

Peace agreement on Kosovo!?

Summoning results after cease fire agreement

by Nenad Vukosavljević

The celebrated 'peace agreement' about Kosovo signed between Yugoslav military representatives and NATO, is not a peace agreement, it is a capitulation contract concerning only the territory of Kosovo. It has been signed by military representatives which clearly defines its purpose and limits. It contains no details on political settlement, as one would usually imagine a 'peace agreement'. NATO claims victory, they got what they wanted, they will be able to march into Kosovo, which has been one of the two main demands that the Yugoslav delegation rejected in Rambouillet.

How possibly could a peace agreement be reached without representatives of one original conflict party, the Kosovo Albanians and the KLA, being involved into process?

NATO obviously took for granted that they have the mandate to 'negotiate' in the name of Kosovo Albanians. It might even suit the Albanians to have it like this at this stage, but I wonder if they will be asked about anything in the future, or will NATO remain the one to keep Kosovo at their disposal.

NATO systematically bombed power plants and electrical installations, just as water supply capacities. Without an eye wink they justified it with 'showing that they have the finger on the light switch' - that could have been the statement of Radovan Karadzic during the Sarajevo siege. But, obviously in the Western public torturing human beings and torturing Serbs is not the same. The Serbs seem to have been wiped out of the human race just within two months of NATO press conferences. And let it be mentioned, one third of the Yugoslav population are not of Serb origin, especially in Vojvodina, Sandzak and Kosovo. Barbarity is justified if in service of a 'just cause' as the British Prime minister would put it. The tradition of justifying Hiroshima because of Pearl Harbour and justifying the Dresden bombing because of Auschwitz, continues on. Yugoslav forces tortured, expelled and killed thousands of Albanians, so we (NATO) may cut water and electricity supplies to some million people, bomb everything they lived of and destroy their natural environment. Sarajevo daily 'Oslobodjenje' which was awarded the prize of the worlds best independent daily in 1992, referred on the front page to NATO bombing as a 'campaign of implementing democracy in Yugoslavia'.

What was the originally proclaimed goal at the beginning of NATO war against Yugoslavia?
Originally NATO formulated their goal as intending to bomb Milosevic into signing the Rambouillet agreement - the so called 'peace agreement' that one of the parties disagreed with. The goal has not been reached. The military capitulation document, just as the statement of the Serbian Parliament (not in charge of federal affairs), bear not even outlines of the political agreement. Withdrawal of Yugoslav forces and Serbian police forces have been agreed upon, nothing else.

What goals have been achieved and what consequences do inhabitants of the region have to live with in the future?

NATO has proved to be the mightiest military power in the world. And even more than that they have shown to the world that they are ready to use it whenever they feel like it, with cruelty and cynicism, some of us could not have dreamt of just three months ago. The whole world is afraid; NATO is the greatest power not afraid of any other! Despite this fact they are not the 'international community', as they like to call themselves, but only a group of 19 economically very powerful countries.

NATO is united and has demonstrated its steadfastness and resolution. NATO must remain united, the USA will not allow any rift in the alliance, and the complaints will be ignored.

NATO troops will rule Kosovo in the military sense. They will control the borders to Macedonia and Albania and most likely enable the return of Kosovo Albanian refugees who were forced to leave their homes, since the beginning of the war. An unknown number of Kosovo Albanians, Serbs and others have fled into Kosovo direction of Serbia proper, a fact not so well known. These 'internal' refugees are not registered and are usually accommodated by relatives and friends.

The hatred between Albanians and Serbs is greater than ever, confidence and tolerance as preconditions for sustainable peace are further distanced than they were 3 months ago.

All of the original problems have been made worse and within the past two and a half months thousands of people have been killed by three warring parties (Yugoslav security forces, NATO and the KLA), the infrastructure (civilian) and industrial capacities of Yugoslavia have been wiped out, including Kosovo.

The basis for living for all has been virtually destroyed, either by NATO bombing or by Yugoslav security forces who have killed an unknown number of people and expelled hundreds of thousands within Kosovo, which means also destroyed crops, killed animals and burnt houses.

This promotion of the new world order policy by the economically powerful Western democracies has inevitably caused reactions world-wide: Ukraine and Belarus want to regain their nuclear power status, Russia decided to update their nuclear arsenal. NATO's violation of the UN principles and disrespect that they have shown towards all non-NATO countries is indeed astonishing. With good reason this can be perceived as the rule of the stronger, as the pillars of the new world order.

In an economic sense the whole region suffered severely. Not only Kosovo and Serbia proper, but the whole region has been brought to long term *complete dependency on foreign aid*, from humanitarian aid and reconstruction of basic infrastructure, up to investment in the economy. This is most likely what NATO strategists have counted on, being now in the position to blackmail any government in the Balkans, conditioning aid with concessions and obedience to their dictate. There is no doubt that in particular the USA and the UK, who pushed landslide infrastructure bombing despite objections from various NATO member countries, have fulfilled one of their goals with this result.

