

“The US-NATO War of Aggression Against Yugoslavia“ by Michel Chossudovsky

Launching of Michel Chossudovsky's Book, Belgrade Forum on October 24, 2022

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My sincere thanks for this welcome to the Republic of Serbia. I must say my heart is in the Republic of Serbia today. And my thanks to Zivadin.

I should mention that just about 15 minutes ago he gave me a bottle of Sljivovica. It was delivered to my room at quarter to 11, 15 minutes ago. It's a weapon of mass destruction [Laughter] but it's also an act of solidarity and sharing. And when I arrived here I had the bottle of Sljivovica in my hands and somebody confiscated it and put it on the table over there. But we will share it, we will share it together at the end of this presentation [Laughter]. Well that bottle is a symbol of division but also solidarity in the Serbian context.

This presentation I think is important inasmuch as the world is at the crossroads of the most serious crisis in modern history.

In many regards the US-NATO war against Yugoslavia which extended incidentally over a period of 20 years or more, because it started in the early 80s was a dressed rehearsal for all US sponsored subsequent wars.

It is important to point out that prominent scholars entitled that war against Yugoslavia as a "Just War". Now, there's nothing "Just" about that war, it's a criminal undertaking. But you have people like Professor Richard A. Falk from Princeton University (currently involved in the anti-war movement in relation to Ukraine), who in 2001 put forth the notion of "The Just War".

He was referring to Yugoslavia and Afghanistan:

Although each case is complex, and the facts can be understood in different ways, I will briefly indicate my assessments from a just war perspective. The Kosovo War was a just war because it was undertaken to avoid a likely instance of "ethnic cleansing" undertaken by the Serb leadership of former Yugoslavia, and it succeeded in giving the people of Kosovo an opportunity for a peaceful and democratic future. It was a just war despite being illegally undertaken without authorization by the United Nations, and despite being waged in a manner that unduly caused Kosovar and Serbian civilian casualties, while minimizing the risk of death or injury on the NATO side.

The Afghanistan War was again controversial in relation to the just war tradition. It seems to qualify as an instance of defensive necessity in view of the high risks of harm associated with the heavy al Qaeda presence in the country, and its demonstrated capacity and will after September 11 to inflict severe harm on the United States in the future. Again, as with Kosovo, the means used and the ends raised serious doubts about the just means and just ends of the war. The American failure to assume the risks of ground warfare in order to carry out the mission of destroying the al Qaeda presence, as well as the failure to convert the battlefield outcomes into a durable peace, raise doubts about the overall justice of the war.

[Interview with R. Falk](#)

Yugoslavia was a preamble to Afghanistan based on the same premises of criminality against Sovereign countries.

I should mention also that when the war on Yugoslavia broke out, on the 24th of March 1999, progressives in other words leftist movements in both Western Europe as well as North America we're firmly behind NATO. And these were anti-war and anti-globalization activists who were either totally ignorant, but I suspect through complicity, they were supportive of the alleged "humanitarian war" to the rescue of the Albanian population of Kosovo.

I should mention that most of my research was done outside Serbia. I have visited Serbia on several occasions but when the war broke out on the 24th of March, I started writing. Many of the texts which are in this book were written more than 20 years ago, some of them were written actually in the mid 1990s.

I had started my research in the early 1990s focusing on the economic and social dimensions which are crucial to an understanding of the military and strategic dimensions. I'm referring to the fact that in the early 1980s there was, what we might describe as, an "Economic War Plan" largely with instrumented by the IMF and the World Bank, which essentially consisted in dismantling an entire National economy.

I recall that the war against Yugoslavia as of March 24 1999 was targeting essentially civilian infrastructure: schools, hospitals, the infrastructure of residential areas.

These are amply documented but there was one element which is beyond criminality.

When I was in Belgrade a year later, I visited the Children's Hospital and the children hospital had been identified as a target, a strategic target by US - NATO. And when we say US - NATO, it's really US. NATO is simply an appendage of the Pentagon.

US-NATO stated categorically that their objective was to save lives and because of that they did not bomb the section of the hospital where the babies were residing, but instead they bombed the power generators which provided electricity to the hospital and to the children in incubators. What this meant is that the entire hospital was destroyed because these smart bombs had undermined the basic functioning of the hospital, which then required the subsequent evacuation of the hospital, and many children, of course, died as a result of this.

