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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 25, 1995

Mr. and Mrs. George Platzer  
424 Cypress Road  
Rochester, Michigan 48309

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Platzer:

I appreciate hearing your views regarding the situation in the former Yugoslavia.

This past summer, I decided that the time had come to launch an all-out effort to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict. I was convinced that the dramatic changes on the ground, along with NATO's renewed commitment to use air power to protect the safe areas in Bosnia, provided a window of opportunity to achieve a comprehensive settlement that could finally end the conflict. Since mid-August, an American negotiating team has been conducting virtually nonstop shuttle diplomacy with the parties to the conflict. Thanks to U.S. leadership, important results have been achieved.

NATO air power has been instrumental in helping to end the siege of Sarajevo. In September, our negotiating team secured the agreement of the parties to basic principles of a peace settlement in Bosnia. These principles confirm that Bosnia will continue as a single, internationally recognized state within its present borders. Earlier this month, our negotiators gained the parties' agreement to a nationwide cease-fire and to the commencement of peace talks beginning on October 31 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

Many difficult issues remain to be solved in the coming weeks, but I believe we may be closer than at any time in the past four years to a lasting peace in the former Yugoslavia. I have instructed my negotiators to spare no effort in clearing away the remaining obstacles to a settlement.

Thank you for your interest in this critical issue.

Sincerely,

*Bill Clinton*

BILL McCOLLUM, FLORIDA  
CHAIRMAN



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NUCLEAR TRAFFICKING IN EUROPE

November 30, 1992

There has been a marked increase in the military nuclear programs of several radical states in the Middle East as a direct result of the expansion of Europe's black market economy. The collapse of the USSR, the acute crisis in Eastern Europe, and the unfolding civil war in what was Yugoslavia have all combined to create an environment that has facilitated a sudden increase in the flow of militarily useful nuclear materials and technologies to such countries as Iran, Iraq, Libya and Algeria.

Indeed, since late 1992, the flow of militarily useful nuclear materials, military technologies and various weapons systems have become a security concern of some significance. As military goods from the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact are shipped to the Middle East via Western and Central Europe, where the financial transactions are worked out, a potential strategic threat to the West has evolved. Taken together with the drugs, counterfeit money and terrorist equipment that are used as payment for black market military goods, and the prospect of a serious threat of terrifying proportions begins to take shape.

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The origin of the major smuggling operations of nuclear technology, materials and experts can be traced back to 1990 as the economic decline of the USSR began to reach crisis proportions. Moscow, which had been reducing its military cooperation with radical states in order to placate the West and secure economic aid, began to undertake a series of ostensibly "private ventures" that were, in reality, KGB and GRU efforts to sell weapons to its former allies. Moreover, the patina of "privacy" maintained by Moscow actually allowed it to provide its clients with previously forbidden goods for large sums of currency. Consequently, by 1991, with the USSR on the brink of dissolution, many of these projects began to take on a life of their own as established networks continued to operate for financial profit and, in some cases, for the defense of what they considered to be the true strategic interests of the Russian Motherland.

Additionally, "entrepreneurs," in reality black market arms dealers, joined in, using their access to nuclear and other military technologies and equipment as a means of keeping their operations financially solvent at a time of diminishing international arms sales. Ex-West German middlemen, some of whom had been involved in illegal technology transfers to the East, were approached to handle the complex financial and money laundering transactions for these networks.

Meanwhile, sophisticated recruiters, mostly ex-East Germans, operating on behalf of Libya and its numerous front groups (Tripoli, in turn, was recruiting on behalf of Iraq, North Korea and Algeria,) as well as various criminal elements, began roaming the vast Soviet arsenal and industrial infrastructure in search of goods and expertise. Several additional contacts were soon made in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

By mid-1991, the transfer of militarily useful nuclear materials and equipment, forbidden military technologies and various weapons systems had developed into a solid conglomerate made up of a multitude of professional networks, with various criminal elements operating at the fringes and attracting some media attention. However, at least in a few cases, the KGB (and the SVR R, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Agency that replaced the KGB,) seem to have thrown a few "crumbs" to the media to create a few elaborate international hoaxes in which criminal elements tried to gain large sums of money from aspirant states. The purpose was to create a scandal that would preoccupy local security authorities in Western Europe and thereby divert attention from more important weapons transfers.

Thus, as of mid-1992, the bulk of the trafficking in arms has been done by networks comprised of former KGB, Stassi and other intelligence operatives. These networks, as already noted, can tap tremendous amounts of expertise, numerous contacts, and solid support assets (like front companies, airlines, shipping companies, etc.,) that are being utilized to expand Europe's black market. So extensive have these networks become, that it is unlikely, so long as there remains a market for the weapons and materials being sold, that any amount of law enforcement methods short of police state tactics will be able to seriously disrupt them.

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One of the most important and notorious of these networks at the center of the illegal trade in militarily nuclear related items from the CIS to the Third World nations is led by a German named Ernst Shleimann. Shleimann's assistant, a former East German nuclear engineer with extensive contacts in Russia, promised that he and his colleagues could "supply everything from the military sector, including chemical agents and gasses." He also noted

that he could deliver spent fuel rods as well. Thus, a new company called LTR was established in 1991 with headquarters in Bad Homburg and St. Petersburg. The latter city was chosen because its nuclear facilities were said to be "blessed with plutonium" available for smuggling.

Aleksandr Bronstein was the effective head of LTV, but even more important was the presence of Aleksey Nikoforov in a prominent position at the new company. Back in 1990, Nikoforov had already handled the clandestine shipment of heavy water to the Algerian reactor in Oussera knowing full well that it would be used for the development of nuclear weapons. (This was clear from the specifications originally written by the Chinese experts working on the reactor.)

With this leadership, between Christmas 1991 and February 1992, LTR transferred 2.8 tons of heavy water to Szczecin (Poland) on trucks, with more ready for further delivery. Meanwhile, Bronstein notified Shleimann by fax that he had put his hands on enriched uranium and "centrifuges" that could constitute "a further milestone for those who want to build a bomb." Bronstein therefore urged Shleimann to find suitable customers.

The transfer of these nuclear weapons was subsequently handled by a Vienna-based Egyptian mediator who had a long waiting list for highly enriched uranium and plutonium. His Middle Eastern client had committed \$180 million for the "package," netting the mediator a \$15 million commission. The destination of the merchandise was to be Algeria and Iraq. (It is noteworthy that both states have cooperated closely on a nuclear weapons program since the destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure during and since Operation Desert Storm.)

Meanwhile, Russian contacts have also identified quantities of rare metals from former Soviet strategic reserves. LTR and Shleimann established a new Belgian-Russian front company called Sirin to handle these shipments. In Moscow, the Director General of this new company is Veleriy Ryumin, and his deputy is Vladimir Glotov, a former GRU official and a nuclear weapons expert. In addition, Sirin employs several Army officers. In reality, Nikoforov is in charge of Sirin's operations and Sirin's primary business is to take care of fulfilling a large request for military equipment, "really big arms deals" according to Nikoforov's definition, raised by a Swiss "corporation" on behalf of a third party.

The networks' "industrial goods" are shipped from Russia in truck and train containers as European TIR [customs sealed, free from border inspection] on false Croatian end users. Once in Croatia, the merchandise is repacked and clandestinely shipped forward to its ultimate destination in the Middle East.

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Meanwhile, in the Summer-Fall of 1991, the underground trade in nuclear weapons technology and components from the former Soviet Union and sold to such countries as Algeria, Libya and Iraq, was being further consolidated. One of the largest of these international networks is run by a Russian named Aleksandr Viktorionovich Kutsin. His network is comprised of a web of 49 companies based in Vienna, Munich, Warsaw and Moscow. Kutsin is also a primary supplier of sensitive materials to Iran.

The network's key man in Poland is Wojciech Grabowski. He delivers tanks, helicopters, and various sorts of other weapons from Polish stockpiles and factories to the network for delivery to various customers. He usually works with a \$5 million credit line as advances on deals. Additionally, a group of financiers in Italy, Switzerland and Austria established a financial network to manage the money flow from the smuggling with Iraq as the primary customer, with other Arab states, notably Libya and Algeria, also serving as major customers.

Another principal organizer in the network is a German woman named Rita Draxler, who operates out of room 415 in the Annas Hotel, Vienna. In addition to smuggling radioactive materials, Rita Draxler is also one of the primary weapons suppliers to Croatia and Slovenia, smuggling weapons from Germany and Eastern Europe. Among the major deals she brokered was a \$60 million arrangement signed in Vienna on September 27, 1991, for Stinger and Milan missiles from Germany to Croatia. The payment was arranged through a Liechtenstein based bank acting as a front.

In a separate deal, MBB sold Armburst anti-tank missiles to both Croatia and Serbia using a Singapore end user. For larger items from Eastern Europe, such as tanks, aircraft, etc., Drexler uses certificates identifying the items as historical pieces on their way to military museums.

Meanwhile, in the early Fall of 1991, Drexler cooperated with a Yugoslav who calls himself Marijan Sokolovic on a series of major weapons deals with Poland for 50 tons of weapons to go to Croatia. Zagreb failed to come up with the money, but Draxler said that it would not be a problem if Sokolovic could instead arrange for Zagreb to provide assistance in the smuggling of uranium and plutonium as an alternative form of payment. Consequently, in due course, Croatia began to emerge as a major component in the international smuggling network from Europe to radical states in the Third World. Croatia's primary role, in this context, is to provide safe storage and false documentation to facilitate the shipment of goods.

According to the terms of the first deal, Sokolovic was to provide logistical support for the transfer of nuclear material

from Siberia to Iraq. On the Russian side, the network was organized by senior officers of the KGB led by Vitali Tarchuk/Fedorchuk, and the GRU led by Oleg Petrovsky. These men had access to nuclear materials, "tactical nuclear warheads capable of reaching targets between 30 and 60 kms away." Initially, the network demanded \$20 million per warhead. All the nuclear materials were stolen from Army depots in Siberia, primarily the Irkutsk area. Although Iraq was the network's initial customer, Libya was soon to become a major customer as well.

Thus, Marian Sokolovich was put in "charge of underground trade in nuclear materials" on behalf of these networks. He arranged for secluded and safe storage and inspection facilities in Sebenico, Croatia. From there, the material for Iraq, including key components for the Iraqi nuclear weapons program, was loaded on trucks arranged for in Serbia and driven to Baghdad via Bulgaria. Dimitriy Nikolic, a Serb from Chicago and a major weapons buyer for Serbia, mediated the negotiations for cross border cooperation.

These shipments continue at a high pace. For example, in the Summer of 1992, Bulgarian truck drivers working for the Somat company were found to be suffering from several rare diseases. The symptoms were attributed to their prolonged exposure to "dangerous toxic cargos," primarily "chemical warfare agents" and "highly toxic radioactive substances," they had been transporting to Iraq from Serbia, Germany, Italy and Croatia since the Spring of 1991.

The trucks' route ran from Serbia to Bulgaria to Turkey and into Iraq. On their way back they carried mainly tanks of fuel, but also fruits. The trucking operation between Serbia and Iraq was run by a Vienna-based Bulgarian named Bozhidar Bozhilov. As a result of the great success of shipping via Bulgaria; its role in the transportation network has expanded, and Varna, long a major port for illegal weapons and terrorist equipment, has now become a primary port for illegal nuclear materials and weapons.

Meanwhile, by November 1991, the volume of traffic in nuclear materials was so large that the network was having problems meeting its delivery schedules, a problem complicated by repeated failures in security. For example, in mid-October 1991, Italian intelligence intercepted negotiations for the sale of diversified nuclear materials and bomb-making tools in Como. (A measurement tool with traces of bomb-grade plutonium was also captured in a police raid.)

The Italians also learned that one of the network's bankers, Karl Friederich Federer, kept a stockpile of 30 kgs of uranium and 10 kgs of plutonium in a bank vault in Zurich. The uranium was seized on November 11, 1991, in suitcases in the trunk of the car

of Friedrich Refner, the honorary consul of Honduras who is also known as a KGB agent in Switzerland. Refner was to deliver the 29.5-30.0 kgs to a customer using the safety and immunity of the diplomatic car.

However, despite this setback, the network was able to ship the plutonium, as well as another large payload of uranium to Sebenico, before the police raids. Sokolovic, whose name was discovered during the Como affair, was arrested in November 1991 in Vienna on his way to Croatia. When caught, he was discovered to be carrying 2.8 kgs of plutonium. He was released in early-February 1992 and is back in business.

Meanwhile, Draxler continued to attempt to sell plutonium, which could be "used for weapons," and red mercury, on Sokolovic's behalf. Consequently, Italian intelligence learned in late-December 1991 of another major shipment to be comprised of a load of 32 kgs of plutonium in bars. The bars were to be shipped from Ukraine, via Austria and Italy, to storage in Sebenico prior to being handed over to an Arab client, most likely Iraq. Italian intelligence intercepted the shipment on January 4, 1992 after having learned of the deal by infiltrating Swiss financial circles. Unfortunately, Draxler escaped to Germany before she could be captured.

Ultimately, the Como affair proved no more than a temporary inconvenience. Indeed, by January 1992 there was a marked expansion of the network's nuclear trade. However, the volume of seizures was rapidly declining because most of the shipments were sent via the safe haven of Sebenico. There, Zagreb provides dealers with a "safe" transit point in which local government authorities help guarantee the security of the deal and the merchandise. Additionally, an additional benefit is derived from the fact that Croatia is located close to both Vienna and Zurich where the financial aspects of these deals are arranged.

In the meantime, by the Spring of 1992, the trafficking of fissionable material from Ukraine to the West was continuing to expand. This was confirmed by several arrests, including the arrest of two Austrians in Zurich on March 23, 1992, for trying to smuggle less than a pound of plutonium and uranium. One of the Austrians, Martin Woes, was one of Drexler's couriers. The load was smuggled from Moscow to Varna to Bratislava to Vienna and was intercepted on its way to Zurich. In addition, Hungarian police arrested two Hungarians in Miskolc (northern Hungary) with a load of 2.6 kgs of Ukrainian uranium on its way to Budapest. The two were couriers for one of the international networks.

Meanwhile, the Kutsin network expanded the smuggling operations of conventional weapons and nuclear related materials using the contacts in Africa of Anton Kikas. Back in early 1991, Anton Kikas, a Croatian with a Canadian passport, established Croatia's



elaborate international system for the clandestine purchase, delivery and recycling of South African weapons (both Soviet and Armscor). A prominent figure in the Croatia emigre communities, Kikas had access to humanitarian contributions collected in the United States and Canada to help facilitate the financing of arms deals for Croatia. In one such deal, he used nearly \$1 million of charitable contributions that had been deposited in a bank in Klagenfurt to finance the purchase of SA-7bs, AK-47s, and ammunition for Croatia. Kutsin delivered these weapons and so the contact was made and a wider cooperation established.

