

Clinton made 1995 Ethnic Cleansing in Krajina Possible

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Global Research, August 03, 2005

originalsources.com 24 July 2000

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [THE BALKANS](#)

There was no outcry against the ethnic cleansing that took place in full view of the world, and made possible by US Air support in 1995 in the Krajina area of Croatia. Hundreds of thousands of Serbs were driven from their homes, and up to 20,000 of them were kill. Some of them have been refugees twice. Some of them who survived the Krajina ethnic cleansing fled to Kosovo and have been driven out of Kosovo back into Serbia. . Not only are they refugees, but are refugees who have been bombed twice by U.S. bombs and missiles, while most Americans remain blissfully unaware of their plight. I recently brought up the subject in a conversation with one of my own children, who had never heard about the 250,000-275,000 Serbs who were driven out of Krajina, after more than 500 years of living in the area. She thought I was making it up because she was sure it would have been on the evening news if it had happened.

In May 1999, Valdan Zivadinovic sent me a report on what happened in August 1995 during the worst refugee crisis in the 1990s Balkan wars of the 1990s when the Croatians drove the Serbs out of Krajina. The author of that ethnic cleansing was Franjo Tudjman, who was re-elected as president of Croatia following the 1995 Dayton Accord. In the intervening five years there has been no international demand that the Croatians allow the Serbs who had occupied the Krajina area for more than 500 years to return to their homes.

Furthermore, it is an ethnic cleansing that is VERIFIED by the World Almanacs of 1993 and 2000. In 1993 the population of Croatia was 4, 763,000 with 75% being Croatian and 18% being Serbian. In numbers that turns out to be 840,885 Serbs in Croatia in the 1992 census figures. In the year 2000 World Almanac the population of Croatia was down to 4,671,584 with 78% being Croatian and 12% being Serbian. In numbers that would be 560,590 Serbs – a difference of 280,295 people. Most of them are in Yugoslavia's Serbia province. Many of them, an estimated 17,000-20,000 are dead.

The Ottawa Serbian Heritage Society, (serbian.heritage@ottawa.com) issued a press release Saturday commemorating the “ethnocide and genocide committed on Serbs in Krajina , Bosnia and Kosovo. August 4th is Krajina Dan, the Memorial Day for Serbian Krajina. This commemorates the day that Knin, the capital of the Serbian Krajina region, fell to invading Croatian forces in 1995. Croatia continues to occupy the region today and of more than 250,000 Serbian people whom the Croatian Army either killed or ethnically-cleansed out of the region in August, 1995, the number who have returned is virtually zero to this date.

“Every August 4th a Krajina Dan Memorial is held to remember the victims of this genocide.

This year's program is: Memorial Prayer Service and a wreath laying at the Human Rights Memorial, Elgin and Lisgar streets, at 6:00pm – 6: 30pm."

After the perpetrator of this ethnic cleansing, Croatian President Tudjman, died on December 11, 1999, high level representatives from the United States and Western Europe did not attend the funeral in fear that doing so would be a political liability if and when Tudjman's war crimes and his un-reconstructed Fascism from World War II became known.

Zivadinovic's paper, found on pages 131-140 in "NATO in the Balkans: KRAJINA", ISBN 0-9656916-2-4), is a chilling indictment of man's inhumanity to man. It is an ugly story, but it is time that the American people ask themselves if they really want to continue the Serb sanctions and the Kosovo ethnic cleansing of all minorities and the general anarchy that exists there under NATO and UN occupation. Zivadinovic wrote:

In early August 1995, the Croatian invasion of Serbian Krajina precipitated the worst refugee crisis of the Yugoslav civil war. Within days, more than two hundred thousand Serbs, virtually the entire population of Krajina, fled their homes, and 14,000 Serbian civilians lost their lives. According to a UN official "Almost the only people remaining were the dead and the dying." The Clinton administration's support for the invasion was an important factor in creating this nightmare.

