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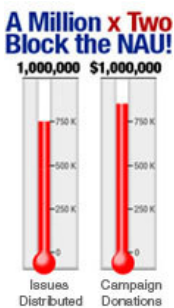
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By: William Norman Grigg

May 10, 1999

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It was a spectacle at once pathetic and horrifying: Hundreds of thousands — perhaps a half-million or more — terrified civilians driven from a land their people had lived in for centuries. Those not fortunate enough to flee fell prey to the depredations of merciless paramilitary death squads, who committed hideous acts of plunder, rape, and mass murder. Thousands of civilians perished, and the human tidal wave generated by this triumph of “ethnic cleansing” was described by some observers as the largest human population displacement Europe had seen since World War II.

Are these snapshots of Kosovo, April 1999? No — these are scenes from Krajina, August 1995. The victims were not ethnic Albanians driven from Kosovo by the security forces of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic, but rather ethnic Serbs driven from Croatia by troops under the command of Croatian dictator Franjo Tudjman. Although no decent person can help but be moved by the plight of Kosovo’s Albanians, their suffering is not unique. As will be illustrated below, that suffering is a product — perhaps a premeditated one — of decisions taken by the same foreign policy elite that now describes the forced exodus from Kosovo as a humanitarian disaster of global proportions. That same elite was behind the slaughter and forced exodus of the Krajina Serbs.

### Reward for “Peace”

No threats of military retaliation were issued by the Clinton Administration and NATO following Croatia’s rout of the Krajina Serbs. In fact, the massacre could not have occurred without timely and generous assistance from the Clinton Administration. According to Croatian diplomat Stipe Mesic, the Croatian assault on Krajina was Tudjman’s reward “for having accepted, under Washington’s pressure, the federation between Croats and Muslims in Bosnia” that was written into the Dayton “peace” accords. Croatian assembly deputy Mate Mestrovic explained that the Clinton Administration “gave us the green light to do whatever had to be done.” The invasion plan, code-named “Operation Storm,” received specific prior approval from Peter Galbraith, the U.S. ambassador to Croatia.

Additionally, the Croatian military campaign received tactical support from NATO. As Croat forces began their attack, U.S. aircraft under NATO command destroyed Serbian radar and anti-aircraft defenses in the region. American EA-6B electronic warfare aircraft patrolled the skies in support of the unfolding offensive, jamming communications between Serb units. But there was also a covert American presence on the ground in support of the Croats. Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), a private military and intelligence consulting firm based in Virginia, had been hired by Tudjman in early 1995 to upgrade his Soviet-created Ministry of Defense into a modern fighting force. According to MPRI information officer Joseph Allred, the firm exists so that “the U.S. can have influence as part of its national strategy on other nations without employing its own army.”

Thanks in large measure to training it received from MPRI, the “ex”-Communist Croatian military, which had previously been dismissed as bumbling and inept, performed its grisly mission in Krajina with unexpected efficiency and professionalism. By focusing primarily on civilian targets, the Croats minimized their casualties: Croatia admitted to suffering only 118 dead or wounded, as compared to an estimated 14,000 civilian casualties among the Serbs. An AP dispatch filed during the offensive reported that Croat forces shelled and strafed columns of Serb refugees.

Canadian General Alain Forand, who was assigned to UN “peacekeeping” duty in Krajina during Operation Storm, has testified, “There is no doubt in my mind that the Croats knew they were shelling civilian targets” in the city of Knin, which was where the Krajina Serb parliament was located. Colonel Andrew Leslie, another Canadian “peacekeeper,” estimated that of the more than 3,000 shells fired at the city, no more than 250 hit military targets; accordingly, he concluded, “the fire was deliberately directed against civilian buildings.” Leslie has also described seeing bodies of the dead at Knin Hospital “stacked in the corridors ... in piles.”

Milwaukee attorney Nikola Kostich, who has served as counsel for Bosnian Serbs at the UN’s war crimes tribunal for Yugoslavia, told THE NEW AMERICAN in late 1997 about his visit to a mass grave in Mrkonjic Grad, a small town in southwestern Bosnia near Krajina where Croats and Bosnian Muslims liquidated Serb civilians during the period of Operation Storm. “I was present when the site was exhumed,” Kostich recalled. “The bodies were not those of military personnel. They were civilians, including people as much as 80 years old.”

### “Highway of Hell”

As is the case with Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians, the Krajina Serbs were secessionists

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seeking to create an independent pe...  
 ever, just prior to the beginning of the Croat offensive on August 4,  
 of the Krajina Serbs, focusing  
 resistance, were willing "to discuss terms for

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Croatia's domain," reported the AP. This contrasts sharply with the position of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the Maoist insurrectionary group that seeks to wrest Kosovo from Serbia and integrate it into a "Greater Albania" which would include parts of Montenegro, Macedonia, and Greece.

In the months leading up to the beginning of the Kosovo War on March 24th, the KLA escalated its guerilla campaign, while urging NATO to bomb the Serbs — even if this meant that hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians would perish or be driven from their homes once the war began in earnest. According to a diplomatic insider quoted by the April 1st *Chicago Tribune*, when KLA officials were warned that NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia would trigger retaliatory violence by Serb forces in Kosovo, one KLA leader replied: "We don't care. 400,000 Kosovars can be sacrificed for our independence."

