

New evidence shows British were behind China Embassy bombing

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On May 14, Lt. Gen. Robert Gard, the former president of the National Defense University and the president emeritus of the Monterey Institute for International Studies, voiced deep criticism about the way that the air war in the Balkans has been conducted, and argued for a humanitarian solution to the ongoing crisis, on the PBS “News Hour with Jim Lehrer.” Toward the end of the interview, PBS’s Phil Ponce asked Gard to comment on the recent “specter of mistakes” in the NATO bombing targetting, an explicit reference to the May 7 bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

The Chinese embassy was hit with at least three precision-guided bombs, resulting in the deaths of three people, and injuries to a score of others. The Chinese government branded the bombing a “barbarian” act of aggression, and accused the “U.S.-led NATO” of a premeditated attack on their sovereign territory.

On May 10, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen and two unnamed “senior intelligence officers” from the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency “explained” the cause of the bombing, blaming the incident on an outdated map provided by the CIA, at a Pentagon press conference.

The preposterous cover story put forward by Cohen et al. only served to deepen the rift between the United States and Chinese governments, a rift that could still jettison President Clinton’s efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the Balkan war. That rift was very much evident when Chinese President Jiang Zemin refused to accept a personal phone call from President Clinton days after the bombing. Eventually, the President met with the Chinese ambassador in Washington, signed the official condolence book for the Chinese journalists and embassy official killed in the bombing, and did speak by telephone with President Jiang on May 14.

The PBS interview with General Gard demonstrated that a sane element within the U.S. military establishment is becoming increasingly alarmed at the insane direction in which U.S. military doctrine is headed, under the likes of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Hugh Shelton and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Wesley Clark (SACEUR). In this view, General Gard and the others have joined Lyndon LaRouche, who called for a thorough probe of the Chinese Embassy bombing, and publicly declared, “I would court-martial the SOBs.”

General Gard responded to Ponce’s question: “Well, particularly if we’re going to attack targets in populated areas, I think we have an obligation. For example, in the case of the Chinese Embassy — to blame that on a seven-year-old map is ludicrous. With all of the surveillance capability we have, we should be cross-checking each and every target we hit in a populated area, to minimize the chances for these kinds of accidents. What’s occurring in warfare is a secular trend toward an increasing proportion of civilian casualties. The turn of the century was about 10%. Now it’s running 80 to 90%. And I think the means that we’re employing to try to achieve a humanitarian objective are contributing to what is an increased proportion of civilian casualties in warfare. And I think we need to take a hard look at employing our forces in that manner.”

While General Gard was too polite to say outright, that the story put forward by Defense Secretary Cohen and NATO spokesman, and British subject, Jamie Shea was an outright lie, his remarks touched upon some of the crucial evidence that the “CIA old maps” tale is preposterous, and that a thorough investigation could lead to a solution to one of the most dastardly, and potentially politically devastating crimes to have ever been carried out by elements of NATO.

Indeed, as *EIR* reported last week, on May 8—two days *before* the Cohen cover story was first rolled out—Maj. Gen. Walter Jertz of NATO was asked by a defense correspondent whether it were possible that the mistaken targetting of the Chinese Embassy could be attributed to an out-of-date map. Jertz debunked the possibility of an “old map” error. “We go through a very thoroughly researched targetting process,” he told reporters at a NATO press conference in Brussels. “We do validate targets, if they are legitimate targets, with all the information we can get. These targets will then be placed on the master target list consistent with NATO plans, and those targets, once they are legitimate, we are going to attack. I have no evidence that we are using old maps, wrong maps.”

How it works

EIR has interviewed a number of current and former U.S. military and intelligence professionals, who have confirmed, indeed, that the scapegoating of the CIA for the China Embassy bombing is absurd. A composite picture from these sources can be summarized as follows:



President Bill Clinton and President Jiang Zemin review Chinese troops in Beijing, June 27, 1998. The British-steered NATO attack on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was intended to break up the deepening strategic partnership between the United States and China.

1. While it may have been the case that officials of the CIA “nominated” the particular Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Interior Ministry building, thought to be a command post for the deployment of Serb paramilitary death squads inside Kosovo, as a target for NATO bombing, and while the CIA may have even been working from erroneous maps provided by the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, there is no way that such an initial error could have escaped detection further along the chain of command.

2. Once a target has been recommended, there is a cross-check and further review conducted at the Pentagon, of all of the evidence justifying the targetting. This review process draws upon added sources of documentation, drawn from a wider range of U.S. government intelligence databases and sources. Several branches of the U.S. military, as well as representatives of other U.S. intelligence agencies, participate in this process.

It should be emphasized that several sources interviewed for this article told *EIR* that, as a matter of routine, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade is a target of electronic eavesdropping by the U.S. National Security Agency. Telephone and cable traffic in and out of the embassy is a priority target for U.S. “national intelligence means.” Therefore, the idea that the 1996 relocation of the Chinese Embassy was not noted by U.S. intelligence agencies at the headquarters level is preposterous.

3. If the targetting recommendation passes this second

cross-checking, the referral is forwarded to NATO headquarters in Brussels, where another review process takes place. This is the process that was described on May 8 by General Jertz, and by a NATO headquarters official interviewed by *EIR*’s military correspondent Dean Andromidas. At NATO headquarters, in the J2 (Joint Intelligence) and J3 (Joint Operations) sections, the American intelligence, backing up the target recommendation, is cross-checked against information from other NATO countries.

