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Serbia's War Lobby: Diaspora Groups and Western Elites

The current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been characterized by two main conflicts: an ideological battle between forces advocating the creation of an ethnically pure Serbian state and those calling for the restoration of a multiethnic country; and a struggle over material resources, notably heavy weaponry and food.¹ The two conflicts are closely connected. The deliberate physical deprivation brought on by a three-year siege and the inequitable distribution of aid has done much to advance the goal of ethnic purity and the elimination of specific populations.² Yet there is an additional link that is most relevant to a discussion of the Western powers and their responses to the war in Bosnia. Agreement on the ideological dimension of the conflict has had a decisive influence on political outcomes, which in turn affect the delivery and distribution of critical resources. This is most clearly illustrated in the controversy over Bosnia's right to self-defense.

The issue of Bosnia's right to self-defense became a major source of debate in the U.S. Congress in 1994 and 1995. By the summer recess of 1995, the Senate had voted seven times on bills and amendments which called for an end to US participation in the UN-imposed arms embargo against the Bosnian government.³ Following the Market Place Massacre in Sarajevo on February 5, 1994, this issue attracted increasing interest from the American public. Congressional debates in both the House

and Senate were preceded by energetic grassroots lobbying campaigns throughout 1994 and 1995. Pro-Bosnian organizations argued that Bosnia's territorial integrity had been threatened since 1992 when Serbian forces under the command of the Yugoslav Federal Army (JNA) invaded Bosnia-Herzegovina and launched a war of genocide against its people.⁴ Activists pleaded with their elected representatives to "lift the embargo" and restore Bosnia's right to self-defense. Their lobbying efforts were challenged by members of the Serbian American community, which denied their charges of genocide and resisted any change in official U.S. policy.

Pro-Bosnian groups maintained that the UN-imposed arms embargo of September 25, 1991, violated Bosnia's rights to territorial integrity, political independence, and self-defense granted under the UN Charter. They therefore insisted that the arms embargo was illegal. Central to their argument was the recognition that (1) the Serb-dominated government of Yugoslavia requested the imposition of an arms embargo on the whole of the fragile federation; (2) the arms embargo could not be legitimately applied to the independent state of Bosnia-Herzegovina since it was imposed on another legal and political entity; (3) the ineffective protection offered by the international community undermined Bosnia's rights to territorial integrity and self-defense, as laid out in Articles 2(4) and 51 of the UN Charter, and made the continuation of genocide possible.

In their defense, Serbian Americans argued that Serbs too were victims of the war and that their suffering was not being heard. According to Serbian American leaders, they were in fact twice victimized since they alleged that bias and a lack of access to the media prevented them from getting their message across effectively.⁵ Counterclaims of genocide were made amid tortuous accusations that defied standard rules of logic. One of the most prominent Serbian American organizations, SerbNet, went so far as to suggest that U.S. policy was designed "to promote German/Turkish influence in the Balkans thereby, extinguishing the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church."⁶ But logic—or the lack of it—did not seem to matter. "In all fairness," they argued, Serbs also had a "point of view," which should be equally respected. The questions, "how did the war begin?" "who is most responsible?" and "should the arms embargo be lifted?" therefore led to an intensely political contest between revisionists who denied the occurrence of genocide and those who maintained that it was the defining characteristic of the Bosnian conflict.

This chapter analyzes the domestic contest between revisionists and

their opponents outside the former Yugoslavia. I argue that the invasion of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Yugoslav Federal Army in 1992 and the continuation of its war aims through the Bosnian Serb Army has been supported by an unknown source of political influence: the Serbian diaspora. Image merchants in the form of Serbian community groups, hired professionals, and public relations firms have helped political leaders protect their territorial gains by fostering a climate of appeasement and confusion abroad. This chapter explores the political strategies used by Serbian political leaders, in concert with the Serbian diaspora, to undermine serious intervention in support of the Sarajevo government.

The Serbian Context: Revisionism and the Politics of Strategic Deterrence

In his book *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing*, Norman Cigar argues that the genocide launched against the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a calculated program devised by former communist apparatchiks, the Serbian intelligentsia, and political elites. A number of institutions were involved—not least the Serbian Orthodox Church. Top-down leadership and official legitimization were crucial to the implementation of their plans for a Greater Serbia, which was to be carved out at the expense of the indigenous population of Bosnia. Cigar maintains that the creation of an explicitly ultranationalist ideology was secondary to the political goals of Serbian leaders. Rather, they found it necessary “to engage in a systematic and intensive propaganda campaign in order to create a nationalist movement and exacerbate intercommunal relations to the extent that genocide could be made plausible.”⁷

Yet if genocide was to be made plausible and later realized, it also had to be justified. It was here that official propaganda came into full effect as state-run television and governmental news agencies in Serbia executed Slobodan Milošević's disinformation campaign. In order to make the case that the conflict in Bosnia was a “civil war” in which all sides were guilty, propaganda alleging comparable acts of brutality against Serbs was quickly produced. Just as the first rumors of Serb-run concentration camps were being heard in Bosnia, Serbian political leaders in Pale and Belgrade tried to impress on the international community that Serbs too were victims. Although their efforts were at first unconvincing,⁸ they paved the way for a longer struggle in which historical memory would be manipulated in an effort to destroy the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The

aim of this campaign was twofold: first, to deter unilateral criticism that might bring outside intervention and interfere with the pursuit of Serbia's war aims; second, to reiterate a theme of historical struggles that would, in the long term, undermine the idea and acceptance of a multiethnic Bosnia. To these ends, Serbian political leaders sought to appropriate the suffering of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina through an elaborate propaganda campaign based on revisionism—both historical and contemporary—and moral relativism.⁹

A list of major concentration camps, prisons, and detention sites set up by the “Muslims” and dated June 22, 1992, was issued by Velibor Ostojić, secretary for information of the self-proclaimed “Serbian Republic of Bosnia.” A similar document was brought to London on July 15, 1992, by Radovan Karadžić, the self-appointed leader of the Bosnian Serbs. According to Serbian sources, Karadžić's list was to be issued at a House of Commons press conference hosted by Conservative M.P. Henry Bellingham and the Serbian-born lobbyist John Kennedy.¹⁰ The press conference, entitled “Concentration Camps in the New Europe 1992: An Appeal to the Civilized World,” was scheduled for the very same day that Karadžić was received by Lord Carrington, chair of the EC-sponsored peace process.¹¹

The substance of this official propaganda was immediately questionable. The various entries were written in poor English and relied on vague descriptions that were blended with fantastic accounts. Ostojić's list claimed that at the hot water plant in “Ali-Pashino Polje (A. P. Field)” over six thousand inmates were the victims of a “mass liquidation.” In Bradina, over four hundred inmates, “predominantly children—left orphans—fathers killed by Muslims and women” were allegedly herded into a railway tunnel. The story of the “railway children” could not be substantiated independently by human rights authorities. Karadžić later added his own revisionist twist by suggesting that Bosnian forces were the ones besieging Sarajevo. In the course of this alleged aggression, the number of Serbian inmates held in Sarajevo—which was reported as two thousand plus “unknown” in Ostojić's list—was multiplied three-fold in Karadžić's document.

6,000 Bosnian-Serbs are detained in a variety of location including: “Ko-sevo” football Stadium, Zetra railway station, the women's prison, the Mladen Stojanović student hostel, the Viktor Bubanj barracks, the 25 May

children's home in Svrakino Selo, the Šipad storehouse and the central prison which comes under the command of the notorious criminal nicknamed "Celo."

John F. Burns points out the irony of the situation in his *New York Times* article of June 23, 1992, "Sarajevo Tries a Normal Life; Bombs Forbid It," showing that, just as Karadžić accused Bosnian forces of besieging the city, he was seen on Serbian television peering at Sarajevo through field glasses and congratulating Serb gunners on their acts of terrorism and murder. In spite of its inconsistencies and dubious content, the disinformation circulated by the Bosnian Serb leadership reached wide audiences within hours of its publication. Ostojić's account of the "railway children" and claim that Bosnian Serb villagers from Konjić were being detained in grain silos near the city of Tarčin were received by the *Chicago Tribune* the same day. The minister's stories were revised and reported in the final edition of the Midwest newspaper on June 22, 1992.¹² One additional piece of information included was the new number of detainees supposedly held in the Bradina railway tunnel; the number had grown from four hundred to three thousand. The revised count was to become the official figure used by Karadžić in July. The *Chicago Tribune* article was syndicated and reappeared with a slightly different title in the *Toronto Star* and the *Calgary Herald* two days later.¹³

In order to substantiate the allegations of Serbian victimization, Karadžić offered to expose "some typical examples of massacres of Bosnian-Serbs by units of the Croatian Army in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian Territorial Defense." The Bosnian Serb leadership tried to present the case for well-armed Muslim-directed aggression against Serb civilians and even charged the Bosnian forces with "genocide." These accusations were repeated later that summer when a Bosnian Serb representative, Misha Milošević, appeared before an extraordinary meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Milošević claimed that forty-two thousand Bosnian Serbs were being detained in twenty one concentration camps run by Croat and Muslim forces. Over six thousand detainees had been killed while three hundred thousand Bosnian Serbs had fled their homes, he asserted.¹⁴

The accusations contained in official lists and public declarations were unconvincing. There were of course documented cases of "Muslim" and Croatian-run prison camps. In 1992, human rights groups, such as Helsinki Watch, collected and published detailed evidence on abuses con-

ducted by Bosnian and Croatian soldiers against detained civilians (see *War Crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, vols. 1 and 2, Human Rights Watch, 1992–1993). However, there was nothing comparable in the reports issued by the Bosnian Serbs which relied on anecdotal evidence and exaggerated statistics. Karadžić's reports were based on fantastic stories and suggested a most unusual practice of collecting human rights data. They even gave the impression that the Bosnian Serb command was in the practice of making "video-nasties" while alleged abuses were being committed.

In the town of Kupres, by the beginning of April, 52 Bosnian-Serbs had been murdered. The principle [*sic*] methods of execution and mutilation were the severing of heads or the extraction of the brains of living victims. In addition mallets were often used to smash skulls. Prior to death it was common practice to gouge out eyes, cut off ears and break both arms and legs of victims. An unidentified number of Bosnian-Serbs were murdered around the village of Gornji Malovan near Kupres. The corpses were buried in a mass grave on Borova Glava. We are now in possession of proof, in the form of photographs, video tapes and tape recordings which can be produced.

In some cases, these "depositions" invited greater poetic license and read as if they had been dictated by the doctor-poet-war criminal leader himself. In Srebrenica, it was claimed that one young woman escaped being burned alive but "needed to be detained in hospital for 20 days and has subsequently had a complete nervous breakdown."