Addressing an audience of NATO combat pilots at the air base in Aviano, Italy on April 8th, Secretary of Defense William Cohen descended into rank melodrama: "Mr. Milosevic, as you have all seen, has carried us into the heart of darkness. It's a place where power grinds its heel and boot over the rule of law, and where justice amounts to nothing more than a bullet in the back of the head." Milosevic and his minions, Cohen continued, "are engaging in rape, pillage, and mass murder on a scale that we have not seen since the end of World War II.... They have pushed over a million people onto a highway of hell that is littered with deprivation and suffering that is almost unimaginable."

Milosevic is an "ex"-Communist thug who commands a Soviet-style military and security apparatus, and there is ample evidence that his treatment of the Kosovo Albanians has been appallingly brutal. However, he can't claim all the credit for the humanitarian disaster described (in grossly exaggerated terms) by Cohen. The "highway of hell" is a joint production of Milosevic, the KLA, and NATO.

"We act to protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive," declared Bill Clinton a few hours after U.S. military personnel had been ordered into battle by Javier Solana, the Spanish Marxist who serves as NATO's secretary-general. As is the case with many of Mr. Clinton's public pronouncements, this was a demonstrable lie, given that he had been offered ample prior warning that air strikes against Yugoslavia would provoke bloody reprisals against Kosovo's Albanian residents.

"The warnings were there for President Clinton," reported the April 1st *Washington Post*. "For weeks before the NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia ... CIA Director George J. Tenet had been forecasting that Serb-led Yugoslav forces might respond by accelerating their campaign of ethnic cleansing in the province of Kosovo — precisely the outcome that has unfolded over the past week." Top-ranking military officials corroborated Tenet's assessment, warning Mr. Clinton that if Serb security and military forces carried out such an assault, "air power alone would not be sufficient to stop it..." Indeed, on March 30th, NATO supreme military commander Wesley Clark admitted that from the very beginning, "we never thought that through air power we could stop these killings on the ground."

Despite receiving such detailed advice from top military advisers, "Clinton and his senior White House advisers pressed on with their planning for an air campaign," continued the *Post* account. An earlier report in the *Post* described a meeting between Mr. Clinton and Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema shortly before the war began, in which D'Alema asked the President what would be done if Milosevic responded to an air strike by escalating his own military campaign in Kosovo. Not knowing how to respond, Mr. Clinton looked helplessly at his National Security Adviser, Samuel Berger, who blithely replied, "We will continue the bombing."

In other words, if the air strikes exacerbated the suffering, the Clinton Administration's chosen strategy was to reinforce failure — at whatever cost to both the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia. Incredibly, when White House spokesman Joe Lockhart was asked about Serb retaliation against Albanians in Kosovo, he replied: "We knew he was going to do this." This admission prompted liberal columnist Michael Kelly to conclude, "the President and his advisers are guilty of criminal irresponsibility. For the United States made no serious efforts to prepare for what Lockhart says we knew was coming, a wave of killing and 'cleansing' U.S. officials now compare to genocide."

### NATO-Prompted Terror

An even more shocking fact was reported by Detroit News columnist Tony Snow on March 29th. Relying on an account of a confidential national security briefing provided by a senator who was in attendance, Snow wrote: "After the foreign-policy wise men asserted that the United States has a moral imperative to stop the murderous Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, one senator asked: How many Albanians have Milosevic's troops massacred this year? The President's emissaries turned ashen. They glanced at each other. They rifled through their papers. One hazarded a guess: 'Two thousand?' No, the senator replied, that was the number for all of last year."

“The senator pressed on,” continued. “Kosovo? Nobody knew. As it turns out, Kosovo has been about as measured ‘not in the hundreds, but dozens.’”

Borneo than expired this year in Kosovar bloodshed — more died in a single Russian bomb blast; in a single outburst of violence in East Timor; in a single day in Rwanda. China has been bloodier this year.”

In other words, it was not until NATO began its war that Kosovo graduated to the status of an epic “humanitarian crisis” — just as it is true that the tragedy of Kosovo was contained until multinational intervention turned it into a conflict of potentially global scope.

It is also important to recognize that the dimensions of the “humanitarian crisis” are not known, and will not be known until normalcy — or what passes for it in the Balkans — is restored to the region. The most lurid accounts of slaughter and mayhem on the part of Serb paramilitary forces originate with the KLA, which, as a Marxist terrorist group, is not hampered by a fastidious regard for the truth. On March 31st, *Agence France-Presse* (AFP) commented that without independent sources on the ground in Kosovo, U.S. and NATO officials are providing “little more than regurgitation of unconfirmed information from the Kosovo Liberation Army.”

State Department spokesman James Rubin acknowledged that the atrocity accounts he provided to reporters were relayed from KLA commander Hashim Thaci and were “not necessarily facts.”

One spurious atrocity story reported by Rubin described the detention of 100,000 ethnic Albanians in a sports stadium in Pristina, Kosovo’s provincial capitol. But when an AFP reporter visited the site to confirm the story, he “found the stadium to be deserted and showing no signs of recent occupation.”

