and local civilians can easily be dealt with by cordoning off and

“cleaning up” the “targeted areas.”

The WHO has warned, in this regard, that depleted uranium could affect children playing in these areas “because children... tend to pick up pieces of dirt or put their toys in their mouth.”<sup>17</sup> What the WHO fails to acknowledge is that the radioactive dust has already spread beyond the affected areas, implying that children throughout Kosovo are at risk.

This tacit complicity of specialized agencies of the UN is yet another symptom of the deterioration of the United Nations system, which now plays an underhand role in covering up NATO war crimes. Since the Gulf War, the WHO has been instrumental in blocking a meaningful investigation of the health impacts of depleted uranium radiation on Iraqi children, claiming “it had no data to conduct an in-depth investigation” <sup>18</sup>

### UNEP and NATO Working Hand in Glove

Amidst the public outcry and mounting evidence of cancer among Balkans military personnel, UNEP conducted a second assessment in November 2000 which included field measurements of beta and gamma particle radiations in 11 so-called “affected areas” of Kosovo.<sup>19</sup>

Despite NATO’s earlier refusal to collaborate with UNEP, the two organizations are currently working hand in glove. The composition of the mission was established in consultation with NATO. The representative from Greenpeace (involved in the 1999 study) had been dumped. NATO maps were readily available; the investigation was to focus narrowly on the collection of soil, water samples, etc. in 11 selected sites (“affected areas”) out of a total of some 72 sites within Kosovo (see NATO map below, at <http://balkans.unep.ch/du/targetmap.html> ).

The broader health issues were not part of the mission’s terms of reference. The two medical researchers dispatched by the WHO in 1999 (as part of the desk study mission) had been replaced with experts from the US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (see <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/default.htm>) and AC Laboratorium Spiez (ACLS), a division of the Swiss Defense Procurement Agency.

AC Laboratorium Spiez (ACLS) has actively collaborated in chemical weapons inspections in Iraq. Under the disguise of Swiss neutrality, ACLS constitutes an informal mouthpiece for NATO. ACLS has been on contract with NATO’s “Partnership for Peace” financed by the Swiss government’s contribution to the PfP.<sup>20</sup>

Although the November mission was still under UNEP auspices, the Swiss government was funding most of fieldwork with ACLS –a division of the Swiss military– playing a central role. The mission –integrated by representatives linked to the Military establishment– was working on the premise (amply reviewed on ACLS’s web page) that DU radioactive dust does not (under any circumstances) travel beyond the “point of release.” <sup>21</sup>

The results of the report to be published in March 2001 are a foregone conclusion. They focus on radiation levels in the immediate vicinity of the target sites . According to the mission’s “back to office report” (January 2001):

“... [A]lready at this stage the Team can conclude that at some of the DU locations, the radiation level is slightly higher above normal at very limited spots. It would therefore be an unnecessary risk to the population to be in direct contact with any remnants of DU ammunition or with the spots where these have been found.” <sup>22</sup>



Double Standards If radioactivity were confined to so-called “very limited spots”, why then have KFOR troops been instructed by their governments “not to eat local produce... have drinking water flown in ...and that clothes must be destroyed on departure and vehicles decontaminated.”<sup>23</sup> According to Paul Sullivan, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, depleted uranium in Yugoslavia could affect “agricultural areas, places where livestock graze and where crops are grown, thereby introducing the specter of possible contamination of the food chain.” (In November 2000, Gulf War veterans affected by DU launched a class action law-suit against the US government).

#### Contamination Over A Large Geographical Area

According to NATO sources (communicated to UNEP), some 112 sites in Yugoslavia (of which 72 are in Kosovo) were targeted during the war with depleted uranium antitank shells. Between 30,000 and 50,000 DU shells were fired.

Scientific evidence amply confirms that the DU radioactive aerosol spreads from “the point of release” over a large geographical area suggesting that large parts of the province of Kosovo are contaminated. “[R]adioactive derivatives can linger in the air for months... ”Just one particle in the lungs is enough... a single particle could travel to the lymph nodes, where the radioactivity would lower the body’s defenses against lymphomas and leukemia”<sup>24</sup>

According to World renowned radiologist [ the late ] Dr. Rosalie Bertell:

When used in war, the depleted uranium (DU) bursts into flame [and] releasing a deadly radioactive aerosol of uranium, unlike anything seen before. It can kill everyone in a tank. This ceramic aerosol is much lighter than uranium dust. It can travel in air tens of kilometres from the point of release, or be stirred up in dust and resuspended in air with wind or human movement. It is very small and can be breathed in by anyone: a baby, pregnant woman, the elderly, the sick. This radioactive ceramic can stay deep in the lungs for years, irradiating the tissue with powerful alpha particles within about a 30 micron sphere, causing emphysema and/or fibrosis. The ceramic can also be swallowed and do damage to the gastro-intestinal tract. In time, it penetrates the lung tissue and enters into the blood stream. ...It can also initiate cancer or promote cancers which have been initiated by other carcinogens”.<sup>25</sup>

The targeted sites within Kosovo although concentrated on the South-western border are scattered throughout the province. Most of the villages and cities including Pristina, Prizren and Pec lie within less than 20 km. of the 72 DU target sites confirming that the entire province is contaminated.

#### NATO War Crimes

The bombing of Yugoslavia is best described as a “low intensity nuclear war” using toxic radioactive shells and missiles. Amply documented, the radioactive fall-out potentially puts millions of people at risk throughout the Balkans.

In March 1999, NATO launched the air raids invoking broad humanitarian principles and ideals. NATO had “come to the rescue” of ethnic Albanian Kosovars on the grounds they were being massacred by Serb forces. The forensic reports by the FBI and Europol confirm that the massacres did not occur. In a cruel irony, Albanian Kosovar civilians are among the

main victims of DU radiation.

To maintain the cover-up, NATO is now prepared to reveal a small fraction of the truth. The military Alliance –in liaison with NATO member governments– wants at all cost to maintain the focus on “peacekeepers” and keep local civilians out of the picture, because if the entire truth gets out, then people might start asking questions such as “how is it that the Kosovar Albanians, the people we were supposed to rescue are now the victims?” In both Bosnia and Kosovo, the UN has been careful not to record cancer cases among civilians. The narrow focus on “peacekeepers” is part of the cover-up. It distracts public opinion from the broader issue of civilian victims.

The primary victims of DU weapons are children, making their use a “war crime against children.” The use of depleted uranium munitions is only one among several NATO crimes against humanity committed in Iraq and the Balkans

According to official records, some 1800 Balkans peacekeepers (Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo) suffer from health ailments related to DU radiation.<sup>26</sup> Assuming the same level of risk (as a percentage of population), the numbers of civilians throughout former Yugoslavia affected by DU radiation would be in the tens of thousands. British scientist Roger Coghill suggests, in this regard, that “throughout the Balkan region, there will be an extra 10,150 deaths from cancer because of the use of DU. That will include local people, K-FOR personnel, aid workers, everyone.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, according to a report published in Athens during the War, the impacts of depleted uranium are likely to extend beyond the Balkans. Albania, and Macedonia but also Greece, Italy, Austria and Hungary face a potential threat to human health as a result of the use of radioactive depleted uranium shells during the 1999 War.

