

A European Trip Diary

November 28 - December 5, 1995

France, Serbia, Great Britain

The Balkans Dec/95: “War on Ice”



By Bob Djurdjevi}

Paris, France

November 29, 1995 (Wednesday)

Messrs. Damjanovic; Pozder/JAT

Dule Zigic (DZ)

(plus the French staff at JAT's Charles DeGaulle airport - 11:30 to 15:00)

Strike + Fog + JAT

The Orly-DeGaulle airport shuttle which I was told to take was nowhere to be seen. Six of us who waited in line for it eventually made a deal with the driver of a van to take us there for 100 Francs each. Only later on was I to find out how great a deal this was. Some people paid that much for a cab just to go a few blocks within the city.

The reason? Paris was a mess! It looked like the whole city was on strike. The freeways looked like parking lots.

But worse was yet to come. When we finally reached the Charles DeGaulle airport, and after waiting for an hour for the JAT counter to open, I was told that today's flight was canceled due to fog - in Paris, not Belgrade. I looked out the window. The runways were fogged up all right. But it did not look any worse than Orly - the airport at which we landed this morning and from which I had just come.

Oh well... I shrugged off something I could not help, and spent most of the afternoon talking to the French staff at the counter, and a very nice, albeit frazzled, JAT manager.

Eventually, I spent the night at the airport Hilton - quite a pleasant experience albeit at my own expense- especially after having struggled with my bags and the airport shuttle which took us to a wrong Ibis hotel, courtesy of JAT.

November 30, 1995 (Thursday)

When I woke up in the morning and looked out the window, the nearby runway looked even more fogged up than yesterday. But by mid-morning, the fog had lifted, revealing a cool, but sunny, winter day. A call from JAT reassured me that the BG flight was on.

Belgrade, Yugoslavia

Bora Jovanovic

(a dinner at the "Tri Sesira" restaurant in Skadarlija - 20:30 to 23:00)

Bora's Partying

It's been a long time since I saw BJ in a better mood. When the musicians came to our table, he started to sing and party ("lumpuje") with them. He must have been going like that for half an hour. BJ even ordered and sang some songs which the musicians didn't know.

Prior to that, I gave BJ a "talk" about the "US Split," which I was planning to present tomorrow at the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAAS).

Family Problems

BJ described to me his personal problems, which he asked me to keep confidential. The "dead dog story" was typical of what it's like these days in his household.

December 1, 1995 (Friday)

Patriarch Pavle (PP)

(a meeting at his office, Bishop Irinej Backi present - 8:10 to 9:15)

Global Outlook

After the usual small talk, I explained to PP that the main reason for my visit was a discussion and a presentation which I was to have at SAAS. He seemed interested, so I took out my slides and flipped through them with PP, explaining each point as we went. He seemed to have comprehended the main point, and was unusually animated when we discussed them.

Change of Clergy

I then broached the subject of the clergy in North America who have been there too long; who only do the bare bones church service duties, but provide no spiritual leadership to the people beyond that. Some of them don't even speak English, I said. PP agreed that there were quite a few such people.

On the other hand, I said, there are now dozens, if not hundreds, of displaced priests from the Krajina. So I suggested that the Synod make a wholesale change - send the eager Krajina Serb priests to us in North America, while returning the lazy ones back home so that they could experience once again what it's like to be with poor people.

PP thought about it for a moment and said that that was a good idea. I told PP that I have also discussed or written about it to Metropolitans Irinej and Amfilohije - so that he would know where to turn if he needed support for that in the Synod.

After the meeting with PP, I went for a long walk in and around the Kalemegdan Park.

Serbian Academy of Arts & Sciences (SAAS)

(a meeting at their office in Knez Mihajlova; present Aleksandar Despic, President, Prof. Vladimir Pantic; Vladimir Davidovic, Director; Ms. Milosevic, Stenographer- 10:00 to 14:00)

National Program

As soon as I explained what I thought (from Dr. Vidic) the point of this meeting was - i.e., to discuss an eventual Serb national program, I could tell that Despic got nervous. He said something about the fact that SAAS should not get involved in politics; how its statements had been misinterpreted in the past (e.g., the SANU Memorandum in 1986), and why it (SAAS) has now actually published its Memorandum, so as to clear up any misconceptions about what it really said and meant with it. Despic then gave me two copies of the Memorandum - one in Serbian and one in English.

PAN-AM Institute

As soon as I realized that I was dealing with a politician, and a “red” one at that, rather than a scientist devoted to the truth and his people, I gave up on the idea of presenting my ideas about the national program, and instead talked to them about my work in the computer industry, and the PAN-AM Institute project which I started back in 1990. That seemed to be of a lot more interest to Despic.

SAAS Directory

Despic then said that they could use some help in compiling a list of prominent people of Serbian descent abroad, and adding them to their database for future communications and information sharing. Despic said that there were currently 185 members of SAAS, not counting those who reside abroad. Davidovic estimated that number to be fairly small, maybe 20 to 30 people.

Pantic Meeting

After about an hour, Despic and Davidovic excused themselves and said that we were welcome to carry on at this office, but that they had another meeting to attend.

So I now used a chance to brief Pantic on the “Green Interstate,” the “US Split,” and the strategic need for Serbia to build long term relations with China.

I said that Plan A - which is long-term, i.e., by the middle of the next century - should be establishing close business, cultural and scientific relations with China, which, I said, would be the 21st century country.

Plan B, a mid-range strategy, should be to foster the same with Russia.

Plan C, a very short-term (less than five years) tactical move should be to re-establish trading with the European Union. “In the long time, however,” I said, “Serbia must realize that Western countries, and especially the U.S. and Germany, are its enemies.”

Pantic seemed fascinated with our discussion and lamented that other academics from the field of history, economics and international relations weren't here to hear my arguments. He mentioned Academic Krestic by name, as one such example. Pantic kept saying how I had a “domacinski” (meaning well thought-out) approach to these issues, and that maybe I should come back to present it to a wider audience.

