NATO's motives and its spokesman

28 May 1999

To the editor:

I consider myself a socialist, and not a naive one at that, but your stance on this war is appalling. Given that the majority of Serbian people support Slobo, misguided or otherwise, do you suppose that you can prevent the butchery going on in Kosovo by appealing to their better side ? Did they see the light after Slovenia, Croatia or Bosnia, NO. It ain't gonna happen, and if you think it's OK to stand on the sidelines and quote Marx while the Albanians are slaughtered then you have a very unrealistic idea off how to convert people to socialism. When the Serbs have suffered enough they WILL end their attacks on their neighbors, it won't come about any other way. NATO has nothing to gain from this and everything to lose. Your criticisms of NATO and the US on this issue are wrong, wrong, wrong.

Yours, ex-reader

The WSWS replies:

As you are an ex-reader, this message will be short. But since the outbreak of World War I in 1914, there has been an unbridgeable gulf between Marxism and those "socialists" who support the war policies of their imperialist governments. What precisely does your "socialism" consist of when you are prepared to acquiesce in what amounts to an imperialist war against a small and largely defenseless country?

You really think the US and the other NATO powers have nothing to gain? That this is the first truly altruistic war waged by the major imperialist powers? Well, if you believe that, there's this bridge in Brooklyn I'd like to sell you.

If you want to know what this war's about — that is, the material interests that are driving US policy in the Balkans — keep reading the *WSWS* this coming week. But the answer in brief is: Power, oil and gold.

Yours,
David North
WSWS

Dear Editors,

Your article "Why is NATO at War with Yugoslavia? World power, oil and gold" points to two undeniable facts: that the US is conducting a naked aggression against a sovereign state and is doing so with impunity, and that such events seem to occur enough times already in modern history that one could plot a time-series chart, revealing a cycle. Causes for wars are and will always be mainly about economics and the allocation of resources. Wars occur when the world is at an economic dead-end. Is the US economy in such a dire state that its only resort to spending left is military-related? Are the economic figures released every month correlated in any meaningful way to reality? Whatever the reasons, the end result has been that periodically people are to die unnaturally and unwittingly so that the current world economic system may survive.

An even sadder note is that, numerous countries are frenetically restructuring their political and economic systems in order to join this human death trap, as though they are missing the "boat".

Your comments on NATO's bombing and its ramifications are chilling. Though given the world's production is in such a state of over-capacity, such interests in the Caspian commodities reserves should have more to do with impeding them from reaching the existing markets and thus spoil the current pricing structures. What a better way to do this than to bomb the region's infrastructures back to the "stone age". All these human sufferings in the name of money-making expediency.

As the world's major events unfold over time, one could not be but in awe at the eerie prophetic might of Marx's writings, whatever one's political belief might be.

LC

To the editor:

This is a great article and helped me understand a lot of the background that leads up to the "war". This site is, to my knowledge, the only voice of opposition out there. There is nothing, and I mean, NOT one iota of dissension in the US media. They have portrayed the war as a glorious effort by NATO (i.e., the US) to save the world from the "demonic" Serbs, etc. Every day they pump up and glorify Clinton and his cohorts with articles and pictures in the papers and TV. I strongly believe, in addition to all of your analysis, that this is also due in part to Clinton's desperate attempt to create a legacy for himself in his final years. This will get him out from under the umbrella of scandal, make him look like a "rough, tough" war hero, and get Gore elected in 2000. In addition to the imperialistic overtures you have noted, it plays into a big political game in the US and Clinton is a master at it. It seems ironic that with all the major western powers electing "leftist, labor, green, and *eek*(dare I say it), other so-called socialist" governments, that there is such a push for this type of aggression. I had always thought you would find this type of behavior during the 80's when the west was right wing. Most

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right wing parties have been decimated, discredited or basically outright eliminated such as in Canada or Britain. With the switch to the left, the opportunity to roll back capitalism and imperialism seems like its at an all time high. I must confess that I don't fully understand how the world works...

JM

Dear Sirs:

I completely accord with you about the US and NATO war against Yugoslavia. What they do in Yugoslavia are war crimes.

EP

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the excellent article on the reasons behind the NATO-attacks on Serbia. What I was missing though, was the fact that NATO had to create a war to justify it's own existence, and to justify the ridiculous military spending of its members.

Keep on the good work,

FF

To the editor,

In a recent letter GN wrote, in part: "NATO is not fighting a people. They are fighting a person."

This is the same fallacy I hear endlessly repeated about Iraq, where we are "fighting Saddam", not Iraqi citizens. When people find themselves thinking this way, they need to stop and realize that it is the people of Yugoslavia and Iraq who fall victim to the bombs (and sanctions), not the heads of state. So yes, NATO is, in the only way that really counts, fighting a people. Opposition to Milosevic alone could be expressed via negotiations and/or a UN peacekeeping force. It's worse than frustrating to hear such muddled thinking being used to justify war.

In peace,

KF

Columbus, Ohio, USA

To the editor:

Jamie Shea is a thoroughly repellent social type and a disgraceful human being. Thanks for your profile of this 1999 Julius Streicher.

AB

To David Walsh,

Since you asked, "Are we at the WSWS the only ones who find Shea particularly odious?" let me tell you that you are not!

Take a look at this statement that Jamie Shea made in regard to the build up of forces near FRY's borders:

“This is what I personally call our Teddy Roosevelt force," said NATO spokesman Jamie Shea. ``It's a force that we are designing to speak softly, but to carry a big stick."

Do bombs speak softly?

To whom?

What do they say?

Yes, I know he's referring specifically to the so-called peace keeping forces NATO is assembling just outside FRY borders. But ...

"The Big Stick" has been striking with brute force for weeks and continues to escalate in its pursuit of "humanitarian" objectives.

The double-speak hypocrisy is astounding.

Oh, do spare us!

Sincerely,

RD

San Diego CA

P.S. High on the list of The Particularly Odious should be William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense.

Dear Mr. North,

Just a brief note to thank you for your very comprehensive and impressive reply to the letter of P. Harris re. the bombing of Serbia. One of the most depressing things about this travesty has been the intellectual paucity of response by people claiming to be 'left.' Your writing has restored my faith.

Given Mr. Harris' Vietnam connection there are a couple of points that you didn't make much note of that echo very unpleasantly of that invasion.

First, the drug connection. Chossudovsky has written an excellent article on that topic that might surprise Mr.. Harris.

Gerald A. Carroll has also written on the subject from which I quote:

"Kosovo, the lightning rod, has for centuries been a conduit through which narcotics have flowed from the Middle East into Europe. Populated by Albanians who are mostly Muslim, the Kosovars have long catered to the needs of the bloody Albanian criminal syndicates, whose drug-selling and illegal pyramid financial schemes destroyed the Albanian economy and wiped out what little coherent government existed in the impoverished state in the 1990s. "

Second, the other looming horror out of Vietnam is the return of 'carpet bombing' as the B52s are now being shipped to the Balkans. Not my words, NATO's.

Mr. Harris and others like yourself, I respectfully urge you to take a reality check. Read some old Zinn essays or whatever....

Right now I have Japanese students at my school of 10 and 11 saying that bombing people is wrong, and if they can get the basic idea then its time we all did.

Yours sincerely,

SB

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