

U.N. paves the way for Serbian takeover of Bosnia

by Konstantin George

United Nations "peacekeeping" forces in Bosnia reached new depths of infamy, as Serbian forces captured the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica on April 16 after a year-long siege, and set to work implementing their hideous "ethnic cleansing" policy.

The U.N. commander in Bosnia, Gen. Philippe Morillon, left Srebrenica on March 27, under the direct orders of U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who told him that he had "no authority" to try to save Srebrenica. General Morillon himself is no hero, having been declared *persona non grata* by the Bosnian government, for allowing the Serbs to murder Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakiya Turajlic on Jan. 8, while Turajlic was travelling in a convoy under U.N. protection. The U.N. troops allowed Serbian assassins to open the door of the armored personnel carrier in which the Bosnian leader was riding, and to shoot him in cold blood.

Two days after the fall of Srebrenica, General Morillon joined Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and other Serb war criminals at a banquet in the Serb-held town of Pale, cheerfully marking the celebration of Orthodox Easter. Morillon and Gen. Lars-Eric Wahlgren, another U.N. commander, sat at the dais along with Karadzic, Karadzic's wife, and Serb commander Gen. Ratko Mladic. "Under portraits of Serbian kings, waiters brought trays of sijjivovica, a plum brandy," reported the *New York Times*. "Between toasts of 'Christ is risen,' people talked of war and destruction."

While the generals drank brandy, the chief activity of the United Nations forces was "to help arrange and administer the surrender and evacuation of Srebrenica," reported the British Broadcasting Corp. on April 17. In other words, to help the Serbs deport or kill all Muslims. The mandate of the U.N. contingent of Canadian forces entering Srebrenica is "to take possession of the Bosnians' weapons in line with the ultima-

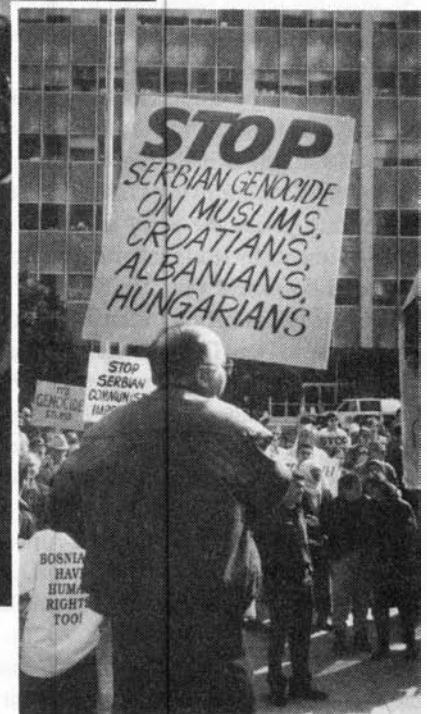
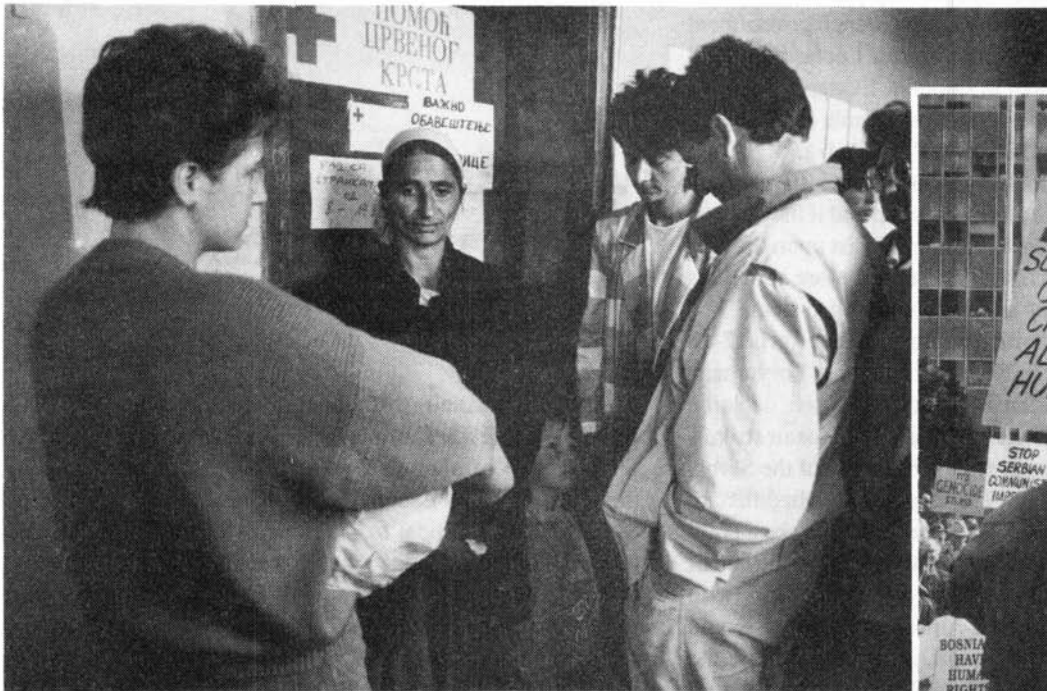
tum of the Serbs" that they be disarmed. The Canadian forces were stopped twice by Bosnian Serb militias, and denied entry to the town. BBC's correspondent commented that the intent of this was apparently "to humiliate the U.N. still further, to drag them in the dust, and to impose more conditions on the U.N. to make sure that the U.N. has agreed to do nothing more than to arrange the Bosnians' surrender and to make sure that the Bosnian militias give up their weapons."

