

spectrezine

An Alternative View of What Happened in Yugoslavia

in:

As we move towards another war, Alfred Mendes looks at the background to the US's last major imperialist adventure.

To elicit some sense of logic out of current events, with America firmly ensconced in the role of World Policeman and the entry of NATO on to the Balkan scene, it is necessary to recall some crucial events from 1917 onwards.

The vast wealth amassed by the Vanderbilts, Astors, Morgans and other suchlike at the turn of the century fuelled the extraordinary growth of the American mass-production machine, and the resultant corporations were soon looking abroad with the intention of extending their interests. On the other hand, the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia in 1917 created, in effect, a call to wage earners worldwide for the setting up of a Marxist system of social distribution of wealth - the very antithesis of the capitalist system of garnering profit from the wealth created by labour. The corporatists now had little option but to commit themselves to the destruction of this subversive Marxist threat, even though this entailed the dubious - if not impossible - concept of the destruction of an Idea, an Ideal. Above all, they had to avoid this dichotomy being seen as one of ideology per se, the inequity inherent within their capitalist system being too vulnerable to close scrutiny. No, the struggle had to be seen by their public as one of Good Nation against Evil Nation: White against Red. This would be made easier both by ownership of the means of communication - the media - and the subornation of political parties of all shades outside of America (as in post-WW 2 in Italy). The weak left in America itself would be quashed by baton and gun.

Such was the ideological impasse that lay at the root of all subsequent events, and it is therefore essential to look more closely at the role of corporate America, the key stall-holder in the world market, and the group that would stand to lose the most in the case of failure. For them, political control was now important, but politicians could not be entrusted entirely with the task of avoiding and repudiating the temptations of this new ideology. Control would be implemented in two ways: (1) by direct secondment of top corporate executives to high government posts, thus skirting the democratic process (an example of this was the fact that in the first two years of Truman's presidency - of the 125 principal administrative appointments made, 56 were corporate lawyers, industrialists and bankers [one of whom, James Forrestal of Dillon, Read & Co. was probably the earliest and most vigorous promoter of what was soon to become popularly known as The Cold War]); and (2) by the formation of influential Advisory Groups. A survey of these reveals that, contrary to the popular view of America as the epitome of a pluralistic, competitive society of rugged individuals, its corporations display a very high degree of cohesion of purpose, and this cohesion is exemplified by their manifest urge to form cabalistic groups, many of a pseudo-social character. This is a phenomenon that would come as no surprise to anyone who has attended an American university - with Fraternity membership frequently leading to the Masonic lodge on graduation. Indeed, when it is recalled that America's first President, Washington, and nine of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence in 1776 were Freemasons, and that the subsequent rituals used for both Washington's inauguration and

the laying of the Capitol cornerstone were Masonic - then it would seem that this phenomenon even has certain traditional roots.

The result is groups such as the Business Council (BC) formed in 1933 by businessmen and bankers as an advisory body to the US Department of Commerce, and subsequently commissioned by FDR to draw up his Social Security Act of 1936 - thus de-fusing the potentially revolutionary situation induced by the Great Depression. Since then, they have held immense political clout in Washington. Understandable when it is recalled that in 1972 the chairmen/presidents of 26 of the 50 largest industrial corporations were members of the BC. From FDR onwards, the only time the BC lost its advisory status was during JFK's presidency, after confrontation with him. Or the Bohemian Club, with its prestigious membership and its 127-lodge Grove Camp north of San Francisco on the river Russia. It was here that the atom bomb Manhattan Project was conceived in 1942 at the prompting of physicist Professor Ernest Lawrence. And (C) The Euro-American Bilderberg Group, formed in 1954 to serve as a forum for lobbying at the highest political level in order to ensure that consensual policies were adopted by the signatories to the NATO Alliance in particular. On the international scene it is almost certainly the most influential of these groups/cabals. Implicit within the structure of the Bilderberg - with its publicised claim to having no membership as such, no charter and no elected officers - is its unaccountable, autocratic nature. However, the fact that it has a chairman, a steering committee and annual

conferences would seem to contradict the above claim. In any case, all doors to the seats of power are open to the Bilderberg.

The inevitable interlocking of membership among groups such as above resulted in the creation of an intricate web of influence. (The Bohemian Club, with tongue in cheek, cautions its members and guests on entering the Grove: Spiders Weave Not Here!- as if a spider could exist without weaving its web!).

