

NATO BOMBING TRAIL IN BELGRADE



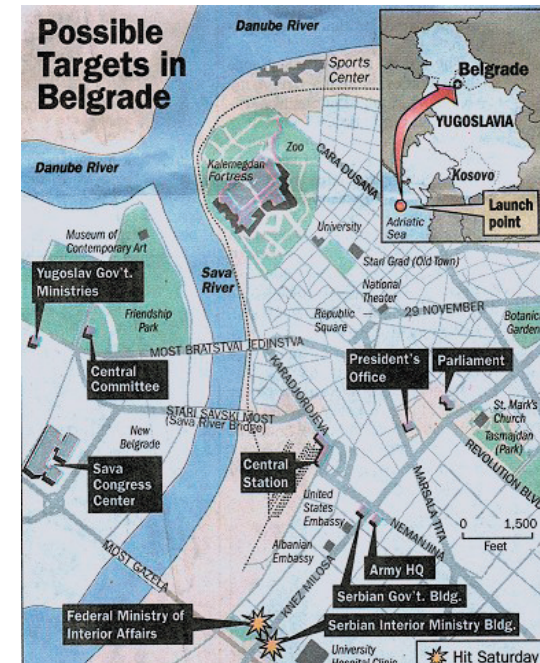
„The U.S. led attack on Yugoslavia was designed to improve President Clinton’s public image and restore credibility to NATO, whose existence since the end of the cold war was in jeopardy. This was the real agenda of the NATO war. In terms of Balkan history it is an old agenda. Traditionally western intervention in the Balkans has proven to be disastrous. From the Congress of Berlin to both world wars, the western powers have intervened in the Balkans for their own selfish policy objectives. These aims have had little relevance to the issues affecting the peoples of the Balkan countries. What was true of the past has proven true again in Kosovo.“

Ambassador James Bisset in „New diplomacy - old agenda“ (he was Canada’s ambassador to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania. He is widely recognized as one of the foremost authorities on Balkan politics)



A free guide offered to commemorate the damage caused by NATO Agression in 1999 on Serbian territory

NATO BOMBING TRAIL IN BELGRADE



This is an unusual guide to Belgrade. Take a walk (or a ride) to see what the „humanitarian“ war did to the capital of Serbia. Many lost their life and existence because of this aggression. This trail suggests to give a look and to be aware of that. Here you find also some background information.

1

HOTEL JUGOSLAVIJA

Hotel Jugoslavija in Belgrade is one of the oldest luxurious Serbian hotels located on the Danube River bank in the Novi Beograd municipality. It was built in stages between 1947 and 1965 and opened in 1969 as one of the biggest hotels in the region. The architect was Lavoslav Horvat.

It was used as an accommodation for celebrities and high officials visiting Belgrade. Some of the famous people that stayed in hotel Jugoslavija include Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Queen Elizabeth II, Willy Brandt, Tina Turner, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, etc. During the years the hotel with 130 rooms decayed and has fallen from 5 star hotel to a 3 star one.



NATO Bombing



The building was directly hit by 2 missiles, during the night of 7/8 May 1999, and the west wing of the hotel was totally destroyed. One guest got killed. The reason is not really evident for bombing the hotel. In the same night the nearby Embassy of China in Novi Beograd was also bombed, four employees got killed, and five of them were heavily injured. This night was one of the heaviest attacks since the beginning of the aggression (the buildings of the Yugoslav Army Headquarters and the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs were also hit again)

2

USCE TOWER

Reconstruction

Hotel Jugoslavija stands for Ex-Yu nostalgia and wonderful lifestyle. Since it was not a military building and is in an attractive location, private companies had big interest to start business again. In fact, in 2006 it was bought by Alpe-Adria Hotels then in 2007 Casinos Austria announced to invest 100 million euros into the hotel and transform it into a luxury casino. There are some plans to add new 33 storey twin towers.

July 2nd 2007, Casino Beograd opened its doors occupying 700m² in Hotel Jugoslavija.

