

---

# U.S. Imperialism After Kosovo

by LANCE SELFA



**N**ATO's WRETCHED war against Yugoslavia will shape international politics long after figures like NATO flaks Jamie Shea and Supreme Commander Wesley Clark are forgotten. The war laid bare international fault lines that had been submerged since the end of the Cold War. It rehabilitated old-fashioned colonialism under the guise of "humanitarian intervention." It gave NATO—the preferred vehicle of the U.S.—new centrality in world affairs. A more unstable—and more dangerous—world will result.

The outlines of a new U.S. imperialism are appearing from the ashes of Kosovo. It remains to be seen whether all of the international tensions exhibited during the war will develop into full-fledged points of conflict in the next century. But the war in Kosovo called into question a decade's worth of assumptions governing U.S. foreign policy since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

U.S. and Western leaders promised that the Cold War's end would usher in an era of peace and prosperity, in which institutions such as the United Nations (UN) would settle conflicts between nations peacefully. This "new world order," as George Bush called it in 1990, would reward U.S. and Western populations with a "peace dividend." Having spent trillions during the Cold War, the U.S. and its European allies would be able to scale back their military machines and concentrate their resources on long-ignored domestic priorities. No longer threatened with superpower nuclear annihilation, the world had only to protect itself from "rogue nations"—smaller regional powers such as North Korea or Iraq—that hadn't yet accepted the necessity of joining the "world community."

With the Cold War blocs dissolved, the road would be open to Russia's development as a "market democracy" and its full acceptance into the "community of nations." China's market reforms—what some foolish commentators labeled "going capitalist"—would bring it more firmly into the Western camp. If no serious observers could say that China had both the market and democracy, at least the Chinese had the market. To most Western policymakers, the market counted more than democracy anyway. Hovering above all of these geopolitical assumptions was the key belief that expanded free trade and "free markets" would bring peace and stability to the post-Cold War world. Nations that traded with each other, it was said, wouldn't

go to war against each other. In fact, promoting free trade and "market reform" represent the only consistent aims of Clinton's foreign policy since 1993.

These post-Cold War assumptions, repeated *ad nauseum* in Washington and in the press, may have had little to do with the reality of Washington's plans for the world after the Cold War. Bush's "new world order" of peace and prosperity lasted only weeks, as the 1991 Gulf War laid Iraq to waste and recession gripped the West. Throughout the 1990s, U.S. forces engaged almost constantly in some kind of war or overseas deployment—including those in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Iraq and the Sudan. "Free trade" and "open markets" contributed to, and made worse, the world economic meltdown that began in Asia in 1997. Yet NATO's war against Yugoslavia exposed just how far removed from reality Washington's rhetoric really was.

## NATO's new colonialism

Needless to say, this interpretation of the lessons of Kosovo directly contradicts the picture that Clinton and the NATO spin machine tried to paint after the bombing ended in June 1999. Yet every development in NATO-occupied Kosovo—as well as many revelations about the war that have found their way into the press—vindicates everything the antiwar movement said about the war.

NATO's war to "stop ethnic cleansing" has turned into a NATO-abetted war of ethnic cleansing against Serbs and the Roma (i.e. 'Gypsies') in occupied Kosovo. A Spanish pilot exposed NATO's repeated "accidental" bombings of civilians as a deliberate policy of state-sponsored terrorism. "If there is a Clinton Doctrine—an innovation by the present administration in the conduct of foreign policy—it is this: punishing the innocent in order to express indignation at the guilty," wrote an establishment critic of Clinton's war.<sup>1</sup> Pentagon and pro-military analysts concluded that NATO's claims of high-tech destruction of Yugoslav forces and materiel were fiction. Even the much-touted unity between NATO allies unraveled as the war wound down. Greece, the one NATO country that opposed the war, denied U.S. forces landing rights on its territory during the rush to occupy Kosovo. When Russian troops moved to occupy the Pristina airport prior to NATO's arrival, British officers re-

fused to carry out Clark's orders to stop the Russians.<sup>2</sup>

Formally a UN protectorate, Kosovo is today a de facto colonial outpost. NATO and the Yugoslavian government insist that Yugoslavia retains sovereignty over Kosovo. In reality, NATO officers call the shots in Kosovo, as a *Wall Street Journal* report described:

In recent weeks, the UN has moved to pay judges and other city workers, and to show the [Kosovo Liberation Army] that the UN is in charge of Kosovo. But UN officials admit the new government or police force won't really be working at full strength before winter. Until then, the tough day-to-day job of running the cities and villages of Kosovo has been left largely to the soldiers.

U.S. units are assuming responsibility for operating schools as a "feel-good mission," one commander told the *Journal*.<sup>3</sup>

But there is little to feel good about today in Kosovo. U.S. and NATO forces are likely to occupy the country for decades. And the longer they remain to rule Kosovo, the more they will become the focus of bitterness and anger for the mass of ordinary Kosovar Albanians. KLA extremists have already staged confrontations with NATO troops who found themselves trying to prevent an anti-Serb pogrom in the city of Kosovska-Mitrovica in August 1999. The Kosovska-Mitrovica confrontation won't be the last. The geopolitical analysis service Stratfor, Inc. sarcastically acknowledged this:

The first price that NATO must pay is the victory itself. It now controls Kosovo. That is a booby prize if there ever was one. Second, NATO is now responsible for stability of the whole Balkan peninsula. What the Austro-Hungarians and the Turks found indigestible NATO will now try to digest. The Balkans is a region whose very geography breeds insecure states without room for viable compromises. It can be done, but the mission is, in the long run, always exhausting. On the bright side, NATO now has a full-time mission to keep it occupied.<sup>4</sup>

If the occupation of Kosovo is the "bright side" of NATO's war, one might ask what the "dark side" is. Even though the U.S. emerged as the victor in the war, it now faces a more complicated world scene. Despite being the dominant power, the U.S. has stumbled into a new era in which its dictates will face greater opposition, even from its "allies."

### A new lease on life for NATO

The standard White House spin extolled the war in Kosovo as an example of what a united NATO alliance can achieve in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Conceived as a purely "defensive" alliance that

welded the U.S. and Western Europe against the Soviet Union for more than 40 years, NATO should have been consigned to history's dustbin when the USSR dissolved in 1991.

But NATO served an essential purpose as the main vehicle for U.S. penetration into Europe, still the most important focus for U.S. foreign policy. "The Western alliance will have to remain together and committed to safeguarding common interests in order to deflect the rise of an alternative centre of power," wrote Alvin Bernstein, director of the Marshall Center (a think tank associated with the U.S. European Command of NATO) in 1995. "Any power or coalition of powers that dominates the area will possess the ability to extend that domination globally, if it so chooses."<sup>5</sup> Rather than going out of business, NATO went "out of area," enlarging its membership to include three former Warsaw Pact enemies—Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic—and expanding its mandate.

Between black-tie parties at the NATO summit in Washington in April 1999, NATO leaders took time to initiate a new "strategic concept." In this statement of NATO military aims, "the Clinton administration has a new tool to employ in Kosovo-style military operations," wrote the liberal Center for Defense Information.

The Strategic Concept specifically gives NATO the right of 'detering and defending' against threats in the vaguely defined 'Euroatlantic area,' which is not necessarily identical with the territory of the NATO allies. Under this definition, Washington can claim that it is acting through NATO rather than unilaterally, thereby permitting the Administration to ignore criticism about imposing Pax Americana on the world.<sup>6</sup>

In this respect, NATO's war marked a major victory for U.S. imperialism. For the first time in its history,

NATO ran an offensive "coalition war" against an "out of area" opponent. What's more, the U.S. managed to lasso its main European allies into a full-scale war.

Yet the actual conduct of the war may ensure that this will be the last NATO coalition war for a long time. If some of the postwar press leaks can be believed, NATO's commanders squabbled throughout the bombardment of Yugoslavia. After complaining that the U.S. stampeded them into war, European leaders such as Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder took the opportunity to show that liberals could run a war. Surely, European leaders had their own interests for jumping into the war. These did not necessarily coincide with U.S. interests, as *Le Monde Diplomatique* writer Ignatio Ramonet commented:



Marines in Somalia

For a wealthy bloc like the EU, the strategic importance of a region lies in its potential to cause damage outside its boundaries by exporting phenomena such as political chaos, chronic insecurity, illegal immigration... Could the EU afford to live for five to 10 years with a conflict of this kind [Kosovo] on its doorstep?

For the U.S.... the crisis provided an ideal opportunity to wrap up something of prime importance, the need to secure fresh legitimacy for NATO... Washington is seeking to remain a European power and has done everything it can to strengthen NATO and extend its influence by bringing in three Eastern European countries—Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.<sup>7</sup>

What's more, the breakup of Yugoslavia provided richer Western European countries such as Germany with Eastern European hinterlands to extend their influence.

### Restless allies

As the war moved into its second month with no seeming end in sight, cracks emerged inside the NATO alliance. In Italy and Germany, the pressure of antiwar opposition threatened to bring down the national governments. Greece maintained an arm's-length relationship to a war waged against its traditional ally in the Balkans. Almost the entire Greek population opposed the war, according to opinion polls. Strobe Talbott, Clinton's lead negotiator in the deal that brought the war to a close, conceded that "there would have been increasing difficulty within the alliance in preserving the solidarity and the resolve of the alliance" if Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic hadn't caved in early June. "I think it was a good thing that the conflict ended when it did."<sup>8</sup>

More than simply reflecting antiwar opposition, splits in



**Supreme Commander Gen. Wesley Clark**

NATO reflected a divergence of interests among NATO's ruling classes. The German ruling class, which maintains a much greater financial stake in Russia and Eastern Europe than does Britain or the U.S., spearheaded the effort to end the war under the G-7 formula. Germany's participation in the war—the first operation of German troops outside of UN "peacekeeping" missions since the Second World War—fulfilled Germany's key objective of beginning to exercise its military prerogatives as a great economic power. But Germany's bosses worried that con-

tinued NATO bombing would further sour relations with Russia—where German capital had invested \$77 billion since 1989, far more than any other NATO country. Auditioning for the part of German foreign minister five months before he won the post, Joschka Fischer characterized NATO's eastward march as a step toward "partnership" between Russia and Germany.

Russia will remain an important security partner for Germany, for a unified Europe, for the West in general. And Russia will not continue in its present state of weakness forever. Those who know Russian history know that there has always been an up and down, and that it will continue to be so. All these questions cannot be solved within the framework of the existing security structure. In my view, then, a Yes to the Eastern expansion of NATO also means a Yes to changes towards a pan-European security system, including Russia in the long run. I deliberately used the word security system and not military system. It will be decisive to see whether it is possible to develop, out of this military system, out of this military alliance, a pan-European security architecture in which the military components will play less and less of a role. If we succeed in this, then the NATO expansion towards the East will be successful.<sup>9</sup>

Needless to say, Fischer's conception of NATO expansion differs from that of the U.S., which sees expansion as a means to continue cordoning off Russia from the rest of Europe—and to block German/Russian dominion over Eastern Europe.

France, which contributed the second largest number of bombers to the war, also clashed with U.S. commanders. French President Jacques Chirac reportedly impeded Clark's choices of targets and decisions. Before the war, France had taken steps to return to NATO, from which it had withdrawn in 1966. After the war, French leaders touted France's "independence" from the U.S., cutting short the country's rapprochement with NATO. Remaining outside NATO during peacetime allows France leeway to pursue an independent foreign policy, which often conflicts with that of the U.S. For instance, France favors lifting sanctions against Iraq and opening more Western channels to Iran—both positions that encounter opposition from the U.S. and Britain.<sup>10</sup>

Britain took the most hawkish line on the war. Prime Minister Tony Blair even badgered Clinton and the U.S. for refusing to commit fully to a ground invasion of Kosovo. More than simply engaging in cheap bluster, the British government was also addressing itself to the European side of the Atlantic. Britain used the war to catapult itself into the center of European politics. British forces constitute the largest contingent in the NATO occupying army in Kosovo (13,000 troops in August 1999, compared to 7,000 U.S. troops), suggesting that Britain will have a lot to say about what happens in Kosovo.