That's one example, but it's one example that I investigated when I returned to Belgrade a year later to attend the commemoration organized under the auspices of the Belgrade Forum.

I would like to look at the issue of chronology and history of this war.

Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, Yugoslavia was a successful economy with a social project. It was entitled "Market Socialism", it had a cooperative structure of enterprise management and it had the highest growth rate when compared to European countries, in excess of 6 percent and a full-fledged welfare state.

I should mention that this process was in a country which had experienced heavy casualties during World War II, which were commemorated yesterday.

I should mention my first visit to Yugoslavia was in 1967 as a student. In fact, it was a group of students from the Institute of Social studies in The Hague Netherlands and we decided we wanted to go to Yugoslavia, to take cognizance of "Market Socialism". The Institute arranged for this to take place.

Without personalizing: during this visit I had a minor health problem. I went to a clinic and received treatment from a medical doctor. Then I said "How much do I owe you?" and he said to me "Nothing". He responded "In the Republic of Serbia we also welcome our foreign visitors and provide them with full health coverage".

No other country in the world would have that kind of procedure. It was full-fledged health coverage for the citizens of Yugoslavia but also visitors to the country. That experience was something which had an obvious impact on the way I analyzed the history of what happened to this societal project and how it was deliberately destroyed.

In other words, a societal project [Market Socialism and the Welfare State] had been carried out, with inevitable divisions at a political level. But ultimately based on a social consensus, that was what the people of Yugoslavia wanted. And that that is what was destroyed quite deliberately through a series of economic, social and political mechanisms starting in the early 1980s.

In 1984 the Reagan Administration published what was called a National Security Decision Directive. It was an important policy document, entitled "*secret* and *sensitive*". It was intended to undermine market socialism and integrate Yugoslavia into a so-called free market economy.

That was a 3-page document. I think that many people in this room have read this document. There's nothing secret about it and there's nothing sensitive about it. It was made public, but there was also another agenda which was not revealed. There was a military intelligence agenda.

I did not have access to those documents. But there was one document to which I had access and it was a World Bank report published in the early 1990s, which revealed the entire logic of how you destabilize and destroy a country.

I have sent that document, it is on file with the Belgrade Forum. I must say that at the time I received that document it was an internal document of the World Bank. I received it from a representative of the government of Yugoslavia at the time. Normally this was something

that was not supposed to be released.

What this document describes is essentially a bankruptcy program, which was initiated under the auspices of the World Bank which then led to the outright closing down of the industrial sector, applied to all major sectors of the Yugoslav economy, dictated of course by the creditors of the Belgrade government.

What this report described were the policies implemented on behalf of Belgrade's creditors, which consisted in the phasing out of socially owned Enterprises. In other words, that was the condition and then there were conditions with regard to bankruptcy and privatization.

They sent in an army of advisors and Western lawyers and consultants to implement this crucial operation. There was the Financial Operations Act of 1989, which was passed and played a crucial role in engineering the collapse of of Yugoslavia's industrial sector.

The terminology is diabolical in many regards. The bankruptcy process involved what they called an exit mechanism.

Exit mechanism is like killing the economy, killing the industry.

In other words these enterprises were thrown out of the economic landscape. This was under, what was called, The 1989 Financial Operations Act. It was entirely controlled by Western creditors, the IMF and the World Bank.

And already in 1989 there were tens of thousands of workers who were simply removed from their employment and the socially managed enterprises went bankrupt. In the meantime this set the stage for subsequent macroeconomic policies, because it led to the impoverishment of the entire population.

In other words, it didn't totally kill the welfare state because, I think, there was a commitment to retaining the welfare state, but it certainly killed the whole economic structure of a sovereign country and its social achievements in the wake of World War II.

Without getting into the detail, this project, was in some regards even more deadly than the US-NATO military operations which were waged at a subsequent stage. Already in 1989 they had more than 200 enterprises which were targeted and almost a 100,000 workers lost their work. That was the first stage both prior and in the wake of the 1990 January IMF Shock Treatment.

January 1990 was the Shock Treatment by the IMF, which ultimately broke down the fiscal structure of the Yugoslav Federation.