This is the first part of the hotel which reopened its doors. It celebrated its opening on February 9th 2008 and now covers an area of 9500m².



Usce Tower was built in 1964 to serve as headquarters of the Central Committee of the League of Communists in the former Yugoslavia and was exclusively used for the Communist party. Until 2003 people called the building CeKa which stands for Centralni Komitet (Central Committee). With its 24 storeys, overlooking the Danube and Sava river it stands like a gateway to Novi Beograd. The competition projects



for this building stirred up much discussion over the issues of symbolism. Until then, buildings for parties and government were built in the style of sociorealism, but this tower (designed also by Mihailo Janković) was a simple aluminium and glass clad International style administrative type building of anonymous character void of any symbolism and represented the latest architectural modernity.



NATO Bombing

Destruction On April 21, 1999 NATO air strikes hit the building, setting the upper floors on fire. Several days later NATO repeated the attack. In total 12 Tomahawk missiles were fired at this building.



[A World Trade Center style destruction nearly occurred during the 1970s when Nikola Kavaja planned to board a Boeing 747 in Chicago, hijack it and hit USCE Tower to kill president Josip Broz Tito to signal the end of communism. However, minutes before he planned to hijack the plane, Kavaja was talked out of doing this by a priest, and spent 23 years in prison for his unsuccessful plan.]

Reconstruction

Reconstruction work on the building started in early 2003 and was completed in 2005. The multi-million dollar project has now 25 stories, totalling around 25,000 square meters of class A office space. An observation deck, fitness area and restaurant are located on the last level of the building. The planned project is much bigger though. It will boast two towers (the second also with 25 floors) and a multifunctional office-commercial-sports centre. The complex will be 180000 square metres and the construction will cost 160 million Euros. There will also be one underground floor of the shopping mall, while the remaining two floors of the mall will be

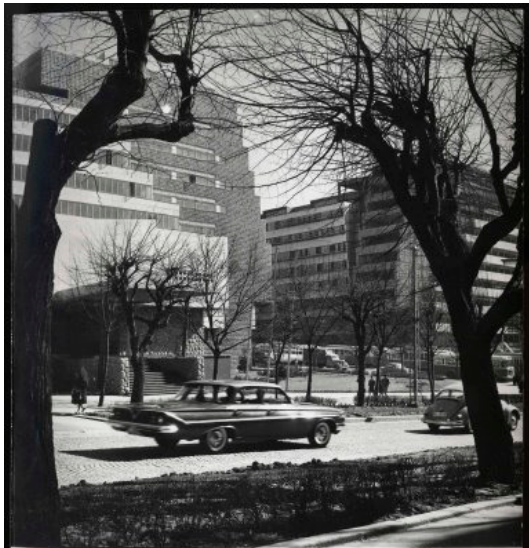


remaining two floors of the mall will be above ground. The shopping mall will have a total commercial space area of 36000 square metres and will feature cafes, restaurants, boutiques, stores, furniture stores, banks, and pharmacies. The third part of the complex will have a multiplex theatre and sports recreation centre.



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

The building, completed in 1963, is today Belgrade's most famous ruin: the Federal Ministry of Defense building on the corner of Miloševa and Nemanjina streets is the work of Nikola Dobrovic. Especially the twin giant frontbuildings were heavily damaged during NATO bombings on 7th May 1999 and are scary examples of precision bombing on Kneza Milosa Street.



Dobrovic is considered Serbia's most important modern architect although he built only one building in Belgrade towards the end of his career. The making and building of the Federal Ministry of Defense coincided with the construction of the post-war national

identity in Yugoslavia shortly after the break from Stalin in 1948. During the spring of 1954 the Yugoslav Army invited nine Yugoslav architects to compete for a new building complex. One of them was Nikola Dobrovic, already known in leftist circles of the European intellectual avant-garde for his modernist work. He was a pioneer among Yugoslavian architects in resisting the influence of tradition.

