

'Lengthy and difficult debates to restore peace'

by Michele Steinberg

If the leaders of the nations of NATO and the "Partnership for Peace" were to speak frankly, the most isolated nation — apart from Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic — would be Britain, perfidious Albion, which was trying to armtwist the NATO countries into committing a grave error, a head-long rush into a ground war designed to trigger a showdown with Russia, perhaps not immediately, but inevitably.

On April 24, British Prime Minister Tony Blair "disappeared" from the NATO summit and cancelled two press conferences. Blair and the British dictates for the "new strategic concept" had been modified, watered down, in some cases rejected, and Blair was reassessing his options, reportedly in long-distance discussions with Baroness Margaret Thatcher, his Tory predecessor who had authored a plan to make NATO an offensive alliance.

The defeats that Blair was reporting to Thatcher were significant: rejection of authorization for a ground invasion of Kosovo (perhaps even during the summit proceedings); refusal to ratify a doctrine that authorized the "new" NATO to strike "anywhere and anytime"; and, denial of a blanket agreement that NATO could ignore the UN Security Council, as was done in closing down the negotiations over Kosovo.

Relations with Russia

Perhaps the most clear-cut defeat for Blair was the vehement rejection — by President Bill Clinton, and by the majority of other NATO allies — of the efforts to isolate, humiliate, and provoke Russia into a "new Cold War," or worse. With Blair shoved into the background on day two of the NATO summit, the leaders of the United States, Italy, Germany, and France made very, very clear, that they are prioritizing the active participation of the government of Russia in finding an end to the Kosovo war.

What the major international media, and especially the U.S. media, have chosen *not* to report, from the 50th Anniversary NATO summit, was the extensive dialogue in press conferences with hundreds of journalists and historians, conducted by NATO heads of state, including French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, who focussed on the future of NATO, beyond the Kosovo war, on the task of

"winning the peace." They stressed that that cannot happen without economic reconstruction of the war-torn Balkans, and *will not happen* without the inclusion of Russia.

Each of these leaders acknowledged to some degree that the agenda of reconstruction of the Balkans was the crucial question coming out of this summit. It was exactly this issue, introduced by President Clinton in a speech to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on April 15, that shifted the NATO summit from the dark predictions of a "war council," or "funeral for the NATO alliance," to an opportunity to expose and isolate the British.

UN Security Council vs. 'globaloney'

On April 24, President Chirac was the first head of state to speak after a longer-than-scheduled morning session where the NATO heads of state had met to "finalize" the text of the strategic concept. Chirac's press conference was "standing room only," and there it became clear that the "New Strategic Concept" document, which had been falsely described the night before by NATO spokesman Jamie Shea as "completely" agreed upon, and due out early the next morning after a pro-forma signing, was the subject of profound discussions and fierce disagreements.

Chirac made clear that he, and the French government, had picked a fight — and won — to stop authorization of reckless autonomy for a NATO which would take it upon itself to act "out of area," on any basis whatsoever, completely bypassing the United Nations. Chirac, joined by many of the other 19 countries, had said, "No."

Against the argument that "NATO, made up of democracies whose objectives would therefore be legitimate by their very nature," might act without the authority of the UN, Chirac warned that such a "waiver" for NATO would lead to "other waivers tomorrow" for other organizations or nations, whose objectives might be "questionable," and "from then on it would be tantamount to accepting or imposing the rule of the strongest."

Chirac discussed a fundamental issue that had been underlined by U.S. Presidential precandidate Lyndon LaRouche in "The LaRouche Doctrine" on the Balkans war (*EIR*, April 16). There LaRouche warned that throwing overboard the institution of the UN Security Council, which for more than 50 years has been the accepted forum for discussions of disputes by the world community, would lead to chaos.