“Lepenski Vir”

At exactly noon, Pantic invited me to join him and the entire SAAS membership in the great hall for a presentation and a celebration of the discovery of “Lepenski Vir,” a great archeological find which was made on the banks of the Danube, some 30⁺ years ago by Dr. Srejovic and his team. There must have been several hundred people in the audience. We watched the films, listened to speeches by the Minister for Arts and Sciences, Dr. Slobodan Unkovic, and heard from Dr. Srejovic as well. I sat between Pantic and his wife, who told me that Unkovic had been appointed Yugoslavia's ambassador to China.

In the crowd just before the meeting started, Gordana Klickovic-Kacibo, who works at the SAAS, tapped me on the shoulder. We had a brief talk before Pantic ushered me into the presentation hall.

Drinks at “Kolarac”

After the meeting, without waiting to take part in the cocktail party, Pantic and I left and walked across the street to the “Kolarac” restaurant. He insisted on buying me a lunch, but I refused figuring that my next appointments at POLITIKA might do it. As it turned out, they didn't. So Friday ended up my fasting day. I did not eat anything until the late dinner in Sremska Mitrovica.

Pantic seemed genuinely interested in keeping up a good relationship with me, so I promised to send him written materials about what I had discussed earlier. I did it later on this weekend by FAX from SM. Pantic said that he lives near Trg Republike.

Nebojsa Curcic/POLITIKA (NC)

(a meeting at his office on the 5th floor - 14:15 to 15:30)

Minovic Affair

I knew that Zika Minovic, the long-time director of POLITIKA, had been recently removed. But I had no idea that I'd be walking into a real hornets' nest in two enemy camps, when meeting with NZ and Laza back to back.

NC explained that it all started in the first week of November. With Milosevic in Ohio, Minovic went on POLITIKA's TV and attacked Hadzi-Antic (NC's boss) and the

publisher of the daily POLITIKA. The following day, Hadzi-Antic, in turn, wrote an editorial which was critical of Minovic. But Minovic banned the paper! This led to an all-night wrangling within POLITIKA board, and ended up with the arrest of Minovic.

The apparent reason for the arrest is that only the editor has the right to halt the publication of a paper, according to the YU statutes, and that Minovic, therefore, broke the law. But NC felt that Minovic was probably set up by the Milosevic clique. Figuring he had their support, Minovic led the attack on Hadzi-Antic. But when push came to shove, they the “Milosevics” left Minovic out in the cold.

(Later on, I learned from a New York Times article that Minovic was dismissed because he published a book by Borisav Jovic, a former Communist President of YU and a former close SPS pal of Milosevic. In the book, Jovic was critical of SM, and exposed his duplicitous role vis-à-vis Bosnia in 1992).

Investigation of POLITIKA

NC also said that there are now several commissions investigating the financial and legal status of POLITIKA. The staff had discovered that at some point in the last couple of years, an English firm had paid over 7 million DM as a bribe to someone at POLITIKA so as to win its business and provide some web presses to it. No one knows at the present time where the money went, and the Brits won't say to whom it was paid. But the implication is quite obvious - that it possibly went to Minovic and his friends.

Vucelic/TV

I asked NC if he knew why Vucelic was also recently replaced as the head of Milosevic-controlled state TV? NC said that it was because Vucelic became an embarrassment to SM. He hung around bars with some prostitutes; and he siphoned off TV advertising money into some personal accounts, NC said. “He is one of the richest men in Serbia,” NC alleged. He said that now that Vucelic is out of government service, he has set up some private firms and is openly doing what he had to do surreptitiously before. Nevertheless, NC seemed sympathetic to Vucelic, calling him “a very smart man.”

Censorship at POLITIKA

Given that he has not had the nerve to publish any of my political columns, I asked NC to explain to me how the censorship is done these days? NC was quite open about it. He said that he gets his signals from Hadzi-Antic (the publisher). “No criticism of Milosevic and of the American government,” is all that Hadzi-Antic said. All the rest is then left to the discretion of the editor (i.e., NC).

Good-byes

Now that I realized how strained relations were between NC and Laza (whom NC now called disparagingly “Laza-Fraza”), I did not want NC to see me out. So I said I'd

walk down to the lobby. Instead, I walked down one floor, as Laza's office was on the fourth floor. As I passed Minovic's office, I could see that the police seal was still on it.

Slobodan Lazarevic (SL)

Lazanski (L) (Political Affairs Analyst)

Zika Minovic (ZM)

(a meeting at TV Politika Director's office - 15:30 to 16:30)

Laza's Office, "Lazanski"

Laza's office must have become the "war room" of the remaining Minovic's supporters. As I opened the door to it, thick smoke poured out of it, as there must have been a dozen or so smokers inside. Laza came out, along with a fairly young (in his 30's?) reporter, whom he introduced as "Lazanski" (or something like that). Laza invited him to join our meeting and stay, as we settled down in the adjacent office of the TV POLITIKA director.

"L" said that he was the political and defense affairs analyst at POLITIKA, and was very pleased to meet me, since he had heard so much about me. "L" rattled off a litany of famous names from the world of global affairs whom he had personally interviewed. "L" said that he had covered the Gulf War for POLITIKA, and had met and interviewed Norm Schwartzkopf at the time. I asked him why he left POLITIKA (paper) to come and work for Laza? "L" said that Hadzi-Antic wanted to change a column that he had written, and "L" quit as a matter of principle. I could not help but note the contradiction about the modes of censorship between this and NC's earlier account.

Minovic

After talking briefly about the "Green Interstate" piece, we re-hashed the Minovic affair, this time from the opposite point of view. Miraculously, just as we were talking about him, like a ghost, Minovic appeared at the door. He seemed pleased to see me again, and stayed with us for a few minutes.

Pointing to the ceiling (as if that's where the hidden microphones were), Minovic said to Laza: "After you're done, let's go for a walk so that we can talk freely."

Minovic then said that he tried to see Milosevic today, but that SM was out of town. He said he'd try again on Monday.

"L" asked Minovic what the chance were that SM would see him? Minovic said he wasn't sure. It became quite clear that all three were worried about their future.

Dusan Markovic/Radio BG (DM)

(a meeting at his office at Radio BG - 16:30 to 17:50)

Censorship at Radio BG

There was nothing particularly memorable worth recording about our conversation. Maybe the most significant part was that DM waited until I said I had to go to ask me if I wanted to record an interview with him. I interpreted this to mean that he, too, has now become too nervous about having me speak out on political subjects.