Dobrovic, an „academic“ with a „liberating voice,“ was there to serve as proof of the recent shift in Yugoslav politics towards a pro-liberal image endorsed by the West. After the break with the Eastern Bloc was unlikely to favor a Neo-classicist variations on national identity (like e.g. the competition entrance of Josip Plecnik, an established academic from Ljubljana) especially since Stalin had already appropriated the Neo-classicist image for the communist state.

Dobrovic won with a scheme stripped of any classical representations of power. The changes and the liberalization of a transitional state such as Yugoslavia were to be shaped into a volume, not expressed as a narrative. The

street front across the site had already been filled with pre-war representational buildings in a variety of academic and Neo-classical styles.

Dobrovic's proposal connected the two divided areas of the site by proposing a long and narrow volume from one end of the site to the other with a full length of 250 meters, thus keeping a space open for the street coming up the hill from the main railway station to the city and forming a symbolic gate.

By setting this volume back from the line of the crossing street, Dobrovic created a 270-meter wide field open for experiments in elevation. The void in that elevation evoked a canyon and Dobrovic imagined the void as an integral part of his new image of national identity.



Selective Bombing or NATO as architectural critics

Had NATO wished to destroy a building with more Western influences, it could not have found a better target than the Ministry of National Defense. The leveling of Vukovar, the siege of Sarajevo, and the random bombardment of Dubrovnik were believed to have been ordered from this place also referred to as the „heart of the war machine.“

For NATO it was difficult to classify this building, because its presence was more represented by the void between two part of the complex and it was extremely modern looking. NATO's late decision to bomb the building, more than a month after the air attacks had started, may have been the effect of this low level of symbolism: no exposed columns, no ornamental narration of history, as might have been present in Stalinist architecture.

Would a historical looking building with columns and classical shape have been enough to remind NATO's cultural advisers of the possibility that it belongs to Culture?

Reconstruction

Will this building now be remembered in relation to its creation or to its destruction?

The reconstruction is not planned. Here 3 reasons why the building probably will remain a ruin:

1) Lack of money

It's nothing unusual, in the Balkans it's always lack of money.

But back in 1999, right after bombing, the talk from Washington indicated that most financial aid to the region will land in Kosovo, the area reported by the UN to have the least damage. In these days, we understand why!

2) Souvenir of a void as National Identity

This famous ruin in the heart of Belgrade now asks that we think of two voids in relation to each other: one created by Nikola Dobrovic within his building of the Federal Ministry of Defense and the new one created by NATO's bombs falling on the building. The dilemma is about which void to identify with, which void to remember.

3) Symbol as too much Yugoslavian
In the Balkan Symbols, Rituals Ideologies still count! People have a cultural memory.

What grows, needs time to grow, what goes down, needs time to be forgotten, but everything that existed leaves traces.

And the building of the Federal Ministry of Defense seems to be too much Yugoslavian, too much a reminder of the past, a past that represent a dark chapter of the collective memory, that is still not forgotten. Like the most of Dobrovic's modernist works, they leave a bad feeling in the mind of Serbians.



NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia and the Lessons of the 20th Century

by Sanderson Beck

The air war of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of 19 nations led by the United States on Serbians in Yugoslavia has been carried out under the rationale that it will prevent a humanitarian disaster similar to Nazi atrocities in the second world war. This article attempts to answer the following questions: Is this justified? What are the likely results? What are the pertinent lessons of World War II? What other lessons can we learn from the disastrous wars of the 20th century? What else can we learn from the experiences of this century? What are better ways of responding to Serbian crimes against the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo?

Is this justified?

