To the victor belongs the spoils

Or why America's liberals love the Kosovo war

Mark Rothschild
17 June 1999

The following comment was sent by Mark Rothschild of Los Angeles.

The World Socialist Web Site *encourages serious contributions from readers, academics, historians and others on the historical and political questions raised by the Balkan war.*

Many Americans have had a hard time coming to grips with the geopolitical reality of Kosovo. One of the most unusual things about this war is that most of the support for the Clinton Administration's bombing policy comes from the left side of the political spectrum. It is precisely among liberals that the policy of intervention receives its most ardent support.

This is a bit surprising. Liberals are often assumed to be non-interventionist and inclined towards peaceful, if not pacifistic foreign policies.

How can the existence of the "pro-war left" be explained?

First of all I would like to observe the parallels between the attitude of the America's cold war Liberals and today's liberals.

Almost a half century ago the United States began its slow but inexorable decent into the morass of Vietnam. Although everyone remembers that it was the liberal left that finally persuaded the American public to abandon the Vietnam adventure, it must be remembered that liberals were actually the ideological authors of America's involvement in Vietnam. (As uncomfortable as the idea may be, we must remember that Lyndon Johnson was the quintessential liberal.)

What was the first excuse used to justify US involvement in Vietnam?

According to former US Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Robert S. McNamara, the beginning of US involvement must be dated from the decision to support the re-occupation of the formerly French colony of Indochina (i.e. Vietnam) by French troops in 1948. According to McNamara, the decision was an unambiguous quid pro quo. The French terms were clear: the US must support their re-occupation of Vietnam or else the French would refuse to join the new European Alliance called NATO. The US agreed to their terms. In retrospect (after 50 thousand American deaths) we can see the folly of that decision.

In the post-WWII world NATO that was our prize, a Pax Americana stretched out over Western Europe signifying our victory over the defeated Europeans (Germany and Italy).

Even those tense days in October 1962 which we call the Cuban Missile Crisis (a time when the world really did come within a hair's breadth of global thermonuclear war) had their origin in a NATO action: the positioning of US (Jupiter medium range) missiles in Turkey in April 1962.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was only brought to an end after Robert Kennedy promised Soviet Premier Khrushchev (through his Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin) that the US would remove the offending Jupiter missiles from Turkey if Khrushchev would do the same in Cuba. It was a done deal and in March 1963 (after a suitable face saving delay) the Turkish missiles were disassembled.

So NATO was there from the beginning—the midwife to every monstrous birth called forth by the Cold War. Now, even after the Cold War struggle has waned, NATO lives on.

NATO was once our means of executing cold war foreign policy. Now NATO has become a policy in and of itself. The means has become the end.

Then, as now, American Liberals have taken the lead in rationalizing US involvement and intervention. The "humanitarian bombing" of Bill Clinton and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair is analogous to the rationalization of US involvement in Vietnam. In Vietnam the US could not "cut and run" because our "credibility with our European Allies" was at stake. Now we must continue bombing Serbia or "NATO will lose credibility"—because the "Alliance itself is at stake".

The common denominator of acquiescence to these policies is the propensity of American Liberals (and not just liberals) to accept almost any policy of the US Establishment which is viewed as necessary to the continued dominance of the United States in Europe.

Almost any hypocrisy and misdeed is acceptable if it can be justified by pleading that the US might otherwise lose its grip on Europe. Put another way: anything is justified if it prevents another power from dominating Europe. While these two statements seem different, they are, in terms of Realpolitik, the same thing.

If liberals to not want to be tarred with the brush of hypocrisy then they should not wave their fingers at authoritarian regimes while dropping bombs on civilians in Serbia.

But enough of Liberal bashing (too easy, and not very much fun anyway). Let's look for a minute at the war itself.

It is important to be frank about ultimate US objectives. The idea that this war started because Yugoslavia refused to sign a document at a conference (held in Rambouillet France) that would protect its Albanian Muslim minority is a lie that cannot be burnished by pointing out the defects of the Milosevic regime.

Milosevic may be Hitler re-incarnate, and his regime may be hell on earth, but no moral failings on the part of Yugoslavia or its leaders can change a basic truth: this war was started by the United States in order to occupy Kosovo militarily.

This conclusion is inescapable if one looks at the facts. Look at the basic demands of the United States against Yugoslavia. There is one demand that persists while others come and go. That demand is the military occupation of Kosovo.

