

Bush sees 'no genocide' in Bosnia, as death toll rises

by Joseph Brewda

"Is the West procrastinating so that the hidden agenda of the Serbs can be achieved?" So asked Bosnia's envoy in London Paul Trvtkovic, in an Aug. 11 interview with BBC, in analyzing the United Nations Security Council consultations on the war in former Yugoslavia. Shocking photographic documentation of Serbian concentration camps had been exposed in the world press that week, and embarrassed British, French, and U.S. government spokesmen were forced to issue vague and contradictory claims that they would be taking action.

"The international community cannot stand by and allow innocent children, women, and men to be starved to death," Bush proclaimed on Aug. 5. By Aug. 7, he said that he was considering the use of force "very carefully," but did want to see the U.S. "bogged down" in "some guerrilla war." He claimed to fear any "reckless use of force."

Then, in an interview with *U.S. News and World Report* published on Aug. 17, the President announced, unbelievably, "In all fairness I have to say to the American people there is no evidence that what's happening [in the Serbian concentration camps] is genocide."

British Prime Minister John Major demurred on Aug. 7 that "we cannot use force without disproportionate risk to lives of civilians."

On Aug. 11, the Security Council finally passed a resolution calling on unnamed countries to take "all measures necessary" to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance to Bosnia. But all that such militarily protected humanitarian convoys would do, even if they were to materialize, would be to "feed people in their abominable state," Bosnian diplomat Trvtkovic noted. In sharp contrast to its resolutions against Iraq, the Security Council refrained from even mentioning Serbia, the aggressor, by name.

More importantly, the "even-handed" United Nations continued to impose an arms blockade on all parties, under the claim of acting to contain the war. A proposed amendment to the resolution by the Organization of Islamic Countries

The Balkan powderkeg



to lift the embargo on Bosnia never saw the light of day. Tiny Bosnia, which now controls only 30% of its territory, has no arms, and no army. Serbia, the former seat of Yugoslavia, on the other hand, has a large, heavily equipped army, regularly supplied by Greece.

Mass death continues

One week following the resolution, Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic flew to Washington to meet with Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger in a desperate effort to obtain military aid for his dying country. "Nobody is asking for ground troops," Silajdzic explained to the press, "only air cover and weapons to defend ourselves." Commenting on a U.N.-sponsored peace conference to be held in London on Aug. 26, Silajdzic said that his government would continue to seek assistance. However, if these efforts fail, "we will ask the international institutions to no longer concern themselves with Bosnia-Herzegovina, because we know how to die alone. This we do well."

While western politicians hem and haw, what have the Serbians been doing on the ground in Bosnia?

Since the war began in April, Serbia has seized 70% of Bosnia's territory. At least 100,000 people are being held in 38 Serbian concentration camps, according to Bosnian Red Cross officials interviewed by Agence France Presse. Food is distributed every 3 days, and life expectancy is 12 days. The situation, one eyewitness told the agency, is "like Dante's Inferno."

Here is one typical account of the camps, reported in an Aug. 18 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report: "Killings occurred regularly in the prison camps. In many cases, the killings were recreational. R.B., a 38-year-old mother, spent 8 days at the Luka camp at Brcko, not far from the Serbian border. According to her testimony, paramilitary groups from Serbia would enter the camp at night and make the men sing Chetnik [Serbian guerrilla] songs. Those judged insufficiently enthusiastic would be pulled outside and made to fight in what was effectively a human cockfight. Two men

would take turns slapping each other. The man judged the weakest slapper would be killed. One time, the Serbian paramilitaries cut off the loser's ears and nose before slitting his throat."

Over 100,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed since Serbia began its aggressive wars, with its attack on Croatia in June 1991. Approximately 2,180,000 people are now fleeing the region, according to the estimates of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. This is the highest number of European refugees since the end of World War II. At least 400,000 refugees have already fled to other countries, primarily to Germany. Some 200,000 Bosnians alone will be expelled from Bosnia by Serbian "ethnic cleansing" campaigns in the coming weeks, according to the commission. Moreover, it adds, food shortages and the weather will "kill even more people than the whole war" this winter—that is, more than 100,000 people.