However, as the volume of weapons shipments increased, Zagreb was unable to meet the payments on the deals it was making. However, almost by accident, Zagreb was soon given a way out of its dilemma when some of Kikas' German colleagues asked him for some special favors. Specifically, Kikas was asked to provide temporary safe storage in Croatia for a very sensitive shipment from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. Zagreb was happy to provide this as well as false documents for the shipment to simplify its movement throughout Europe. The German dealers were enthusiastic about these arrangements and offered to trade weapons to Zagreb in return for safe storage and documentation in future deals.

The major asset Kikas could offer in this arrangement was a network of charter aircraft registered in sub-Saharan African states known for their adherence to the embargo against South Africa that Kikas himself had established for use in major deals with South Africa. The aircraft were initially registered as Uganda Airlines Corporation [UAC] and used for the delivery of weapons to Croatia. In the Summer of 1991, the UAC was involved in a series of weapons-carrying flights between South Africa and Croatia via Ethiopia, as well as nocturnal flights from Sofia to Zagreb carrying highly specialized cargoes for Kutsin and his German colleagues, and later, also to and from other cities in Eastern Europe. The center of command and control for these flight operations was in Nairobi, Kenya.

All was proceeding quite well until, on August 30, the use of the UAC for the delivery of weapons to Zagreb almost came to a halt when two Yugoslav Air Force MiG-21s intercepted a UAC Boeing 707 (registration number 5X-UCM) on its way to Zagreb and forced it to land in Belgrade. The aircraft was loaded with South African made weapons and ammunition. The Boeing 707 itself actually belonged to the US Aviation Leasing Group and had been leased by Kikas on behalf of UAC. It filed flight plans claiming a regular commercial flight route between Gaborone (Botswana), Entebbe (Uganda), and Zagreb.

In reality, however, the Boeing 707 never landed in Gaborone but made an unlogged flight to Mambastho (Bophuthatswana) where Kikas and the South Africans loaded the aircraft with the weapons. On

28 August, the 5X-UCM left for Entebbe, again reporting the flight as having originated in Gaborone. As already noted, in due course, the flight was intercepted on the 30th as it approached Zagreb.

Meanwhile, Pretoria was also willing to accept sophisticated military technology and other sensitive systems as payment for their weapons. In September-October 1991, the Croatia-South Africa cooperation in military and nuclear affairs expanded to such a degree that it was taken over by Zagreb. Hrvoje Sarlic, a close aide of President Tudjman who answers to him personally, was put in charge of overseeing these sensitive relations and exchanges with South Africa. The South Africans were most interested in nuclear technology, as well as advanced aerospace technology, mainly electronics and new materials. Croatia agreed to provide assistance for South Africa's plans "to produce nuclear missiles." The Ruder Boskovic Institute in Zagreb was asked to oversee the nuclear part of the deal. Meanwhile, Kikas's German colleagues were willing to shop for the South African requests in return for services from Croatia and large sums of money from South Africa. Zagreb was to be the center of this operation.

In December 1991, police in Regensburg, Germany, broke a smuggling ring Kutsin and Kikas were using for some of their shipments. This network was comprised of a few Arabs, led by an Arab with Yugoslav citizenship who had been involved in Palestinian terrorism, and a few Croat and German nationals who were responsible for providing services. The captured shipment included 3,000 AK-47s and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition. These weapons were produced in Poland, ostensibly to be exported to Africa with Kikas providing false end user certificates from Equatorial Guinea and Burkina Faso. In reality, the weapons were to be shipped to Croatia via Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany. It should be added that Libyan intelligence assisted Kikas in obtaining the African documents.

In the end, the shipment seized in Germany was but a small fraction of a flood of weapons that had been reaching Croatia since late-1991 for further shipment to the Third World, as well as for its own use. The financing of these operations is arranged mostly via front companies in Germany and Switzerland, using false end user certificates to circumvent the embargo.

Massive deliveries of additional types of weapons and military equipment to and via Croatia began in early-January 1992. For example, later that month, Kutsin, Grabowski, and Kikas completed yet another deal with Warsaw. Poland agreed to supply 250 Strela-2M [SA-7b] SAMs and 25 launchers to a Swiss company. The Swiss provided the Polish authorities with false end user certificates from the Philippines and a charter aircraft from Nigeria delivered the missiles to their destination - Zagreb.

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As has been noted, the flow of militarily useful nuclear material from Eastern Europe to the Middle East is tightly controlled by an elaborate international dealers network of "thousands of channels, businessmen, unemployed scientists, and blackmailers" spread all over Europe, the CIS and the Near East. The financial headquarters for this network is in Switzerland and Austria, and most of the deals are settled in Austria and Germany. Therefore, only relatively few samples of radioactive materials, mainly Caesium-137 and Strontium-90, of non-military origin to be used in demonstrations for prospective clients, find their way into these countries.

The actual supplies of nuclear materials and equipment arrive from Russia and the Ukraine, via forward staging sites in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, to forward storage areas in Croatia and Bulgaria where they are handed over to the customers and/or for shipping to the Near East. The Russians and Ukrainians involved are mainly former and active KGB and GRU officers. These networks also deal with shipments of small arms from Libya via Macedonia and Croatia to interested third parties. Since mid-1992, these international networks have expanded their operations to include the distribution of "poison gas and bacteria" [chemical and biological weapons] retrieved from "Russian laboratories," with deals being arranged at different locations in Germany.

In addition, starved for hard currency, Poland is now eager and willing to sell virtually any type of conventional weapons produced in Poland and/or available in the arsenal of its armed forces. Warsaw prefers to conduct these deals via underground private dealers provided that the price is right and in cash, and that they deposit seemingly legitimate end-user certificates. In order to entice such dealers to buy in Poland, Warsaw blissfully ignores the use of its territory as a forward storage site for nuclear materials from the CIS.

Although the Zagreb treasury is virtually empty, money from the illegal arms trade flows into Croatia's secret accounts in the Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank AG in Germany, and the Erste Osterreichische Sparkasse Bank in Austria, to name but a few. One of the Swiss bankers involved in the Croatian acquisition efforts has confirmed the source of the money in Zagreb's various accounts.

The main front companies in Austria and Germany that are purchasing weapons for Croatia are: Industry Enterprise, Meiz, Waggengrosshandel, Gebrueder Scholeger g.m. BG, DKS, Atlantic, Huertenbert, Scorpion International Services S.A., Xandil International LTD Consulting, Electric Dalland, Weba, Faba, Foga,

Franconia-Jagd. The Croatian build-up also includes the deployment of various para-military forces which is done through a series of front companies ultimately controlled by the Astra Import-Export House owned by Dr. Franjo Greguric, Croatia's Prime Minister. Other key Zagreb-based front companies involved in the illegal arms trade include Promedei, Como, and Ribomaterijal.

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In early June 1992, Austrian police arrested 2 Czechs and 4 Hungarians in a Vienna parking lot with a suitcase filled with various radioactive samples. The material originated in the CIS and was on its way to Croatia. The shipment was captured because the couriers, who were driving a stolen car, worked for a major international network, a "Russian Mafia" made of former KGB officers. They were waiting in Vienna for an Arab contact man, a representative of the ultimate purchaser of the goods, to come and supervise the shipment before they crossed over into Croatia. After capture, they admitted being part of a "nuclear mafia" smuggling radioactive material to Third World customers.

The magnitude of the current illegal traffic in nuclear materials was exposed in mid-October 1992 in Germany. German police arrested 7 members of the "nuclear mafia" (1 German, 2 Czechoslovaks and 4 Polish) in a sting operation launched after a Polish ringleader, Krzysztof Adamski, sought in late-August medical treatment in Switzerland for severe radiation sickness contracted from exposure to 200 grams of Caesium-137 and Strontium-90 that he had been carrying in his breast pocket as a sample for a major deal.

Subsequently, the German police seized, near Munich, 4.8 lbs of "highly enriched Uranium," most likely "weapons grade," in a BMW driven by a Czech courier. The source of this nuclear material was the CIS, and it was being smuggled to Germany via Poland on its way to delivery to a prospective buyer. The seized uranium amounts to slightly less than 10% of the material required to build a simple atomic bomb. In another Polish BMW stopped near Frankfurt, Police seized 200 grams of Strontium-90. One of the drivers had the key to a locker in Frankfurt where Police found an additional 200 grams of Caesium-137 and Strontium-90.

Documents seized indicate that the network is in possession of an additional 44 lbs of weapons grade uranium and additional radioactive materials that were to be delivered in a subsequent phase of the deal and are still hidden in Germany and/or Eastern Europe, mainly Poland. The German authorities believe that at least 22 lbs of this uranium had indeed been smuggled into Germany. Using a Polish informant named Zbiginiew Fiutowski as bait, the German police concluded a deal for the purchase of 22 lbs of enriched uranium in Frankfurt, and the material was soon reported to have arrived in Germany. However, the network leaders

suspected a trap because buyers usually insist on delivery to safer Croatia and Bulgaria and consequently they did not show up for the transfer. In any case, the two Polish drivers in the operation were exposed to a "lethal dose" of radiation, thus giving credence to theirs and Adamski's claims that the entire 44 additional lbs of weapons grade uranium had already been smuggled into Germany.

Meanwhile, Polish police raided the house of a colleague of the aforementioned drivers in Terespol (eastern Poland) and discovered 3.3 lbs of uranium that had been hidden in the bathroom pending delivery instructions. The house was but one of a wide network of storage safe houses. (The uranium had arrived from Breast.) At Bonn's urging, the Russian Security Ministry raided a forward storage site in Breast and confiscated 100 kgs of radioactive material from the nearby Udmurtiya "defense enterprise" already being prepared for shipment overseas.

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Another major deal was revealed by the Sunday Express newspaper in late-October. In that case, Iraq was about to acquire 176.4 lbs of "weapons grade" Plutonium-239, sufficient to produce 20 nuclear bombs, to be sold for \$1m a kg (2.2 lb). An additional 440 lbs of plutonium were available for sale from the same sources in Russia.

There is no doubt that the material in question was indeed weapons grade plutonium. A 0.1 Oz sample that was provided in a hotel in Hamburg was confirmed as PU 239 by a British lab. A wooden box containing 140 screw-disks of Plutonium, totalling about 0.6lbs, was sold to the ostensible front-men of the buyers in Bulgaria as a sample. The Bulgarian National Security Service confirmed that "the box contained military grade PU 239."

In any case, the deal in question was organized by an international network whose financial and organizational centers are in Sweden and Bulgaria. The on-site operatives were a Swede, Bo Gosta Hartmen, and two Poles, Marek Siwek and Edward Rajka, who live in Sweden. The financial arrangements were to be handled through that country. The three individuals seemed to have been mediators operating on behalf of higher authorities. Moreover, they used a British weapons merchant, Norman Derbyshire, as a front to expedite movement in Western Europe.

The source of the radioactive material in which the network was dealing is in Russia, where the suppliers enjoy the support of the highest levels. Indeed, Derbyshire assured the front-men that "there are Russian politicians and generals involved in this," and indeed the offered plutonium was accompanied by official

original certificates. He added that he and the sellers "don't care where it [the plutonium] goes as long as we get cash. And we know there's only one buyer -- the Middle East."

The entire 176.4 lbs of plutonium were reported to be in the Sofia area. The plutonium arrived there in numerous small boxes over a lengthy period of time, both on land by train and by ferry on the Black Sea. The boxes were then stored in several farms and buildings around Sofia. They were prepared and packaged for shipment to Iraq via Varna. Derbyshire claimed that a total of 120 packages totalling 96.8 lbs of plutonium were already hidden in the Sofia area, ready to be delivered to the Iraqi Embassy by truck virtually on a moments notice. The ultimate buyer, Iraq, was then to ship the material from Varna as diplomatic mail.

After the deal was exposed by the Sunday Express, correspondents who had acted as the front-men reported that the Bulgarian security authorities seized "a certain quantity of Plutonium-239," but far below the quantities known to be hidden in that country. Siwek was arrested in Bulgaria and Derbyshire in Germany. All of the other principals are still at large.

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There is no doubt that there is a major and increasing flow of militarily useful nuclear materials and equipment, forbidden military technologies, and numerous weapons systems throughout the black market. Of crucial significance, however, is the question of the significance of these smuggling operations. In other words, how close to acquiring indigenous nuclear weapons are the primary radical states -- Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Algeria -- who serve as clients to the black market networks?

In this connection, it should be emphasized that the flow of militarily useful nuclear materials and tools from the CIS to the Near East is so threatening because it coincides with the migration of nuclear scientists, engineers and master technicians with experience and expertise in nuclear weapons, to the very same radical states that are obtaining the weapons on the black market. In fact, as of late-1992, it has been ascertained that several (at least 7-12) experts are in Algeria, a few (at least 2-4) are in Libya, some 50 specialists are still working in Iraq (including a team from the Arzamas-16 nuclear weapons institute), and 14 nuclear scientists, 50 engineers, and 200 technicians are in Iran. These experts can effectively use the materials and tools that have been smuggled via Europe.

Meanwhile, additional extremely worrisome signs have begun to appear that there are indeed operational or near operational warheads in the hands of various Third World states. Specifically, there has been a growing demand in the black market for super-rare components and materials that strongly

suggest that Soviet-style warheads have been virtually completed by several states. Most telling is the suddenly growing need for gaseous Lithium that is used in bombs to facilitate the boosting of the chain reaction, thus increasing considerably the power of the nuclear explosion. However, Lithium has a relatively short shelf life. Therefore, the Lithium needed by the CIS experts or their local teams is most likely for placement in warheads.

There are also growing indications that the previously mentioned sale of the 4 nuclear weapons to Iran was not an isolated case, and that there are quite a few weapons on the market available for sale to the Middle East's radical states. Indeed, growing numbers of tactical nuclear weapons are reported missing from forward storage sites. For example, in the spring of 1992, "23 nuclear warheads" were reported missing from Komsomolsk-on-Amur arsenals in the Far Eastern Military District and it is believed that they were sold in Central Asia.

The report was hotly denied by the Russian military in Moscow on account of the fact that the whereabouts of all the former Soviet nuclear weapons is known. Nevertheless, the report's accuracy is being insisted on by several sources in Moscow, the Russian Far East and Central Asia. Meanwhile, nuclear weapons continue to pop up in republics long considered de-nuclearized. The last such case was Azerbaijan, which announced in mid-November 1992 that it was in possession of half-a-dozen nuclear bombs and which threatened to use them against Armenia.

Another strong indication of the growing availability of nuclear warheads on the market is their price. In late 1991, the Kutsin network demanded \$20m per warhead. However, by the Summer of 1992, the price being demanded by the "Russian Mafia" had gone down to \$5m and West European mediators were making efforts to negotiate the purchase of several warheads/weapons by a single customer, thereby suggesting that they had access to more than one weapon/warhead. Indeed, in mid-October 1992, the German police seized documents proving that an international network was "offering to sell an entire nuclear warhead." Polish intermediaries told a German agent that they were already in possession of "a nuclear warhead stolen from former Soviet stocks" as well as vast quantities of other nuclear materials suitable for military use.

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Ultimately, the data that can be compiled from the various seizures and arrests of members of these networks is insufficient for an accurate quantitative assessment of the volume of nuclear smuggling. After all, only a small fraction of the traffic and trade are actually known to the various security and intelligence services. The more professional the networks, the less is actually known about their activities, and, in all likelihood,

their very existence.

Thus, it is safe to assume that the myriad of "professional" networks have already been able to provide some of the radical states of the Near East with sufficient amounts of nuclear material and equipment to enable them to either already have a few operational nuclear weapons/warheads (not including Iran's 4 known nuclear weapons), or, at the least, to be on the verge of acquiring them. Needless to say, the implications of this development are ominous.

by Yossef Bodansky  
& Vaughn S. Forrest

(This paper may not necessarily reflect the views of all of the Members of the Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare. It is intended to provoke discussion and debate.)



## OUTLINE

As an institution, Congress dreads the possibility of US involvement in a major war in Yugoslavia for both substance and elections-related reasons. However, in view of the mass hysteria in the media, the popularly accepted notion of victims and demons, and the huge (very huge!) "soft" election funds flowing for supporters of "popular causes," there is a great reluctance to try to do what is right if such an effort can fail. The in-House position is that we must do everything -- including mega-fights with the White House and the media -- ONLY if such a fight stands a chance of success. The price of a futile assault on wind mills is too high to be tolerated by anybody running for re-election in 1996.

What I've been told repeatedly by the leadership is "Yes, all that you say is correct..., the present situation stinks..., but what's the alternative?" or "Bring us a viable option -- a peace plan, a viable working diplomatic process, and we'll go all out for it..."

The TWO decisive principles for a viable and potentially successful diplomatic process are:

1. The anticipated diplomatic process fits closely with the indigenous dynamics on the ground, and
2. The anticipated diplomatic process fits closely with the conventional and commonly-accepted political principles on Capitol Hill (or Washington as a whole).

Amazingly, point 1 is not that difficult to achieve. The essentials of the vision of the future and principles of a long-term solution of both Zagreb and Belgrade are quite similar. There are differences about lines on maps, but they are relatively small. The most divisive issue standing between the two capitals - Krajina - is no longer an issue (for obvious reasons)

It is possible to get Congress to support a peaceful/political solution generally along the principles acceptable to Belgrade and Zagreb. Given the right conditions (proper knowledge of the realities on the ground), the Hill will even swallow, and without shedding too many crocodile tears, the disappearance of the Izetbegovic regime and his band of mujahideen.

HOWEVER, for this to happen, point 2 must be realized. There ought to be a peace initiative from Belgrade AND Pale. THE SERB INITIATIVE MUST COME IN THE FORM OF AN AUTHORITATIVE DOCUMENT SUPPORTED BY A HOST OF BRIEFING MATERIAL - BOTH OF YUGOSLAV ORIGIN AND FROM PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. WITHOUT SUCH AN INITIATIVE IN WRITING AND A THOROUGH SUPPORT AND

EDUCATION CAMPAIGN, NOTHING WILL MOVE. The Peace Initiative document must be not only genuine, but certain principles and buzz-words must be met to qualify the "process" as "democratic" and thus deserving US consideration, let alone support.

So, here are some points that MUST be in such a document:

1. Be positive. Nothing is "off the table," everything is "negotiable." (Whatever position is taken once the Serbs discuss point A or B is a different story). Similarly, Serbs should not rule out off hand any previous peace proposal, map, idea, as much as one may hate them or disagree with them. ALL can "serve as basis for future" study, negotiation, observation, whatever...
2. Stress and condition everything on "the will of the people as expressed in internationally supervised elections/referendums." For example, "Belgrade will be glad to recognize a sovereign BiH PROVIDED that a special majority (66-75%) of all eligible voters (including refugees, for example) voted that they want to live in such a BiH," or "Belgrade will extend protection, annexation, whatever, to the Serb-inhabited parts of BiH PROVIDED that it is ascertained that this is the will of the people." The conditioning should be on the will of the people affected by the suggested solutions: Belgrade will accept this or that PROVIDED the people agree... It is impossible for Washington to argue with such declared democratic benevolence. One of the most heated and bitter fights with Belgrade is over the recognition in principle of a BiH-state, not whether such a state will ever materialize. Thus, Belgrade can be generous, and then, once the people spoke... tough!

Moreover, the Serbs must insist that ALL the elections and referendums in question should be organized and tightly supervised by international monitors and observers. They should be the most vocal and insisting on the internationalization of the process, thus both delegitimizing Sarajevo and reaffirming their commitment to democratic principles.

3. In making demands, the Serbs must rely on precedents that do not apply to the Serbs directly but are sanctified by the State Department. For example, the Serbs should insist that in the case there is a BiH-state (after all the elections and referendums) ALL the present federative arrangements between Zagreb and Sarajevo giving the former supra-territorial rights over the Croats in BiH (de-facto annexation of Herzeg-Bosna to Croatia) will be applied and extended, word-by-word, to relations between Belgrade, Sarajevo and the Bosnian Serbs. Since State Department wrote the original agreement, there's nothing they can say.

4. The Serbs must stress repeatedly Belgrade's ideological commitment to all Serbs -- because they are a single people -- and the ensuing suffering from sanctions, etc. BUT, at the very same time, the Serbs should reaffirm and emphasise the overriding

importance of the democratic principle. They should state that the new Yugoslavia will support, protect, have special relations with, ONLY these Serb communities who want it (and vote accordingly). Belgrade will not impose its presence on, involvement with, whoever does not want Serb alliance. HOWEVER, if the local Serbs express (in elections or referendums) desire to join, link-up, have close relations with Yugoslavia/Serbia (including being an integral part of) -- the world must equally respect the will of the people.

5. Belgrade will accept any map, form of government (in BiH, or parts there of), internal arrangements of local governments and authorities, only AFTER they were subjected to, and approved by, special majority of the affected population. In case of establishing a BiH, Belgrade will accept any separation from the Bosnian Serbs as long as Zagreb does likewise with the Bosnian Croats.

6. Belgrade will be glad to reach a host of over-complex myriad of bilateral relations, non-belligerence, non-aggression, friendship and brotherhood treaties with Zagreb PROVIDED there are at least two sets of documents/agreement/treaties -- THE FIRST is solely bilateral between the two peoples/governments of Serbia and Croatia. The public excuse is the Serb determination to ensure that the two peoples, who have been co-existing in the region for ages and will have to co-exist in the future, can put the horrible legacy of the war behind them. The real reason for such insistence is making sure that foreign powers stay out of the immediate relationship so that mechanism for future manipulations and provocations is sharply reduced. Zagreb wants a form of co-existence with Belgrade, it is the outside powers that want a viable BiH and continued "punishing" of the Serbs. Therefore, the key to avoiding the above is to ensure that the White House will not be able to impose an agreement through the instrument of "guarantees."

Then, the Serbs should demand a SECOND set of international guarantees and multiple-signatory agreements, involving specific states, not just UN, to bless and guarantee the bilateral deals! These agreements will compel the outside forces to go along with the Belgrade-Zagreb deal.

7. The Serbs should NOT utter A SINGLE WORD on expecting sanctions to go away. Washington knows that the sanctions hurt and needs no reminder. BUT, preoccupation with sanctions removal makes the Serb position appear like trading whatever the US wants (including Serb blood in Krajina) for material goods. It is impossible to claim genuine commitment to the Serb nation or other noble principles under such perception. The Serbs must mention their desire to be an integral part of a new democratic Europe with free market economy -- a process that cannot be realized for as long as the sanctions remain. Belgrade must appear committed to peace and the fate of brethren Serbs!

Sarajevians is but one price paid (willingly) for the responsibility felt by all Serbs of Yugoslavia for their brethren in BiH, Krajina, etc. . .

8. The Serbs must appear at all time open-minded, positive, forthcoming, not rejecting anything but not accepting anything either. They should stress democratic principles, long-term hopes, new constitution, etc. These claims must be made repeatedly in authoritative documents so that the claims are believed, at the very least given benefit of the doubt.

9. On the other hand, Belgrade and Pale must stress in the most authoritative and clear voice, though subtly (as far as phrasiology goes) their commitment to a single Serb nation. They should demonstrate resolve, national pride, commitment to interests of ALL Serbs, and steadfastness, or else they will be denied this possibility. It should be clear to the West that although the Serbs are genuinely forthcoming and democratic, the West should not even think about a walk-over imposed settlement, empowerment of Izetbegovic's Sarajevo, etc. as viable options.

The Serbs should be fully aware of the crucial importance of "a first impression!" By the time their document reaches the Hill it must be perfect, golden, and coated with teflon. It is a very challenging undertaking, and there would have to be several non paper cycles until they get it right!

Finally, the Serbs should not even think about putting forward such a paper -- even if it is perfect in its own right -- without ensuring that a comprehensive support and education system is ready to support and sustain the ensuing struggle. People there should know by now what it means (funds, material, getting professional help, and the like). This undertaking is extremely risky from political point of view as people's careers, reelection, and reputation are on the line. The other side is vicious, professional, and has lots of cash. So, nobody (almost nobody) will risk it all if they fear that the maneuver will fail because the support/sustainment will not be there. It is a crucial issue for getting anything done in Washington. One cannot overstate its crucial importance!

NOW, comes September, is a unique window of opportunity. The Serbs better use it. It sure beats the current state of affairs, even for the brave Serbs!

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Globe & Mail July 29/95

# Sarajevo shuns West and brightest

BY CHRIS HEDGES  
New York Times Service  
Sarajevo

WITH faith in the West extinguished, an out-gunned army on the defensive and most of its intellectuals and professionals in exile, this city is turning away from a cosmopolitan European past and embracing a nationalism built on religious identity and indifference to its tradition of artistic and cultural wealth.

"The people in Bosnia feel betrayed by the Western international community," Sarajevo mayor Tarik Kupusovic said. "All the promises that have been made by the West, after all, have never been fulfilled. People are beginning to look at Europe, and themselves, differently."

Sarajevo, once one of the most integrated and religiously diverse cities in Europe, a place where Slavs of all religions could live together comfortably, has changed, perhaps forever.

Hatred and anger, coupled with a deep distrust of the outside world, are breeding legions of new nationalists. And many in the Bosnian capital now openly embrace the xenophobia that seems embedded in all unadulterated nationalism.

The Bosnian Serbs paint the war to their own audience as a battle by Christendom against the inroads of "Islamic fundamentalism."

One of the great ironies of the conflict is that by prosecuting the war, the Bosnian Serbs are creating a Muslim state, the very thing they say they set out to destroy.

In this city under daily assault, where 10,500 people have died from shelling or sniper fire and 50,000 more have been wounded in the past three years, patience has run out on both sides.

Serbs still living in Sarajevo are having a harder time coping with the growing Muslim favour of Bosnian nationalism.

## *Embittered Bosnian capital abandoning rich cultural heritage for Muslim-hued nationalism*

And many Sarajevans, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, no longer have the desire — or the energy — to explain their suffering to those from the West.

The refusal by the Western alliance and the United Nations to confront the Bosnian Serbs has led to a series of military and political disasters for the Bosnian government, especially in recent weeks, and the recent promises from the West have inspired little enthusiasm among the Bosnian Muslims.

"What does it matter what we say?" said a leader in the newly built Islamic Centre, who refused to give his name. "What does it matter what you think of us? You in the West do not care. And after three years of being abandoned and lied to, we no longer give a damn about you."

The great cultural centres of the city, including the imposing library, the national museum and the university, lie gutted, symbols of the destruction wrought not just on a city, but on an outpost of European civilization.

WHILE symbols of Europe have become rubble, one of the most imposing embassies, still under construction, in Sarajevo belongs to Iran.

Tehran, which has long supplied arms to the Bosnians, has also sent groups from the Revolutionary Guards to Bosnia to help foment militant Islamic ideology and assist on the military front, Western diplomats said.

And Iran is not the only country leaving Islam's mark on Bosnia. Turkey and Saudi Arabia are also giving tens of millions of dollars a year in arms and support to the Muslim fighters, according to Western diplomats.

In a sense, the war in Bosnia has become the modern Muslim world's Spanish Civil War. Videocassettes with gruesome footage of the fighting are hawked on street corners in Cairo, Riyadh, Istanbul and Tebran.

The plight of the Bosnian Muslims is decried in mosques across the Muslim world as another move by the Christian-dominated West to crush a resurgent Islam.

And the Muslim world is responding. Saudi Arabia announced on Monday, in the name of King Fahd, another pledge of more than \$10-million (U.S.) for the Bosnian government.

Malaysia and Egypt said this week that they would ignore the international embargo on supplying arms to combatants in the war. And the Organization of the Islamic Conference last week declared the UN arms embargo invalid.

Islamic charities, many in Saudi Arabia, recruit men, especially veterans from the war in Afghanistan, to go to the Bosnian front lines. Scores have died, and at least a few hundred are here fighting. Bosnian Serb news broadcasts often show Arabic documents and identity cards that the Serbs say they have taken from dead Bosnian soldiers.

The very fibre of Sarajevo has changed, with more than half its prewar population of 450,000 gone. Of the 280,000 who are in the city now, an estimated 100,000 came as refugees from villages taken over by the Serbs.

Men and boys from the hinterlands watch their goats and sheep graze on the grassy divides between the streets and in the parks. Families unaccustomed to urban life toss food scraps from the windows.

Women do the laundry in the canals. A small number of women now wear Islamic head coverings, something that was unseen in Sarajevo before the war.

Farmers and labourers from the countryside have taken over apartments abandoned by the doctors, lawyers, teachers, musicians, and business owners who fled.