While no overall data on civilian deaths have been recorded, partial evidence confirms that a large numbers of civilians have already died as result of DU radiation since the war in Bosnia:

“DU radiation and an apparent use of defoliants by US/NATO troops against Serbian land and population [in Bosnia], have caused many birth defects among babies born after the US/NATO bombing and occupation; the magnitude of this problem has stunned Serbian medical experts and panicked the population.” <sup>28</sup>

A recent account points to several hundred deaths of civilians solely in one Bosnian village:

The village is empty, the cemetery full. Soon there will be no more room for the dead. Among refugee families who moved to Bratunac from Hadzici [in the outskirts of Sarajevo] there is a hardly a household not cloaked in mourning...On them are fresh wreaths, some with flowers that have not yet wilted. On the crosses the years of death 1998, 1999, 2000 and the grave of a 20 year-old woman at the end of the rows. She died a few days ago... No one could even imagine that in only one or two years the part of the cemetery set aside for civilians would be doubly full...

It happens often that one of the natives of Hadzici will suddenly die. Or they will go to see the doctor in Belgrade and when they come back their relatives will tell us that they are dying of cancer... [C]hief doctor Slavica Jovanovic...conducted an investigation and proved that in 1998 the mortality rate far exceeded the birth rate. She showed that it wasn't just a question of fate but something far more serious... 'Zoran Stankovic, the renowned pathologist from the Military Medical Academy (VMA) determined that over 200

of his patients from this area died of cancer, most probably due to the effects of depleted uranium in dropped NATO bombs five years ago. But someone quickly silenced the public and everything was hushed up. 'You see, our cemetery is full of fresh graves while the people from Vinca [Nuclear Institute] claim that uranium isn't dangerous. What other kind of evidence do you need if people are dying?...'

The refugees from Hadzici arrived in Bratunac in a sizeable number. There were almost 5,000 of them. There were 1,000 just in the collective centers. Now, says Zelenovic, 'there are about 600 of them left. And they certainly had nowhere else to go' ... Someone dies of cancer every third day; there is no more room in the cemeteries."<sup>29</sup>

## Notes

1 The Independent, London, 4 January 2001.<sup>2</sup> See Felicity Arbutnot, "It Turns out that Depleted Uranium is Bad for NATO" Troops, Emperors Clothes, <http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/arbutnot/port.htm> . 11 October 2000. See also interview with F. Arbutnot.

3 In all, some 17 countries including Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia and South Korea are known to have DU weapons in their arsenal. See Vladimir Zajic, Review of Radioactivity, Military Use, and Health Effects of Depleted Uranium, 1999 at <http://vzajic.tripod.com/>. See John Catalinotto and Sara Flounders, Is the Israeli Military using Depleted Uranium Weapons against the Palestinians? International Action Center, <http://www.iacenter.org/> , New York, 2000

4 Agence France Presse, 4 January 2001.

5 United Press International, 5 January 2001.

6 See Felicity Arbutnot, op cit.

7 Piot Bein, "More on Depleted Uranium", Emperors Clothes at <http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/arbutnot/port.htm> .11 October 2000.

8 According to Dr. Siegfried Horst Guenther, "Uran Geschosse: Schwergeschädigte Soldaten, missgebildete Neugeborene, sterbende Kinder, Ahriman Verlag, <http://www.ahriman.com/guenther.htm>, Freiburg, 2000. See also International Action Center, "Metal of Dishonor, How the Pentagon Radiates Soldiers and Civilians with DU Weapons", Second Edition, International Action Center, <http://www.iacenter.org/> , New York, 2000.

9 Beta News Agency, Belgrade, 13.50 GMT, 10 Jan 2001, in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 12 January 2001.

10 Ibid.

11 See Rick McDowell, "Economic Sanctions on Iraq", Z Magazine, November 1997.

12. Carlo Pona, "The Criminal Use of Depleted Uranium", International Tribunal for U.S./NATO War Crimes in Yugoslavia, International Action Center, <http://www.iacenter.org/>, New York, June 10, 2000. See also "Metal of Dishonor", op. cit.

13 See UNEP/UNCHS Balkans Task Force Final Report “The Kosovo Conflict -Consequences for the Environment & Human Settlements” at <http://balkans.unep.ch/fry/fry.html>; see the “desk study” on “The Potential Effects on Human Health and the Environment of the Possible Use of Depleted Uranium (DU)” at <http://balkans.unep.ch/du/du.html>; see also “UN considers New Data on Depleted Uranium in Kosovo”, UNEP, Geneva, 20 September 2000.

14 See Michel Chossudovsky, NATO Willfully Triggered an Environmental Disaster, <http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/chuss/willful.htm>

15 See the 1999 UNEP “desk study”, op. cit.

16 According to a toxicologist at the International Agency for Research on Cancer which is a division of the WHO, Associated Press, January 5 2001.

17 According to WHO specialist, quoted in the Boston Globe, January 10, 2001.

18 Boston Globe, June 27 2000, statement of Mark Parkin, an expert with the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

19 See UNEP Press Release at <http://balkans.unep.ch/du/missions.html> .

20 See AC Laboratorium Spiez (ACLS) website at <http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/gr/acls/e/index.htm>

21 Ibid

22 See UNEP Press Release at <http://balkans.unep.ch/du/missions.html> ; see also UNEP, “Advisory Note on Current work on DU by UNEP” at. <http://balkans.unep.ch/press/press010111.html> .

23. Arbuthot, op cit.

24 According to British radiologist Roger William Coghill, quoted in Associated Press, 5 January 2000.

25 Rosalie Bertell, Email Communication, May 1999.

26 RTBF, Belgian French Language Television, 9 January 2001

27 Calgary Herald, 4 January 2001.

28 Tika Jankovitch, “Chemical/Nuclear Warfare in Bosnia: Eyewitness To Hell” Comments by Jared Israel, Emperors Clothes at <http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/tika/hell.html> ., 9 January 2001.