Three notorious, well-documented examples of the use to which this

influence was put:

(1) In Iran, mid-1953, the Americans deposed Mossadegh who had nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP) in 1951 - and installed the Shah by means of a CIA operation code-named AJAX. Legal counsel for the AIOC had for years been the distinguished New York corporate law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell, the senior partners of which were the Dulles brothers (another partner was Arthur Dean who was later to be co-chairman in the Bilderberg for some years). At the time of the coup, John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State; Allen Dulles was CIA Director. It is worth adding here that the AIOC had for years been financed by the Industrial Bank of Iran, an offshoot of the German Schröder banking house (about which, more later).

(2) In Guatemala, June 1954, a CIA-sponsored coup d'état removed the reformist, constitutionally-elected government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman (a land-owning, military officer), and replaced it by a military dictatorship. Arbenz had, in 1953, expropriated - as part of his much-needed agrarian reform - large tracts of land belonging to the American United Fruit Company, whose earlier predatory incursion into Central America had caused the area to be known as 'the Banana Republics'. For years, the counsel for the UFC had been Sullivan & Cromwell, and at the time of the coup the Dulles' still held the posts they had held in 1953 (above). Indeed, John FD was also a large stockholder in the UFC. This coup, incidentally, had been a blatant violation of Article 15 of the US-inspired Organisation of American States (OAS) which specifically forbade any interference - political or military - by one state in the affairs of any other state.

(3) Chile, September 1970: the CIA, with the collaboration of International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT) and Pepsi-Cola, tried, unsuccessfully, to mount a military coup in order to prevent the favored, left-wing candidate Salvador Allende from winning the presidential election. They planned this coup without the privity of the American Ambassador, Edward Korry, who was opposed to such intervention. This abortive attempt did not stop the CIA and

its corporate allies: in September 1973, Allende was overthrown - and killed - and the dictatorship of General Pinochet installed. Among those who played an active influential role in the above were: Harold Geneen (Pres./Chm. of ITT); John McCone (Board of ITT, Director CIA 1961 to 1965, & member of Bohemian Club), and Donald Kendall (Chm. Pepsi Cola, Mem. Business Council, & friend of Nixon).

These examples of corporate power-wielding reveal the lack of any democratic accountability, as well as a disregard of national frontiers - this latter aspect due largely to the now multi-national nature of the corporations. There were even a number of cases in the 1930s and 1940s when such activity militated against the national interest of their own country - to the benefit of Germany in the following instances. The 1920s had been a particularly crucial period in Germany because of the extraordinary rise to power of the Nazis. What had been a rag-tag of street dissidents had, within a decade, become a well-uniformed, well-organised and obviously

well-financed party. Above all, it projected a marked anti-communist bias. This attracted corporate America - and contacts were soon made. ITT and Sullivan & Cromwell were among the more high-profile firms to do so. In the case of both firms the German contact used was Dr. Gerhardt Alois Westrick, Hitler's financial agent - and through him deals were made with Baron Kurt von Schröder of the Schröder banking house (see AIOC above). This bank was a channel for funds for the Nazi Party in general, and the Gestapo in particular. (It was in von Schröder's villa in Cologne on the 7th of January 1933 that Hitler and Franz von Papen had met to plan details for their subsequent seizure of power, and von Schröder was later made SS Gruppenführer). In ITT's case: in return for directorships for both Westrick and von Schröder in ITT, the latter acquired a number of German firms, the most intriguing of which was a 28% share in the Focke-Wulf company whose aircraft saw much service in the ensuing WW 2 - much to the discomfiture of Allied civilians and servicemen. Furthermore, in 1967 ITT were paid \$25 million in compensation for war damages to its factories in Germany! For its part, Sullivan & Cromwell acquired as clients the following: (1) IG Farben, the German chemical conglomerate which, in 1937, developed the deadly nerve gas Tabun. (2) The well-known Swedish ball-bearing manufacturer SKF, which supplied 60% of its production to Germany, primarily for its armaments. And (3) The Schröder banking house itself, Allen Dulles becoming a director of

its New York offshoot - a post he held until 1944. Inasmuch as it exposes one of the filaments of the corporate web, it is pertinent to note here that the man who initially approached Sullivan & Cromwell on behalf of Schröder was the latter's New York vice-president, John I. Simpson, the chief confidant of Steve Bechtel Snr. (Bechtel Corp.) who was a member of the most prestigious camp in the Bohemian

Grove - Mandalay Camp. (Bechtel was later to supply the US government with such figures as John McCone, George Schultz and Caspar Weinberger). Implicit within the political unaccountability of the American corporate oligarchy is its secretiveness. We are thus justified in assuming that the few examples of foreign intervention that are in the public domain (as noted above) must mean that there are many more of like import and gravity not in the public domain. Hence, any concerned curiosity about such unpublicised activities is equally justified.