SELD Lindov, a 60-year-old carpenter, sat with his wife on the 14th floor of a huge apartment block that is pockmarked with holes from Serb shells. He said Bosnian Serb troops drove his family from the suburb of Ilidza three years ago. They lost everything and settled in the building on the edge of the city. His two sons now fight on the front lines around Sarajevo.

"We are not interested in these intellectuals who talk of living together," he said. "They have all left Bosnia. It is the poor who remain to fight. This country belongs to us now, not them."

And those intellectuals and professionals who remain, and who defend Western culture and its values, have little influence in a city that once overflowed with artists, writers, professors and intellectuals.

Late one afternoon, in a top-floor apartment that was damaged by a shell, Ferida Durakovic, one of Sarajevo's best-known poets, sat drinking a cognac as air-raid sirens wailed throughout the city.

"I can understand those who left," Ms. Durakovic said. "Everyone has limits, especially if they have children. But those who left have no right to criticize what this city has become. If they had remained, it would not have ended like this. Yes, this is not the Sarajevo we knew before the war, but now is the time for those in exile to be silent."

# S A V A

September 3, 1995

Serbian American Voters Alliance  
P.O. Box 24493 Los Angeles CA, 90024

Mr. John Kirkpatrick  
Sunday Patriot-News  
Harrisburg, PA

Dear Mr. Kirkpatrick,

Five major national Serbian organizations join the Serbian American Voters Alliance in expressing our collective rage at today's article, *Serbians learning Bible Lesson* by William Pfaff. This article is racist. Mr. Pfaff's remark that: "*He felt a justified relief and even vengeful pleasure*" is indeed sick. Mr. Pfaff and the Patriot-News neglected to inform your readers that on Monday, August 28th, the day before the NATO bombing, the Muslim forces in Sarajevo launched an artillery shell into the front of the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox church as a wedding was taking place, killing Jadranka Vitor, a 30 year old woman, and seriously wounding 48 Serbian civilians including the parish priest, Fr. Djordjc Ilic. Apparently the UN outrage against the violation of Sarajevo's safe area does not include the Serbian section! The silence about this attack in the media makes a mockery of the free press. The silence by our government indicates the depth of our duplicity in these NATO assaults.

Missing, too, from this article were any references that Bosnian Muslim forces joined in concert with Rapid Reaction Forces in attacking and destroying 15 Serbian villages in the area of Blazuj and Nevesinje. These attacks were outside of the 12 mile range of Sarajevo and were launched against Serbian hospitals, churches and schools. One attack in Nevesinje hit a Serbian school holding its first day of classes for the new school year, injuring dozens of Serbian children. Today 5 children have died from their injuries.

In WWII, the Nazis executed 100 Serbs for every German the Serbs killed. Tens of thousands of Serbs were executed by this form of German retaliation. On Palm Sunday, 1941, the Germans bombed Belgrade, a declared open city at the time, killing 17,000 Serbs in 4 hours. Today, dropping hundreds of laser-guided bombs on the Bosnian Serbs for supposedly killing 36 Sarajevo citizens is an affront to anything that resembles human decency. Disproportion is also cruel and unusual punishment! How many dead Serbs will satisfy Mr. Pfaff's "*vengeful pleasures?*"

UNHCR and International Red Cross sources released documents on Monday, August 28th that say more than 10,000 Krajina Serbs have gone "*missing*" from the August 5th Croatian offensive. None of this information has found its way to the pages of the Patriot-News. After Mr. Pfaff's remark he must be jubilant that Serbs are dying in such vast numbers. Does Pfaff dance on graves, too?

Discrediting and insulting someone's history and mythology is considered a form of racism, therefore, the Serbian organizations named in this letter demand a retraction or a printing of this letter.

Mr. Pfaff's opening paragraph that "*Serbs are invincible in battle but always lose their wars*" is insultingly inaccurate. The mythical Serbian phrase Pfaff refers to: "*Pobednici U Ratu A Gubitnici U Miru*" means; "*Winners in War but losers in Peace.*" The Serbs won the Balkan wars that created the Serbian nation at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 ending 400 years of Ottoman oppression. The Serbs were victorious in the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1914 and were "*winning*" allies in both World Wars. The Serbian mythology is supported by such historians as, William Harold Temperley, who, in 1918, wrote: "*There is no race which has shown a more heroic desire for freedom than the Serbs or achieved it with less aid from others or at more sacrifice to itself.*" Mr. Pfaff would better serve the Patriot-News and your readers if he studied some history. He would also help the democratic movement by promoting equal rights and legal parity instead of fomenting racial hatred by such abhorrent editorials.

Wm. Dorich, President,  
Serbian American Voters Alliance

joining in this protest letter:  
Serbian National Federation,  
Serbian Unity Congress,  
Serbian American Community Coalition,  
Jewish-Serbian Friendship Society and  
Serbian National Defense Council of America

CHARLEY REESE



## G.I.s have no business in Balkans

**T**he real question about President Clinton's desire to send 25,000 Americans to the Balkans is this: Is this plan crazy or stupid?

The blarney version is that Americans must contribute to a NATO peace-keeping force. Why should we? "Peace-keeping" is a euphemism designed to hide reality. If the three ethnic groups wish to live in peace, you don't need peace keepers. If they don't, there's no peace to keep.

You can see how crazy-stupid this idea is when you try to answer the following questions: What, precisely, is the mission? How will we know when it's been accomplished? How long will it take? What will be the cost? What will be the benefits to the American people?

I know that last question strikes a jarring note among internationalists, but after all, these troops belong to the U.S. government. The only source of authority for the U.S. government is the Constitution. The Constitution does not say one syllable about forming a more perfect union, ensuring domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare and securing the blessings of liberty - in Bosnia.

In fact, that famous preamble says quite specifically, "We, the people of the United States "seek all those things, including the blessings of liberty "... to ourselves and our posterity." The sole purpose and reason for the existence of the U.S. Army is to provide for the common defense of the American people.

President Clinton and other internationalists propose to use the Ameri-

**The Issue:** Peace-keepers  
**Reese's opinion:** If the U.S. Army is to go to Bosnia, Americans must know what benefit they will receive.

can Army as international errand boys and leg-breakers for the United Nations, for the European Union and for miscellaneous multinational corporations.

The American people should insist that Congress call a halt to this abuse. Perhaps we need a constitutional amendment limiting the powers of the commander in chief so that under no circumstances will Americans ever have to wear an international uniform, serve under any but American command or go in harm's way for any purpose other than defending the United States.

One reason Switzerland is such a happy little country is that it has wisely maintained a policy of armed neutrality. The people support their government's military preparations (they have universal military training for all men) because they know their sons' lives will not be thrown away in some two-bit international scheme or foreign adventure.

As usual, the Clinton administration has been deceptive. It was U.S. Army officers who trained and probably directed the Croat invasion, which, by the way, resulted in ethnic cleansing and atrocities. Because the victims are Serbs, neither the United

States nor the news media has shown much interest.

The United States has been supplying the Muslims with intelligence and has schemed with the Muslim government to instigate NATO planes to heavily bomb Serb military positions. That is not the role of a broker of peace; that is the role of covert intervention in another country's affairs.

All of this, I suppose, was designed to get Clinton a photo opportunity as the man who brought peace to the Balkans. Nonsense. The tentative agreement involves partition of Bosnia, and that agreement could have been signed three years and several thousand lives ago. There is no peace in the Balkans.

As for putting U.S. forces on the ground in the Balkans, that will prove to be a disaster. What will they do? Disarm the Serbs? We couldn't disarm the Somalis, and the Serbs are 100 times tougher than they were.

And does Clinton think that the Serbs don't read or watch television? They know all they have to do is start killing Americans. In Lebanon, it took about 241 dead Americans to force us out; in Somalia, about 18.

How many American lives is Clinton willing to sacrifice for his photo opportunity as a phony peacemaker before he ignominiously retreats? His plan will waste American lives and further damage America's standing among nations. The Balkans are none of our business. It's stupid and crazy to go there.

*Reese's column is syndicated by King Features Syndicate Inc.*

# Stay Out of the Snake Pit

## Say a Prayer for the Troops Over There

“Over there. Over there. Say a prayer, for the troops over there.” wrote Irving Berlin for the American soldiers who went to Europe in 1917 to fight in a war that was not their country’s concern.

Unless we the people wise up and take charge, we can expect to find young Americans soon dying in Europe again. Certainly they won’t die by the tens of thousands as their great-grandfathers did, but they will die by the dozens, as did Marines and soldiers in Lebanon and Somalia.

The Serbs now hate us. We took sides against them in a civil war with NATO (read U.S.) bombs. When our warriors dig in behind Bill Clinton’s proposed demilitarized zone, they’ll be fair game for nasty Serb tricks, just as my regiment was from 1945 to 1947, when it manned another hot DMZ on the Yugoslavia border called the Morgan Line.

The 351st Infantry took dozens of casualties, and back then we didn’t have to watch our rear. Our biggest worry from the rear was an assault by eager Italian girls. But in Bosnia, the Muslims will be shooting our warriors in the back and blaming the killings on the “evil Serbs.”

Last week, congressional skeptics called Clinton’s plan to send troops to Bosnia “dangerous,” “disturbing” and “ill-conceived.”

“Stupid” would be a better word to capture the madness of putting our warriors on the ground there. We have not one vital interest in Bosnia; all that’s at risk is Clinton’s international prestige.

Clinton impulsively promised European politicians that if a cease-



**DAVID HACKWORTH**

Syndicated Columnist

fire deal was stitched together he would send Americans to keep the peace.

Bill Clinton has a way of sticking his foot in his mouth. During the Vietnam War he not only opted out of wearing our uniform, he compounded that dodge by later writing how much he “loathed” our military.

Somalia was another bad call — 45 U.S. and about 2,000 Somalia dead — and when the body bags came home, he dodged again, blaming the United Nations.

Clinton recently said, “My mama told me never to answer questions after 7 p.m.” I’ll bet he made the decision to put American ground troops in the middle of the Bosnian minefield in the wee hours of the morning, after one too many cigars.

Last week, Clinton sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Defense William Perry and Gen. John Shalikashvili to Congress to sell his next foreign policy disaster. Christopher, as usual, did doublespeak; Perry, with a straight face, said U.S. national interests were involved in Bosnia; and Shali said the forces he plans to send will be “robust.”

Even my pet rock knows we have no national interests there, and “robust,” the Pentagon’s newest

buzzword, is what our forces won’t be.

Shali plans to send a tank division. The hooker is that the 64-ton Abrams tank is too heavy for Bosnian bridges and most roads. A top NATO planner says, “It’s all smoke and mirrors. The tanks will go to holding areas and just park there until the engineers do mission impossible — reinforce the bridges.”

The Pentagon plans to send up to four Navy carrier groups and two Army aviation brigades. The NATO source says, “This and the tanks are the ‘robust punch’ Shali is pitching, but with Bosnia’s weather, you frequently can’t get through the clouds. If the flyboys can’t see the targets, they ain’t exactly gonna be robust.”

Meanwhile, our grunts, in their DMZ foxholes, would be outgunned just as they were in Lebanon and Somalia, sandwiched by bad guys in front of and behind them.

Canadian Gen. Lewis MacKenzie, who headed up the U.N. peace effort in Bosnia and who well knows the score, said at the hearings, “Don’t touch it with a 10-foot pole. It’s your soldiers who are going to bear the consequences.”

MacKenzie says that NATO should do the job without U.S. ground forces and, “If they can’t maintain 50,000 or 60,000 troops on the ground, we’d better go back and rethink NATO.”

He’s dead on target!

Clinton’s promise to help put out a fire in Europe’s backyard should not be paid by American firemen. Bosnia is not worth the life or limb of one American warrior.



## WHETHER THE BALKANS ...

by Yossef Bodansky

Exploiting public shock and outrage over the gruesome horror footage of the carnage caused by an explosion on Market Street in Sarajevo on August 27, 1995, the Clinton Administration moved quickly to drastically alter the character of the US involvement in the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Even though sizeable American armed forces were committed to combat -- the US provided the bulk of aircrews used over Bosnia-Hercegovina -- neither Congress, nor the American public at large were informed about the change in policy. On the contrary, initially, there was a concentrated effort to conceal the extent of the change in US commitment.

After railroading a "beyond reasonable doubt" accusation of the Bosnian Serbs for the "mortar shell" that caused the carnage, the Clinton Administration used this incident to justify the massive bombing campaign launched virtually immediately. On August 29, President Clinton called the still escalating bombing campaign "an appropriate response to the shelling of Sarajevo." Starting the pre-dawn hours of August 30, wave after wave of NATO aircraft -- 80-85% of them American -- began pounding Bosnian Serb strategic and regular military objectives. Initial targets were around Sarajevo, giving credence to the fig-leaf claim of retaliation for the "mortar shell." But, within a few hours, bombing raids were taking place all over Bosnia-Hercegovina. Thus, rhetoric aside, the US is an active and dominant participant in the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

It was only after the first waves of predominantly US NATO strike aircraft had already dropped their bombs over Bosnian Serb strategic objectives, as wide cracks were beginning to appear in the certainty of the official attribution of the "mortar shell" to the Serbs, that the Clinton Administration grudgingly began to tell truth.

At first, UNPROFOR acknowledged that the widespread bombing were not a retaliation this specific mortar shell but rather a humanitarian operation aimed at protecting the civilian population of Sarajevo from the Serb gunners. "The aim of the operation is to remove the threat of heavy weapons around Sarajevo," said UN spokesman Lt.Col. Chris Vernon.

However, by now, the bombing raids were expanded to include Serb positions overlooking Tuzla and Gorazde as well. These bombings were presented as defending the Bosnian Muslim "safe havens" from possible future attacks or retaliation by the Bosnian Serb forces. "We hope that this operation will also demonstrate to the Bosnian Serbs the futility of further military actions," said an August 29 statement released in Brussels by NATO Secretary

General Willy Claes.

It was only when the US aircraft began bombing Bosnian Serb positions overlooking Mostar, in south-west B-H, that the truth finally began to emerge. Mostar has never been a safe haven. The local Bosnian Serb forces remained quiet for several months now while overlooking how the Croat forces were slaughtering the Bosnian Muslim -- their brothers in the US-brokered federation. Presently, Mostar is also the place where key Croat forces are now being built for an offensive push on Banja Luka. And these Croat forces might need some help breaking through the Serbian defensive positions one of these days.

On September 8, the very same day a breakthrough war reached in the peace negotiations in Geneva, US military officials said "the bombing campaign could shift to a new set of targets in the north-western of the country," particularly the Serb military infrastructure in the Banja Luka area. No effort was made by the American officials to explain the connection between these new objectives and the safety of Sarajevo or even other safe-havens. On the other hand, the presence of Bosnian Serb important strategic objectives was stressed.