The NATO air campaign in Yugoslavia is clearly a violation of international law. Since Kosovo is a province of the nation Yugoslavia, and the United Nations charter prohibits aggression against a sovereign nation, NATO has no right to interfere in their internal affairs. Article 2 Section 4 states, „All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.“ NATO's intervention is also a crime against peace according to the Nuremberg Principles. The rationale of stopping Serbian genocide against the Albanian people of Kosovo has been proven false, since those atrocities have actually increased as a result of the air war. The war crimes of the Serbians in Kosovo do not justify NATO in committing crimes against the Serbians; rather this policy only multiplies the war crimes. Now thanks to the European Greens it has come out that the press failed to report Appendix B of the Rambouillet agreement in which Yugoslavia had to accept occupation of all Yugoslavia by NATO troops with NATO press censorship to avoid being bombed. Yet the Serbian parliament was willing to accept the political settlement with autonomy for Kosovo if implementation would be by United Nations authority. Not being willing to yield its national sovereignty to occupation by a hostile military alliance while willing to accept a UN-implemented agreement is hardly the resolution of a nation „asking to be bombed.“

AIRFORCE HEADQUARTER

The monumental Headquarters building in Zemun was built in 1935 to the architectural plans of Dragiša Brašovan.



This unique building expresses Brasovan's poetical, romantic understanding of modern architecture and is a good example of expressionism (a modernist adoption of new materials to express forms and emotions) in Serbian architecture.

According to the architect, the building resembles a dual of „Roda“ fighter jets with its two wings and indented middle section.

It's difficult to take pictures of the military buildings in Belgrade because it happens often that officers chase you away and confiscate your pictures.

Exhibitions, poetry evenings and musical shows were held here. A conspiracy led by general Dušan Simović was hatched in this building in 1941. The Cvetkovic-Macek Government was overthrown and the under-aged Petar II Karadjordjevic came into power.

Target

The building was severely damaged on April 5, 1999, during NATO bombing.

Dragiša Brašovan (*1887) is considered as the one who introduced Modern Architecture in the Balkans. He studied in Budapest and after working for 6 years in Budapest in 1920 he founded an architecture firm in Belgrade with Milan Sekulic (this lasted until 1925 after that he went on on its own). After 1929 he started modern style architecture and joined the group „Arhitekata modernog pravca“. However he was not a strictly functionalist architect, in the modern language of his buildings there was always some place for decoration or expressionistic elements in his works. After 1945 he made a couple of buildings in socio-realism style, where he combined modern style with ethnic and monumental elements. Brasovan died in 1965. He's considered one of the most famous Serbian architects of the century, distinguished connoisseur of the age of baroque and introduced modern style architecture to the Balkans.



NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia was done without the involvement of the United Nations.

It failed utterly to do serious damage to the Yugoslav military.

The bombing has destroyed the infrastructure of Serbia and has caused untold environmental damage to the countries along the Danube river.

In the name of humanitarian objectives it caused a humanitarian disaster.

NATO took sides in a civil war and became the air force of the KLA to wrest away from a sovereign state an integral part of its territory!

Ambassador James Bisset



MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Muzej savremene umetnosti
 Museum of Contemporary Arts
 Ušće 10. Blok 15
 11070 Novi Beograd

The edifice was erected between 1961 and 1965 after the design of architects Ivan Antic and Ivanka Raspopovic, who were awarded the October Prize of the city of Belgrade in 1965 when the museum opened.

This building represents an original architectural concept linking its interior with the exterior and at the same time meeting all the principals of a museum, thus ranking it among the most significant examples of modern museum architecture in in Serbia and the world in general.



An old pictures from the 60's showing the well composed facade that takes care of aesthetics and of the needs of a museum

The Museum was founded in 1958 aiming to collect, study and exhibit the works of modern Yugoslav art. Now the museum has a collection of more than 35,000 works of arts by Yugoslav artists: paintings and sculptures dating from 1900 up to the present day.



Bombing

On April 28th, when the Usce Business Center was bombed by NATO for the second time, the glazing of the Museum was blown off and and the Museum exhibits were damaged. The sculptures in the park surrounding the Museum sustained substantial damage too.

Ivan Antic was born in Belgrade in 1923. He made his studies in Belgrade from 1945 until he got his diploma in 1950. While studying he worked for the Ministry of Transportation and from 1950 until 1953 he worked for the „Jugoprojekt Office“ where he met people like Stanko Kliska and Vojin Simeonovic (both famous architect in former Yugoslavia) . After 1957 he started to make own projects and after that he joined the Architectural Faculty in Belgrade. He's Member of the Academy and his buildings are masterpieces of Serbian modern architecture: they are functional and aesthetical. He died in 2005 in Belgrade.



