

# US-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia: critical reports circulate on the Internet

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*A number of reports have appeared on the Internet critical of the campaign by NATO and the media to demonise the Serbs. Below we summarise three of these for the information of our readers. The WSWS is not able to confirm the veracity of all the statements made by their authors, nor do we necessarily endorse their political positions.*

Stories of "rape camps", holding thousands of Muslim women, have played a particularly emotive role in NATO's attempts to justify their bombardment of Serbia. Such biased and selective allegations are not new. A report by the North American News Analysis Group (NANAG) from 1992 chronicles how the mass rape stories first emerged.

Their report, "Rapes in Yugoslavia: Separating facts from fiction", points out that allegations of mass rape, "along with the stories of the same calibre about 'death camps' have resulted in the emotional outcry driving political demands for military action just to 'do something'... Sensationalism, not fact, has driven political action on this issue."

NANAG begin their report with the outbreak of war in Bosnia Hercegovina in April 1992, saying that for the first six months of the war there were no allegations of the mass rape of Muslim women. Then, in November, reports suddenly emerged "provided by such partial sources as government sources of Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina". Figures "bounce all over the board, 60,000 to 10,000, casting full doubt on the validity of numbers or reliability of sources".

Based on these reports, "and not a single substantiated report", European Union (EU) leaders attending the December 1992 summit in Edinburgh passed a declaration "condemning the allegations and authorising a delegation to investigate, requiring that 'this delegation must be allowed free and secure access to the places of detention in question' and calling upon the UN to adopt measures to support this mission."

A letter from the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, France and the United Kingdom, including a "Declaration on the treatment of Muslim women in former Yugoslavia" (UN Document S/24960), was then submitted to the United Nations, describing rape as "part of a deliberate strategy to terrorise the Muslim community in Bosnia & Hercegovina..."

That month the UN passed a resolution condemning "the massive, organised and systematic detention and rape of women, in particular Muslim women, in B&H [Bosnia Hercegovina]."

NANAG reports that between December 18 and December 24, 1993 an EU delegation headed by Dame Anne Warburton visited the Croatian capital, Zagreb, to validate the stories. The delegation "had no direct contact with the victims" and was "not permitted to visit any centres. Their information came primarily from the Croatian government and some from international organisations based in

Geneva."

As a consequence, the EU delegation qualified its findings by noting "the contrast between the extensive media coverage of the alleged rapes and the lack of supporting documentary evidence in the possession of the organisations concerned". Without any substantiation, it still maintained, however, that a possible 20,000 women had been raped.

From January 19-26, 1994 the delegation again went to Zagreb and to Bosnia Hercegovina, where they met with leaders of the Catholic and Muslim communities, field staff of the international agencies and representatives of both Croatian and Bosnian governmental and non-governmental organisations. There was no attempt to investigate the rape of Serbian women.

In January 1994 the UN Commission on Human Rights sent a second commission of inquiry to Croatia, Bosnia Hercegovina and Serbia under the Special Rapporteur Tadeusz Mazowiecki. NANAG reports the UN findings that "Attempts made to locate specific places where women were allegedly detained and raped have proved unsuccessful to date. Information provided was often too imprecise. In several cases alleged rape camps were found to be empty when visited by ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] delegates."

Commenting further on the UN report, NANAG states, "The study based its findings on actual documented evidence of rapes, assumed conservative formulas of what percentage the documented cases represented of the actual cases and concluded that, based on their evidence, approximately 2,400 women, Muslim, Serb and Croat, had been raped. This also is an estimate, but the only estimate based on any evidence instead of hearsay. Interestingly enough, it is a far cry from the original claims by the Governments of Croatia and Bosnia & Hercegovina of 60,000 Muslim women raped."

The NANAG report cites the fact that, on January 29, the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, "issued a report on the findings of the Commission of Experts investigating war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, (A/48/858). In this report he cites that in the summer of 1993 the 'Commission of Experts sent a mission to Sarajevo... to conduct several pilot studies, including one on rape, and to receive the documentation on rape cases that the War Crimes Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina had promised in April'.

"In previous announcements the Bosnian Government had claimed that they had in their possession files on 15,000 cases of rapes of Muslim women by Serb men. However, the UN report continues, 'During the mission, the Commission of Experts obtained from the War Crimes Commission all their information identified as relating to this issue (listing 126 victims, 113 incidents, 252 alleged perpetrators, 73 witnesses and 100 documents).' Thus all of the Bosnian

Government information included only 126 cases of rape. This is a far cry from the 15,000 to 60,000 claimed by the same Government."