Chirac put it this way: It is "the whole international order set up after World War II, which is at stake in this discussion. France on this subject took a very strong position. . . . I discussed this with President Clinton several times during these past few months and again at length at a meeting which I had with him yesterday. Following these lengthy debates, *long and difficult debates*, . . . the decisions which have been taken . . . represent a true victory." Chirac stated that the issue which had been "of paramount importance" to France, had been officially incorporated into two texts: a communiqué, and "a



President Bill Clinton confers with French President Jacques Chirac. The two leaders reached a meeting of the minds on NATO's relationship to the UN Security Council.

report which is called the strategic concept." He said that all of the NATO allies are "committed to the United Nations Charter," and, as quoted in Article 10 of the strategic concept, "the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council in maintaining international peace and security."

Ironically, although U.S.-based right-wing "yahoos" denounce the UN as a "world government," the globalists associated with Blair, Thatcher, and the British Empire are completely *opposed* to going through the UN Security Council! To the British-American-Commonwealth faction, the UN Security Council, under Secretary General Kofi Annan, which includes as permanent members the Allies from World War II—the United States, Russia, China, Britain, and France—is *an impediment* to their ideas of world government in a "unipolar," or one-power world. The BAC fears that the UN Security Council could stop its plans, because Russia and China have full veto power. For Blair and the BAC, NATO could be strongarmed by the British if a rift between the United States and continental Europe was assured. It was that gamble that Blair lost when *EIR* caught Jamie Shea in a bald-face lie over ground troops.

Ground troops and a blockade

On ground troops and the use of a naval blockade to stop oil deliveries, Chirac cut the legs out from under Blair's agenda. Italy and Germany presented similar obstacles. One exchange at Chirac's press conference shows the degree to which France opposed the Blair lunacy:

Q: Do you share Tony Blair's idea that the security forces could enter into Kosovo without Belgrade's agreement?

Chirac: "...As far as I am concerned . . . I hope it will be . . . including, for example, Russian or Ukranian contingents, as is the case in Bosnia. Which means it can only be designed within the framework of a political agreement. . . . [Otherwise] it would no longer be a peace and security force, it would be a wartime force."

In an interview with *USA Today*, Chirac also opposed the use of force in a naval blockade. "We feel the legal basis is very weak," he said. The first plan that was submitted, the escalation to use ground troops, a British-generated plan, "was very dangerous and might have caused a catastrophe with third countries like Russia. We were the ones to launch the idea of an oil embargo within the European Union. . . . Stopping ships in the Adriatic would have been NATO getting out of control."

A plan for reconstruction

In a press conference immediately following President Chirac's, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder focussed on a vision of the world after a peace agreement over Kosovo were reached. He said that he "could not emphasize enough," the importance of a Russian role in seeking a settlement. Schröder indirectly confirmed reports that *EIR* had received, that Russian President Boris Yeltsin's envoy to Yugoslavia, Viktor Chernomyrdin, had wanted to attend the NATO summit to brief leaders on his discussions with Belgrade, but that Blair had hysterically nixed the idea.

In answer to a question from *EIR* about the possibility of "repairing the damage to Russia-NATO relations that resulted from the NATO action in Kosovo," and whether Chernomyr-

din would be briefing Schröder and the other NATO heads of state, Schröder answered, "I just have seen that Mr. Chernomyrdin has some travel plans. He wants to come to Washington and to Bonn, and I would like to hear his advice as well. I have invited him to Bonn." He stressed that Russia "has a major role to play," including providing assistance for a "robust" international peace-keeping force, as in Bosnia, and for the future reconstruction of the region. Schröder stressed that Russia's help in solving the crisis "had already begun with Russian Prime Minister [Yevgeni] Primakov's peace mission to Belgrade," and that the Russians are very interested in reaching a peace.

Like Chirac and Italian Prime Minister D'Alema, Schröder also emphasized that the United Nations must play a role in solving the crisis, and that he would be meeting UN Secretary General Annan in Berlin right after the NATO summit, after which Annan is to travel on to Moscow.

