

found; the Kosovars were expected to sign the Cook-Védrine draft in one week.

What ensued was a split in the Kosova Liberation Army, with the hard-liners labelling Rambouillet as “treason,” because it did not give immediate independence to Kosova, and calling for an unconditional “war of liberation.” After the failure of negotiators such as U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia Christopher Hill, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright redoubled her efforts to pressure the Kosovar leaders she thought she could count on. In particular, the 29-year-old Hashim Thaci, who led the Kosovar delegation in Rambouillet, and who was praised by Albright at every public opportunity—including calling him the “Gerry Adams of Kosova.” Albright had NATO Supreme Commander Clark fly to Rambouillet for a “summit” with Thaci at a local café.

Former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole was sent to Kosova by the White House to convince Thaci and the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) to sign the draft. Thaci promised to sign, and there was even a public announcement. “Frankly, I’m a little disgusted with the attitude of the Kosovars,” stated Dole. On the other side, Milosevic, probably feeling the general East-West confrontational mood, refused to even consider the presence of foreign troops in Kosova, and confided that he will be able to push the Russians to come to his defense. The Yugoslav Army and Milosevic’s “special police” have been ordered to “clean-up” the organized UCK resistance.

Military operations, especially along the Kosova and Macedonia border, have escalated. According to observers, tanks and heavy artillery hit selected towns and villages, creating waves of new refugees—around 4,000 within only a few days in March. The houses are looted and then torched by Milosevic’s forces. These are indeed criminal acts, and they are not undertaken at random. They conform to a precise military plan. In particular, they are designed to prepare for confrontations with the NATO troops expected to arrive from Macedonia.

Also, there were “special negotiators” who visited Milosevic, after he refused to see Ambassador Hill. Special envoy Richard Holbrooke, who brokered the Dayton Accord on Bosnia, was sent to Belgrade. On March 10, he held eight hours of talks with Milosevic, at the end of which he told the media: “We are on a collision course if things do not change, and nothing that happened here today has changed that.”

Blair’s war cry

The latest events in Kosova and Belgrade have eliminated an ambiguity that has been, at least formally, shared by all the NATO countries, i.e., that Russia was agreeing with Cook and Védrine on what to do in Kosova. Quite the contrary, the Russians have stated repeatedly their opposition to the “use of force,” and this position goes beyond the superficial explanations of the “pan-Slavic and Orthodox brotherhood” that would link Moscow and Belgrade. The Russian position, different from that taken in 1995 when NATO bombed military



British Prime Minister Tony Blair demands that Europeans restructure their defenses for deployments outside the NATO area.

targets and partially neutralized the war machine of Radovan Karadzic in Bosnia, has been prompted by strategic considerations, and above all by the role that the “new NATO,” whipped up mostly by London, is supposed to play.

In this sense, the Balkan situation is seen as an experiment for this new, British-led “globalized” military machine. A conference in London on March 8-10 celebrating the 50th anniversary of NATO (“NATO at Fifty”), gave the podium to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who re-launched his model of a “global NATO,” to be inaugurated in the Balkans. The conference was organized by the oldest military institute in the world, as the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) calls itself, having been founded by the Duke of Wellington. It is today presided over by the Duke of Kent, the cousin of Queen Elizabeth II and the grand master of British Masonry. The RUSI boasts that the Queen is “our patron,” and quotes her saying, “I know what valuable work, in the cause of peace and security, the RUSI carries in maintaining the essential links between the Armed Forces and those who make decisions under economic and political disciplines.” Blair’s intervention was nothing less than a war-cry for Europe, under British leadership—forgetting, of course, the British role in secretly helping the Milosevic clan.

Blair lectured the Europeans on the new NATO gunboat diplomacy. “Europe’s military capabilities at this stage are modest,” he said. “Too modest. Too few allies are transforming their armed forces to cope with the security problems of the 1990s and the 21st century. To strengthen NATO and

to make European defense a reality, we Europeans need to restructure our defense capabilities so that we can project force, can deploy our troops, ships, and planes beyond their home bases and sustain them there, equipped to deal with whatever level of conflict they may face.” Of course, Blair’s vision of this war machine deployable immediately into every point of the globe where the interest of the new Empire requires it, has taken form already in the British Rapid Reaction Corps.

In an article in the Feb. 14 London *Independent*, Blair went into a similar tirade. Any force that will be deployed in Kosova “is likely to be based on NATO’s British-led Rapid Reaction Force, the ARRC. This is one of the most sophisticated and capable military detachments in the alliance. Britain contributes a large portion of the ARRC’s headquarters. . . . Its commander Gen. Sir Michael Jackson is a distinguished British Army officer. He will command the international force [to deploy in Kosova]. Such a force must be ready to deploy quickly to follow up the momentum of any such peace agreement. That means it has to be assembled well ahead of time. That is why we . . . have put forces in standby, ready to go to the region at short notice. It is also why the British Cabinet decided last week to pre-position the vehicles and equipment that would form the machinated core of any deployment,” Blair said. “In Kosova, we will not repeat the early mistakes

in Bosnia. We will not allow war to devastate a part of our continent.” Thus, Europe must be prepared militarily following the British example.

British Defense Minister’s echo

Blair’s imperial proclamation was echoed by British Defense Minister George Robertson, also a speaker at RUSI’s “NATO at Fifty” conference. With no less hypocrisy, Robertson poured forth his tears on the sufferings of the Balkan population. “NATO’s fundamental tasks extend beyond simple collective defense,” he said. “The alliance has also agreed to undertake . . . peace support operations which project stability beyond NATO’s borders. . . . Today, the breadth of missions that NATO might undertake is staggering. They can be very demanding of our armed forces. . . . In Britain we are fond of saying that to be the best at peacekeeping, you need first to be the best at war-fighting. . . . Here in Britain we think of the characteristics required of today’s armed forces in terms of the family of ‘abilities’: deployability, flexibility, sustainability, mobility, survivability and interoperability. Forces must be deployable to where they are needed, requiring strategic lift capability and equipment that is readily transportable.”

Right now the military force advocated by Blair and Robertson is waiting in Macedonia to get into action, as Sir Michael Jackson, head of the ARRC has made very clear.

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