

"What was being committed there was one the biggest savageries of history."

Spanish pilot says US ordered targeting of civilians in Yugoslavia

Chris Marsden
18 June 1999

On June 14, a Spanish weekly paper published an article detailing how American NATO commanders ordered attacks on civilian targets. The piece in *Articulo 20* (Article 20 is the provision in the Spanish constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech) is based on an interview with Captain Adolfo Luis Martin de la Hoz, a NATO pilot from Spain. The article was translated by Jelena Karovic and circulated by the Network for Peace in the Balkans (BalkanPeaceNetwork@listbot.com).

Captain de la Hoz returned to Spain at the end of May, having participated in the bombings since the start of the war, as the pilot of an F-18. He says that the US led the operation and that NATO honoured those who bombed civilian targets with medals.

"First of all, I want to make it clear that the majority, I say the majority, of my colleagues, even if not all, are against war in general and against this war of barbarity in particular," de la Hoz says. "[O]ur worst enemies are our own authorities, the Defence Minister and his whole team, the members of the Government, who know nothing about war and go along with it without informing themselves about anything and, what is gravest, are guilty of lying to the Spanish people through the papers, radio and television, foreign correspondents and press agencies," he states.

De la Hoz rejects the claim that NATO's repeated bombings of civilian targets were accidental. "Several times our Colonel protested to NATO commanders about why they select targets which are not military targets. They threw him out with curses saying that we should know that the North Americans will lodge a

complaint to the Spanish Army, once through Brussels and again to the Defence Minister.

"Once there was a coded order of the North American military that we should drop anti-personnel bombs over the localities of Pristina and Nis. The Colonel refused it altogether and, a couple of days later, the transfer order came."

The comments of de la Hoz reveal something of the national tensions between the imperialist powers that lay under the surface of the "united" NATO offensive. He complains that the Spanish military was subjected to repeated "humiliations and insults" because of America's control of the operation.

"The order-givers are only the North American generals, and no one else. We are zeroes, just as our replacements are going to be. But there is still more to that. Here, they say that several operations were directed by Spanish commanders and pilots. Lies over lies. All the missions that we flew, all and each one, were planned by US high military authorities. Even more, they were all planned in detail, including attacking planes, targets and type of ammunition that we have to throw. We never directed anything, and our missions were limited to flying over the borders of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Slovakia."

He berates the Spanish government for its servility to the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA. He reserves particular venom for the NATO General Secretary, "our own Javier Solana", whom he describes as "a puppet who has been put there by the Yankees to do what they tell him he has to do."

De la Hoz paints a picture of extreme disaffection

within the Spanish military forces involved in the Kosovo campaign. Commenting on official statements that the Spanish pilots were “disciplined and patriotic” and “concentrating on the complexity of their war missions”, he says, “we read so many discrepancies, so many lies that we agreed to not read a single newspaper until we return. Our anger is enormous.”

He concludes with a chilling description of the real face of NATO's war, which has been concealed by the authorities.

“There is no journalist who has the slightest idea what is happening in Yugoslavia. They are destroying the country, bombing it with novel weapons, toxic nerve gases, surface mines dropped with parachutes, bombs containing uranium, black napalm, sterilisation chemicals, sprayings to poison the crops and weapons of which even we still do not know anything. The North Americans are committing one of the biggest barbarities that can be committed against humanity. A lot of very bad things will be told in the future about what was happening there, because, by the way, judging by what we talked about with the British and German officers, it was designed in order to divide the Europeans and keep us subjected for many decades....

“Be sure that what I say is not to exculpate myself and to intone 'mea culpa' for having participated in it, because I will never be able to forget that what was being committed there was one the biggest savageries of history.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact