

The History of “Humanitarian Warfare”: NATO’s Reign of Terror in Kosovo, The Destruction of Yugoslavia

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March 24th 2016 marks the 17th anniversary of NATO’s war against Yugoslavia. The following text was written in August 11, 1999 in the immediate wake of the 1999 NATO bombings of Yugoslavia and the invasion of Kosovo by NATO troops.

It is now well established that the war on Yugoslavia was waged on a fabricated humanitarian pretext and that extensive war crimes were committed by NATO and the US.

In retrospect, the war on Yugoslavia was a “dress rehearsal” for subsequent US-NATO sponsored humanitarian wars including Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), Libya (2011), Syria (2011), Ukraine (2014).

Who are the war criminals? In a bitter irony, the so-called International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague is controlled by those who have committed extensive war crimes.

US-NATO started the war on Yugoslavia. President Milosevic was indicted on charges of war crimes. He was poisoned in his prison cell under the auspices of the ICTY.

According to Nuremberg jurisprudence, the ultimate war crime consists in starting a war. According to William Rockler, former prosecutor of the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal:

“The [1999] bombing war violates and shreds the basic provisions of the United Nations Charter and other conventions and treaties; the attack on Yugoslavia constitutes the most brazen international aggression since the Nazis attacked Poland to prevent “Polish atrocities” against Germans. The United States has discarded pretensions to international legality and decency, and embarked on a course of raw imperialism run amok.”

According to Nuremberg jurisprudence, NATO heads of State and heads of government are responsible for the supreme crime: “the crime against peace.”

Reagan’s NSDD 133 (1984) “Secret and Sensitive”

There is evidence that the US administration in liason with its allies took the decision in the early 1980s to destabilise and dismantle Yugoslavia.

The decision to destroy Yugoslavia as a country and carve it up into a number of small proxy

states was taken by the Reagan administration in the early 1980s.

A “Secret Sensitive” National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 133) entitled “US Policy towards Yugoslavia.” (Declassified) set the foreign policy framework for the destabilization of Yugoslavia’s model of market socialism and the establishment of a US sphere of influence in Southeastern Europe.

Yugoslavia was in many regards “an economic success story”. In the two decades before 1980, annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 6.1 percent, medical care was free, the rate of literacy was 91 percent, and life expectancy was 72 years.

While NSDD 133 was in itself a somewhat innocuous document, it provided legitimacy to the free market reforms. A series of covert intelligence operations were implemented, which consisted in creating and supporting secessionist paramilitary armies, first in Bosnia then in Kosovo.

These covert operations were combined with the destabilization of the Yugoslav economy. The application of strong economic medicine under the helm of the IMF and the World Bank ultimately led to the destruction of Yugoslavia’s industrial base, the demise of the workers’ cooperative and the dramatic impoverishment of its population.

Kosovo “Independence”

The record of US-NATO war crimes is important in assessing recent developments in Kosovo.

From the outset of their respective mandates in June 1999, both NATO and the UN Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK) have actively supported the KLA, which has committed numerous atrocities.

It is important to understand that these atrocities were ordered by the current and former prime ministers of the Kosovo “government”.

Since 1999, State terrorism in Kosovo has become an integral part of NATO’s design.

The present government of President Hashim Thaci (a former KLA Commander), is an outgrowth of this reign of terror. It is not a government in the common sense of the word. It remains a terrorist organization linked to organised crime. It is an instrument of foreign occupation.

Michel Chossudovsky, March 27, 2016, August 5, 2015

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NATO HAS INSTALLED A REIGN OF TERROR IN KOSOVO

by Michel Chossudovsky

10 August 1999

This text was presented to the Independent Commission of Inquiry to Investigate U.S./NATO War Crimes Against The People of Yugoslavia, International Action Center, New York, July 31, 1999.