The previous month, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel met with Croatian diplomat Miomir Zuzul in London. During this meeting, Christopher gave his approval for Croatian military action against Serbs in Bosnia and Krajina. Two days later, the U.S. ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, also approved Croatia's invasion plan. Stipe Mesic, a prominent Croatian politician, stated that Croatian President Franjo Tudjman "received the go-ahead from the United States. Tudjman can do only what the Americans allow him to do. Krajina is the reward for having accepted, under Washington's pressure, the federation between Croats and Muslims in Bosnia." Croatian assembly deputy Mate Mestrovic also claimed that the "United States gave us the green light to do whatever had to be done." (1)

As Croatian troops launched their assault on August 4, U.S. NATO aircraft destroyed Serbian radar and anti-aircraft defenses. American EA-6B electronic warfare aircraft patrolled the air in support of the invasion. Krajina foreign affairs advisor Slobodan Jarcevic stated that NATO "completely led and coordinated the entire Croat offensive by first destroying radar and anti-aircraft batteries. What NATO did most for the Croatian Army was to jam communications between [Serb] military commands...." (2)

Following the elimination of Serbian anti-aircraft defenses, Croatian planes carried out extensive attacks on Serbian towns and positions. The roads were clogged with refugees, and Croatian aircraft bombed and strafed refugee columns. Serbian refugees passing through the town of Sisak were met by a mob of Croatian extremists, who hurled rocks and concrete at them.

A UN spokesman said, "The windows of almost every vehicle were smashed and almost every person was bleeding from being hit by some object." Serbian refugees were pulled from their vehicles and beaten. As fleeing Serbian civilians poured into Bosnia, a Red Cross representative in Banja Luka said, "I've never seen anything like it. People are arriving at a terrifying rate." Bosnian Muslim troops crossed the border and cut off Serbian escape routes. Trapped refugees were massacred as they were pounded by Croatian and Muslim

artillery. Nearly 1,700 refugees simply vanished. While Croatian and Muslim troops burned Serbian villages, President Clinton expressed his understanding for the invasion, and Christopher said events “could work to our advantage.” (3)

The Croatian rampage through the region left a trail of devastation. Croatian special police units, operating under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, systematically looted abandoned Serbian villages. Everything of value – cars, stereos, televisions, furniture, farm animals – was plundered, and homes set afire. (4) A confidential European Union report stated that 73 percent of Serbian homes were destroyed. (5) Troops of the Croatian army also took part, and pro-Nazi graffiti could be seen on the walls of several burnt-out Serb buildings.(6)

Massacres continued for several weeks after the fall of Krajina, and UN patrols discovered numerous fresh unmarked graves and bodies of murdered civilians. (7) The European Union report states, “Evidence of atrocities, an average of six corpses per day, continues to emerge. The corpses, some fresh, some decomposed, are mainly of old men. Many have been shot in the back of the head or had throats slit, others have been mutilated... Serb lands continue to be torched and looted.” (8)

Following a visit in the region a member of the Zagreb Helsinki Committee reported, “Virtually all Serb villages had been destroyed.... In a village near Knin, eleven bodies were found, some of them were massacred in such a way that it was not easy to see whether the body was male or female.” (9)

UN spokesman Chris Gunness noted that UN personnel continued to discover bodies, many of whom had been decapitated. (10) British journalist Robert Fisk reported the murder of elderly Serbs, many of whom were burned alive in their homes. He adds, “At Golubic, UN officers have found the decomposing remains of five people... the head of one of the victims was found 150 feet from his body. Another UN team, meanwhile is investigating the killing of a man and a woman in the same area after villagers described how the man’s ears and nose had been mutilated.” (11)

