

# Coverup unravelling on bombing of Chinese Embassy

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On June 24, the *Washington Post* published details from a classified CIA inspector general's report on the May 7, 1999 bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. The *Post* revealed that a "mid-level CIA officer" had attempted, unsuccessfully, to warn both CIA higher-ups and U.S. military officials responsible for the selection of bombing targets, that the building in downtown Belgrade, selected for bombing, was *not* the headquarters of the Yugoslav Federal Directorate of Procurement and Supplies, as had been thought. Indeed, it proved to be the Chinese Embassy, a building visited on numerous occasions by many American diplomats, and under constant electronic surveillance by NATO intelligence agencies, including the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) and Britain's General Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).

Three people were killed and dozens injured, when three precision-guided bombs, dropped by an American B-2, hit the embassy compound on May 7.

The *Post* revelation has opened a gaping hole in the official Pentagon and NATO story, that the embassy bombing was an "accident" caused by faulty maps.

The June 24 *Post* story provoked a barrage of questions, later that day, when Pentagon press spokesman Ken Bacon held his regular Thursday afternoon briefing. Under intense grilling from the press corps, Bacon made startling revelations, amounting to an admission that Secretary of Defense William Cohen, in his May 10 press conference on the China Embassy bombing—which was purportedly the "definitive account" of how the "accidental" bombing had occurred—had lied about the most essential details of the incident.

Under the Nuremberg Code standards of "knew or should have known," Secretary Cohen is one official who should, at minimum, be fired for his conduct—along with NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, Gen. Wesley Clark, and his deputy SACEUR, Gen. Sir Rupert Smith of Britain.

## No investigation was started

One of the first things that Bacon admitted, was that the essential facts, as reported in the *Post*, were accurate. A mid-level CIA officer had attempted, first on May 4, and again on May 7—just hours before the bombing of the Chinese Embassy occurred—to warn CIA higher-ups that they were targetting the wrong building. Moreover, the unnamed CIA officer had placed telephone calls to the Combined Air Opera-

tions Center (CAOC) in Stuttgart, Germany, the headquarters for the U.S. component of the NATO air war, and the unit responsible for the implementation of NATO bomb site targetting. He had spoken to different officers on both days, but he did reach people within the relevant chain of command.

So, what happened?

Incredibly, Bacon admitted that there has not yet been a Pentagon review of the incident! For the first time, it was confessed that no comprehensive after-action investigation had been launched into the bombing until *after* the air campaign had concluded. "Secretary Cohen has instructed Deputy Secretary Hamre and General Ralston, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to conduct an after-action review of Operation Allied Force that will look at all aspects of the operation and come up with an analysis of what went right, what went wrong, what could have happened better, what happened better than we anticipated," Bacon told the astonished Pentagon press corps. "And as part of that review, we will look into this aspect—that is, what happened on our side in terms of targetting for the Chinese Embassy incident—but it will be in a broader context."

Bacon later clarified, that the purported investigation which Secretary Cohen cited on May 10, *had nothing to do with the operational aspects of the embassy bombing*. "The initial—there was a review that was done on the intelligence side that had to do with databases, it had to do with how the intelligence was gathered that led to the initial targetting decision. . . . There's another side of the review that has to deal with—that has to do with the military side, and that was always going to be done in the context of a broader after-action review." Bacon acknowledged that the Pentagon brass, to this day, do not know how many other targets were questioned, and how the information was handled.

Bacon's stark admissions also make it clear that, when Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Pickering travelled to Beijing in early June, to provide the Chinese government with a detailed briefing on what happened, he was, in effect, travelling empty-handed. It should come as no surprise that the Chinese officials were not impressed with Pickering's explanations, which the Chinese later described as "not logical" and "inconceivable."

Within days of the embassy bombing, Lyndon LaRouche had drawn the parallel between Secretary Cohen's obvious lies, and the performance by Adlai Stevenson, President Kennedy's UN Ambassador, who told the American people that the United States had nothing to do with the failed October 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Days later, when evidence emerged that the CIA had been behind the Cuba fiasco, Stevenson was forced to publicly eat his words.

The June 24 revelations make it certain that Secretary Cohen and others in the U.S. and NATO command will soon be eating their words, too. But, as LaRouche demanded on May 8, in order to really clear the air, President Clinton must "fire the S.O.B.s" responsible for this hideous act, or face grave consequences—in the very near future.