PART I: MASSACRES OF CIVILIANS IN KOSOVO

While the World focusses on troop movements and war crimes, the massacres of civilians in the wake of the bombings have been casually dismissed as “justifiable acts of revenge”. In occupied Kosovo, “double standards” prevail in assessing alleged war crimes. The massacres directed against Serbs, ethnic Albanians, Roma and other ethnic groups have been conducted on the instructions of the military command of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

NATO ostensibly denies KLA involvement. These so-called “unmotivated acts of violence and retaliation” are not categorised as “war crimes” and are therefore not included in the mandate of the numerous FBI and Interpol police investigators dispatched to Kosovo under the auspices of the Hague War Crime’s Tribunal (ICTY). Moreover, whereas NATO has tacitly endorsed the self-proclaimed KLA provisional government, KFOR the international security force in Kosovo has provided protection to the KLA military commanders responsible for the atrocities. In so doing both NATO and the UN Mission have acquiesced to the massacres of civilians. In turn, public opinion has been blatantly misled. In portraying the massacres, the Western media has casually overlooked the role of the KLA, not to mention its pervasive links to organised crime. In the words of National Security Advisor Samuel Berger,

“these people [ethnic Albanians] come back ... with broken hearts and with some of those hearts filled with anger.”¹

While the massacres are seldom presented as the result of “deliberate decisions” by the KLA military command, the evidence (and history of the KLA) amply confirm that these atrocities are part of a policy of “ethnic cleansing” directed mainly against the Serb population but also against the Roma, Montenegrins, Goranis and Turks.

Serbian houses and business have been confiscated, looted, or burned, and Serbs have been beaten, raped, and killed. In one of the more dramatic of incidents, KLA troops ransacked a monastery, terrorized the priest and a group of nuns with gunfire, and raped at least one of the nuns. NATO’s inability to control the situation and provide equal protection for all ethnic groups, and its apparent inability or unwillingness to fully disarm the KLA, has created a serious situation for NATO troops...²

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), confirms in this regard that:

“more than 164,000 Serbs have left Kosovo during the seven weeks since... the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered the province... A wave of arson and looting of Serb and Roma homes throughout Kosovo has ensued. Serbs and Roma remaining in Kosovo have been subject to repeated incidents of harassment and intimidation, including severe beatings. Most seriously, there has been a spate of murders and abductions of Serbs since mid-June, including the late July massacre of Serb farmers.”³

POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

The self-proclaimed Provisional Government of Kosovo (PGK) has also ordered assassinations directed against political opponents including “loyalist” ethnic Albanians and supporters of the Kosovo Democratic League (KDL). These acts are being carried out in a

totally permissive environment. The leaders of the KLA rather than being arrested for war crimes, have been granted KFOR protection.



Madeleine Albright and Hashim Thaci

According to a report of the Foreign Policy Institute (published during the bombings):

“...the KLA have [no] qualms about murdering Rugova’s collaborators, whom it accused of the ‘crime’ of moderation... [T]he KLA declared Rugova a ‘traitor’ yet another step toward eliminating any competitors for political power within Kosovo.”⁴

Already in May [1999], Fehmi Agani, one of Rugova’s closest collaborators in the Kosovo Democratic League (KDL) was killed. The Serbs were blamed by NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea for having assassinated Agani. According to Skopje’s paper Makedonija Danas, Agani had been executed on the orders of the KLA’s self-appointed Prime Minister Hashim Thaci.⁵ “If Thaci actually considered Rugova a threat, he would not hesitate to have Rugova removed from the Kosovo political landscape.”⁶

In turn, the KLA has abducted and killed numerous professionals and intellectuals:

“Private and State properties are threatened, home and apartment owners are evicted en masse by force and threats, houses and entire villages are burned, cultural and religious monuments are destroyed... A particularly heavy blow... has been the violence against the hospital centre in Pristina, the maltreatment and expulsion of its professional management, doctors and medical staff.”⁷

Both NATO and the UN prefer to turn a blind eye. UN Interim Administrator Bernard Kouchner (a former French Minister of Health) and KFOR Commander Sir Mike Jackson have established a routine working relationship with Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and KLA Chief of Staff Brigadier General Agim Ceku.