29 Dubravka Vujanovic “Someone Dies of Cancer every Third Day; There is no More Room in the Cemeteries” , Nedelni Telegraf, Belgrade, 10 January 2001. On the same subject see Robert Fisk, “I see 300 Graves that could bear the Headstone: ‘Died of Depleted Uranium’, The Independent, London, 13 January 2001

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## Chapter VIII

### Washington Behind 2001 Terrorist Attacks In Macedonia

This article was first published on Global Research on September 10, 2001

*While Washington supplies National Liberation Army (NLA) terrorists with brand new weapons "Made in America", some 3000 heavily armed NATO troops have been given the mandate to "disarm the rebels" and enforce the cease-fire. Code-named "Essential Harvest", this bogus "peacekeeping" operation [2001] under British command is intended to weaken the Macedonian Armed Forces and destabilize national institutions.*

"As much as their text ["peace plan"] is brutal, more brutal and worrying is the fashion in which they are trying to break up Macedonian state institutions,' ... All of the terrorist actions in Macedonia have been supported by the Western democracies... all threats and blackmails have been presented so far, except that NATO will conduct an air-strike on us." (Macedonian Prime Minister Mr. Ljubco Georgievski)

It is now documented beyond doubt that Washington is behind the terrorist assaults in Macedonia. While Secretary of State Colin Powell reaffirms America's resolve to "combat terrorism", US military advisers are fighting alongside the NLA terrorists:

"Among the rebels that were withdrawing were 17 "instructors" - former US officers that provided military training for the rebels. Not only that: the Macedonian security forces claim that 70% of the equipment that the guerilla fighters took with them are of US production and the latter includes highly sophisticated third generation night vision devices." 1

#### US Forces Protect the Terrorists

In late June, the Macedonian ARM undertook a major assault against KLA-NLA positions in Aracinovo, a village close to Skopje. In a NATO sponsored operation which "was supposed to allow the Macedonian Army to gain significant rebel territory", US troops were sent in to "evacuate" and "disarm" the terrorists:2

"When the terrorists were defeated and showed a white flag, the OSCE and NATO were in panic and ordered us [the Macedonian authorities] to stop immediately the [military] action. Swedish Foreign Minister Ana Lindth and the European leaders were hysterical, threatening us with economic sanctions, etc. Furthermore, the OSCE and KFOR entered Aracinovo and 'saved' 500 terrorists together with their weaponry and took them to another village from where they are now attacking again, killing civilians and undertaking ethnic cleansing in



several Macedonian villages... NATO forbids us to defend ourselves when we are attacked; our territory is brutally abused by the terrorists. We have tried to defend ourselves, and they have saved the terrorists in air-conditioned buses. That has provoked harsh reaction of the Macedonian people.”<sup>3</sup>

The official “story” out of the US military base near Skopje was: “[Sorry]...but something went wrong”:<sup>4</sup>

“A confidential source at Camp Able Sentry [US base near Skopje] says the bus convoy [evacuating the terrorists] was stopped by tanks manned by NLA rebels ... and the rebels left the buses and disappeared. ‘Now we have some extremely angry Macedonians on our hands,’ the American official said.”<sup>5</sup>

The same source stated that the rebels “were escorted by lightly armed American troops”, conveying the impression that the highly trained American GIs of the 502nd Infantry division could not do anything against “the tanks manned by NLA rebels” which had entrapped the bus convoy.<sup>6</sup> The ambush story is a fabrication, for one KLA-NLA rebels do not have tanks in their arsenal.

### Opening a New Front

The US sponsored “evacuation” from Aracinavo had enabled the NLA terrorists –together with their American military advisers and foreign mercenaries– “to open up a new front” around the village of Radusa, 40 kilometers northwest of Skopje. <sup>7</sup> “They [NATO] are transporting the rebels, the terrorists, from one area to another and rearming them, instead of confiscating their weapons.” <sup>8</sup> In turn, KFOR is “protecting” the NLA terrorists’ supply routes including the flow of military personnel and weapons from KLA-NLA bases in Kosovo and from training camps in Albania.

Sources in the U.S. Army in Kosovo suggest that the “evacuation” mission was also intent upon saving “the 17 ‘instructors’ among the withdrawing rebels”, presumably to avoid the diplomatic humiliation and media embarrassment of senior US military personnel captured together with the terrorists by the Macedonian Security Forces.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, there are indications that US Apache helicopters and unmanned “predator” drone spy planes (UAV) (dispatched by a contingent of the US 15th Military Intelligence Battalion, stationed at Camp Able Sentry) are supporting this “new front” by transmitting military-intelligence to the rebel army’s US military advisers:

“The Pentagon... approved [mid March 2001] sending several unmanned spy planes to monitor the Kosovo-Macedonia border. The Air Force Predator unmanned drones can feed images immediately not only to troops in the region, but also to Washington.”<sup>10</sup>

And in the wake of the US sponsored “evacuation”, the KLA-NLA terrorists –together with their US military instructors– have renewed their attacks in the Tetovo region.

## Recruiting Foreign Mercenaries

Since the Soviet-Afghan war, recruiting Mujahedin (“holy warriors”) to fight covert wars on Washington’s behest has become an integral part of US foreign policy. A report of the US Congress has revealed how the US administration –under advice from the National Security Council headed by Anthony Lake– had “helped turn Bosnia into a militant Islamic base” leading to the recruitment through the so-called “Militant Islamic Network,” of thousands of Mujahedin from the Muslim world.<sup>11</sup>

The “Bosnian pattern” has since been replicated in Kosovo, Southern Serbia and Macedonia. Among the foreign mercenaries now fighting with the KLA-NLA are Mujahedin from the Middle East and the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union as well as “soldiers of fortune” from several NATO countries including Britain, Holland and Germany. Some of these Western mercenaries had previously fought with the KLA and the Bosnian Muslim Army.<sup>12</sup>

Also among NLA recruits are Albanian-American “volunteers” enlisted in New York with the tacit approval of the US government.<sup>13</sup> In March 2001, the New York-based Albanian-language newspaper Bota Sot printed an advertisement of the National Liberation Army (NLA) “calling Albanians [in the US] to register as volunteers and to donate money.”<sup>14</sup> Several hundred Albanian-Americans had formed an “Atlantic Brigade” which fought alongside the KLA in 1998 and 1999. In recent months, members of the “Atlantic Brigade” have reportedly joined the NLA.<sup>15</sup>

## The United Nations Funds the Terrorists

Amplly documented, the United Nations so-called “civilian” Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) is the KLA in disguise, and the NLA is a proxy of the KLA. According to the Sunday Times: “Hundreds of KPC reservists were called up by their Albanian commander, Agim Ceku, in March [2001]. They subsequently disappeared to former KLA training camps in Albania and are now re-emerging in Macedonia.”<sup>16</sup>

NLA rebel Commander Ostremi was until recently Chief of Staff of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). To maintain appearances, Washington has “blacklisted” the KPC commanders who joined the NLA. Washington’s so-called “blacklist” –which bars the former KPC commanders from entering the US– includes the names of “Commander Ostremi, his replacement as chief-of-staff at the KPC Commander Daut Haradinaj, the commander and deputy commander of the KPC’s elite force, the Rapid Reaction Corps, plus the leaders of two of its six regional divisions, Commander Sami Lushtaku and Commander Mustafa Rrustem...”<sup>17</sup>

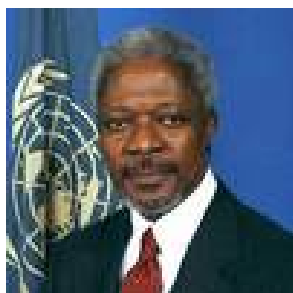
From the horse’s mouth: Washington’s “blacklist” visibly refutes the claims of both the “international community” and the Western media mantra that “the NLA has no links to KLA”. In fact, the “blacklist” confirms that they are one and the same thing, with the same commanding officers in both the KPC and the NLA. Moreover, it also confirms that the terrorist assaults are led by military

personnel paid by the United Nations.

