

## Will NATO strike? The price of appeasement in Kosova

by Umberto Pascali

While officially, everything is ready to launch NATO air strikes against targets in Kosova and Serbia to stop Slobodan Milosevic's genocide, behind the scenes a different game is being played out, a game whose rules and aims go far beyond Kosova itself. "This time it's serious. Milosevic has received assurances of support from the Russians; he has been told not to back down," a senior Balkan source told *EIR*, summarizing the real debate going on. The high-level source pointed out that there is indeed a very cynical reason for the constant "overtalking" about all details of what NATO is going to do, how, when, the constant threats and posturing, which are never followed up with any action.

Indeed, the loudest talk about military action is coming from London. The British elite, as *EIR* has documented, has in the past undertaken the most appalling schemes, like in the case of Sir Gen. Michael Rose, to protect the Milosevic gang. Suddenly, over the past weeks, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, British Foreign Minister Robin Cook, and their sycophants took the lead in the *verbal* war against Milosevic.

While NATO was preparing plans for intervention that are supposed to be kept secret up to the last minute, Blair and company pushed their *virtual* assault. The motivation? According to the senior source: "It is as if they wanted to provoke Russia and force Moscow to intervene in favor of its nominal ally, Milosevic." Even if the motivation were otherwise, Milosevic does not constitute a strategic interest for Russia. "I deeply dislike this overtalking about any detail of a possible NATO intervention, something that should be kept within a very small circle, used as a very credible threat, and applied in a determined way. The opposite is being done. That could very well mean that those who speak the loudest are looking for an excuse not to act."

### From economic shock therapy to war

Indeed, the Russian angle has become the center of the complex game in the Kosova crisis. Moscow did indeed intervene in an "uncharacteristic way." President Boris Yeltsin, Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Defense and Foreign Ministers, the State Duma (lower house of Parliament), and a number of political and military leaders intervened in the Kosova debate, stressing that Russia opposes any military intervention against Milosevic, that no intervention should take place without an explicit resolution and mandate of the UN Security Council, that Russia (as a permanent member of the Security Council) will veto any such resolution, and that air strikes would risk starting a war.

On Oct. 7, Yeltsin talked to Blair, who was visiting China, to tell him that air strikes "would be disastrous for global peace and drastically change the situation." The Duma was even more drastic, calling, in a unanimous resolution, for supporting Serbia and strengthening the Russia-Serbia military alliance. Duma Deputy Speaker Sergei Baburin put on the table the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty. It would be difficult for Russian parliamentarians to ratify it in case of air strikes, he said. "Pushing the world to the brink of war is not the most reasonable thing [Western] politicians are doing."

This is the situation to which the senior Balkan source was referring. "There is a wild atmosphere in Russia. . . . Within the political and military leadership, among many people . . . [there is] a spirit of visceral reaction against the West. Russia is in disarray, economically and otherwise, but still, possibly because of that, it provokes fear. Russia still has nuclear bombs. It is said that it is not clear who controls these bombs," he said. "All this situation is now focussing around

Kosova. . . . *On the other hand, if there are not effective measures to stop Milosevic's genocide, NATO, the U.S., the West — whose credibility is at a dramatic low in the Balkans — will be hit probably in a fatal way with tragic consequences, not only for the Balkans, but for the whole world.*"

Indeed, the "wild atmosphere" in Russia was not provoked by Kosova, but by the systematic economic destruction of an economy already crumbling from the time of the Soviet Union, triggered by the economic "shock therapy" pushed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and George Soros on behalf of an appalling "loot and flee" plan, not only in the former Soviet Empire, but all over the world, sponsored by the British oligarchy. There is "disarray" now in Russia—abject misery, despair, humiliation and hate. As in pre-Hitler Germany, there is a strong feeling of having been condemned without appeal by the rest of the world. Ironically, the economic insanity of the IMF and company is the cause of the terrible situation in the Balkans, in more ways than one.

