

Time is running out for Clinton to act on Bosnia

by William Jones

As the Bosnian Serbs voted overwhelmingly on May 15 to reject the Vance-Owen peace plan, the resolve of the Clinton administration to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia and move with air power to knock out Serb artillery positions, seems to be faltering. The visit of Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Europe to “confer” with the allies on the Clinton policy has apparently thrown a monkey wrench into the proposed military action. The strident objections of the Anglo-French “Entente Cordiale” have undoubtedly dashed any hopes that President Clinton may have had about convincing the allies about the effectiveness—and morality—of his policy.

Anglo-French-Russian maneuvers

As Christopher returned to Washington, it was clear that the Anglo-French objections, with perhaps some important backing from the Russians, had created some hesitation in the administration about quickly following through on its plans for military action. Military action was put on hold for the sake of once again following the “diplomatic track,” which has been so successfully used to stall any real action up until now. At a photo session in Washington with Thai Foreign Minister Prasong Sunsi on May 17, Christopher said that “our allies have particular ideas of their own that they want to pursue at the present time,” although “all the options are on the table,” including the option of military action.

At the same time, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev began a tour of western capitals in a new effort to weave a “coordinated policy” on Bosnia. Kozyrev’s attempt to call a U.N. Security Council meeting on May 21 with four of the permanent members, Russia, France, Britain, and the United States, fell apart, however, as U.S. officials responded that Christopher wouldn’t come. Kozyrev and the Entente Cordiale still seem prepared to try to pump life into the corpse

of the Vance-Owen plan, which would carve Bosnia up into ethnic cantons.

After the Bosnian Serbs voted against the plan in a referendum, their chieftain Radovan Karadzic, undoubtedly heartened by the failure of the United States to carry through on its threat of military action, happily announced that “the plan is dead.” Karadzic now insists that the only viable solution is to create three separate states out of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Calling his conquered territory the “Republic of Srpska,” Karadzic thumbs his nose at the impotent West. “We are going our own way,” he said defiantly, “We have our own destiny.” When asked what the borders of this new state were, Karadzic responded, “They are what they are today, held by Serb nationals.”

Kozyrev met with Christopher on May 21 at the U.S. State Department, to discuss a “common plan.” Christopher will then meet with his British and French counterparts in further attempts to find “common ground.”

The forces of the Entente Cordiale are trying to browbeat the Clinton administration into sending U.S. troops into Bosnia as peacekeepers, something the Clinton government, rightly fearful of U.S. involvement in a ground war that would become a quagmire, has refused to do. The U.N. peacekeepers have simply served as a stumbling block in the way of any substantive military assistance for the defenders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the British and French are continually carping about the safety of their own peacekeepers, as an excuse to deter any moves to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia. Keenly aware of this, the Bosnian government asked that the U.N. withdraw its peace-keeping forces, the Unprofor. In Croatia and Bosnia, the Unprofor has simply provided the Serbian occupation with legitimacy, often even collaborating with the occupying Serb forces.

The vacillation on the part of the administration has led



Djenana Campara (center) and Zeljko Milicevic (right) are interviewed by Webster Tarpley in Washington for "The LaRouche Connection" cable TV show. The two Bosnian leaders, one of Muslim descent and the other of Croatian, gave the lie to Henry Kissinger's assertion that Bosnia is a political fiction, and called on the Clinton administration to give Bosnia the means to defend itself.

the opponents of the Clinton policy to go for the jugular. Henry Kissinger, who has brokered more than one crisis into the abyss of continual warfare, raised his ugly head in a commentary in the *Washington Post* on May 16, giving credence to the lie that "endemic ethnic rivalries" among Croats, Muslims, and Serbs are responsible for the war, and ridiculing the nation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a political fiction not worth defending.

Refuting Kissinger's lie

Kissinger's lie—the primary argument which is allowing the tiny multi-ethnic nation to be swallowed up in a Greater Serbia—was thoroughly exposed in the visit to Washington of a multi-ethnic Bosnian delegation, working with the Bosnia-Herzegovina Information Center in Ottawa, Canada. The visit was organized by the Schiller Institute. One member of the two-person delegation, Mrs. Djenana Campara, is a Bosnian of Muslim background and the first cousin of Hakija Turajlic, the late deputy prime minister of Bosnia, who was assassinated in January by Serbian Chetnik gunmen while under United Nations protection. The other member of the delegation, Zjelko Milicevic, is a Bosnian of Croatian descent.

In a series of meetings and interviews May 17-21, they explained to congressmen, administration officials, and others the real nature of the multi-ethnic Bosnian state. "Ethnic rivalries are not endemic to Bosnia-Herzegovina, but have been created in Belgrade," Mrs. Campara explained (see accompanying interview).

The two explained to officials—some sympathetic, some skeptical—how the ultimate result of the Vance-Owen plan or any such "cantonization" of Bosnia-Herzegovina would simply be the introduction of an apartheid system in the heart of Europe. They countered the arguments against lifting the arms embargo and air strikes by showing how the failure to move militarily would inevitably lead to more, not less,

bloodshed, whereas the opposite course could provide a speedy conclusion to the conflict.

"The success of the Serbian aggression has fueled Croatian ambitions," warned Milicevic. Mate Boban, the Bosnian Croatian leader waging war in Bosnia-Herzegovina against the Muslims, "may think he will become leader of a new kingdom carved out of Bosnia with the help of the Serbs, but he himself will become a victim of 'ethnic cleansing.' Because when the Serbs have 'cleansed' the Muslims, they will then begin to 'cleanse' the Croats. They want the Croatian coast for their Greater Serbia."

The delegation also explained the weakness of the Serb position, and emphasized the readiness of Bosnian troops to fight, provided they receive the necessary arms. "Every Bosnian male has undergone military training in the old Yugoslavian Army," Milicevic explained. "We don't need and don't want U.S. ground troops in Bosnia. We have the capability, but we must have the weapons. Then we can defend ourselves. Air strikes would be needed only to eliminate the Serb superiority in artillery."

This is also what President Clinton has said. But unless it happens soon, it will be too late. Mrs. Campara warned of rumors of a mooted "Orthodox pact" among the Serbs, the Russians, and the Greeks, a pact aimed at Albania, Kosova, and ultimately Turkey. If such a pact is formed, combining Serb ethnic policy with Russian nuclear capabilities and Greek knowledge of NATO strategy, President Clinton would face a crisis far beyond one simply demanding surgical air strikes. In order to preempt a more acute crisis of this nature, the U.S. must act quickly—with or without allied or U.N. consensus. Kissinger-style "geopolitics" has always led to a quagmire. Decisive action by the United States, showing that it can and will take leadership in a morally just cause, by lifting the arms embargo and by air strikes, could in fact prevent such a quagmire from developing.