Biljana Djurdjevic-Stojkovic (BD)

(a meeting at "Hotel Moscow" - 18:00 to 18:50)

Her Baby, Wedding

It was quite obvious that BD was in an advanced state of pregnancy. Asked when the baby was due, she said that it was "any time this month" (i.e., December). I asked her when she got married? She said in June. I replied that I was surprised that he didn't mention it then when we met in July. "We didn't meet in July," she said. "We met when you were here in March."

I let it go. It was obvious that I had unintentionally cornered her, and that she didn't know how to stop lying. Later on, BJ interpreted this to be because she was probably embarrassed that she got pregnant first, and then got married. But Mina dismissed that as irrelevant in today's liberal society.

Milosevic, Perisic

This was the first time in more than five years of my meetings and conversations with BD that she was openly critical of Gen. Perisic and of Milosevic. She sounded downright hostile vis-à-vis the latter. As for my recent letter to Perisic, she implied that she got into trouble with him because of it. "People around here don't know how to handle criticism," she said. "They take everything personally."

Mina, Bora

(a trip to SM from the Hotel Intercontinental - 19:15)

Meeting at Hotel

I arrived at the hotel at 19:00 exactly, as we had agreed. But Mina was already waiting for me in the lobby. She'd attended a conference at the Hotel "Jugoslavija," which she found very boring and left early.

On the way to SM, we stopped to pick up BJ at his house. We briefly saw Stasa, but did not come in and chat with him.

Sremska Mitrovica, Yugoslavia

December 2, 1995 (Saturday)

Father Milorad Golijan

(a "Parastos" church service at the "small church" - 11:00 to 11:30)

"Parastos" Service for Deda

The priest, Milorad Golijan, turned out to be from Han Pijesak, Bosnia. And he said that he was a writer and a member of the Serbian Writers' Guild. He gave me four of his books, and autographed one of them for me after the service.

(see the photos re. the family members who attended the service).

Belgrade, Yugoslavia

December 4, 1995 (Monday)

Dr. Nikola Koljevic (NK)

(a meeting at the "Hotel Slavija" - 9:15 to 10:15)

Kostunica, Serbs in Diaspora

"I am very mad at (Voja) Kostunica (VK) and at the Serbs in the Diaspora," was the first thing NK said after we had greeted each other. His driver/bodyguard, Goran, whom I met last summer, was also with him. As we sat down to a table in the middle of the large restaurant, NK instructed Goran to get VK's phone and set up a meeting. But NK gave Goran VK's old address, so I corrected him. I also explained to Goran where VK's "new" (since two years ago) office was and how to get there.

NK then argued that VK (who is a constitutional lawyer) did not understand the provisions of the new Bosnian constitution. "He is causing me problems by saying that we'd sold out our people," NK lamented. "That's what I think, too," I said.

"But you're both wrong!" NK exclaimed passionately. "This is the best plan of all. It's better than the Coutillieri's plan (March 1992); better than Vance-Owen plan (May 1993), better than Contact Group plan (July 1994)..."

Ed. I could not help but notice that he did not mention the Owen-Stoltenberg plan (September 1993), which the Serbs had accepted but the Muslims turned it down.

A Deal with Croats

Asking me not to publish this, NK said that they've made a deal with the Croats to veto any unfavorable decisions of the Lower House, where the Muslims have a majority, by the Upper House, whose members are not elected, but rather appointed by the three Bosnian "entities."

Ed. To me, this sounded like a perfect recipe for a gridlock. Which is what the Bosnian Parliament was like in 1990-1991, before the war started. It's a preamble to a Serb defeat in the next round.

"They (the Croats) will again fuck you in the end," I said, gazing at him coldly. "Just as they did in 1994" (when they entered into the "Federation" with the Muslims).

"No, they won't," he insisted.

I shrugged without saying a word.

NK also said that the Dayton deal meant the Croats' ceding Prevlaka to the Serbs.

"We'll see," I shrugged again.

Sarajevo

As for Sarajevo, NK said that what the Serbs (i.e., Karadzic and Krajisnik) did in Sarajevo "was a stupid thing anyway." And that "Karadzic and Krajisnik were too hung up about Sarajevo."

Ed. I presumed that he was referring to the shelling of the city's civilian population, and the insistence that it, rather than Banja Luka, become the capital of Republika Srpska. But NK never said anything like that while RK and MK were solidly in charge.

Karadzic, Mladic

"What's going to happen with Karadzic and Mladic?" I asked.

"They'll have to go," NK replied.

"And Krajisnik, too?" I asked.

"We'll see about him," NK said.

"Which will then leave you as President, won't it?" I asked.

"I guess so," NK said. "But the parliament will have to decide on that."

"Sure," I thought without saying anything. "The 'parliament' called Milosevic."

"The 'international community' thinks that, because I speak English well and have taught Shakespeare at American universities I am somehow different than Karadzic or Krajisnik," NK added. "That's nonsense. I believe in the same things as Karadzic or Krajisnik."

Grahovo, Glamoc

I asked NK to explain why Grahovo and Glamoc fell so easily. He blamed the RS army for it (i.e., Mladic). NK argued that the Serb lines were too thin, and most of the forces were needlessly concentrated in the East, around Srebrenica and Zepa. Once the defense lines collapsed, there was no stopping the Croats and the Muslims. "Even Banja Luka could have fallen," NK said.

"Who saved it?" I asked.

"(Richard) Holbrooke," NK replied. "He called Tudjman and told him to stop."

“Just like that,” I thought, but didn’t say anything. And here was the American government trying to convince us last August that it didn’t have anything to do with the Croat offensive in Krajina!?

“6-4-2-2” Defense Balance

NK then said that the Americans are for a so called “6-4-2-2” defense balance. In terms of the military power and readiness, the slogan means that Serbia should be 6, Croatia 4, Croat-Muslim federation 2, and RS 2. “Originally, they wanted a 6-4-3-2 plan,” NK said. “But we managed to negotiate a parity.”