If that were not enough, the war is spreading, and threatening to engulf not only the other former Yugoslav republics, but also Albania, Greece, and Turkey.

A Serbian military assault against the Albanian-ethnic Muslim population of Kosovo is expected over the coming weeks. Kosovo was annexed by Serbia a year ago, but the oppressed population is overwhelmingly in favor of independence. The President of Kosovo, Imbrahim Rugova, stated in July that war will spread if Kosovo is not recognized as an independent state. A Serbian assault on Macedonia, another former Yugoslav republic, is increasingly possible. The invasion of either Kosovo or Macedonia could spark a Serbian war with neighboring Albania. These conflicts could then draw in Serbia's ally Greece on the one side and Turkey on the other.

In an Aug. 5 press conference, a representative of the London Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies elaborated on these themes. A war between Serbia and Albania is "almost certain" and "perhaps imminent," gloated Marko Milivojevic. An "even more formidable threat" is posed to Albania from Greece. "Greece and Serbia are collaborating more closely on both political and military issues, having a common interest in preventing the emergence of a Greater Albanian state."

Greece has led a successful campaign to block the European nations' recognition of Macedonia, claiming that only it has the right to the name. Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis opposes independence for Kosovo or any other former Yugoslav republic. "We must not recognize the absolute right of self-determination of the Albanians in Kosovo," he said on June 15. "The borders of the former Yugoslavia—both the external and internal ones—must be respected." Greece continues to claim southern Albania, which it terms "northern Epirus."

Last spring, Turkey formed a military alliance with Albania which, like the rest of this region, it had once ruled. Unlike the rest of the NATO countries, Turkey is continuing

to call for a military intervention against Serbia to protect Bosnia. "Turkey has an army of 700,000 to 800,000," Turkish Defense Minister Nevzat Ayaz stated on Aug. 15. "We can send as many troops as we like."

How the war was created

The accompanying chronology of representative statements by U.S., British, and French spokesmen gives some indication of how those countries prepared the war and fanned its flames. Here, we summarily list the key imperial considerations and events that shaped the war.

1) In June 1991, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker traveled to Belgrade, Yugoslavia to give Serbia the go-ahead to crush the then imminent secession of Slovenia and Croatia from the Serbian-run Yugoslav federation. Without such guarantees, both publicly and confidentially made, Serbia would have never dared to begin the war. The fact that both then-Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft had been business associates of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, indicates some of the reasons why those guarantees were believed.

2) The Anglo-Americans' strategic purpose in sparking the Balkans war, like the developing war in the Transcaucasus and the earlier U.N. war against Iraq, has been to envelope newly reunified Germany and newly liberated eastern Europe with military conflicts, thereby to contain their power and influence. In line with this objective, a vicious propaganda campaign was launched by the British, charging that Germany was out to create a "Fourth Reich," with imperial designs on the Balkans. This charge was used to blunt any German effort to stop Serbia, and to block any European nation that might have wanted to follow Germany's line. Today, we see the hideous outcome of this British policy, as Serbia carries out its "ethnic cleansing" and mass extermination on the model of Hitler's fascism.

The imposition of savage International Monetary Fund conditionalities over eastern Europe had a similar strategic purpose. These IMF "scorched earth" policies, Lyndon LaRouche warned as far back as 1988, would lead to a Yugoslav civil war.

3) In the fall of 1991, Germany began to campaign for the diplomatic recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. This recognition was intended, as German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said at the time, to show that Europe would not tolerate Serbia's aggressive war of conquest. The initiative was bitterly fought by the U.S., British, and French governments, which continued to reiterate their support of Serbian sovereignty over the breakaway republics into the spring of 1992. Without this continuing support, Serbia would not have continued the war.

4) The "peace-keeping" missions of both the U.N. and the European Community have continued to support Serbia. U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance (the former U.S. secretary of state), together with European Community envoy Peter Lord

Carrington (the former British foreign secretary) have condemned both sides equally. This is de facto support for Serbian aggression. The truces and arms embargoes imposed have selectively favored the much more heavily armed Serbia, which continues to acquire arms from Greece.