These actions follow from an emerging reorientation of Britain towards Europe and a recalculation of its "special relationship" with the U.S. In late 1998, Britain lifted its longstanding opposition to a European military force that can operate independently of NATO. In the past, Britain had relied on its alliance with the U.S. to thwart moves toward a European military command distinct from U.S. control under NATO. Now, it wants to leverage its "special relationship" with the U.S. to become a player in the European military arrangement proceeding from the June 1999 European Union (EU) decision to launch a Europe-wide military.<sup>11</sup> After the war, the British and Italian governments met to develop common criteria for military readiness among EU states.

The war exposed the huge military and technical gap be-

tween U.S. and European armed forces. The U.S. supplied two-thirds of the aircraft used during the war, and it essentially called the shots militarily. Clark escalated the war on several occasions, ordering the bombing of targets that European governments had earlier ruled out of bounds. The European powers could only stand by and complain.<sup>12</sup> European powers will have to close the gap with the U.S., building up their own military and technical capacity, if they want to make a serious go at building a European military. Although the EU and U.S. economies account for roughly the same amount of output (\$8 trillion annually), the U.S. annually spends \$270 billion on the military, compared to \$140 million in the EU. Any attempt merely to catch up with the U.S. means an arms buildup that will steal money from schools and social security. European workers can only lose in this arms race.

The U.S. faces a contradiction in its foreign policy towards its closest allies. On the one hand, it constantly preaches that Europe must assume “its share” of the burden of maintaining European military power. On the other hand, a significant commitment of European resources to building a strong military presence could pose an eventual challenge to U.S. political leadership of Europe. As he assumed the role of NATO general secretary, former British Defense Minister George Robertson committed to this delicate balancing act. He sought to cajole Europe to spend more on arms to lessen its dependence on the U.S. Meanwhile, he aimed to maintain a strong NATO, which Britain has traditionally supported as a tool for Anglo-American hegemony over continental Europe. Robertson would never have gained the general secretary’s chair if he didn’t have the blessing of the U.S.

Much of the foregoing analysis identifies tendencies and trends that have yet to develop into full-blown shifts in the relations of the main European powers to the U.S. But the U.S.-Europe relationship is far from the picture of unity that NATO leaders tried to portray. The war hasn’t slowed down the ongoing trade wars between Europe and the U.S. over bananas, meat, Coca-Cola and steel. And it may have accelerated a European desire to rein in U.S. military power.

“Since the U.S. emerged from the Kosovo war with its status as the world’s superpower reinforced, other countries have been trying to tie Gulliver down,” wrote the *Financial Times*’ David Buchan. “Although Russia, China and the main European powers are Lilliputian by comparison with America’s military might, they are not diplomatically powerless. In various ways, they could succeed in shifting the balance of power within NATO, and constraining any further expansion of the alliance’s role.” Buchan suggested the European powers might insist that the UN bless future Kosovo-type operations, which the U.S. would view as “a concerted effort to hem it in.”<sup>13</sup>

Hedging against that possibility, the U.S. military’s \$112 billion buildup over the next six years is aimed at increasing its ability to act on its own, without allies, and without the fig leaf of UN or NATO cover. Although Clinton sold the military spending binge as an effort to increase troop pay and to improve “readiness,” the bulk of the money goes to weapons systems that enable the U.S. to deploy forces anywhere in the world. “As the only nation in the world able to conduct large-scale, effective joint [i.e. multi-service] operations far beyond its borders, the United States is in a unique position,” said the



**Madeline “Mad Bomber” Albright in Kosovo**

1999 Department of Defense report.

To sustain this position of leadership, the United States must maintain ready and versatile forces capable of conducting a wide range of military activities and operations.

