

# After Election Day, foreign policy crises loom for President Clinton

by William Jones

During the flurry of activity of the Presidential election campaign, President Clinton has attempted to relegate foreign policy issues to the back burner—acting under the misperception that it's more important to play up domestic issues with the voters—at a time when the global strategic situation is about to blow sky high. *EIR* sources and oligarchical geopolitical strategists alike are pointing to the mass turmoil in several western European countries, as well as the volatile situations in Russia, the Middle East, Africa, East Asia, and the Balkans, any and all of which could explode after Nov. 5.

Only once did the President make foreign policy a major campaign theme: On Oct. 22, he gave a major foreign policy address in Detroit, Michigan, a state with a large number of voters of Eastern European ethnic origin, in which he announced that NATO would begin its expansion in 1999, setting a date on the highly controversial NATO expansion.

Late in September, Clinton suspended his campaigning to hastily repair a breach in the Middle East peace accords, because of the decision by Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu to open a tourist tunnel from the Western Wall beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, Islam's third most holy site. President Clinton had to take a several days out of campaigning in order to prevent a fragmentation of the tenuous peace agreements. The President's efforts, pulling together a summit with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu, succeeded in stemming the violence, but an intransigent Netanyahu prevented any progress on outstanding issues.

At the conclusion of the emergency White House summit over Sept. 30-Oct. 1, State Department envoy Dennis Ross was sent to the Middle East to push the process forward. The most Netanyahu was willing to agree to at the Washington summit was to start negotiations on all the major issues, with particular emphasis on the pullout of Israeli troops from the West Bank town of Hebron, which had originally been scheduled for July 1996, and to continue negotiating until an agreement were reached. However, rather ominously, on Oct. 28 Dennis Ross returned to Washington after three hectic weeks of negotiating without any tangible results. Ross himself characterized the situation as "neither breakthrough nor breakdown," although it was clear that "break-

down," was nearer to the reality. Little progress will be made until the Clinton administration more seriously focusses on the problem.

When Clinton wakes up on Nov. 6, he will be staring extremely dangerous strategic situations in the face, including in Russia, the new outbreak of war in Africa's Great Lakes region (see our *International* lead and *Editorial*), the British oligarchy's efforts to divide China and create a ring of destabilizations on its borders, Bosnia, and the Middle East.

## Russia waiting to explode

Undoubtedly, the most difficult and dangerous foreign policy issue facing the United States is Russia. The much-lauded "success" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) austerity policy has driven the country to the edge of chaos. Even if Russian President Boris Yeltsin were not afflicted with a serious heart condition, the situation would still be extremely precarious. Yeltsin's long-term recuperation is threatening to send the country to the vultures—several of whom are prominent in the Yeltsin cabinet.

The administration's failure to face the IMF's depredations head-on is inviting disaster: Some awareness of this was expressed on Oct. 29 by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, the administration's point man on Russia, in a speech commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Columbia University's Harriman Institute for Russian Studies.

In 1993, Talbott saw firsthand what the IMF economic shock therapy, imposed earlier under the Bush/Thatcher regime, had done already, and on his return, urged that Russia needed "less shock and more therapy." His concerns about the strategic effects of reducing Russia to penury have grown, which *EIR* has identified as the danger of a "Third Rome" tendency to gain ascendancy in the Federation. "One challenge America faces, quite frankly," Talbott said, "is to overcome Russian suspicions, Russian conspiracy theories, and Russian old-think. . . . Many of them have made clear that they believe America's real strategy—indeed this administration's real strategy—is actually to weaken Russia, even to divide it. . . ."

"Let me be a bit more specific about my concern here. If the Russians overindulge their misplaced suspicions that we

want to keep them down, then words like partnership and cooperation, translated into Russian, will become synonyms for appeasement, subservience, humiliation at the hands of the West. The result then could be that we will indeed cooperate less, and compete more, on precisely those issues where it is in our common interest to cooperate more and compete less. . . . Suspicions of each other's motives could prove self-justifying, and pessimistic prophecies about the future of the relationship may be self-fulfilling."