As more evidence of Serb-run concentration camps was discovered by journalists and human rights workers in August 1992, the earlier charges made by the Bosnian Serb leadership became increasingly inconsistent with the course of official propaganda. Statements made by Bosnian Serb representatives in July and early August 1992 were soon contradicted by subsequent declarations. On August 13–14, Misha Milošević tried to impress upon the UN Human Rights Commission that the idea of Serb-run concentration camps in Bosnia was pure fiction. Milošević told the Commission that, (1) no concentration camps existed in Serbian territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina; (2) no hidden camp had been created; (3) the self-proclaimed Serbian government of Bosnia-Herzegovina had never carried out operations of "ethnic cleansing" on its territory; and (4) that the same government had never refused international control over prison camps in its territory.¹⁵ Less than two weeks later, Karadžić corrected some of Milošević's claims. The self-appointed president delivered a cautious admission that there were camps in Bosnia that were under the

control of Bosnian Serb forces. Before representatives of some twenty countries, Karadžić told delegates at the 1992 London Conference that the Serb-run "prisoner-of-war" camps would be closed down.

If the practice of circulating revisionist propaganda to the international community was publicized by Bosnian Serb leaders, the program of denial could ultimately trace its way back to Belgrade and to forces under the command of the Serbian president, Slobodan Milošević. As the fighting intensified, official denials from Belgrade became commonplace. In April 1992, as soon as the Serbs' aerial bombardment began in western Bosnia, the military command of the JNA and political leaders in the Serbian capital denied any direct involvement in this offensive. On June 6, two days after its declared withdrawal from Bosnia, the Milošević government again tried to distance itself formally from the aggression and, in a cosmetic effort to deceive the international community, called on the Bosnian Serbs to stop the fighting. As press reports of Serbian military involvement in Bosnia were to reveal three years later, there was no change in policy from Belgrade. Milošević's state apparatus continued to direct both the course of the war and the self-justifying campaign of propaganda that he and Karadžić had perfected.¹⁶

Milošević's direction of the propaganda campaign required total control of the system of communications in Serbian-held territories. To this end, the official Yugoslav news agency Tanjug placed correspondents in a number of Bosnian cities throughout 1992 and 1993, where they worked in tandem with Karadžić's Serbian Democratic Party and his news agency, SRNA. Reports from Bosnia of Serbian attacks in Sarajevo were routinely censored and corrected by the Belgrade bureau until the practice of self-censorship and vague commentary was institutionalized.¹⁷ News agencies executed both a local and international disinformation campaign. Not only did they target the Serbian populations of the former Yugoslavia but, since information was not covered in the UN-imposed sanctions against Serbia-Montenegro, these agencies also served to represent the Milošević government abroad. Three years later, state-run news agencies would do the same for Karadžić.¹⁸

War crimes reports similar to those produced by Ostojić and Karadžić were released by the highest-ranking official of the Yugoslav mission to the United Nations, Dragomir Djokić. Serbian American propaganda organizations, with direct links to Belgrade, claimed to have sponsored the findings that were ultimately received by Djokić's office.¹⁹ A letter sent by Djokić to the UN secretary-general on November 24, 1993,

offered the text of “a memorandum on war crimes and crimes of genocide in eastern Bosnia (communes of Bratunac, Skelani and Srebrenica) committed against the Serbian population from April 1992 to April 1993.” The reports repeated the accusations of “ethnic cleansing” previously made in Karadžić’s list:

The aim of the terror the Serbs are now exposed to is the same as during the previous wars. It is to expel now and for all the Serbs from these regions. That is why every attack on Serbian villages leaves in its wake only desolation, burned buildings, looted and destroyed property, destroyed monuments, cemeteries and churches.

The letterhead indicated that the State Commission for War Crimes had produced the report, but other sources would try to persuade the Serbian faithful that the information was collected independently. According to the British journalist and Serb publicist Nora Beloff,²⁰ a certain Milivoje Ivanišević was responsible for preparing the documentation. Her attempts to convince the readers of the Serbian Unity Congress’s *Unity Herald* were hardly persuasive. The sources that Beloff claimed were central to Ivanišević’s investigation immediately challenged the veracity of his dossier. Beloff even acknowledged that among Ivanišević’s primary sources were the Serbian militia, police, and local authorities—the apparatus of the Serbian state.²¹

Official propaganda on war crimes continued to be produced in a number of disguises. The Serbian Council Information Center (SCIC), which described itself as a “non-governmental and non-political association of independent experts, writers and other intellectuals from Belgrade,” offered another vehicle for Milošević’s propagandists. Reports issued from this research body circulated on electronic newsgroups that linked Serb-nationalist communities in the diaspora. A dossier published by the supposedly independent information agency reviewed alleged abuses that had occurred prior to April 1993. Ostojić’s hand could again be found in these infected sources of documentation. This was evident in the findings presented by the SCIC “regarding the violation of human rights, ethnic cleansing, crimes and violence by Croatian and Moslem armed formations against the Serbian civilian population in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”²² Common motifs resurfaced, as Ostojić’s story of the railway children of Bradina was repackaged, this time with a Koranic emphasis. One testimonial from an alleged detainee recorded the entry of Islamic texts into the story.

During my stay in the camp I watched the Serbs who were tortured by the Muslims. I watched the “No 9” tunnel at Bradina, I watched the Muslims take the Serbs out, line them against the wall where they had to stand for hours with their hands up, they sat for hours in cold rain, soaking wet, and they were forced to sing and learn the Koran. Those who didn’t know the Koran were beaten.²³

In spite of the odd editorial change as different institutions and agencies selectively transmitted official lies, the Serbian revisionist program was essentially circular. The same source material appeared again and again in both the Serbian and the Serbian American press.

While Serbian political leaders attracted little sympathy from the international community in 1992, their propaganda had other uses back home. Government-sponsored disinformation proved to be an effective means of mobilizing the Serbian public behind an exclusive nationalist ideology. For Milošević and Karadžić, the Serbian populations under their control became an essential tool in the continuation and conduct of their war aims.²⁴ Having planted the idea that comparable tragedies had befallen the Serbian people in the former Yugoslavia, leaders in Pale and Belgrade were able to undermine any serious resistance to their political goals: the creation of a Greater Serbia at the expense of the local population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, securing their ethnically pure lands required constant legitimation and inventive propaganda.

As the level of violence escalated and as hundreds of journalists arrived in Sarajevo, the revisionist campaign took a new turn. Serbian leaders in Belgrade and Pale could no longer concentrate on creating the illusion that Serbs were simply the victims of the genocidal crimes that they had been accused of by the international press. There was still no acceptable explanation for the savagery carried out against the Bosnian people, who were now the subject of international attention. Serbian political leaders therefore introduced a new component into their disinformation campaign. In order to rationalize their denials of complicity in crimes committed against Bosnian civilians, Serbian leaders created an unlikely scapegoat, the Sarajevo government and its embryonic army. News agencies under the control of Milošević and Karadžić charged the Bosnians with self-inflicted massacres on the pretext that the Bosnian government needed to attract sympathy from the international community. Serbian allegations of choreographed and “self-inflicted” attacks required a certain fidelity among official propagandists, as one source of disinformation fed off the other. The most popular Serbian daily, *Politika*, repeated claims

made by Karadžić's news agency, SRNA, and accused Bosnian forces of stage-managing the massacre of May 27, 1992, when seventeen people were killed.²⁵ This incident, later to be known as the Bread Line Massacre, set the tone for Serbia's domestic and international propaganda program based on denial and cynical conspiracy theories that served to redistribute blame.²⁶

Yet what stands out from the history of the genocide in Bosnia is not that Serbian leaders were able to mobilize local populations in pursuit of ethnic purity, but that they were also able to export their political objectives so effectively to the Serbian diaspora in the Western world. The crude tactics of revisionism and outright denial used by ultranationalists in the former Yugoslavia found an accommodating niche of willing sponsors in the United States and Canada. What was most astonishing was the absence of dissent from members of the Serbian American community. Those who openly recognized Serbia's genocidal policies remained faceless individuals and their voices were inaudible. Although many of its members were educated in Western democracies, one could reasonably say that the Serbian American community championed the claims of authoritarian politicians and advocated the official line from Serbian political leaders. However independent they pretended to be, their ideological manifestos were virtually indistinguishable from those drafted in Belgrade and Pale. Serbian American groups adopted the same policies: an end to sanctions against Serbia-Montenegro, full recognition of the "Bosnian Serb Republic," and "fair" treatment for all the parties concerned. Above all, these Serbian American organizations insisted that, in the name of "evenhandedness," the arms embargo against the Sarajevo government should remain in place. As a result of the Serbian diaspora's sponsorship of Karadžić's policies, the Serbian disinformation campaign was brought to a new political arena where causal uncertainty and moral relativism would eventually take root. As the Serbian American community transmitted official propaganda issued from Belgrade and Pale, it soon became the executor of Serbia's war lobby overseas.

The Genesis of a Lobby

Prior to the war in the former Yugoslavia, the Serbian American community had little tradition of political organization. Scores of community groups like the Serbian Benevolent Society, the Serb National Federation, and the Serbian Singing Federation had established chapters in industrial

centers such as Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay area, but their focus was predominantly religious or cultural. Within this community, there was no record of elaborate political organization. It was only in 1990 that returns from the Federal Election Commission began to record specific Serbian political action committees (PACs) that were set up to lobby on behalf of Serbian interests.²⁷ As former congresswoman and Serbian American leader Helen Delich Bentley noted, the creation of a Serbian lobby in the United States was by all accounts a new phenomenon: "This is something which has never been done before, and let me assure you we are making a difference. We are building a Serbian-American grassroots political lobby and network in this country from the ground up."²⁸ Five years later, Bentley was to be proved correct. Today, the Serbian lobby consists of hundreds of groups and individuals united behind a set of shared values and political goals. The belief system of this lobby is best characterized by its members' unequivocal support for the concept of ethnic purity, defended as the exclusive right to territorial unification and self-determination for the Serbian people. Two other points are central to the lobby's doctrinal foundation. These are self-identification as a persecuted group—the belief that Serbs are the principal victims in the former Yugoslavia—and a denial that genocide has been committed against the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The ultranationalist and xenophobic sentiments of Serbian leaders in Pale and Belgrade were exported to the United States through two principal carriers. The first was politicians and emissaries who traveled between North America and the former Yugoslavia. The second was the Serbian Orthodox Church. In effect, the Serbian diaspora was mobilized through similar community and institutional structures that had so successfully marshaled the Serbian public behind the nationalist agenda in Milošević's Yugoslavia. Indeed, the red-brown-black order that Norman Cigar describes²⁹ could also find its expression among the Serbian community overseas.³⁰

In the United States, it was the then Congresswoman Helen Delich Bentley who took charge of broadcasting Milošević's political agenda to Serbian émigré groups. In 1989, Bentley traveled to Yugoslavia and was present at a crucial juncture in the history of the Balkans. Bentley had been invited to commemorate the six hundredth anniversary of the defeat of Serbian forces at the hands of the Turkish armies in 1389 and joined Milošević at a nationalist rally on the sacred battlefield in Gazimestan,

Kosovo. Having celebrated the fervent nationalist spirit that gripped the hundreds of thousands of faithful as Milošević held out the promise of Serbian grandeur, Bentley returned to the United States as his main crusader. From her congressional office in Washington, D.C.—and at the taxpayers' expense—she approached Serbian Americans directly and tried to forge a community lobbying effort.³¹ Letters and invitations sent out recorded her allegiance to Milošević's Serbia and the repressive policies it stood for. Her support for Milošević's brutal program of underdevelopment and impoverishment for the indigenous Albanian population in Kosovo was evidenced by her campaigning efforts back home.

