

NOTES FOR BRATISLAVA CONFERENCE

“SAY NO TO KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE”

AS THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE IN THE EARLY 1990’S I WAS A WITNESS TO THE FAILURE OF WESTERN INTERVENTION TO PREVENT THE BREAK UP OF THE COUNTRY.

I WAS ALSO ABLE TO OBSERVE HOW WESTERN INTERVENTION EXACERBATED THE PROCESS OF DISINTEGRATION AND CAUSED AND PROLONGED MUCH OF THE BLOODSHED AND VIOLENCE THAT FOLLOWED.

THE BREAK UP OF YUGOSLAVIA WAS THE FIRST SERIOUS DIPLOMATIC CHALLENGE FACED BY THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL. THEY MADE A MESS OF IT.

THEY ARE STILL MAKING A MESS OF IT ---- AND IF A DECISION IS MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO RECOGNIZE A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY THE ALBANIANS IN KOSOVO – AS THE AMERICANS AND SOME OF THE OTHER NATO COUNTRIES SEEM DETERMINED TO DO – THEN THAT DECISION WILL SIMPLY ADD TO AND COMPOUND THE MANY ERRORS AND MISTAKES MADE BY THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH THE YUGOSLAV CRISIS.

FROM THE VERY OUTSET OF THE BREAK UP OF YUGOSLAVIA THE POLICIES FOLLOWED BY THE UNITED

STATES LED NATO POWERS AND THE UNITED NATIONS HAVE BEEN MARKED BY DUPLICITY, DOUBLE STANDARDS, MISMANAGEMENT AND COWARDICE THE INSISTENCE OF THE UNITED STATES TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO KOSOVO IS BUT THE LATEST CHAPTER IN A SERIES OF STRATEGIC MISTAKES.

BEFORE I TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO KOSOVO I WOULD LIKE TO QUICKLY REVIEW WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST GLARING OF THESE MISTAKES BECAUSE THERE IS A PATTERN TO THIS TRAGEDY OF ERRORS THAT PROVIDES THE BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT TRAIN WRECK WE ARE APPROACHING.

MISTAKE #1:

FIRST WAS THE DECISION BY A UNITED AND RESURGENT GERMANY TO PREMATURELY RECOGNIZE SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN INDEPENDENCE – AND I MIGHT ADD THE WILLINGNESS OF A COMPLIANT ENGLAND AND FRANCE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EU TO – AND MY OWN COUNTRY - GO ALONG WITH THIS FATAL DECISION. - A DECISION THAT PREMPTED AND FORECLOSED ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND GUARANTEED CONTINUED ARMED CONFLICT WITH THE SERBIAN POPULATION IN CROATIA. [BY THE WAY NONE OF THE WESTERN POWERS EXPRESSED AT ANY TIME CONCERN ABOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF THE SERBS LIVING IN CROATIA].

MISTAKE #2

THE NEXT MISTAKE WAS THE DECISION BY THE UNITED STATES TO ENCOURAGE PRESIDENT ALIA IZETBEGOVIC OF BOSNIA – HERZEGOVINA, TO DECLARE UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE AND WITHDRAW HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE SO – CALLED LISBON AGREEMENT OF MARCH 1992 WHICH WAS THE LAST HOPE OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. THIS US INTERVENTION GUARANTEED A CIVIL WAR IN BOSNIA WITH ALL OF THE DREADFUL CLEANSING AND BLOODSHED THAT ENSUED.

RELATED TO THIS ERROR WAS THE DECISION OF THE AMERICANS IN VIOLATION OF THE ARMS EMBARGO TO CLANDESTINELY PROVIDE MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE MUSLIMS AND PRESIDENT CLINTON’S ORDER IN COOPERATION WITH THE IRANIANS TO PERMIT THE ENTRY INTO BOSNIA OF FROM THREE TO SIX THOUSAND VETERAN MUJHADEEN FIGHTERS. ADDING INSULT TO THIS INJURY WAS THE US DECISION TO UNDERMINE TWO CAREFULLY CRAFTED PEACE PLANS – VANCE – OWEN AND LATER THE OWEN – STOLTENBERG PLAN.

IT APPEARED THE AMERICANS WERE MORE INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING A MUSLIM STATE IN EUROPE THAN IN ENDING THE BLOODSHED. THIS IS A MISTAKE THAT MAY COME BACK TO HAUNT EUROPE AS IT PAVED THE WAY FOR ENHANCED JIHADIST OPERATIONS IN EUROPE.