If you read the approximately 70 pages of the Rambouillet document you will find that the word “refugee” or “refugees” occurs only four times in the entire document, with only one paragraph devoted to the subject. This paragraph (excerpted below) is the only shred of evidence in the Rambouillet document of NATO's vaunted concern for the refugees.

Chapter 4b

Humanitarian Assistance, Reconstruction and Economic Development

© World Socialist Web Site

...

3. The international community will provide immediate and Unconditional humanitarian assistance, focusing primarily on refugees and internally displaced persons returning to their former homes. The Parties welcome and endorse the UNHCR's lead role in co-ordination of this effort, and endorse its intention, in close co-operation with the Implementation Mission, to plan an early, peaceful, orderly and phased return of refugees and displaced persons in conditions of safety and dignity.

...

Let's do a bit of lexical analysis on the Rambouillet document. How often does the word “military” occur? It occurs 49 times. The word “authority” occurs 78 times.

If you read the Rambouillet document you will see that it is about military authority and occupation— not about refugee repatriation. (On the World Wide Web you can read the entire document at: www.balkanaction.org/pubs/kia299.html.)

The fact that the refugees figure so un-prominently in the original document should surprise no one since 700,000 of the 800,000 people who are currently refugees from Kosovo left their homes only after NATO began to bomb Kosovo on March 25th.

According to a statement by the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), (excerpted below), before the bombing began there were only approximately 90,000 Kosovo refugees in neighboring countries, not 800,000, the current number.

Briefing by Mrs Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to the Security Council New York, 5 May 1999

...

Up to 23 March, when UNHCR had to reluctantly leave the province following a decision of the United Nations Security Coordinator, it was providing assistance to 400,000 people displaced or otherwise affected by fighting inside the province, and to 90,000 refugees and displaced people outside Kosovo.

...

Let's not shine up Milosevic in order to make NATO look bad. That's not necessary, nor would it be truthful. Milosevic is not a dictator (he is a democratically elected ruler of a parliamentary system). He is however an authoritarian leader with a questionable human rights record; there can be no doubt about this. Concerning discrimination in Kosovo, there can be little doubt that the social position of Kosovo Albanians was not and is not enviable. Discrimination was widespread and quite unpalatable to the Albanians.

However, the idea that the Kosovo Albanians are being discriminated against in a unique way that required intervention on humanitarian grounds is absurd, and cannot be supported by evidence.

To prove this let's compare the situation of Kurds in NATO member Turkey with that of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. We will do this not to draw any invidious comparisons that show Serbia to be a democratic paradise, but rather to illustrate the point that the humanitarian excuse for this war is just that - an excuse.

NATO member Turkey's discrimination against her Kurdish linguistic/ethnic group is systematic:

(1) Language: Turkey virtually prohibits the publishing of newspapers and books in the Kurdish language. Until a few years ago it was a crime to speak Kurdish in public in Turkey.

(2) Ethnicity: It was and still is the official policy of Turkey that Kurds as a people or unique ethnicity do not even exist! Although they were officially called "mountain Turks", the Kurdish language is not related (even remotely) to Turkish.

(3) Belligerent status: The leader of the Kurdish rebellion, Abdullah Ocalan has been recently captured but is being tried as a common criminal by the Turks and will almost certainly be executed for terrorism when convicted.

How does the treatment by Serbs of Albanians in Kosovo compare?

(1) Language: Albanians in Kosovo study at state supported Albanian Language universities and Secondary schools. The Albanian Language has equal legal status to the Serbian language in Kosovo. Newspapers and books in Albanian are published freely.

(2) Ethnicity: Albanians are officially recognized as one (of the many) ethnic and religious groups in Kosovo.

(3) Belligerent status: The Serbian authorities have consented to parley with the ethnic Albanian Kosovo resistance (KLA), and accept in principle that an amnesty and reconciliation are the solution to the conflict.

Let no one think that the idea of this comparison is to make the point that the Serbs are angels and that anyone would be happy to be a Kosovo Albanian. I don't believe this and I do not ask you to believe this either. The point is only that if the decision to bomb Serbia and Kosovo had been decided on *humanitarian grounds* then it would have been NATO member Turkey, not Yugoslavia, on whom the bombs would now be falling.

So if you hold the view that the United States should be bombing Serbia please justify your policy with something other that the same tired "humanitarian" slop that the State Department has been of late feeding to the American People.

But if you are willing to abandon the fig leaf of "humanitarian war" and go naked out into the cold cruel world of Realpolitik then join me for a few minutes as I seek to explain what this very "non-humanitarian" war is really about.