Bentley's first action was recorded in a controversial appeal released on personal letterhead. On August 4, 1990, Bentley approached the Serbian American community and asked members to pressure their elected representatives in opposition to a House resolution that she described as HR 352, the "Broomfield bill on Kosovo and Yugoslavia."³² She also urged members to resist the active petitioning of Congressmen Tom Lantos and Benjamin Gilman to suspend Yugoslavia's most-favored-nation status. In response to these challenges, Bentley provided the Serbian American community with a comprehensive lobbying guide:

For your information, most members of Congress will be in their home districts for the entire month of August. So first, right away, send a letter to their Washington Office so that it will be on their desk when they return to Washington. Second, during August, organize large delegations of Serbian Americans from your churches and groups, and make appointments to see your Senators and Congressmen during the month of August while they are in their home states.

Together with this letter, Bentley included a position paper on why the "Broomfield bill" was to be opposed, as well as lists of congressional representatives. She had well-rehearsed justifications for rejecting criticism of Serbian actions, as well as ideological arguments to counter the demand for local autonomy for the Albanian population. Two days earlier, in a sixty-minute speech before the House, Bentley tried to make the case that Serbs had been long-standing victims in Tito's Yugoslavia. The 1974 Federal Constitution of Yugoslavia had been imposed on Serbs by a ruthless communist dictator who wanted to "split the vast majority of the Serbian people from Kosovo, their ancestral homeland, for hundreds of years." In light of the unjust introduction of the constitution, the powers of autonomy it granted to the local Albanian population of Kosovo should be reevaluated, Bentley argued.

The manner in which she reviewed the situation was open to question. In spite of the establishment of a *de facto* police state in Kosovo by the Serbian parliament on June 29, 1990, Bentley justified these policies by blaming the victims. Recorded incidents of arbitrary arrest, detention, and dismissal of thousands of local Albanians as well as the creation of segregationist policies were brought on by local community leaders in Pristina, Bentley insisted. The indigenous Albanian population of Kosovo was condemned as "criminal" and its parliament, secessionist. Kosovo itself was also declared a bastion of Islamic activity.³³ Following these accusations, and in an effort to minimize the significance of Belgrade's repressive policies, Bentley then asserted that Serbs were worse off than the Albanians of Kosovo: "I can say with no hesitation that the Albanians of Kosovo have more freedom and autonomy than Serbs and Jews living in the so-called liberal northern Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia."³⁴ What Bentley was doing was no different from the standard relativist tactic used by authorities under the command of Milošević and later Karadžić: she was redistributing blame so as to distract attention from genuine human rights abuses committed by Milošević's brutal regime.

Bentley's own battles continued well after this particular episode. Until her departure from the House of Representatives in 1994, she repeatedly fought against the imposition of sanctions on Serbia-Montenegro and the creation of resolute policies aimed to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to those most in need in Bosnia. Almost exactly two years after her first real fight in the Congress, Bentley could be found receiving Serbian representatives³⁵ and offering official apologies for the ineffective distribution of humanitarian aid to the besieged people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.³⁶ Resisting calls by Senator DeConcini and Representative Hoyer for the United Nations to use force to ensure the delivery of aid, Bentley cited UN General Lewis MacKenzie,³⁷ and insisted that any attempt to strengthen the ineffective aid effort with military force would lead to a major escalation of the "ancient blood feud" and to the loss of American lives. She therefore advocated that the U.S. policy should be to secure a negotiated settlement based on "fair treatment" of the "three sides." In effect, Bentley was simply trying to protect Serbian war gains with the same language of self-victimization used by her ideological mentors in Belgrade.

In an attempt to promote "fairness," Bentley had founded a major propaganda campaign of her own. While she complained to the Congress

that “the United States has been inundated with a professionally run public relations campaign on behalf of Croatia which makes the treatment and fairness of information of the Balkans highly suspect,”³⁸ few Balkan advocacy efforts could match those sponsored by the congresswoman. Her aim was to diminish Belgrade’s responsibility for starting the war by shifting the blame—first on the Albanians of Kosovo, then on the Croats, then on the Bosnians.

In October 1991, Bentley invited prominent Serbian Americans to join her in Chicago, where she tried to unite the Serbian community under a single banner. On that occasion she claimed that “the idea grew of forming an umbrella organization of members representing all existing Serbian American groups which would articulate the Serbian position and speak with one voice on behalf of all Serbs.”³⁹ In spite of the noticeable opposition against the Milošević government in 1991, there was only one Serbian position for Bentley, the one defined by the Serbian president. By exploiting common fears and nationalist stereotypes, Bentley was largely successful in creating a base of support for Milošević.⁴⁰ Persistence and ideological commitment seemed to pay off. By 1992, Bentley had made scores of visits to the Serb diaspora communities in the United States⁴¹ and was recognized as their protector. SerbNet, the propaganda organization that had been set up by Bentley at the end of 1991, was positively identifiable with its founder.

SerbNet’s strength lay in its preparation of promotional materials and later, in its patronage of Serb-biased personalities. In an article in the Belgrade tabloid *Intervju*, “The Unifiers of the Serbian Diaspora,” SerbNet was credited with having secured financial support from the Serbian Orthodox Church to lead a delegation including four congressmen and senators to “the Fatherland.”⁴² However, in its first few years, much of SerbNet’s resources were devoted to its domestic audience.

In 1993, SerbNet concentrated on preparing a video to be distributed through the Serbian American community to influential politicians, journalists, and other ethnic groups. The title of the twenty-six-minute video, “Truth Is the Victim in Bosnia,” immediately set the tone for a revisionist intrigue. It was narrated by a woman with a BBC accent; the Serb propagandists tried to copy serious documentary format. Official myths were fused with partial citations from the former British ambassador to the United Nations, Sir David Hannay, which were added to excerpted statements from respectable authorities. Jeri Laber, director of Human Rights Watch, was just one of the experts quoted out of context. Yet if the

filmmakers had been involved in manipulative editing practices, they were also able to purchase actors and extras. Guest appearances were also arranged with the former UN general Lewis MacKenzie. Three interviews with MacKenzie were followed by extracts from an academically obscure journal, *Strategic Policy*, which were used to reinforce the myth of equal guilt.⁴³ Arguing that the media were biased and favored the Croatians, the video repeated the SRNA-inspired myth that the Bread Line Massacre in Sarajevo was staged by the Bosnians to gain sympathy from the West. The producers let MacKenzie do the talking.

The incestuous manner in which this video was produced was truly staggering. MacKenzie had been sponsored by SerbNet to give a dozen speeches in the United States. Since he was one of the first to publicize Karadžić's claim that Bosnians had bombed themselves, his own objectivity was cast in doubt as he seemed to take on the role of Serbian publicist. MacKenzie's appearance at U.S. congressional hearings was later questioned by journalists who sought an explanation for his visits and new role.⁴⁴ When asked about his appearance in the SerbNet video, he later claimed that he had simply been filmed by accident at a rally to commemorate the UN peacekeeping monument in Ottawa. He failed to mention that his speaking engagements had been organized by SerbNet, and he denied any formal relationship with the organization.⁴⁵ MacKenzie even argued that it was not until afterwards that he learned where the money for his speaking tour was coming from. However, MacKenzie's subsequent declarations were to reveal the extent to which the Serbian propaganda front organized by Helen Delich Bentley had opened up access to Congress. Inadvertently, MacKenzie later admitted that the testimonies he gave before the U.S. Congress were organized and suggested that SerbNet was behind his lobbying efforts. Writing in the *Calgary Sun* two months later, MacKenzie insisted that both of his appearances in Washington were "arranged by an elected member of the U.S. Congress through a U.S. speaking agent and my own Toronto based agent. There was absolutely no indication of SerbNet sponsorship until after the events were history."⁴⁶ In spite of MacKenzie's denials,⁴⁷ SerbNet did not conceal its sponsorship. In its newsletter that very same month, the MacKenzie speaker tour was well documented. There was little doubt which elected member of Congress had arranged his speaker tour. Certainly, Helen Delich Bentley knew how MacKenzie was brought to Washington. The then honorary president of SerbNet could not plead ignorance.

As SerbNet sought to communicate official propaganda from Belgrade

and Pale, Bentley tried to attract funds and patrons for her project.⁴⁸ The congresswoman's efforts were acknowledged in the Serbian press and by the Milošević government, which described her as a "fighter for Serbian rights in the USA." Yet, if she was a fighter for Serbian rights, she was above all a fighter for Milošević and the policies of a Greater Serbia.⁴⁹

Helen Delich Bentley's success at introducing Milošević's goals of ethnic purity to the heart of the Serbian American community through SerbNet and her own congressional campaigns could not have been sustained without the assistance of preexisting Serbian institutions. In addition to well-established newspapers like the Pittsburgh-based *American Srbobran*,⁵⁰ which published advertisements for SerbNet, the Serbian Orthodox Church was of paramount importance to the realization of Bentley's vision—a Serbian American lobby. SerbNet's work was reportedly blessed by clerical leaders⁵¹ while Serbian churches throughout the United States and Canada served as meeting points for foreign representatives, political figures, and the diaspora community as a whole. Not only the standard ideas of Serbian grandeur and victimization but also considerable sums of money were exchanged during these gatherings. Much of this was used to support declared humanitarian aid efforts through bodies like the International Organization of Christian Charities.⁵² However, there was a significant element that could not be classified as "humanitarian." SerbNet frequently held propaganda functions in local Serbian churches where political statements from Patriarch Pavle in Belgrade were distributed. Official documents from the U.S. Department of Justice also recorded instances in which clerical leaders lent their charitable offices to organize political protests⁵³ and fund-raisers aimed at financing Serbian emissaries. Zoran Djordjevic, who was registered with the Foreign Agents Unit as a representative for the "Government of Serbian Krajina," recorded that he gave eight lectures to the Serbian American community in Serbian churches in Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee and in the California cities of Saratoga, Acadia, and San Marcos. During these visits, Djordjevic admitted to raising \$15,645, which was used to finance his public relations campaign. Four churches in particular seemed unconcerned that their political sponsorship was being reported to the Justice Department and instead facilitated the disinformation effort.⁵⁴ The Orthodox Church and the Serbian polity, both in the former Yugoslavia and in the diaspora, were firmly united.⁵⁵ In some cases, religious leaders even joined their congregations and contributed

directly to the accounts of foreign agents working on behalf of renegade regimes.⁵⁶

