

authorities, in Delhi or in the states, to evaluate the situation and take adequate measures. Instead, the central authorities allowed the situation to deteriorate by not stepping up spraying in the suspected areas, and by underplaying the subsequent findings.

Cure is the best prevention

Once it became evident that the Surat residents were fleeing to places far and near, thereby enhancing the danger of spreading the disease among a large population, the government announced a state of emergency, which brought the Rapid Action Force to prevent Surat residents from leaving the city. Local authorities, such as in Delhi, told the press that those who are coming in from Surat would be checked for plague infection, but in real life these promises were found wanting. Reports of house-to-house checks in Bombay to ensure that no one had come in contact with infected people from Surat were similarly found to be highly exaggerated. Meanwhile, fresh suspected cases have shown up in such distant states from Gujarat as West Bengal.

The one area where the government has geared up is in the production of tetracycline and other antibiotics, such as gentamicin and streptomycin, which also work well in treating plague infection. The public sector pharmaceuticals manufacturer IDPL, based in Rishikesh, has already released some 40 million tetracycline capsules, and is geared up to release 1.5 million more every other day. The Maharashtra government is reportedly drawing up plans to spray the entire state with insecticides as measures to contain the plague have failed. Authorities have indicated that the fumigation of Maharashtra would require 26,000 metric tons of insecticide, costing about 216.6 million rupees—a small price, no doubt, to save human lives and assure foreign investors that all will be well in the future.

This leads to the obvious question of why was the spraying not done before? Dr. Mira Shiva, head of the public policy division of the Voluntary Health Association of India, a nongovernmental organization, claims that the budgets of premier institutes of public health and hygiene have been slashed over the years with the sole purpose of satisfying the International Monetary Fund-World Bank demand to reduce budget deficits. Planned expenditure on health has been gradually reduced from 3% of the planned outlay to 1.8%. In addition, gradual privatization of health facilities had been encouraged. The failure of the private hospitals to respond at the time of crisis was seen in Surat, and six private clinics whose medical personnel had abandoned them were burned down by irate crowds there.

Despite the cuts in the public health expenditure, and the diversion of funds into family planning by the Union Health Ministry to satisfy the U.N. agencies, India's budget deficits remained high and inflation remained high. In addition, India is now feared as a plague-endemic country, and that should be of great concern to those who are wooing foreign investors.

Deal over Bosnia by threatens to be fatal

by Katharine Kanter

By agreeing in the last week of September to partially lift sanctions against Serbia, the Clinton administration has opened in central Europe and the Balkans a new window of opportunity for British maneuvers which may, given the extraordinary strategic importance of the Balkans, lead to a chain of crises the administration might not withstand.

The U.S. administration, which also made an about-face on its decision to raise the arms embargo against Bosnia unilaterally on Oct. 15, has not yet decided whether it is strong enough to go for a head-on confrontation with the British over International Monetary Fund policy towards Russia. Therefore, its attitude toward Russia is condemned to be giving with the one hand, what is promptly taken away by the IMF with the other, while making political concessions to what is perceived to be the pro-Serbian "hardliners" in Russia as a sweetener to the IMF pill.

For the United States, this may seem a small, "time-saving" sacrifice to make. But to Bosnia, and to the whole of central Europe, it may spell doom.

There is no Milosevic-Karadzic split

The premise upon which the lifting of the sanctions against Serbia was based, were statements—and they are nothing more than that—by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, claiming that he has ordered the border between Serbia and Bosnia to be sealed, as a sign that Serbia is in favor of the London Contact Group's "peace" plan for Bosnia, and has therefore ceased to support the war effort by "renegade" Serbian forces inside Bosnia. Those forces, led by Radovan Karadzic, President of the self-styled Serbian Republic of Bosnia, have showily spurned the Contact Group plan on the basis that it proposes that the Bosnian Serbs, who have seized 70% of Bosnian territory, remain with "only" 50% of Bosnia.

Over September, a campaign has been run through the international press to convince the western public that the border is indeed sealed, and that there is real political division, even hatred, between the Milosevic and Karadzic camps.

This is nothing but a dog-and-pony show, orchestrated by Great Britain's David Lord Owen and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd; Milosevic, who is in fact the "true and only begotten" of the Greater Serbia military onslaught, gets to

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play the “good guy” vis-à-vis western public opinion, while Karadzic struts his stuff as the “bad guy” who has rejected the Contact Group’s generous offer to carve Bosnia up into pieces and toss the biggest chunk to Serbia.