### Scoring for Milosevic

Once it became clear that the NATO air strikes would not prevent Milosevic from attacking Kosovo’s Albanians, NATO and Administration spokesmen modulated their rhetoric by insisting that the air campaign was “degrading” or “grinding down” the Serb dictator’s ability to carry out his attacks. But such statements were strangers to the truth. “With every NATO missile that hits Yugoslav targets, Slobodan Milosevic stands to gain more power at home,” wrote Associated Press reporter Dusan Stojanovic in a March 27th news analysis. “The opposition can’t support the West in its air strikes, the independent media have been silenced and foreign journalists expelled.” Furthermore, “the ragtag Yugoslav Army — the main target of NATO strikes — has always been sidelined under Milosevic, with far fewer resources than his real power base: the Serbian police.” It is the “police” — that is, the Interior Ministry and its affiliated paramilitaries — that conducted the atrocities in Kosovo, beyond the range of NATO’s air campaign.

In much the same way that UN-supervised military campaigns against Iraq have eliminated Saddam Hussein’s domestic opposition while leaving the dictator’s power base intact, NATO’s Kosovo War has actually fortified Milosevic’s position. Obrad Kesic, a senior adviser to former Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Panic, is an outspoken opponent of Milosevic. Kesic told THE NEW AMERICAN that in late 1998 “Milosevic was purging the upper echelons of the Yugoslav Army” in order to forestall a coup. “The Army has always been a big problem for Milosevic, both as an obstacle to his designs and as a potential rival for power.”

Since 1991, Milosevic has built a 40,000-60,000-man paramilitary force independent of the Army, and that paramilitary force serves as Milosevic’s personal Praetorian Guard. He has also, in time-honored Communist fashion, seeded the ranks of the Army with paramilitary gangs skimmed from the scum of Serbian jails. These are the forces that have been tasked to conduct most of the dirty work, and NATO’s military campaign has left them relatively unmolested. A NATO missile attack on Belgrade did destroy the Interior Ministry headquarters — long after it had been evacuated. *New York Times* pundit William Safire, a supporter of the war, pointed out that the Interior Ministry attack served a propaganda purpose: It produced dramatic pictures that looked good on television.

But the bombing of Belgrade also served Milosevic’s propaganda purposes as well. “Milosevic is a product of the Communist Party who has posed as a Serb nationalist, and the war has given him a chance to recite all of the nationalist propaganda themes,” Kesic informed THE NEW AMERICAN. “The truth of the matter is that he cares for nothing but preserving his own power, and he’s willing to play ‘Tito’ over whatever part of Yugoslavia he manages to keep. Time after time he has been willing to cut a deal that has sold out Serbs, whether it’s those living in Bosnia or the Krajina Serbs who were driven out of Croatia in 1995.” For this reason, Milosevic’s relationship with the military “was deteriorating rapidly” as negotiations over Kosovo proceeded earlier this year.

However, noted Kesic, “things have changed dramatically since the war began. The Army feels that it’s giving as good as it’s getting, the Serb population is united behind Milosevic in a war with a foreign aggressor, and the regime is benefiting from a wave of patriotism that is suffocating all internal dissent against Milosevic’s rule.”

### The Real Reason

NATO's war, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Brundage admitted on Monday that the war was as much as "one act of brutality", in fact, as we have seen, quite the case. It has not dislodged M... enhanced his position. Thus the question remains...

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war?

The most likely answer is suggested by the cover of the April 12th edition of *Time* magazine, which displays a column of forlorn Albanian refugees. In the foreground is a young Albanian mother struggling to breast-feed her infant as she wearily plods toward an uncertain destiny. Beside this heart-rending photo, a headline poses a question intended to answer itself: "Are Ground Troops the Answer?"

The public has been inundated with similar photos and footage: Kosovo Albanians driven from their homes, packed into boxcars, and consigned to wretched refugee camps; throngs of desperately hungry refugees reaching plaintively for bread; elderly women and young children racked with sobs. This barrage has been the most effective weapon of the war, since it has been calibrated to break down the American public's resistance to a protracted involvement in a ground war in the Balkans on behalf of NATO, the United Nations, and the cause of global government.

Why was the public spared similar footage of the August 1995 exodus of the Krajina Serbs? The short and cynical answer is that an event qualifies as a "humanitarian catastrophe" only when it is recognized as such by the foreign policy elite. As the following article "Media Trumpeting for War" will show, that elite has now decided, on the basis of Kosovo's "humanitarian catastrophe," that a "consensus" exists in favor of American involvement in a ground war in Kosovo. The purpose of that war, as is explained in the article "NATO and the Global Advance," is to advance the cause of world government, particularly the creation of a UN-run International Criminal Court.

This is why Serbs and Albanians are dying in Yugoslavia, and why American ground troops may soon be fighting and dying in the Balkans. There is a certain sinister symmetry in the fact that the modern drive for world government began with America's involvement in World War I. The same criminal elite responsible for that debacle has decided to reprise the Balkan bloodshed as a coda to the 20th century.

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