Being able to project power allows the United States to shape and respond [to overseas crises] even when it has no permanent presence or [but] limited infrastructure in the region.<sup>14</sup>

This is not the language of “international peacekeeping,” but the language of war.

### **A new Cold War with China?**

In the midst of the Kosovo crisis, a potentially more explosive crisis developed between the U.S. and China. The U.S. bombing of China’s embassy, whether deliberate or not, plunged relations between the U.S. and China to a 30-year low. Almost immediately after the bombing, lurid congressional allegations of Chinese spying in U.S. nuclear labs hit the airwaves. The world’s most powerful military and the world’s most populous country seemed to be careening towards a dangerous collision.

China had a right to disbelieve U.S. explanations for the embassy bombing. After all, in late 1998, the U.S. announced its intention of deploying a “missile defense” system in Japan—an announcement that China perceived as a threat. China vehemently opposed the Kosovo war, even abstaining on the UN Security Council resolution that ratified the NATO occupation. Viewing the Kosovo war as a dangerous Western intervention into the internal affairs of a sovereign state, China saw parallels that hit too close to home (i.e. Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong). A 1998 Chinese military white paper described U.S. global policy as “hegemonism,” a term Chinese leaders used to reserve for the USSR.<sup>15</sup>

Subsequent U.S. efforts to patch up relations won’t erase the likelihood of future U.S.-China tensions for two reasons. First, the ground on which the U.S.-China relationship was built has shifted. From President Nixon’s 1972 “opening to China” to the collapse of the Soviet Union, naked Cold War geopolitics gov-

erned U.S.-China relations. The U.S. created an alliance with China based on the two countries' common interest in containing the USSR.

After the USSR disappeared, U.S. interaction with China shifted mainly into the economic sphere. As China's economy clocked annual growth rates of 8-10 percent, it sought to assert itself politically and militarily in Asia. The Clinton administration accelerated a policy of "engagement" with China, trying to use economic carrots of greater U.S. trade and investment to "contain" China's regional ambitions. At the same time, Clinton has held China's membership in the World Trade Organization hostage for Chinese concessions to greater U.S. penetration of its markets.

Second, the U.S. ruling class is still trying to decide how far to push the conflict with China. For years, the Republican right has itched to find a new enemy on par with the USSR. For them, "communist" China fits the bill. Despite capturing lots of headlines for a few weeks, the Cox Commission's allegations of a massive Chinese conspiracy to steal U.S. nuclear secrets fell flat. The Cox Commission forced some proponents of "engagement" with China to keep their heads down for a while. But it pushed others to speak out more forcefully. Veteran Cold Warrior Henry Kissinger expressed alarm at the deterioration of the U.S.-China relations he helped to construct:

If, in the absence of a direct challenge, the emergence of China as a major power and its political system are turned into the occasion for American hostility, we will be embarked on a lonely course without support from any major nation in either Europe or Asia... There is no more important task for American foreign policy than to design a strategy recognizing and managing adversarial elements in our relations with China, yet drawing Beijing further into the international system. We must not repeat in Asia the emotional and un-thought-out policies that brought us such grief in the Balkans.<sup>16</sup>

July's congressional vote on China's trade status with the U.S. as a "most favored nation"—which passed with surprisingly little opposition—suggested that proponents of engagement with China still hold the upper hand.