Thus, the real objective of the bombing has nothing to do with the "mortar shell," or the safety of the Bosnian Muslim safe havens for that matter. The US is intervening in the wars in B-H in order to deprive the Bosnian Serbs of a military victory and compel them to acquiesce to a decidedly discriminating political solution. "The Bosnian Serbs, especially after the events of the last 12 hours, ought to have concluded that there is no military victory in sight for them, the tide of the war has turned against them, their dream of a greater Serbia is no more, it's time to face the responsibility of peace," US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said already on August 30. Similarly, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke welcomed the NATO air strikes as a long-awaited sign that Bosnia is "moving toward peace."

America's closest allies were alarmed by the emerging objectives of the bombing campaign -- a campaign in which their own aircraft and ground forces were taking active part. London's reaction was the strongest. On August 30, a British official shied away from the superlatives uttered by the American spokesmen. "The objective of this action is not to bomb the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table. We're not there to fight a war," he stressed. He explained that London vowed to continue participation in the NATO actions "until Sarajevo was safe from hostile gunfire" but stressed that the UN had no mandate for, and the British Government is against, "blasting the Bosnian Serbs into submission."

The Clinton Administration remained committed to the path chosen. Claiming to be committed to finding peaceful solution to the wars in B-H, the Clinton Administration has actually been committed to

forcing a Muslim victory on the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina. That the essence of this victory is empowering the Islamist Sarajevo regime that, at the very best, enjoys around 20% support and recognition (30-35% of the Bosnians are Muslims, at least one third of them support Abdic, so that even if all other Bosnian Muslims support the Sarajevo regime -- they still constitute only 20% of the population!) on a country where over two thirds of the population is Christian and adamantly opposed to living in the Muslim state.

Since mid summer, US negotiators have been creating the impression of being serious about pursuing a just peace and an even-handed diplomatic process. It was the lure of the Clinton Administration's trying to confront the grim realities in the former Yugoslavia that made Milosevic betray the Krajina Serbs, and the sacred tenet of Serb unity, in the name of a US peace proposal. Belgrade hoped that the profound sacrifice of the Serbs will be appreciated and that their desire for a settlement of the war be finally accepted.

Belgrade made a major mistake. Starting the third week of August, the Clinton Administration sharply deviated from the impression of sincerity impressed upon both Zagreb and Belgrade, and instead endorsed Izetbegovic's 12-Points peace plan which had been submitted in mid August 1995. Sarajevo's peace plan set pre-conditions known to be unacceptable to the Serbs. Sarajevo insists not only that any peace must be based on Bosnia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but that no population group would be permitted to secede from B-H and join a neighboring country. Sarajevo also insists that the 1994 Contact Group Peace plan, particularly the maps already rejected by the Serbs, should remain the sole basis for any settlement.

Significantly, Sarajevo insisted on the deligitimization of the Bosnian Serb leadership. Calling the Pale leaders "war criminals" Sarajevo insists on the persecution and that no negotiations will be held with them. This point was quickly and publicly endorsed by Holbrooke, thus in effect raising doubt about his ability to serve as a mediator.

In order to stress the Islamic character of the future Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo has insisted since early summer that any peace plan must be signed by representative of the Organization of Islamic Conference in addition to the members of the Contact Group and the UN. This issue is also one of Izetbegovic's 12-Points peace plan endorsed by Holbrooke. Thus, while the US continues to point to the multi-national character of a future B-H, Washington moved quickly to appease Sarajevo on this point. On August 30, the Contact Group announced formal briefings given to Islamic Ambassadors in Geneva -- representing the OIC -- on the peace process in the former Yugoslavia. Diplomats in Geneva stressed that the two main issues the OIC was to be briefed on were the current US proposals for a Bosnian settlement and the additional military threats and incentives.

The ensuing events in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as the entire former Yugoslavia, cannot be comprehended but in the context of the state of mind of the upper echelons of the Bosnian Muslim leadership in Sarajevo, and, in all likelihood, the key American officials dealing with the region.

By now, mid August, Sarajevo had concluded that the US initiative at its original form was doomed, an opinion shared by local diplomats. "The Bosnian Government will reject the peace plan. I don't think the Americans will get them around," observed a senior West European diplomat in Sarajevo. "They [the Bosnian Muslims] don't trust anyone except for themselves." The Bosnian Muslim leadership was in a combative mood. On August 13, Izetbegovic vowed that "Sarajevo, of course with the help of God and our efforts, will be unblocked by political or military means. We must not enter winter in this situation, and we will not." Sarajevo was convinced that a military solution was the only viable option, and that a Bosnian Muslim victory could only be made possible by a massive American-led bombing. This issue was raised in the negotiations with Ambassador Holbrooke. The Bosnian Muslim leadership was convinced that Washington supported their position. On August 16, Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbegovic stressed that his recent talks with Holbrooke focused "on what needs to be done to compel the Serbian side to accept the plan, and how in fact will the Bosnian Government and its armed forces be provided the opportunity to resist aggression."

Little wonder that Sarajevo was now convinced that the Clinton Administration was favorably disposed toward a marked escalation of the US/NATO military involvement in B-H -- in the form of massive bombing of Bosnian Serb objectives -- thus facilitating a Bosnian Muslim military victory. The upper echelons in Sarajevo were under the impression that the Clinton Administration only needed a legitimate excuse in order to launch the massive air campaign. Therefore, the Bosnian Muslim prepared a self-inflicted atrocity to be blamed on the Serbs -- thus serving as the excuse Washington needed. According to a top Russian military intelligence officer, they "learned about the [Bosnian Muslim] plan to stage the explosion yet on August 20. Russian intelligence briefed the American, German and Croat "leaderships" fearing an uncontrolled escalation. However, the top officer explained, "they did nothing to cut short the provocation and kept silent about the information," convincing Moscow that it was in their interest to see the provocation happen.

Meanwhile, Sarajevo was busy preparing the diplomatic and media grounds for a dramatic collapse of the peace negotiations and the resumption of hostilities. Indeed, starting the second half of August 1995, Sarajevo was raising the pressure on the Clinton Administration to further increase the pressure on the Serbs. While in Washington on August 23, Sarajevo's Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbey [Sacirbegovic's Westernized name] issued an ultimatum to Washington. He told Secretary of State Christopher

that Sarajevo would give the US initiative had only two months to make progress. If nothing tangible happened, the Bosnian Muslims would commit themselves to a military solution to the conflict.

By now, the Clinton Administration was convinced that the Serbs -- both Pale and Belgrade -- would never accept the Holbrooke version of the Izetbegovic plan. The US expected, and West European governments were so briefed, that the Serbs would reject the offered plan, thus clearing the way for the sought after military escalation. To further reduce the likelihood of Pale accepting the peace initiative Holbrooke publicly deligitimized them -- insisting the Bosnian Serbs leaders were "war criminals" the US could not trust and negotiate with. On August 27, Holbrooke introduced additional pressure on the Serbs. "If this peace initiative does not get moving, dramatically moving in the next week or two, the consequences will be very adverse to the Serbian goals," Holbrooke warned.

And then, the US policy faced an unforeseen calamity -- both Pale and Belgrade agreed to the US conditions. Serb leaders authoritatively announced, and on time, their commitment to further negotiating in accordance with the US peace plan.

Thus, on August 28, at the beginning of a fateful week, Izetbegovic and the Sarajevo leadership were in Paris for a summit originally planned to sanctify the US-led NATO military escalation against the Serbs in response for their rejection of the Peace Plan. But the Serbs only reiterated their commitment to negotiate, and, since the Clinton Administration would not listen to them, also formally notified former President Carter and others to make sure the word got to Washington DC. The Clinton Administration was suddenly faced with the dreaded possibility that they would have to negotiate with the Serbs on substance.

And then the ubiquitous "Serb mortar shell" exploded on Market Street, killing nearly 40 civilians. Not only was the shell's timing perfect, but a professional camera crew was on hand to record the gruesome scene in all its gore even before the emergency services began arriving. Although the UN rushed to determine "beyond reasonable doubt" that the 120mm mortar shell came from Bosnian Serb positions south of Sarajevo, many major forensic questions remained unanswered. Col. Andrei Demurenko, a Russian artillery officer who is the Chief of staff for the Sarajevo sector of the United Nations Peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, formally stated that "technical analysis shows that a 120mm mortar bomb which killed 37 people and wounded 85 on Monday could not have come from Bosnian Serb Army positions." Moreover, UN officials in Sarajevo described the August 27 shell as "an almost carbon copy of the shelling 18 months ago." Then the UN safe area policy was enacted and persisted even as the February 1994 explosion in the Sarajevo Market was eventually found out to be a self-inflicted act of terrorism by the Sarajevo regime. The UN officials stressed the similarity between the two events as catalysts for a US-pushed drastic change in NATO and UN policy

and military actions in favor of the Bosnian Muslims.

The swift determination of Serb culpability came even though there is a long record of Muslim self-inflicted terrorism and sniper fire since 1992, acknowledged by senior UN officials, UNPROFOR senior officers, French and British military investigation teams, and other experts. However, all the confirmations and acknowledgments of the self-inflicted terrorism by Sarajevo came after lengthy and thorough investigations -- long after the shocking and emotional impact of the carnage had already been fully exploited against the Serbs. Moreover, being "old news" and politically "incorrect," these findings were hardly ever reported by the US media.

Nor was the Clinton Administration even a little bit suspicious that the latest carnage comes at such a perfect timing for Sarajevo's political strategy. The "mortar shell" exploded exactly at the time when the Europeans have been pressing Washington to be more even-handed in its approach to finding a solution to the Bosnian crisis. The Serbs were publicly demonized anew just when Izetbegovic was coming up with a peace plan that was essentially a non-negotiable ultimatum, and which the US was racing to embrace while the UK and France were adamantly opposed to such one-sided approach. In late August, the conventional opinion in Western Europe was that whatever the Bosnian Serb reaction to the inevitable NATO retaliation would be, it would in effect paralyze the diplomatic process and revive the primacy of the military option -- which is presently Sarajevo's preferable approach.

But all the lingering questions and doubts -- both military and political -- were quickly cast aside under US pressure so that they did not interfere with the swift political capitalizing on the "Serb Shell." Now, the Clinton Administration had both the fig leaf and excuse for the sought after fundamental change of US policy. Within a few hours, the US pushed NATO onto a marked escalation of direct military involvement that, if not contained, might lead the US to going to war in the Balkans.

And so, in the predawn hours of August 30, a massive bombing and shelling campaign began. The strategic impact of this bombing campaign will not disappear. Irrespective of the amount of casualties and damage inflicted, the chances of a Sarajevo/Washington-style peace being accepted are even more remote. The willingness of the Serb leadership in both Belgrade and Pale to continue and talk with the US delegation, including making a major concession by agreeing to a single Serb delegation -- thus in effect self-deligitimizing the Bosnian Serb leadership, for long a major objective of Sarajevo and Washington -- should not be taken out of proportion. The Serbs still have legitimate and vital interests that are incompatible with the peace plan of Washington or Sarajevo. Moreover, the Clinton Administration is eroding its own credibility as a peace maker by increasingly justifying the widening bombing campaign by the need

"to punish the Serbs," and by pushing the UN/NATO to issue additional ultimatums to the Serbs, such as lifting the siege on Sarajevo, under the threat of renewed and expanded bombings.

While the Clinton Administration espouses the contribution of the latest bombing campaign to the peace process, its closest allies -- the Sarajevo regime -- actively prepares for the expansion and escalation of the war in B-H by capitalizing on the impact of the bombing campaign. The Bosnian Muslim leadership is emboldened by the strikes on the Serbs and the international pressure. Sarajevo is increasingly suspicious about their Croat "allies." Sarajevo is therefore determined to exploit the outcome of the punitive bombing to improve its military posture against both Serbs and Croats. Military and militant leaders are convinced that only a major decisive military victory will enable the Bosnian Muslims to consolidate control over the entire B-H.

General Rasim Delic, the Commander of Bosnian Muslim Army, has repeated this argument ever since the NATO bombing campaign began. On August 28, just after the "Serb Shell" exploded, Delic, as well as the rest of Sarajevo regime, began demanding a marked escalation of NATO retaliation. Delic dismissed the US peace initiative or any other non-military outcome of the bombing. "We have only one direction, and that is to continue fighting," he explained. Delic stressed Sarajevo's commitment to "liberating all Bosnian territory" by force of arms.

As the bombing campaign began to unfold, Zagreb became convinced that it was imperative to capitalize on the effect of the bombing to seize the military initiative on the ground. The August 30 clarifications by a Western diplomat in Zagreb that the goal of the bombings was to "deliver a political message and not to change the overall balance of power," were openly ridiculed.

Croatian senior military officials and analysts described the initial effect of the NATO bombing as "a major shift in military might to the advantage of the Muslim-Croat alliance." Several experts predicted that a correct capitalization on the effect of the bombing could finally create conditions for victory over the Serbs. "We are talking about a strategic turning point where Bosnian army and Croat troops seriously outnumber the Serbs in every respect," explained Fran Visnar, a Croat military expert. "This action will give wings to the Bosnian and Croat troops, especially in western Bosnia where the Serbs are most vulnerable since they have no friendly border."

Croatian military analysts expected the Bosnian Muslim and Croat forces to capitalize on NATO's destruction of Serb guns around Sarajevo in order to try to lift the siege of the city by force of arms. The Croat experts expect an attack from the south, where the Serb ring is the thinnest, from Mount Igman through the airport towards the city. "NATO warned the warring parties not to take advantage of the strikes for military gain, but the fact is that the present situation has created ripe conditions for

piercing the blockade," declared Karl Gorinsek, a Croat military expert. The US bombing in the Mostar and Banja Luka areas would only expedite such offensives.

Thus, the Bosnian crisis is far from over, and the massive bombing all but complicated an already complex situation. The challenge of resolving the convoluted crisis in the former Yugoslavia is growing. And so does the likelihood of a major military escalation that might very well spread beyond the confines of the former Yugoslavia into the Balkans and all over Europe. It is therefore imperative to comprehend the roots, dynamics and scope of this crisis and intense war. It is in the strategic context of the war that one can see how misguided the Clinton Administration's Bosnian policy really is. Furthermore, if the crisis in the former Yugoslavia continues to evolve in its present course, the ensuing developments will be detrimental to US own national interest and national security.