While the Serbian Orthodox Church served to assemble the local community, a handful of Serbian American political leaders emerged from newly created citizens' organizations. In 1990, two propaganda agencies, SerbNet and the Serbian American Voters Alliance PAC, were created. A year later, the Serbian Unity Congress (SUC) was formed. While the Serbian American Voters Alliance issued satirical cartoons and offensive press releases, SerbNet and the SUC appeared remarkably professional. They produced and distributed videos, organized lectures, and promoted Serbophilic journalists. These two groups signaled a shift away from the haphazard protests during the first few months of the war in Croatia. Rather, these new organizations were modeled on American civic associations and gave the semblance of having a democratic structure, a clear mission, and professional leadership.⁵⁷

The presence of member organizations such as the Serbian Unity Congress at first disguised the birth of a Serb-nationalist lobby on American soil. It was simply a matter of spin. Instead of introducing themselves as the crusaders for an ethnically pure Serbian state carved out of a destroyed Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbian American groups argued that their demands for fairness and equality should be heard as a matter of principle. By framing its arguments as a matter of "opinion," to be tolerated according to its basic civil "rights," the Serbian American community skirted around any injurious decision that might exclude its voice. This tactic opened the debate up to deceptively rational notions, like "Serbs have the same right to self-determination as any other people." The argument was a simplistic one that ignored the manner in which self-determination was to be achieved. However simplistic, the Serbian proponents' line of reasoning was barely challenged and, often in the name of multiculturalism and fairness, it was agreed that Serbian "rights" should also be respected.

Where Milošević, Karadžić, and Helen Delich Bentley had succeeded was in convincing the Serbian and Serbian American public that they were part of a great nation. Serbian American supporters sincerely believed in the morality of their claims to create an ethnically homogeneous state inside Bosnia. Nationalist pride overcame any real inquiry into the genocidal policies through which this ethnically pure Serbian homeland would be achieved. In practice, affiliates of these Serbian American

groups boldly defended their actions as expressions of their constitutional rights to association and free speech. Demonstrations held in front of UN offices, foreign embassies, and the press were considered legitimate acts of political participation.⁵⁸ Advertisements that defied the Clinton administration were placed in newspapers and were also justified on the basis of free speech.⁵⁹ To the discerning observer, however, it was clear that what these groups exhibited was a far cry from the American traditions of voluntarism and civic protest.

In the name of defending Serbs against defamation, these Serbian American groups promoted a well designed political campaign of appeasement that was coordinated with the Serbian leadership in the former Yugoslavia. In many respects, the Serbian American leaders duplicated the practices of historical revisionism and Holocaust denial designed by right-wing extremists. If they made their own arguments seem more respectable than those of Holocaust deniers, there was little virtue in the distinction. The Serbian American lobby was simply engaged in a more popular campaign of denial, but the rationale behind its program was strikingly similar: it too needed to justify a political agenda based on ethnic purity, territorial conquest, and genocide. Although Serbian American groups maintained the appearance of independent civic organizations, their resolutions advocated official policies from Belgrade and Pale, namely, the creation of ethnically pure states as well as the transfer of indigenous populations. The most deceptive of these organizations was the Serbian Unity Congress.

The Serbian Unity Congress and Karadžić's War Lobby

The Serbian Unity Congress is the most extensive Serb-nationalist organization in North America. Based in Napa, California, and Washington, DC, it was created as a membership organization devoted to political lobbying on behalf of the regimes in Belgrade and Pale. It represents the interests of Serbian political leaders by (1) financing an official representative for the Bosnian Serb regime in Washington, DC; (2) sponsoring a deliberate disinformation campaign that targets the U.S. Congress, media, university campuses, and research centers; (3) engaging public relations firms to lobby on behalf of the Serbian leadership in Pale and ensure representation during congressional committee hearings; (4) purchasing the support of speakers and journalists.

Formed in December 1990, the SUC was later incorporated in the state of Nebraska as a tax-exempt organization on February 14, 1991. Under Article 2, its declared mission was recorded: "The Corporation is a not-for-profit corporation organized and to be operated under the Nebraska Nonprofit Corporation Act exclusively for religious, scientific, literary and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C.) as now enacted or as may be amended or succeeded by a new provision." Since its inception the Serbian Unity Congress has operated from northern California. Its provisional base in Berkeley was transferred to Napa in 1993. From there, the director of the central office, Jelena Kolarovich, managed the accounts and administered the day-to-day running of the organization, in concert with Mirjana Samardzija, the former executive director in San Francisco. The director of the Serbian American Affairs Office in Washington, DC, Danielle Sremac, is also a key figure in the SUC. These offices are small, one-person outfits, and the SUC therefore remains highly dependent on the activism of its reported six thousand members.

The creation of a tax-exempt and charitable organization of Serbian Americans was immediately questionable. While the directors of the Serbian Unity Congress tried to impress on the secretary of state for Nebraska that the SUC fell within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code,⁶⁰ newsletters circulated by the organization revealed an active pan-Serbian political agenda. According to the introductory letter of its former president, Nick Petrovich, the goals of the Serbian Unity Congress could be easily summarized: "the SUC's short term goal as adopted is to contribute to the reconstruction of the territories on which the Serbian people find themselves." If the aim of unifying Serbs was understood in Petrovich's concern to help "reconstruct" Serb-held lands, the goal of ethnic purity based on the transfer of populations underlined the SUC's real agenda. Former SUC president Michael Djordjevich made this point clearly during an interview with the Serbian newspaper *Intervju*. Ignoring the contradictions the creation of an ethnically pure state poses to the establishment of a democratic order, Djordjevich told the Belgrade tabloid, "Our main efforts are directed toward ending the war in Bosnia and to have Serbia gather all the Serbs into a democratic, constitutional and traditional Serbian state."⁶¹ To its members, the SUC's political program was clearly expressed in the resolutions recorded at annual conferences in 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994. These resolutions urged

1. the U.S. Congress and the international community to lift the economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro;
2. the United States and the international community to recognize the rights of Serbian people in Serbian-occupied territories of Bosnia and Croatia to self-determination;
3. all authorized groups and responsible institutions to identify “illegal” immigrants from Albania who “migrated” to the territory of Kosovo from April 6, 1941, to the present and transfer them to the United Nations for resettlement.

It went without saying that the arms embargo against the Sarajevo government was to remain in place. Fairness and evenhandedness—Bentley’s favorite terms—were two of the slogans used by the Serbian Unity Congress to appease the American conscience.

To its own members, the Serbian Unity Congress boasted of its unique status within the Serbian diaspora. Claiming to be the foremost Serbian organization, it reported that it combated misinformation by maintaining a full-time Washington, DC, office for public relations and provided grant support to “objective publications by internationally renowned non-Serb sources.” With much bravado, the SUC advertised its declared accomplishments. The list sounded impressive:

- Our representatives testify in Congress.
- [The] media considers Serbian Unity Congress as #1 information source on Serbian point of view.
- Our Washington office representative achieved many media appearances.
- We sponsored a rape report with international recognition, used by War Crimes Commission, the Yugoslav Mission to the UN, authors, etc.
- We are a major source of research and financial support to authors, journalists and academics.
- We initiated an Alliance of Orthodox Peoples with plans for internationalization.
- We developed a media watch group (engaged in anti-defamation of Serbs) with a global network.
- We initiated efforts to get sanctions lifted.

While its achievements were largely exaggerated in its own publicity, there was some truth to its claims. The founder of the SUC did testify

before Congress, but his was the only appearance made by a Serbian American leader. Money was paid to journalists, to promote the SUC's agenda, as was later revealed in the SUC's information returns filed with the Internal Revenue Service in 1994.⁶² In 1993, a report that questioned the practice of mass rape against non-Serbian women was drafted and disseminated by the SUC's executive director, Mirjana Samardzija, through her front, the "North American News Analysis Network." Elements of this report, *Rapes in Yugoslavia: Separating Fact from Fiction*, would later be found in a notorious piece of revisionism entitled "Dateline Yugoslavia: The Partisan Press," published by Peter Brock in *Foreign Policy* in January 1994. With Samardzija's assistance, Brock was able to introduce official disinformation from Belgrade into one of the most respected journals on foreign affairs.⁶³ Above all, the SUC did create an active Serbian American lobby with both a grassroots and a congressional dimension. By 1994, the SUC had indeed started to penetrate the media and Congress, as it advertised. It did so by launching an energetic pressure campaign and by employing hired professionals to direct its public relations effort in cooperation with its Belgrade office.

Grassroots Lobbying

At the grassroots level, the Serbian Unity Congress organized a major letter-writing and protest campaign. Lists of elected representatives, media offices, and prewritten scripts were sent to members of the six-thousand-strong Serbian Unity Congress. Under the heading "Serbs, Write and Call!" the leadership of the SUC New York chapter prepared ready-made campaign materials that were published in the quarterly *Unity Herald*. Using the same scare tactics Helen Delich Bentley had initiated, the Serbian Unity Congress impressed on its members that they were engaged in a moral struggle for truth and justice in the United States where there was a "malevolent, aggressive and persistent propaganda campaign against the Serbian people."⁶⁴ The Serbian American community just needed to be better organized and funded if it was to have a chance, they argued, following the medieval slogan, "Only unity can save the Serb." Self-victimization was essential to the SUC's motivation tactics. Like Milošević's new "Yugoslavia," which had been unfairly denied membership to the United Nations, Serbs in the diaspora were no different from their brethren overseas, and they argued that the American government and media were perpetuating their suffering.

In order to convince its membership, the Serbian Unity Congress repeated the charge that its opponents had hired the services of public relations firms and had considerable financial backing. The message from the Serbian American leadership was that Serbs were the underdog. In the course of this propaganda effort, the public relations firm of Ruder-Finn and, in particular, its vice president James Harff were defamed, as perjured interviews were circulated to substantiate revisionist claims.⁶⁵ At one point, Serbian American leaders maintained that the Croatian community had launched a major lobbying effort and was seeking a \$550 million financial aid package for Croatia. This was a frequent rallying cry that served an additional goal: to the non-Serbian community, talk of public relations firms and foreign sponsorship helped foster the myth that press reporting reflected an anti-Serbian bias. By presenting the conflict as a struggle over truth, the Serbian propaganda campaign sought to create an epistemological debate that would be used to confuse the American public over the nature of the war and undermine meaningful criticism of Serb-directed atrocities in the former Yugoslavia.