The Muesum from the Kalamegdan Fortress blends nicely with the surrounding

Renovation

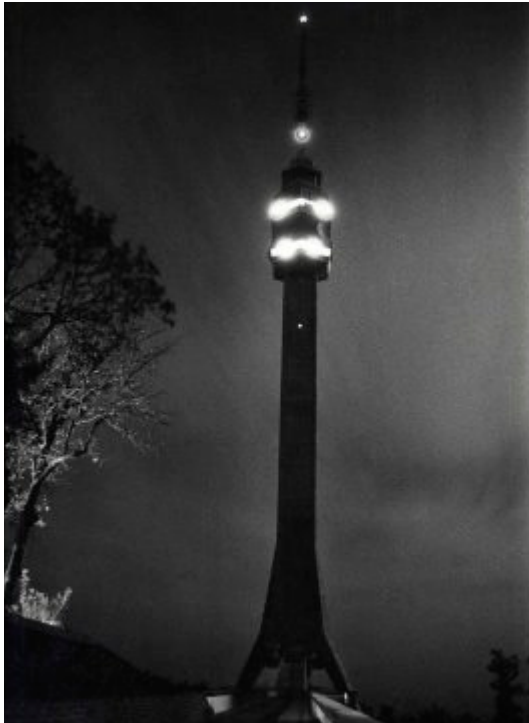
It is undergoing an €8 million renovation fully funded from the Government's National Investment.

AVALA TOWER NEAR BELGRADE

The TV Tower on Avala Mountain, renowned for modern architectural and structural concepts, was completely destroyed during NATO's April 29th attack. The attack managed to stop TV broadcast for 10 hours. And for that the tower had to be destroyed?!

Before

The tower was constructed between 1961 and 1965 designed by Uglješa Bogdanovic and Slobodan Janjic, and civil engineer Milan Krstic.



It was was 202.87m high and standing on three slim legs (buried 1.4m into the mountain rock) it was the only tower that had an equilateral triangle as its cross section.

From the height of 102 metres to a 135 metres there was an all glass area to which visitors could come via two quick lifts.

It was a matter of prestige to have a drink at the top of the Tower, to have dinner and watch the city glittering at night.

On the top of the tower there was an antenna, which was at first used for black and white television transmission. In 1971 the antenna was replaced by a new one used for colour TV transmission. It quickly became the symbol of Belgrade and a popular lookout point.



Target

Avala Tower was destroyed on April 29, 1999 by NATO bombardment supposedly to put Radio Television of Serbia off the air. Radio Television Serbia broadcasting did not suffer as it was relying on a network of local TV stations which were obliged to relay its program throughout the whole of Serbia. A special bomb was used to destroy the tower. The blast was one of the loudest explosions heard throughout Belgrade during the NATO bombardment.



Reconstruction

In 2004, Radio Television Serbia commenced a series of fund-raising events in order to collect money to reconstruct the building (over 1 million euros was collected through fund-raising and donations supported by politicians and celebrities). On December 21, 2006 the construction of a new Avala Tower started. An agreement regarding its construction was signed by Dušan Basara, director of the construction sector of the Ratko Mitrović Company—which will be in charge of the construction of the tower—and general director of RTS, Aleksandar Tijanić. Completion of the new tower is expected in August 2008.



Avala tower was a „proudness“ symbol and a famous touristic landmark, so there was a big wish and acceptance to rebuild this unique tower.

if not otherwise indicated, all texts are from www.sajkaca.blogspot.com and some extracts are from [serbian wikipedia](http://serbian.wikipedia).

Some pictures from:

www.sramota.net [site not working anymore]

www.ostarchitektur.com

www.predsednik.rs

www.belgradefvc.com [wiki]

Just ten days after NATO bombs began falling on Yugoslavia, Milosevic appointed Milutin Mrkonjic to head the nation's post-war reconstruction and development.