It remains questionable whether the people of Serbian towns will blame their government and not NATO for the lack of water and electricity, for absence of heating next Winter (usually very cold) and possibly even famine that may be a result of incapability to plant, harvest, process and transport basic food products. The heads of governments who are able to inflict deliberate water supplies destruction are well able of watching mass starvation unless their dictate is obeyed. Whether the public of these countries will be capable of digesting explanations that it is justice remains to be seen.

What may Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs expect of the future?

Kosovo Albanians can hope for reconstruction, those who fled can expect a chance to return. Kosovo will be an international protectorate for years, since it will be very difficult to reach any political agreement after all the suffering that has been inflicted. They will be living in a Serb free Kosovo, something that most of them will be looking forward to.

The Serbs from Kosovo will flee with the Yugoslav army and Serbian police; those who remain can expect a life in ghettos with a heavy military presence for their protection. The majority of Kosovo Serbs will flee to Serbia proper and can expect no support from the government as they will be angry and feel betrayed, something that Milosevic's regime will not allow being heard in public.

Officially kept up, the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, combined with a lack of any political settlement, will lead to constant tensions and possibly to new war. After the Dayton agreement in Bosnia Herzegovina, the USA introduced a military armament programme 'equip and train' for the Bosniak-Croat Army. The military spending in Bosnia Herzegovina equals the total of all foreign aid to the country, delivered weapons are of Western origin.

It is to be expected that similar things will be done for the Albanians in Kosovo also. The response by Serbia will be to renew their military arsenal and get ready for the next war, better equipped with air defence systems, than they were this time. Nowadays one can buy badges in Belgrade with a heart and three letters in the midst of it 'PVO' letters, meaning 'air defence'.

The only problem the Yugoslav government may face is the lack of money for this, but we may feel confident that priorities will be set very clearly, disadvantaging civilians on behalf of the army.

What are the prospects of democratic development?

In Serbia they are worse than ever before. Any new government, which could replace Milosevic, will just as well set for military armament. Many people from Serbia who were engaged in peace and human rights work over the past 8 years have left the country. Western democracies have completely lost any positive credibility in the eyes of Serbian citizens. In winter 1996-97 hundreds of thousands marched through the streets of Belgrade, protesting against the election fraud, many flags of various western countries were carried, as a symbol of belonging to the civilised 'western democracies'. One may confidently claim that this will never happen again, these flags stand now in Serbia for destruction, violence, cruelty and hypocrisy. This does not necessarily mean that those who have this opinion automatically support Milosevic's regime. One Belgrader has put it plainly: 'We do not want to change our government, just because NATO says that we must'. This sad consequence seems to be the only way left of preserving self-respect and dignity.

It is very unlikely that citizens of Serbia will ever hear the truth about the police, paramilitary, and army activities in Kosovo during this war. The media control remains steady in the hands of the regime and if Milosevic goes, it is very likely that Seselj (extreme right wing nationalist) will come to power. Even with the sudden and unexpected freedom of the media, hardly anyone in Serbia will be able to develop empathy or solidarity with Kosovo Albanians, the pictures of fleeing Kosovo Serbs will remain in their memory as another injustice, like the pictures of tens of thousands of Croatian Serbs who fled the Croatian Army offensive in Krajina in 1995. Nobody remembers them in the West and nobody in Serbia wants to remember them. There were 600 000 refugees of Serb origin in Serbia who fled Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina by 1996. The fate of Kosovo Serbs will be identical.

Economic collapse that has already happened will keep people busy with surviving; they will resent and show no will to fight for any ideals of democracy.

In Kosovo, if the transition ever happens and self-government is established, the militant and conservative KLA will take over. So far all Kosovo Albanian political groups have shared the same goal, the independent Kosovo, their divisions were about ways to achieve this and pure power struggles. There is even less political pluralism than in Serbia, so one can not be very hopeful about the development of civil society. What will be the actual political contents of independent Kosovo still remains to be seen. A paradox of new buildings of monoethnic states for the proclaimed purpose of 'developing democracy' continues on. New states based on nations instead of citizens directly challenge the basis for democratic development, the one of civil society, which means the community of citizens, not the community of blood brothers and sisters.

And whether Kosovo alone will satisfy the ambitions of Albanian nationalists in the KLA is granted by no means. The shapes of Great Albania, covering Kosovo, Western Macedonia and Albania itself are not the imagination of Serbian propagandists; they are visions of Albanian nationalists. If they will achieve their goals and at what price, also remains to be seen and depends most of all on those who will control Kosovo now, the NATO led by USA.

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