MISTAKE #3

A FURTHER SERIOUS MISTAKE WAS THE ILLEGAL BOMBING OF SERBIA ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE OF GENOCIDE AND MASSIVE ETHNIC CLEANSING BY SERB SECURITY FORCES. WE NOW KNOW THE BOMBING HAD

NOTHING TO DO WITH THESE FALSE CHARGES. THE UN ESTIMATES THAT 2000 WERE KILLED IN KOSOVO IN THE TWO YEARS LEADING UP TO THE BOMBING AND THE GREATER PART OF THE MASS EXODUS OF PEOPLE OUT OF KOSOVO TOOK PLACE AFTER THE BOMBING STARTED

WE ALSO KNOW NOW THAT BEFORE THE BOMBING THE KLA WERE RECEIVING TRAINING AND TACTICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE CIA AND THAT THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION WAS PLANNING TO INTERVENE IN KOSOVO WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE SO – CALLED RACAK INCIDENT THAT WAS AS MADELINE ALBRIGHT TERMED, “THE GALVANIZING INCIDENT THAT LED TO THE INTERVENTION

.THE NEWSTATESMAN OF MAY17 1999 REPORTED FROM THE MINUTES OF THE US SENATE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE OF 12 AUGUST 1998 THAT, “PLANNING FOR A US LED NATO INTERVENTION IN KOSOVO IS NOW LARGELY IN PLACE. THE ONLY MISSING ELEMENT SEEMS TO BE AN EVENT – WITH SUITABLY VIVID MEDIA COVERAGE - THAT COULD MAKE THE INTERVENTION POLITICALLY SALEABLE...THAT CLINTON IS WAITING FOR A TRIGGER IS INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS.”

THAT “INCIDENT” WAS OF COURSE THE MANUFACTURED MASSACRE AT RACAK WHICH LED IN TURN TO RAMBOUILLETT AND THE 78 DAY BOMBING CAMPAIGN.

MISTAKE #4

THE LAST MISTAKE I WILL MENTION – ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MORE - WAS THE REFUSAL TO IMPLEMENT

UN RESOLUTION 1244 THAT BROUGHT AN END TO THE BOMBING. RESOLUTION 1244 WAS A THOUGHTFUL AND JUDICIOUS RESOLUTION AND AN HONEST REFLECTION OF THE PEACE ACCORD REACHED BY SERBIA AND THE NATO POWERS.

IT SET DOWN THE PARAMETERS FOR A PEACEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL FUTURE FOR KOSOVO BY PROVIDING FOR A FUNCTIONING CIVIL SOCIETY WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL CITIZENS AND RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW.

RESOLUTION 1244 CALLED FOR THE RETURN OF ALL REFUGEES, THE DISARMING OF THE KLA AND OTHER ARMED GROUPS/ IT PROVIDED FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF SERBIAN MILITARY TO PATROL THE BORDERS AND TO PROTECT THE CHRISTIAN HOLY PLACES. FINALLY IT FULLY COMPLIED WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW BY REAFFIRMING SERBIA'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER KOSOVO WHILE PROVIDING THE ALBANIAN COMMUNITY WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF LOCAL AUTONOMY. IT WAS A BLUEPRINT FOR A SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION.

TRAGICALLY, IT SEEMS THERE WAS NEVER ANY INTENTION TO HONOUR RESOLUTION 1244 AND NONE OF ITS PROVISIONS WERE ENFORCED. UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF NATO AND UNITED NATIONS FORCES THE ALBANIANS WERE ALLOWED TO EXPELL ALMOST ALL OF THE NON – ALBANIAN POPULATION AND TO DESTROY OR BURN OVER 150 CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES. THEY HAVE CARRIED OUT A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN OF CRIME, VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION.

NONE OF THE STANDARDS IMPOSED BY THE UN HAVE BEEN MET IN KOSOVO AND YET DESPITE THIS RECORD OF VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS THE UNITED STATES AND SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE PUSHING TO GRANT THESE PEOPLE INDEPENDENCE. THIS IS NOT ONLY A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE BUT IT IS A GROTESQUE MOCKERY OF EVERYTHING THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE FREE WORLD STANDS FOR.

I HAVE MENTIONED A NUMBER OF THE MORE SERIOUS MISTAKES MADE BY THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES IN DEALING WITH THE YUGOSLAV BREAK UP AND ITS AFTERMATH. IT HAS BEEN A SAD SAGA AND THE STORY IS BY NO MEANS FINISHED. IT LOOKS VERY MUCH AS IF WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF YET ANOTHER SERIOUS IF NOT FATAL MISTAKE BEING MADE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.

THERE SHOULD BE NO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES THAT WILL FOLLOW FROM THE RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED STATES AND MAJOR MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND NATO OF A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY THE ALBANIANS IN KOSOVO.

SUCH AN ACT WOULD CREATE INSTABILITY IN THE BALKANS, SET A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT FOR OTHER PEOPLES IN THE WORLD DESIRING INDEPENDENCE, AGGRAVATE ALREADY FRAGILE US – RUSSIAN RELATIONS AND BRING FURTHER DISREPUTE TO THE ALREADY TARNISHED IMAGE OF AN AMERICA THAT CLAIMS TO BE THE CHAMPION OF THE RULE OF LAW AND YET IS PREPARED TO VIOLATE THAT FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IN THE CASE OF KOSOVO.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLES AROUND THE WORLD THAT WOULD LIKE TO BE INDEPENDENT AND A NUMBER OF THEM HAVE BEEN MENTIONED HERE TODAY BUT I CAN NOT THINK OF ANY GROUP LESS DESERVING OF INDEPENDENCE THAN THE ALBANIANS OF KOSOVO.THEIR RECORD OF ETHNIC CLEANSING, MURDER AND VIOLENCE AND SEEMING INABILITY FOLLOW EVEN THE SEMBLANCES OF CIVIL SOCIETY DISQUALIFIES THEM FROM JOINING THE COMMUNITY OF INDEPENDENT STATES.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO KOSOVO IS A FOOLISH AND WRONG THING TO DO BUT THE PRIMARY REASON IS THAT TO DO SO WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF MANY OF THE MOST BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE GOVERNED THE RELATIONS AMONG STATES SINCE THE TREATY OF WESTPHALIA IN 1648.