\* In the Begining \*

Between 5 and 28 June 1389, on the Field of Blackbirds, now known as Kosovo, the rebelling forces of Serbia were soundly defeated by the advancing Turkish armies of the Sultan Murad I. Murad I himself was assassinated in Kosovo soon after the first battle. His son, now the Sultan Bayazid, was also with the Turkish armies in the Balkans. He immediately ordered the execution of the captive King Lazar of Serbia as a blood revenge. Meanwhile, the Turkish armies intensified their assault on the remaining Serbian forces. Consequently, by 28 June 1389, the land of the Yugo [southern] Slavs was completely occupied by the Muslim Turks, and the centuries long struggle of the southern Slavs, led by the Serbs, for independence and self-determination has just begun.

Since 1389, June 28 is known as Vidovdan -- the Day When We Shall See -- and is a national symbol of the Serbian defiant struggle for independence and self-determination against overwhelming odds and in a hostile world.

On 28 June 1989, the 600th anniversary of the sacred Battle of Kosovo, Slobodan Milosevic, then an aspiring leader in the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia, delivered a speech at the monument for the Battle of Kosovo in Prishtina. Flanked by the other leaders of Federal Yugoslavia and its various national republics in what was supposed to be a commemoration of a joint historic milestone of all southern Slavs, Milosevic spoke about the need to resurrect the glory and predominance of the Serbs. His was a measured and calm speech, logically outlining a vision of a Serbia moving to assume a greater and ultimately leading role in a united Yugoslavia.

Forthcoming as he was, Milosevic had no illusion as to the fears his speech was causing among wide segments of Yugoslavia's multinational population. In their quest for a greater role in Yugoslavia, Milosevic explained, the Serbs were facing a



challenge of historical proportions -- comparable to the historic Battle of Kosovo. "Six centuries [after Kosovo]," he told a huge, predominantly Serbian, audience, "we are again engaged in battles and quarrels. They are not armed battles, but this cannot be excluded yet." Milosevic's prophesy of a new Balkan war, trials and tribulations, would be realized faster than anybody could dream on that fateful day in 1989.

In this demonstration of Serbian spirited nationalism, Milosevic daringly brought to the open a fundamental process already taking place in Yugoslavia since 1986-87. It was the rapid erosion of the two socio-political taboos introduced by Tito and preserved by his heirs, namely, preventing at all cost -- (1) the display of overt nationalism, and (2) the active participation of the masses in politics.

However, Milosevic was not the first to raise these issues. The first cracks in these taboos had already been caused by the revival of Croatian nationalism as a political ideology in the late 1980s. This campaign was spearheaded by Franjo Tujman, a former JNA [Yugoslav National Army] political general turned historian. Tujman was legitimizing a lengthy underground struggle waged by Croatian nationalists, a struggle that included resorting to international terrorism. By the late 1980s, it did not take long for the same sentiments to lead to the rise of Slovenian nationalism. The explosive potential in Tujman's ideological line was in the consequent insensitivity, hostility toward, and ultimately discrimination against, the Serbian population in Croatia and Slovenia. The emerging Croat and Slovenian nationalist leaderships were fully aware of the ramifications of their ideological lines considering the increasingly confrontational attitudes they assumed toward the Serbs, both these living in their midst and Serbia as a nation.

However, unlike the Serbs, whose revitalized quest for national self-identity went little beyond virulent rhetoric, the Croats began actively preparing for a unilateral secession by force of arms if necessary. The nationalist leadership was fully aware of the gravity of the decision they made, and therefore sought the patronage of foreign powers. In 1988, Tujman made a secret visit to Germany, Croatia's patron in the Second World War. There, he met with Chancellor Kohl and other senior officials in order to formulate a joint policy to dismember Yugoslavia and establish a new independent Croatia. One of the first steps taken in accordance with these plans was to begin large scale clandestine weapons acquisition in order to enable the Croats and Slovans to launch their unilateral independence movement with armed militias. Meanwhile, the growing self-confidence of the Croat and Slovene nationalist leaderships was manifesting itself in mounting populist chauvinism and hostility toward Serbs.

Little wonder, therefore, that the mounting anti-Serb sentiments in Croatia and Slovenia since the late 1980s resulted in a backlash in Serbia where Milosevic, a Stalinist turned populist,

took the process one step further, into overt populism as seen in Kosovo in June 1989. It was becoming clear that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were asserting their national self-awakening in a confrontational and hostile manner toward the other key nations of Yugoslavia. The ensuing populist response to the new nationalistic winds made it clear that a violent eruption was all but inevitable. Thus, although neither side really wanted war, the dye for the eruption of a series new Yugoslav wars was cast between Tudjman and Milosevic. The violent secession of Slovenia and Croatia, introducing the harsh and atrocious treatment of the civilian population by all combatants, proved to be only the beginning.

\* Setting the Context \*

Presently, the fall of 1995, with intense fratricidal war already raging throughout the former Yugoslavia for over four years, the Balkans are on the verge of an explosion that, if not prevented in time, will rock the whole of Europe, bring war to the entire continent, and disrupt world order. It is virtually inevitable that the US will then be drawn into yet another European-turned-World War.

The tragedy of the situation in the former Yugoslavia is that both the current and anticipated escalations could have been avoided had the West, led by the US, examined the relevant facts and closely studied the situation, rather than commit itself hastily to a policy based on intentional disinformation and sentimentalism generated by largely distorted TV images.

The internal strife in the Balkans, and not just the former Yugoslavia, is of historic ramifications and intensity. Neither "Western logic," nor international outrage and intervention, are capable of suppressing this long-overdue historical cataclysm, let alone preventing its completion. However, it is possible to expedite the solution of the process while markedly reducing the levels of violence in the former Yugoslavia.

Tragically, the US-led West, is currently preoccupied with the wrong aspect of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, both the good-intentioned and the cynical manipulative efforts to impose a solution only aggravate the situation. Meanwhile, Germany is pushing for an explosion of the Balkans for its own self-interest. Russia, mesmerized by the rediscovery and legitimization of its Slavonic past and future, is out to settle historic scores. Obsessed with its own traumatic clash with the Westernized world order, the Muslim World uses the Balkan crisis as a spark for new a self-cleansing Jihad against Judeo-Christian values and civilization.

The Yugoslav crisis is essentially a quest for national self-determination as well as for a just solution for historic injustices and grievances. However, it is being rapidly transformed into both a religious war and a global crisis --

both constituting potential catalyst and prelude to a new world war. Hence, unless the Balkan crisis is defused immediately, and in a manner that genuinely stabilizes internal dynamics and rifts, the external interventions will increase the interregional pressure, pushing the Balkans, the rest of Europe, and possibly the rest of the world, over the brink.

\* Changing Europe \*

The present strategic situation in the former Yugoslavia is frighteningly reminiscent of the strategic dynamics around the turn of the century. Then, as now, several blocs maneuvering in a multi-pole environment were forced into a twin-pole environment only to erupt in violence. Eighty years ago, the primary point of friction was in the Balkans. In 1914, one spark in Bosnia was sufficient to bring about a cataclysmic release of the building tensions throughout Europe, and subsequently all over the world. That one incident in Sarajevo served as the excuse and catalyst for an explosion now called the First World War, which, in turn, led to the Second World War and the Cold War, should not be forgotten or ignored. With social, political and economic tensions rapidly building throughout Europe, the continent is increasingly vulnerable to the cataclysmic impact of yet another single incident in Sarajevo.

The likelihood of such an incident taking place is growing under present conditions and circumstances. Presently, the key protagonists in the Balkans are immersed in last minute preparations for a marked escalation in the war -- a dramatic breakout long anticipated as of the spring of 1995. Indeed, there was a marked escalation in the fighting throughout the former Yugoslavia since last spring, and the beginning of the spread of Islamist terrorism into Western Europe indeed happened in August. The consequent, and still escalating, horrendous war is at the very same time the war most local powers are desperate to prevent, and the war they are convinced is quite inevitable. It is still possible that the West will be drawn into active participation in this Balkan war. Consequently, the Balkans are once again the focus and catalyst of the traditional European power realignment. The European blocs emerging in the wake of the cold war are strikingly similar to these on the eve of the First World War.

However, the present situation is far more dangerous than a century ago. The main reason is the rise, and direct involvement in the Balkans, of two major players from outside the traditional European power equation and dynamics -- the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. By intervening in a pure European dynamics and power polity, these two external players are not only derailing the proper course of the European revival, but are also pushing Europe, and the rest of the world, into a new cataclysmic eruption -- perhaps a world war.

In modern times -- the last three to four centuries -- Europe has been comprised of three power blocs:

1. The western sea faring nations led by Great Britain and France.
2. The industrialized center led by Germany.
3. The Slavic east dominated by Russia.

Until some 50 years ago, these blocs were floating in a flexible strategic environment influenced by oftenly contradictory economic and political interests in Europe, as well as strategic and economic interests in the Third World (then mostly colonized by the Europeans).

During the cold war, these European blocs were forced into an artificial and rigid bi-polarization. The first two blocs rallied behind the US as a counter to the strategic might of the USSR that, in turn, dominated Russia's traditional domains. This bi-polarisation, made necessary by the prevailing conditions of the global nuclear stand-off, nevertheless remained artificial. Indeed, the bi-polarization began to crumble in the mid 1980s once the intensity of the cold war was reduced, even before the fall of the Berlin wall. By now, this bi-polarization has already disappeared from the European socio-political scene.

The revival of the three European blocs has already had direct impact on global politics and economy.

For several centuries now, the strategic posture and economic development of all European blocks has largely been determined by trade with, and influence over, segments of the Third World.

1. Britain and France reach out to Africa, the Middle East and littoral Asia through the eastern Mediterranean -- Italy and Greece.
2. Germany concentrates on the non-Arab Muslim northern tier -- Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan, and onward into central and east Asia -- through a land drive via the Balkans.
3. Russia historically reaches out along a southwards arch ranging from the Slavic south-west in the Balkans all the way eastwards toward China, arching over the land adjacent to Russia, primarily central and south Asia.

Thus, for all three European blocs, the Balkans have always constituted the gateway to their key interests in the Third World, and hence, have had great influence on the ability of the European powers to wage the Great Game in the vast expanses of the Third World. The repeated crises and wars in the Balkans in the last centuries were first and foremost manifestations of the struggles between the European powers for hegemony over the

gateway to the Orient.

The Cold War did not diminish these traditional trends, merely froze them for half a century -- a brief interlude from historical point of view. These traditional trends and tensions resurfaced as soon as the inter-European power dynamics was revived. Hence, the current crisis in the former Yugoslavia, although initiated and fueled by indigenous quest for self-determination by the local nations, cannot be separated from its role as manifestation of the revival of the European traditional geo-strategic dynamics.

Indeed, dramatic twists and turns in the wars in the former Yugoslavia have been, more than anything else, manifestations of the dramatic shifts in the European power structure during both the last phases of the cold war bi-polarization and the ensuing surge for the revival of the traditional multi-pole posture. These externally induced factors must be coupled with the lingering legacy of the character of the various branches of the southern Slavs.

#### \* Local Roots \*

Indeed, the two main peoples of the former Yugoslavia -- the Croats and the Serbs -- have themselves been molded and formed over the years by accumulating historic experiences. It should be stressed that these national experiences have been largely shaped by these nations' respective roles as the pawns guarding the gateways of Europe in the Balkans.

The dominant factor determining the intensity of the current war is that the two main nations of Yugoslavia developed and were molded under different types of foreign dominance for hundreds of years -- virtually their entire modern history. Therefore, by the time both Serbs and Croats merged into independence in the 20th century, each of them had already had a very distinct yet diverse legacy and concept of political culture, economic development, as well as socio-religious conscientiousness.

Under the Germanic influence, the Croats and Slovenes became Catholic and Westernized. In contrast, the Serbs, Macedonians, and Montenegerins developed under a harsh and hostile Turkish rule which resulted in economic backwardness. Consequently, these nations were molded by the "oriental politics and culture" which still dominates their national behavior, irrespective of their religion -- Orthodox Christianity or Sunni Islam.

These dramatically different historical experiences and heritage shape the political culture of the dominant southern Slav nations, particularly in the ways they deal with each other.

The Orthodox Christian Serbs -- molded by a series of epic and defiant revolts, as well as stoic resistance to, and suffering of, Turkish repressions -- tend to favor centralized

authoritarian leadership and believe in decisive military solutions that will ensure lingering tangible results. The Serbs are committed to self-reliance against an inherently hostile world around them.

In contrast, the Croats, closely associated with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, matured under the soft Hungarian and Germanic rule, and learned to achieve gains through political cunning, passive resistance, socio-economic obstructionism. Consequently, Croats tend to concentrate on appealing to, and exploitation of, foreign contacts and influence.

These inherent differences between the political culture and awareness of Serbs and the Croats still dominate their national conscientiousness and the character of their present struggle for national liberation and self-determination in the new Balkans.

It is impossible to comprehend the current power structure and savage fratricidal wars in the former Yugoslavia without addressing the legacy of the Second World War. This is an issue that affects everyday life and consciousness and not because of the lingering effect of the pervasive education and indoctrination of the Communist era. In the most affected areas, all of them predominantly Serb-populated, the suffering and carnage were so immense that, 50 years after the end of the war, the demographic balance and distribution of the local population is yet to return to the pre-war trends. With two whole generations growing up in families missing relatives due to wartime atrocities and killing, it is impossible for to-day's youth to disengage from the legacy of the war.

The German and Italian armies invaded Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941. Organized resistance collapsed after two weeks of fierce fighting. Soon afterwards, Yugoslavia was dismembered, some of its borderlands annexed by the participating Axis powers. The bulk of the Yugoslavian territory was divided between a German occupation zone that was predominantly Serbian populated, and the Independent State of Croatia which immediately joined the Axis Powers, contributing considerable forces and assets to the war effort in the Balkans and especially the Eastern Front.

Immediately after the German-Italian invasion, Ante Pavelic, the leader of the Ustashi movement, established the fascist state of Croatia as a satellite of the Axis powers. In the summer of 1941, Zagreb declared war on the USSR and sent relatively Croat forces to fight with the Germans on the Eastern front. In December 1941, Croatia also declared war on the US and Britain. In Croatia itself, adopting German occupation policies, the Ustasha evolved into a SS-type police force and established a concentration and death camp in Jasenovac, the only non-German death camp in Europe. The Ustasha embarked on an ethnic cleansing campaign, rounding up Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. All together at least 500,000-700,000 people died in Jasenovac alone -- over 300,000 Serbs, over 60,000 Jews, and over 20,000 Gypsies -- in the 1,335

days and nights that the camp operated. It is noteworthy that immediately after he assumed power in 1991, President Tudjman ordered that the complete destruction of the Jasenovac camp, which had been preserved and turned into one of Yugoslavia's main war memorials, in order to establish a "rare bird sanctuary" in its place.