Ed. “How pathetic! Now you’re happy with a supposed parity,” I thought. “And only two years ago, you could have won the war outright!” (after Igman, Bjelasnica).

Srebrenica Attack, Gorazde and Brcko Corridors

NK said that attacking Srebrenica and Zepa was a mistake. “We should have provided to the Muslims a land corridor from them as we now did in Gorazde,” NK said. “Eventually, they would have seeped out of the enclaves on their own.” He predicted that that would happen in Gorazde.

Ed. This was certainly a different NK from the one who, less than four months ago, were so jubilant when the Serbs took Srebrenica; who spoke about “bring the situation to the boiling point;” and who told me how the British encouraged them, through his brother from Novi Sad, to take the enclaves.

As for the Brcko corridor, NK was equally confident that the result of the arbitration would be favorable to the Serbs.

“Even if that were the case,” I said, “in the meantime, you cannot maintain an air link between Belgrade and Banja Luka, isn’t that right?”

“No it’s not,” NK said. He insisted that the air corridor will be open even during the 12-month arbitration period.

Investments and Reconstruction

NK said that the Serbs in the Diaspora could help the most with respect to the reconstruction. He said that, while they were in Dayton, they met with an Ohio Serb and a business tycoon (the name did not mean anything to me) “who was worth \$300 to \$400 million.”

He added that the Greeks have already committed several hundred million for rebuilding of the destroyed housing. NK claimed that the British were also anxious to invest in RS (something which Ivor Roberts later on denied). NK expected a total of \$6 billion to be invested in the reconstruction of Bosnia, of which the Serbs would get \$2.5 billion. “The Americans really want to help us,” he said.

Ed. I could not believe his naïveté. It made me sick to think that the Bosnian Serbs, who have sacrificed so much, will be stuck with such a leader.

“My main goal is to get \$400 to \$500 million for Sarajevo reconstruction right now,” NK said. “Otherwise, I am afraid that we’ll lose our people” (who will leave for Serbia).

“What are the chances that they will stay and fight?” I asked.

“None,” NK replied.

Good-bye, British Speech

As we were saying our good-byes, heavy wet snow was falling on the Slavija Square. Passers-by rushed hurriedly looking for shelter along the sidewalks. “Your appointment with Kostunica has been set for 11:00,” Goran told NK.

“About that speech in London, which you mentioned earlier,” NK said. “Please give everybody there my greetings and tell them that we could use their help now more than ever.”

Ivor Roberts/British Embassy (IR) (a meeting at his office - 10:15 to 11:15)

Bosnia Aid, Koljevic

Since I had just finished my meeting with NK, the conversation invariably started on that topic. IR said that he wasn’t aware of any British effort to invest in Bosnia. He said that this week’s (Dec. 8-9) conference in London has been called so as to decide on the “shopping list” for Bosnia. After a few weeks, there will be another “pledging conference” in Brussels, at which individual countries will decide exactly how much money they will spend based on the London “shopping list.”

As for NK’s expectation of \$2.5 billion out of the total of \$6 billion, IR that the reality will be quite different. He said he was reminded of similar promises which Bush and Clinton made to Yeltsin as Russian aid. “But after you looked closely at the deal, you saw that everything was heavily conditioned on practically impossible steps which the Russian were supposed to take first,” IR explained. “In the end, only a trickle of the money was actually delivered to Russia.”

(Separately, I heard on CNN or Sky News this morning that the U.S. doesn’t want to pay more than 20% of the total peacekeeping and reconstruction cost for Bosnia.)

London Conference

IR said that the London conference would be held at the Lancaster House (in the St. James area of the city). More than 50 countries are expected to attend. IR said he was

grateful that he was in Belgrade, rather than in London, as organizing such a conference is a logistical nightmare.

Cold Peace in Bosnia, Krajisnik, French General

IR shared my skepticism that peace would hold in Bosnia. “The Sarajevo deal is very bad, and the Brcko corridor delay and arbitration is a disaster,” he said. IR said that Rudy Perina had told him that Krajisnik literally passed out in Dayton after he had seen the map giving Sarajevo to the Muslims. “We had to pick him up off the floor,” Perina said.

IR also quoted a French general in Sarajevo who said that the local “Serbs are being asked to choose between a coffin and a suitcase.” (*Later on, I heard that the general had been recalled to Paris over the remark.*) Yet it will be the French enforcing the peace in Sarajevo.

Turkey in Europe

“So Bosnia may end up another Cyprus?” I goaded him.

“It could,” IR replied. “The Americans have not been helpful in that situation, either,” IR added.

“Yet I am sure you’re aware of what the proposed U.S. government’s ‘solution’ is for Cyprus,” I said. “Admit Turkey to the European Union.”

“That’ll never happen,” IR said dismissively, looking quite upset. “A Muslim country will never become a member of the EU.”

(Ed. So much for the supposed “multi-ethnic” tolerance and cosmopolitanism of the EU,” I thought, but did not say anything out loud. I was please to have caused IR to drop his guard).

Casualties, “Rebadging” for NATO Duty

IR said that the British have been “extremely lucky” so far during the nearly four years of the UN peacekeeping operation. Only 18 British soldiers have been killed. The French, on the other hand, were very unlucky, he said, suffering far greater casualties.

IR said that the existing British troops in Bosnia (about 10,000) would remain, and would be “simply rebadged for NATO duty.” Britain will additionally have to send another 5,000¹ or so troops, he figured. This will make the British the second highest contingent after the Americans. France would be the third biggest.

“As permanent members of the UN Security Council, Britain and France understand that we have to pull a greater weight than anyone else in Europe when it comes to peacekeeping,” IR explained.

¹ Later on, while in London, I heard that Britain would actually provide about 13,000 troops, and that Germany would send 4,000 of “non-combat” soldiers.

Vlajko and Nada Radovancevic
(a meeting at their apartment - 11:30 to 12:15)

Personal

Since I had a break in my schedule due to an unexpected weekend departure of Perina from Belgrade, I dropped in to see the “kum.” Both he and his wife, Nada, were very happy to see me. Later on, a dentist dropped in for a visit, who seemed to be looking to rent some office space in a building across the street which they own.

