

Bush policy toward Balkans is 'classic appeasement'

by Kathleen Klenetsky

For over a year, as war and devastation have enveloped former Yugoslavia, the Bush administration has consistently maintained that it was doing everything it could about the crisis. *EIR* was in the forefront of showing that to be a lie, and documenting that behind the administration's do-nothing policy lay a strategy of allowing the Serbians to seize as much territory as they could.

But now, the Bush administration's de facto support for the savage regime of the Serbian Hitler, Slobodan Milosevic, has reached such extremes that even members of the State Department bureaucracy are revolting.

Over the weekend of Aug. 22, George D. Kenney, the department's acting chief of Yugoslav affairs, resigned from his position to protest the Bush administration's failure to intervene against the Nazi-style genocide that is being perpetrated by the Serbian government against Croats and Bosnian Serbs.

Kenney was not the first U.S. government official to harshly criticize the Bush administration for standing idly by while over 100,000 people have been slaughtered and countless more wounded, thrown out of their homes, and turned into desperate refugees. On Aug. 18, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee issued a report documenting Serbian genocide against Bosnia. Committee chairman Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) termed the report "the first U.S. government report documenting the full extent of the horrors associated with the ethnic cleansing being carried out by Serbs against the Muslim population of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

Although the committee report takes the U.S. State Department to task for failing to act on the information it has received on the Serbian-run death camps, Kenney's resignation has brought home the Bush administration's immorality even more dramatically.

In a series of interviews and commentaries subsequent to

his resignation, Kenney has bluntly accused the U.S. government of engaging in "classic appeasement" in its response to Serbia's war of aggression and its "ethnic cleansing" policy. The administration's policy direction "seemed to be, 'do nothing, continue to negotiate, find a peaceful solution,'" Kenney said in one interview. But it should have been patently obvious, he added, that "it runs against the reality that the Serbs do not want to negotiate."

Kenney also revealed that the primary reason the Bush administration has refused to use the word "genocide" to describe Serbia's "ethnic cleansing" policy is that, as a signatory to the U.N. Convention on Genocide, the United States and other signers would be forced to do something about it.

Green light for Serbian 'thugs'

"From the first signs of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia last year," Kenney wrote in the Aug. 30 *Washington Post*, "the administration has made it clear that the United States would not intervene militarily to control the conflict. This gave the green light to Serbia's thuggish leaders to implement their plans for a greater, ethnically pure Serbia. Their method: genocide. The U.S. reaction: feckless diplomatic negotiation."

Warning that Serbian aggression had to be met with military force, Kenney called for a series of measures, including a "combination of U.S. and western air strikes"; the arming of the Bosnian resistance; and a "no-fly zone" over Bosnia, aimed at the Serbian Air Force.

In an earlier interview with the *Post*, Kenney singled out his boss, Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, the former U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia whose sympathy for, and business dealings with, the present Serbian regime is an open secret in Washington, as having an especially immoral attitude to the Balkan crisis. Eagleburger's "basic attitude,"

Kenney revealed, was “a pox on all their houses. He feels we should wait until they [the former Yugoslav states] exhaust themselves [from fighting] and then move in.”

In an interview with the Aug. 27 *New York Times*, Kenney said that the United States had a “moral obligation” to stop the “genocide . . . going on in Bosnia.” He charged that the administration’s line, that it fears risking another Vietnam quagmire if it commits military forces to the Balkans, is “vastly overblown.” “In the short run,” western military intervention “would increase the violence, but in the long run it would decrease the violence. It’s more destabilizing to allow the Bosnians to be murdered.”

Although the Bush administration attempted to dismiss Kenney’s charges (Eagleburger patronizingly proclaimed that he had lots of “sympathy” for Kenney, implying that Kenney had become an emotional basket case after months of poring over reports of the death and destruction being wrought in the Balkans), the outcome of the London peace talks on Aug. 27, confirmed them in every respect.

Kenney had warned, in an Aug. 26 interview with the *Washington Post*, that the London talks would be doomed to failure in the absence of “very strong pressures, including military pressures against Serbia, to stop its campaign of genocide in Bosnia.”

Another Munich

Not unexpectedly, such pressures were totally absent; consequently, the conference was nothing but a fig-leaf to cover the complicity of the United States and other great defenders of western democracy in the Balkan holocaust. Just days before the conference opened, the United States, Britain, and France let it be known that they had decided to abandon plans to use the military to ensure delivery of humanitarian aid to beleaguered Bosnia, thus turning the London talks into a Munich-like charade even before it took place.

Efforts by the U.S. delegation, headed by Eagleburger, to present the agreements struck at the conference as a big victory for peace, rang hollow, as Serbian artillery in the hills surrounding Sarajevo renewed their shelling the minute the conference broke up, killing and maiming hundreds. On Aug. 30, Serbian soldiers lobbed an artillery shell into a crowded marketplace on Sarajevo’s western edge, killing 15 people and wounding over 100.

Although Serbian leaders made all sorts of promises at the conference, including ones to close down the notorious detention camps and to allow delivery of humanitarian aid, none of these show any signs of being fulfilled, as the fierce new Serbian attacks demonstrate.

Indeed, at an Aug. 31 press conference in Washington, Srdja Popovic, a dissident Serb, reported that all the Serbian negotiators had been called in prior to departing for London and told to be prepared to accept almost any conditions demanded at the conference—since they didn’t intend to keep

any of them.

“All parties told us they would stop fighting so that we could come here and begin a peace process,” said Fred Eckhard, a spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping forces in Sarajevo Aug. 30. “That peace process has not begun in any meaningful way.” Even *Newsweek*, a U.S. establishment outlet, termed the London conference a “sham” in its Sept. 7 coverage.

Bosnian representatives were understandably outraged at the conference’s failure to take even small steps to deter Serbian forces. The results were “unbearable for Bosnia,” declared Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic. Silajdzic said that the resolution passed at the conference omitted the key measures which the Bosnians said were necessary to turn back the Serb onslaught. These included measures to keep the Serbian Air Force out of Bosnian air space; a commitment to send relief supplies to other Bosnian cities, and not just to Sarajevo; and a clear timetable for the withdrawal of Serbian troops from Bosnian territory.

None of these was agreed upon. In fact, Silajdzic said that when he presented his catalogue of Bosnian essentials to the British, they flatly rejected it as something that would jeopardize the conference “consensus.”

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic charged that the West “betrayed its own principles” at the conference. “It is fortunate that the West didn’t hesitate as much as it is doing now at the beginning of the Second World War,” he said. “We would have Nazi rule in the world.”

‘Recording clerks for murder’

Even more impassioned was an open letter put out Aug. 28 by the Mothers for Peace from Zagreb, Croatia. The letter details how the United Nations is collaborating with Serbian genocide, and concludes: “We protest against the cynics of the U.N. institutions, who, instead of stopping the Serbian aggressor, which they were in a position to do, protect the delivery of humanitarian aid, in order that the victims sentenced to death do not die with an empty stomach. Gentlemen of the U.N. Organization! Have you indeed degraded yourselves to the level of the recording clerks and witnesses of murders and violence, unprecedented in this world? Is it indeed your role to convey the last supper to the nation sentenced to death?”

With winter coming on, the prospects for the besieged citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina are steadily growing grimmer. Warnings have begun to circulate that tens of thousands of people will almost surely die from lack of food, shelter, and medicine—unless the West aggressively intervenes to stop Serbia. But that will happen only when the populations of the United States and western Europe force their governments to take action. Until that time, George Bush will be trying to provoke another war with Iraq for alleged human rights violations, while encouraging a virtual holocaust in the Balkans.