„He said ... Mrko, we have to rebuild our country,“ said Mrkonjic. „Start with the team tomorrow ... go and visit the sites.“ Mrkonjic, a 58-year-old civil engineer, said there was a reason to start the project long before 79 days of bombing had ended on June 11, 1999.

„We were monitoring sites during the war ... gathering information about those sites that were destroyed ... like bridges,“ Mrkonjic said. „We used that documentation after the war, which helped us begin the work right away.“

Ahead of schedule

In the past year, according to official records, the national reconstruction agency that Mrkonjic leads has repaired 174 houses or apartments and rebuilt 449. It also has rebuilt 28 road bridges, four railway bridges and a railway track.

Many projects have been completed ahead of schedule, Mrkonjic said, an achievement he attributes to strict discipline among his workers. But Mrkonjic's successes have been hindered by a trade ban by NATO nations against Belgrade in an attempt to force Milosevic, who has been indicted as a war criminal by a U.N. commission, out of office. „Sanctions made our job harder,“ Mrkonjic said. „But our companies have good personnel, our engineers and experts are well-known all over the world. Knowing these qualities we began our work assured.“

Paying for reconstruction

Cost of the reconstruction has been estimated in billions of dollars, 80% from government resources and taxes, and 20 percent from abroad. The sanctions, said Mrkonjic, are „a mistake of the West... They need to look at the economy. We are talking with the rest of the world, and many countries are interested... China, Russia, we still talk to them.“ Last year China, which had denounced the NATO bombing campaign, reportedly offered Belgrade \$300 million in credit and loans to help rebuild the damage.

BUILDINGS AT KNEZA MILOSA

THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA GOVERNMENT BUILDING

No.11 Nemanjina Street

The building is presently the seat of the government of the Republic of Serbia. Due to its architectural style and cultural-historic values, the building is currently the object of an evaluation procedure, necessary for the granting of the status of an immovable cultural asset cultural monument.

The building is located in the immediate vicinity of the Federal Ministry of Defence complex, and the facade was severely damaged in the bombing during the night of 29/30 April.

However, during the night of 7 May, the building was directly hit and partially demolished.



THE OLD GENERAL STAFF BUILDING

No.17 Kneza Milosa Street

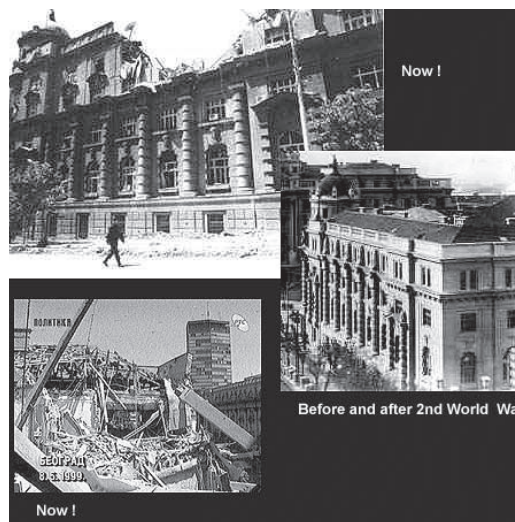
The old General Staff was considerably damaged by the bombing of the new General Staff (Ministry of Defence). The facades, pillars and sculptures were damaged by shrapnel and bits of stone which flew from the demolished building in the immediate vicinity. All window and door frames in the building were blown out of place, while all the glass was shattered.



THE BUILDING

at No.6 Kneza Milosa Street
at Generala Danova Street
at the corner of No.3 Bircaninova Street and Generala Danova Street.
at the corner of No.20 Kneza Milosa street and Admirala Geprata Street

The buildings were shaken as a result of two attacks on the Serbian Government Building located in the immediate vicinity; first during the night of 29/30 April and then during the night of 7/8 May; window and door frames were blown out of place, while all the glass was shattered.



