

BASIC: a British counter-gang exposed

by Dean Andromidas and Edward Spannaus

The British are never satisfied to push simply one side of any issue. Their method has been described by British Brig. Gen. Frank Kitson as “gang-counter-gang”: set a policy in motion, and then create a controlled “opposition” to that very policy. The gang-counter-gang actions of the British have often been written in blood, as in the British creation of phony rebel groups during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya in the 1950s, or in the British Army’s creation of phony Irish Republican Army cells, to carry out brutality against Protestants in Northern Ireland, to fuel a 20-year communal urban war.

But not all British counter-gangs are dispatched to plant bombs or carry out “third force” assassinations. Thus, while British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, and Defense Secretary George Robertson arrived at the summit hell-bent on getting President Clinton and NATO to back their blueprint for World War III, a British organization, the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), was distributing its anti-NATO message. BASIC’s director, Daniel Plesch, was seen everywhere, buttonholing representatives from the various delegations, while directing a small army of volunteers who were distributing the latest press releases. BASIC documents appeared on the same distribution tables as the official NATO press releases. Plesch also seemed to pop up anywhere an *EIR* representative was, although he aggressively refused any contact with *EIR* correspondents. This is not surprising, because Plesch has been caught in the past slandering Lyndon LaRouche.

One wonders whether it was a warning from Plesch, who was in contact with the principal anti-British tendencies at the summit, that led to the unusual decision by the British to cancel all their press conferences and public events scheduled for the second, most important day of the summit.

Your BASIC counter-gang

BASIC was founded in 1987 by Plesch, who had been serving as vice chairman of Great Britain’s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which was founded by the evil Lord Bertrand Russell. CND works closely with such Russellite groups as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), SANE, and Freeze.

The organization is not to be confused with long-haired peaceniks. Its council members include Denis Healey, of the

British Labour Party and a former Defense Minister, and Life Peer Lord Roy Jenkins, former government minister for the Labour Party who later formed the Social Democratic Party with Lord David Owen. Frank Blackaby, a former director of SIPRI, is another.

In the early 1990s, BASIC was one of the leading advocates of Lord Owen’s pro-Serbian Vance-Owen peace plan, to carve up Bosnia during the earlier phase of the war in former Yugoslavia. More recently, it has taken up NATO expansion and globalization, presenting them as strictly U.S. inventions, ignoring altogether the British role. This disinformation campaign, identifying the “new NATO” doctrine of global policing as “Made in America,” was delivered a harsh setback at the NATO summit, despite Plesch et al.’s best efforts to conduct a non-stop anti-American whisper campaign.

As early as October 1998, BASIC wrote in its newsletter: “The Clinton administration is eager for NATO to formalize a military role outside Alliance borders, ideally without specific UN Security Council authorization for each mission.” On the new strategic concept proposals, it wrote that “the United States and others favored a complete rewrite of the concept to address issues such as counter-terrorism, out-of-area operations, and counter-proliferation. . . . Washington is pushing for a wide interpretation that would allow action against terrorists, nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons proliferators, and other threats in Europe and beyond.”

These were precisely the *British* proposals that President Clinton nixed.

In January, BASIC published “A Risk Reduction Strategy for NATO,” which dealt largely with its analysis of the proposed new strategic concept: The United States wants NATO active in a broader area, relegates the UN to a subordinate role, and no longer considers the UN indispensable. Russia must be put firmly in its place. NATO should be active from the Middle East to Central Africa.

On April 22, the day before the start of the NATO summit, BASIC hosted an all-day symposium on “NATO at 50.” The event was obviously intended to provide a counter-gang forum for many speakers who had honest reservations about NATO policy, particularly on Kosovo. For example, the Greek Defense Minister enunciated his government’s policy which, while supporting the real humanitarian concerns, called for seeking ways to demilitarize the conflict so that the search for a political settlement could be found—a position which dominated discussions at the summit.

Another speaker, Dmitri Trenin, a retired Russian military officer working for the Carnegie Foundation in Moscow, warned that the view among a majority of Russian military and political leaders is that NATO is a hostile force, out to destroy and subjugate Russia.

There were no speakers from BASIC. In fact, the only British representative was Adm. Sir James Eberle, formerly of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).