

‘The Serbian forces are not invincible’

by Katharine Kanter

On April 10-11, American fighter bombers carried out extremely limited, punctual bombing raids on Serbian matériel used in the siege of the Bosnian town of Gorazde. Ostensibly, the raids were in pursuance of a collection of heretofore-ignored U.N. resolutions authorizing the use of force to protect U.N. troops deployed around the so-called safe havens; however, there can be little doubt that these raids were directly upon order of U.S. President Clinton. According to British Labour Party sources, Gen. Sir Michael Rose, commander of U.N. troops in Bosnia, was not informed in advance; indeed, he turned back on his way to Brussels when he heard the news of the raids. To BBC radio, Rose said: “It was the Pentagon which launched the attack, not the U.N. Security Council.” Whatever Rose knew, the truth is probably pretty well stated by Simon Jenkins in the London *Times* on April 12: “By calling in tactical bombing, Rose is *staving off American pressure for blanket bombing*” (emphasis added).

Upon hearing of the raid, Lyndon LaRouche commented: “The air strike was the right thing to do. Belated, a year late, but it was the right thing to do. . . . With the aid of air power, you can run a very good operation to cut through the fraud of this ‘Serbian invincibility,’ because the Serb forces are *not* invincible, it’s just that they have the British and Kissinger’s friends helping them. . . . If you’re going to fight war . . . let the generals carry out the mission for which the war is being fought. And this kind of bargaining-table operation, this so-called cabinet warfare operation, should come to a screeching halt.” (See the full text of his interview on p. 56.)

The United States must cut out the shilly-shallying if Bosnia is to survive. The events since the raids of April 11 show that the Serbians and their allies in England and Russia will not be made to back down by mere pinpricks. At the time of writing, on April 14, heavy artillery bombardment of

Tuzla and Tuzla airport has begun. That airport, strategically critical for Bosnia, has been supposedly “opened” by the U.N. for over a month, but not one airlift has gone in.

Heavy fighting rages on throughout Bosnia, notably around Bihac, in the Doboj region of north-central Bosnia, near Brcko on the Posavina corridor, near Zenica and at Olovo. According to the press service of the Bosnian Embassy in London, and to satellite reports obtained by former German Minister Christian Schwarz-Schilling, the military situation around the Muslim enclave of Bihac is as bad or worse than that at Gorazde, where Serbian shells continue to fall; not a single aid convoy has got through to Bihac since the first week of February. The embassy in London reports that the Serbians are shelling civilian areas in Buzim and Caute, near Bihac, and that at Olovo, there has been unceasing Serbian artillery fire since April 10.

According to the U.N. Refugee Commission, by now 18,000 people have fled into Gorazde, as the Serbians burn towns and villages before them; old men and the wounded have been left to die in the countryside; the hospital at Gorazde can no longer accept any more wounded, so people are dying in the streets. The U.N. tried to release their last food stocks in Gorazde this week, but they cannot distribute them, because Serbian snipers fire on anyone queuing for rations.

Advised, no doubt, by their Russian friends—the Russian leadership took no concrete action against the raids save to make a lot of angry noise—the Serbians began to test western reactions by building a ladder of provocations. On April 13, acting Serbian Commander for Bosnia General Mladic told the press at Gorazde that he had given orders to shoot down every NATO plane in the area, just as Russian “Third Rome” ideologue Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, in Strasbourg, said that Russia should bomb NATO bases in Italy in

retaliation for the U.S. raids.

The Serbians placed under house arrest 60 U.N. officials dotted over Serbian-occupied territory in Bosnia; a Dutch U.N. official vanished near Zepa with his interpreter; 11 French civilians from a group known as *Première Urgence*, who had been running an aid convoy into Sarajevo, were kidnapped April 12; on April 13, the Serbians attempted to storm one of their heavy weapons depots now under U.N. guard, at Krivoglavci, northwest of Sarajevo, and mined three of these depots so that the Unprofor soldiers are now trapped inside a mine ring.

In Sarajevo itself, two rockets were fired on April 14, and intense sniper activity has taken off; French troops there have been put onto red alert for the first time in two and a half years of war. The crossings from central Bosnia to Turbe in the West and into Sarajevo in the East have been cut by the Serbians.

The Serbians and their British and U.N. allies control every single major crossroads and choke-point in Bosnia. This has enabled them, since the U.S. raid on April 11, to close every supply route for the aid convoys. At Kiseljak, on the so-called Sierra 1 checkpoint, a group of Scandinavian U.N. soldiers is currently held up, the Serbians having mined the road in front and behind the convoy. As the London *Independent* put it on April 14: "The Swedish and Danish troops could easily move the mines if they wanted, but *to do so could upset the Serbs*" (emphasis added).

The routes to Sarajevo are choked off; the Serbians have been attempting to prevent anyone, including journalists, from entering or leaving the capital.

Satan as a Blue Helmet

Meanwhile, over in the cabinet warfare department, so open is the debate over the existence of a purported Russian-American "halving" plan, that Alan Philips and Michael Montgomery wrote on April 13 in the London *Daily Telegraph*: "With Gorazde and the other Muslim enclaves in Eastern Bosnia, the Bosnian Serb thirst for conquest is not slaked. If the *division of Bosnia worked out by America and Russia* is going to be implemented, the Serbs are keen to make sure their allocated territory is as free of Muslims as possible. . . . The Serbians had hoped to cut through the Gorazde pocket from north and south, splitting the center from the rugged swathe of Muslim-held land to the West. U.N. troops would then have been allowed in to . . . *disarm its defenders* while the Serbians 'cleaned out' the rest of the pocket" (emphasis added).

And C.B. Goodhart, fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, England, wrote in a commentary for the *Independent*: "An international frontier will have to be drawn between a new Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia, with transfers of population across it in both directions. Population transfers are bound to be painful, but surely no more than the present situation. . . . Bosnian Muslims who have effective-

ly lost their war, will have to make the best of what they can be given . . . then the process of population transfers will have to start, controlled and supervised by U.N. forces already there." Or, as LaRouche put it, "Satan now travels as a Blue Helmet."

Russian envoy Vasily Churkin, who told the Russian press that Bosnia must be "halved" between a Serbian entity and a Bosnian-Croat entity, is now, according to U.N. sources, working at gaining the deployment of two companies of Russian paratroopers as "U.N. peacekeepers" to Gorazde, although the government of Bosnia has stated plainly that it will not accept one more Russian soldier on Bosnian soil. It was thanks to the deployment of Russian troops, disguised as "Blue Helmets," around Sarajevo, that the Serbians over the last month could move their heavy matériel from Pale down to the front line at Gorazde.

Where angels fear to tread: The first westerners *allowed* to enter Serbian-occupied territory in Bosnia since the NATO air strikes were the so-called mediators Lord David Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, who, we thought, had mercifully dropped out of the strategic picture; following hard upon Churkin's footsteps, they made the pilgrimage to Radovan Karadzic's headquarters at Pale, over Sarajevo. It is not known what was discussed there, but, as the London *Financial Times* put it April 14, "The Serbian leaders have been urging a return to the Geneva process, which they see as more favorable to their war aims." Quite so.

As for Serbia's war aims, she clearly has some well-placed friends in the International Monetary Fund. According to reports from sources in Zagreb, the IMF delegation which arrived the week of April 11 demanded that the government of Croatia tolerate the setting up of a so-called Blue Zone, still further behind the U.N. lines drawn to freeze Serbian conquests in the Krajina. This, as the precondition for IMF loans and international bank credits. But the government of Franjo Tudjman may shortly vanish in favor of something more interested in an energetic prosecution of the war, as recent events in Bonn tend to show.

'Hold out, Europe! Bosnia will save you!'

So read a clever banner carried by Bosnians on April 10, at what was probably the largest political demonstration in Germany since the Gulf war. On the Münsterplatz in Bonn, 15-20,000 Bosnian refugees from the German-speaking nations of Europe gathered to hear speeches by leading German, Bosnian, and Croatian figures, and by an envoy of Kosova President Dr. Ibrahim Rugovo. It was the first major public event since the war began, to which the three Balkan nations came united as one front. They rejected jointly any partition of Bosnia.

Telling is the fact that a Secretary of Embassy from the Croatian Legation in Bonn was introduced, and stayed throughout, as Tudjman and Croatian chauvinist Mate Boban were booed from the crowd and attacked from the podium.