The first published script for calling the “President and other politicians” appeared in the *Unity Herald* in November 1992. In disgust at perceived anti-Serbian policies, the Serbian Unity Congress directed its members to repeat five main points: (1) the sanctions against the Serbian people were to be lifted; (2) the United States was to refrain from military intervention in the Balkans; (3) Yugoslavia’s membership in the United Nations was to be reinstated; (4) the arms embargo was to be reinforced equally on the “Croatian and Muslim” sides; (5) pressure was to be applied to the Croats and Muslims to negotiate a peaceful territorial settlement and redraw the communist-drawn borders of the former Yugoslavia. The November 1992 script then concluded with a request to meet representatives of the Serbian Unity Congress.

Subsequent campaigning materials distributed to the SUC membership repeated the abovementioned policies and the themes of “evenhandedness” and “nonintervention.” In November 1992, a letter inviting change in U.S. policy in the former Yugoslavia addressed to President-Elect Clinton was circulated among the delegates at the SUC’s annual conference in San Diego.⁶⁶ The following year, when it appeared that the Clinton administration might issue air strikes against Serbian forces, the SUC sent letters and information packs to the president, U.S. senators, congressional representatives, the State Department, Jewish organizations, and the American media.⁶⁷ However, the SUC’s pressure tactics and use

of emotional blackmail did not originate only from Serbian Americans. An SUC newsletter of December 26, 1993, advertised the SUC-cosponsored campaign to direct children in Belgrade to write letters protesting against "the unjust sanctions imposed on innocent civilians."

By 1995, the SUC's letter-writing campaign reflected a genuine sense of panic. Letters faxed from the SUC central office suggested that the Serbian lobby effort was often reactive, however systematic. In anticipation of a proposed cease-fire, which would freeze Serbian gains in Bosnia, Michael Djordjevic sent an urgent letter appealing to SUC members, friends, and family members to write and visit their representatives in support of Jimmy Carter's initiative.⁶⁸ The same day, Djordjevic wrote to Senator Phil Gramm advocating an amendment to the "Contact Group" proposal. The SUC's demands for appeasement were actively circulated in the form of model letters throughout January 1995. Members of the lobby were simply told what to write and say. The newly elected SUC President, John Delich, drafted three model letters on January 10, following Djordjevic's example. He first approached chapter presidents, urging them to write to certain congressmen, asking them to "use their efforts and influence to help end the carnage in Bosnia now."⁶⁹ Attached to this were two additional letters, one to Senator Jesse Helms, the other to Representative Charles Wilson. This grassroots campaign was later to be supplemented by a three-day lobbying effort on Capitol Hill.

The SUC's internal publications publicized scores of its own protests. The *Unity Herald* recorded multiple examples of demonstrations across the United States from 1991 onward. According to this source, demonstrations were held in front of the German consulate in San Francisco (January 11, 1992) and in Chicago, where the SUC later boasted of ten thousand participants at its Serbian parade (June 20, 1992). The *Unity Herald* also mentioned a gathering of five thousand Serbian Americans in front of the UN headquarters in New York, where SUC members demanded "the right to self-determination for all Serbs in all Serbian lands, and the lifting of sanctions against the Serbian people." On the West Coast, Serbian activists were again mobilized to protest in front of the *San Diego Union Tribune* offices for a second time (August 29, 1992). Two months later, SUC members returned to stand outside the UN headquarters in New York, where they complained against "threats of the United States military intervention against Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

In spite of its charges that an anti-Serbian bias in the media prevented

the Serbian community from being heard, the SUC's pressure tactics were well documented by the press. In November 1991, *USA Today* (November 5) and the *Chicago Tribune* (November 4) announced the creation of the Serbian Unity Congress and publicized its goal of securing "balanced coverage" of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Michael Djordjevich, founder and first president of the Serbian Unity Congress, saw three letters published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Washington Post* in 1991 and 1992.⁷⁰ Djordjevich's associate in Calgary, Nesa Ilić, was even more successful in promoting their cause. Between June 1992 and mid-January 1993, the *Calgary Herald* recognized the activities of the Serbian Unity Congress in an article and included three letters signed on behalf of SUC representatives and local chapters.⁷¹ Ilić even thanked the newspaper for its "fair" coverage. "It sure is nice to see the words of Bosnian Serbs for a change and read what they have to say," he wrote on December 10, 1992.

Protests staged by the SUC were also reported. The *Los Angeles Times* journalist Irene Chang quoted the head of the SUC chapter in Los Angeles, and noted that activists were "writing letters and making telephone calls to their elected officials and the media to increase their profile."⁷² The *San Diego Union Tribune* covered a demonstration organized against its editorial management in August 1992. Rex Dalton, writing for the *San Diego Union Tribune*, quoted one of the SUC's directors, Zika Djokovich, and commented on a similar SUC demonstration in Los Angeles the week before. In the fall of 1992, the SUC held a rally in Phoenix, Arizona, where Channel 10 TV was condemned as biased. A few months later, the Serbian Unity Congress achieved a public relations hat trick. In February 1993, the Associated Press (February 23), the *Los Angeles Times* (February 20), and the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (February 9) remarked on the SUC's grassroots lobbying effort and claims of media bias and exaggeration. Allegations that the "Muslims" were stage-managing atrocities in order to attract sympathy again resurfaced in some of these articles. Uncritical reporting of the SUC's true intentions was to continue. On March 5, 1995, Almar Latour, writing in the *Washington Times*, commented on the Serbian American lobbying effort and presented the SUC's case for an ethnically pure state as if it were a legitimate one. In the course of his reporting, Latour repeated Karadžić's declared "willingness" to trade land for peace, although there was never any suggestion that the Bosnian Serb leader would give up his claim to the territories around Sarajevo.

The group has lobbied for the Bosnian Serbs since the start of the conflict in 1990, and claims the Serbian viewpoint has been ignored by Western governments and the media. The Serbian Congress argues the contact group plan truncates the Bosnian Serb part of the former Yugoslavia into three areas that would make it more difficult for Serbs of each region to move freely, without having to cross a Muslim area. Radovan Karadžić, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, has suggested trading several traditionally Muslim areas separating the Serbian zones for Serbian areas surrounding Sarajevo.⁷³

In spite of the SUC's claims of Serbian victimization and hostile press reporting, there was indeed a Serbian voice in the United States, a voice that was amplified through public relations firms and paid propagandists.

The Serbian Public Relations Drive: Entry to Congress

From 1992, four main public relations firms were sponsored by the Serbian American community to further Serbian interests. David Keene and Associates and McDermott O'Neill were engaged through SerbNet, while the SUC employed the Washington-based Manatos and Manatos. Another firm, Craig Shirley and Associates, was also hired to support the Serbian campaign.⁷⁴

The SUC's establishment of a public relations team with Manatos and Manatos was central to the Serbian American outreach effort. The Serbian Unity Congress had had a difficult time attracting interested firms, in spite of the \$400,000 account that was advertised in the *Legal Times*.⁷⁵ Only the Hellenic American firm of Manatos and Manatos accepted the SUC's offer; it was hired on September 15, 1992.

Manatos and Manatos was recruited to foster better relations between the Greek and Serbian public, and, above all, to secure political support from the established Hellenic American community. The firm was especially well placed to organize this public relations exercise since it already represented a number of Hellenic institutions as well as the city of San Francisco, near the SUC's headquarters. Andrew Manatos's clients included the embassy of Greece, the United Hellenic American Congress, and the Pan-Cyprian Association of America. By 1994, the Serbian Unity Congress seemed to have succeeded in drawing in the leaders of the Hellenic American community and forging a joint political lobby.

In 1993 and 1994, a concerted lobbying effort to further the SUC's interests was largely financed by Greek American money. Although these monetary contributions did not stand out immediately from the Federal

Election Commission reports, there was considerable evidence of a campaign led by Andrew Manatos to support a select number of members of Congress who might have pro-Serbian sympathies. According to Morton Kondracke, current editor in chief of *Roll Call*, by the late 1980s Manatos had developed an extremely successful fund raising and lobbying effort with a small group of wealthy Greek American businessmen. In a 1988 article for the *New Republic*, Kondracke noted that the network set up between Manatos and Senator Paul Sarbanes had been exploited for raising vast sums of money from small numbers of sponsors to support Dukakis's presidential ambitions.⁷⁶ Kondracke described how Manatos's network had also managed to attract potential non-Greek American contributors to the Greek lobby.

Kondracke alluded to Manatos's employment of "bundling" practices—the grouping of individual contributions made simultaneously to elected representatives, as if they had been made by a political action committee—which was the standard technique used to direct the Serbian American lobbying campaign. Prior to the engagement of Manatos and Manatos, the Serbian Unity Congress had led a haphazard effort to influence congressional representatives through its own political action committee. Contributions were made to elected officials as indicated in table 1.

Apart from the donations to Helen Delich Bentley, there was little

TABLE 1.
Campaign Contributions by Serbian Unity Congress PAC

Date	Amount	Recipient
September 7, 1991	\$ 700	Dan Burton for Congress
December 3, 1991	\$1,000	Helen Delich Bentley for Congress
December 6, 1991	\$3,000	Dan Burton for Congress
July 16, 1992	\$1,000	Randy Cunningham for Congress
June 21, 1992	\$1,000	Bill Baker for Congress
July 8, 1992	\$1,000	Nancy Pelosi for Congress
July 20, 1992	\$1,000	Doug Weed for Congress
September 3, 1992	\$3,000	Dan Burton for Congress
October 27, 1992	\$1,000	Joe Knollenberg for Congress
October 27, 1992	\$1,000	Sam Gejedenson for Congress
October 31, 1992	\$ 500	Anna Eshoo for Congress ⁷⁷
March 9, 1993	\$1,500	Dan Burton for Congress
May 17, 1993	\$1,000	Kay Bailey Hutchinson for Senate ⁷⁸
July 12, 1994	\$ 500	Ronna Romney for Congress
July 25, 1994	\$ 500	Joe Knollenberg for Congress
July 25, 1994	\$ 500	Dick Chrysler for Congress

SOURCE: Federal Election Commission

indication that the Serbian Unity Congress PAC had developed a coherent strategy for targeting members of Congress by offering monetary contributions. Congressional candidates Kay Bailey Hutchinson and Sam Gejdenson returned their contributions almost immediately.⁷⁹ Others, such as Representative Anna Eshoo, claimed that they were unaware that they had even been the beneficiaries of SUC contributions and denied having had any contact with Serbian American groups.⁸⁰ The FEC returns also threw light on the disorganized accounting and reporting practices of the SUC. On several occasions, the Federal Election Commission staff wrote to the Serbian Unity Congress asking for reports to be submitted, reminding the organization of past deadlines. In addition, the FEC pointed out that the accounts reported by the SUC did not correspond with declared donations and receipts, raising questions about the SUC's internal administration and use of funds.