All of Milosevic’s statements to the effect that the border is sealed, are pure and simple lies. The border is not sealed; when in Washington the week of Sept. 7, Bosnian Army Commander Rasim Delic presented to the relevant American officials further, material proof of what the United States already well knew from NATO aerial photography and ground intelligence sources: Men and materiel continue to pour over the border from Serbia. For example, on Sept. 15, U.N. officials admitted that “hundreds” of Serbian helicopter flights had been detected at the northern borders of Bosnia—50 to 100 sorties each night.

According to the press briefing of the Bosnian Embassy in London, the Serbians maintain pontoon bridges near Zvornik, dismantled during the day, whilst the U.N. “monitors” stand there taking their tea and cakes, which pontoons are reassembled during the night while the monitors are all tucked up into their silken sheets.

As for these U.N. monitors, whose mission is supposedly to prevent anything save “humanitarian” supplies from crossing into the Bosnian Serb camp, well, we are essentially dealing with an unarmed bunch of 130 clowns, each one of whom is tailed by a Yugoslavian policeman and a so-called “translator”! General Bo Pellnas of Sweden, heading the U.N. team, whose main function seems to be to gently pat the Serbians’ shiny fur, said he wanted to avoid using the word “monitor,” because “this is a very, very civilian operation.”

Western public opinion has, of course, been confused by all this, the more so, as Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic emerged from the Security Council session last weekend and said that he now would accept the arms embargo against Bosnia remaining in force for another six months. No, the Bosnians, who, although they have no anti-aircraft and no heavy weaponry, are getting infantry materiel in quantity and from a number of sources, and have not decided they would enjoy losing the war.

The Bosnians have simply read the obvious political signals. The lamentable fact that the United States is not, at this

juncture, willing to break with the consensus policies of the British-run Contact Group, means that the Croatian government, pressured by the IMF (which has demanded that 19 factories, all vital to the war effort, be closed), and heeding hysterical warnings from the German ambassador to Zagreb, is afraid to crawl out onto a limb without U.S. support.

Thus, Croatia will not presently put into effect the military accords with Bosnia that were decided upon almost a year ago. But, unless the Croatian armed forces be actively engaged at her side, it is doubtful that Bosnia alone will be mighty enough to recapture her occupied territories from a far better armed and numerically superior invading force.

Furthermore, were the arms embargo to be raised against Bosnia within the actual Russian-American political configuration—i.e., unless the United States were suddenly to offer Russia as a counterweight something as big, as substantial as a complete break with the IMF—within days Russia and Serbia would fall upon Bosnia like a sledgehammer. Bosnia needs six months’ lead time to bring in heavy weapons and to train men to use them, before mounting a major counter-offensive. Without the full and absolute commitment of the United States, such a move is bound to fail.

Let us not forget: This is mass murder

In spite of the Clinton administration’s unexpected and skillful moves in North Korea, Cuba, and Ireland, this latest debacle over Bosnia has put us back, strategically, to Square One: We have not gained time by making concessions to the British over Serbia; rather, we have *lost* time in a game whose upshot could be continental war. And we have lost precious time for several million people whose lives hang by a thread.

Thanks to the British propaganda effort for Serbia, there is a virtual news blackout as to the latest wave of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Thousands of Muslims and Croats have been driven out of Banja Luka and Bjelina in the month of September, while Bihac, Velika Ladusa, Cazin, and Buzim have been constantly shelled from the U.N.-“monitored” areas of occupied Croatia.

Nor do we know what, if any, food and medicine is getting in to the people of Bosnia, since the supply routes are controlled by British and French Unprofor troops. On Sept. 26, the UNHCR office in Zagreb said that all convoys through Serbian-occupied parts of Bosnia would be stopped, and Sarajevo Airport was closed again due to shelling of relief flights. The capital has no electricity, and therefore virtually no water, because the pumps cannot function. The “Kosovo” hospital has no water supply. There is no fresh food available, and the dried and canned food stocks are down to a fortnight’s reserve.

Within the next month, temperatures will drop below freezing at night in many parts of this mountainous country. This is the third winter of war in Bosnia, and, unless the United States decide to take decisive action, how many will never see the spring of 1995 is a moot point.