Serbs in final offensive

Going into April, the Serbians had two remaining military-territorial objectives to seize. First, was to eliminate the Bosnian-held Srebrenica pocket in northeast Bosnia, near Bosnia's border with Serbia, and second, after taking Srebrenica, to use the Serbian forces freed from that offensive to launch a drive against Bosnian positions in northern Bosnia, to clear a corridor connecting Serbia with its conquests in central and western Bosnia, and all the occupied regions in Croatia (western Slavonia, Banija, Krajina, the remaining Dalmatian hinterlands), minus eastern Slavonia, which is adjacent to Serbia.

The U.N.-brokered capitulation of Srebrenica, with the disarming of the Muslim defenders, directly served these Serbian war aims. No sooner did Srebrenica capitulate, than the freed Serbian forces were immediately moved into an offensive directed against the Bosnian-held towns of Maglaj and Olovo. The elimination of the Bosnian military presence in the Srebrenica pocket secured the rear of the Serbian drive to clear the corridor.

Maglaj and Olovo hold the key to Serbia securing one of two possible variants of its last major ground objective, namely securing a usable road in the highly vulnerable land corridor linking Serbia with its conquests in central and west-



Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina at a food and health aid center in Croatia. Inset: A recent demonstration in San Francisco by several different groups targets Serbian war crimes.

ern Bosnia, as well as with all the occupied regions in Croatia. The offensive also aims to widen the currently very narrow corridor, to place it outside Croatian and Bosnian artillery range. The original Serbian goal of opening the paved road in the corridor running near the Sava River, has never succeeded, as the Serbs have been unable to take the bastions held by Croatian forces blocking this route. They are now "going for broke" against the more weakly held Bosnian positions astride the second route through the corridor.

Next target: Tuzla

The U.N.-brokered deal for Srebrenica has not alleviated the suffering of the Muslims in northeast Bosnia. Rather, through the mass evacuation of the 50-60,000 Bosnian civilians trapped in Srebrenica to the town of Tuzla, some 70 kilometers to the northwest, it has immensely compounded and exacerbated the plight of the Bosnian Muslims. Tuzla, already swollen with war refugees, cannot cope with the new flood, which would bring its civilian population to about 200,000.

Formally speaking, Tuzla is not surrounded. Its link to the main Bosnian lines is through a very narrow Bosnian-held corridor, with a very poor dirt road. A year of Serbian attacks has failed to take Tuzla. But now, barring drastic combined ground and air action to supply the city, Tuzla threatens to become a new Srebrenica, the scene of mass starvation, on a scale surpassing that which transpired in eastern Bosnia during the winter.

NATO has begun air drops to supply Tuzla, but air drops alone cannot sustain 200,000 civilians. Tuzla has a major airport, which is held by the Bosnians, but an air lift has been ruled out, under the absurd argument that the Serbs would shell the airport. Perhaps they would, but a few days of heavy air strikes would do wonders in this regard.

Ground supply is currently impossible because the faction of Croatian Bosnians led by Mate Boban, which is seeking a de facto partition of Bosnia, has blocked the roads leading to Tuzla. This blockage did not come out of the blue, and was essential to the Serbian military calculations for their April offensives. At the beginning of April, Boban telegraphed the isolation of Tuzla by issuing an ultimatum to the Bosnian Muslims, demanding that they leave the three cantons of Bosnia-Herzegovina accorded to the Croats under the infamous Vance-Owen plan, giving a deadline of April 15. On April 15, the heaviest fighting ever erupted between Croats and Muslims throughout central Bosnia and in the Mostar region of Herzegovina. The fighting was still raging through April 20, with no end in sight, and well over 200 killed on both sides.

Too little, too late?