At this point it is necessary to recall that at the end of WW 2, America emerged with three-quarters of the world's invested capital and two-thirds of the world's industrial capacity - the USSR with its infrastructure decimated. The distribution of American aid that followed was significant: more aid was distributed to the right-wing dictatorships of Turkey, Greece, South Korea, South Vietnam and Formosa (Taiwan) than to Western Europe. Again, the USSR

was denied aid, and the reason given by the US for this denial (which, incidentally, circumvented UN agreements) was that, at the critical Moscow Conference which started on the 10th of March 1947, the USSR had spurned America's gestures of compromise - conveniently disregarding Truman's bombshell of a speech to his Congress on the 12th of March, just two days into the Conference! A speech known as the Truman Doctrine which was, in effect, an ultimatum to the Soviets. The Marshall Plan was announced three months later. George Kennan, who was Head of the US State Department Planning Staff in the late 1940s (and protege of James Forrestal), supplied the official rationale that lay behind the above facts concisely in articles he wrote at the time under the pseudonym of Mr. X? He wrote: "the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate...and...to promote tendencies which eventually find their outlet in either the break up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power? Prophetic words?

These irreconcilable ideological differences between the USSR on the one hand, and Britain and America on the other, reflected the fact that their wartime alliance had been an alliance of convenience - of pragmatism (for instance, contrary to FDR's assurance to the USSR in May 1942 that a second front would be opened later that year, this, in fact, did not occur until June 1944 - when it became clear to the Western Allies that the Soviets were advancing inexorably westwards). Thus, at war's end, the Western Allies immediately reverted to their pre-war anti-communist strategy - and given their common, fervent anti-communist bias, it was also inevitable that there would be co-operation between America and the Vatican. Examples of this co-operation were the setting up of the anti-communist propaganda radio stations: Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, joint ventures of the CIA (for funding) and the Knights of Malta (SMOM) members J. Peter Grace (WR Grace Corp.) and Frank Shakespeare (CBS, RKO, and US Information Agency) - among others. SMOM was the most active Catholic group which so co-operated, and although membership was opened to Americans only in 1927, it is a measure of that country's influential standing that by the 1940s the American Cardinal Spellman held the post of Grand Protector within the Order, whereas King Leopold and Queen Wilhelmina were mere Protectors within their respective countries. To name but a few of the SMOM members, past and present, is to reveal its elitism and power: Juan Peron; CIA Directors John McCone and William Casey; King Juan Carlos; ex-NATO Commander and Secretary of State Alexander Haig; Joseph Kennedy; and Nazi Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen (who negotiated the Hitler/Vatican Concordat of 1933).

This Concordat was an agreement that meant, in effect, that a government with an ostensibly anti-religious, Nazi bias had taken the seemingly extraordinary step of imposing a church tithe on its populace. To understand this apparent paradox it is necessary to recall the ties that bound Germany to Rome for some eight centuries (926 to 1806) under the aegis of the Holy Roman Empire, with its succession of German Kings. The unavoidable conclusion to be drawn here is that these ties were still alive in 1933. And when it is recalled that in the mid-thirties the Vatican, aided by French and British Intelligence Services, had formed a powerful secret

organisation, Intermarium, whose primary aim was the promotion of a Pan-Danubian Confederation of middle-European states (thus forming an anti-communist barrier stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic), then the setting up of the puppet states in Slovenia and Croatia in 1941 are comprehensible. That these German/Roman ties still exist today is attested to by the facts that: (1) the Concordat is still in effect; and (2) since WW 2 the German political scene has been dominated, for the most part, by Christian Democratic (Catholic) parties. Indeed, there can be no other rational explanation for Germany's extraordinary action on the 15th of January 1992 when, following on the Vatican's recognition of the "Independence" of Slovenia and Croatia - and contrary to the advice and warnings given to them by the UN, EEC and Bosnia (Iztbegovic had even gone to Bonn in a vain attempt to dissuade them from taking this step) - they broke the universally-accepted rule of not interfering in the domestic affairs of a foreign sovereign state, and unilaterally recognised the "Independence" of Slovenia and Croatia, thereby sanctioning the violent outbursts of nationalism that had occurred as a result of the earlier Declarations of Independence by those two autonomous members of the Yugoslav Federation. It was inevitable that this German action would lead to the Bosnian debacle, and it is difficult to believe that Germany was not aware of this (about which, more later). This act of recognition by the Vatican in 1992 should be viewed in the context of the Ustase's approach to the papal mission in Salzburg in June 1945 asking for the pope's assistance in the creation of either another Croatian state, or, at least a Danube-Adriatic union.