Nenad and Natasa Nikolic
(a meeting at their apartment - 12:20 to 12:50)

Personal

Since I was in the neighborhood, I dropped in to see the Nikolic’s. At first, Nenad was alone at home. Then, after a few minutes, Natasa also joined us in the conversation. Nenad is preparing another concert (as a producer), and said he was feeling nervous about it. Both of them smoked non-stop while I was there.

Zoran Djindjic (ZD)
(a luncheon meeting at the “Verdi” restaurant- 13:10 to 14:30)

Cooperation with Foreign (Mostly) Catholic Parties

ZD said that he would be going next week to meet with some Austrian and German political party leaders who sought collaboration with his Democratic Party (DS) even though “they were predominantly Catholic.” ZD mentioned that in the context of my “Green Interstate” article, which he thought put too much emphasis on demographics and ethnicity.

Micunovic, Rajic

ZD said that his party expelled Micunovic and another member this weekend. Micunovic had been reportedly campaigning on his own (i.e., as the head of the Democratic Institute which he founded) even though he was still the member of the DS. So the DS Board asked him to commit that he would be a DS candidate in the next election. When Micunovic refused, the Board voted 85-6 to expel him.

ZD said that Fedor Rajic (FR) had initially helped the DS party with some \$5,000 to \$6,000-worth of donations. But he has given them nothing in the last couple of years. ZD said that he meets with FR when the latter comes to BG, has lunch or dinner and a chat, but otherwise has no other closer relations with him.

Ed. Which only proves that FR was supporting Micunovic, not the party.

Elections

ZD is expecting the Yugoslav (federal) elections by March (they have to be held by December 1996; the Serbian elections have to be held by December 1997). He figures that Milosevic must try to capitalize on the Dayton peace treaty and the lifting of the sanctions while the electorate's memories are still fresh. And since Milosevic cannot constitutionally run again for President of Serbia (he's already served two terms), ZD expects that SM will run for Presidency of Yugoslavia. But this would require the SPS to enact some new legislation as the current powers of Yugoslavia's President aren't sufficient for SM's appetite.

United Opposition?

ZD thinks, however, that a united opposition under his leadership could depose SM. Even in the last elections, the opposition got 60% of the popular vote, he said. But the "winner take all" electoral system, and divisions within the opposition, enabled the SPS to retain the majority in the Parliament. Now in hindsight, ZD admits that he was wrong when he opposed the DS' joining DEPOS during the last elections.

ZD said that his party had proposed to Kostunica's DSS that they merge. "We even offered him the leadership of the party for six months," he said. "After that time, we would hold a joint convention and have the delegates elect the new leader. VK refused." But, ZD said that just today he met with Paroski (a Novi Sad-based leader of the Peoples' Party of whom "Kum" Vljako approves the most), who proposed a merger between their parties. But Paroski has minimal presence in the current Parliament, and would thus gain a lot more from the deal than ZD. Yet, ZD said he has an open mind.

Milosevic Appeasement

ZD lamented that, even though he and his party refrained from bellicose criticism of the Dayton accord and that of Milosevic, "he (SM) keeps pouring it on against us."

"Suppose you do win, as you suggested," I hypothesized. "Do you really expect Milosevic to yield power; to let you take over and govern?"

"No, I don't," ZD replied. "I think that he will probably arrest five or six of us (the opposition leaders). But that will cause the international community to step in."

I just stared at him silently. "What a fool!" I thought. "Just as the 'international community finally got Milosevic where it wanted it (i.e., kissing its ass), the last thing on its mind would be to save the asses of some two-bit opposition politicians who oppose SM." But I said nothing. It was obvious it would have been a wasted breath.

Ed. Overall, this was the coldest meeting I've had with ZD. I think that he has realized, as I did, that we do not see eye-to-eye. He is a political pragmatist who will do what it takes to get to power, even if that means cavorting with the enemy (the Catholics, Milosevic) who will end up screwing him sooner or later. I am a hopeless idealist who would only compromise for the long-term good of the people, never for a short-term personal gain.

Vlado Resetar/TANJUG (VR)
(a meeting at his office -14:45 to 15:40)

Personal

VR's family are from Hercegovina. He and Dusan Zupan (DZ) are close personal friends. VR stresses that he is a journalist, not a politician. Slobodan Jovanovic is still the head of TANJUG (politically). VR said that DZ is unhappy with his new job at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, mostly because DZ is still in a limbo expecting to be appointed somewhere.

"Green Interstate"

Our conversation was rather boring until I started talking about the Dayton peace plan in the context of the Green Interstate. I even showed him the slides with maps. He was visibly shaken-up. "I hope you're wrong," he said.

While he and I were talking, Momir Brkic, a former director of Radio BG, came into the office twice to ask for VR's opinion about something. Even though I've met him more than once, the idiot never recognized me! A typical stupid Commie...

(As fate would have it, I saw the same idiot (Brkic) on Kneza Milosa Street, while trying to flag a cab this evening, following my meeting at the Canadian Embassy.)

Aleksandar Klas/Cartoonist (AK)
(a meeting at his studio at 4 Obilicev Venac, V Floor -15:45 to 16:20)

A Studio in the Attic

Klas' studio in the attic of an art deco building next to Tanjug's (which itself was the art deco vintage) was a riot. It was a "hole in the wall" full of his drawings and paintings. Even though we were meeting for the first time, it did not take us long to establish that both of us were anti-Communists from way back. "The only reason they (the Communists) let me become editor of *Illustrated Politika* was because they didn't think that cartoon art mattered much," he explained. "They were probably right," he muttered under his breath, revealing his self-deprecating sense of humor.

AK went on talking almost the whole time we spent together. It was almost as if he'd been waiting for me to arrive so that he could bust. He wasn't boring, however, as most long-winded Serbs are. So I enjoyed my little visit with the "world's most awarded cartoonist."

Willie Claes

AK said he enjoyed my adaptation of his older Hague tribunal cartoon to fit in with last month's forced resignation of Willie Claes, the former NATO political leader.

Pale vs. Banja Luka

AK said that some people from Banja Luka had made a DM80,000 profit by offering his cartoon exhibition throughout the Bosnian Serb Republic.