Since this war is ostensibly being brought to you by NATO, lets look first at NATO itself. Just what is NATO and how does it form its policies?

Well, everyone seems to agree that NATO is an alliance whose policies are arrived at by open and democratic deliberation by its member countries.

That's right isn't it? No, In fact it's wrong. NATO's policymaking body, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) meets only in secret. During these secret sessions Member countries do not vote on policy—in fact there is no mechanism for voting at all in the North Atlantic Council. In wording which one could imagine was lifted from the pages of Stalin's "Visitors Guide to Decision Making at the Kremlin", we read in the pages of the Official NATO Handbook,

...

When decisions have to be made, action is agreed upon on the basis of unanimity and common accord. There is no voting or decision by majority.

The forgoing is quite remarkable. Apparently NATO makes all its policy decisions unanimously.

The next sentence in the same paragraph is even more remarkable. Continuing...

Each nation represented at the Council table or on any of its subordinate committees retains complete sovereignty and responsibility for its own decisions.

So even after "unanimous" decisions have been reached the Member countries are not bound to observe them!

Reading this one would think that NATO would be unable to formulate and implement a coherent military policy such as Operation Allied Force (what NATO calls the war against Yugoslavia), but this is (obviously) not the case.

Clearly, there is more to how NATO operates than that which is presented in the official NATO handbook. The opaqueness of NATO is due to the fact that NATO is essentially an American invention (run by and for Americans), not an alliance of equals.

In fact when NATO was first founded in April of 1949 the European members had to sign on the dotted line that they promise not to leave the

© World Socialist Web Site

alliance for twenty-one years! This opting-out clause is embodied in Article 13 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 (the legal basis for NATO). Article 13 reads,

Article 13

After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States of America...

It is revealing that an opting-out provision is provided for all member countries except the United States! The explanation for this is that the treaty was conceived to be so advantageous for the United States that it did not even occur to anyone at the time that the US would ever want out.

The Friendly Hegemon

Although NATO is dominated by the United States, this pleases the European NATO members because it means that European stability is assured and no European country will strive to establish a dominant (hegemonic) military position.

For the small European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands US dominance is a godsend because it frees them from the potential specter of German military hegemony. For Germany and France, both potential European hegemons, NATO frees them from the necessity of an expensive and destabilizing military rivalry. For Great Britain, NATO keeps the US engaged in Europe as a powerful English speaking ally and traditional protector of Anglophile interests and as a counter-balance to Continental (French or German) influence.

So while US-led NATO defends Europe from external aggression (i.e. Russia), more importantly it defends Europe from itself. It is the internal stabilizing function of NATO, more than its external defensive function, which has become the essence of NATO. This is especially true now since the Warsaw Pact has ceased to exist and Russia's armed forces have deteriorated.

It is the stabilizing influence of the United States that allows the United States to demand and get the quiet acquiescence to its de facto hegemony in Europe. The US in the role of the indispensable and "friendly hegemon" was able to run NATO with practically a free hand during the Cold War. Consensus in NATO during the Cold War meant, in practice, deferring to US dominance.

But it is precisely NATO's ability to provide stability for Europe that has been brought into question by both its recklessness and trepidation in Kosovo.

But before going into that, let's look one last time at the important Rambouillet document itself.

The following excerpts which refer to NATO's Chief of Implementation Mission in Kosovo (CIM), are suggestive of the scope of intrusion into Yugoslavia's sovereignty proposed by the Rambouillet document and illustrate the point that Yugoslav refusal to sign was a certainty in the minds of the US authorities who orchestrated the conference. The following is excerpted from the text of the US document:

Article IX: Final Authority to Interpret

The CIM is the final authority regarding interpretation of this Chapter and his determinations are binding on all Parties and persons.

3. The CIM shall serve as the Chair of the Joint Commission.

... the Chair's decision shall be final.

The CIM may recommend to the appropriate authorities the removal and appointment of officials and the curtailment of operations of existing institutions in Kosovo if he deems it necessary for the effective implementation of this Agreement.

Article V: Authority to Interpret

The CIM shall be the final authority in theater regarding interpretation of the civilian aspects of this Agreement, and the Parties agree to abide by his determinations as binding on all Parties and persons.

NATO's Chief of Implementation Mission (CIM) then becomes a virtual dictator in Kosovo. But how is his power enforced on the ground? Let's read on in the Rambouillet document...

