

Missiles hit hospital, embassies

NATO resumes bombing of Belgrade

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NATO warplanes resumed the bombardment of Belgrade, striking the capital city of Yugoslavia repeatedly the night of May 19-20. Bombs and missiles destroyed part of a major hospital complex and hit the embassies or residences of seven foreign ambassadors. It was the first large-scale strike on the city since the destruction of the Chinese embassy May 7.

After the usual initial denials, NATO spokesmen admitted that a missile fired into the Dedinje district had hit the Dragisa Misovic hospital. The blast killed at least three people and injured many more. It destroyed the hospital's intensive care unit and neurological center and damaged the maternity unit and emergency room.

Doctors at the maternity unit said they had finished the last delivery only 15 minutes before the missile exploded, leaving a huge crater only a few dozen yards from the building. Two women who had just completed labor were injured by flying glass.

Serbian television broadcast footage showing hospital beds overturned and covered in rubble, in what appeared to be a children's ward. The Yugoslavia news agency Tanjug reported that the operating theater in the hospital had been destroyed.

The three deaths took place in the cardiovascular department of the hospital, according to Dr. Milovan Bojic, who is also Serbian Deputy Prime Minister. A nurse told Serbian radio, " We managed to evacuate the babies--around 20 of them--and we took the women to the basement. Everything has been destroyed." Officials said a number of hospital staff were injured, but could give no further details.

The Dedinje district is a wealthy area of the capital, home to both President Slobodan Milosevic and to much of the diplomatic corps. The missile which hit the hospital also damaged the Swedish embassy and the homes of the ambassadors from Hungary, Israel, Libya,

Norway, Pakistan and Spain. No one was injured in any of these residences. Three of them, those belonging to NATO members Hungary, Norway and Spain, have been vacated since the bombing began.

The decision to launch an attack on this neighborhood, after the firestorm of criticism worldwide touched off by the destruction of the Chinese embassy, is another sign of the reckless and aggressive character of the decisions being taken in Brussels and Washington.

Bombing raids the next night (May 20-21) hit the Swiss embassy, where the Swedish ambassador had taken refuge after the damage to his own facility.

It is especially difficult to credit the usual claims that the attack was a "mistake," since Dragisa Misovic is an enormous complex with 20 separate buildings, and would be clearly identifiable even at relatively high altitude.

The timing of the strike on Belgrade was also a calculated provocation. It came within hours of the departure from the capital of Russian emissary Viktor Chernomyrdin. The clear message was that if Yugoslavia does not accept a NATO-dictated surrender along the lines proposed by the Russian intermediary, the entire country and its people will be pulverized by bombs and missiles.

Other attacks the same night included targets just outside the capital city, including a chemical factory at Baric, a power station at Obrenovac, which serves Belgrade and much of the rest of the country, and a water purification station in the town of Makis.

The last-named facility, which was confirmed and justified as a "military target" by NATO, demonstrates the real aim of the bombing. There is clearly no thought that Yugoslav military forces will be overcome by thirst, in a country where clouds and rainy weather have

been the principal complaint of the war planners. The targeting of a water purification plant is purely and simply a terroristic measure against the people of Serbia.

At a press briefing Thursday, US President Bill Clinton dismissed questions about NATO atrocities such as the hospital bombing and the killing of nearly 100 Albanian refugees in the Kosovo village of Korisa. He echoed the claim of NATO and Pentagon spokesmen that the Serbs had caused these deaths by using the Albanians as "human shields".

"It is like pushing someone in front of an oncoming train and then trying to blame the train for running them over," Clinton said. "We will not allow this cruel tactic to deceive or divert us from our goal. We need stay focused and patient."

In the case of the Belgrade hospital, the Western media has suggested that Yugoslav authorities were to blame because the hospital is located near an army barracks. The two structures are actually one kilometer apart, according to a hospital spokesman, and both are large buildings in a major city, built long before the present war. The claim that the hospital was being used to "shield" the barracks is so demented that even NATO's liar in chief, Jamie Shea, did not actually say it, leaving the insinuation to be circulated by the press.

Besides deliberate and increasingly outrageous lies, US-NATO propaganda relies on media self-censorship. The bombing of the Dragisa Misovic hospital received relatively little attention in the press reports, especially in the United States.

The Pentagon meanwhile announced that it has begun to deploy AC-130 "Spectre" attack aircraft in Kosovo, a low-flying plane whose function is to attack troops and armor with artillery and cannon fire. These planes fly well below the 15,000-foot limit set for most other NATO war planes engaged in bombing of Yugoslavia.

The NATO powers also moved to tighten their grip on Yugoslavia's two neighbors to the south. Officials in Brussels announced Wednesday that the alliance would supply long-term military aid to Albania and Macedonia and draw up plans to help them meet the requirements for NATO entry.

At the same time, a conference was held in Brussels, attended by representatives of many European corporations interested in winning contracts for the rebuilding of infrastructure and other facilities in the

former Yugoslavia. Carl Bildt, special UN envoy for the Balkans, said that it would take ten years and \$50 billion simply to undo the damage caused by the NATO bombing since March 24. Some 14,000 bombs and missiles have fallen on Yugoslavia during that time.



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