When Commander Ostremi took leave from his UN job to lead the NLA, the UN “assumed he had gone on holiday”. 18 According to the Irish Times, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan failed to remove the NLA commanders from the United Nations payroll. The “international community” was still (early July [2001]) footing the bill under the disguise of UN “peacekeeping”:

“...the United Nations says it will take no action against these five men [NLA commanders], all still serving officers [in the UN sponsored KPC] because Washington has yet to pass on details of what the men are supposed to have done.”19

This pattern of “financing terrorism” from the UN purse is nothing new. The former head of the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Bernard Kouchner had established close personal ties with KLA Commander in Chief Agim Ceku, who in a bitter irony was on the list of “alleged war criminals” of the Hague Tribunal. But because he was wanted in relation to “crimes committed in Croatia” rather than Kosovo, this was not an issue in his appointment by the UN to the position of Commander in Chief of the KPC. 20.



An independent report submitted to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2000 confirmed that the KPC had been involved in “criminal activities – killings, ill-treatment/torture, illegal policing, abuse of authority, intimidation, breaches of political neutrality and hate speech.”21. In a cruel irony, “the United Nations is paying the salaries of many of the gangsters.”22

But what the report fails to mention, however, is that barely two months after the official inauguration of the KPC under UN auspices (September 1999), KPC-KLA commanders –using UN resources and equipment — were already preparing the assaults into Macedonia, as a logical follow-up to their terrorist activities in Kosovo. According to the Skopje daily Dnevnik, the KPC had established a “sixth operation zone” which:

“included Presevo, Bujanovac, Medvedja [in Southern Serbia] and Macedonian villages in the area of Skopska Crna Gora, Lojane, Vaksince, Straza and Lipkovo... Sources, who insist on anonymity, claim that headquarters of Kosovo protection brigades [directly linked to the UN sponsored KPC] have [March 2000] already been formed in Tetovo, Gostivar and Skopje. They are being prepared in Debar and Struga [on the border with Albania] as well, and their members have defined codes.” 23.

According to the BBC, “Western special forces were still training the guerrillas” meaning that they were assisting the KLA in opening up “a new front” in

## Links to Organised Crime

Also acknowledged by official US sources as well as by numerous press reports are the links of the KLA-NLA to powerful criminal syndicates involved in the Balkans' multi-billion dollar drug trade. Albanian and Kosovar criminal organizations are providing "a very significant support to them [the NLA terrorists in Macedonia]." 25 These criminal groups are also involved in the traffic of Albanian women into prostitution in several European countries including Britain, Italy and Germany. And part of the proceeds of these illicit activities is used to arm and equip the KLA-NLA terrorists.

In other words, in providing support to the KLA-NLA, Washington (not to mention the United Nations) is indirectly upholding the organised criminal-business syndicates which are behind the terrorists.

## Treason within the Macedonian Security Forces

In April, the Commander in Chief of the Macedonian Armed Forces (ARM) General Andrejevski was accused by A1 TV Skopje of having transmitted military intelligence to the NLA through MPRI General Richard Griffiths, who is director of the US "equip and train" program with the Macedonian ARM under a US military aid programme. 26. Sixteen senior (retired) US military officers are advising the ARM.

But it so happens that the same US mercenary outfit on contract to the Macedonian ARM is also assisting the NLA rebels in their terrorist assaults. In other words, Washington is arming and advising both the KLA attackers and the Macedonian defenders under military and intelligence authorization acts approved by the US Congress. MPRI is helping Macedonia -as part of a US military aid package- "to deter armed aggression and defend Macedonian territory." But MPRI is also advising and equipping the KLA, which is responsible for the terrorist assaults. In this war, the American military-intelligence apparatus is pulling strings "on both sides of the fence". 27

Faced with mounting pressure, General Andrejevski has since given up his position as Commander in Chief of the ARM. But immediately following his resignation, Andrejevski was appointed "Military Adviser" to President Trajkovski, while maintaining his personal links with MPRI's Richard Griffith who is still in Skopje, responsible for channeling US "military aid" on behalf of the Pentagon. In other words, the US military establishment is still involved on both sides, advising the NLA as well as "assisting" the Macedonian ARM. The ultimate objective of this military-intelligence ploy is to prevent the Macedonian ARM from defeating the terrorists.

## Civil Society Ploy

Despite the barrage of media falsehoods, Macedonian citizens are fully aware that Washington is supporting the terrorists. To diffuse public resentment, several Western "foundations" and "human rights organisations" -including the

International Crisis Group (ICG) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) are working closely with local citizens groups in Macedonia. While their formal mandate is in the areas of “confidence building”, “governance”, “peace-making” and “inter-ethnic reconciliation”, in practice, they work hand in glove with NATO. They are an integral part of the military-intelligence ploy. The role of these front organisations is to ensure that public resentment is directed against the Macedonian government and Military rather than against Washington, NATO or the IMF. 28

The Open Society Institute (OSI) in Skopje (supported by George Soros) is also playing a central role in manipulating and ultimately weakening the civilian protest movement. 29 The OSI in Macedonia has launched an “Appeal for Peace” endorsed by a large number of Macedonian organisations. (More than 300 organisations and individuals have signed the OSI “Appeal for Peace”). In other words, Soros’ OSI in Skopje hosts and finances the citizens’ movement against terrorism while carefully omitting to mention the causes of terrorism.

Moreover, George Soros is also part of the Wall Street financial establishment which is colonising the Balkans. And this “economic conquest” by American financial interests is supported by the US military-intelligence apparatus, which is funneling covert support to the terrorists.

While George Soros finances “peace” and “reconciliation” initiatives in Macedonia, he also supports the KLA. Across the border in Kosovo, the OSI sponsored Kosova Foundation for an Open Society (KFOS) is funding the activities of “local governments” controlled by KLA appointees. This assistance was initially channeled through a World Bank “Post Conflict Trust Fund”, of which a large share of the financing was from the OSI.<sup>30</sup>

the Open Society Institute is also supporting the “alternative media” in Macedonia with all the appearances of purporting to advance “democracy” and “freedom of the press”.

### NATO Sponsored Refugee Crisis

The refugee crisis has been deliberately triggered by the US sponsored terrorist assaults. Both Macedonian and Albanian civilians are among the victims. More than 100,000 people are affected. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) some 73,800 people have crossed the border into Kosovo, and another 34,500 people are “internally displaced” within Macedonia.<sup>31</sup> In Albanian villages occupied by the rebels, Albanian civilians rather than being “protected” by NLA “freedom fighters” are often the object of intimidation and reprisals.