The Parties invite NATO to constitute and lead a military force to help ensure compliance with the provisions of this Chapter.

b. The Parties agree that NATO will establish and deploy a force (hereinafter KFOR) which may be composed of ground, air, and maritime units from NATO and non-NATO nations, operating under the authority and subject to the direction and the political control of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) through the NATO chain of command.

What is important in the forgoing paragraph is the explicit language that stipulates that the North Atlantic Council is to administer Kosovo. The Yugoslav government or any other body such as the United Nations is thereby excluded and Kosovo is made a protectorate of NATO.

6. a. NATO shall be immune from all legal process, whether civil, administrative, or criminal.

b. NATO personnel, under all circumstances and at all times, shall be immune from the Parties, jurisdiction in respect of any civil, administrative, criminal, or disciplinary offenses which may be committed by them in the FRY.

7. NATO personnel shall be immune from any form of arrest, investigation, or detention by the authorities in the FRY.

The previous three paragraphs establish so-called "extra-territoriality" in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Typically such extra-territoriality is only exercised in semi-independent countries or semi-colonies by a colonial power.

The next paragraph permits NATO troops access to all points within the FRY.

8. 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.

It should be clear that the United States knew that such intrusions into the sovereignty of Yugoslavia as envisaged by the Rambouillet document would never be accepted by the Yugoslav negotiators.

So far we've made the points that NATO's motivation was not based on humanitarian issues and the Rambouillet peace conference was never intended to succeed but was rather a provocation conceived to act as an excuse for NATO's decision to bomb Yugoslavia.

But now having made these serious accusations, it remains for me to explain why it would be in the US interest to start this war.

Why the US Wanted War

To explain the motivation among US policy makers for this war we have first to understand the current position of US power in Europe. Let's go back for a moment to the discussion of why the various European countries willingly permit the US to exercise hegemony in Europe through NATO: the concept of the "friendly hegemon".

As was explained above, the US maintained the balance of power in Europe during the Cold War by protecting Europe from the East (Russia) and by ensuring that no European power ever become dominant. This stabilizing function was universally appreciated by the European members of NATO during the Cold War, but when the Cold War ended, the preconditions that gave value to NATO began to come under scrutiny.

It is in the end of the Cold War that the seeds of the present conflict lie. With the Cold War over, the Warsaw Pact disbanded, and Russia's military shrinking, the raison d'être for NATO has come into question by European public opinion.

Europeans generally accept the concept of collective security as an antidote to hegemonism, but they have at the same time questioned whether the United States is still necessary for this function or whether the US could be replaced by an all-European military force. Such a force under the direct political control of the European Union (EU) already exists. It is (oddly) named the Western European Union (WEU). The WEU is also sometimes called the Euro-corps or in Euro-bureaucratic

© World Socialist Web Site

terms the "European Security and Defense Identity" (ESDI).

This debate in the EU over the ESDI is often framed as a debate over the relative merits of NATO vs. the WEU. However the subtext of this debate is really not about NATO's role in Europe—it is really about the role of the United States in Europe. But since this is such a delicate subject, the debate is framed by the use of the surrogate contest of NATO vs. WEU.

As NATO approached its 50th anniversary celebration in April, its US leadership knew that a crisis was approaching. If the 50th anniversary was not to turn into a retirement party, then something had to happen to inject new life, new in-expendability, into NATO. That something was the Yugoslav war.

The Yugoslav war was contrived to coincide with NATO's 50th anniversary held in Washington this past April.

The United States knows that unless NATO is viewed by European public opinion as essential for security in Europe, its role will be reduced and it eventually will be submerged by the military arm of the European Union, the WEU.

U.S. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, Permanent Representative to NATO's North Atlantic Council, in an interview just before the April NATO anniversary celebration commenced, was quite frank about the need for NATO to head off the establishment of "separate European capabilities and structures".

In the following "Q" and "A " excerpted below Ambassador Vershbow refers to the European Security and Defense Identity" (ESDI) as the generic name for the role of the WEU armed force.

Q: How do you see the U.S. role in NATO evolving in terms of U.S. participation in and commitment to the Alliance?

Vershbow: Our chief concern is that in proceeding with institutional developments on ESDI, we not lose what has already been achieved in building ESDI within NATO. We expect that the Washington Summit will mark the completion of arrangements on ESDI agreed at the 1996 Berlin NAC (North Atlantic Council) Ministerial—including mechanisms for sharing NATO assets with the WEU (Western European Union). This arrangement preserves NATO as the framework for collective defense and avoids the waste and political divisiveness that could come from efforts to establish separate European capabilities and structures.