4. Before final approval is given for a target, there is an on-the-ground check carried out by NATO intelligence assets. In the case of the Chinese Embassy, on-the-ground sources in Belgrade would have been deployed to eyeball the target, to confirm that the cumulative intelligence motivating the targetting was accurate. In short, if, as Cohen et al. claim, there was no correction provided on the targetting of the Chinese Embassy, this was the result of outright willful sabotage on the part of key elements of the NATO command, who, by their own rules, cannot authorize a bombing attack until an eyewitness corroboration of the accuracy of the target information has been transmitted back to Brussels.

British perfidy

NATO officials confirmed to *EIR* that the target verification process, including a mandatory on-the-ground site observation, is handled at NATO headquarters by the J2 and J3 units, which are staffed by active duty officers from several

NATO countries. The chain of command leads up to the Deputy SACEUR, who, by NATO statutes, is always a British officer. The present Deputy SACEUR is Gen. Sir Rupert Smith, who had been the commander of the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia. The British component of the Bosnian peacekeeping force was notorious for feeding preemptive information about planned UN military deployments to the Serbian forces, thus abetting some of the very "ethnic cleansing" that they were deployed to prevent. So, the idea that General Smith is the chief operations officer for the current NATO operation in Kosovo demands special attention and scrutiny, if the truth is to be revealed about the Chinese Embassy bombing.

Well-placed U.S. intelligence sources have told *EIR* that it cannot be ruled out that British assets on the ground in Belgrade, including Serbian assets with long-standing ties to British intelligence, may have been the source of the disinformation that locked in the targetting of the Chinese Embassy. "The British are the number-one suspects," stated one source, who requested anonymity. "They have the capability on the ground, and they clearly have the motive. The United States had neither."

Several military sources completed the picture: Once the mapping coordinates of a target are verified from the on-site sources, it is a matter of procedure that specific NATO countries are given the task of planning and executing the attack. Given that 75% of all of the air sorties over Yugoslavia have been carried out by the U.S. Air Force, it was not shocking that it was apparently American fighter aircraft that dropped the three precision-guided bombs.

Washington, Bonn, Rome, Moscow pursue diplomacy

by Rainer Apel

The first direct telephone conversation between President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin, on May 14, broke the ice that had been piled up between NATO and China, after the "accidental" bombing attack on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on May 7. That telephone contact, in which Clinton assured the Chinese that there would be a thorough investigation of the bombing incident, helped to restore much, though not all, of the positive impulse for a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo conflict, which had been created by the May 6 Bonn declaration of the foreign ministers of the Group of Seven and Russia. The talks that Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had in Beijing with Chinese leaders on May 12, were also very important to mend relations between NATO and China, thereby "pulling China into the boat," as German

officials put it. But the diplomatic impulse was consolidated only with the Clinton-Jiang Zemin telephone discussion, and one cannot rule out a new British-instigated atrocity to once again undermine the fragile relationship with Beijing.

From there, the international Kosovo peace diplomacy made fast advances in the days immediately after: On May 15, the United Nations Security Council approved a joint U.S.-Russian initiative, supported by the governments of Italy and Germany, to appoint Martti Ahtisaari, the President of Finland, as special UN envoy for the Kosovo peace process. Not being a member of NATO, makes Finland acceptable to Russia and China, the two non-NATO members of the five permanent powers on the UN Security Council. And, having clashed repeatedly with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright over her destructive views on the Balkans issue, German diplomats very much welcome that Clinton has named Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to represent the United States in the Kosovo peace talks.

Talbott is known among German diplomats as a tough negotiator, but he is also known for being a constructive mind, and Italian diplomats hold similar opinions on this issue. Furthermore, Talbott has also been designated by President Clinton to handle the sensitive joint work with Russian Balkan envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin, the longtime crony of Vice President Al Gore. In effect, President Clinton has not only iced out Secretary of State Albright from the Balkan diplomacy, but he has iced out Vice President Gore as well. This, too, is an extremely positive and important maneuver by President Clinton, which undercuts the prospects of the peace effort being sabotaged by the notorious Gore-Chernomyrdin combination, already under suspicion of having plotted the overthrow of Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov.

The redoubled U.S.-continental European effort to achieve a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo war became visible on May 18 when, after two days of Italian-German consultations in Bari, Italy, Schröder and Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, at a joint press conference, endorsed the Ahtisaari mission. That mission is something that Talbott was involved in directly, when he met with the Finnish President and Chernomyrdin in Helsinki on the same day.

The air war must be halted

The other aspects on which the German and Italian leaders agreed, were the need for a temporary halt in the NATO air war against the Serbs, to create conditions for a rapid withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. The cessation of air operations would be made possible, when a joint Kosovo resolution of the Security Council, with the explicit consent of Russia and China, were passed, Schröder and D'Alema said. And, they indicated, that resolution should be along the lines of the May 6 Bonn resolution of the G-8. D'Alema had published the basic outlines of this proposal already on May 16, and he had also been strengthened in his view after a conversation with Schröder on May 10, that NATO could not,