In villages inhabited by Macedonians in the Tetovo region, ethnic cleansing is being implemented in the presence of US military personnel who are advising rebel commanders. The KLA-NLA is reported to “have committed unprecedented acts of terror against the inhabitants, forcing them to leave the villages completely. The displaced persons from [these] villages have strongly criticized the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross – whose representatives have consistently avoided contact with the residents of these



## Tetovo villages” 32

Entire communities are uprooted. According to the UNHCR, the majority of the refugees crossing into Kosovo are women, children and elderly men. Other reports suggest that the terrorists are enlisting ethnic Albanian men to join the KLA-NLA often through force and intimidation. The evidence suggests that those who refuse face serious reprisals. 33 The pattern in this regard, is very similar to what occurred in Kosovo in 1999 where entire villages were uprooted.<sup>34</sup>

## Ethnic Cleansing

Washington is indelibly behind the process of ethnic cleansing in Macedonia. It is worth mentioning in this regard that MPRI (the mercenary outfit working with the KLA-NLA) was on contract with the Croatian Armed Forces in 1995, in charge of the ethnic cleansing and civilian massacres directed against the Serb population in the Krajina region of Croatia. In this regard, MPRI was working closely with Commander Agim Ceku, who at the time was a Brigadier General in the Croatian Armed Forces. Ceku was not only one of the key planners of “Operation Storm”, he was also commander of the artillery division responsible for shelling Krajina Serb civilians. It is no wonder that the pattern in Macedonia is similar to that of Krajina and Kosovo. 35

The same commanding officers from the KLA and the MPRI are now involved in the terrorist assaults and ethnic cleansing in Macedonia. “Protected” by American and British troops stationed in Kosovo and Macedonia, the KLA-NLA rebels now control a significant portion of Macedonian territory.

## Bogus Peace Plan

Washington’s design is to prevent the Macedonian Security Forces from fighting the rebels and protecting its borders. In other words, the hidden agenda of the EU-US brokered “peace plan” is to gain time, drag out the conflict, keep the Macedonian Security Forces in the barracks while continuing to arm and equip the rebels. And this gruesome military-intelligence ploy is possible because the Macedonian President and part of his entourage are puppets of the US. Moreover, the MPRI, which is actively advising the NLA, is still on contract with the Macedonian government “helping the Macedonian Armed Forces”.

Meanwhile General Andrejevski, who recently resigned his position as ARM Commander in Chief, is still in charge as “military adviser” to the President, acting on behalf of the MPRI and the Pentagon.

In other words, key senior military officers in the ARM are collaborating with the enemy, against the lower ranking officers and the ARM rank and file who are fighting for their country. Despite the divisions within the government, Prime Minister Mr. Ljubco Georgievski, has openly accused US envoy James Pardew and the EU’s Francois Leotard of “forcing Macedonia to cave in to demands from Albanian guerrillas” 36:

“It becomes obvious that all of the terrorist actions in Macedonia have been

supported by the western democracies. Now, we practically have 95% of Ali Ahmeti's [the NLA leader] document on the table. It is clear that the international community has decided on its position beforehand, and now it is trying to realize it in Macedonia" 37

"'As much as their text is brutal, more brutal and worrying is the fashion in which they are trying to break up Macedonian state institutions,' Mr. Georgievski said ... The Prime Minister further stated that the proposed peace package constituted 'a serious interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Macedonia'... Asked about the extent of pressure Macedonia could sustain, Georgievski said all threats and blackmails had been presented so far, 'except that NATO will conduct an air-strike on us.' "

38

### The Anglo-American Axis

In the negotiation of the "peace plan", the Anglo-US position has prevailed over that of France and Germany. In this regard, Prime Minister Georgievski "underlined that the French expert in law [former Minister of Justice] Robert Badinter was brutally eliminated from the political process", meaning that his recommendations on constitutional reform were turned down by James Pardew in consultation with NLA leader Ali Ahmeti. 39

Although NATO is not formally part of the EU-US "mediation", EU High Representative Javier Solana (who occupied the position of Secretary General of NATO during the 1999 bombings of Yugoslavia) has been working hand in glove with his successor at NATO Lord George Robertson. In turn, British Ambassador Mark Dickinson was appointed in May by Solana to act on his behalf in Skopje. British paratroopers and Special Forces -which trained the KLA in 1999- are slated to lead the bogus "Essential Harvest" operation to "disarm the rebels".

Increasingly, the corridors of international diplomacy have been taken over by military-intelligence officials with previous experience in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. James Pardew started his Balkans career in 1993 as a senior intelligence officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for channeling US aid to the Bosnian Muslim Army. Coronel Pardew had been put in charge of arranging the "air-drops" of supplies to Bosnian forces, working closely with the Chairman of the National Security Council Anthony Lake. 40 NATO's Peter Feith who has been "put in charge of contacts with the [KLA-NLA] guerillas" is a longstanding "colleague" of James Pardew. He was political advisor to the IFOR High Command in Bosnia in the mid-1990s.41

### Replicating Bosnia and Kosovo

America's "mediator" James Pardew has been given the mandate to replicate the Bosnia-Kosovo pattern. In this regard, Washington's military-intelligence ploy is to fracture Macedonian territory, foster internal social divisions and fuel ethnic strife. The design is to destroy all social and political ties between Albanians and Macedonians, who have coexisted for more than half a century within a multi-ethnic society. These socio-ethnic divisions are deliberately created so as to curb all forms of social resistance. More importantly,

Washington wants to prevent the development of a broader “common front” against the enemy.

The US sponsored terrorist assaults as well as the bogus “peace plan” are intent upon eventually splitting up the country and transforming Macedonia into a NATO protectorate. Operation “Essential Harvest” to be led by British parachutists would constitute a first step towards a military occupation of Macedonian territory. NATO forces are not only protecting the rebels in the territories under their control, MPRI advisers on contract to the Pentagon are assisting indirectly in the implementation of “ethnic cleansing” in these territories. In the latter, Macedonian State institutions are no longer functioning.

In other words, the territories under KLA-NLA control –which border Kosovo– are de facto under the jurisdiction of NATO. Moreover, there are indications that the KLA –with NATO support– may attempt to trigger a unilateral secession of Kosovo from Yugoslavia. This would not only heighten the political crisis in Belgrade, it would also raise the issue of the political status of the territories occupied by the KLA-NLA from which the Macedonian population has been expelled (much in the same way as the Serbs were expelled from Kosovo). In this design, NATO’s intent is clear, it consists in fracturing and destroying Macedonia as a country.