The festering conflict over Taiwan shows that fundamental issues divide the U.S. and China. In July 1999, Taiwanese President Lee attempted to capitalize on the U.S.-China divide to make what amounted to a declaration of Taiwan's independence from Beijing. Lee miscalculated. The U.S. reaffirmed its official position of recognizing the Beijing regime as the government of China. But it also warned China that any move against Taiwan would invite a clash with the U.S. "We are there in numbers, we're trained, we're ready and we're very powerful," Rear Admiral Timothy J. Keating, commander of the *USS Kitty Hawk* battle group, told reporters in August.<sup>17</sup> Establishment China expert Bates Gill, a proponent of what he calls "limited engagement" with China, nevertheless warned that "Taiwan's status holds the greatest potential for a U.S.-China war."<sup>18</sup>

Both the Clinton administration and its right-wing critics—mirroring the divide in the U.S. ruling class—agree that China represents the biggest potential challenger to U.S. dominance in Asia. This represents quite a shift from the early 1990s, when most U.S. officials saw Japan as the main political and economic challenger to the U.S. in Asia.<sup>19</sup> China does not have the military might to challenge the U.S. yet, but it is making a bid to become a major player in Asia along with the U.S. and Japan. On almost every major political question in Asia (Tibet, North Korea, "missile defense," Taiwan) the U.S. and China are

at loggerheads. Thus, the debate in the ruling class is about *how* to contain China, not *whether* to contain China. Unlike the days when the U.S. and China allied against the USSR, the U.S. views China as a competitor, not as a "strategic partner."

### Stirring the Russian bear?

NATO's war against Russia's Balkans ally, Yugoslavia, pushed the contradictions in the U.S. approach to Russia to a breaking point. On the one hand, the U.S. leaned on Russia to provide it with an end to the Kosovo quagmire. Russian envoy Victor Chernomyrdin negotiated Yugoslavia's surrender to a NATO occupation of Kosovo. Chernomyrdin's peace brokering helped NATO avoid what would have been a bloody and unpopular ground war to break Yugoslavia's hold on Kosovo. On the other hand, the war itself proved to Russia that its worst fears about NATO expansion and U.S. intentions were true. In attacking a Russian ally after refusing the formality of a United Nations Security Council resolution (and a certain Russian veto), NATO once again asserted itself as an anti-Russian alliance. To Russia, NATO's war against Yugoslavia gave the lie to 1990 Western assurances that Russia had nothing to fear from a post-Cold War NATO and a unified Germany.

The farcical appearance of the standoff between Russian and NATO troops around the Pristina airport belied just how serious a confrontation it was. Russia was asserting its right to share in the carve-up of Kosovo, after having played the key role in winning Milosevic's surrender. KFOR commander, British General Michael Jackson, refused to carry out Clark's order to block—even attack—Russian forces. Jackson reportedly told Clark "I'm not going to start World War Three for you." The White House and U.S. military officials opposed Clark (and dumped him a few weeks later). Publicly, U.S. officials insisted the Russian move into Kosovo was little more than a planning glitch. Behind the scenes, they pressured Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova to deny permission to Russian planes to fly over their territories. As a result, the Russian troops in Pristina were isolated and NATO continued its occupation without facing organized resistance from the Yugoslav army or its Russian allies.

U.S. dealings with the Russians over Kosovo followed from the two-level approach to Russia the U.S. has used ever since the USSR collapsed in 1991. The first, "above-ground" level, stresses U.S. support for a "democratic, market-oriented Russia," as the boilerplate statement from Clinton's National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger described:

We support reform because a democratic, market-oriented Russia is more likely to pursue goals that are compatible with our own; it is more likely to be a reliable partner and to respect the independence of its neighbors and to live in peace with them.... A Russia that chooses to stay on the course of reform is one that will be more likely to continue to reduce the nuclear threat, to work with us to promote peace around the world, and to create new markets for our products and jobs for American workers.<sup>20</sup>

To cultivate a wing of the Russian ruling class dependent on American favor, the U.S. has lent support (and billions in IMF loans) to the repressive, mafia-ridden Yeltsin regime.

However, at the second and more hidden level of U.S.-Russian relations, the U.S. has attempted to push back Russian influence in Europe and Central Asia. Enlarging NATO to include three former USSR satellites and forging alliances with



***U.S. troops on maneuvers in Puerto Rico***

oil-rich former Soviet republics, the U.S. has wanted to claim part of Russia's lost empire for itself.<sup>21</sup> It also aimed to prevent German-Russian dominion over Central Europe and the Western states of the former USSR.<sup>22</sup> The U.S. accelerated the timetable for NATO enlargement to take advantage of Russian weakness.

