

# U.S. eggs on Serbian massacre in Bosnia

by Umberto Pascali

Lawrence Eagleburger, deputy secretary of state, former president of Kissinger Associates, and the most blatant example of a conflict of interest, summed up on April 23 the position of the Bush administration concerning the Serbian war of aggression now concentrated on Bosnia. In an interview with the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour the “former” intimate friend of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic, stated that in the case of the war against Croatia “the only issue that finally made a difference” was that Croats and Serbs “got tired of killing each other. They were exhausted, and the U.N. and the European Community were there—once the situation reached the stage where the two were prepared to stop killing each other, where, in fact, the U.N. and the EC could find ways to . . . separate the parties and bring some sort of at least temporary solution.”

A Croatian leader commented: “They do not try to hide it any more. The strategy now is: Let the killing continue as long as possible. Maybe they will apply now a ‘breakaway’ scenario in which the racists, the Greater Serbians, will accuse ‘American imperialism’ but will continue to be encouraged to do the dirty job. Bottom line: Europe will be more and more paralyzed by fear and by the inability to take any stand.”

When, at the press briefing of May 5, State Department spokesman Margaret Tutwiler was asked what happened to the big boast by James Baker III, after he met with Bosnia’s foreign minister on April 14, that he would make Serbia an “international pariah” if the aggression were not stopped. “When the minister was here we made quite clear that our effort was an emergency humanitarian effort,” she replied. “We have consistently called on all parties, all groups to stop the violence, to stop the fighting. Now, I don’t know, what will ever eventually cause them to stop. But in the meantime we have innocent people being killed.” It is not only Serbs, “there are also others who have been involved in contributing to the violence. . . . And in fact, excuse me, some of them were Bosnian armed individuals.”

“Bosnian armed individuals”! Talking about a country, Bosnia, officially recognized by the United States, which has been attacked by an enemy army and gangs of “irregular” terrorists, Tutwiler accuses the Bosnians of being armed and active inside their country during a war of aggression! The cynicism reached its zenith, however, on May 2, when a

State Department assessment explained that there were conflicting reports on who started the fighting in Bosnia. Serbia was not even mentioned.

Why did the State Department decide on that day to drop even the fig leaf of a formal condemnation? “I think it was a signal,” said a local source who follows the situation in Bosnia hour by hour. “Don’t forget that on May 2 the President of Bosnia was kidnaped by the [Serbian] Army, and the Army thought they could turn him into a puppet. Isn’t it curious that the Bush administration exactly on that day decided to go blatantly for verbal equidistance?”

## Serbian Army abducts Bosnian President

Indeed, on May 2, the legally elected and internationally recognized President, Alija Izetbegovic, was abducted by the Serbian Army shortly after landing at the Sarajevo Airport, while returning from EC-sponsored peace talks in Lisbon. Izetbegovic was held at gunpoint inside the Lutavika army barracks. His abductors asked him to sign a “cease-fire” order. When Vice President Ejup Ganic succeeded in establishing phone contact with him, the President said: “I was brought to Lutavika by force. That is why I am not in the presidential building. The Army waited for me at the airport. I am virtually a prisoner.” In the meantime the Army lobbed what western diplomats called “the heaviest shelling against an European capital since World War II” on Sarajevo, trying to annihilate the government physically.

With the President of a friendly country kidnaped, the U.S. ambassador in “Yugoslavia,” Zimmermann, and EC mediator Lord Carrington’s people immediately entered negotiations with the kidnapers. The Serbian Army asked as ransom that the chief of their forces in Bosnia, Gen. Milutin Kukanjak, be let out of Sarajevo. He and 500 troops had been blockaded and surrounded inside their headquarters by the Bosnian forces.

From a military standpoint, the Bosnians had to maintain the blockade at all cost: It was the only guarantee that the Serbian Air Force would not totally destroy Sarajevo, as they had Mostar and so many other Bosnian towns. The government of Bosnia had to give in to the blackmail, and even release captured Serbian soldiers. Throughout the process, Zimmermann, still in Belgrade with a full staff, mediated between victim and kidnapers and made sure that the Bosnians respected the deal.

On May 6, there was another attempt on Izetbegovic’s life. His car was shot at while he was traveling with U.N. special envoy Marrack Goulding. Most of the U.N. observers had abandoned their headquarters in Sarajevo. The last trick of the Serbian Army was to “release” 60,000 soldiers stationed in Bosnia. The High Command in Belgrade, after having organized the invasion, declared that they were no longer responsible for them. The soldiers, mostly from Serbian families living in Bosnia, are expected to turn even more savagely against the unarmed population once “released.”