It was decision at the Bosnia Peace Talks in Dayton, Ohio in 1995, to grant the IMF and World Bank the "franchise" for Bosnia's reconstruction, that ensured that no real reconstruction would take place. The state of non-reality, no real jobs, no real economy, has produced despair, unemployment, the growth of the black market, escalating organized crime and, in short, a permanent instability and volatility that could quickly become a hot war.

What is more dramatic, is that the West has nominally decided to face the Kosova problem at the moment in which the international financial system is collapsing and economic, financial, strategic, political, social, and military upheavals are taking place. In the middle of the deliberation on the Kosova intervention, two of the key Western governments involved just collapsed: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Sept. 27 lost the election to a Social Democratic-Green coalition, and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi on Oct. 8 lost a parliamentary vote of confidence. These are two of the six governments of the "Contact Group" (the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Britain, and Russia) that are involved in the attempt to establish peace in Bosnia and Kosova.

In the meantime, Russia is exploding, and President Clinton is facing a coup d'état organized by Kenneth Starr's puppet-masters. The West, after having waited, appeased, and de facto encouraged Milosevic for so long, after having given him the mark of impunity, is now forced to face the problem in the middle of an impending earthquake. And all this, while London has been unveiling a new version of its geopolitical "divide and conquer" schemes, dangerously pushing Russia to the edge.

### **Holbrooke, Milosevic negotiate, again**

For the moment, while the representatives of the Contact Group nations are meeting almost constantly, and after all the ultimatums to Milosevic, U.S. Balkan envoy Richard Holbrooke, the main mediator of Dayton, after having met on Oct.

8 with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Brussels and the foreign ministers of the Contact Group in London, was sent back to Belgrade for three more days of negotiations with Milosevic.

In an interview with *EIR* (published in last week's issue), Bosnian official Dr. Nedzib Sacirbey stated: "The problem is: Who brought Milosevic back into the game every time? At the time of the Dayton agreement, mediators had a position of the kind: 'When I want a deal, I will get it by pleasing the stronger and putting pressure on the weaker.' Milosevic was again given the position of 'guarantor' of the agreement. This role was tried again in Kosova. . . . I do give credit to Holbrooke for visiting Kosova, mediating . . . but the U.S. cannot bless Milosevic. Milosevic never respects any deal.' "

Is this, beyond all the posturing, what is being prepared? Is there in fact a deal with Milosevic being prepared? It is to be hoped that it is not so. It would be indeed tragic.

The point was raised at a press conference of U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin, at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Oct. 8. At that point it had just been announced that Milosevic had de facto told Holbrooke the diplomatic equivalent of "Go to hell," and had accused NATO and the West of acting like "rapists." The Milosevic-appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, the genocidalist Vojislav Seselj, had just stated: "NATO soldiers may possibly enter our country as combatants, but they will leave it in coffins." Seselj had also stated that if Balkan countries provide help to NATO, "they will also be considered our enemy and will have to face the consequences." Seselj had also delivered a terrorist threat, that U.S. forces outside Serbia will be hit, and opposition forces will be hit as well.

"Why is she [Albright] sending Holbrooke back to Belgrade when she has gotten nothing out of Milosevic? . . . What's the point?" a reporter asked Rubin. The answer, in diplomatese, was: "The goal of our policy is not to use force if it's not necessary. . . . Ambassador Holbrooke can work on specific ways to ensure a verifiable and durable compliance with the requirement of the international community."

In the meantime, different approaches are emerging from within the Contact Group. France took a "softer" line, with Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine telling a French Parliamentary committee that yes, France could accept air strikes, but of a different kind. France "excludes resorting to immediate, huge attacks which would be incompatible with a political solution. *Eventual military action* will be progressive and interrupted by periods where [diplomatic] activities will be resumed," i.e., more British-style cabinet warfare. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, who was also in Belgrade while Holbrooke was there, briefed the Contact Group the same day, giving this surrealistic statement: "I am convinced that we have moved closer to a political settlement of the [Kosova] question." On the substance, Ivanov did not change a comma: Air strikes "would have dire consequences of an international nature."