

A HUMANITARIAN MISSION?

A quick proof that the US is not on a “humanitarian” mission in Yugoslavia:

Yugoslavia has repeatedly been willing to sign a peace agreement, and even to give the Kosovars “autonomy” as in Quebec, which is exactly what the US demands.

The *only* sticking point is that Yugoslavia refuses to allow enemy NATO troops to occupy its lands.

It does not refuse UN troops, or troops from Russia (which has historically friendlier ties with Yugoslavia).

If the US wanted peace, it would propose UN or Russian troops. Would Russia agree? Yes, either to avoid NATO bombing or in exchange for cash. Would Yugoslavia agree? Probably, as an alternative to NATO, but the point is that the offer was not even extended.

So why must it always be *our* military? It must be because US leaders want control (plus a chance to flaunt the latest weaponry, and use it up to get more, yum yum). Control of what? It varies.

In Yugoslavia there are enormously rich mines owned by the government (and so envied by corporations), and promising routes for oil pipelines to Europe.

In Iraq: the US controls the oil flows, but also the pencil flow, the medicine flow, the food flow, the water purifier flow, the tourist flow, the news flow, the blood flow ... everything.

And that is the definition of

A TOTALITARIAN MISSION!

NO VIOLENCE-PREVENTION

Why did the West do absolutely nothing before this crisis became violent? There were many opportunities for negotiated solutions since 1992 that could have prevented violence and the killing we've seen the last year. In no other conflict has there been so many early warnings and so little preventive diplomacy. Kosovo's catastrophe was among the most predictable of all. It is intellectual nonsense that 'everything else has been tried and NATO bombings were the only option left.'

HUMANITARIAN WORK MADE IMPOSSIBLE BY NATO THREATS

The immediate consequence of the threats of NATO air strikes is that humanitarian verification missions had to be withdrawn and that almost all humanitarian organizations withdrew to protect their staff. More refugees are now running over the border to Macedonia. With fewer ears and eyes on the ground, it's free for all sides - NATO included - to step up the killing.

THIS WILL MAKE SERBS AND ALBANIANS HATE *MORE*

NATO bombings will be perceived as a punishment of Serbs and a clear support to Albanian hardliners. Serbs will feel that it was the Albanian side that called this hell upon them. Thus, the little hope we may have had about Serbs and Albanians living peaceful together or as trustful neighbours in the foreseeable future, is now gone. Producing hate is the opposite of a humanitarian effort.

MANY MORE DIE IN OTHER CONFLICTS, WITH NO HUMANITARIAN CONCERN

The Kosovo war has caused the death of about 2,000 people during the last year. This is serious; every human life is sacred. However, the international community has chosen NOT to intervene in the following when: 80,000 were killed in Algeria; perhaps 10,000 in the Ethiopian-Eritrean war in the last couple of weeks; 820,000 in Rwanda in the last five years; 1,500,000 in Sudan in the last 15 years; more than 1 million people dead because of the Western sanctions against the Iraqi people; etc.

The Kosovo civil war, in other words, has killed about 5 people per day--Serbs and Albanians, civilians and combatants. The NATO bombings are already killing people at over 10 times that rate, with no end in sight.

THE WORLD'S REAL HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS ARE NOT ADDRESSED

An estimated 100,000 people die PER DAY around the world - not in wars but because they lack the most basic provisions such as water, clothes, shelter, food, medicine. 100 million people have no home; there are already some 40 million refugees; 70 Third World countries have lower standards of living today than 30 years ago; at least 800 million people go to bed hungry. In monetary terms, a fraction of the world's military expenditures could alleviate most of that suffering.

THERE IS ALWAYS MONEY FOR WEAPONS BUT NOT FOR HUMAN BEINGS

The world's military expenditures - NATO making up most of it - equals the combined income of the poorest 50% of the world's population. The Pentagon alone spends 20 times more than the entire budget of the United Nations. And the UN - the world's most important humanitarian organization - is completely ignored in the Kosovo conflict and, these very days, forced out of Macedonia. When will the media begin to ask what this type of 'peace'-making costs - and what we could do in terms of real relief and peace for a similar sum?

THERE HAVE LONG BEEN LARGER HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS IN YUGOSLAVIA

250,000 citizens are now displaced inside Kosovo or are refugees in Macedonia - about 10% of the Kosovo-Serbs and 10% of the Kosovo-Albanians. They certainly need help. But so do the 650,000 mostly Serb refugees (according to the UN) who have fled from Croatia, Bosnia and elsewhere during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, about half of them ethnically cleansed from Croatia in 1995. It's Europe's largest refugee problem - largely going unnoticed.

SANCTIONS CREATE HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS

Why has the West upheld various types of sanctions against the people of Yugoslavia since 1991? The majority of citizens suffer one way or another from that, mainly the sick, the very young, and the very old.