After the fall of Krajina, Croatian chief of staff General Zvonimir Cervenko characterized Serbs as “medieval shepherds, troglodytes, destroyers of anything the culture of man has created.” During a triumphalist train journey through Croatia and Krajina, Tudjman spoke at each railway station. To great applause, he announced, “There can be no return to the past, to the times when [Serbs] were spreading cancer in the heart of Croatia, a cancer that was destroying the Croatian national being.” He then went on to speak of the “ignominious disappearance” of the Serbs from Krajina “so it is as if they have never lived here... They didn’t even have time to take with them their filthy money or their filthy underwear!” American ambassador Peter Galbraith dismissed claims that Croatia had engaged in “ethnic cleansing,” since he defined this term as something Serbs do. (12)

U.S. representatives blocked Russian attempts to pass a UN Security Council resolution condemning the invasion. According to Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic, American officials gave advice on the conduct of the operation, and European and military experts and humanitarian aid workers reported shipments of U.S weapons to Croatia over the two months preceding the invasion. A French mercenary also witnessed the arrival of American and German weapons at a Croatian port, adding, “The best of the Croats’ armaments were German- and American-made.” The U.S. “directly or indirectly,” says French intelligence analyst Pierre Hassner, “rearmed the Croats.” Analysts at Jane’s Information Group say that

Croatian troops were seen wearing American uniforms and carrying U S. communications equipment. (13)

The invasion of Krajina was preceded by a thorough CIA and DIA analysis of the region. (14) According to Balkan specialist Ivo Banac, this “tactical and intelligence support” was furnished to the Croatian Army at the beginning of its offensive. (15)

In November 1994, the United States and Croatia signed a military agreement. Immediately afterward, U.S. intelligence agents set up an operations center on the Adriatic island of Brac, from which reconnaissance aircraft were launched. Two months earlier, the Pentagon contracted Military Professional Resources, Inc (MPRI) to train the Croatian military.(16) According to a Croatian officer, MPRI advisors “lecture us on tactics and big war operations on the level of brigades, which is why we needed them for Operation Storm when we took the Krajina.” Croatian sources claim that U.S. satellite intelligence was furnished to the Croatian military. (17) Following the invasion of Krajina, the U.S. rewarded Croatia with an agreement “broadening existing cooperation” between MPRI and the Croatian military. (18) U.S. advisors assisted in the reorganization of the Croatian Army. Referring to this reorganization in an interview with the newspaper Vecernji List, Croatian General Tihomir Blaskic said, “We are building the foundations of our organization on the traditions of the Croatian home guard” – pro-Nazi troops in World War II. (19)

It is worth examining the nature of what one UN official terms “America’s newest ally.” During World War II, Croatia was a Nazi puppet state in which the Croatian fascist Ustashe murdered as many as one million Serbs, Jews, and Roman (Gypsies). Disturbing signs emerged with the election of Franjo Tudjman to the Croatian presidency in 1990 Tudjman said, “I am glad my wife is neither Serb nor Jew,” and wrote that accounts of the Holocaust were “exaggerated” and “one-sided.” (20)

Much of Tudjman’s financial backing was provided by Ustasha émigrés and several Ustasha war criminals were invited to attend the first convention of Tudjman’s political party, the Croatian Democratic Union. (21)

Tudjman presented a medal to a former Ustasha commander living in Argentina, Ivo Rojnica. After Rojnica was quoted as saying, “Everything I did in 1941 I would do again,” international pressure prevented Tudjman from appointing him to the post of ambassador to Argentina. When former Ustasha official Vinko Nikolic returned to Croatia, Tudjman appointed him to a seat in parliament. Upon former Ustasha officer Mate Sarlija’s return to Croatia, he was personally welcomed at the airport by Defense Minister Gojko Susak, and subsequently given the post of general in the Croatian Army. (22) On November 4, 1996, thirteen former Ustasha officers were presented with medals and ranks in the Croatian Army. (23)