NANAG concludes that, "To this date there has been no evidence or reliable information accepted as legitimate by any international body that substantiates either that rapes of Muslim women by Serb men were the only cases of rape, that they were systematic, or that they were in the tens of thousands as the international political and media communities have so irresponsibly perpetrated."

The PDS (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus--Party of Democratic Socialism) has published on their parliamentary website a statement concerning the Balkan war from April 7, 1999 which is said to originate from "an insider at the government's offices in Bonn, Germany."

It is claimed the letter was handed over to a Catholic priest by someone wishing to remain anonymous, but who holds a "confidential and high position". The author of the letter claims that German and US military units are active on the ground in Kosovo as part of a continuing plan to destabilise Yugoslavia.

"Their task is to mark targets. Furthermore NATO officers function as communication commandos for the KLA. The necessary contacts were established when the US and German officers abused their mission as OSCE observers before the NATO attacks."

The letter's author says that the German government "knew from the very beginning that no Yugoslav government could ever sign the occupation-dictate as written in articles 6, 8 and 10, annex B of the Rambouillet papers. Both understood clearly that this would mean the end of Yugoslavia as a sovereign state. Therefore war was the only outcome possible. Experts of the Justice Department doctored the lines that would give NATO the rights of a medieval knight in the whole of Yugoslavia."

The CIA is said to have been covertly preparing for such a war in an operation codenamed "Roots". Its aim was to break up Yugoslavia by "disengaging Kosovo, Montenegro and the Vojvodina".

"Since the beginning of Clinton's presidency, the USA has worked closely together with Germany under the codename 'Roots'," the letter states. "This covert action is planned by the CIA and DIA, a joint office of the Pentagon and the CIA supported by the German secret service, in order to destabilise Yugoslavia, which is the last resisting force in the Balkans."

The objective of operation "Roots" is described as "the separation of Kosovo by means of autonomy, independence or becoming part of Albania, the separation of Montenegro as the last means of access to the Mediterranean and the separation of the Vojvodina, which is the area for the majority of Yugoslavia's food-supplies.

"This will lead to the total collapse of Yugoslavia as a viable independent state. The trigger for this action is the fear of Germany and the USA that Yugoslavia will ally itself with Russia and other former Soviet states the moment that [Russian President] Yeltsin is replaced by Communist and nationalist forces in the near future."

The CIA funded the KLA, the anonymous author writes, in order to prevent a peaceful solution in Kosovo. "This organisation is based on the powers of the Albanian Mafia, that still controls mountain villages in the border area of Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. Their source of income is drug trafficking, smuggling, extortion etc, and the Codex of blood-revenge still applies.

"Their weaponry was obtained during the civil war in Albania. Peaceful settlement between Serbs and Albanians became difficult due to ambushes by the KLA against Yugoslav police units. The civilian population was used as a human shield.

"These actions were stepped up after a new meeting between [moderate Albanian Kosovar leader] Rugova and Milosevic in 1998... In the same period of time Montenegro received immense investments from European and American companies in the tourist industry. So-called 'pro-western' private radio stations were established and NATO-friendly politicians supported. This resulted in the present situation that about half of the population supports the NATO-friendly government.

"In the Vojvodina, the influence of the new NATO-member Hungary came into play. Anti-Serb feelings amongst minority groups like Hungarians, Romanians and Croats were given voice by small radio stations at the border in an attempt to raise resistance against Belgrade."

An article on the Internet by Marie-Pierre Lahaye, entitled "Yugoslavia: How demonising a whole people serves Western interests", notes the role of a US public relations firm.

Lahaye writes that, "According to a US Department of Justice official document, the Washington-based public relations agency Ruder-Finn served as a media counsel for the Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to 'facilitate a greater US leadership role in the Balkans... and to educate US government officials, including Clinton Transition Team members and news media reporters, editors and producers to the continuing tragedy taking place in Bosnia.'"

Lahaye then explains that the same document acknowledges that Ruder-Finn from November 1992 to May 1993 rendered the same type of service for the province of Kosovo for a fee of \$230,000, "consisting of a 'compilation of background materials and dissemination of information regarding the brutal Serbian repression of minorities in Kosovo.' This provides clear evidence that a strategy of communications had been carefully planned by the ethnic Albanians with the support of the US government at least five years before the violence erupted in the province, specifically targeting opinion leaders in order to manipulate the mass media against the Serbs."

*See Also:*

The NATO Attack on Yugoslavia  
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