## Notes

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## Chapter IX

### "OsamaGate"

#### **Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia "Freedom Fighters" Supported by Al Qaeda**

First published on October 9, 2001, two days after the invasion of Afghanistan and less than a month after 9/11, this article documents the links of the Kosovo Liberation Army and Macedonia's National Liberation Army (NLA), affiliated to the KLA

*Confronted with mounting evidence, the US Administration can no longer deny its links to Osama. While the CIA admits that Osama bin Laden was an "intelligence asset" during the Cold War, the relationship is said to "go way back".*

*Most news reports consider that these Osama-CIA links belong to the "bygone era" of the Soviet-Afghan war. They are invariably viewed as "irrelevant" to an understanding of present events. Lost in the barrage of recent history, the role of the CIA in supporting and developing international terrorist organisations during the Cold war and its aftermath is casually ignored or downplayed by the Western media.*

Yes, We did support Him, but "He Went Against Us"

A blatant example of media distortion is the so-called "blowback" thesis: "intelligence assets" are said to "have gone against their sponsors"; "what we've created blows back in our face."<sup>1</sup> In a twisted logic, the US government and the CIA are portrayed as the ill-fated victims:

The sophisticated methods taught to the Mujahideen, and the thousands of



tons of arms supplied to them by the US – and Britain – are now tormenting the West in the phenomenon known as ‘blowback’, whereby a policy strategy rebounds on its own devisers. 2

The US media, nonetheless, concedes that “the Taliban’s coming to power [in 1995] is partly the outcome of the U.S. support of the Mujahideen, the radical Islamic group, in the 1980s in the war against the Soviet Union”.<sup>3</sup> But it also readily dismisses its own factual statements and concludes in chorus, that the CIA had been tricked by a deceitful Osama. It’s like “a son going against his father”.

The “blowback” thesis is a fabrication. The evidence amply confirms that the CIA never severed its ties to the “Islamic Militant Network”. Since the end of the Cold War, these covert intelligence links have not only been maintained, they have in become increasingly sophisticated.

New undercover initiatives financed by the Golden Crescent drug trade were set in motion in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans. Pakistan’s military and intelligence apparatus (controlled by the CIA) essentially “served as a catalyst for the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of six new Muslim republics in Central Asia.” 4

#### Replicating the Iran Contragate Pattern

Remember Ollie North and the Nicaraguan Contras under the Reagan Administration when weapons financed by the drug trade were channeled to “freedom fighters” in Washington’s covert war against the Sandinista government. The same pattern was used in the Balkans to arm and equip the Mujahideen fighting in the ranks of the Bosnian Muslim army against the Armed Forces of the Yugoslav Federation.

Throughout the 1990s, the Pakistan Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was used by the CIA as a go-between — to channel weapons and Mujahideen mercenaries to the Bosnian Muslim Army in the civil war in Yugoslavia. According to a report of the London based International Media Corporation:

“Reliable sources report that the United States is now [1994] actively participating in the arming and training of the Muslim forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina in direct contravention of the United Nations accords. US agencies have been providing weapons made in ... China (PRC), North Korea (DPRK) and Iran. The sources indicated that ... Iran, with the knowledge and agreement of the US Government, supplied the Bosnian forces with a large number of multiple rocket launchers and a large quantity of ammunition. These included 107mm and 122mm rockets from the PRC, and VBR-230 multiple rocket launchers ... made in Iran. ... It was [also] reported that 400 members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (Pasdaran) arrived in Bosnia with a large supply of arms and ammunition. It was alleged that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had full knowledge of the operation and that the CIA believed that some of the 400 had been detached for future terrorist operations in Western Europe.

During September and October [1994], there has been a stream of “Afghan” Mujahedin ... covertly landed in Ploce, Croatia (South-West of Mostar) from where they have traveled with false papers ... before deploying with the Bosnian Muslim forces in the Kupres, Zenica and Banja Luka areas. These forces have recently [late 1994] experienced a significant degree of military success. They have, according to sources in

Sarajevo, been aided by the UNPROFOR Bangladesh battalion, which took over from a French battalion early in September [1994].

The Mujahedin landing at Ploce are reported to have been accompanied by US Special Forces equipped with high-tech communications equipment, ... The sources said that the mission of the US troops was to establish a command, control, communications and intelligence network to coordinate and support Bosnian Muslim offensives — in concert with Mujahideen and Bosnian Croat forces — in Kupres, Zenica and Banja Luka. Some offensives have recently been conducted from within the UN-established safe-havens in the Zenica and Banja Luka regions.

(...)

The US Administration has not restricted its involvement to the clandestine contravention of the UN arms embargo on the region ... It [also] committed three high-ranking delegations over the past two years [prior to 1994] in failed attempts to bring the Yugoslav Government into line with US policy. Yugoslavia is the only state in the region to have failed to acquiesce to US pressure.<sup>5</sup>

#### “From the Horse’s Mouth”

Ironically, the US Administration’s undercover military-intelligence operations in Bosnia have been fully documented by the Republican Party. A lengthy Congressional report by the Republican Party Committee (RPC) published in 1997, largely confirms the International Media Corporation report quoted above. The RPC Congressional report accuses the Clinton administration of having “helped turn Bosnia into a militant Islamic base” leading to the recruitment through the so-called “Militant Islamic Network,” of thousands of Mujahideen from the Muslim world:

Perhaps most threatening to the SFOR mission – and more importantly, to the safety of the American personnel serving in Bosnia – is the unwillingness of the Clinton Administration to come clean with the Congress and with the American people about its complicity in the delivery of weapons from Iran to the Muslim government in Sarajevo. That policy, personally approved by Bill Clinton in April 1994 at the urging of CIA Director-designate (and then-NSC chief) Anthony Lake and the U.S. ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith, has, according to the Los Angeles Times (citing classified intelligence community sources), “played a central role in the dramatic increase in Iranian influence in Bosnia.

(...)

Along with the weapons, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and VEVAK intelligence operatives entered Bosnia in large numbers, along with thousands of mujahedin (“holy warriors”) from across the Muslim world. Also engaged in the effort were several other Muslim countries (including Brunei, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Turkey) and a number of radical Muslim organizations. For example, the role of one Sudan-based “humanitarian organization,” called the Third World Relief Agency, has been well documented. The Clinton Administration’s “hands-on” involvement with the Islamic network’s arms pipeline included inspections of missiles from Iran by U.S. government officials... the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), a Sudan-based, phoney humanitarian organization ... has been a major link in the arms pipeline to Bosnia. ...

TWRA is believed to be connected with such fixtures of the Islamic terror network as Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman (the convicted mastermind behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing) and Osama Bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi émigré believed to bankroll numerous militant groups. [Washington Post, 9/22/96] emphasis added. 6

### Complicity of the Clinton Administration

In other words, the Republican Party Committee report confirms unequivocally the complicity of the Clinton Administration with several Islamic fundamentalist organisations including Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda.

The Republicans wanted at the time to undermine the Clinton Administration. However, at a time when the entire country had its eyes riveted on the Monica Lewinsky scandal, the Republicans no doubt chose not to trigger an untimely "Iran-Bosniagate" affair, which might have unduly diverted public attention away from the Lewinsky scandal. The Republicans wanted to impeach Bill Clinton "for having lied to the American People" regarding his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. On the more substantive "foreign policy lies" regarding drug running and covert operations in the Balkans, Democrats and Republicans agreed in unison, no doubt pressured by the Pentagon and the CIA not to "spill the beans".