A lot of buildings at Kneza Milosa Street are demolished. it's enough to take a walk.

БЕОГРАД 3. 4. 1999. око 2 сата

RADIO TELEVISION SERBIA HEADQUARTER

The building at Aberdareva Street 1, was nothing special, but when Sixteen employees of RTS died when a single NATO rocket hit the building people were very shocked.

Target

The bombing started controversy in Serbia, as it turned out that employees were not properly evacuated and that more people than the minimum necessary were in the building at that time. Many were trapped for days, only communicating over mobile phones.

The television station went on air again 24 hours later from a secret location, and for that 16 people had to die!



Reconstruction

A new building has been built next to the bombed station while a monument was erected to all of those who have died in the attack.

The 16 killed are seen as heroes who were offered for political purposes. A monument overlooking the ruins from Tasmaydan park asks 'why?' ('why?'), lists the names, profession and ages of the victims and has a photo of the ruins directly after the attack.



Tasmaydan Monument Tasmaydan Park.

Was erected to commemorate the children killed during the NATO bombings of 1999.



President Boris Tadic in 2006 at the monument in Tasmajdan Park

Many apologists in the west argue that the NATO intervention was to stop ethnic cleansing but NATO bombed Yugoslavia because President Milosevic would not sign the Rambouillet Agreement.

The two provisions of that Agreement which made it impossible for any sovereign state to sign were eventually dropped by NATO after seventy odd days of bombing failed to subdue Yugoslavia.

Ironically, through the good offices of the Russians, NATO agreed not to insist on the occupation of all of Yugoslavia by NATO troops and to forget about insisting on a referendum in Kosovo within three years.

These were the two provisions of the Rambouillet Agreement that had caused the bombing in the first place!

CHINESE EMBASSY

On May 7, 1999 NATO bombs hit the Chinese Embassy at Bulevar Nikole Tesle killing three Chinese citizens and outraging the Chinese public. At the time of the bombing, the embassy was located in Novi Beograd – later, a new site was designated for the embassy in Dedinje. NATO later apologized for the bombing, saying that it occurred because of an outdated map provided by the CIA. Few Chinese accepted this explanation, believing the strike had been deliberate. Several media reports from the US, UK, Denmark and Canada supported this view. Some US sources such as New York Times maintain culpability still lies with U.S. strike planning.



Chinese reaction

The bombing sparked outrage among the public in China and provoked demonstrations outside the United States embassy in Beijing and U.S. consulates in other Chinese cities.

US response

The U.S. made a lot of efforts to explain that the bombing was not intended, but a mistake of unfortunate casualties.



In 2005, the Centre for Research on Globalization reported that the attack was deliberate and was „based on intelligence that then Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević was to have been in the Embassy at the time of the attack“. The report does not provide sources or independent confirmation, adding to the long list of conspiracy theories concerning US motivations for the attack.

War In The Balkans: Fatherland sees truth through a looking-glass:
The Propaganda War by Robert Fisk
Wednesday, 31 March 1999 (The Independent)

Just after Nato's air strikes on Yugoslavia began last week, Belgrade state television entertained its viewers with Wag the Dog. It took a genius to show at such short notice a perfect copy - equally perfectly sub-titled into Serbian - of Hollywood's fantasy about an American president who manufactures a totally artificial war in Albania to escape from private scandal. But no longer do the people of Yugoslavia have to turn to Hollywood. For to live in Belgrade just now is to see the Balkan war through a looking-glass. While BBC World and Sky TV show a war in which Kosovo Albanians suffer, Belgrade television portrays Nato's attacks as an act of international aggression against an innocent nation - Serbia - which is fighting for its life against KLA „terrorism“ in Kosovo.

