

## A step back from the precipice of total war

by Rainer Apel

During the six weeks since the beginning of the air war against Serbia, the world was at the brink of a major international conflict, possibly even a new world war. Now, with President Clinton's May 6 visit to Bonn and the simultaneous conference of the foreign ministers of the Group of Eight there in Bonn, a degree of reason for hope exists that the threatening catastrophe can be averted.

Two points which crystallized out of the diplomacy of the past week, deserve special emphasis: first, the repeated insistence of the U.S. President that all efforts must be made to obtain a solution to the Kosovo conflict together with Russia; and, second, the decision of the eight foreign ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, to also inform the government of China in detail about the results of their consultations in Bonn. Taken together, these diplomatic steps serve to reestablish, to a certain extent, the strategic ties among the United States, Russia, and China, which had been all but destroyed by the British-controlled confrontationists with the (intended) failure of the Rambouillet negotiations, and the initiation of the air war. But peace can only be secured and shaped once the guns are indeed silenced.

To recapitulate the most important stages of the recent diplomacy:

On May 4, President Clinton, at a press conference in Washington together with his guest from Japan, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, said that he did not want a total victory over Serbia, and that he was instead looking for an agreed-upon political solution, in which Russia and the United Nations would play a role, but also Ukraine and "perhaps others who come from the Orthodox tradition, who have close ties to the Serbs." He said that his trip to Europe, which began on May 4, was in pursuit of this goal. While en route to Brussels, Clinton gave NBC anchor Tom Brokaw an exclusive inter-

view, in which he said that he felt encouraged by the Russian initiatives, and hoped that a political solution could be found on this basis. Clinton said that he wanted a safe return of the Kosovar Albanians to their homes, and that the solution for Kosovo must avoid the 1991-95 disaster in Bosnia. It is a good thing, Clinton emphasized, that the Russian government is working "aggressively," with great energy, toward a peaceful solution, and that it is also desirable that the Russians play a role in the future international peace force for Kosovo.

Clinton let no doubt arise, that NATO would continue the air war until a solid diplomatic solution had been found, and that was the subject of his discussions at NATO headquarters in Brussels, where his European trip began. Yet, one or another of the military people, with whom Clinton discussed the situation, could not have failed to sketch out the risks involved in continuing the military operation, which was ill-conceived from the outset. Gen. Klaus Naumann, the German chairman of NATO's Military Committee, who is just now retiring from that post, is likely to have repeated in his discussion with Clinton, the critical remarks he made at a press conference on May 4, on the blunders of the Balkan air war. At that press conference, freed from the gag rule of his official position, Naumann spoke with a clarity which is conspicuously absent from remarks by German politicians. He said that the Alliance had failed to achieve essential goals of its operation. In particular, it was unable to prevent hundreds of thousands of Albanians from being driven out of Kosovo, and the Alliance will continue to fail at that task by employing military means alone. A political solution has to be found, he admonished.

During the second phase of Clinton's European trip, in his discussions in Germany, the contours of the political situation began to take shape. The U.S. President used his two brief visits to the Spangdahlem and Ramstein air bases to support the morale of the U.S. troops stationed there. But he also sent

an important signal to Moscow to dispel fears: It is not the aim of the United States to conquer and occupy territory, Clinton said, but rather to achieve a peace which encompasses all of Europe. That remark set the theme which characterized the second day of Clinton's visit to Germany. First of all, there was a May 6 press conference at the military airport in Frankfurt, where the President showed confidence that a major step forward toward a political solution for peace in Kosovo would be achieved that same day. Much depended on the Russian attitude, Clinton said, and if the hoped-for breakthrough were not achieved that very day, then it would come very soon: of that he was sure. Clinton's remarks referred to the conference of the foreign ministers of the G-8, which was just beginning in Bonn. In discussion with the media, Clinton said that he believes in a solution which would make a ground war against Serbia unnecessary, because there was hope that Belgrade would make concessions in time.

The surprising release of the political leader of the Kosovar Albanians, Ibrahim Rugova, and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's release of the three captured American soldiers a few days earlier, were a signal in that direction, Clinton said. In these media discussions in Frankfurt, Clinton repeated that he was working for a solution together with Russia and the United Nations.

The Bonn declaration of the eight foreign ministers (see box), which not only emphasizes the role of the United Nations and the UN Security Council, but also, under Point 4, explicitly includes China in the efforts for a peace solution, is a step in the same direction. One week following the Bonn meeting of the G-8 foreign ministers, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder will embark on a visit to China, which can become a crucial step in international diplomacy.

### **Only reconstruction will secure peace**

Nevertheless: Non-war is still not a reliable and secured peace. What is still missing, is a signal that the desired peace will be backed up *economically*. On this point, the nations involved in Balkan diplomacy have provided only vague hints, at best. The remarks which Clinton made in his April 15 speech in San Francisco on a new, comprehensive program for reconstruction for all of southeast Europe (see *EIR*'s April 30 issue), are among the most positive to be heard from official channels to date. That, however, is not sufficient, because the International Monetary Fund is still always counted as a stowaway in the sort of "New Marshall Plans" which a number of governments, including the Germans, have envisioned as the crucial element in the future of the Balkans.

There is no need to start at square-one to look for how to provide a sustainable economic foundation for peace. It is appropriate to refer to the discussions and results of the recent conference in Bonn, where Lyndon LaRouche, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, and representatives of Russia, China, India, and Germany addressed this issue (see *EIR*'s May 7 issue). In the same vein, there was the well-attended *EIR* seminar on May

5 in Washington, which may serve the governments as a point of reference for their deliberations in this regard.

Following Clinton's trip to Europe, there is, at any rate, hope for better conditions for an intensive international dialogue on an honest foundation. This is a grand step forward compared to the situation in which the world found itself on the first day of the air war against Serbia back on March 24.

## **The Group of 8 communiqué on Kosovo**

*The following "General Principles of the Political Solution" was adopted by the foreign ministers of the Group of Eight nations at their meeting in Petersberg, Germany, on May 6, 1999:*

1. The G-8 Foreign Ministers adopted the following general principles on the political solution to the Kosovo crisis:

- Immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo;
- Withdrawal from Kosovo of military, police and paramilitary forces;
- Deployment in Kosovo of effective international civil and security presences, endorsed and adopted by the United Nations, capable of guaranteeing the achievement of the common objectives;
- Establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo to be decided by the Security Council of the United Nations to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo;
- The safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations;
- A political process toward the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of the UCK [Kosovo Liberation Army];
- Comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilization of the crisis region.

2. In order to implement these principles the G-8 Foreign Ministers instructed their Political Directors to prepare elements of a United Nations Security Council resolution.

3. The Political Directors will draw up a roadmap on further concrete steps toward a political solution to the Kosovo crisis.

4. The G-8 Presidency will inform the Chinese government of the results of today's meeting.

5. Foreign Ministers will reconvene in due time to review the progress which has been achieved up to that point.