### From Bosnia to Kosovo

The "Bosnian pattern" described in the 1997 Congressional RPC report was replicated in Kosovo. With the complicity of NATO and the US State Department. Mujahideen mercenaries from the Middle East and Central Asia were recruited to fight in the ranks of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1998-99, largely supporting NATO's war effort.

Confirmed by British military sources, the task of arming and training of the KLA had been entrusted in 1998 to the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Britain's Secret Intelligence Services MI6, together with "former and serving members of 22 SAS [Britain's 22nd Special Air Services Regiment], as well as three British and American private security companies".<sup>7</sup>

The US DIA approached MI6 to arrange a training programme for the KLA, said a senior British military source. 'MI6 then sub-contracted the operation to two British security companies, who in turn approached a number of former members of the (22 SAS) regiment. Lists were then drawn up of weapons and equipment needed by the KLA.' While these covert operations were continuing, serving members of 22 SAS Regiment, mostly from the unit's D Squadron, were first deployed in Kosovo before the beginning of the bombing campaign in March. 8

While British SAS Special Forces in bases in Northern Albania were training the KLA, military instructors from Turkey and Afghanistan financed by the "Islamic jihad" were collaborating in training the KLA in guerilla and diversion tactics.<sup>9</sup>:

Bin Laden had visited Albania himself. He was one of several fundamentalist groups that had sent units to fight in Kosovo, ... Bin Laden is believed to have established an operation in Albania in 1994 ... Albanian sources say Sali Berisha, who was then president, had links with some groups that later proved to be extreme fundamentalists.

10

### Congressional Testimonies on KLA-Osama links

According to Frank Ciluffo of the Globalized Organised Crime Program, in a testimony presented to the House of Representatives Judicial Committee:

What was largely hidden from public view was the fact that the KLA raise part of their funds from the sale of narcotics. Albania and Kosovo lie at the heart of the “Balkan Route” that links the “Golden Crescent” of Afghanistan and Pakistan to the drug markets of Europe. This route is worth an estimated \$400 billion a year and handles 80 percent of heroin destined for Europe. 11

According to Ralf Mutschke of Interpol’s Criminal Intelligence division also in a testimony to the House Judicial Committee:

The U.S. State Department listed the KLA as a terrorist organization, indicating that it was financing its operations with money from the international heroin trade and loans from Islamic countries and individuals, among them allegedly Usama bin Laden” . Another link to bin Laden is the fact that the brother of a leader in an Egyptian Jihad organization and also a military commander of Usama bin Laden, was leading an elite KLA unit during the Kosovo conflict. 12

Madeleine Albright Covets the KLA

These KLA links to international terrorism and organised crime documented by the US Congress were totally ignored by the Clinton Administration. In fact, in the months preceding the bombing of Yugoslavia, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was busy building a “political legitimacy” for the KLA. The paramilitary army had -from one day to the next- been elevated to the status of a bona fide “democratic” force in Kosovo. In turn, Madeleine Albright has forced the pace of international diplomacy: the KLA had been spearheaded into playing a central role in the failed “peace negotiations” at Rambouillet in early 1999.

The Senate and the House tacitly endorse State Terrorism

While the various Congressional reports confirmed that the US government had been working hand in glove with Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda, this did not prevent the Clinton and later the Bush Administration from arming and equipping the KLA. The Congressional documents also confirm that members of the Senate and the House knew the relationship of the Administration to international terrorism. To quote the statement of Rep. John Kasich of the House Armed Services Committee: “We connected ourselves [in 1998-99] with the KLA, which was the staging point for bin Laden...” 13

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, Republicans and Democrats in unison have given their full support to the President to “wage war on Osama”.

In 1999, Senator Jo Lieberman had stated authoritatively that “Fighting for the KLA is fighting for human rights and American values.” In the hours following the October 7 missile attacks on Afghanistan, the same Jo Lieberman called for punitive air strikes against Iraq: “We’re in a war against terrorism... We can’t stop with bin Laden and the Taliban.” Yet Senator Jo Lieberman, as member of the Armed Services Committee of the Senate had access to all the Congressional documents pertaining to “KLA-Osama” links. In making this statement, he was fully aware that that agencies of the US government as well as NATO were supporting international terrorism.

## The War in Macedonia

In the wake of the 1999 war in Yugoslavia, the terrorist activities of the KLA were extended into Southern Serbia and Macedonia. Meanwhile, the KLA –renamed the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC)– was elevated to United Nations status, implying the granting of “legitimate” sources of funding through United Nations as well as through bilateral channels, including direct US military aid.

And barely two months after the official inauguration of the KPC under UN auspices (September 1999), KPC-KLA commanders – using UN resources and equipment – were already preparing the assaults into Macedonia, as a logical follow-up to their terrorist activities in Kosovo. According to the Skopje daily Dnevnik, the KPC had established a “sixth operation zone” in Southern Serbia and Macedonia:

Sources, who insist on anonymity, claim that the headquarters of the Kosovo protection brigades [i.e. linked to the UN sponsored KPC] have [March 2000] already been formed in Tetovo, Gostivar and Skopje. They are being prepared in Debar and Struga [on the border with Albania] as well, and their members have defined codes. 14

According to the BBC, “Western special forces were still training the guerrillas” meaning that they were assisting the KLA in opening up “a sixth operation zone” in Southern Serbia and Macedonia. 15

“The Islamic Militant Network” and NATO join hands in Macedonia

Among the foreign mercenaries now fighting in Macedonia (October 2001) in the ranks of self-proclaimed National Liberation Army (NLA), are Mujahideen from the Middle East and the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Also within the KLA’s proxy force in Macedonia are senior US military advisers from a private mercenary outfit on contract to the Pentagon as well as “soldiers of fortune” from Britain, Holland and Germany. Some of these Western mercenaries had previously fought with the KLA and the Bosnian Muslim Army. 16

Extensively documented by the Macedonian press and statements of the Macedonian authorities, the US government and the “Islamic Militant Network” are working hand in glove in supporting and financing the self-proclaimed National Liberation Army (NLA), involved in the terrorist attacks in Macedonia. The NLA is a proxy of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). In turn the KLA and the UN sponsored Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) are identical institutions with the same commanders and military personnel. KPC Commanders on UN salaries are fighting in the NLA together with the Mujahideen.

In a bitter twist, while supported and financed by Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda, the KLA-NLA is also supported by NATO and the United Nations mission to Kosovo (UNMIK). In fact, the “Islamic Militant Network” –also using Pakistan’s Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) as the CIA’s go-between– still constitutes an integral part of Washington’s covert military-intelligence operations in Macedonia and Southern Serbia.