Croatia adopted a new currency in 1994, the kuna, the same name as that used by the Ustasha state, and the new Croatian flag is a near-duplicate of the Ustasha flag. Streets and buildings have been renamed for Ustasha official Mile Budak, who signed the regime’s anti-Semitic laws, and more than three thousand anti-fascist monuments have been demolished. In an open letter, the Croatian Jewish community protested the rehabilitation of the Ustasha state. In April 1994, the Croatian government demanded the removal of all “non-white” UN troops from its territory, claiming that “only first-world troops” understood Croatia’s “problems.” (24)

On Croatian television in April 1996, Tudjman called for the return of the remains of Ante Pavelic, the leader of the Croatian pro-Nazi puppet state "After all, both reconciliation and recognition should be granted to those who deserve it," Tudjman said, adding, "We should recognize that Pavelic's ideas about the Croatian state were positive," but that Pavelic's only mistake was the murder of a few of his colleagues and nationalist allies. (25) Three months later, Tudjman said of the Serbs driven from Croatia "The fact that 90 percent of them left is their own problem... Naturally we are not going to allow them all to return." During the same speech, Tudjman referred to the pro-Nazi state as "a positive thing." (26)

During its violent secession from Yugoslavia in 1991, Croatia expelled more than three hundred thousand Serbs, and Serbs were eliminated from ten towns and 183 villages. (27) In 1993, Helsinki Watch reported: "Since 1991 the Croatian authorities have blown up or razed ten thousand houses mostly of Serbs, but also houses of Croats. In some cases, they dynamited homes with the families inside." Thousands of Serbs have been evicted from their homes. Croatian human-rights activist Ivan Zvonimir Cicak says beatings, plundering, and arrests were the usual eviction methods. (28)

Tomislav Mercep, until recently the advisor to the Interior minister and a member of Parliament, is a death-squad leader. Mercep's death squad murdered 2,500 Serbs in western Slavonia in 1991 and 1992, actions Mercep defends as "heroic deeds." (29) Death squad officer Miro Bajramovic's spectacular confession revealed details: "Nights were worst for [our prisoners]... burning prisoners with a flame, pouring vinegar over their wounds mostly on genitalia and on the eyes. Then there is that little induction, field phone, you plug a Serb onto that... The most painful is to stick little pins under the nails and to connect to the three phase current; nothing remains of a man but ashes... After all, we knew they would all be killed, so it did not matter if we hurt turn more today or tomorrow."

"Mercep knew everything," Bajramovic claimed. "He told us several times: 'Tonight you have to clean all these shits.' By this he meant all the prisoners should be executed." (30)

Sadly, the Clinton administration's embrace of Croatia follows a history of support for fascists when it suits American geopolitical interests: Chile's Augusto Pinochet, Indonesia's Suharto, Paraguay's Aifredo Stroessner, and a host of others. The consequences of this policy for the people affected have been devastating.

Although the American people were told last year that the 79 days of bombing of Yugoslavia was a "humanitarian" effort to "stop ethnic cleansing," the facts indicate no ethnic cleansing took place. Now we are hearing that it was the KLA itself that was ordering the Albanians to flee, and most Albanians AND Serbs were fleeing the NATO bombs. Yet, still there as been no change in the US policy in Serbia. Clinton still insists on keeping sanctions in place in an effort to destroy the Serbs.

And, not a word has been said about any of this in the year 2000 presidential election campaign. Clinton told us in 1995 that the American servicemen who were sent to Bosnia would be "home by Christmas." Not only are they still not home, we have send another contingent to assist in the occupation of Kosovo.

I have wondered most of my life how the German people could have sat back and done nothing as their leader did horrible things. "We didn't know about it," I was told by Germans who lived in Germany at the time. I doubted them. However, now I'm seeing something disturbingly similar by an American leader, and we Americans are not even asking

Presidential candidates questions about it.

I think I may owe those post-World War II German citizens an apology. Maybe they really didn't know about it. Or, just maybe, they didn't really WANT to know what was happening to their Jewish neighbors when they disappeared.

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