During the Second World War, several Croat and Bosnian Muslim units actively served on Axis side, mostly under SS command. The Croat forces included 160,000 Domobrani regulars and a 75,000 strong Ustashe militia that dealt primarily in "internal security". With a carte blanche from the Germans, the Independent Croatia unleashed the Ustashe on the local Serb population in a campaign of terror aimed at forcing their eviction so that a pure Croatia could be established. In addition, Croat volunteers manned two SS divisions and three Wehrmacht division, as well as an elite Croat Legion that served under German Command on the Eastern Front. Guided by the former Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Bosnian Muslim population established several units under the SS command -- most notably the 13 SS Handzar Division that had a distinct Muslim character (including public prayer sessions and Quranic studies) that was to spearhead Hitler's surge to the Middle East. Ultimately, the Bosnian Muslim units and particularly the Handzar Division joined the Ustasha forces in their terror campaigns against the Serbs in areas known to-day as western B-H and the Krajina.

Meanwhile, two armed resistance movements sprang into action immediately. The Communist forces were led by a Croatian activist named Josip Broz, who used the nome-de-guerre Tito. The second was a royalist-nationalist movement led by Col. Draza Mihailovic of the royal army. Echoing the Soviet propaganda, Tito's movement adopted the name Partisans while Mihailovic's people adopted the name Chetniks, the historical name of Serbian irregular fighters associated with past fighting against the Turks and other foreign invaders.

The guerrilla war was waged mainly in Serbian populated areas. Mihailovic fought for the interest of the Yugoslav, mainly Serbian, people within the context of the Allied cause. Tito fought for Communist power in post-War Yugoslavia within the context of the Soviet-led Great Patriotic War. Although both movements and leaders were fiercely committed to fighting the Axis powers, this dichotomy in their perception of the future of Yugoslavia would dominate their strategies, especially approach to waging war against the Germans, and ultimately, each other.

Brigadier Sir Fitzroy Maclean, who served as a senior British liaison officer with the Tito Headquarters during W.W.II, described the difference in approaches to waging the guerrilla war in Serbia. At first, both movements conducted a joint struggle against their common enemy. "The rising which took place in Serbia in the summer of 1941 was essentially a national rising. In it Partisan and Chetnik bands fought side by side. It

was astonishingly successful." Consequently, already seeking to divert as many forces as possible to the Eastern Front, the Germans embarked on a fierce suppression of the guerrillas and the population. They retaliated for the guerrilla attacks by savage reprisals against the civilian population. Maclean stresses that the immensity of these German atrocities brought about the conflict between Mihailovic and Tito:

"In the eyes of the Chetniks the results achieved by their operations could not justify the damage and suffering caused to the civilian population. Their aim was to preserve rather than to destroy. ... The Partisans, on the other hand, with true Communist ruthlessness, refused to let themselves be deterred by any setbacks or any reprisals from accomplishing the tasks which they set for themselves. Their own lives were of no account. As for the civilians, they too were in the firing-line, with the same chance of a hero's death as they themselves. The more civilians the Germans shot, the more villages they burned, the more enemy convoys the Partisans ambushed, the more bridges they destroyed."

In the spring of 1993, Debra Costic, the Serb communist partisan leader turned anti-Tito dissident writer, and, ultimately, the president of the new Yugoslavia, reflected on the historic legacy of the Second World War. Mihajlovic fought for a romantic notion of a Yugoslavia that would never exist. "The Chetnik movement was tragic and anachronistic in its ideas and political views. It had a banal slogan that was intended to win over the peasant masses: For King and Fatherland!" The ultimate objective of Mihailovic, Costic stressed, was the salvation of the Serbian population. Therefore, once the slaughter of Serbs reached the level of affecting the demographic character of Yugoslavia, priority had to be given to preserving the people, especially as Germany was already losing the war and Soviet forces were advancing into the Balkans. Costic now acknowledged that, in retrospect, it "was irrational to wage war at the price we paid in Serbia."

In a sharp contrast, the Communist partisans continued their war irrespective of the horrendous retribution inflicted by the Germans and Croats on the civilian population, completely oblivious to the suffering of the people for whose liberation the partisans insisted they were fighting. "Such a war could have only been waged by fanatics, people who were not only fighting for Serbia but for Russia as well and wanted to defend the whole world against fascism," explained Costic, himself a former partisan officer and commissar. These distinctions were not merely historical reflections. The trauma of the Second World War still dominates the psyche of the people of Yugoslavia, directly affecting their current determined and vicious armed struggle, including the horrific cruelty toward each other.

The fact that during the Second World War, all the nations, and fragments thereof, engaged in a savage civil war characterized by mutual atrocities, could not be erased by the rise of a post-War



Yugoslavia. The subsequent imposition of integration and nation-building policies was unable to erase the legacies of bloodshed, only to subdue them. Indeed, the integrated institutions and elements to have emerged from the war, most notably the CPY-led partisan army that evolved from Tito's forces, were the result of prevailing circumstances rather than the free choice of most participants. For example, Serbs in Croatia, subjected to the atrocities of the Ustashe, had no alternative but to join Tito's Partisan Army, although it was dominated by Croat communists, because it was the sole local alternative to enduring the Ustasha. In Serb dominated areas, the resistance organizations followed the traditions of fighting the Turks, and units were organized accordingly on a local basis. These were Serb-dominated forces, with heavy Montenegrin presence and leadership, that were isolated in the mountains and largely lacked political component. This fact would remove them from the post-War power structure.

The revival of Croatian nationalism was indistinguishable from the revival of the Ustasha -- its checkered coat-of-arms and other Nazi-era symbols. Zagreb repeatedly stressed the continuity, causing fear among the Serbs. The Croatian militias drove these fears home when they attempted to assert Zagreb's control over parts of the Krajina and Slavonia explicitly evoking the Ustasha's "return" to these areas.

Therefore, when the young Ustasha, wearing the same uniforms as their World War II predecessors, waving the same checkered banners, shouting the same Croat militant chauvinistic slogans, returned to Slavonia in such a flagrant and arrogant way in the summer of 1991, it had a shocking impact. Little wonder that a few elderly Serbs, all of them survivors of the 1942 massacre and the Partisan struggle, snapped -- a few of them shooting their shotguns and hunting rifles at the Ustasha. The Ustasha returned automatic fire, inflicting casualties among the Serbs. Young Serb militiamen, also equipped with automatic weapons, rushed in and intervened in the firing. A brief though intense clash ensued. There were a few fatalities on both sides. The Ustasha withdrew before darkness fell, vowing to return and take revenge. It was then that the Serb population concluded gloomily that the years of Communist Yugoslavia were but an illusion of co-existence, and that the hated and dreaded Croats haven't really changed. This grim realization, made in the immediate aftermath of the shock and clash, would determine the rural population's position in the ensuing crisis. It was imperative, the local Serb leaders argued now, to prepare to defend the Serbs against the spectre of renewed atrocities.

In the summer of 1991, there were too many villages, and too identical clashes, for each to be labeled an isolated incident. There was, in fact, a concentrated wave of demonstration of Croatian chauvinism in the heart of the one of Serb areas most affected by Croat atrocities during the Second World War. Zagreb only increased the significance of this wave of incidents. When

the news of these clashes spread, Tudjman and official Zagreb failed to demonstrate sympathy and understanding to the Serb population of Croatia. Nor did they condemn these attacks, let alone take steps against the young Ustasha perpetrators. The Serbs, and not without good reason, concluded that these incidents were the beginning of an intentional campaign to evict them from the lands of their ancestors. It would be, they reasoned, a campaign identical to the Ustasha's murderous campaigns during the Second World War.

The fears of the Serbs were not calmed down by the publication of maps of Greater Croatia -- the so-called Historical Croatia -- that included large segments of Bosnia and parts of Serbia. These maps also included a portrait of Ante Pavelic, the wartime leader of the Croatia and the Ustasha, and the ideologue of the slaughter committed against Serbs and Jews. Similarly, the Sarajevo regime was quick to assert its legitimacy by invoking ghosts from the Second World War. Significantly, in mid 1993, Sarajevo revived the Handzar Division with all its fascist culture and preoccupation with the division role as worthy successors to their SS predecessors. The B-H Handzar Division provides the Praetorian Guards for Izetbegovic and other senior leaders of Sarajevo - clearly reflecting their pride in and support for the revival of the old traditions.

The Bosnian Serbs, descendants of victims of the original Handzar Division or the Ustashe, could not but fear the greater ramifications of this trend. This time, however, the younger generation of Serbs was determined to ensure that the slaughter and atrocities against their people would not be repeated, whatever the price. It was this sentiment that dominated the Serbian approach to waging their war against the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims in the early 1990s. The first skirmishes and clashes in the various Serb villages in Croatia would prove, in the long run, to have been of crucial importance to the further deterioration of the situation in the Balkans and the eruption of the vicious war. The Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims revived their vicious fighting of the Second World War, thus determining the totality, cruelty and intensity of the fighting throughout the former Yugoslavia.

In retrospect, the distinct national character of the two dominant protagonists in the former Yugoslavia, strongly reinforced by the trials and legacy of the Second World War, was too close to the Cold War's divide line not to affect the initial European approach to the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

At first, the Europeans took sides in the inter-Yugoslavian crisis as part of the retention of the Cold War's bi-polarity. Thus, the UK and France followed Germany to support the "Westernized" Croats and Slovenes against the "Slavic" or "Eastern" Serbs commonly associated with the USSR-turned-Russia, then still considered inherently hostile to the West.

Although brief and militarily small, the secession of Croatia and Slovenia was a major event effecting the transformation of the key players. The war started with a Yugoslav Government in Belgrade -- including numerous non-Serbs, mostly Croats, at the top -- ordering the national army to defend the unity and territorial integrity of the Yugoslav state against unilateral secession. However, the ensuing clash evolved into a more compounded phenomena. The war in Slovenia was an effort by the local Slovenian Territorials to surround and suffocate the local JNA garrisons and ambush and negate JNA attempts to move convoys to relieve the besieged installations. The local paramilitary forces exploited fully the JNA's orders and reluctance to fire on civilians, even if hostile, in order to repeatedly ambush convoys in inhabited areas. Consequently, the JNA was rapidly demoralized, its military effectiveness plummeted. The war in Croatia was even more demanding from non-military point of view. In Croatia, as described above, the chauvinistic demons of the Second World War came out of the closet. For the Croats, the essence of the war was more than gaining independence from Yugoslavia. Their objective was the establishment of a Croat State -- that is, evicting the Serb population or, at the very least, discriminating against them thus forcing them to leave "voluntarily."

Consequently, the war in Croatia has developed into a series of assaults on inhabited areas -- from isolated villages to cities - - with the declared aim to determine through the use of force the ethno-demographic character of the area. Croat regular and irregular forces attacked Serb civilians, intentionally committing atrocities aimed to cause their escape. The Serb irregular and JNA organized forces reacted with vengeance, committing equally horrific atrocities in the process against the local Croats. Some of the fiercest fighting that followed in and around urban centers in eastern Slavonia were exceptionally cruel.

Taken together, the fighting in Slovenia, and particularly Croatia, changed the entire former Yugoslavia irreversibly. Most important has been the transformation of the JNA. The JNA started the war as a multi-ethnic conscript army. The JNA was the country's most truly integrated institution with a professional cadre committed to the unity of Yugoslavia. By early 1992, it was a completely different institution. The cumulative impact of mass desertion of Croats and Slovenes, the ugly confrontation with the Croat and Slovene hatred, and the deployment to protect Serb villages in Krajina and Slavonia against Croat atrocities-- all, when taken together, brought about the Serbianization of the JNA. The JNA's manpower was now predominantly Serb (although there were numerous Bosnian Muslims in senior positions in the JNA during the fighting in eastern Slavonia, presently an enduring source of contention between the Bosnian Muslim forces and their Croat counterparts). Their missions were increasingly to defend Serb civilians against Croat forces. As the JNA was compelled to vacate its garrisons and withdraw into the new Yugoslavia (Serbia

and Montenegro), it was becoming increasingly nationalist Serb.

In the winter of 1991-92, Zagreb sought to suppress some of the key positions held by the Krajina Serbs, especially their hold over key bridges overlooking the Adriatic coast. The Croats also sought to contain the JNA and Slavonian Serb pressure on key cities such as Osijek. The key to Zagreb's strategy was preventing, or at the very least limiting, Belgrade's ability to dispatch reinforcements to bolster the local Serb forces. The main instrument of the Croats was to deploy forces into Croat populated areas in B-H, and subsequently, incite the local Muslim population to join the war against the Serbs. Zagreb enticed Sarajevo to cross the line and take sides by promising Western diplomatic recognition and massive economic aide. Consequently, the Croats manipulated the situation in the former Yugoslavia to have the Bosnian Muslims become their instrument and point of clash with the Serbs (meaning, doing the killing and dieing for the Croats). Zagreb and Bonn then dragged the Western powers into recognizing, and then siding with, the Bosnian Muslim as a legitimate political entity in the Balkans. By now, however, the Bosnian Serbs were resolved to defend their own traditional habitation areas against the resurrection of anti-Serb chauvinism and militancy. With that, the center of the war moved to Bosnia-Hercegovina. Meanwhile, the first cycle of fighting in Croatia ended in the spring of 1992 with UN forces assuming protection of the local Serb population as JNA forces withdrew from Croatia and Slovenia.

The end of the first phase of the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the spring of 1992 was much more than moving the center of gravity into Bosnia-Hercegovina (where it remained with the exception of the recent Croat onslaught on the Krajina Serbs). With this shift of the fighting, there effectively ended the legacy Cold War constraints on the position and posture of the various European powers. Indeed, it did not take long for Europe, now freed from the artificial bi-polarizing pressure of the Cold War, to return to the traditional and historic three-bloc dynamics and fluid alinement. There has since been a corresponding change in the European powers' expectations from their proxies in the Balkans. This has already led to a change in the nature of European support for the belligerents in the former Yugoslavia.

By the mid 1990s, Europe has fully returned to formulating its policy according to the traditional "normal blocs." The most dominant trend is the resurrection of a Russo-German co-existence against the Western sea-faring nations. Russia and Germany are engaged in a condominium-type relationship in order to exploit eastern Europe, as well as conduct a joint surge into, and hegemony over, the Orient (Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia).

