

A small breach in US press censorship

A reporter
29 April 1999

An item which appeared in the *Washington Post* Wednesday marks the first report in a major American newspaper of the clause in the Rambouillet Accords on Kosovo which effectively authorized a NATO occupation of Serbia. The German press has carried several reports this month on the previously undisclosed Appendix B of the accord, but the American media has maintained a wall of silence.

Appendix B includes the following section (FRY is an abbreviation for Federal Republic of Yugoslavia):

"NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, maneuver, billet, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations."

This language made it inconceivable that any government in Belgrade could accept the Rambouillet pact, since it would have transformed the entire territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, not only the province of Kosovo, into a NATO parade ground. This provision was included by the US government in order to insure that the government of President Slobodan Milosevic rejected the agreement and provided a suitable pretext for launching the air war on Yugoslavia.

The *Post's* "For the Record" column reproduces without comment the exchange below between NATO spokesman Jamie Shea and an unidentified reporter at the National Press Club in Washington on Monday, April 26.

Q: The Rambouillet Accords, appendix B in particular ... called for the occupation of all of Yugoslavia.... Unrestricted passage through air space, territorial waters, rail, airports, roads, bridges, ports without payment, the electromagnetic spectrum and so

on. Was not the Rambouillet accord, which Milosevic refused to sign, in fact, a desire to occupy all of Yugoslavia and not simply Kosovo?

Mr. Shea: No, absolutely not.... We were looking ... to be able to deploy an international security force, and that means, of course, being able to deploy the assets for that security force.

At the moment, all of our predeployed elements in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have come in by the Greek port of Thessaloniki. And for that, obviously, one has to have an agreement with the Yugoslav government to be able to have access to those roads, those rail systems, the air space for the business of setting up an international security presence, and therefore NATO personnel who may have had at the time ... to transit temporarily through Yugoslavia will have had to enjoy these kinds of immunities....

Q: That's simply not the language, sir. It's "free and unrestricted passage," the ability to detain people, for example ... and total use of the electromagnetic spectrum sir.

A: I was not a negotiator at Rambouillet ... but my understanding, sir, is that it refers to, as you say, passage, exactly transit. And that's the point I've made.

Despite Shea's obvious evasion, it is clear that the unidentified questioner--and many other journalists present in Washington for the NATO summit--are well aware of the significance of Appendix B. This document reveals the real purpose of the US/European assault: the transformation of Yugoslavia into a de facto colony of imperialism. The press silence on this crucial issue is a blatant example of the self-censorship of the corporate-controlled mass media.



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