The KLA-NLA terrorists are funded from US military aid, the United Nations peace-keeping budget as well as by several Islamic organisations including Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda. Drug money is also being used to finance the terrorists with the complicity of the US government. The recruitment of Mujahideen to fight in the ranks of the NLA in Macedonia is



implemented through various Islamic groups.

US military advisers mingle with Mujahideen within the same paramilitary force, Western mercenaries from NATO countries fight alongside Mujahideen recruited in the Middle East and Central Asia. And the US media calls this a “blowback” where so-called “intelligence assets” have gone against their sponsors!

But this did not happen during the Cold war! It is happening right now [2001] in Macedonia. And it is confirmed by numerous press reports, eyewitness accounts, photographic evidence as well as official statements by the Macedonian Prime Minister, who has accused the Western military alliance of supporting the terrorists. Moreover, the official Macedonian New Agency (MIA) has pointed to the complicity between Washington’s envoy Ambassador James Pardew and the NLA terrorists. 17 In other words, the so-called “intelligence assets” are still serving the interests of their US sponsors. [And that was occurring in the months preceding the September 11, 2001 attacks]

Pardew’s background is revealing in this regard. He started his Balkans career in 1993 as a senior intelligence officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for channeling US aid to the Bosnian Muslim Army. Colonel Pardew had been put in charge of arranging the “air-drops” of supplies to Bosnian forces. At the time, these “air drops” were tagged as “civilian aid”. It later transpired –confirmed by the RPC Congressional report– that the US had violated the arms embargo. And James Pardew played an important role as part of the team of intelligence officials working closely with the Chairman of the National Security Council Anthony Lake.

Pardew was later involved in the Dayton negotiations (1995) on behalf of the US Defence Department. In 1999, prior to the bombing of Yugoslavia, he was appointed “Special Representative for Military Stabilisation and Kosovo Implementation” by President Clinton. One of his tasks was to channel support to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which at the time was also being supported by Osama bin Laden. Pardew was in this regard instrumental in replicating the “Bosnian pattern” in Kosovo and subsequently in Macedonia...

### Justification for Waging War

The Bush Administration has stated that it has proof that Osama bin Laden is behind the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon. In the words of British Prime Minister Tony Blair: “I have seen absolutely powerful and incontrovertible evidence of his [Osama] link to the events of the 11th of September.” 18 What Tony Blair fails to mention is that agencies of the US government including the CIA continue to “harbor” Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda.

A major war supposedly “against international terrorism” has been launched by a government which is harboring international terrorism as part of its foreign policy agenda. In other words, the main justification for waging war has been totally fabricated. The American people have been deliberately and consciously misled by their government into supporting a major military adventure which affects our collective future.

This decision to mislead the American people was taken barely a few hours after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre. Without supporting evidence, Osama had already been tagged as the “prime suspect.”

Two days later on Thursday the 13th of September –while the FBI investigations had barely

commenced– President Bush pledged to “lead the world to victory”. The Administration confirmed its intention to embark on “a sustained military campaign rather than a single dramatic action” directed against Osama bin Laden. 19

In addition to Afghanistan, a number of countries in the Middle East were mentioned as possible targets including Iraq, Iran, Libya and the Sudan. And several prominent US political figures and media pundits have demanded that the air strikes be extended to other countries “which harbour international terrorism.” According to intelligence sources, Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda has operations in some 50 to 60 countries providing ample pretext to intervene in several “rogue states” in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Moreover, the entire US Legislature –with only one honest and courageous dissenting voice in the House of Representatives– has tacitly endorsed the Administration’s decision to go war. Members of the House and the Senate have access through the various committees to official confidential reports and intelligence documents which prove beyond doubt that agencies of the US government have ties to international terrorism. They cannot say “we did not know”. In fact, most of this evidence is in the public domain.

Under the historical resolution of the US Congress adopted by both the House and the Senate on the 14th of September [2001]:

The president is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

Whereas there is no evidence that agencies of the US government “aided the terrorist attacks” on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, there is ample and detailed evidence that agencies of the US government as well as NATO, have since the end of the Cold War continued to “harbor such organizations”.

Patriotism cannot be based on a falsehood, particularly when it constitutes a pretext for waging war and killing innocent civilians.

Ironically, the text of the Congressional resolution also constitutes a “blowback” against the US sponsors of international terrorism. The resolution does not exclude the conduct of an “Osamagate” inquiry, as well as appropriate actions against agencies and/or individuals of the US government, who may have collaborated with Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda. And the evidence indelibly points directly to the Bush Administration.

#### Notes

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2. The Guardian, London, 15 September 2001.
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5. International Media Corporation Defense and Strategy Policy, US Commits Forces, Weapons to Bosnia, London, 31 October 1994.
6. Congressional Press Release, Republican Party Committee (RPC), US Congress, Clinton-Approved Iranian Arms Transfers Help Turn Bosnia into Militant Islamic Base, 16 January

1997, available on the website of the Centre of Research on Globalisation (CRG) at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/DCH109A.html>. The original document is on the website of the US Senate Republican Party Committee (Senator Larry Craig), at <http://www.senate.gov/~rpc/releases/1997/iran.htm>)

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12. US Congress, Testimony of Ralf Mutschke of Interpol's Criminal Intelligence Division, to the House Judicial Committee, 13 December 2000.
13. US Congress, Transcripts of the House Armed Services Committee, 5 October 1999,
14. Macedonian Information Centre Newsletter, Skopje, 21 March 2000, published by BBC Summary of World Broadcast, 24 March 2000.
15. BBC , 29 January 2001 , at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid\\_1142000/1142478.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_1142000/1142478.stm))
16. Scotland on Sunday, Glasgow, 15 June 2001 at [http://www.scotlandonsunday.com/text\\_only.cfm?id=SS01025960](http://www.scotlandonsunday.com/text_only.cfm?id=SS01025960), see also UPI, 9 July 2001. For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, Washington behind Terrorist Assaults in Macedonia, Centre for Research on Globalisation, August 2001, at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO108B.html>.)
17. Macedonian Information Agency (MIA), 26 September 2001, available at the Centre for Research on Globalisation at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MNA110A.html>
18. Quoted in The Daily Telegraph, London, 1 October 2001.
19. Statement by official following the speech by President George Bush on 14 September 2001 quoted in the International Herald Tribune, Paris, 14 September 2001.

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## Note

The Republican Party Committee (RPC) Congressional document confirms that the Clinton administration was collaborating with Al Qaeda in Bosnia and Kosovo with a view to fragmenting and ultimately destroying the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In retrospect, the Obama Administration's covert support to the Islamic State (ISIS-ISIL-Daesh) in Syria and Iraq bears a canny resemblance to the Clinton administration's support of the Militant Islamic Base in both Bosnia and Kosovo.

What this confirms is that US intelligence rather than the White House and the State Department determine the main thrust of US foreign policy, which consists in supporting and financing "Jihadist" terrorist organizations with a view to destabilizing sovereign countries.

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