

# The big stick behind the Vance-Owen plan for the Balkans: Russian troops

by Katharine Kanter

As Bosnia slides toward oblivion, the single most fateful decision in the debacle was taken in mid-February, and no one seems to have noticed. On Feb. 18, according to reports in the British press, Valery Churkin, Russian envoy to the “Yugoslavian” “peace” talks in New York, agreed with U.S. and British envoys Cyrus Vance and David Owen that 15,000 Russian troops will shortly be sent into Bosnia and Croatia. The next day, the Russian Parliament, by a vote of 162-4, declared itself in favor of sanctions against Croatia. Failing this, the Parliament demanded that sanctions against Serbia be lifted.

The Feb. 20 London *Times* noted that Churkin had “made it clear” to Reginald Bartholomew, President Clinton’s special envoy, that the Russian troops would “not come under direct NATO command.” Furthermore, it was established that the western countries will *pay* the Russians to come in, because, Churkin said, they can’t feed their own troops. Owen added that he would have the Swedes deploy a battalion of their beardless beachboys to play alongside the Russian troops, so that, in Churkin’s words, “it doesn’t look like NATO plus one.”

Furthermore, the British proposed to have western Europe pay the Russians’ salaries—pay them, to de facto invade Yugoslavia, a state which even the Communist Tito threw them out of 50 years ago.

## Risk of superpower confrontation

Will the Clinton administration go along with this madness? One prays not, but the most recent events augur ill for an independent American foreign policy. Although the administration had said in early February that U.S. support for the Vance-Owen plan was out of the question, since the Bosnians oppose it, Owen’s trip to the United States somehow hypnotized the administration—like his alter-ego Karadzic, Owen is a psychiatrist—and turned it round like a glove. Precious time was gained for the British and French to put into effect the next phase of the war plan: Pour Russian troops into the Balkans, so that any decision by the new administration to finally intervene militarily against Serbia, if it come at all, will come too late—unless the administration wishes to risk a direct confrontation with Russia.

What, precisely, can be expected from the Russians in Bosnia? An article in the *Sunday Times* let slip, *ex post facto*,

what the Russians have been up to for months as “U.N.” soldiers in Croatia. Unbelievable as it may seem, given the fact that anyone who is anyone in Europe knows that the Russians are with the Serbians, Russian troops were posted *one year ago to the U.N. cease-fire zones in Serbian-occupied Croatia*. In other words, the Russians were sent to guard Serbian conquests.

According to Louise Branson, the *Times* correspondent in Erdut, Croatia, 800 Russian soldiers were stationed in Serbian-occupied Erdut, next door to the headquarters of Arkan. Arkan, the sobriquet of Zeljko Raznjatkovic, is a psychopathic underworld figure who runs Chetnik gangs on the front lines. Branson coolly reports that it was the Russians who simply handed over to Arkan’s “men,” if that is the right word, the sets of keys for the U.N. armory and tanks. Diplomats in the Erdut area told Branson that although other U.N. troops patrol their sectors in occupied Croatia at night, the Russians refuse to do so, so that the Serbians may take Croatian men out of their homes for sport, such as making them run across mine fields.



*During a 1992 tour of the war zone, a Schiller Institute delegation looks at devastated houses in Croatia, the target of wanton destruction by Serbian forces.*

This is only a small glimpse, given what Arkan is. After a series of scandals erupted around wild Serbian parties thrown for Col. Viktor Loginov, who was driving a white Mercedes the Serbians had given him, and Col. Aleksandr Khromenchenkov, the senior Russian U.N. commander in Croatia, the two had to be recalled to Russia. But the troops remain in Erdut, although Gen. Satish Nambiar, the U.N.'s commander in Croatia, has three times "ordered" them to decamp—to Vukovar.

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## Prime Minister Bujar Bukoshi

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# Kosova faces imminent catastrophe

*The following was received too late to accompany the interview with Kosova Prime Minister Bujar Bukoshi in our Feb. 26 issue.*

Dr. Bujar Bukoshi is prime minister of the Republic of Kosova, and was elected in clandestine elections that were held against the wishes of the Serbian forces occupying Kosova. He has campaigned relentlessly to bring to the attention of the world public the dangers posed by Serbia's brutal suppression of Kosova's 2 million-strong Albanian population.

For example, on Jan. 7 of this year, Bukoshi spoke before the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security of the European Parliament in Brussels. He told the assembled group that "the purpose of my visit here is to sound the alarm about the dangerous situation in the Republic of Kosova, where Albanians live under the harshest of martial law conditions, with all civil, human, and national rights represented and abrogated by the Belgrade regime. My purpose is also to urgently appeal to the international community for timely assistance and support, in order to avoid an incredible slaughter which would make Bosnia pale in comparison."

Bukoshi stressed that "Kosova is a powder-keg, ready to explode at any moment. It is believed by most observers and analysts that our country is next on the ethnic genocide list of Serbia." He insisted that "preventing, preemptive action" by the world community must be taken, to prevent this from happening.

Bukoshi told the European Parliamentarians that the dangers had been greatly exacerbated by the election in Serbia on Dec. 20 of "war criminals and extreme nationalists" into the Serbian Parliament. "In recent weeks, Serbia has massed troops in Kosova. Serbian-led Yugoslav troops and paramilitary forces are being deployed in large numbers, particularly

near the Albanian border. Meanwhile, Serbian refugees from Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina are being brought to Kosova to change the demographic makeup of the region." In the face of this, "the people of Kosova are virtually defenseless."

Bukoshi warned the international community of attempts to "draw a line" in Kosova against further Serbian aggression. This idea, he said, "in effect consigns Kosova to oblivion. The facts are that today, the Serbs have supplemented their previous military forces in Kosova with new troops that were withdrawn from Makedonija. The Belgrade regime has heavy artillery and advanced weaponry in place surrounding most of our cities. They have calculated trajectories and other technical details of launching a barrage on our people. They have even identified specific apartments that are occupied by Serbs so they will be protected when an attack is launched."

He further warned: "In short, the Serbs are prepared at a moment's notice to decimate our country with their overwhelming firepower and fanatical determination. If, in fact, Serbia is prepared to launch simultaneous attacks on the unarmed, unprotected Albanians in Kosova, then a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions will occur. Close to 2 million men, women, and children would be wiped out within a matter of hours, in an unprecedented campaign of ethnic genocide.

"By the time the line is crossed, it will be too late to come to Kosova's defense. In the dust of our demise, the international community will find itself in a conflagration pitting many nations of the region against each other, with tens of thousands of additional refugees, and thousands of senseless massacres. Then it will be too late. . . . That is why we appeal to the international community to pay special attention to Kosova, and to take adequate measures in order to prevent the conflict."

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## Interview: Ejup Ganic

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# 'Someone has to change the mandate'

*Umberto Pascali interviewed Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic by phone on Jan. 31 in New York. He thanked the Schiller Institute for its campaign against the genocide being perpetrated against Bosnia and added, "We are grateful to anybody who is helping Bosnia. In Bosnia, we have a crime against humanity. If they are helping us they are helping humanity."*

**EIR:** What is your position on the big debate concerning an