But the crowning pearl of Schröder's press briefing was his announcement of a conference on the future of the Balkans, especially economic reconstruction, integration, and development, which Germany will convene on May 27 in Bonn. The conference had been mentioned "as a possibility" by a "high-ranking NATO official," who insisted that the briefing on this conference not be attributed to a specific official.

Schröder played up the conference as a major next step, saying that, in Kosovo, "military measures will not suffice." He cited the Marshall Plan as a model, but emphasized that "policy does not have to be called a Marshall Plan." The social, economic, and political development of the region has to be positively addressed, he said. Despite the fact that the "major [economic] burden is going to be on us," i.e., the European Union, in the long run it will be far less expensive than a future military intervention. For comparison, he urged people to look at the billions of dollars that have been spent on the peace-keeping mission in Bosnia.

Other differences over NATO doctrine were tabled, such as Germany's position of "no first use" of nuclear weapons. In reply to a question from *EIR*, Schröder indicated that there has been no change in Germany's view, but that the government had decided beforehand that this question was "not going to be put on the agenda" at this time. He said that the German-Canada common position against first use of nuclear weapons reflects the differences between the "haves" and "have-nots" among the countries that have nuclear capabilities.

In another important blow against British propaganda, on the response to terrorist threats with weapons of mass destruction, Schröder said that the question of using nuclear weapons to deter "any terrorist group was never discussed."

Again and again, the establishment media tried to induce the NATO leaders to denounce Russia, to mimic the sabre-rattling of Blair, or to "talk tough" about escalating the war. Prime Minister D'Alema proved a model for handling the

provocative press. At his press conference on April 25, D'Alema was asked for his reaction to the fact that a Russian statement had characterized the NATO naval blockade of oil shipments to Yugoslavia as an "act of war." D'Alema caustically replied, "There is no language from NATO about a naval *blockade*; that is *your* term. . . . Embargo has a certain meaning, blockade is another one. We are speaking simply of the need to impede Milosevic's access to raw materials—petrol—that can be used for military purposes. . . . A blockade means . . . denying any kind of products, any kind of shipments. So, it's quite a different thing!" He added, "No one has an intention to provoke acts of war against Russia," by forcibly boarding ships.

D'Alema was also one of the strongest advocates at the summit for a peace plan involving Russia. Indeed, from the last week of March, the Italian government, parallel to and in concert with the Vatican, had been striving to attain a cease-fire. He stressed the unprecedented unity of the NATO allies, but for the "painful absence" of Russia and, of course, Yugoslavia.

Like Chirac, D'Alema was strongly opposed to the idea that NATO could be allowed attack a sovereign country in an offensive action without consulting through the UN Security Council. In reply to this reporter's question of whether Italy is seeking a peace agreement through the UN that would, because of their membership on the UN Security Council, involve China and Russia, which nations had denounced the "unipolar" action, D'Alema said that he—and others—are hoping that the negotiations involving UN Secretary General Annan, and the Russian envoy of President Yeltsin, would "soon lead to a UN mandate" for a peace-keeping international force for Kosovo. "We want to succeed in involving the UN Security Council in order to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict," he said.

"We are of the opinion," said D'Alema, "that the UN must be protagonists in all this, along the lines indicated, not by NATO, but by the declaration by Secretary General Annan. We hope that Russia and China will support that statement. The position of NATO is not aimed at making NATO a new international institution that would be an alternative to the UN, on the contrary."

Before the NATO summit ended, President Clinton was on the telephone with President Yeltsin about the Kosovo crisis. In the closing hours of the summit, Clinton's National Security Adviser Sandy Berger announced at a press briefing that Clinton's special envoy to Russia, Strobe Talbott, who is also one of Clinton's oldest friends and one of the first U.S. administration officials (in 1994) to criticize the International Monetary Fund's "shock therapy," had been dispatched to Moscow for talks. By April 28, a triangle of activity—Moscow-Bonn-Washington—had brought about non-stop talks on reaching a peace settlement. The U.S.-European alliance, including Russia, could be the doom of Tony Blair, and the would-be U.S.-British "special relationship."