And what results are expected from NATO's Washington celebration?

Q: Are there tangible outcomes that you would like to see as a result of NATO's 50th anniversary commemoration in Washington in April?

Vershbow: There are dozens. For starters, we will celebrate the inclusion of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in NATO—and this is an important point because it shows that Stalin's dividing line in Europe is being erased forever. NATO will also reaffirm its commitment to further enlargement and take practical steps to help candidate countries in the form of the Membership Action Plan I mentioned earlier. We will take steps to make PfP a more operational instrument—a standing coalition of democratic states acting together in response to crises.

NATO will also be providing its own answer to your first question—"What is the role of NATO in the 21st century? " *It is important for our publics and for other countries to get a clear message on what NATO is all about. Helping answer this question will be an update of NATO's Strategic Concept.* The last version was written in 1991, as the Cold War was still coming to a close. The new version will speak directly about NATO's future — including "non-Article 5" crisis response operations, and a greater emphasis on partnership and cooperation, alongside its continuing commitment to the defense of NATO members. (Emphasis supplied.)

It is clear from his response that what is to be accomplished by the anniversary is the formation of public opinion (" *for our publics and for other countries...*") and that what is new in NATO is NATO's new *Strategic Concept*. (Think of NATO's Strategic Concept as something like its mission statement.) And what is indeed new about NATO's new Strategic Concept is "non-Article 5" military operations. This is getting a little arcane but it is essential for understanding what the new improved NATO is all about. So for the sake of clarity we will excerpt Article 5 and its succeeding text from the North Atlantic Treaty below...

The North Atlantic Treaty

Washington D.C.—4 April 1949

...

Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense.... including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Article 6

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack: on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer; on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

It is clear from reading these excerpts that Article 5 is simply the article that limits NATO's reach and mission to defense of Western Europe, the Mediterranean Sea, and North America. Without the Article 5 restrictions, NATO would have no limits at all to its exercise of military power. In fact it would not even be limited to *defensive* use of that power.

The WEU is currently still embryonic (but that is to soon change— see below). So for now NATO is the only "collective defense game" in town. With nothing to substitute for NATO the Europeans had to accede to US pressure and in April they ratified NATO's new Strategic Concept, thereby allowing NATO to become an unveiled instrument for the projection of U.S. power into Eastern Europe (and even beyond into the oil-rich Caucasus mountains region of the former Soviet Union).

A struggle is now ensuing. On the one hand is the United States regaled with NATO and NATO's new Strategic Concept. On the other hand is Europe mostly disarmed or poorly armed with only the notion of the WEU-armed force. It is not a battle between these two forces, but rather over which armed force will become the arbiter of European stability.

But most importantly, and this is key, it is not really a contest between NATO and the WEU; it is a contest between the United States and its allies: the United Kingdom and some of the smaller Continental States on the one hand, and the Franco-German EU bureaucracy on the other hand.

In simple terms it is the Anglo-Saxons vs. the "Continentals" (France, Germany, and their allies) struggling over political control of Western Europe.

This struggle is the inner meaning of NATO's seemingly irrational use of military power against Yugoslavia. NATO's aggression against Serbia is simply an exercise to prove the potency of NATO's new Strategic Concept (the so-called "out of area" or "non-Article 5" use of force). This in turn will prove that NATO under U.S. leadership (or domination depending on your point of view) is still capable of exercising its pax-NATO in Europe.

Why don't the Continentals just opt out of NATO right now? There is one big reason.

Individual countries in Europe, while they do have de facto independent military establishments, are nevertheless very dependent on NATO for many aspects of their military capabilities. Fifty years of NATO's dependence on the US for airlift, satellite surveillance, and other essential

© World Socialist Web Site

functions have left the European military establishments atrophied of essential parts. Furthermore, taken individually European military establishments are quite small and virtually incapable of acting independently if faced with a large (i.e. Russian) threat.

What this means is that Franco-German policy cannot simply discard NATO without seamlessly replacing it with another supra-national (preferably Europe-wide) military alliance such as the EU controlled WEU.

Therefore the process of the EU bureaucracy assuming control over its own military (and by extension, foreign policy) requires that the Continentals incrementally inch out of NATO into the EU-controlled WEU armed force.

That "inching out" is the meaning of the behind-the-scenes political bickering between the NATO "Allies" over the Kosovo war.