Any further historical review of the Balkan region would be inadequate if it did not include the role that religion in general, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, has played in it - but in view of the schism that exists within the RC Church between the oligarchic Integralists and the liberal Communities? it should be noted that any further references to the Church in this article are directed towards the former: the autocrats in the Vatican. The involvement of The Church in the region was inevitable, given its geographical juxtaposition to - and historical association with - Slovenia and Croatia. The latter had long been regarded by The Church as a bastion against both the Orthodox Serbs (since Pope John 10th's crowning of Tomislav as king of Croatia in 925 AD) and the Muslim Ottomans. The Roman/Orthodox split in the Christian Church and the subsequent five centuries of Ottoman rule ensured that the Yugoslavia that was to be formed in 1918 would be a land simmering with religious discord - a situation not eased by the earlier incursions of the Habsburgs from the north and the Bulgars from the east. The setting up of the Catholic state of Croatia under the fascist Ustase in the wake of the German invasion of Yugoslavia ignited this discord, resulting in large-scale massacres of Serbs, Jews, Muslims and Gypsies. Another area of discord during the war (and one of particular pertinence to the current crisis) was the split among the Serbs, between the Nationalist/Royalist Cetniks under Mihailovich and the communist/republican Partisans under Tito (most of whom were Serbs - though Tito himself was born a Croat). The British and Americans were well aware of this schism, the British having seconded Brig. Fitzroy McClean to the partisans, and the Americans Robert McDowell of the OSS to the Cetniks.

One aspect of the Vatican/Yugoslav relationship during the early post-war period that should be noted is that, whereas the Polish government, a USSR satellite, had intervened far more in the internal affairs of the Church than had Yugoslavia, which had broken off relations with the USSR, the Vatican adopted a far more intransigent attitude towards the latter (as exemplified by their opposition to Tito's agrarian reform; their stance over the Istrian confrontation; and their ban on priests joining the long-established Priest? Associations) - than to the former. This could only have been a case of political opportunism aimed at Tito's comparative weakness. It was certainly not a case of religious principle.

Another post-war event that was to play a crucial role in Yugoslavia's future was the Greek civil war. The popular communist-led party EAM (with its military wing ELAS) would have assumed power in Greece in 1944 had not the British intervened militarily with two divisions, as a result of the (then) secret deal Churchill had made with Stalin in October '44: allowing the British a free hand in Greece, in return for the USSR having a free hand in Bulgaria and Romania. The British installed the right-wing Tsaldaris as dictator of Greece, and thus found themselves embroiled in a civil war they could ill-afford. In February 1947 they notified the Americans of their intention to withdraw from Greece, and Truman made his crucial speech calling on the West to rally to his crusade against the "un-American " communist way of life? - the Truman Doctrine as it came to be known (see above). America had now replaced Britain as the broker in the Balkans, and was faced by the fact that ELAS was an effective military force, due primarily to the aid/backing it was receiving from neighbouring Yugoslavia.