These aggressive actions produced a reaction in Russia. As the war wound down, Russia announced new ties with China. Then, Russia's chief spymaster (now Prime Minister) Vladimir Putin said "in light of the rapidly changing situation in the world, relations between Russia and China assumed a strategic nature."<sup>23</sup> Russian military officials later announced plans to form an informal bloc with China and India aimed to counter U.S. "hegemony." Ten years after the Cold War's end, the possibility of nuclear blocs reemerging cannot be dismissed.

### **A more dangerous world**

President Bush's declared "new world order"—where conflicts between nations would recede and multinational organizations like the UN would police the status quo—apparently won't live out the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The breakup of the bipolar, postwar world may have left the U.S. as the world's only remaining superpower, but it has also left behind a more fragmented world in which many smaller powers seek to

pursue their interests outside of the East-West Cold War straightjacket. The 1991 Gulf War—when the U.S. marshaled a coalition of nearly every world power (including Russia and China) against one unfortunate "rogue nation"—remains a one-time event rather than a model for post-Cold War international relations. The arrogance of U.S. power, whether demonstrated in Clinton's gratuitous bombings of Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998 or in the continued prosecution of genocide against the Iraqi people, has made other powers wary of embracing Washington. Every U.S. military adventure, and every U.S.-backed IMF austerity plan imposed on a country, swells the ranks of the world's people who believe the U.S. is a bully that must be opposed.

NATO's war against Yugoslavia killed as many as 10,000 civilians, left the country in ruins and caused an ecological catastrophe that will stalk future generations. Outside of Yugoslavia, it left a more dangerous world in which arms spending will be ratcheted upward and the likelihood of military conflicts will be escalated. Since the war in Yugoslavia ended, Russia has launched a war with Dagestani rebels that threatens to engulf the Caucasus. China and Taiwan rattle sabers—with the U.S. Seventh Fleet standing by. The U.S. stepped up its military intervention in Colombia, leading many analysts to draw comparisons to pre-Tonkin Gulf Vietnam. The 21st century looks



**f-14 jet fighter**

set to begin the way the 20th century did, with the great powers preparing for war. It's up to working people in the U.S., Europe, China and Russia—who have no interest in repeating the horrors of NATO's war, or worse—to resist this descent into barbarism.

1 Michael Mandelbaum, "A Perfect Failure: NATO's War Against Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs* 78 (5) (September/October, 1999), pp. 6-7.

2 Robert Fisk, "Serb Army 'Unscathed by NATO,'" and "How Fake Guns and Painting the Roads Fooled NATO," at <http://www.lbbs.org/CrisesCurEvts/twofisk.htm> (originally in the British *Independent*).

3 Matthew Kaminski, "U.S. Troops Wear Many Hats in Kosovo," *Wall Street Journal*, August 13, 1999: p. A9.

4 Stratfor, "NATO's Victory," June 21, 1999. Available at <http://www.stratfor.com/crisis/kosovo/specialreports/special91.htm>.

5 Quoted in Mark Curtis, *The Great Deception: Anglo-American Power and World Order* (London: Stylus, 1998), pp. 36-37.

6 Tomas Valasek, "Kosovo Body Language: Backslapping or Head Scratching?" *Weekly Defense Monitor*, June 22, 1999. Available online at <http://www.cdi.org/weekly/1999/issue22.html>.

7 Ignacio Ramonet, "New World Order," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (online edition), June, 1999.

8 Talbot interviewed on BBC "Newsnight" program, August 20, 1999.

9 Joschka Fischer, "The Self-Restraint of Power Must be Maintained: Germany's Role and Objective in the Globalized World of the 21st Century." Address to the German Society for Foreign Affairs, Berlin, June 8, 1998. Available on the Web site of the German Embassy to the U.S. ([http://www.germany-info.org/f\\_gic/index\\_news\\_publications.html](http://www.germany-info.org/f_gic/index_news_publications.html)).