Ed. I have to admit that I was skeptical about a scheme like that, considering how poor miserable the people were in Bosnia even when it came to matter of existence (e.g., food), let alone art. But I did not want to upset a nice older man (he was born in 1928) by contradicting him.

AK said that this experience has taught him that “the Pale Serbs were the chetniks, while the Banja Luka Serbs were the Communists.”

*Dennis Snider/Canadian Embassy (DS)
(a meeting at his office - 16:45 to 17:30)*

Embassy Look

The Canadian Embassy looked rather ghastly in the dark Belgrade night. All the staff were gone, a stark contrast with the usual hustle and bustle which I was used to during day time visits. DS seemed quite tired after a vacation which he had spent in Vienna and Prague. He must have yawned at least half a dozen times during our meeting.

Canadian Troops

DS said that Canada will participate in the NATO Bosnia deployment. Otherwise, DS didn't have anything worthwhile to say during our 45-minute meeting.

*Voja Kostunica (VK)
(a dinner meeting at the “Protokol” - 20:15 to 23:00)*

Koljevic, Bosnia

VK said that NK had come to see him and tried to talk him into accepting NK's optimistic view of the Bosnian situation. But NK seemed just as unmoved by NK's arguments as I was. In fact, VK reminded me that constitutional law was his professional specialty. And that the Bosnian Constitution did not pass mustard according to his assessment.

Djindjic

VK said that in the early 1980s, the Yugoslav government had put all political dissidents into a Belgrade institute. “That way, they could keep an eye on all of us at the same time,” VK said. ZD was one of them. Although there were sometimes even greater political differences between dissidents themselves than between them and the

government, they all developed a sense of survival camaraderie and tolerance. Still, "Djindjic was the furthest to the left among us," VK said. He explained that he just could not see himself and ZD in the same party.

"Green Interstate"

VK said that he agreed with my theories, as outlined in this article.

French, U.S. Envoys

VK said that both new envoys from France and from the U.S. were negatively disposed toward the Serbs. After VK publicly criticized the U.S. support for Croatia, following its conquest of Western Slavonia in May, VK got a letter from Perina complaining that he was being too harsh against the U.S. This, in turn, got an otherwise quite calm VK incensed.

"Who does he think he is to tell a political leader of a party in a foreign country what he (the leader - i.e., VK) should think?" VK fumed.

Ed. Overall, by contrast to my earlier luncheon meeting with ZD, this was probably the warmest meeting I've had with VK. It is also interesting that both of my impressions of the Serbian political leaders map 100% with Bora's prior assessment - without his benefit of having met them.

December 5, 1995 (Tuesday)

Zoran Kojic (ZK)

(a meeting at his office - 9:10 to 9:30)

Milosevic and Mladic/Karadzic

As usual, I stopped by ZK's office to have a coffee and a chat with him before going off to the airport. When I said that SM had apparently made a deal with RK and RM that he would not extradite them to the Hague trial, ZK replied: "If that's what Milosevic had promised them, then he'll most certainly turn them over."

I laughed but added that that was fairly unlikely, as the two of them (RK+RM) know too much about SM's role in this sinister business.

I then briefly explained to ZK about the "US Split" and the strategic plan for Serbia. He seemed interested.

London, England

Yugo Kovach (YK)

(a telephone conversation - at about 15:00)

Tonight's Speech

YK said that my tonight's talk was going to be at the Serbian community center next to the St. Sava Church. And that Lord Braine, an old veteran of British parliamentary affairs, was going to be the "main speaker." And that I should not "upstage him."

"So what are you trying to say?" I asked. "That you asked me to speak as a dumb clown."

For my part, I told YK not bother bringing the overhead projector from his office. "I'll manager one way or another to paint a picture of global trends even into Lord Braine's brain," I joked.

YK laughed nervously.

"You probably don't know who you're dealing with respect to Lord Braine," YK cautiously inquired.

"You're probably right," I replied. "I don't. Who this 'brainy' fellow?"

"He is the guy who remembers Winston Churchill saying that 'Yugoslavia had found its soul in 1941,' (as the Serbs went into the streets to repudiate the YU government's pact with Hitler in March 1941).

"Really?" I posed. "And does his Lordship also remember Churchill's betrayal of the Serbs in 1945, when he quizzed (Canadian Major) Fitzroy McLean on whether or not he (McLean) intended to live in the Communist Yugoslavia?"

"I give up," YK said. "You backed me into a corner. Say whatever you'd like in your speech."

Bill Carr (BC)

(a meeting at the hotel - 15:30 to 16:40)

U.S. "Hint" Re. Srebrenica

BJ said that he "knew for a fact" ("I have a copy of the letter") that the U.S. gave the Bosnian Serbs a "green light" to take Srebrenica and Zepa. He said he wouldn't tell me who it was that did it, but that this person had written to Karadzic's government and advised them to feel free to attack Srebrenica. But that this "source" had "couched the advise in four layers of disclaimers about how he wasn't sure that this was accurate information."

Ed. Only five hours later, I found out that this "mystery" person was "Prof. Sean Gervasi." No wonder another AZ source had expressed doubts about this supposedly pro-Serb SOB, when he showed up at her Belgium apartment with two German people/agents. He was either a double agent or was duped into being a conduit.

I said to BC that the Americans weren't the only ones trying to con the Bosnian Serbs. "Your (British) government did it, too," I said. "Which only goes to show you that they have all conspired to fuck the Serbs, not just the Americans."

BC seemed stunned about the revelation to do with the British.

Ed. Only later on, did I figure out why he was so stunned. BC is a former British intelligence officer. So he must have figured he had the MI5 cornered.

Srebrenica "Massacre"

BC said that he had traveled to Bosnia after Srebrenica and had met with Col. Salapura, among others. According to this source, the West had deliberately INFLATED the figure of the Muslims alleged to have been resident in Srebrenica. This allowed them to claim later on that there were 5,000 to 6,000 "missing," which Madelaine Albright, using the CIA photos of alleged mass graves then proceeded to claim were massacred by the Serbs.

Ed. According to another source close to RM (Dr. Lekic - 12/15/95), the alleged Srebrenica "mass graves" contained bodies of some 150-200 soldiers, both Serb and Muslim, who were killed during the battle for Srebrenica.