While trying to portray NATO expansion as a means of preventing ethnic rivalries in Eastern Europe, Talbott also stressed that President Clinton's setting the deadline for expansion in 1999, "gives us time to work out, in parallel with the process of enlargement, the terms of a cooperative and mutually reassuring relationship between NATO and the Russian Federation."

### **U.S.-China rapprochement**

The U.S. relationship with China will also require renewed impetus, which had gotten off to a good start with such joint efforts as those to ease tensions between North and South Korea. For President Clinton to succeed in establishing a good rapport with Beijing, it will definitely require him to visit China.

Speaking on Oct. 22 to the Japan-America Society of Washington, D.C., National Security Adviser Anthony Lake used the occasion to define a second Clinton administration Asia policy, with obvious reference to China. "Today, Asia faces a choice between two global visions for the 21st century," Lake said. "The first is a return to the zero-sum politics of the 19th century—a world where great powers are permanent rivals, acting as though what was good for one power was, by definition, detrimental to another. The second is a world where great powers act to increase cooperation, avert chaos, and strengthen economic growth, while preserving the balances of power that preserve the peace."

Aside from the somewhat extraneous reference to the "balances of power," the policy of the Clinton administration is, as Lake himself indicated, the exact opposite of the British 19th-century "balance of power" methods which aimed at keeping potential competitors as "permanent rivals"—with each other—a strategy that British agent Henry Kissinger adopted during his years in the Nixon and Ford White House.

### **A fragile peace in Bosnia**

As in the Middle East and Zaire crises, the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina cries out for immediate U.S. leadership. The election of a collective Presidency and an assembly on Sept. 14 did occur without major incident—although there were numerous instances of coercion and bullying on the part of the Bosnian Serbs to prevent Muslims from voting in the home districts from which they had been expelled during the war. Even after the September elections, considerable finesse was required by U.S. diplomats to bring together

the three members of the collective Presidency, Muslim, Serb, and Croat, to a meeting in Sarajevo. Bosnian Serb President Momcilo Krajisnik did not want to participate in the meeting in Sarajevo, which has been designated as the capital of the new Federation, because it is in the Muslim part of the country.

The situation was so precarious that U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Robert Frowick, who is the OSCE representative responsible for election oversight in Bosnia-Herzegovina, decided to postpone municipal elections until sometime next year, which had been scheduled for November. These municipal elections had already been postponed in August together with the national elections, because circumstances across the country had been "too problematic," as Frowick phrased it. Now, according to Frowick, the problem is not so much the threat of violence, but rather continued controversy over refugee voting prerogatives, with Bosnian Serbs attempting to fill the districts of the Republika Srpska with Serbs from other parts of the country, which is designed to destroy the original ethnic diversity of the various regions. The OSCE is trying to maintain that original diversity as much as possible.

President Clinton will have to make some decisions on the follow-up force to the U.S. contingent stationed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the IFOR forces, which are supposed to be moved out in November. Some force will be required in order to assure that the process of completing the Dayton Accords continues moving ahead. Clinton will also have to get some motion into the question of economic reconstruction, which had been started by Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, before Brown was killed in a plane crash outside Dubrovnik in April. Ambassador Frowick also echoed the UN General Assembly address of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, calling the failure of the international community to seriously begin the economic reconstruction "disgraceful." Without the "glue" of economically rebuilding the country, the shaky diplomatic arrangements at Dayton could quickly unravel.

### **Policy can't be done 'on the cheap'**

Much of this has been hampered by the restrictions placed on foreign aid spending by the Republican Congress, demanding ever greater austerity at home. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, giving his part of the foreign policy "mosaic" at the Military Academy at West Point on Oct. 22, warned of the folly of such a policy: "Simply put, we cannot sustain our diplomacy on the cheap—unless we want to short-change the American people. But that is just what is happening. Since 1984 our international affairs spending has fallen by 51% in real terms. Fifty-one percent. The total amount the United States spends on international affairs now constitutes just 1.2% of the federal budget—a tiny fraction of the amount we must spend when foreign crises erupt into war," Christopher said.