The hiring of Manatos and Manatos signaled a complete change from the amateur lobbying practices associated with the Serbian Unity Congress PAC. Manatos's approach was not only more subtle and calculated than the SUC's own homemade initiative, but was based on tested practices taken from the Greek American experience.

From 1993 onward, Manatos led a focused campaign that aimed to open congressional doors to the Serbian American community. This was done in two ways. First, his clients, prominent figures and sponsors of the SUC together with leaders of the Hellenic American community, were to be found making simultaneous group contributions to select members of Congress. Second, the practice of "bundling" was central to the joint lobbying effort.⁸¹ Those participating included Michael Djordjevich, former president of the SUC; George Bogdanich, director of SerbNet; and both the director and chairman of the Serbian American Media Center, Peter Samardzija and Nicholas Trkla, respectively. Milan Panić, the former political challenger to Milošević was also among the Serbian contributors who made repeated donations. The aim of this campaign was two-fold: first, to lend support to potentially sympathetic representatives by bolstering their campaign funds; second, to create an image of a powerful lobby. While the Serbian contributions on their own do not amount to large sums of money, combined with Greek American sponsorship, the Serbian lobby appeared to carry greater influence. The impression given was that of a community of individuals who could unite quickly to raise large sums of money when necessary. The most popular recipient of Serbian American and Greek American contributions was the former

chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Lee Hamilton. In addition, Manatos led a personal lobbying effort to introduce Serbian Americans to members of Congress, State Department officials, and presidential advisors.

Lee Hamilton: Balkan Profiteer

In twenty months, Congressman Lee Hamilton accumulated significant campaign contributions from Balkan lobbyists and political leaders associated with Manatos and Manatos. The 1993, 1994, and 1995 reports from the Federal Election Commission record that Hamilton received \$47,141 in itemized contributions from leaders of the Serbian American and Greek American communities. A number of those donating to Hamilton's campaign account could be easily identified with Andrew Manatos—in fact, many of the contributors were Manatos's clients and ethnic leaders who had specific political agendas to promote.

The amount of money credited to Hamilton's account in this manner is significant. Commenting on the 1992 election, Larry Makinson and Joshua Goldstein of the Center for Responsive Politics noted that the largest bundle of cash given to a House member was \$61,300. The Serbian American and Greek American contributions made to Hamilton during the twenty-month period in question even challenged the thousands of dollars collected from Emily's List, the well-coordinated political action committee that had done so much to promote specific women candidates in the 1992 elections.⁸²

The nature of Hamilton's involvement with the Serbian American and Greek American communities and their political lobbies raises a number of questions concerning the representative's ideological leanings. Hamilton's record on the Balkans is mixed. He has been particularly critical of Macedonia and has clearly demonstrated Hellenic-friendly tendencies. In spite of this bias, Hamilton has not always been such a vocal opponent of the "lift and strike" policy that was first advocated by his fellow Indiana Democrat, Representative Frank McCloskey. An article in the *National Journal* noted Hamilton's ambiguous position on the war in Bosnia from the fall of 1993 onward. Since 1994, however, Hamilton has consistently resisted lifting the arms embargo against the Sarajevo government and had lobbied his fellow members of Congress to vote down legislation initiated by his colleagues to end U.S. participation in the embargo.

The motivation behind Hamilton's opposition to the restoration of

Bosnia's right to self-defense requires careful examination. Even though there is evidence of close cooperation between the Serbian and Hellenic communities, there is more than one Balkan agenda at play here. Whether the congressman sincerely believed that maintaining the arms embargo was the preferable option or was in any way influenced by monetary contributions is not certain. What is beyond dispute, however, is Hamilton's recorded contact with leaders of the Serbian American and Greek American lobbies and his reliance on their campaign contributions.

Until 1991, the only noticeable special interest groups that had made sizable donations to Hamilton's campaign account were pro-Israel groups. The Center for Responsive Politics noted that in 1991, Hamilton received \$21,800 from pro-Israel PACs.⁸³ According to the FEC reports, from 1992 onward, there was a steady decline in Hamilton's receipt of contributions from ideological groups. In effect, there was considerably less money reaching his account as fewer PACs supported the congressman in subsequent elections. As pro-Israeli groups reduced their sponsorship of Hamilton's biennial campaigns, the only special interest groups and individuals that stood out from Hamilton's FEC returns were Serbian American and Greek American patrons. In both cases, contributions sent by these Balkan communities exceeded those made by pro-Israeli groups.

On September 29, 1993, Hamilton received \$24,000 from an assembly of over forty-five prominent Americans. The amount of money credited to Hamilton's campaign account on this one day was disproportionately important. This series of donations represented over 35 percent of contributions he received in the preceding six-month period from January to July 1993 and over 10 percent of his receipts for the whole fifteen-month FEC cycle.⁸⁴ Over 90 percent of these contributors resided in the Chicago area and fell almost exclusively into one of three ethnic groups: Serbian, Greek, or Jewish. Most of the contributors to Hamilton's account, like Lester Crown, a distinguished member of the Chicago community, occupied senior management positions. According to his own FEC returns, Hamilton's staff traveled to Chicago on September 23, 1993, just a few days before his account was credited. The question remains, what were they doing there and did they engage in a private fund-raiser for the congressman?

On April 25, 1994, Hamilton received a further \$9,525 through multiple contributions from twenty-five members of the Greek and Serbian communities. This included \$2,000 from two PACs, notably the pan-Hellenic Dynamis Federal. The majority of the contributors were from

TABLE 2.
*Campaign Contributions to Lee Hamilton,
September 29, 1993*

Contributor	Amount
Robert Adler	\$ 500
John Alexander	\$ 250
Bob Asher	\$1,000
Daniel Asher	\$1,000
Helen Asher	\$ 500
Nathan Asher	\$1,000
Andrew Athens	\$1,000
Paul Athens	\$1,000
Michael Bakalis	\$1,000
Gilbert Blechman	\$ 500
George Bogdanich	\$ 250
Thomas Cappas	\$ 500
Lester Crown	\$1,000
Ilija Djuricic	\$ 250
Marko Duric	\$ 500
Sidney Epstein	\$ 500
Sid Feiger	\$1,000
Richard Fleisher (Karlin and Fleisher)	\$ 250
Martin Gecht	\$ 400
Manny Giannakakos	\$ 250
Julius Hemmelstein	\$ 250
Andrew Hochberg	\$ 250
Bernard Jaffee	\$1,000
David Kahn	\$ 250
Charles Kanakis	\$ 250
Andrew Lappin	\$ 250
Stuart Levine	\$1,000
Lorry Lichtenstein	\$1,000
Milos Ljuboja	\$ 250
John Marks	\$ 250
Robert Mazer	\$1,000
Clara Moranis	\$ 500
Arnold Newberger	\$ 250
John Ostojic	\$ 250
Kenneth Pontikes	\$1,000
Milo Popovic	\$1,000
Milan Rakic	\$ 250
Sol Rosen	\$ 300
Peter Samardzija	\$ 500
Roger Schoenfeld	\$ 250
Eli Sreckovic	\$ 500
Thomas Stacy	\$ 500
Chris Tomaras	\$ 250
Nicholas Trkla	\$ 250
Branko Tupanjac	\$ 500
Irving Wein	\$ 250
Richard Weinberg	\$ 500

SOURCE: Federal Election Commission

Maryland and Virginia, and almost every contribution was of the order of \$300. Contributors again included Michael Djordjevich of the SUC; his vice president, Ronald Radakovich, and both leaders of the Greek and Cypriot communities, Andrew Athens and Philip Christopher, respectively. What was interesting about this second series of contributions was that it coincided with Manatos's testimony before Congress on behalf of leaders of the Greek and Serbian communities. Those making payments to Hamilton's campaign account on April 25, 1994, were Manatos's clients whose interests he was representing in Congress that very same day. At that time, Manatos appealed to the Appropriations and Foreign Operations Committee not to renew U.S. aid to Turkey. He also called for a halt to U.S. recognition of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Three weeks after this series of contributions, the former president of the Serbian Unity Congress, Michael Djordjevich, was invited to speak before a hearing of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs chaired by Hamilton. As the series of donations made on April 25, 1994, demonstrated, Hamilton's receipt of Serbian and Greek contributions was a strategic program coordinated by Andrew Manatos. Hamilton himself knew some of the contributors and was familiar with the agendas they were promoting. Evidence of Hamilton's relationship with the Serbian community could be found in an exchange of personal correspondence published in the *Unity Herald* in 1992 and 1993.⁸⁵ Although these letters signaled the first recorded contact between Hamilton and the Serb-nationalist lobby, Michael Djordjevich later boasted in the Serbian press that the Serbian Unity Congress had established good relations with a number of key politicians, including the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.⁸⁶

Hamilton's acquaintance with his sponsors was further suggested by the repeated appearances made by Manatos's clients before Hamilton's committee. The leader of the Cypriot community, Philip Christopher, and the former SUC president Michael Djordjevich had both testified before Hamilton's committee. In the case of Djordjevich, it was shortly after payments had been made into Hamilton's campaign account. Manatos too, for that matter, contributed directly to Hamilton's account in June 1995, five months after he was seen leading a delegation of Serbian Americans to Capital Hill.

As Hamilton's returns from special interest groups and PACs declined, the amount of money originating from Serbian American and Greek

TABLE 3.
Campaign Contributions to Lee Hamilton, April 25, 1994

Contributor	State of Origin	Amount
Individuals		
Michael and Vasiliki Angelakis	MD	\$ 300
Andrew Athens	IL	\$ 300
Panayiotis Baltatzis	MD	\$ 300
John Billinis	MD	\$ 300
Demetri Boosalis	VA	\$ 300
Philip and Christina Christopher	NY	\$1,000
Michael Djordjevich	CA	\$ 150
Michael Djordjevich	CA	\$1,000
William Karas	MD	\$ 300
George Kartsioukas	CA	\$ 250
E. N. Koulizakis	VA	\$ 300
Panos Koutrouvalis	VA	\$ 300
Charis Lapas	VA	\$ 300
Ana Maria Laveglia	MA	\$ 300
Efstratios Likakis	MD	\$ 300
Charlie Marangoudakis	NY	\$ 300
Constantine Marinakos	VA	\$ 300
Alekos Maroudas	DC	\$ 300
Chris and Tula Mouroufas	CA	\$ 250
Konstantinos & Susan Papadopoulos	MD	\$ 300
Ronald Radakovich	CA	\$ 225
Panagiotis Silis	VA	\$ 300
George Siskos	CA	\$ 250
Despina Skenderis	MD	\$ 300
Paul Vangelow	VA	\$ 300
PACS		
Allied		\$1,000
Dynamis		\$1,000

NOTE: These contributions were made to Lee Hamilton on the same day Andrew Manatos testified on behalf of United Hellenic American Congress before the House Appropriations and Foreign Operations Committee.

SOURCE: Federal Election Commission

American sponsors became increasingly significant. In the first six months of 1995, Balkan donations made up just under 40 percent of Hamilton's itemized contributions. Again, the names of the leaders of the Hellenic American community could be found next to those of Manatos and Milan Panić.

Hamilton's receipt of Serbian American and Hellenic American contributions stands out as a highly irregular practice. None of Hamilton's colleagues on the House Foreign Affairs Committee could claim a similar source of sponsorship. The pattern in which contributions were made to Hamilton's account suggests that the congressman has in fact profited

TABLE 4.
*Balkan Campaign Contributions to Lee Hamilton,
 January 1–June 30, 1995*

Contributor	Amount
June 26, 1995	
Michael and Vasiliki Angelakis	\$ 250
Andrew Athens	\$ 500
John Charalambous	\$1,000
Hunter Johnson (Jones and Walker)	\$1,000
Stelios Kimilis	\$ 250
Margery Kraus	\$ 500
Charles Lapas	\$ 250
Andrew Manatos	\$ 250
Lloyd Meeds	\$ 871 (in kind)
Constantine Papavizaz	\$ 250
James and Wanda Pedas	\$ 250
George Tsentas	\$ 250
Total	\$5,621
June 30, 1995	
Robert Keefe	\$ 500
Gregory Kever	\$ 250
Peter Krist	\$1,000
Peter Krist	\$1,000
Elias Kulukundis	\$1,000
Yannis Kulukundis	\$1,000
Roger Loomis	\$ 250
Milan Panić	\$1,000
William Tavoulareas	\$1,000
William Tavoulareas	\$1,000
Total	\$8,000

SOURCE: Federal Election Commission

from the recent wars in the Balkans. While it would be wrong to conclude there was a definite cause and effect between the donations made to Hamilton and his voting record, it would be fair to underscore that his acceptance of this money raises a number of ethical questions. The systematic nature of Manatos's lobbying effort and the deposit of money into Hamilton's campaign account could be partially understood against the background of the war in the Balkans and the external situation that prompted a Serbian-Greek attempt to influence the congressman.

With Manatos's assistance, leaders of the Serbian American and Greek American communities joined to make sizable donations to Lee Hamilton at critical points in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The first series of contributions received by Hamilton followed an active publicity drive in July and August 1993, when SerbNet placed advertisements in the *New*

York Times and the *Washington Post*. They also coincided with an energetic campaign led by Bosnian president Alija Izetbegović, who aimed to rally support for the use of force against Serbian positions as well as the lifting of the arms embargo against his government. Izetbegović's efforts were being challenged by attempts made by the EU and UN mediators, Owen and Stoltenberg, to carry out a three-way partition of Bosnia. As Izetbegović traveled to Turkey (September 2–5), the United States (September 5–9), Saudi Arabia (September 12), Iran, and Kuwait (September 13) in the hope of securing political support and financial assistance, increasing pressure was applied to the Clinton administration. The Organization of the Islamic Conference met in Istanbul to discuss Bosnia; immediately after that, the UN Security Council met on September 7, 1993. During this time, the Bosnian president appealed directly to the Clinton administration. The response from the former U.S. defense secretary, Les Aspin, was the first suggestion that the United States might be prepared to send troops to enforce a peace agreement (September 12).

The second series of donations, made on April 25, 1994, to Hamilton's account also coincided with two foreign policy debates: one diplomatic, the other strategic. The principal issue, the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Macedonia and the release of funds to Turkey, led to a major contest between Andrew Manatos and the Clinton administration. *Washington Post* columnist Jim Hoagland noted that the "influential Greek-American political lobby has rolled President Clinton back from his declared intention to establish full diplomatic relations with Macedonia, despite urgent pleas to Clinton from Macedonia's president for visible support for his tottering government."⁸⁷ Arguing that the effort to postpone full diplomatic relations with Macedonia would undermine Clinton's decision to send three hundred American peacekeepers to the region, Hoagland reported on an influential meeting at the White House on March 9 led by Andrew Manatos, whom he quoted. "The policy he [Clinton] outlined there is very consistent with what Greece would like it to be," claimed Manatos. As Clinton appeased the Greek lobby, Manatos's clients credited Hamilton's campaign account with new Balkan dollars.

At the international level, it was not only the issue of Macedonia that was of interest to Greek Americans and Serbian Americans. In April 1994 considerable pressure was placed on the Clinton administration to launch air strikes against Serbian forces as they assaulted the UN "safe area" of Gorazde. There was genuine reason for Serbian anxiety. It was not until later on in the day contributions appeared in Hamilton's campaign account

that the UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi ruled out the use of air strikes. The donations therefore reached Hamilton's account when the use of NATO air power was becoming increasingly realistic. It was only afterwards that it was established that air strikes would not be launched and that Serbian forces would not take the UN safe area at that time.

Again the pattern continued. The contributions in June 1995 were also made during a period of political uncertainty, when Hamilton was emerging as the most prominent voice of opposition in the House on the issue of lifting the arms embargo. During this month, Hamilton had a real fight on his hands. On June 8, 1995, the House voted 319–99 in favor of lifting the arms embargo. This successful vote encouraged pro-Bosnian forces to move ahead in the Senate, and Hamilton, in turn was occupied with another major lobbying effort to undermine the plans of Dole and Lieberman to lift the arms embargo. Throughout June and early July, Hamilton appeared on numerous television programs where he repeatedly advocated maintaining the embargo and seeking a diplomatic end to the conflict.

The net decline in Hamilton's campaign contributions from 1991 onward might explain the reason the congressman so willingly accepted this Balkan money. Nonetheless, the central question remains: what political objectives did his sponsors seek to achieve? While the Serbian and Greek lobbies have individual agendas, there were several points that united the two communities, especially regarding the issues of Bosnia and Macedonia. A central concern for these two Orthodox lobbies is a shared anti-Islamic and anti-Turkish sentiment. Such bias could be found recorded in Manatos's testimonies before Congress; in the advertisements placed by the Serbian Unity Congress in major newspapers; in the propaganda disseminated by Helen Delich Bentley; and, most frequently, on electronic systems such as the Serbian Information Initiative. Hamilton's acceptance of Serbian American and Greek American contributions therefore raises the question, has the congressman been capitalizing on this particular bias? And to what extent have Serbian American and Greek American contributions influenced the congressman's own policy of appeasement of Serbian aggression in Bosnia? An answer to these questions is important. For the past two years, an elected official and one of the most prominent members of Congress is on record as having received significant donations from proponents of Radovan Karadžić's policies in the United States.

The Serbian Lobby Approaches Political Leaders

The first significant record of group lobbying organized by the Serbian Unity Congress was on April 25, 1993, when SUC leaders met with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the National Security Council.⁸⁸ Four months later, the *Unity Herald* again noted a lobbying effort with H.R.H. Crown Prince Alexander when it was claimed that the SUC met with “some of the most important leaders in the U.S. foreign policy circles.”⁸⁹ However, it was not until May 1994 that the SUC secured a real coup when it was invited to testify before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, chaired by Lee Hamilton.

On May 11, 1994, with Manatos’s assistance, the former president of the SUC, Michael Djordjevich, appeared before Congress. He addressed the House on the situation in the former Yugoslavia. In his conclusion, Djordjevich advocated that the United States suspend the sanctions against Serbia and take the following three steps: (1) enforce a total cease-fire in Bosnia; (2) impose on all belligerents the condition that they settle their territorial claims by binding arbitration; (3) establish an arbitration panel consisting of two experts appointed by Croats and Muslims and two appointed by Serbs. What was most interesting about Djordjevich’s testimony was the extent to which he went to justify the creation of an ethnically pure Serbian state. Djordjevich employed classic apologetic arguments to make his case for “self-determination.” While he acknowledged that the conflict was tragic and unfortunate, the causes of the war lay with the “premature” recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and with nationalist and secessionist parties outside Serbia, he claimed. It was unfair to let Germany unify and not the Serbs, he maintained. In reply to questions asked by House members, he insisted that the war in the Balkans was analogous to the American Civil War. The SUC would later use the fact that Djordjevich appeared before Congress to gain legitimacy in Belgrade, as his testimony was advertised to ultranationalist opposition parties⁹⁰ and to the SUC membership in general.

In February 1995, the SUC launched its most extensive lobbying campaign on Capitol Hill, where delegates advocated Karadžić’s policies and distributed the SUC’s official memorandum. The Serbian presence in Washington was reported by Almar Latour in the *Washington Times* on March 5. The newsletter of the Serbian Unity Congress, published ten days later, gave more information on the SUC’s visit of February 21–23, 1995.⁹¹ According to this source, the delegation met with four senators,

twenty-one House representatives, and twenty-four congressional staff officials. The Serbian lobby had two objectives: "to ascertain the current opinion of the key congressional and governmental officials about the crisis, and to provide them with up to date information on the situation in former Yugoslavia."

By early 1995, the Serbian Unity Congress was presenting itself as the face of the Serbian lobby in the United States. However, this lobby was still highly dependent on the expertise of professionals like Manatos and Manatos. It would be fair to say that the SUC's success depended less on its lobbying power and more on the predisposition and willingness of influential actors to tolerate seemingly "balanced" and nonviolent solutions to the conflict in Bosnia. The role of former president Jimmy Carter in the Serbs' international campaign of appeasement is one episode that requires further investigation. In December 1994, the SUC hinted that it had initiated Carter's visit to Pale⁹² when a cease-fire was negotiated that froze Serbian gains and enabled forces under the control of General Ratko Mladić to regroup in preparation for a subsequent genocidal campaign in eastern Bosnia. The involvement of the SUC in this victory was later recorded in the Serbian press by Michael Djordjevich, although sources from Belgrade also took credit for this coup.⁹³

In spite of its tendency to exaggerate, the Serbian Unity Congress had made itself known on Capitol Hill and, with a constant presence in Washington, was chipping away at the official position of the Clinton administration: that Bosnia should remain an undivided, sovereign state.