June 1948 saw the Tito/Stalin split, resulting in the former being expelled from the Cominform. The West's reaction to this was best spelt out by Pavlowitch in his book *Yugoslavia. The American and West European governments* were faced with a dilemma. Should they help a now weak and isolated, but otherwise successful, instance of communism, while containing communism generally? On the one hand, if Yugoslavia were left to collapse, only the Soviet Union would benefit. But if, Tito's regime were helped to survive economically, his rift with Moscow could be widened to the point where no reconciliation were possible any longer, and his independent position could then entice other East European regimes to follow his example. Thus, at the same time as the states of Western Europe and North America were grouping together to constitute the North Atlantic Alliance, it was decided, as a calculated risk for a long-term advantage, to assist Yugoslavia without asking its government to alter its domestic policies in any way. In July 1948 America released Yugoslavia's frozen gold-assets which had been blocked earlier when the latter had refused to compensate for American property it had nationalised. This was the result of Yugoslavia now agreeing to pay such compensation. The following year America relaxed export controls to Yugoslavia, and instigated a series of loans and grants to same (this totalled some \$2- to \$2.5 billion in the decade up to '79). Tito stopped assisting ELAS, thus ensuring the latter's defeat. Yugoslavia was now embarked on a debt-ridden course which would eventually lead to the dissolution of its Federation - helped in no small measure by Tito's setting up in 1984 of a New Constitution which, in effect, split the Republic of Serbia into three parts by giving its provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina a higher degree of autonomy than they had previously held - thereby, incidentally, exacerbating underlying dissidences of a political, ethno-religious nature. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 now meant that Yugoslavia's usefulness as a tactical foil to the Soviets (see Pavlowitch above) had now lapsed, leaving Yugoslavia in the vulnerable position of now being one of the only two remaining nominally communist states in Europe - the other being Albania. Moreover, as noted above, American aid had ensured that Yugoslavia would be a country heavily in debt, and with an economy in turmoil. This was a situation exacerbated by the disparate economies of the various republics within the Federation

(Slovenia and Croatia vis-a-vis the others), and the historical ethno-religious discord within the region. Disintegration was inevitable, and was to begin in 1990.

On the face of it, and in simplistic terms, the resulting turmoil in the region was just another anarchic stew of religious ingredients. After all, there had been many such throughout history (and still are!), usually characterised by the cruel, vicious acts of the warring parties (begging the question: when is a war not cruel, not vicious? Can it be that it is when, by the simple, dehumanised act of pressing a button or pulling a lever, a nuclear or napalm bomb or cruise missile is sent on its impersonal way - in the name of "humanitarian intervention"). Be that as it may, such a simplistic approach to the Balkan maze - not taking into account the inexorable rationality of historical events leading to the debacle - has led to many a dead-end of irrationality in this crisis, epitomised by the many diplomatic and journalistic reports covering it.

Intervention by the West, in the form of the EU and the UN, soon followed, but the initial attempts to bring the warring factions together, punctuated as they were by frequent about-turns in tactics on the part of the peace-makers, were of such an irresolute nature as to nurture doubts as to their aim. For a start, peace-brokers of questionable qualifications were appointed: Carrington, an eminent Bilderberger, and his successor, Owen, had both served as Foreign Secretary of a country, Britain, that had for decades been conspicuously unsuccessful in solving its own Balkan/Irish problem. Again, Carrington and Vance (Owen? co-broker) had both been board members of arms-dealing companies - the former with Kissinger Associates; the latter with the prestigious General Dynamics. Surely a case of conflict of interests here?

In the middle of these peace-brokerings came Germany? recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence, which ensured that the conflict would spread to neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina with its potentially explosive mixture of three ethno-religious groups. On the face of it, it would seem that, having been given the chimerical task of untying the Balkan Gordian Knot by the Germans, the peace-makers had little choice but to make the best of it. However, in view of the clonal nature of the EEC/NATO partnership (of which, more later), it is hard to believe that fellow-members of the partnership were not party to Germany? action: were not two crucial NATO posts held by Germans at that time (Werner as Secretary General, and Weggenger as Assistant Secretary General of Political Affairs)? Indeed, the fact that NATO was to adopt a more overt role in the crisis from hereon calls for scrutiny of that organisation.

The collapse of the communist states in the East caused many in the West to query the future need for NATO. It is now evident that this query was based on two grave misconceptions: (1) that NATO had been set up solely to resist Soviet expansion; and (2) that the collapse of the latter had meant the end of Marxism. Had this been so, logic would have decreed immediate redundancy for NATO! From its birth in April 1949 NATO has operated under American

patronage and hegemony. Patronage whereby, under its Article 3, it finances the organisation; hegemony, as attested to by a glance at its command structure, which reveals that both its commands (Allied Command Europe [ACE with its two sub-commands SHAPE & SAFEUR]), and Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) come under statutory American control (It is significant that the third Command-that-was (CINCHAN), the only command previously not under statutory American control, was recently disbanded). No, NATO's true role has been to act as a counter-revolutionary, counter-reformist arm of the Corporate West. This was clarified by no less a person than George Kennan (once again) when, at the BBC Reith Lecture in 77, while objecting to the fact that since the co-option of Germany into NATO, the latter - a military instrument - had become ?he major vehicle of western policy? he revealed that the State Department had created NATO as a shield behind which the West could meet ?.the communist danger in its most threatening form - as an internal problem - that is, of Western society, to be combated by reviving economic activity? In plain English: NATO had been formed to deal with the internal political problems of Western society. And if anybody should have known, it was he: had he not been Head of Planning at the time? This was a statement, moreover, that conformed precisely - and understandably - to the tenets of Corporate America. That this was its mandate, and that NATO was not subject to democratic accountability, can be attested to by the fact that in 1989, under its Article 9 (which empowered the setting up of subsidiary bodies, GLADIO (aka GLAIVE, aka ZWAARD) was brought under the control of SHAPE? Clandestine Planning Committee. GLADIO was a secret anti-left terrorist group set up by the CIA and British Intelligence in Italy in 1950 with the aim of countering the influence of the Communist Party in that country. Subsequent judicial investigation in Italy revealed that GLADIO had been actively involved in such acts as the Bologna station bombing.

Kennan could have added that NATO had had another more immediate role to play. In the immediate post-WW 2 period, well aware of the potentially lucrative markets that would result from the reconstruction of war-damaged Europe, Corporate America, with its vast capital reserves, was determined to benefit from it. They would achieve this by means of the Marshall Plan as implemented by the Economic Co-operation Act passed by Congress in 1948. The

most crucial requirement for the successful fulfilment of this Act was an integrated Europe - but the British and Scandinavians, fearing loss of sovereignty and suspicious of America's motives, opposed such integration. The following year NATO was formed, and by incorporating these dissenting nations under the guise of shielding them from any move west by the Soviets, America thus attenuated such dissension and gained a valuable hold in Europe. NATO had thus played an important role in the

formative stage in what would ultimately become the Common Market/EEC/EU. Any doubt as to the close relationship between the two is dispelled by NATO's own words in its commemorative Handbook of 1999: (keeping in mind that, from 1955, the Brussels Treaty became known as the Western European Union - precursor of the Common Market) The Brussels Treaty of 1948..was also the first step in the process leading to the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 and the creation of the North Atlantic Alliance? A glance at recent events in Europe confirms this closeness: before an applicant country - such as Poland or Hungary - could be considered as a member of the EU, it had to be first vetted by NATO. Indeed, this relationship is so close as to cast doubt as to who is calling the tune in Europe.

NATO's involvement in the Balkan crisis was a gradual process - from its avowed readiness in June 92 to support peace-keeping under the authority of the Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe (subsequently re-named the Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]) - through to its use of air strikes over Bosnia from 94 until September 95, when the strikes were suspended pending the Dayton peace talks. The reason for this somewhat tentative initial approach on the part of NATO was that they were playing for time: as a result of a strategic review undertaken in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR, NATO, in October 92, had inaugurated a plan to create an Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) of some 250,000 troops to be deployed whenever NATO deemed it necessary to intervene in order to keep the peace? (This was a force which would presumably augment its twin CENTCOM which had similarly been formed to *protect* [i.e. control] the Middle East oilfields). As originally foreseen, the ARRC would not be ready until 1995.

NATO has for years stressed that the Alliance is purely defensive in purpose..an attack on one is an attack on all. Indeed, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 states this clearly. What then was NATO's mandate for intervening militarily in what was an internal civil war in Yugoslavia? The above-mentioned 1999 Handbook supplies NATO's answer - to the effect that some of its main defence forces could also be employed for sustaining Article 5 operations. This is elaborated upon by a footnote which, while re-affirming the validity of Article 5, adds that Alliance activities falling outside the scope of Article 5 are referred to as Non-Article 5 operations. This was a veiled reference to the fact that NATO, in the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR, had changed its strategic concept, conveniently modifying its Article 5 so that it could now intervene militarily in the name of keeping the peace or humanitarian intervention- or both. Self-defence was no longer the only reason for launching an attack. In NATO's own words the organisation of its forces has changed the Alliance's overall defence posture.

In September 1995, with the ARRC now ready, NATO announced its readiness to deploy a large force to implement a Bosnian peace settlement. They would now be in overt control of the situation and they pressurised the warring factions to sit around the table. On the 5th of October 1995 they announced a 60-day cease-fire which came into effect a week later. Ultimatums were now the order of the day - accompanied by the carrot of an embargo-lift.