5) Throughout this bloodbath, Anglo-American media have claimed that the mass death was the necessary result of the rise of nationalism following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union. The images daily broadcast on television screens in Central Europe, and in the press, are intended to induce a sense of impotent despair, as war again returned to Europe.

6) Then, in an abrupt public policy shift in the spring of 1992, the British and U.S. governments demanded that sanctions and even military action be taken against Serbia. This shift was coupled with the shameless lie that Europe in general, and Germany in particular, were responsible for the do-nothing approach to Serbian aggression. The argument was made that only action by the U.N., NATO, or some other supranational, Anglo-American-dominated entity, could contain nationalist wars throughout Europe. Yet, it is unlikely that force will be used, if at all, until after Bosnia is exterminated. On Aug. 25, U.S. government officials leaked to the press that Britain, the United States, and France had abandoned any coalition effort to deliver even humanitarian aid.

Documentation

A history of lies about Serbian genocide

Anglo-American instigation of the war in Yugoslavia can be traced to June 21, 1991, when U.S. Secretary of State James Baker gave Serbia the "green light" for launching war against Croatia and Slovenia. The following chronology traces the perfidy of Washington and London, with the full acquiescence of the Anglo-Americans' junior partner, French President François Mitterrand. Of the principal NATO powers, only Germany has bucked the State Department line, as the time line shows.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, June 21, 1991:

"The United States would like to help in whatever way we can in assisting Yugoslavia to democratize, to maintain respect for human rights, and to preserve the unity of the country." So stated Baker in Belgrade, Serbia—the capital of former Yugoslavia. The statement was made in a speech to the Yugoslav parliament which was televised and broadcast live throughout the country. Slovenia and Croatia, then

two republics of Yugoslavia, had announced the previous week that they would each be unilaterally declaring their independence from Yugoslavia on June 25. Baker also stated that the United States would not recognize the independence of either republic.

Baker's statements were interpreted by Serbs, Croats, and all other knowledgeable European observers, as giving Serbia the go-ahead to crush Slovenia and Croatia. Five days after the speech, the day following their declarations of independence, Slovenia, and then Croatia, came under a full-scale assault by the Yugoslav (Serbian) Army and Air Force. Serbian irregular, guerrilla units had been involved in sporadic actions against Croatia since August 1990, but it was only after Baker's address that a full-scale war involving government troops began.

European Community "peace negotiator," former British Foreign Minister Peter Lord Carrington, Oct. 5, 1991:

"Logically there is nothing to fight about now . . . but frankly I wouldn't bet my shirt on it!" Lord Carrington told the BBC, commenting on a just-forged "Yugoslavia peace agreement" he had sponsored earlier that week, following the three months of fighting between Serbia and Croatia that began after Baker's June 21 speech. "What we must hope, is that now that the motive for fighting seems to have very largely disappeared, that good sense will prevail." Lord Carrington claimed that Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic "for the first time" has publicly acknowledged Croatia's right to independence, while Croatia guaranteed the protection of ethnic Serbs, so the agreement, he said, was successful.

Even the *Washington Post's* Zagreb (Croatia) correspondent felt embarrassed in reporting the statement, writing the next day that "the failure today to stop or even reduce the level of fighting, struck many Croats here as a signal that the entire political agreement was doomed. Reflecting that pessimism, Croatian media today relegated the peace deal, which is being described by European diplomats as a major breakthrough, to the end of gloomy reports about federal air and artillery attacks."

EC mediator Lord Carrington, Oct. 10, 1991:

On the eve of his visit to New York to meet with U.N. special envoy to Yugoslavia Cyrus Vance, Carrington rejected the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia: "The position of the European Community has been that nobody is going to recognize the independence and sovereignty of any of the republics until there is a solution to the whole problem."

U.N. special envoy and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Nov. 5, 1991:

Vance had been appointed U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar's envoy to Yugoslavia in October. At the conclusion of his mission in November, Vance had declared that he opposed sanctions against the Serbs on grounds that