
Situation Report on the Balkans

Europe's responsibility in Bosnia-Herzegovina

by Gen. J.A. Graf von Kielmansegg (ret.)

Two weeks before the Sept. 14 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a delegation from the Schiller Institute visited the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. German Gen. J.A. Graf von Kielmansegg (ret.) accompanied the delegation, and submitted the following report, which has been translated by Anita Gallagher.

General Kielmansegg was, until 1993, Chief of NATO Northern Command of Europe. In 1992, he called for NATO air strikes against Greater Serbian targets. After his retirement in early 1993, he spent a week in Sarajevo during heavy fighting, mobilizing public opinion in Germany thereafter to support NATO military action against Serbian aggression. See EIR, April 19, 1996, for excerpts from a 1994 article in which he showed how a military victory could be achieved against Serbia—contrary to the insistence of the UN, NATO, and the European Union mediators, that a military solution was out of the question.



On my last trip, in August of this year, to Bosnia-Herzegovina, which I had already visited several times during the war, I found a country whose ravaged and destroyed appearance had only barely improved a year after the war's end—in part through Europe's standing on the sidelines and non-intervention in the war.

I have spoken with politicians, soldiers, church leaders, and the people of the country; the picture was diverse and often perplexing. However, all were agreed that the situation ought not to continue as it is, if the peace and the unity of the country and its future are not to be lost altogether. And again, it appears that the lack of resoluteness on the part of the Western nations, and their political self-interest, unkept promises, and timid wait-and-see attitude, bear a good measure of blame for the current situation. However, it is also the case that, along with Bosnia, the credibility of Europe and of the free world, their last chance to stand as a morally legitimate au-

thority, and a great part of their political freedom of action, would perish.

No aid, harsh IMF conditions

I found a country in which the destruction of housing, infrastructure, the energy supply, and manufacturing plants, is unbelievably great. The will to rebuild, and even the capability to do so, do exist in the country. However, the pledged and so urgently needed financial and economic aid, so far, has either still not arrived—is just dragging along and becoming available drop by drop—or is tied, mainly by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to conditionalities which, for a country so impoverished and destroyed, are completely unattainable. A kind of Marshall Plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina would be necessary, just as, 50 years ago, it helped us Germans to get back on our feet.

It appears almost as though it were in the political interest of some powers, to keep Bosnia-Herzegovina permanently weak and dependent. Moreover, humanitarian aid is no solution; it only humiliates the victims as long as it continues. People must become able to earn their own living and shape their own future.

I found a country in which the conditions of the Dayton Agreement have not been complied with up to now, or are not enforced by the guaranteeing powers. The return of especially Bosnian Muslim refugees, especially to Serbian-occupied territories, is neither being prepared for, nor enforced. IFOR [the U.S.-led Implementation Force] is far less established in the Serbian part of Bosnia than in the Bosnia-Croatian Federation; within that, Herceg-Bosnia is a virtually lawless, Croatian-run district, in which the mafia of Croatian Defense Minister Susak holds the power.

Freedom of movement in the country, in reality, is only guaranteed, to a certain extent, in territory secured by the Bosnian government's army. In all other parts, it is either enforced by IFOR, or by international pressure. The result is, now as before, that the only fully permeable border in Bosnia-Herzegovina for Muslims and Croats, is the inner Bosnian border between the Serbian-occupied part of Bosnia and the rest of the country. IFOR, whose military mission up until

now was a success, is becoming so tied up with political handicaps in the enforcement of its other internal state tasks, that its role is dwindling to that of observing, staying on the sidelines, and waiting. Thus, it will assume, over the short or long term, the same disastrous role as Unprofor [UN protection force] did in its time, for the entire country. Therefore, it is not sufficient to prolong its stay, although that is, in any case, necessary. At the same time, its mandate must be changed, in order to carry out its internal state responsibilities as well as the full enforcement of the Dayton Agreement. For, an effective, competent, and generally recognized police force, bound only by the law, has not been established in the entire country by a long shot.

The West refuses to act

The fact that the Serbian part of Bosnia-Herzegovina is governed by Europe's most terrible criminals, and that the free world tolerates it, is a scandal of the first order. IFOR ducks: No one has jurisdiction; beware of violence. How could it be otherwise? Every police force resorts to violence, and runs a risk, if it takes violent criminals into custody. There is no doubt at all, that [Radovan] Karadzic, [Ratko] Mladic, and the others could have been arrested, if there had been a desire to do so. The truth seems to be that there are nations—above all, those which always exercised a pro-Serbian policy—which have no interest in a trial of these people. With this, the impotence and/or indifference of Europe in the pursuit of international criminals becomes obvious. Enforcement of the law becomes a plaything at the caprice of political interests.

I found a country in which all men, from simple farmers up to the highest political leaders, live not only in want, but under enormous pressure. This has to do with the conditions which I described above, even if only inadequately, as the tip of an iceberg. Men are no longer masters of their lives; they are, and feel, alien. For the most part, invisible authorities and requirements leave them helpless. That leads, on the one hand, to complete resignation, and, on the other hand, to a relentless internal power struggle. At the brink of the abyss—for which we share the blame—each struggles for himself, and for physical, psychological, and political survival, by every means. No one trusts anyone else any longer. This also manifests itself in the party landscape, their conduct in the distinctively colored ethnic and religious interests, in the contradictions and turns which we often become aware of, shaking our heads. There are the struggles and convulsions of a country that we indeed rescued from death, and that we surely do not want to let completely die, which, however, we are not really helping to a future worthy of human beings, with all the measures that are necessary and possible for us. No one ought to blame the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who, indeed, are victims, for this behavior.

I found a country, in which the approaching elections through the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], and also in the countries that are hosting

Bosnian refugees, have been prepared in an utterly insufficient manner; have been manipulated in advance, through massive abuse of the so-called P2 printed ballots; above all, rigged in the Serbian part of the country to favor the victor, and thus fraudulently alter the outcome. The elections will be neither free, nor democratic, nor fair. That they will be carried out under these conditions, is a second scandal. The key to it lies with the OSCE and in Washington; however, no one appears to have the courage to tell the truth: that it is not working. The outcome is foreseeable. The results of war, genocide, and expulsion have been ratified and legalized.

The division, and with it, the destruction of the multi-ethnic state, will thus be sealed. Perhaps it is so intended. However, no one can say: We did not know.

The refugee problem

Under these circumstances, the utmost caution must be used in the return of the refugees, including from Germany, which up to now has helped so much. No forced return should be allowed—not at this point in time, at any rate. There are indeed many districts in Bosnia-Herzegovina which are proportionally intact; however, those are the ones, as a rule, from which people did not flee.

The expelled persons living among us come from the scorched-earth regions or the areas now under Serbian control, in part also Croatian-settled areas, which they were not allowed to enter, and if and when they did, they were without rights, defenseless, without any resources. Unless economic and political conditions are substantially improved, with our help; unless human rights, protection of minorities, and freedom of movement in the entire country are guaranteed and enforced, these people would be sent into a *void*. If this were done, they would lose the last remnant of hope in a future worthy of man.

It is right that the refugees should return to their own country someday. Only under this condition, could we undertake projects on so grand a scale. Only in this way, will their own country have a future, in which they can and must work together. President [Alija] Izetbegovic has stated clearly enough that Bosnia-Herzegovina needs its people who are now living in Germany: their knowledge, their skills, and their will to rebuild. This process can now also get under way. However, each case must be examined.

The principle of free will is still supposed to be predominant. If the conditions for a life worthy of man are again strengthened in the country, or, at least, appear within reach in the near future—and, on that, above all, effort should be concentrated—then the other expellees could, and will surely follow.

The securing of Bosnia-Herzegovina's future is the decisive test, the great challenge for a common European foreign, security, and economic policy guided by justice and freedom. The West ought not once again become guilty in this country—this time, guilty of a lost peace.