WESTPHALIA LAID DOWN THE ESSENTIAL TENETS OF SOVEREIGNTY – THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND OF NON – INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF NATIONAL STATES. THESE ARE PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE INVALUABLE THROUGH THE YEARS IN HELPING TO PREVENT ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN STATES. AGE HAS NOT DIMINISHED THEM. THEY REMAIN THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

ARTICLE 2 [4] OF THE UN CHAARTER INCLUDES TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AS ONE OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES PROHIBITING THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE IN THE RESOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES AND IT IS ONE OF THE PARAMOUNT

ELEMENTS IN THE CHARTER RELATING TO THE CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY.

THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT OF 1975 REINFORCED THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND GAVE IT FURTHER EMPHASIS BY INCLUDING A SECTION ON THE INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS

THESE ARE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES. THEY WERE DESIGNED AS A GUARANTEE THAT ALL NATIONS SMALL AS WELL AS LARGE NEED NOT FEAR AGGRESSION BY A MORE POWERFUL STATE.

THEY ARE MEANT TO HAVE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION AND CANNOT BE SET ASIDE BECAUSE OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR WHEN THEY PROVE TO BE AN OBSTACLE TO THE POLICY AIMS OF POWERFUL NATIONS. THEIR MESSAGE IS CLEAR AND SIMPLE. BORDERS CANNOT BE CHANGED WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE AFFECTED STATE.

SERBIA IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT IN REJECTING ANY POSSIBILITY OF GIVING UP SOME OF ITS TERRITORY BECAUSE OF THE VIOLENT ACTIONS OF A SMALL MINORITY OF ITS CITIZENS EVEN IF THEY ARE A MAJORITY IN ONE REGION OF THE COUNTRY

.SERBIA, AS ANY OTHER SOVEREIGN STATE, IS INDIVISIBLE. NO MINORITY HAS THE RIGHT TO DECLARE UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT THIS PRINCIPLE BE RESPECTED. IF NOT THE FRAGILE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY WILL SUFFER A SERIOUS SETBACK.

HISTORICALLY THE BALKANS HAVE ALWAYS SUFFERED FROM INTERFERENCE IN THEIR AFFAIRS BY GREAT POWERS – THE OTTOMANS – THE HAPSBURGS – THE NAZIS OR THE RUSSIANS AND MORE RECENTLY BY THE NATO POWERS. THESE INTERVENTIONS HAVE BROUGHT NOTHING BUT HARDSHIP AND BLOODSHED TO THE PEOPLE LIVING THERE.

MOREOVER THE MOTIVES OF THE OUTSIDE POWERS HAVE BEEN TO SATISFY THEIR OWN SELFISH FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND NOT BECAUSE OF ANY CONCERN FOR THE PEOPLE LIVING THERE.

PART OF THE UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THIS LACK OF CONCERN HAS BEEN AN UNWARRANTED BUT APPARENTLY STILL PREVAILING ATTITUDE THAT THE BALKANS CAN BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY THAN OTHER EUROPEANS.

I BELIEVE THIS EXPLAINS AT LEAST TO SOME DEGREE WHY THE AMERICANS AND SOME OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS ASSUME THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH VIOLATIONS OF THE UN CHARTER AND THE RULES OF NORMAL INTERNATIONAL CONDUCT WHEN DEALING WITH SERBIA. THIS IS A SAD COMMENTARY ON THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE WESTERN POWERS.

IN RECENT DAYS WE HAVE SEEN THAT A NUMBER OF PROMINENT AMERICANS HAVE SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THEIR GOVERNMENTS INTENTION TO RECOGNIZE AN INDEPENDENT KOSOVO. FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE AND FORMER AMBASSADOR TO YUGOSLAVIA, LAWRENCE EAGLEBURGER, FORMER NATIONAL

SECURITY ADVISOR, BRENT SCOWCROFT, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, JOHN BOLTON, AND FORMER ADMIRAL JAMES LYONS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE FOLLY OF THE PLANNED US ACTION.

LET US HOPE THERE CONCERNS HAVE NOT COME TOO LATE. IS IT TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR THAT ENGLAND, FRANCE AND GERMANY—THE THREE MAJOR WESTERN EUROPEAN POWERS MIGHT COME TO THEIR SENSES AND TELL THE AMERICANS “NO” TO KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE?

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