

British, French sabotage hopes for justice in former Yugoslavia

by Katharine Kanter

So we, the British and French foreign ministers, flew out together. We thought, we spoke, we acted together—two representatives of the two largest European troop contributors speaking with one voice and with one message. . . . During those days in Sarajevo, in Pale and Belgrade, the two of us were able to speak, thanks to good work from our staffs, almost as if we were members of the same government, better in some cases than between members of the same government, supporting each other's presentations, briefing each other's press. And our staffs and the people we spoke to were surprised how far this went. . . . And we could do it, of course, because for month after month, the two of us and our soldiers and our diplomats had worked together on Bosnia. And I do not doubt that as we go on with Bosnia, and Bosnia remains an acutely difficult and dangerous problem, not just because of the miseries of the people who live there, but because of the dangers which persist for division and substantial difficulty within the Atlantic Alliance. . . .

—Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, to the Franco-British Council, Oct. 25, 1994, on the Juppé-Hurd visit to Bosnia in July 1994

Thanks precisely to the Entente Cordiale of the governments which Hurd and his colleague Alain Juppé represent, half a million human beings in Bosnia are now on the verge of death from hunger, hypothermia, and dehydration, in a country whose cities are all within 20 minutes' flying time of Rome or Vienna, and 90 minutes from Berlin. All fuel convoys into Bosnia have been stopped on orders of General Mladic, who commands the Serbian rebel militia in Bosnia, and the U.N.'s Unprofor "peacekeeping" force itself is now operating on emergency fuel supplies. What that means is that the convoys cannot move inside Bosnia, and there are no means for residents to cook food or heat dwellings.

Bihac province in the West, where the Bosnian Army has made territorial gains and has even crossed over to fight in Serbian-occupied Krajina, within Croatian territory, has almost run out of food, according to the U.N. High Commission on Refugees, whose spokesman Kris Janowski said that conditions in the enclaves of eastern Bosnia are equally ap-

palling. At Zepa, Srebrenica, and Gorazde, almost no medical supplies remain, and there is no electricity, and very little food.

On Oct. 25, the Serbians announced that they were letting through a total of 33 tons of gasoline—14 tons for the capital, 9 tons for Zepa, and 20 tons for the eastern enclaves, an enormous area where about 200,000 people are trapped in conditions which Doctors Without Borders leader Philippe Salignon calls "open air jails." Unprofor had demanded 700 tons divided among 11 convoys, and 12 convoys with food.

These zones are all under U.N. "protection," meaning that the Unprofor is supposed to have a mandate to send convoys through. Since this mandate is not being executed, it is clearly that the U.N. is working hand-in-hand with the Serbians to force the Bosnian Army to capitulate by starving the population out from under it.

Struggle over Mt. Igman

During the latter half of October, there was an uproar in Sarajevo over the attempts by the U.N.'s Gen. Sir Michael Rose, at Serbian request, to drive the Bosnian Army off Mt. Igman, a strategic stronghold not far from the Bosnian capital. *EIR* readers may recall that on Oct. 6, military action was taken by Unprofor against 550 Bosnian troops protecting the only land route left open into Sarajevo, blowing up Bosnian bunkers and trenches. Then, Unprofor began to threaten *air strikes* against the Bosnian Army, unless the Mt. Igman route were cleared.

This route has great significance, since Sarajevo Airport, which Unprofor refuses to protect adequately, is highly vulnerable and can be taken out at any time by Serbian sniper fire. There remains one and only one overland route in and out of Sarajevo, which winds down to the sea over Mt. Igman. Were that route to be cut, the capital could fall to Serbian forces at any time.

At Serbian request, the zone was declared demilitarized in late 1993, but Bosnian Army regulars and militiamen proceeded to heavily infiltrate it when it soon became apparent that the U.N. would do nothing to keep it open. This all changed during the last week of October, when the Bosnian government, under strong military threat from the Entente Cordiale partners, agreed to withdraw its troops from Mt. Igman, despite the fact that Unprofor had made no further

commitment to keep the road open.

Intense and openly expressed hatred now prevails between the Bosnian population and the British officials occupying their country. On Oct. 22, it came to a vitriolic exchange between the Bosnia's U.N. Ambassador Mohammed Sacirbey and the U.N. Security Council's Chairman Sir Peter Hain. Sacirbey demanded that General Rose be put before a military tribunal.