Instead of fleeing Albanian refugees, it shows bombed-out Serb homes in Kosovo, wounded children - Albanian and gypsy as well as Serb - in a damaged Pristina hospital, and a massive haul of arms captured from Kosovo Albania guerrillas by young Yugoslav soldiers, one of whom eagerly passes on his love for his mother in Subotica the moment a microphone is waved in front of his face. Even the military briefings are a mirror-image of Nato press conferences. While RAF officers talk to journalists in Brussels, Yugoslav Air Defence Commander General Spasoje Smiljanovic invited us for a Yugoslav armed forces military assessment in Belgrade. In a massive room dripping with chandeliers and decorated with two gold twin-headed eagles of Serbia and Yugoslavia, the general was even equipped with a slide projector to illustrate Nato air strikes and those countries involved in the „aggression“ against Yugoslavia. A map showed guilty nations coloured in purple, the innocent - and Russia, of course, is a very big innocent - in white. General Smiljanovic reels off the codenames of Nato jets involved in the air bombardment with all the panache of a Nato commander: F-15s, F-16s, F-18s, EAGD „Prowlers“, A-10s, E3-Awacs, Mirages, Tornados, Harriers and B-52s. When America's downed F-117A „Stealth“ fighter-bomber comes up on the big screen, the general is in top form. „It flew from New Mexico to come to rest on Serb territory,“ he says sarcastically.

„Such a pity! If it had come as a friend, it would still be flying.“ He insists that Yugoslavia has sustained „minimal losses“ among its air-raid personnel - just seven soldiers killed and 17 wounded (a lower figure than the weekend's) - while admitting „severe damage to stationary facilities and infrastructure“ costing \$300m (pounds 183m).

While Western television viewers were watching exhausted Kosovo Albanian refugees talking of Serb executions and „ethnic cleansing“, their Serb counterparts were seeing a badly damaged hospital in Pristina reported to have been bombed by Nato and a damaged maternity ward in which 51 babies were reportedly rescued from incubators as the air attacks began. Film at a different clinic showed children, said to be Albanian as well as Serb, with stomach wounds.

Third item on the national news here in the past 24 hours was a dramatic report of a Yugoslav interception of Albanian „terrorists“ carrying weapons into Kosovo, 13 of whom had been killed, the remainder having fled back across the border. The film report - and the arms - appeared to be new; they included a large number of anti-armour weapons, apparently of Austrian manufacture. The Kosovo town of Djakovica had been attacked by Nato forces, viewers were told, and dozens of civilian houses damaged as well as the town's Catholic church and monastery.

Serbs were outraged to be told that the Serb village of Gracanica had been almost totally destroyed by Nato bombs. Other reports said that KLA „terrorists“ had attacked military positions immediately they had been targeted by Nato. Clearly, there have been Serb civilian casualties. Yesterday, for example, Care Australia reported that nine Serb refugees from Krajina, captured by Croatian forces more than four years ago, had been killed in Cacak, 85 miles from Belgrade, where they had been living in an abandoned barracks attacked by Nato.

General Smiljanovic insisted that Yugoslav air defence forces had shot down seven Nato aircraft - Nato says it has lost only one - and three helicopters, more than 30 cruise missiles and three pilotless drone reconnaissance aircraft.

Nato denies the helicopters although it has made no comment about lost drones or missiles destroyed by ground fire. The general went out of his way to praise his MiG-29 pilots. And indeed, yesterday's issue of Soldier magazine - the journal of the Yugoslav armed forces - shows that Serb and Montenegrin pilots are praised as much here as Nato's warriors of the air are on BBC World. Four MiG pilots were promoted by President Slobodan Milosevic, and a medal of honour went to two senior officers for defending „the Fatherland's airspace“.

So much for the gongs. In reality, Yugoslavia has shrewdly kept most of its mobile anti-aircraft missile defences intact, keeping them deactivated and moving them around to avoid Nato target positioning. Whenever air-raid alerts suggest a threat to MiG airfields, Yugoslav jets are scrambled, either returning to their air bases after the alert or, if their airfields are damaged, landing on the great highways that Tito built for just such a purpose more than 20 years ago.

In other words, despite all the Nato bombing, the Yugoslav armed forces are far from down and out.

Just who, one wonders here these days, is wagging the dog?