Simultaneously, the UN echoed NATO's cease-fire announcement by announcing its intention to reduce its troops in the region. The Dayton peace talks took place in the intimidating atmosphere of the Wright-Patterson Air Force base near Dayton, Ohio. The embargo against Yugoslavia was lifted in November - and the peace accord signed in Paris on the 14th of December 1995. Just previously, in early December, as a result of a conference convened in London to discuss the implementation of the Dayton accord, a Peace Implementation Council - with no UN representatives onboard - was set up in Brussels. The resulting Implementation Force (IFOR), a force of 60,000 American, British and French troops - under the command of the ARRC - was then deployed throughout Bosnia into three zones of operation. In December 1996 IFOR was augmented by the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) of 30,000 troops. The cease-fire could now be ensured by this display of military might.

America's tactics in the crisis from early on had raised doubts as to its impartiality and avowed compliance with the tenets of reconciliation inherent in a peace-making process. David Owen had voiced such doubts, and certain subsequent actions were to validate such doubts. As a result of a signed agreement on military co-operation between the US and Croatia (the latter had already signed a similar agreement with Turkey), the Croatian Ministry of Defence had signed a contract with Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) in 1994, under which the latter would act as military advisors to the Croat army at the Petar Zrinski military school in Zagreb.

The MPRI officer in charge was retired General Richard Griffiths who had once been assistant to the US Commander in Europe for Intelligence, in Frankfurt. That the MPRI operates under the aegis of the US Department of Defence is attested to by: (1) the agreement referred to above; (2) the fact that it is staffed by many of the highest-ranking retired military officers in the US (such as its Chief of Operations, Lieut. General Harry Soyster, who had been Head of the Defense Intelligence Agency); and (3) James Pardew, the Pentagon representative at the Dayton talks, had subsequently flown to Sarajevo to persuade the Bosnians to use MPRI's services. This was a company set up in Alexandria, Virginia in 1987 with the specific aim of promoting America's anti-left strategy on the international military scene. In August 1995 the training of the Croat army came to fruition: their attack on the Serbs of Western Krajina was so well and effectively planned that, within a matter of days, 150,000 Serbs had fled the region where, four centuries before, they had been settled to act as a buffer between Catholic and Muslim. Not long after the Krajina rout, it was revealed in a Croat newspaper - and later on British TV - that one of the contributory factors to the Croat victory had been CIA-

organised pilotless reconnaissance flights over Krajina from a base on the island of Brac, in the Adriatic. Obviously, this could not have been done without close coordination with MPRI.

The Americans had now adopted a blatantly anti-Serb stance which embraced both Cetnik Serbian leadership in Bosnia (Karadic was a self-avowed royalist Cetnik) and the rump Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - conveniently disregarding the schism between these two groups (see above), a schism born in WW 2 and now re-activated in this crisis. This was clearly manifested during the Vance-Owen Plan negotiations in 1993, when Karadic initially rejected the plan in open defiance of the wishes of the Federal Republic. In the context of the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR and the consequent lapse of Yugoslavia? use as a tactical foil (as noted above), the logical conclusion to be drawn from this latest American stance was that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) - still tainted with Communism in the eyes of the Americans - was now the ultimate target. And if Milosevic, by now effectively Saddamised, was not aware of that, then he was not the shrewd politician he had so far proven to be.

This build-up of the Bosnian army under the guise of creating an even playing field, while good news for American arms manufacturers, was most certainly not a helpful move towards a peaceful solution of the Balkan problem. The resulting entry of the big corporations on to the scene would be eased by the need for the reconstruction of the war-damaged infrastructure, with its accompanying lucrative contracts - as happened in the Gulf War, for instance, when, even before the war? end, corporations such as Bechtel were awarded contracts to rebuild Kuwait (both Secretary of State Shultz and Secretary of Defense Weinberger had joined the

