

## Bush is planning an 'Operation Balkan Storm'

by Konstantin George

On May 22, statements by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker confirmed a warning issued only two days previously by U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, that the same Bush administration which had supported and encouraged Serbian aggression against Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia, was now drafting plans for an Anglo-American-led military operation against Serbia, modeled on the "Operation Desert Storm" launched for the war against Iraq. Baker, after meeting with British Prime Minister John Major in London, spoke of "possible international military actions" to force Serbian forces out of Bosnia should "political, diplomatic, and economic measures fail."

Since the Baker-Major meeting, the United States and Britain have led an international drive to impose a complete trade embargo and blockade of Serbia, while hastily drafting plans for a military intervention. Had the same stringent sanctions policy been put forward nine months ago, before Serbian forces invaded Croatia, or at the outset of their invasion, the human tragedy in Croatia and Bosnia—the tens of thousands killed and wounded, the 1.2 million human beings now homeless, and the threat of mass starvation in Sarajevo—would never have come to pass.

However, Washington and London are not guided by concern for people, but by the imperial dictates of their "new world order" policy, which is an attempt to prolong the bankrupt "Versailles system" into the future. Thus, from the perverted standpoint of the new world order, any effective moves which would have averted the bloodbath in former Yugoslavia, would also have denied Washington and London their pretext for a future military intervention.

The 180-degree U.S. policy change toward Serbia is analogous to the abrupt reversal of U.S. policy against Iraq that began in the spring of 1990 and reached its climax during

the summer of 1990, immediately after the invasion of Kuwait. Prior to that, Washington had been a "supporter" of Iraq, while at the same time encouraging Kuwaiti economic warfare against Iraq, and had left the door open for Saddam Hussein to seize Kuwait, thus setting him up for the "Desert Shield" trap sprung immediately thereafter.

Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic and the leading Serbian generals have felt free to commit aggression and atrocities against Croatia and Slovenia, and now Bosnia, because they received a blank check from America. Belgrade miscalculated, believing that U.S. support was open-ended. They failed to understand that they are mere pawns, set into motion to allow a process of Anglo-American-led military-political moves whose aim is to plunge the entire Balkans into war. With the Balkans at war, London and Washington, together with their regional junior partner, Turkey, can ensure that European economic development projects never get off the ground.

### What's behind the Sarajevo outrage?

The dynamic toward a military intervention reached fever pitch with the May 27 terrorist outrage in the center of Sarajevo, when three mortar shells were fired into a large crowd waiting in line at a bread market. The attack killed at least 20 and wounded more than 160 people, mostly old people, women, and children.

Whoever committed this atrocity did so with a timing that fit perfectly with Anglo-American plans for military intervention. While no definite conclusion can yet be drawn as to who was responsible, every indication points to one of two possibilities: a cult-like unit of fanatics, either on the Serbian or the Bosnian side, and in either case, not under the control of the regular Serbian Army; or through the Bosnian territori-

al defense chain of command channels.

In either case, the outrage was diametrically opposed to Serbian policy, which had abruptly changed in an attempt to stave off sanctions and an invasion. This in no way excuses the conduct of Serbian dictator and Bolshevik butcher Milosevic, or exempts him and his clique of responsibility for the wanton destruction and human tragedy in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia. It simply means that by May 26-27, for reasons of short-term self-interest and desperation, the last thing Belgrade wanted to do was to commit an outrage in Sarajevo.

The atrocity was committed on the day that the European Community (EC) adopted its first stringent sanctions package, including a trade embargo against Serbia, and on the eve of U.N. Security Council deliberations for a comprehensive international trade and oil embargo against Serbia.

Immediately after the outrage, while the dead and wounded were still lying on the streets of Sarajevo, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic appealed to the U.N. Security Council for an "armed intervention" against Serbia, and Bosnian Defense Minister Jerko Doko appealed to George Bush to send the U.S. Sixth Fleet and U.S. Marines to help Bosnia.

The United States was clearly already moving in this direction. The May 28 London *Independent*, citing the conduct of U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney at the May 26-27 NATO defense ministers' meeting, commented: "The threat of military force against Serbia today is much more real." Cheney notably fudged the issue when he said there were no plans "at present for deploying U.S. forces in Yugoslavia."

Besides the United States and Britain, Turkey also wanted a pretext for an American-led military intervention. The first public declarations from a prime minister of a NATO member calling for precisely that were issued one week before the Baker-Major meeting by Turkish Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel, who used the formulation "modeled on Operation Desert Storm."

## Serbia scrambles

After the Baker-Major meeting, it finally dawned on Belgrade that Serbia would soon be facing an American-led "Operation Balkan Storm," and in anticipation of such an action, the Serbian leadership suddenly reversed direction, in a desperate effort to make concessions before U.N. sanctions hit. By May 26, the concrete indications of a Serbian policy shift were in evidence, juxtaposed to the NATO defense ministers' meeting, where U.S. Defense Secretary Cheney indirectly confirmed that "Operation Balkan Storm" preparations were in progress. The Serbian measures included:

1) Sarajevo Airport was opened to allow international food and medicine relief aid to arrive for the hungry population of the city. In addition, a cease-fire was proclaimed in Sarajevo, which, despite outrages, was generally adhered to by the Army.

2) A convoy of 12 trucks with 15 tons of food and medi-

cine left Belgrade for Sarajevo.

3) The Army abruptly ended the 238-day siege of the Croatian Dalmatian port of Dubrovnik, and withdrew its forces from the Dubrovnik Peninsula, issuing a declaration which said: "The fate of Dubrovnik is now exclusively in the hands of the Republic of Croatia."

## The Bush profile

The Serbian reversal will in all probability not stop Anglo-American schemes. A commentary published in the May 27 London *Times* by former U.N. official Conor Cruise O'Brien stressed the fact that Bush's desperation to gain reelection via a foreign military adventure is not to be underestimated: "I think American-led military intervention against Serbia is now probable. True, no vital American interest is at stake in Bosnia, as there was in Kuwait. But there is a vital White House interest at stake: the reelection of George Bush," where the "H. Ross Perot challenge" provides "adequate presidential reasons for adopting a forward policy in Yugoslavia."

O'Brien, who helped run U.N. military operations in the Congo in the 1960s, was confident that Russian or Chinese potential objections in the U.N. Security Council to a "Balkan Storm" would be "bought off" by Washington. Behind the scenes, with a bare minimum being made public, there are extensive American-Russian discussions concerning new sphere-of-influence arrangements in the Balkans and elsewhere. These arrangements have been reflected in the lengthy Lisbon meetings between Baker and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, directly after Baker's London visit, and sandwiched in between Kozyrev's first and second "missions to Belgrade" for talks with the Serbian leadership. They also have been reflected in the juxtaposition of the May 25 Moscow meeting between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Turkish Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel, which likely explored Russo-Turkish joint interests in a type of "New Yalta" deal over the Transcaucasus at the expense of Armenia and Iran, with the deliberations in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi the same day between Baker and Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze.

The U.S. move toward a military intervention in the Balkans is in accord with a formula proposed recently by The Netherlands for NATO to become not only an "out of area" intervention force *qua* NATO, but the "out of area" intervention force for the United Nations and the Committee on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) in Europe. The Dutch plan had received the enthusiastic backing of the United States and Britain, and was in effect ratified by the NATO defense ministers' meeting, which adopted a policy putting NATO forces at the disposal of the CSCE or the U.N.

The countdown to such a military move in the Balkans has begun. Such an intervention may "put out the fire" in Bosnia, but it will create the conditions for a protracted war to engulf the entire Balkans in the not too distant future.