In the Balkans, their common gateway to the Orient, the vested interest of both Russia and Germany is now to contain the violence so that they can concentrate on their larger and more

important global aspirations. Therefore, both Moscow and Berlin now support the establishment of a tenuous co-existence between Croats and Serbs largely along the original Karadjordjevo Agreement of March 1991 on the division of Bosnia-Hercegovina, and the consequent establishment of unified Croatia and Serbia. Despite the periodic flare-up of heavy fighting between Serbs and Croats, both Belgrade and Zagreb have repeatedly reaffirmed the validity of these principles as the basis for the preferable long-term solution for the former Yugoslavia.

The largely unknown Karadjordjevo Agreement is the result of a series of bilateral meetings Tudjman and Milosevic held in Karadjordjevo, Vojvodina, in early March 1991. In a rare moment of clairvoyance and responsibility, the two leaders seriously examined the long term aspirations and interests of their nations and sought ways to reconcile between them. Both leaders realized and agreed that what was then happening in Yugoslavia was a resurgence of a popular quest for national self-determination. There was no doubt that the two main nations of the western Balkans -- Serbs and Croats -- were determined to reunify their peoples, irrespective of the remnants of the Titoist borders, and realize their quest for self-determination.

Milosevic and Tudjman concluded that the only way to curb the violence in Yugoslavia was to expedite the process of establishing a new Croatia and a new Serbia, encompassing the majority of Croats and Serbs, each under a single government respectively. The main issue was the Serb and Croat population in Bosnia-Hercegovina, which both leaders considered an artificial entity created by Tito to suppress their own peoples. In Karadjordjevo, Tudjman and Milosevic reached a very detailed and specific agreement on the carving up of Bosnia-Hercegovina, between their countries. Croatia was to get Hercegovina and Posavina in the north, covering a large portion of W.W.II Croatia. Milosevic secured control over the predominantly-Serb areas. The original agreement called for Serbia to get 75% of Bosnia-Hercegovina, and Croatia -- 25%.

A year later, confronted with the West's determination to secure a Muslim state in Bosnia-Hercegovina, Zagreb and Belgrade reexamined their 1991 agreement. They decided that if there would be no escape from retaining a Muslim mini-state -- the Serbs will keep only 65% of Bosnia-Hercegovina, the Croats will get only 20%, and leaving the Muslim with 15% of the territory. As late as the fall of 1994, both Zagreb and Belgrade reiterated their commitment to, preferably, the original Karadjordjevo Agreement, and, if inevitable, the 1992 readjustment of the maps. In the February 1992 meeting in Lisbon, the leaders of the three main groups in B-H, including Izetbegovic, agreed on a modified version of the original agreement between Belgrade and Zagreb that would transform B-H into a canton-style state in which all nations could preserve their self-identity. However, at the last moment, Izetbegovic reversed himself on the basis of US enticements and promises of support. Later that spring, the

building internal tensions throughout Bosnia resulted in the outbreak of the still going fratricidal war.

Meanwhile, the rise of the Sarajevo regime has proven a major factor bringing the Western sea-faring nations to supporting the Russo-German solution for the Balkans even though such a posture will have reduced their own influence over the former Yugoslavia. The reason for such a dramatic change is the widespread recognition of the horrendous threat in the spread of radical Islam into Europe. Thus, the entire Europe -- all three blocs -- is presently determined to speedily contain the spread of militant Islam, including the blocking of its European springboard -- Izetbegovic's Bosnia-Hercegovina. Europe has already resigned itself to accepting the conclusion that the only viable solution for the crisis in the former Yugoslavia is to enable both Croats and Serbs to realize their burning desire for national self-determination -- the establishment of cohesive Serbia and Croatia with their natural boundaries. In the fall of 1995, the European powers have finally accepted this reality and are already working to implement it.

#### \* Sarajevo's Way \*

By now, however, the situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina has already become far too complicated to be simply defused through recognition of reality and implementation of the long sought-after indigenous solutions. This grim reality is the direct outcome of the evolution and transformation of the wars in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Although the Serbs and Croats constitute a majority of the population of B-H, the evolution of the war was dominated by the Bosnian Muslims and the out-of-region powers intervening on their behalf.

Essentially, since the early 1990s, the complex, convoluted, and extremely cruel war in B-H has transformed from an intense and fratricidal set of struggles for national self-determinations by the local peoples/nationalities determined not to be boxed into an entity they consider both alien and hostile to their own national aspirations, into a still contained war by proxies in which such alien and out-of-region powers as the US and Iran (which, along with Pakistan, is leading the Muslim Bloc that is also very actively involved as an entity in its own right) as well as the various European blocs (both together and separately) fight for the balance of power in, and the shape of, a future Europe. Both the European and the out-of-region powers struggle for their long-term interests on the backs of the southern Slavs -- irrespective of religion and definition of nationality.

Because of the international involvement and ramifications of the war in B-H, it is the quintessence of the war in the former Yugoslavia. The struggle for the future of B-H is the focal point where the future of the entire Balkans, and perhaps the rest of Europe and even the West as a whole, will be decided. It is

therefore of great importance to understand the dynamics of the evolution of the war in B-H.

If one follows the Western media (beyond the specter of atrocities and other humanitarian issues), the war in B-H appears as a series of unrelated localized clashes, each of which attracts and dominates international attention and involvement for a while. However, in retrospect and from a strategic point of view, one can see that the war in B-H has been evolving according to a very coherent course, while the actual military operations can be divided into three phases in each of which the implementation of the overriding war aims has been improved. From the very beginning, the course of the war has been dominated by Sarajevo, even when the Bosnian Muslim forces were militarily virtually irrelevant and the Bosnian Serb forces were vastly superior to all. Sarajevo's dominance over the evolution of the war in B-H is the result of the work of Alija Ali Izetbegovic and Rasim Delic.

All this time, the Bosnian Serbs have remained committed to preserving their gains -- a passive strategic approach leaving the initiative to their opponents. On the eve of the war, Bosnian Serbs had legal title to over 60% of the territory of B-H. The bulk of their initial military operations was to improve their defensive positions and lines of communications, both internally and with Serbia. Once these missions have been completed, the Bosnian Serb forces have tried to remain on the defensive. In principle, observed General Charles G. Boyd (until the summer of 1995 the Deputy Commander in Chief, US European Command), "the [Bosnian] Serbs are not trying to conquer new territory, but merely to hold on to what was already theirs." In retrospect, Pale's greatest strategic-political failure to date is this relinquishing of the strategic initiative at the time.

As early as 1992, Izetbegovic outlined a very precise and uncompromising strategic political objective for the Sarajevo regime -- to get the West to defeat the Serbs and establish a Muslim-dominated state for him. There was no ambiguity about Izetbegovic's objectives. Maj.Gen. Lewis Mackenzie described the essence of Sarajevo's strategy in the summer of 1992 (when he was UNPROFOR's commander): "Izetbegovic wants the entire country back. Quite frankly, the only way he can get it is by convincing the international community to intervene with massive military force, ridding him of his Serbian enemies. ... It's in the interest of Izetbegovic to keep the fighting going, in the hope that the world will come to his rescue -- provided he can make it look as if the Serbs are solely responsible for perpetrating the chaos."

The task of both building the Bosnian Muslim armed forces and using them to provoke and instigate that international, essentially Western, military intervention is entrusted to Rasim Delic, the commander of the Muslim Bosnia-Herzegovina Army. Back in 1992, Delic, in his formal capacity as the head of Department

for Strategic Planning and the then de-facto commander of the Muslim forces in B-H, devised a long-term plan that still dominates Sarajevo's military activities. (In the late 1980s, Delic used to be the Chief of Department of Strategic and Operational Planning of the Yugoslav General Staff.) Dalic's plan defined a long-term military build-up and warfare strategy to meet both the need to instigate Western intervention and then enable the Muslim forces to conduct a major war against both Serbs and Croats on their own. This plan is still being implemented quite successfully despite its cynical and manipulative character, as well as Sarajevo's overall Islamist and thus inherently anti-West character. Indeed, the overall course of the wars in B-H since 1992 fit the key phases Delic's plan:

PHASE 1 -- from the spring of 1992 till early 1993. This phase was dominated by Sarajevo's struggle for international legitimacy. The Bosnian Muslim leadership in Sarajevo was determined not only to ensure that the Western recognition of B-H as a state endured, but also to ensure that the West deligitimized the Serb and Croat posturing for the establishment of coherent and cohesive entities -- the Republic of Sparska and Herzeg-Bosna respectively. Sarajevo was determined to gain international legitimacy for a unified B-H as a Muslim state to the point that the West will intervene militarily to impose a Muslim-dominated state on the Christian majority (some 70%) in B-H.

Sarajevo's main instrument in this phase was the demonization of the Serbs through a media and disinformation offensive in the West (highlighting Serb "atrocities" and "ethnic cleansing"), as well as pin-prick military actions and self-inflicted terrorism.

Starting the summer of 1992, there was a marked escalation in the provocations performed by the Muslim forces in order to instigate a major military intervention by the West against the Serbs and, to a lesser extent, the Croats. Initially, these provocations were mainly senseless attacks on their own Muslim population, but they soon expanded to include attacks on Western and UN objectives. A UN investigation concluded that several key events that galvanized public opinion and governments in the West to take bolder action in B-H, were in fact "staged" for the Western media by the Bosnian Muslims themselves in order to dramatize Sarajevo's plight. Investigations by the UN and other military experts count among these self-inflicted actions the "bombing" of the bread line (May 27), the "shelling" of Douglas Hurd's visit (July 17), the explosion in the cemetery (August 4), the killing of ABC producer David Kaplan (August 13), and the shooting down of an Italian G.222 transport aircraft on approach to Sarajevo (September 3). In all these cases Serbian forces were out of range, and the weapons actually used against the victims were not these claimed by the Bosnian Muslim authorities and the parroting Western media.



The UN concluded that a special group of Bosnian Muslim forces, many of whom had served with Islamist terrorist organizations, committed a series of atrocities, including "some of the worst recent killings," against Bosnian Muslim civilians in Sarajevo "as a propaganda ploy to win world sympathy and military intervention." These attacks escalated into premeditated attacks and atrocities committed against Bosnian Serb civilians trying to flee contested areas. In early September 1992, UN security officials in Geneva pointed out that the shooting down of the Italian transport "was in line with a growing number of Muslim actions intended to scuttle moves toward peace and to provoke outside military intervention." They added that "the Muslims have targeted United Nations troops and even other Muslims in the capital of Bosnia to throw blame on the Serbs."

Ultimately, through cynical manipulation of a susceptible Western media and a lavishly financed public relations blitz, the Bosnian Muslims and their then Croat allies were indeed able to demonize the Serbs and twist the image of the fighting in B-H to such an extent that this twisted perception of B-H still prevails and dominates the decision making of the Clinton Administration in Washington as well as public opinion and populist policies elsewhere in the West.

For their part, the Bosnian Serbs have been helping this propaganda blitz aimed at the demonization of the Serbs. In retrospect, Pale's greatest strategic-military mistake was the beginning of the massive shelling of Sarajevo in the spring of 1992, and subsequently escalating this campaign into laying siege on Sarajevo. Consequently, and unintentionally, Pale has been providing means and opportunity for the Western politicians and their press to transform the complicated B-H issue into the simplistic and emotional presentation of the plight of innocent civilians in Sarajevo. The Bosnian Muslim self-inflicted acts of terrorism, widely attributed to the Serbs, only served to exacerbate the West's preoccupation with the plight of Sarajevo as the essence of the situation in B-H. This development compounded the effects of Pale's strategic-political error in losing the strategic initiative in the region.

PHASE 2 -- from the spring of 1993 till early 1994. This phase was dominated by the building the Bosnian Muslim Armed Forces in preparation for future offensives, while, at the very same time, strengthening the West's, particularly Washington's, sympathy and commitment to the Bosnian Muslim cause to the point of considering massive military intervention on their behalf. (The unique role played by the US is discussed in detail below.) In the spring of 1993, Sefer Halilovic acknowledged that the B-H forces were "incapable, without outside help, of getting back significant parts of its lost territory."

The Bosnian Muslim military build-up was based on Delic's plan and intended not only to acquire weapons but to transform the Muslim forces (now including numerous foreign volunteers in key

positions) and national infrastructure into an offensive-oriented military establishment. During PHASE 2, Sarajevo was actively preparing for a major escalation in the fighting, first through offensive irregular warfare and, ultimately, regular campaigns, following the arrival of major reinforcements from around the Muslim World.

The most important facet of the strategic build-up was the establishment of well defended sanctuaries into which reinforcements and weapons shipments can arrive, and from where offensives would ultimately be launched against the Serbs and the Croats. The key sanctuaries were established around air bases protected by medium and long range air defense systems, itself smuggled into B-H. The main sanctuaries selected are the Dubrave military airbase and heliport near Tuzla, and the Butmir airport near Sarajevo. A wide variety of sophisticated weapon systems, from advanced missiles to heavy artillery pieces, as well as crews and ammunition, were promised by Syria, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. All can be delivered by C-130- type transport aircraft into the airstrips in the sanctuaries.

Once these sanctuaries were operating and key weapon systems delivered, Delic's plan called for the beginning of offensive military operations on a localized basis. These will be a combination of limited offensives and a spate of irregular warfare, that is terrorism, throughout the Serb and Croat "strategic rear," namely, Croatia and Yugoslavia proper. The local offensives will be carried out by numerous Brigade-size, each 6,000-troops strong, elite forces supported by long-range weapons, a growing number of heavy artillery and tanks, as well as helicopter gun-ships and assault helicopters.

Indeed, a major reorganization of the Bosnian Muslim forces into a professional conventional military system has already been completed. In April 1994, Sarajevo established a professional high command, and the army was reorganized into seven corps, each comprised of 1-3 brigades and regiments, as well as several special forces/mujahideen units. In early 1995, with the beginning of the new cycle of offensives, the Bosnian Muslim forces in the key sectors in central Bosnia were further organized into division-level groupings, each comprised of 3-4 brigades. This reorganization reflects availability of heavier weapons and standardization of military equipment. Further more, there has been a marked increase in the number and quality of the special forces/mujahideen units which now spearhead all key offensives. In mid May 1995, the Mujahideen forces were organized as the 3rd Corps.

There has been a corresponding increase in the size and arsenal of the Bosnian Muslim forces. By 1994, the overall number of Bosnian Muslim troops reached between 150,000 and 200,000 depending on the extent of mobilization. The quality of their weapons improved markedly -- both in quality and in the emergence of an ordinary and lavishly provided logistical system. Numerous