administration from Bechtel Corp.). While on this matter of reconstruction, the fact that an ostensibly military organisation NATO (in the form of IFOR) had been given the responsibility of undertaking the reconstruction of the civilian infrastructure of war-damaged Bosnia, was surely a pointer both to its inbred political nature and its corporate alliance. Now, at the end of 1998, after months of internal strife in Kosovo - with the resultant outflow of Kosovar refugees and reports of massacres - NATO, after much sabre-rattling, prevailed upon the Yugoslavs to allow its (NATO?) affiliate, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor the situation in situ. Result: the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) entered Kosovo under the leadership of a US diplomat, William Walker, who, as US Ambassador to El Salvador, had administered support for that State's reign of terror - with its politically motivated killings (shades of Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua et al.). The concurrent peace talks convened by the Americans at Rambouillet, just west of Paris, were notable for the fact that one of the two main protagonists, Yugoslavia, was treated as a non-participant. How else to explain the fact that when, in Paris on the 18th of March 1999, the representatives of the FRY, Serbia, and seven of the Kosovan ethnic minorities submitted - for discussion - an Agreement for Self-Government in Kosovo & Metohija (a document conforming to democratic principles), - only to have it rejected out-of-hand by the (American) Contact Group and the KLA? The logical deduction to be drawn from this is that these talks had been an orchestrated facade obscuring the fact that NATO had already decided to bomb Yugoslavia. Certain facts sustain this view: regardless of Yugoslavia? non-participation (as noted), an agreement was reached at Rambouillet, the crucial clause of which was set forth under Appendix B: Status of Multi-National Military Implementation Force (8) NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY including associated airspace and territorial waters. (Agreement - or Ultimatum?); on the 19th of March 1999 the KVM was withdrawn from Kosovo - its mission unfinished; and (Keeping in mind that Kosovo is one of the two provinces of the Republic of

Serbia, Vojvodina being the other) in answer to the Rambouillet Agreement/Ultimatum, the Serbian National Assembly convened, and on the 23rd of March passed a resolution rejecting NATO? ultimatum, condemning the withdrawal of the KVM, and calling for negotiations leading..towards the reaching of a political agreement on a wide-ranging autonomy for Kosovo and Metohija? It added that, "though..the Serbian Parliament does not accept presence of foreign military troops in Kosovo & Metohija..it is ready to review the size and character of the International presence in Kosmet (Kosovo/Metohija) for the carrying out of the reached accord. immediately upon signing the political accord on the self-rule agreed and accepted by the representatives of all national communities living in Kosovo & Metohija." There were now two peace plans on the table on the 23rd of March.

NATO launched its bombing campaign the following day, on March the 24th - with the avowed humanitarian aim of returning the refugees to Kosovo, in the name of the "international community". It is hard to believe that NATO was so politically obtuse that it did not foresee that this bombing would exacerbate the ongoing strife in Kosovo - with its concomitant human suffering; or that it was so eagerly committed to the return of Kosovar refugees, when, after 4 years, the refugee problem in neighbouring Bosnia had still not been resolved; and it could have claimed so brazenly to be acting in the name of the international community when it was circumventing the authority of an organisation - the UN - which had been formed to cope with just such an eventuality. With these points in mind, when, on the 6th of May 1999, the G-8 nations called for a Kosovo peace settlement under UN mandate - and two days later NATO bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade (thereby making it much less likely that the plan would be implemented), surely logic demands that we harbour grave doubts as to the veracity of NATO? claim that the bombing was accidental? Moreover, NATO's constantly reiterated claim that it intervened in the Balkans for humanitarian reasons loses all credence when viewed against events of a similar nature occurring simultaneously in not-so-distant Turkey, a long-standing member of NATO which had for years been responsible for the ethnic-

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cleansing of its Kurdish minority on an even greater scale than is the case in the Balkans - and in a region which boasts the presence of a long-established American military Intelligence base just outside Diyarbakir, a town to which over a million Kurds fled between 1970 and 1974. This begs the question: by what right - other than military might - does NATO assume the mantle of the "international community"? The rational answer is: the right of the Corporate West, led by America, to pursue its aim of global, capitalist domination. National boundaries are no longer sacrosanct.

In view of the foregoing facts, it is surely logical to assume that NATO's ploy in the Balkans clearly mirrors that of its twin, CENTCOM, in the Gulf - namely, the creation of a situation in which their continued military presence in the region is thus justified.

In conclusion, it is interesting to wonder what some historian in the more objective future would make of the long-past dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Faced by the fact that the two main protagonists in the dispute had both been federal states, would he not ponder on the irony of it, and wonder what would have been the reaction of the federal United States government if the roles in the situation had been reversed - and two of its states had decided to quit the United States federation? Of one thing the historian would be in no doubt: peace counts for nowt when caught in the corporate spider's web of Profit!