10 David Buchan, "A Tethered Superpower," *Financial Times*, July 27, 1999: p. 11.

11 Meeting in Cologne, Germany on June 3-4, 1999, the EU resolved to appoint Javier Solana, NATO's general secretary during the war, to act as the coordinator of this effort. Just how independent of NATO and the U.S. a European foreign policy would be remains to be seen.

12 This revelation comes from the August 20, 1999 BBC special on the war.

13 Buchan, p. 11.

14 Quoted in Michael T. Klare, "U.S. Aims to Win on All Fronts," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1999, online edition (<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/en/1999/05/?c=04klare>).

15 Bates Gill, "Limited Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 78 (4) (July/August, 1999), p. 70.

16 Henry Kissinger, "New World Disorder," *Newsweek*, May 31, 1999 (online edition).

17 Keating quoted in Liz Sly, "China Raises Stakes on Taiwan," *Chicago Tribune*, August 14, 1999: p. 1.

18 Gill, p. 72.

19 The bursting of the Japanese bubble economy and Japan's decade-long economic stagnation deflated much of the Japanese clout U.S. rulers feared.

20 Samuel (Sandy) R. Berger, "Challenges Approaching the Twenty-first Century," in Robert L. Hutchings, ed., *At the End of the American Century: America's Role in the Post-Cold War World* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 188.

21 John Rees, "NATO and the New Imperialism," *Socialist Review*, July 1999.

22 Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble* (New York: Verso, 1999), p. 301.

23 Putin quoted in Stratfor, "Kosovo Conflict Accelerates Formation of Russia-China Strategic Alliance," June 25, 1999 (<http://www.stratfor.com/asia/specialreports/special13.htm>).

# SCHOOL of the ASSASSINS



Calling card  
of a 1980s  
Salvadoran  
death squad

BY KATHERINE DWYER

ON AUGUST 11, 1999, the *New York Times* reported that a former torture victim in Paraguay had unearthed five tons of documents revealing atrocities committed under Paraguayan dictator General Alfredo Stroessner during his 35-year rule. Stroessner was part of “Operation Condor,” an initiative backed by the U.S. to coordinate efforts between the military and police in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia to crush dissent. *New York Times* reporter Diana Jean Schemo describes how Condor “allowed security officials to take part in joint interrogations, to pursue people across borders and to order surveillance on citizens who sought asylum in other nations.”<sup>1</sup> Operation Condor facilitated the torture, imprisonment and, in many cases, the murder of so-called subversive elements. Martin Almada, the man who obtained the documents from a Paraguayan judge, is a former schoolteacher who was held captive and tortured for four years for the crime of writing a dissertation that criticized the Paraguayan education system. Almada’s wife died from a heart attack after hearing her husband’s screams as his jailers held a phone receiver to Almada’s mouth while they tortured him.

The officials who ran “Operation Condor” were trained at the notorious School of the Americas (SOA), a training center

for Latin American and Caribbean military and police officers originally located in Panama. It moved to Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia in 1984. In recent years, revelations such as those in the *New York Times*, combined with mounting numbers of activists at a yearly protest to shut down the SOA, have brought the “school of coups” under increased scrutiny. The

U.S. General Accounting Office conducted an investigation into the SOA in 1996 revealing that the school used training manuals advocating torture, “truth serum” to extract confessions, false imprisonment, bounty hunting, blackmail and execution. Pentagon officials initially claimed they had no idea what had been going on at the SOA, because the staff members assigned to review SOA teaching manuals couldn’t read enough Spanish to understand what they said.

In 1997, however, the U.S. government was forced to publicly admit that it runs a school that has trained numerous Latin American dictators, generals and death-squad leaders who, as graduates of the SOA, have committed

innumerable atrocities in their home countries. This admission prompted a series of editorial condemnations in the most prominent U.S. newspapers. The *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