When a friend pushed me recently to tell him what I think had really happened, I replied that there was no doubt in my mind that there was a small number of stupid incidents in which the Serbs executed their Muslim prisoners on the spot. Just as the Muslims did throughout the war with the captured Serbs - without ever being indicted or even accused of being war criminals. After all, that's what the Balkans wars are like. And not just in the Balkans. That's the way war is..

I said that (a small number) of Dutch troops in Srebrenica were traumatized for not being able to help the victims, and had no reason to lie about what they saw. But those were sporadic incidents. As were the hysterical claims by women, whom I saw on CNN and Sky News, watching it together with RM, on July 15, were probably stages for the cameras. "They are lying through their teeth," RK kept muttering watching them. Yet these were the women who owe their live and safe passage to Tuzla to RM (he had had put them - at Serbian Army's expense - on the buses and trucks; contrast that with the brutal "ethnic cleansing of more than 200,000 Krajina Serbs which the Croats committed without a whimper from the "international community").

In conclusion, I said I had some real difficulties believing that there were even a thousand Muslim prisoners executed, let alone 5,000 to 6,000. But even one was one too many. Considering their demonization by the Western governments and the media, the Serbs had to be more than just pristine. They also had to be cunning. They weren't. Which is how they provided the ammunition for these outrageous claims.

Greg Copley's Businesses

BC said that both he and Yossef Bodansky worked for Greg Copley. Copley was a former journalist from Australia who got into publishing, and then ship-building

businesses during Margaret Thatcher's efforts to close down unprofitable government operations. Copley, an avid yachtsman, couldn't stand to see a Glasgow shipbuilding yard close down, as Thatcher's government had planned in the 1980s. So he solicited help from a Tory MP, George Young. And Copley ended up buying what was left over from that Navy site, and turning it into a private yacht-building shipyard.

BC said that later on, Copley bought another one in London, which he (BC) is now managing.

Work for Milosevic?

I asked if he or GC they ever did any work for Milosevic or his government (as Srdja Trifkovic had alleged once, a long time ago). BC replied that they never did.

Mike Stenton (MS)

(a meeting at the hotel - 17:00 to 18:00)

Personal

He arrived at his 5 p.m. meeting on time but on a wrong date. We were supposed to meet tomorrow at 5 p.m. Luckily, I was not double-booked so we were able to carry on a conversation in the circular tea room of the hotel.

MS' (Chinese) wife is expecting, he said. Later on, during dinner, I saw for myself that she was in a highly advanced state of pregnancy. Lord Braine, the keynote speaker at the dinner, was gushing over her pregnancy with appropriately sympathetic remarks.

George Tintor (GT)

(a meeting at the hotel - 18:30 to 19:30)

Personal

GT, a man in his 30s, said that he was Canadian-born (from Toronto). He is now working for a French investment banking concern (Banque Indo-Suez). GT is married to a Swiss lady with whom he is trying to build a home on the outskirts of Zurich. Eventually, the two of them plan to move there and raise a family. It sounded as if his wife's family were wealthy Swiss from Basel area. Otherwise, the Tintor's folks are from Lika (the Serb Krajina which had been overrun by the Croats in 1995).

GT drove me to the dinner meeting. Along the way, he said that he usually doesn't like to attend the meetings of the Serbs, where people preach to the converted, but that he was making an exception this time, when he heard that I was coming.

Serbian Information Center

(annual dinner meeting at the St. Sava Church hall - 20:30 to 23:00)

Cocktail Party

As GT and I entered the hall, the cocktail party seemed to be already under way. GT introduced me to Joan "Phillips" (who later on turned out to be Joan Hoey) of the ECONOMIST, and her (Serbian boy)friend who also worked for the ECONOMIST's Intelligence Service.

I also met Yugo Kovach for the first time, who seemed hugely relieved not to have had to lug the overhead projector. He thanked me for it, and said he wanted to buy me a drink. But alas, someone else had already done it...

Head Table, Speeches

I was seated between Mike Stenton and Marcetic, the chairman of the Serbian Information Center. GT whispered to me about him that he was an old "Ljoticevac" (i.e., a Nazi collaborators in 1944-1945), but that no one wanted to bring this up now.

After a few house-keeping speeches by the center's secretary, Yugo Kovach and Misha Gavrilovic, Marcetic announced me as the "guest speaker from the U.S." From his curt introduction, it was evident that he didn't know much, if anything, about me.

I walked out in front of the head table and, moving to the side of the crowded room, said that I didn't want to have my back turned on anyone. I then spoke about my visit to Belgrade; the message from Koljevic; the "Green Interstate;" and the strategic role of Serbia in the "New World Order."

After I was finished, Marcetic got up and thanked me. He also asked if I could leave with the Serbian Info. Center some printed materials about the "most fascinating speech" which I had just delivered. I said I would.

After that, Sir Alfred Sherman spoke, followed by Lord Bernard Braine. Both speeches were the "we're with you, Serbs" - rah-rah - British parliamentary talks, which cost hundreds of thousands of Serbian lives in World War II, not to mention World War I and other examples of Western treachery.

Well after the speeches were finished, I was approached by a lady who introduced herself as "Ruzica." She said she was originally from Milici, Bosnia. "I am so thrilled to see that there are some Serbs in this world who are prepared to tell the truth no matter what," she said.

She said that 53 Serb villages around Milici (i.e., Srebrenica - using the NATO/U.S. nomenclature) were destroyed by the Muslims in 1992 without as much as a whimper by the West. "I am raising my college-age son in the spirit of avenging them," she said.

As I was putting on my coat, getting ready to leave at the end of the evening, a 20+-year old young lady came over and said: "Your speech was the best! Thank you."

She blushed as she rushed out the door.

YK gave me a ride back to the hotel.

December 6, 1995 (Wednesday)

Jack Sweeney/Computer Reseller News (JS)
(a breakfast meeting at the hotel - 8:00 to 9:00)

Personal

We has an interesting breakfast discussion and a personal interview.