Will the United States act, and launch the kind of air strikes against Serbian military positions that could still stop the war? Certainly no U.S. military policy can have any chance of success if Washington insists on clearing matters first with Britain

and France. The latest position of the new French government was clearly expressed by Defense Minister Léotard on April 20, after his return from talks in London. Léotard spoke out against lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and Croatia, and ruled out air strikes as "ridiculous" and "absurd."

The British position is to delay air strikes as long as possible, and thus make them meaningless when and if they occur. Beyond that, the British, like the French, insist upon the precondition of withdrawing U.N. forces first, before air strikes begin, thus giving the Serbs an "early warning system."

Statements by leading British figures over the April 17-18 weekend document this. Sir Nicholas Bronsor, Tory chairman of the Parliament's Defense Select Committee, declared in response to Lord David Owen's qualified call for air strikes: "Lord Owen is not right to call for the bombing of the Serbs. It is not a one-sided conflict. The Croats and Muslims are also guilty of ethnic cleansing. However there may be a point where we have to change tack, but that would mean the end of humanitarian aid. It would have to be a joint decision, with everyone going in, following the Americans. But we would have to withdraw troops first [meaning, among others, the British troops assigned to the U.N. in Bosnia], as they would be slaughtered."

Bonsor's "fight" with Owen has less to it than initially meets the eye. He demanded that before any air strikes, the Russians would have to agree to such a course of action. Owen, after his well-publicized call for air strikes, sang a similar tune: "We have to be thinking in terms of going to the Security Council [meaning an agreement with Russia and France] and taking the necessary measures to pressure them [the Serbs] and that would include military measures, and I think these measures would be the interdiction of supply lines."

U.S. policy must be a combination of air strikes now against vital Serbian targets, combined with a broader strategy that could easily neutralize the often-cited "Russian problem" that supposedly stands in the way of doing anything serious against Serbia. Clinton must accept the Russian proposal for American-Russian anti-missile defense cooperation, put forward by President Yeltsin at the Vancouver summit on April 3-4. By committing America to support Russia's, and indeed America's own, most vital strategic interests in this way, he can readily get Russian agreement to help stop Serbia. Compared to the prospects of mutually rewarding strategic defense and high-technology cooperation with America, Serbia counts for little in Russian strategic thinking. For Bosnia, however, time has all but run out.

As a postscript, another Russian initiative ought to be endorsed immediately by President Clinton, with a proviso. This is the proposal of Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozirev for all U.N. Security Council foreign ministers plus leading European foreign ministers to meet in either Sarajevo or Srebrenica to work out a solution. The proviso is that the ministers not be permitted to leave Sarajevo or Srebrenica until that solution is reached.

Wiesenthal defends Serbian crimes

by Mark Burdman

Austria's renowned "Nazi-hunter" Simon Wiesenthal has seen his better days. In 1988, Wiesenthal had taken the positive step of signing a policy statement, distributed by the Club of Life, denouncing the present-day practice of euthanasia as identical to the policies of the Nazis. He did this with full knowledge that he was endorsing an initiative of Helga Zepp-LaRouche, wife of Lyndon LaRouche, who were then being anathemized throughout the world by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL). During the late 1980s, Wiesenthal had frequently criticized the U.S. Justice Department and World Jewish Congress witchhunt against former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim. He also appeared to distance himself from some of the campaigns of the institute bearing his name in California, which targeted eastern European-origin octogenarians living in the United States, Britain, and other countries who were accused, often on the basis of evidence provided by the Soviet authorities, of Nazi war crimes.

But now, for reasons that are not clear, Wiesenthal has thrown his weight behind a campaign of certain Russians, the Israelis, and their friends in the ADL to justify the crimes of the Serbs. He is also echoing Russian propaganda vis-à-vis the Baltics and Ukraine, as if to justify a Russian strategic move against these nations.

With his pro-Serbian views, Wiesenthal has aligned himself with a faction within Jewish organizations typified by California's Herb Brin, whose ADL-mouthpiece *Southwest Jewish Heritage* weekly has become an open advocate of the Serbian cause. Brin has traveled to Belgrade to propagandize for Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic. At the same time, Wiesenthal is in public opposition to an important counter-current among Jewish spokesmen, exemplified by those who have drawn the parallel between the current slaughter of the Bosnians and what was done to the Jews by the Nazis. The sole remaining commander of the Jewish Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis, Dr. Marek Edelman, declared on April 18, on the 50th anniversary commemoration in Poland of the launching of that resistance: "There is mass extermination taking place in Bosnia, and Europe is behaving in a similar way as it did vis-à-vis the ghetto fighters. . . . Sadly, the Holocaust did not stop with the ghetto. It goes on."