ATROCITIES COMMITTED AGAINST THE ROMA

Ethnic cleansing has also been directed against the Roma (which represented prior to the conflict a population group of 150,000 people). (According to figures provided by the Roma Community in New York). A large part of the Roma population has already escaped to Montenegro and Serbia. In turn, there are reports that Roma refugees who had fled by boat to Southern Italy have been expelled by the Italian authorities.⁸ The KLA has also ordered the systematic looting and torching of Romani homes and settlements:

“All houses and settlements of Romani, like 2,500 homes in the residential area called `Mahala' in the town of Kosovska Mitrovica, have been looted and burnt down”.⁹

With regard to KLA atrocities committed against the Roma, the same media distortions prevail. According to the BBC: “Gypsies are accused by [Kosovar] Albanians of collaborating in Serb brutalities, which is why they've also become victims of revenge attacks. And the truth is, some probably did.”¹⁰

INSTALLING A PARAMILITARY GOVERNMENT

As Western leaders trumpet their support for democracy, State terrorism in Kosovo has become an integral part of NATO's postwar design. The KLA's political role for the post-conflict period had been mapped out well in advance. Prior to Rambouillet Conference, the KLA had been promised a central role in the formation of a post-conflict government. The “hidden agenda” consisted in converting the KLA paramilitary into a legitimate and accomplished civilian administration. According to US State Department spokesman James Foley (February 1999):

“We want to develop a good relationship with them [the KLA] as they transform themselves into a politically-oriented organization, ...[W]e believe that we have a lot of advice and a lot of help that we can provide to them if they become precisely the kind of political actor we would like to see them become.”¹¹

In other words, the US State Department had already slated the KLA “provisional government” (PGK) to run civilian State institutions. Under NATO's “Indirect Rule”, the KLA has taken over municipal governments and public services including schools and hospitals. Rame Buja, the KLA “Minister for Local Administration” has appointed local prefects in 23 out of 25 municipalities.¹²

Under NATO's regency, the KLA has replaced the duly elected (by ethnic Albanians) provisional Kosovar government of President Ibrahim Rugova. The self-proclaimed KLA administration has branded Rugova as a traitor declaring the (parallel) Kosovar parliamentary elections held in March 1998 to be invalid. This position has largely been upheld by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) entrusted by UNMIK with the postwar task of “democracy building” and “good governance”. In turn, OSCE officials have already established a working rapport with KLA appointees.¹³

The KLA provisional government (PGK) is made up of the KLA's political wing together with the Democratic Union Movement (LBD), a coalition of five opposition parties opposed to Rugova's Democratic League (LDK). In addition to the position of prime minister, the KLA controls the ministries of finance, public order and defence. The KLA also has a controlling

voice on the UN sponsored Kosovo Transitional Council set up by Mr. Bernard Kouchner. The PGK has also established links with a number of Western governments.

Whereas the KLA has been spearheaded into running civilian institutions (under the guidance of the OSCE), members of the duly elected Kosovar (provisional) government of the Democratic League (DKL) have been blatantly excluded from acquiring a meaningful political voice.

ESTABLISHING A KLA POLICE FORCE TO 'PROTECT CIVILIANS'

Under NATO occupation, the rule of law has visibly been turned up side down. Criminals and terrorists are to become law enforcement officers. KLA troops which have already taken over police stations will eventually form a 4,000 strong "civilian" police force (to be trained by foreign police officers under the authority of the United Nations) with a mandate to "protect civilians". Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien has already pledged Canadian support to the formation of a civilian police force.¹⁴ The latter which has been entrusted to the OSCE will eventually operate under the jurisdiction of the KLA controlled "Ministry of Public Order".

US MILITARY AID

Despite NATO's commitment to disarming the KLA, the Kosovar paramilitary organisation is slated to be transformed into a modern military force. So-called "security assistance" has already been granted to the KLA by the US Congress under the "Kosovar Independence and Justice Act of 1999". Start-up funds of 20 million dollars will largely be "used for training and support for their [KLA] established self-defence forces."¹⁵ In the words of KLA Chief of Staff Agrim Ceku:

"The KLA wants to be transformed into something like the US National Guard, ... we accept the assistance of KFOR and the international community to rebuild an army according to NATO standards. ... These professionally trained soldiers of the next generation of the KLA would seek only to defend Kosova. At this decisive moment, we [the KLA] do not hide our ambitions; we want the participation of international military structures to assist in the pacific and humanitarian efforts we are attempting here."¹⁶

While the KLA maintains its links to the Balkans narcotics trade which served to finance many of its terrorist activities, the paramilitary organisation has now been granted an official seal of approval as well as "legitimate" sources of funding. The pattern is similar to that followed in Croatia and in the Bosnian Muslim-Croatian Federation where so-called "equip and train" programmes were put together by the Pentagon. In turn, Washington's military aid package to the KLA has been entrusted to Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) of Alexandria, Virginia, a private mercenary outfit run by high ranking former US military officers.