Europeans, while outwardly in solidarity with the United States in NATO, are hard at work behind the scenes both trying to find a way of boxing in the US to an armistice with Serbia and in trying to enhance the bureaucratic structures of the WEU so they can eventually dispense with NATO.

The European Union (EU) Summit in Cologne being held now (1-4 June) will be an important venue for observing this political infighting among the "Allies" in the EU.

This summit is the meeting of the EU Council of ministers (actually, the foreign ministers of each of the EU member states).

Each member state serves as Council President for six months in rotation. Germany is now president of the EU Council (Jan - June 99) and also currently (coincidentally) of the G-8 and WEU.

Pay particular attention to the communiqués issued by the EU Council after the summit— especially any language that seems inconsistent with NATO positions. The extent of inconsistency will be an indicator of how bold the "Continentals" have become in defying the Anglo-Saxons.

Since the EU parliamentary elections are June 12 and 13, movement toward peace if it is happening behind the scenes, should become visible by then.

If peace is indeed in the offing it probably would be announced after the G-8 foreign minister's summit (also to be held in Cologne) on the 19th and 20th of June. (The G-8 includes all the big rich countries in European and North America as well as Russia and Japan.)

Germany is strongly in favor of an enhanced role for the WEU and has only until the end of June to see that this occurs during its EU presidency rotation. Germany will not want to show weakness at this time, and this, more than a desire to stop the carnage in Serbia and Kosovo, will motivate Germany to go no-holds barred at the EU and G-8 summits for a bombing halt or armistice.

The stakes are getting higher as we approach the June 19th G-8 summit. Clinton cannot give in to public opinion and negotiate an end to the bombing. If he forgoes the military option in favor of diplomacy he loses the whole game, for remember that the game here is not really about Kosovo— it is about NATO. It is about proving to European public opinion that a US-led NATO is indispensable to the security of Europe. But in order to do this he must demonstrate that the standoff with Yugoslavia will be solved *by military and not diplomatic means*. As unpalatable as it may be to Americans to believe, it is US policy to avoid at all costs a diplomatic solution. A military solution (even a solution disadvantageous to the US!) is preferred to any diplomatic solution because a diplomatic solution would degrade the prestige of NATO.

But the vaunted facade of unanimity of NATO is cracking. After the last G-8 meeting (held in Bonn in May) Germany has openly challenged US leadership. With the assistance of Italy, Germany is now proposing a cease-fire in unambiguous contradistinction to the unconditional surrender that the US is demanding of Yugoslavia. The US war machine is running out of options as Continental European diplomacy turns against it.

Last Gasp—The Chinese Embassy

If you've read this far I hope that I do not need to convince you of the absurdity of the idea that US military planners misplaced the Chinese Embassy and bombed it by mistake. Whether the Embassy was providing satellite telemetry to the Yugoslav military (as rumored) is irrelevant in assessing the political meaning of the event.

The bombing (May 7th) of the Chinese Embassy is viewed by this writer as a desperate attempt by the US to move the ball from the diplomatic court (where the Bonn G-8 meeting in May placed it) back into the military court where the US could continue to play out its NATO-centered strategy of in expendability.

By relying on force alone, the United States is becoming increasingly diplomatically irrelevant to the Continental countries; and it is even beginning to appear not as a factor of stability but rather as a factor of instability. The Chinese Embassy gambit was a failure for it only accelerated the deterioration of European public support for the war.

The sole exception to this deterioration is of course the United Kingdom, which sees its chances of ultimately keeping the US in Europe fading as each day passes, hence its increasingly frantic tone and increasing diplomatic distance from the Continental powers.

NATO can only win this war by vindicating itself with military power. It must demonstrate its Pax-NATO by the defeat and occupation of Yugoslavia: the "Final Solution" to the problem of Yugoslav defiance of NATO.

If NATO does not attain the Final Solution then the near future will see NATO more and more relegated to a fig leaf for the eventual disengagement of the United States from Europe.

In NATO's place will emerge a WEU-armed force— at first de facto subject to NATO—but in time superseding NATO and replacing virtually all of NATO's functions. It is obvious that the Continentals will dominate the WEU as the Anglo-Saxons have dominated NATO.

With this occurrence the United States hegemony in Europe will have come to an end. The last chapter of WWII—its epilogue—will have been written and a new era will open up before us.

Good, bad, or inevitable? These are questions for another time and place. Perhaps these questions are unanswerable. History offers many ambiguous lessons, but at least one lesson is entirely unambiguous: To the victor belong the spoils.

Copyright 1999 Mark Rothschild

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact