

Five-power sellout of Bosnia is worse than the Munich betrayal

by Konstantin George

The Bosnian "peace" plan adopted by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, Russia, and Spain, and announced in Washington, D.C. on May 22, marks a level of infamy with few parallels in this century. It is an agreement by the "Big Four" to bury Bosnia, with the British-led Anglo-French Entente Cordiale serving as the driving force behind the sellout. It has dropped even the pretense of a commitment to the existence of a Bosnian state. Adding insult to injury, the plan was unveiled on the day that marks the first anniversary of Bosnia's admission to the United Nations as a sovereign state.

With this betrayal, which Lyndon LaRouche called "probably the worst foreign policy catastrophe for the United States government in recent times" (see *Documentation*), the West has sanctioned and rewarded the naked aggression, territorial conquests, and genocide of Serbia's Nazi-communist dictatorship. These crimes have been accepted on the continent of Europe. The message will not be lost on every other present or future imitator of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic.

The capitulation carries with it devastating consequences for western relations with the Muslim world. This theme was addressed by the 51-nation Islamic Conference which issued a statement denouncing the Washington agreement, and called instead for lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia, air strikes against Serbian positions, and sending troops from Islamic countries as peacekeepers.

The Serb commanders wasted no time in proving what sorts of dangers the world faces in the wake of the capitulation. Typical were statements by the Bosnian Serb military commander, Gen. Ratko Mladic, on May 25, that Serbia would carry on the war until its forces had reached Vienna and Trieste, the northeast Italian Adriatic port across the border from Slovenia. Croatia and Kosova are most immediately threatened.

The assessment that further Serbian aggressions are now imminent is shared by top military experts, including Gen. John R. Galvin, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, who told the House Armed Services Committee on May 26: "I'm one who personally believes the Serbs will not stop with Bosnia. They will want to exert themselves very strongly in Kosovo and other places."

From within the United States, protests were issued by

congressional leaders from both parties, denouncing the sellout. For example, Sen. Robert Dole, Republican leader in the Senate, on May 23 described the plan agreed to by the Clinton administration as "writing off Bosnia as a state by ratifying the *status quo* on the ground." "We must allow the Bosnians to defend themselves," he said. "It's the least we can do."

Such statements give some grounds to hope that the western capitulation may not be irreversible.

The fraud of 'safe havens'

The five-power plan clears the way for a partition of Bosnia, leaving the Bosnian Muslims a small American Indian-type reservation in central Bosnia, and five ghettos surrounded by Serbian forces—the so-called safe havens. These are: the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo; the central Bosnian town of Tuzla and surrounding region; the western Bosnian town of Bihac and surrounding region; the eastern Bosnian Muslim-held towns of Gorazde and Zepa; and the already-existing "safe haven" of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia.

With the fragile exception of Tuzla, all of these "safe havens" are presently surrounded by Serbian forces, and crammed with hundreds of thousands of half-starving Bosnian Muslim civilian refugees, living under hideous conditions. These locations are neither "safe" nor "havens." As Warren Christopher stated when announcing the plan, U.S. air power would not be used to defend the Bosnian Muslims, but only to support U.N. forces attacked in these ghettos, and then only if these forces formally requested such assistance. The Serbians can attack Bosnian Muslims as they please, in or outside of the "havens," without any worry about retaliation. It is no wonder that Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic promptly hailed the plan and praised President Clinton as "a great man," for having capitulated to Britain and France.

Serb conquests accepted

The plan, by making no mention of Bosnian Muslim-held areas outside the "safe havens," provides another go-ahead for the Serbs to widen and secure their corridor in north Bosnia, and to attempt to complete the encirclement of the Tuzla region, the last remaining Bosnian Muslim stronghold not completely surrounded by Serbian forces. These twin

objectives, known to the United States, NATO, and the European powers for months, constitute the Serbians' last remaining significant military goals in Bosnia. Beginning in mid-May, in the week running up to the Washington capitulation, the Serbs launched their biggest offensives of the war, in the corridor and to the north and west of the Tuzla region, to accomplish precisely these aims.

Over the May 22-23 weekend, after the news from Washington reached Belgrade, Serbian forces launched the most intense artillery shellings and strongest attacks of the war against the northern towns of Maglaj and Olovo. According to Bosnian Radio on May 23, an unprecedented 2,000-plus shells hit Maglaj alone, causing extremely heavy civilian losses, and leaving the town burning. On that weekend of infamy, the Serbians also showed the world what they think of "safe havens," unleashing the worst artillery barrage in months against Sarajevo, killing scores of civilians.

On May 26, Serbian forces completed the encirclement of Maglaj, seizing all the surrounding hills and trapping 32,000 Bosnian Muslim civilians. The crushing of the Bosnian positions around Maglaj places Serb forces within striking distance of completing the encirclement of the Tuzla area.

General Balkan war looms

The Washington capitulation is in fact a triple sellout—of Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosova—setting the stage for a general Balkan war. The plan expressly rules out any independence for Kosova, thus giving Serbian dictator Milosevic a free hand to begin mass deportation of the region's ethnic Albanians, who comprise 92% of the Kosova population. The section of the five-power communiqué dealing with Kosova, curiously ignored by the media, insists that Kosova shall remain Serbian occupied. It reads: "We favor an increase in the international monitoring presence in Kosova. International standards of human rights should be strictly enforced in Kosova, although we do not support declarations of independence there." This quashing of Kosovar hopes for independence, combined with dropping all reference to even a restoration of so-called autonomy, thus deliberately maintains Kosova under Serbian occupation.

Finally, the odious treatment given Croatia by this document must be mentioned. Solely on the basis of the Washington communiqué, one would never know that Croatia was and remains a victim of Serbian aggression. This wretched document of the five powers accepts the slander that Croatia is a guilty party along with Serbia. The communiqué reads: "Croatia: The same considerations apply to the Serb-populated areas of Croatia," as previously outlined for Kosova. The document blithely ignores the fact that the "Serb-populated areas of Croatia" such as Krajina, have been detached from Croatia and placed under Serbian occupation, thus making it physically impossible for Croatia to "respect" any "standards" in these regions.

In the communiqué, Croatia is held accountable for main-

taining "human rights" in areas ruled by the Serb Army. Even at Munich, Daladier and Chamberlain did not have the nerve to demand that Czech President Eduard Benes be held responsible for "human rights" in the Sudentenland after the Nazis marched in.

Documentation

Below is a selection of international expressions of outrage at the May 22 five-power agreement:

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., radio interview "EIR Talks with LaRouche," May 24:

It's an absolute disaster. It probably is the worst foreign policy catastrophe for the United States government in recent time, in terms of its implications, because this tends to discredit the United States as an international factor in policy shaping.

I think it's impossible to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation; but I shouldn't wish to suggest hopelessness. This is going to deteriorate. This is worse than what Daladier and Chamberlain did at Munich, what the British and their friends succeeded in imposing on the United States. It is far worse, as I say, than what was conceded to Hitler by Chamberlain and Daladier.

We have to see what the next development is. This is not going to stick. This is not going to lead to peace; this is going to lead to extended chaos. We will have to see how the United States government, the Clinton administration in particular, reacts to this. If this were to continue, if there were to be no correction on the part of the Clinton administration, I would say that the chances of Mr. Clinton's being reelected, would be zilch, on the basis of what the consequences of this would be. I don't want to foreclose happier turns in policy; but as of now, if this sticks, it's an absolute disaster.

This will spread. You are not going to stop the Balkan war. The Balkan war is going to continue to simmer and explode. So the idea that this is "peace in our time"—that's it. This is Neville Chamberlain getting off the airplane in the airport in Britain, talking about the hope that there would be "peace in our time." It's just folly. There is no peace. This is an absolute disaster.

If you unleash genocide, if you unleash mass rape, rape slave camps numbering tens of thousands of women, if you engage in the "final solution" to the Bosnian Muslim "problem," and you imagine that somehow it's going to contain itself within a few foothills in the Balkans and not extend to the rest of the world, you simply don't understand at all how the world works.

Bosnia President Alija Izetbegovic, radio address to the Bosnian people on May 23:

A totally unacceptable . . . betrayal. . . . The aggressor is not going to withdraw from the occupied territories. And

our people who have been evicted will not be allowed to return to their homes. . . . We are not going to waste time any longer in futile negotiations. The world has not left us with many choices.

We will not pull back any more. The international community is in the process of accepting the law of force and violence, which means acceptance of atrocities and genocide in violation of elementary principles of the rights of man.

If the international community is prepared to accept the law of force in international relations . . . rewarding aggression and genocide, then it should issue a new code of behavior in which force and violence will be the primary and sole argument, and it should make public that the U.N. Charter and . . . international laws are no longer valid.

Bosnian U.N. Ambassador Mohammed Sacirbey, interview with National Public Radio in the United States, May 24:

If necessary, we will look for new friends in the world to help us exercise our right; we already have many of them, now it's maybe time to call on them to help us in whatever way they need to under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

Under Article 51, any state can call upon other member states to assist it in self-defense against an aggression. That is a primary right, one which supersedes any other resolutions or any other articles of the Charter.

We've been too long, too trusting that the West would come to protect a European country. We are not a Muslim country, but a European country with a large Muslim population, a democratic, secular state, one that is pluralistic and multicultural. Europe has let us down, and sometimes we get the feeling that they have let us down purely because some of our leaders happen to be Muslims.

Bosnian Armed Forces Commander Sefer Halilovic:

Lift the embargo, gentlemen, and then get lost, every one of you, from Bosnia. . . . It is incomprehensible that the international community has been so impotent toward Bosnia-Herzegovina, a state which it recognized.

Besim Spahic, mayor of Zenica, Bosnia:

Don't talk to me about western or European culture, or about democratic freedoms, human rights. All that is hypocrisy and nonsense. Please do not talk anymore about civil rights, human rights and freedom, with all this happening in Europe, in the cradle of western civilization, on the eve of the 21st century.

Bosnian Information Minister Ivo Knezevic:

They are reducing us to Indian reservations. . . . For 10 months, the Europeans have been observing us, supervising us, counting us, feeding us, classifying us, but it would have been more just to have helped us. So much have we been reduced to the role of animals on the way to extinction,

we would have accomplished more if we had called on the societies for protection of animals, which are more effective. While the Serbian aggression has gone on, the image which appears of Europe in the mirror disgusts me so much that I want to smash the mirror. My son, aged 14 years, wrote this morning in his diary: "I hate Europe." I think that the Bosnian youth, who identified themselves with Italian or French youth, will preserve this disillusionment for their entire lives.

Clinton and Warren Christopher have shown that they are only men of promises and are, in some sense, responsible for the deaths [in Sarajevo] of this weekend. They are rubber-stamping the Serbian occupation, which is "cantonizing" us in Indian reservations, while developing the Bosnian prisoner syndrome. Without future, without even a tomorrow, since we don't know what will happen tonight.

The Islamic Conference, represented at the United Nations with 51 member-states, May 24:

The result of adopting a strategy which fails to reverse aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina will have consequences which go far beyond the borders of this state.

The joint action program announced in Washington . . . would appear to foreclose effective enforcement action against the Serbian aggressor and deny the inherent right of self-defense to the government and people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbs cannot be allowed to retain the fruit of their aggression, ethnic cleansing and territorial occupation. . . .

The Islamic countries must make it clear to the world that we will not stand by while genocide is being committed and condoned against defenseless Muslims. We must make clear that we will not passively accept the rape of thousands of Muslim women and young girls in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We must make clear that we will not accept that a Muslim people should be virtually exterminated from the heart of the most "civilized" continent.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, syndicated column, May 24:

The notion that aggression must not be rewarded lest it invite further aggression has been the core concept and driving principle of U.S. foreign policy, at least since World War II. That is why Harry Truman signed and the U.S. Senate ratified the United Nations Charter.

But in the Bosnian conflict the search for consensus in the Security Council has taken priority over protecting a people from genocide. The lack of consensus has protected an aggressor. Does the United States have a greater national interest in consensus with our allies than in discouraging aggression? . . .

I am very disappointed in the performance of Clinton and Christopher. They were wrong to decide and announce that we would not act unilaterally. And it is sad that they were not able to provide the leadership needed to persuade others.