MPRI's training concepts which had already been tested in Croatia and Bosnia are based on imparting "offensive tactics... as the best form of defence".¹⁷ In the Kosovar context, this so-called "defensive doctrine" transforms the KLA paramilitary into a modern army without however eliminating its terrorist makeup.¹⁸ The objective is to ultimately transform an insurgent army into a modern military and police force which serves the Alliance's future strategic objectives in the Balkans. MPRI has currently "ninety-one highly experienced,

former military professionals working in Bosnia & Herzegovina".¹⁹ The number of military officers working on contract with the KLA has not been disclosed.

PART II. FROM KRAJINA TO KOSOVO. A FORMER CROATIAN GENERAL APPOINTED KLA CHIEF OF STAFF

The massacres of civilians in Kosovo are not disconnected acts of revenge by civilians or by so-called "rogue elements" within the KLA as claimed by NATO and the United Nations. They are part of a consistent and coherent pattern. The intent (and result) of the KLA sponsored atrocities have been to trigger the "ethnic cleansing" of Serbs, Roma and other minorities in Kosovo.

KLA Commander Agim Ceku referring to the killings of 14 villagers at Gracko on July 24, claimed that: "We [the KLA] do not know who did it, but I sincerely believe these people have nothing to do with the KLA."²⁰ In turn, KFOR Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson has commended his KLA counterpart, Commander Agim Ceku for "efforts undertaken" to disarm the KLA. In fact, very few KLA weapons have been handed in. Moreover, the deadline for turning in KLA weaponry has been extended. "I do not regard this as noncompliance" said Commander Jackson in a press conference, "but rather as an indication of the seriousness with which General Ceku is taking this important issue."²¹

Yet what Sir Mike Jackson failed to mention is that KLA Chief of Staff Commander Agim Ceku (although never indicted as a war criminal) was (according to Jane Defence Weekly June 10, 1999) "one of the key planners of the successful 'Operation Storm'" led by the Croatian Armed Forces against Krajina Serbs in 1995.

General Jackson who had served in former Yugoslavia under the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was fully cognizant of the activities of the Croatian High Command during that period including the responsibilities imparted to Brigadier General Agim Ceku. In February 1999, barely a month prior to the NATO bombings, Ceku left his position as Brigadier General with the Croatian Armed Forces to join the KLA as Commander in Chief.

FROM KRAJINA TO KOSOVO: THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

According to the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Operation Storm resulted in the massacre of at least 410 civilians in the course of a three day operation (4 to 7 August 1995).²² An internal report of The Hague War Crimes Tribunal (leaked to the New York Times), confirmed that the Croatian Army had been responsible for carrying out:

"summary executions, indiscriminate shelling of civilian populations and "ethnic cleansing" in the Krajina region of Croatia...."²³

In a section of the report entitled "The Indictment. Operation Storm, A Prima Facie Case.", the ICTY report confirms that:

"During the course of the military offensive, the Croatian armed forces and special police committed numerous violations of international humanitarian law, including but not limited to, shelling of Knin and other cities... During, and in the 100 days following the military offensive, at least 150 Serb civilians were summarily executed, and many hundreds disappeared. ...In a widespread and systematic manner, Croatian troops committed murder and other inhumane

acts upon and against Croatian Serbs.” 24

US `GENERALS FOR HIRE`

The internal 150 page report concluded that it has “sufficient material to establish that the three [Croatian] generals who commanded the military operation” could be held accountable under international law.²⁵ The individuals named had been directly involved in the military operation “in theatre”. Those involved in “the planning of Operation Storm” were not mentioned:

“The identity of the “American general” referred to by Fenrick [a Tribunal staff member] is not known. The tribunal would not allow Williamson or Fenrick to be interviewed. But Ms. Arbour, the tribunal’s chief prosecutor, suggested in a telephone interview last week that Fenrick’s comment had been `a joking observation’. Ms. Arbour had not been present during the meeting, and that is not how it was viewed by some who were there. Several people who were at the meeting assumed that Fenrick was referring to one of the retired U.S. generals who worked for Military Professional Resources Inc. ... Questions remain about the full extent of U.S. involvement. In the course of the three year investigation into the assault, the United States has failed to provide critical evidence requested by the tribunal, according to tribunal documents and officials, adding to suspicion among some there that Washington is uneasy about the investigation... The Pentagon, however, has argued through U.S. lawyers at the tribunal that the shelling was a legitimate military activity, according to tribunal documents and officials”.²⁶

The Tribunal was attempting to hide what had already been revealed in several press reports published in the wake of Operation Storm. According to a US State Department spokesman, MPRI had been helping the Croatians “avoid excesses or atrocities in military operations.”²⁷ Fifteen senior US military advisers headed by retired two star General Richard Griffitts had been dispatched to Croatia barely seven months before Operation Storm. ²⁸ According to one report, MPRI executive director General Carl E. Vuono: “held a secret top-level meeting at Brioni Island, off the coast of Croatia, with Gen. Varimar Cervenko, the architect of the Krajina campaign. In the five days preceding the attack, at least ten meetings were held between General Vuono and officers involved in the campaign...”²⁹

According to Ed Soyster, a senior MPRI executive and former head of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA):

“MPRI’s role in Croatia is limited to classroom instruction on military-civil relations and doesn’t involve training in tactics or weapons. Other U.S. military men say whatever MPRI did for the Croats and many suspect more than classroom instruction was involved it was worth every penny.” Carl Vuono and Butch [Crosbie] Saint are hired guns and in it for the money,” says Charles Boyd, a recently retired four star Air Force general who was the Pentagon’s No. 2 man in Europe until July [1995]. “They did a very good job for the Croats, and I have no doubt they’ll do a good job in Bosnia.”³⁰

THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL’S COVER UP

The untimely leaking of the ICTY’s internal report on the Krajina massacres barely a few

days before the onslaught of NATO's air raids on Yugoslavia was the source of some embarrassment to the Tribunal's Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour. The Tribunal (ICTY) attempted to cover up the matter and trivialise the report's findings (including the alleged role of the US military officers on contract with the Croatian Armed Forces). Several Tribunal officials including American Lawyer Clint Williamson sought to discredit the Canadian Peacekeeping officers' testimony who witnessed the Krajina massacres in 1995.³¹

Williamson, who described the shelling of Knin as a "minor incident," said that the Pentagon had told him that Knin was a legitimate military target... The [Tribunal's] review concluded by voting not to include the shelling of Knin in any indictment, a conclusion that stunned and angered many at the tribunal"...³²

The findings of the Tribunal contained in the leaked ICTY documents were downplayed, their relevance was casually dismissed as "expressions of opinion, arguments and hypotheses from various staff members of the OTP during the investigative process".³³ According to the Tribunal's spokesperson "the documents do not represent in any way the concluded decisions of the Prosecutor." ³⁴

The internal 150 page report has not been released. The staff member who had leaked the documents is (according to a Croatian TV report) no longer working for the Tribunal. During the press Conference, the Tribunal's spokesman was asked: "about the consequences for the person who leaked the information", Blewitt [the ICTY spokesman] replied that he did not want to go into that. He said that the OTP would strengthen the existing procedures to prevent this from happening again, however he added that you could not stop people from talking".³⁵

THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN CROATIA

The massacres conducted under Operation Storm "set the stage" for the "ethnic cleansing" of at least 180,000 Krajina Serbs (according to estimates of the Croatian Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International). According to other sources, the number of victims of ethnic cleansing in Krajina was much larger.

Moreover, there is evidence that chemical weapons had been used in the Yugoslav civil war (1991-95).³⁶ Although there is no firm evidence of the use of chemical weapons against Croatian Serbs, an ongoing enquiry by the Canadian Minister of Defence (launched in July 1999) points to the possibility of toxic poisoning of Canadian Peacekeepers while on service in Croatia between 1993 and 1995:

"There was a smell of blood in the air during the past week as the media sensed they had a major scandal unfolding within the Department of National Defense over the medical files of those Canadians who served in Croatia in 1993. Allegations of destroyed documents, a coverup, and a defensive minister and senior officers..."³⁷

The official release of the Department of National Defence (DND) refers to possibility of toxic "soil contamination" in Medak Pocket in 1993 (see below). Was it "soil contamination" or something far more serious? The criminal investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) refers to the shredding of medical files of former Canadian peacekeepers by the DND. In other words did the DND have something to hide? The issue remains as to what types of shells and ammunitions were used by the Croatian Armed Forces ie. were chemical

weapons used against Serb civilians?

OPERATION STORM: THE ACCOUNT OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT

Prior to the onslaught, Croatian radio had previously broadcasted a message by president Franjo Tudjman, calling upon “Croatian citizens of Serbian ethnicity... to remain in their homes and not to fear the Croatian authorities, which will respect their minority rights.”³⁸ Canadian peacekeepers of the Second Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment witnessed the atrocities committed by Croatian troops in the Krajina offensive in September 1995:

“Any Serb who had failed to evacuate their property were systematically “cleansed” by roving death squads. Every abandoned animal was slaughtered and any Serb household was ransacked and torched”.³⁹

Also confirmed by Canadian peacekeepers was the participation of German mercenaries in Operation Storm:

“Immediately behind the frontline Croatian combat troops and German mercenaries, a large number of hardline extremists had pushed into the Krajina. ...Many of these atrocities were carried out within the Canadian Sector, but as the peacekeepers were soon informed by the Croat authorities, the UN no longer had any formal authority in the region.”⁴⁰

How the Germans mercenaries were recruited was never officially revealed. An investigation by the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) confirmed that foreign mercenaries in Croatia had in some cases “been paid [and presumably recruited] outside Croatia and by third parties.”⁴¹

THE 1993 MEDAK POCKET MASSACRE

According to Jane Defence Weekly (10 June 1999), Brigadier General Agim Ceku (now in charge of the KLA) also “masterminded the successful HV [Croatian Army] offensive at Medak” in September 1993. In Medak, the combat operation was entitled “Scorched Earth” resulting in the total destruction of the Serbian villages of Divoselo, Pocitelj and Citluk, and the massacre of over 100 civilians.⁴²

These massacres were also witnessed by Canadian peacekeepers under UN mandate:

“As the sun rose over the horizon, it revealed a Medak Valley engulfed in smoke and flames. As the frustrated soldiers of 2PPCLI waited for the order to move forward into the pocket, shots and screams still rang out as the ethnic cleansing continued. ...About 20 members of the international press had tagged along, anxious to see the Medak battleground. Calvin [a Canadian officer] called an informal press conference at the head of the column and loudly accused the Croats of trying to hide war crimes against the Serb inhabitants. The Croats started withdrawing back to their old lines, taking with them whatever loot they hadn’t destroyed. All livestock had been killed and houses torched. French reconnaissance troops and the Canadian command element pushed up the valley and soon began to find bodies of Serb civilians, some already decomposing, others freshly slaughtered. ...Finally, on the drizzly morning of Sept. 17, teams of UN civilian police arrived to probe the smouldering ruins for murder victims. Rotting corpses lying out in the open

were catalogued, then turned over to the peacekeepers for burial.”⁴³

The massacres were reported to the Canadian Minister of Defence and to the United Nations:

“Senior defence bureaucrats back in Ottawa had no way of predicting the outcome of the engagement in terms of political fallout. To them, there was no point in calling media attention to a situation that might easily backfire. ...So Medak was relegated to the memory hole no publicity, no recriminations, no official record. Except for those soldiers involved, Canada’s most lively military action since the Korean War simply never happened.”⁴⁴

PART III. NATO’S ‘POST CONFLICT’ AGENDA IN KOSOVO.

Both the Medak Pocket massacre and Operation Storm bear a direct relationship to the ongoing security situation in Kosovo and the massacres and ethnic cleansing committed by KLA troops. While the circumstances are markedly different, several of today’s actors in Kosovo were involved (under the auspices of the Croatian Armed Forces) in the planning of both these operations. Moreover, the US mercenary outfit MPRI which collaborated with the Croatian Armed Forces in 1995 is currently on contract with the KLA. NATO’s casual response to the appointment of Brigadier General Agim Ceku as KLA Chief of Staff was communicated by Mr. Jamie Shea in a Press Briefing in May:

“I have always made it clear, and you have heard me say this, that NATO has no direct contacts with the KLA. Who they appoint as their leaders, that is entirely their own affair. I don’t have any comment on that whatever.”⁴⁵

While NATO says it “has no direct contacts with the KLA”, the evidence confirms the opposite. Amply documented, KLA terrorism has been installed with NATO’s tacit approval. The KLA had (according to several reports) been receiving “covert support” and training from the CIA and Germany’s Bundes Nachrichten Dienst (BND) since the mid-nineties. Moreover, MPRI collaboration with the KLA predates the onslaught of the bombing campaign.⁴⁶ Moreover, the building up of KLA forces was part of NATO planning. Already by mid-1998, “covert support” had been replaced by official (“overt”) support by the military Alliance in violation of UN Security Council Resolution UNSCR 1160 of 31 March 1998 which condemned: “...all acts of terrorism by the Kosovo Liberation Army or any other group or individual and all external support for terrorist activity in Kosovo, including finance, arms and training.”

NATO officials, Western heads of State and heads of government, the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan not to mention ICTY chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour, were fully cognizant of General Brigadier Agim Ceku’s involvement in the planning of Operation Storm and Operation Scorched Earth. Surely, some questions should have been asked...

Yet visibly what is shaping up in the wake of the bombings in Kosovo is the continuity of NATO’s operation in the Balkans. Military personnel and UN bureaucrats previously stationed in Croatia and Bosnia have been routinely reassigned to Kosovo. KFOR Commander Mike Jackson had previously been responsible as IFOR Commander for organising the return of Serbs “to lands taken by Croatian HVO forces in the Krajina offensive”.⁴⁷ And in this capacity General Mike Jackson had “urged that the resettlement [of Krajina Serbs] not [be]

rushed to avoid tension [with the Croatians]... while also warning returning Serbs “of the extent of the [land] mine threat.”⁴⁸ In retrospect, recalling the events of early 1996, very few Krajina Serbs were allowed to return to their homes under the protection of the United Nations.

And a similar process is unfolding in Kosovo, ie. the conduct of senior military officers conforms to a consistent pattern, the same key individuals are now involved in Kosovo. While token efforts are displayed to protect Serb and Roma civilians, those who have fled Kosovo are not encouraged to return under UN protection... In postwar Kosovo, “ethnic cleansing” implemented by the KLA has been accepted by the “international community” as a “fait accompli”...

While calling for democracy and “good governance” in the Balkans, the US and its allies have installed in Kosovo a paramilitary government with links to organised crime.

The foreseeable outcome is the outright “criminalisation” of civilian State institutions and the establishment of what is best described as a “Mafia State”. The complicity of NATO and the Alliance governments (namely their relentless support to the KLA) points to the de facto “criminalisation” of KFOR and of the UN peacekeeping apparatus in Kosovo. The donor agencies and governments (eg. the funds approved by the US Congress in violation of several UN Security Council resolutions) providing financial support to the KLA are, in this regard, also “accessories” to the de facto criminalisation of State institutions. Through the intermediation of a paramilitary group (created and financed by Washington and Bonn), NATO ultimately bears the burden of responsibility for the massacres and ethnic cleansing of civilians in Kosovo.

STATE TERROR AND THE ‘FREE MARKET’

State terror and the “free market” seem to go hand in hand. The concurrent “criminalisation” of State institutions in Kosovo is not incompatible with the West’s economic and strategic objectives in the Balkans. Notwithstanding the massacres of civilians, the self-proclaimed KLA administration has committed itself to establishing a “secure and stable environment” for foreign investors and international financial institutions. The Minister of Finance Adem Grobozci and other representatives of the provisional government invited to the various donor conferences are all KLA appointees. In contrast, members of the KDL of Ibrahim Rugova (duly elected in parliamentary elections) were not even invited to attend the Stabilisation Summit in Sarajevo in late July.