Three days later, the Bosnian Parliament unanimously voted up a resolution demanding that Rose be removed from the post of U.N. commander in Bosnia, not because he was openly working with the Serbians, but because in his efforts to protect British interests, he was failing to implement the U.N.'s own resolutions. Bosnian Minister Hasan Muratovic commented: "The target of the Unprofor mission is, first, to freeze the existing situation, to get agreement from the Serbian side for every action they take, as well as to get agreement from the Serbian side to supply themselves. . . . The [Bosnian Parliament] agreed that this freezing of the situation is unacceptable, even if the price of that is the withdrawal of Unprofor."

These statements by officials and elected representatives of a sovereign state, were dismissed as "noise" by U.N. spokesmen quoted in the London *Times*. True to its "Catch-22" identity, the United Nations has asked England to nominate the person to replace Rose: another Englishman, of course, Maj.-Gen. Rupert Smith.

Western 'unity' at what price?

There should indeed be more of whatever is worrying Douglas Hurd. At two stormy NATO meetings during the week of Oct. 17, the United States was at loggerheads with the U.N. commander in former Yugoslavia, Bertrand de Lapresle, over air strikes. The meetings ended in a complete stalemate, and Oct. 18 statements by White House spokesman Dee Dee Myers as to the possibility that the United States might unilaterally lift the arms embargo on Bosnia on Nov. 15, were contradicted two days later by President Clinton. Nevertheless, on Oct. 19 it was made public that the U.S. administration was sending Gen. John Galvin, former supreme commander of allied forces in Europe, to Bosnia along with 15 American officers, in order to "help the Bosnian Army and its Croatian allies integrate their forces," according to senior American and Croatian sources. That same week, Gregory Treverton, deputy chairman of estimates of the National Intelligence Council, a private agency, arrived in Bosnia, presumably on an advance mission. Unprofor (i.e., the British and the French) treated him as shabbily as possible: He was refused armored transport for his trip to central Bosnia, and was subjected to a number of vexations and insults.

Despite the U.S. actions, the generally held evaluation in the Bosnian camp, is that nothing can be expected in the short term from the U.S. government, neither in terms of

air strikes, nor in terms of a subsequent lifting of the arms embargo, and that therefore, a complete internal reorganization is the only hope for victory. Even British military commentators, such as *Jane's Defense Weekly*, admit that an ultimate Bosnian victory is possible, thanks to the incredible tenacity and iron morale of the Bosnian troops.

In late October, it was made known that Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic had proposed to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, that the famous Croatian General Spegelj should be made commander of a joint military command of the Bosnian Army and the Bosnian Croatian militia. Spegelj, who is enormously popular in Croatia for having stopped the Serbian offensive in eastern Slavonia, is less popular with the entourage of present Defense Minister Susak, who, like President Tudjman, is an apostle of "compromise."

'Law is invented, my dear!'

But iron morale, let alone iron morality, is definitely not the tone in the western camp. Following the latest round of proposals by French Foreign Minister Juppé, French UDF Deputy Yves Rousset-Rouard, presumably in the name of the London Contact Group on Bosnia, organized on Oct. 17 a conference on "Balkan unity" the French National Assembly. Rousset-Rouard, who, if one trusts his curriculum vitae, appears to be mainly a representative of the French movie-making industry, promoted the idea of a reconstituted Yugoslavia, under another name, and appeared to be extremely surprised when his "mini peace-conference," at which he had expected that the diplomatic representatives of Bosnia and Croatia would sit calmly at the same podium with Serbian officials, broke down into six hours of absolute chaos.

Amid scenes which reminded one of political meetings in Germany shortly before the Nazi coup d'état, Bosnian Ambassador Dr. Kovac was shouted down and interrupted on several occasions by Rousset-Rouard himself, as soon as Kovac attempted to bring home to the parliamentarians present the terrifying nature of the Serbian occupation. A septuagenarian historian, Prof. Paul Garde, who attacked the concept of Greater Serbia, was drowned out and insulted with catcalls of "Fascist! Liar!" and other even ruder expressions.

The low-point of the conference was reached when Prof. Marc Gjidara, who teaches international law at Paris University, rose from the floor to attack Juppé's proposal to federate the self-styled "Serbian Republic of Bosnia" with Greater Serbia, to give away eastern Bosnia away to Serbia in exchange for the government keeping Sarajevo, and to let the Serbians have the area around Dubrovnik in exchange for compromising on the parts of eastern Slavonia which they have seized. In Gjidara's view, such areas should become autonomous. To this, the head of the Franco-Serbian Parliamentary association, Xavier de Roux, a lawyer who once specialized in Soviet commercial contracts, replied: "Law? What is human creativity for, but to make up new laws? *Law is invented, my dear!*"