The fiscal structure of the Yugoslav federation played a central role in the transfer of resources from the central government to the republics. That's the basis of a federal structure. These transfers of revenues and expenditures from the central government to the member states of the Federation.

When shock treatment was applied, the federal fiscal structure was destroyed and dismantled, paving the way and creating the conditions for secession.

Already in early 1990, 614 000 workers were dismissed out of a Workforce of the order of

2.7 million. In other words, almost the quarter of the labor force with the largest concentrations of bankrupt firms in Serbia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo.

The January 1990 IMF Shock Treatment: That was their economic terminology – shock treatment – the idea is that you get shock treatment and then you recover.

Meanwhile the fiscal structure is destroyed, the links between the central government and the republics are undermined and at the same time all the major components of the Yugoslavia economy with regard to large-scale electrical companies, petroleum, refinery, machinery, engineering all of this was precipitated into bankruptcy.

I should mention that this process of economic disintegration was the precondition for the so-called Civil War including military intervention. Social divisions were created. People were impoverished. And this then led to the subsequent stage of military intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It was also related to Operation Storm in Krajina and Operation Medak Pocket and the various military actions in Croatia directed against Serbian civilians, from the early 1990s to the mid 1990s.

During the period 1990-1995, the US intelligence strategy was to bring in their terrorists namely Al-Qaeda.

Al Qaeda was integrated into the Bosnian Muslim Army as of an early stage. This is not necessarily known to everybody but Al-Qaeda was a creation of the CIA going back to first War on Afghanistan what was called the the Soviet Afghan War (1979-1989).

It wasn't the Soviet Afghan War, it was a US sponsored war with so-called "freedom fighters", namely what was subsequently described as Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda means "The base" and Al-Qaeda was the base in the CIA data bank of the Freedom Fighters who were recruited to wage war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

The relationship between the Bosnia Muslim Army and Al-Qaeda is documented in a congressional document. In other words it's a document of the US Senate, which was drafted by the Republican party at the time, and they accused the Clinton administration of bringing in Al Qaeda.

It's all confirmed. They brought in Al-Qaeda in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, of course, they brought in Al-Qaeda into Kosovo at a subsequent stage.

I should also mention that the Kosovo Liberation Army, they were also trained in Afghanistan, courtesy of the US intelligence.

In other words, the KLA as an entity was linked up with Al-Qaeda terrorists at a much earlier stage, training in Afghanistan and then ultimately these Kosovo terrorists were given United Nations status, as you know that's came subsequently. But the history goes back to Bosnia and the use of terrorists to create conditions which then led to ultimately, as far as Bosnia is concerned the so-called Dayton Agreement.

In 1995 there was an alleged peace agreement which was signed in a US military base in Ohio [Dayton, Ohio]. It wasn't in Geneva, it was in a US military base in Ohio and it was monitored by the US government and military with an army of lawyers and consultants. It

was at Dayton that they drafted the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Now this goes beyond colonialism. They drafted the Constitution of a so-called sovereign state. It wasn't a sovereign state at all. And in that Constitution there is a clause that struck me, I went into the appendices, it wasn't easy to find it at that time. The Constitution said that the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is a key instrument of monetary and macroeconomic policy, the president of the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or of a neighboring country. He/she she will be appointed by the IMF. That's what you call democracy.

There is a transition from Bosnia to Kosovo. The United States had private mercenary companies, because they wanted to avoid being directly involved. This was Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI). And MPRI was involved in training terrorists in Croatia and Bosnia and ultimately these acts of training were also conducive to the crimes committed against the Serbian population in Croatia, namely Kraina, the Medak Pocket, if I recall correctly. We then had, of course, a chief of staff whose name was Agim Çeku, which of course everybody knows who he is.

But Agim Çeku was recruited by by Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), mostly composed of former high level officers of the Pentagon.

Agim Çeku, of course, then became Commander in Chief of the Kosovo forces at a subsequent stage.

But in the earlier period he was instrumental in Operation Storm, which was a criminal operation directed against the Serb population in Croatia.

There is another individual which of course everybody knows, it's General Michael Jackson. It's not the pop singer. I think I should mention a little bit about the background of Michael Jackson. He was first involved in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, appointed by the United Nations. He held the highest rank in the British Military. And ultimately became Head of the Joint Chief of Staff.

But there's something else about Michael Jackson which I don't think people in Serbia know. I know that because I'm of Irish descent and he was the second officer in command of the Bloody Sunday Massacre in Northern Ireland, that was in the 1970s.

He was a young officer and all his training was based in Northern Ireland, largely directed against civilians. I will make that article available. But it's important to understand how they appoint criminals to high-ranking positions under UN auspices.

So that in effect, the methods of killing civilians was something that he had inherited from his role in Derry, Northern Ireland. It was in 1972, when civilians were involved in a protest movement and they were shot, killed on the orders of Michael Jackson.

There is a lot of detail in history, but let me proceed to the subsequent stage of the US-Nato Aggression against Yugoslavia, which is the 1999 Illegal invasion and bombing of Yugoslavia, and the role of the alleged Kosovo Freedom Fighters namely the KLA.

This was portrayed as a humanitarian undertaking and the media conformed throughout the Western world and, as I mentioned earlier, the Kosovo Liberation Army was viewed as a legitimate entity protecting the human rights of the Albanian minority.

This of course is total rubbish, because the Kosovo Liberation Army was linked to organized crime. Hashim Thaçi had a file with Interpol, this was well known and they were, of course subsequently, the Kosovo Liberation Army freedom Fighters were then given UN passport, so to speak. The Freedom Fighters linked to organized crime then became the Kosovo Protection Corps and all of that was, of course, not only illegal but criminal.

In late March 1999, I started writing an article which was called and “Kosovo Freedom Fighters financed by organized crime”.

I was a regular contributor to the *Le Monde diplomatique* which was a prestigious French monthly, and still is, and I worked with them for a period of 10 years starting in 1989, and that article was never published by the *Le Monde diplomatique*, and I was under attack by various people on the Left regarding my assessment of the Kosovo Liberation Army.

As I mentioned earlier the Kosovo Liberation Army was protected by the CIA and German intelligence – the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND). It was also trained by these intelligence operatives and, as I mentioned, some of the training took place in Afghanistan and the KLA had links to Al-Qaeda right from the beginning prior to 1999.

The issue was as far as media coverage was concerned: it was absolutely prohibited to mention that Hashim Thaçi was on file with Interpol.

I knew it, I checked it, that information was known but it was never released in the course of the war.

In other words not only is the leader of a terrorist organization links to organized crime, but at the same time the leader of that organization becomes the ideal candidate for position of head of state of the self-proclaimed Kosovo Republic. T

he irony is that Hashim Thaçi became president with a criminal record and it was only more than almost 20 years later that there was a report coming from the Hague Tribunal saying that he had committed crimes against humanity etc.

Very convenient: that came 20 years later, when it was known in the late 90s that he was a criminal.

But I should say one thing, criminals were considered as the ideal candidates for high office (President, Prime Minister). Why because they obey orders! Criminal appointees, corrupt politicians are not going to question the people who are behind them. So what happened: the Mafia State installed by NATO was by a political entity and a leader who was on the Interpol list, but that doesn't matter because he's not going to make any decisions, the decisions are taken by US – NATO and this is a very convenient appointment.

I think I should conclude referring to the utmost relevance of US-NATO wars on Yugoslavia in an understanding of what is now happening in Ukraine and beyond.

Because since Yugoslavia there have been a series of US-NATO-sponsored Wars either directly or indirectly but certainly with regard to Libya NATO was involved. Libya, Syria, of course, Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was officially a NATO project, because Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty was endorsed and within three weeks after the 9/11 attacks allegedly by terrorist, (September

11 2001(, on October 7th 2001 they waged war on Afghanistan, based on fraudulent statement that somehow Afghanistan had attacked America. There were no Afghan jets in the skies of New York that day and meanwhile Osama bin Laden had been admitted for treatment to Pakistani military hospital in Rawalpindi within walking distance of the US military Mission,

They knew where he was: was he coordinating the 9/11 attacks from his hospital bed with his laptop?

That's another dimension, but I think what we have undertake, starting in the Republic of Serbia, we have to build a Worldwide movement against US-NATO and also against what is now treason, political treason, within the European Union.

The term Mafia state is not limited to Kosovo. In many regards the European Union has become the Mafia state. I will not dwell upon this but there's one key appointment in the European Union which is the president of the European Central Bank. Now it just so happens that Christine Lagarde, formerly managing director of the International Monetary Fund, has the criminal record in France. She was condemned to a prison sentence of one year attributable to her role in money laundering and deviation of public funds. It's all on record. But she was then released of that decision by French judges when the IMF governing board, which she chairs, incidentally sent a note to the French government saying that she was a very honest person and they asked for the repeal of the Judgment. But the criminal record is still there and why is that important. Because she is obeying orders from the upper echelons of the financial establishment. There are many elements of Mafia state appointments within the European Union which are now unfolding.

I am going to complete this presentation focusing on the nature of the crisis now affecting the European Union and, of course, Ukraine. It's interconnected.

There is an act of economic Warfare which in many regards is modeled on the act of economic Warfare against Yugoslavia.

It's the triggering of bankruptcies, it's the destabilization of agriculture.

It's very complex, but it is focusing essentially on two variables:

1. energy and 2. food.

Energy is the input into production, food is survival.

Those two variables and the actions of the United States to block the supply of energy to the European Union are crimes against humanity.

But, on the part of the European, as we say in French *La classe politique*, it is an act of treason, because they are sleeping with the enemy.

This is a war on Europe, it's not a war on Russia,

It's a war in Europe and it has a whole history behind it.

I won't enter into the details. Specifically North Stream was an act of sabotage by the US government. We have all the information to that effect and Biden said „Yes, I promise we

will do it“. We have evidence. In international law, an act of sabotage directed against infrastructure in the territorial waters of sovereign states of the European Union, namely Sweden and Denmark, is an act of War, it's defined as an act of War.

My thanks to everybody. This is not meant to be a “serious statement” but I think it's a good idea for the Republic of Serbia not to join the European Union at this particular moment.

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Question 1: Thank you very much for coming to Belgrade and for writing this book which I can't wait to read. I have two questions. One, has there been a promotion of this book in Canada?

The book is available on our website online. Actually, I posted it back today. It has been read quite extensively online and we will continue promoting it.

I think the problem is that print versions are not easy to distribute in this particular context because there is censorship.

My research center is not continuing with print publications. First of all, we don't have the resources, but we are now moving into what we call ebooks. I've just completed a book on the Corona crisis which I think is also relevant to the debate here. But that's another topic. But yes it is available now.

There are Serbian communities in North America and many cities particularly in Canada and Toronto. I've lost contact a little bit because, we were very active in 1999 at various venues in which the late Ramsey Clark was involved. There was a coherent peace movement. I think the problem now is that we don't have a coherent peace movement.

Question 2: Second, you touched upon a few issues relating to the war in Ukraine and European Union and I'm just wondering if you're planning to write a book on those topics? It would be very interesting.

I have written extensively on Ukraine in the form of articles and, of course, we've also got very numerous contributors and authors which have written on that.

At this stage, all that information is available on Ukraine, in terms of daily coverage.

The books that I've written recently or less recently are on nuclear war, the first of which came out in 2011.

Then another book which is entitled “The globalization of War“ came out in 2015 and then my latest book is on the Corona crisis which essentially is almost two years of research, it's very detailed.

Let me just mention one dimension, and that's very important. The economic crisis did not start in February of this year, it started in January of 2020. And what economists do not understand, but that's also a characteristic of our discipline, is that when you implement a lockdown requiring the confinement of the labor force and you close down the workplace in 193 countries simultaneously, what are the impacts.

it's the largest economic and social crash in world history which was instrumented on March 11, 2020.

That I've tackled very extensively so that all the corona crisis is part of our understanding of what's happening in Ukraine and so on and so forth.

Again it's another topic but that book is available online and I will make sure that it is also available to the Belgrade Forum so that all of you can get a copy of it.

I think in a sense you are very fortunate in Serbia not to have experienced this crisis as in most countries.

Because there was an awareness and I mean, I'm coming from Canada, people are still wearing the mask.

The restrictions, the levels of devastation are beyond description and the logic of this Corona crisis is bankruptcy as well. And it's the building up of debt and it's the fiscal crisis of the state. This is outlined in the book there are several chapters on the economic dimensions.

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