“Free market reforms” are envisaged for Kosovo under the supervision of the Bretton Woods institutions largely replicating the structures of the Rambouillet agreement. Article I (Chapter 4a) of the Rambouillet Agreement stipulated that: “The economy of Kosovo shall function in accordance with free market principles”. The KLA government will largely be responsible for implementing these reforms and ensuring that loan conditionalities are met.

In close liaison with NATO, the Bretton Woods institutions had already analysed the consequences of an eventual military intervention leading to the military occupation of Kosovo: almost a year prior to the beginning of the War, the World Bank conducted “simulations” which “anticipated the possibility of an emergency scenario arising out of the tensions in Kosovo.”⁴⁹

The eventual “reconstruction” of Kosovo financed by international debt largely purports to

transfer Kosovo's extensive wealth in mineral resources and coal to multinational capital. In this regard, the KLA has already occupied (pending their privatisation) the largest coal mine at Belacevac in Dobro Selo northwest of Pristina. In turn, foreign capital has its eyes rivetted on the massive Trepca mining complex which constitutes *"the most valuable piece of real estate in the Balkans, worth at least \$5 billion."*⁵⁰ The Trepca complex not only includes copper and large reserves of zinc but also cadmium, gold, and silver. It has several smelting plants, 17 metal treatment sites, a power plant and Yugoslavia's largest battery plant. Northern Kosovo also has estimated reserves of 17 billion tons of coal and lignite.

In the wake of the bombings, the management of many of the State owned enterprises and public utilities were taken over by KLA appointees. In turn, the leaders of the Provisional Government of Kosovo (PGK) have become "the brokers" of multinational capital committed to handing over the Kosovar economy at bargain prices to foreign investors. The IMF's lethal "economic therapy" will be imposed, the provincial economy will be dismantled, agriculture will be deregulated, local industrial enterprises which have not been totally destroyed will be driven into bankruptcy. The most profitable State assets will eventually be transferred into the hands of foreign capital under the World Bank sponsored privatisation programme. "Strong economic medicine" imposed by external creditors will contribute to further boosting a criminal economy (already firmly implanted in Albania) which feeds on poverty and economic dislocation.

"The Allies will work with the rest of the international community to help rebuild Kosovo once the crisis is over: The International Monetary Fund and Group of Seven industrialized countries are among those who stand ready to offer financial help to the countries of the region. We want to ensure proper coordination of aid and help countries to respond to the effects of the crisis. This should go hand in hand with the necessary structural reforms in the countries affected helped by budget support from the international community."⁵¹

Moreover, the so-called "reconstruction" of the Balkans by foreign capital will signify multibillion contracts to foreign firms to rebuild Kosovo's infrastructure. More generally, the proposed "Marshall Plan" for the Balkans financed by the World Bank and the European Development Bank (EBRD) as well as private creditors will largely benefit Western mining, petroleum and construction companies while fuelling the region's external debt well into the third millennium.

And Kosovo is slated to reimburse this debt through the laundering of dirty money. Yugoslav banks in Kosovo will be closed down, the banking system will be deregulated under the supervision of Western financial institutions. Narcodollars from the multibillion dollar Balkans drug trade will be recycled towards servicing the external debt as well as "financing" the costs of "reconstruction." The lucrative flow of narcodollars thus ensures that foreign investors involved in the "reconstruction" programme will be able reap substantial returns. In turn, the existence of a Kosovar "narco State" ensures the orderly reimbursement of international donors and creditors. The latter are prepared to turn blind eye. They have a tacit vested interest in installing a government which facilitates the laundering of drug money.

The pattern in Kosovo is, in this regard, similar to that observed in neighbouring Albania. Since the early 1990s (culminating with the collapse of the financial pyramids in 1996-97), the IMF's reforms have impoverished the Albanian population while spearheading the

national economy into bankruptcy. The IMF's deadly economic therapy transforms countries into open territories. In Albania and to a lesser extent Macedonia, it has also contributed to fostering the growth of illicit trade and the criminalisation of State institutions.

NOTES

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41. United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Fifty-first session, Item 9 of the provisional agenda, Geneva, 21 December 1994).
42. (See Memorandum on the Violation of the Human and Civil Rights of the Serbian People in the Republic of Croatia,
<http://serbianlinks.freehosting.net/memorandum.htm>
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47. Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol 25, No. 7, 14 February 1996.
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