Rajko Bogojevic/Yugoslav Embassy (RB)
(a meeting at the hotel - 10:15 to 11:00)

London Conferece

RB was running late because of having to make all preparations for the Serbian delegates to the London Dec. 8-9 conference. "All hotels are booked up," RB complained. So he is having to improvise about where to put up some 20 or so members of the Yugoslav delegation to the conference. I told him about what IT had told me in Belgrade - that he was glad he didn't have anything to do with running a conference like this.

Serbian National Interests, Political Parties

After I had explained to RB what I said to the SANU members with whom I met in Belgrade, RB said that he was in complete agreement with me. He suggested we switch from the formal ("per vu") to a more casual ("per tu") style of our addressing each other. In Serbian "body language," that's a sign that we're supposed to be buddies.

RB then said that in his own political orientation, he is "kind of a centrist person."

"But," I said, "from what I can see, there is no political 'center' per se in Serbia."

He agreed. RB then fessed up that he played basketball with VK, with whom I had just had dinner the night before.

"I had no idea VK played basketball," I said. "Had I known that, maybe we could have had our meeting in a more relaxed environment."

Prince Alexander (A)
(a meeting at his office - 11:15 to 12:15)

Crown Council

I asked A how his Crown Council was doing. He lamented that nobody was very enthusiastic about doing any real work.

Milan Milutinovic

I said that I heard about the YU delegation coming here for the conference later on this week, led by Milan Milutinovic, Yugoslavia's Foreign Minister.

“You know that my wife is Greek,” A. said.

I nodded.

“Do you want to know what they say about him in Athens?” he asked.

“What?” I played along.

“His nick name is the ‘Launderer!’” A. looked triumphantly at me as he said that. “He’s been laundering dirty money for Milosevic ever since the UN sanctions started.”

Malcolm Rifkind

A. said that he sees the British Foreign Secretary regularly. During one of his recent “casual” visits to this British minister, A. ran into a group of Montenegrins, outside of Rifkind’s office, who were accompanying the “Prime Minister” (an alleged Mafioso) Milo Djukanovic during the latter’s visit to London. “So I chatted then up,” A. said.

Tomislav, Visit to Belgrade

A. said that both he and his wife were recently in Belgrade, to visit his uncle, Tomislav (another pretender to the throne from the Regent side of the family), who is being treated for cancer of the colon at the VMS (the military hospital in BG). He said that Tomislav had been at the hospital for several months, and that things didn’t look very good as the cancer had spread.

As before, he boasted that he didn’t use any passport when he got to Belgrade. “We just arrived,” he said. “But we were nevertheless met by a very friendly security detail who welcomed us and drove us to our hotel.”

“How did they know you were coming?” I asked.

“We FAX-ed them in advance of the visit,” he replied.

“So much for the ‘surprise-no passport’ visit,” I thought, but didn’t say anything.

Ed. Overall, A. was extremely friendly with me. Not that he wasn’t on the previous occasions we had met. But this time, he was practically gushing.

Sam Perry/Reuters (SP)

(a meeting at the hotel - 15:00 to 16:30)

High Tea

SP was late. But he had called ahead. It was quite obvious that SP was ready for “high tea” by the time he arrived. He seemed starved and couldn’t wait to dig into the “goodies” which the hotel provided. He said he normally bicycles to work, and everywhere else around Central London. But with today’s snow, the elements have thrown a crimp into his life style.

We just basically gossiped about IBM, the IT industry and the world affairs.

Misa Gavrilovic (MG)

(a dinner meeting at the hotel - 19:30 to 21:30)

Personal

Except for a presentation which Misha G. gave at a recent meeting on NATO at a Birmingham conference, there was really nothing else worth of recording about our dinner conversation.

December 7, 1995 (Thursday)

Sean Welsh (SW)

(a breakfast meeting at the hotel - 10:00 to 11:30)

Personal

SW is Irish. A Protestant Irishman, that is. His Dad was from a working class family. When he applied for a job at the British Honk Kong bank, "all they wanted to know if he played rugby at his high school," SW said. SW's replied that he did.

And so, SW's family spent most of their lives in Asia's southeast. SW, for example, was born in Thailand.

Greg Copley (GC), Bill Carr (BC)

(a meeting at the hotel - 10:00 to 11:30)

His Australian, Journalistic Origins

Before BC joined us, GC told me about his Australian background. His family are originally from Perth, Western Australia. But he seems to be well connected everywhere in the Australian government. He told me about a meeting he had just had on this trip, for example, with the Deputy Prime Minister.

He also said that journalism was his original profession, from which he branched into different businesses which he now runs.

Carr's Work, Western Democracies

When BC joined our conversation, GC joked, "I hear you've already met this 'born again' Serb?" He added that he (GC) sometimes has to tone the passion in down BC's writing, "because we are supposed to sound neutral." But he added that he is totally sympathetic, and cannot believe how "someone who is actually of Serbian origin, like yourself, can stand all the injustices being heaped at the Serbs these days."

"That's easy," I said. "You never take anything personally. And you look at everything you do as a service to your country." I added that "the hard part for me is reconciling with myself how I got duped for so many years into buying all the bullshit about the virtues of Western democracies."

GC agreed. He said that the duplicity is especially pronounced in the U.S. “Even in Australia, democracy works better,” he said.

“I know,” I replied. “My family and I attended a few sessions at the Australian Parliament in Canberra. Those guys play rough. Democratic vs. Republican ‘congressional wars’ in the U.S. look like the fights between pussycats by comparison.”

At one stage of the conversation, he referred to BC as “the former intelligence officer.”

Ed. Which could help explain why he had access to Col. Salapura.

U.S.-Based Institute, Bodansky’s Book Cover

GC showed me the cover of Bodansky’s book, which he said was being published by British publishers, but printed in the U.S. GC suspected that many unexpected “production delays” which they experienced, were a result of deliberate sabotage efforts while debated on the use of U.S. troops in Bosnia was raging on Capitol Hill.

GC also gave me a pamphlet describing the “International Strategic Studies Association,” an Alexandria, (his?) VA-based organization, where he said he’d be later in December and early January.

Bodansky’s Origins

As I suspected (see my diary notes from Aug/94), Bodansky is of Russian origin, but is an Israeli citizen, and has worked for their intelligence services.

⊕ **End of Diary** ⊕