The SUC and Karadžić's Representative Office in Washington

From the beginning, the SUC knew that it required a permanent office in the nation's capital to carry out a significant public relations campaign. In November 1992, the Serbian Unity Congress opened the Serbian American Affairs Office in Washington, DC. This bureau was directed by Danielle Sremac, an articulate twenty-six year old who had recently graduated from American University. The Belgrade-born Sremac was to work as a liaison between the Serbian Unity Congress and the newly hired lobbying firm of Manatos and Manatos. Her duties were to distribute newsletters and invitations to conferences to think tanks, newspapers, UN dignitaries, and other offices; monitor print and broadcast media; create a media contact list; draft memorandums for congressional members; and

instruct the Serbian community on which members of Congress should be targeted.⁹⁴

As a result of the war in Bosnia, Danielle Sremac's career accelerated. By 1994, the Serbian Unity Congress was functioning as a front for Radovan Karadžić through the appointment of Sremac. Less than two years after her engagement by the SUC, Danielle Sremac was traveling back and forth to Pale and acting as the official representative for the Bosnian Serb leader in Washington. For this purpose, the SUC's Serbian American Affairs Office was converted into the Serbian American Affairs Council. Sremac's letterhead was amended and under the new name an additional title, the "Representational Council of Republika Srpska", was included in both English and Serbian. Just as the Serbian Unity Congress sought to legitimate the Bosnian Serb leadership, Sremac too tried to present herself publicly as an official representative. Letters signed by Danielle Sremac, "Emissary of the Republika Srpska to the United States and Canada," were stamped with an impressive seal that added no more legitimacy to her office, but simply recorded "Serbian-American Affairs Council" in Cyrillic.

On July 15, 1994, Sremac filed documents with the U.S. Department of Justice Foreign Agents Registration Unit and claimed that she had an oral understanding to act as a spokesperson for the Bosnian Serb leadership. She would deal with Aleksa Buha, minister for foreign affairs of the declared "Bosnian Serb Republic." The only conditions of Sremac's engagement were that she would not receive fees or compensation for expenses from Pale. She was to work for the Bosnian Serb leadership on a voluntary basis. Sremac therefore reported that her fees were to be covered by American contributors. In practice, Sremac was to remain an employee of the Serbian Unity Congress and would represent the Bosnian Serb regime as part of her daily duties. There was no change in her official responsibilities and she continued to receive a salary collected, in large part, through tax-exempt contributions.

The Serbian Unity Congress's sponsorship of the Representational Council of the Republika Srpska raised a number of questions. Since the SUC had received tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) organization, it was supposed to meet a number of tests. The restrictions on lobbying laid out by the Internal Revenue Code were explicit: lobbying, as defined as "attempts to influence legislation" was not to be a substantial part of the organization's activities.⁹⁵ Since its inception, however, the Serbian Unity

Congress engaged in both grassroots and direct lobbying, and Sremac's direction of these campaigns was beyond dispute.⁹⁶ By 1994, it was clear that the Serbian Unity Congress and the Serbian American Affairs Council were conduits for tax-exempt dollars used to promote the Bosnian Serb leadership in the United States.⁹⁷

It was Sremac herself who tipped her hand and admitted that she was to serve as Karadžić's propaganda agent through the sponsorship of the Serbian American community. On July 20, 1994, Sremac mistakenly swore that she would be conducting activities that challenged the regulations of the Internal Revenue Code. Under section 5 of her registration statement, she declared that she would be engaged in the dissemination of "political propaganda," which was clearly defined at the top of the official form.⁹⁸ Sremac acknowledged that she would be using radio, television broadcasts, press releases, letters, and telegrams, as well as lectures and speeches, to prepare and distribute "political propaganda." Her target groups were government agencies, civic associations, nationality groups, and the media. Her activities on behalf of the Bosnian Serb leadership were identical to those as director of the Serbian Unity Congress in Washington. In both cases, Sremac was instructed to provide press releases and articulate the positions and policies of the Bosnian Serb republic, including "the right to self-determination for the Serbian people in territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and promotion of equal treatment of all conflicting parties in the region."⁹⁹

The statements filled out by Sremac proved to be remarkably revealing. A close reading of these documents unmasked the Serbian propaganda campaign that was camouflaged under the slogan of evenhandedness.¹⁰⁰ Appeasement in the name of "equal treatment" was an official policy of the Bosnian Serb Republic. Sremac was indeed advocating a political policy rather than opening up the debate to the Serbian viewpoint, as she would argue.

Six months later, when Sremac was again required to report her activities to the Justice Department, she declared a number of her activities undertaken on behalf of the Bosnian Serb regime, including lectures and television and radio interviews, but denied that she had conducted *political* activities on behalf of the "Republika Srpska." Checking "None" next to every question that inquired about her possible preparation and dissemination of political propaganda, Sremac deliberately submitted an incomplete form to the Foreign Agents Registration Unit under oath.

Following the example of her political leaders in Pale, Danielle Sremac had repeatedly lied in the course of her work for the Serbian American lobby.

From 1994 through 1995, Sremac was regularly seen and heard on CNN, CSPAN, National Public Radio, and even on Sky and BBC *Newsnight* in the United Kingdom. According to the documents filed with the Justice Department, Sremac admitted to participating in an impressive range of television and radio interviews.¹⁰¹ During these broadcasts, Sremac repeated the official line passed down from the Bosnian Serb leadership and frequently tried to inject a “historical” analysis into her discussion of the conflict. In essence, she repeated the traditional charge that Serbs were facing a real threat from “fundamentalist Islamic” and “Nazi” forces in the form of the Bosnian and Croatian armies. Danielle Sremac was indeed a paid propagandist for the Bosnian Serb leadership. Her role was to confuse American viewers over the nature of the war and make the route of appeasement, disguised as a diplomatic solution that treated all the combatants equally, the most favorable political option.

The Serbian Lobby: An Evaluation

In five years, the Serbian American community did manage to create an active political lobby. However, its overall success depended less on its own abilities, and more on the powers of other agencies to take on or at least listen to its cause. As the reports from the Federal Election Commission for the Serbian Unity Congress PAC illustrated, on its own, the Serbian American effort was often quite amateur. Without the help of public relations firms such as Manatos and Manatos, the Serbian American community would not have had access to elected officials other than Helen Delich Bentley. With her departure in 1994, no member of Congress was prepared to champion the Serbian cause to such a great degree. The Serbian American lobby was therefore highly dependent on its grassroots base.

It was the grassroots element of the Serbian propaganda campaign, however, that earned the Serbian Unity Congress its reputation as a recognizable pressure group. Members were truly motivated to write and call, as the SUC directors requested. The bullying tactics behind the SUC’s phone and letter-writing campaign did in fact have much to do with the persistence of Serbian Americans who sincerely believed in their

crusade. When the Serbian lobby did express its voice, it was usually in the semi-friendly company of journalists who were opposed to the prospect of foreign intervention or those who simply wanted to capitalize on a topical debate and who accepted the apologetic claims of Danielle Sremac, Peter Brock, and the SUC's directors.¹⁰²

The successful tactics used by the Serbian lobby demand further discussion. Elsewhere, others have commented extensively on the growth of popular relativist and deconstructionist philosophies that appear uncritically tolerant.¹⁰³ The reception given to the Serbian lobby introduces a greater issue than just the presence of ultranationalist sentiments conveyed from Belgrade. The real issue is the way ethnic groups could exploit the contemporary cultural climate under the guise of multiculturalism to push forward exclusive and antagonistic political agendas. As the Serbian propaganda effort illustrated, under the banner of tolerance, intolerant ideologies could be admitted to the mainstream media, often indiscriminately.

The relative success of the Serbian pressure campaign should not, however, be exaggerated. As Serbian Americans insisted that they were simply offering their own "side of the story," they needed to create a story. In spite of the odd article such as Peter Brock's piece in *Foreign Policy*, the Serbian side was hardly credible. Moreover, it was patently obvious that the Serbian publicists relied on contradictory argumentation to sell their fabrications. Like the Serbian leaders in Belgrade and Pale, the Serbian American community attempted to reduce the actual conflict in the former Yugoslavia to competing accounts whose validity rested on interpretation. While propagandists could look to divisive college campuses to understand how the notion of interpretation could be used to grant them a hearing in the highly charged "multicultural" atmosphere of the 1990s, few outside the Serbian community took their claims seriously. While SerbNet and the Serbian Unity Congress issued releases and materials that revealed their true motives, their real achievement was not in conveying a persuasive argument but in mobilizing their members. The deconstructionist approach was not only unconvincing, but also internally inconsistent. On the one hand, the propagandists contested the idea that there was "objective knowledge" of atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia and argued that press reporting was highly politicized. On the other hand, they insisted that journalists and politicians should be both "objective" and "balanced" in their assessment of the war. The deliberate

assimilation of objectivity to balance and the assumption that an “even-handed” approach was required when the fighting was obviously uneven forced a false epistemological debate which the propagandists believed would not only disguise but also justify Serbia’s war aims. If the intention was to dispel the notion of truth and accurate reporting, in order to discredit personal testimonies and serious journalism, SerbNet and the SUC really only managed to advance their own politically motivated agendas within their community. The party faithful remained the local Serbian community—it seems as though there were few converts, although their claims may have contributed to confusion about the Balkan situation in the minds of the American public.

In order to sustain the charges of bias and unite its membership behind these myths, the Serbian American community had to enlist the help of publicists. With the exception of A. M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times*, the Serbian lobby did not attract big names, and there was little indication in a change of public opinion in the United States.¹⁰⁴ Reports issued by fact-finding missions, the CIA, and human rights agencies, as well as journalistic exposes all recorded that the overwhelming majority of abuses carried out in Bosnia were the result of Serbian forces. The argument of media bias that ignored Serbian claims of victimization had not managed to shift the jury.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Overall, the Serbian propaganda effort succeeded in activating hundreds of Serbian Americans. It was their constant pressure and vocal outbursts that made their lobby more visible. Whether the Serbian American community really influenced politicians like Lee Hamilton and effected changes in policies remains a matter of speculation. Certainly their efforts did not hurt their cause. There were, however, other reasons why the revisionist arguments made by Serbian leaders in Pale and Belgrade had such appeal in the United States. As the siege in Bosnia dragged on into its third year, it was evident that the international powers had adopted a policy of expediency that would ensure that significant Serbian war gains should be protected. Croatia too would gain considerably as a result of the Bosnian partition plan that U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke actively tried to sell to the governments in Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb. President Franjo Tudjman would inch closer to his dream of establishing a secure Croatian foothold in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The argument for appeasement was by no means the exclusive property of the Serbian lobby. Although their motivation was different, in the end, there was considerable ideological accommodation between a reluctant Clinton administration and Serbian proponents of ethnic purity. The fight to maintain an integral Bosnia-Herzegovina was all but abandoned by the American leadership. Retaining the territorial integrity of the Bosnian state and dividing it on a near-equal basis between Serbs and the Croat-Muslim Federation were mutually exclusive options. Bosnia was to be partitioned, to the benefit of Radovan Karadžić and his illegitimate regime. To that extent, Serbia's ethnic purists and their American lobby won by default.

NOTES

The author would like to thank the staff at the U.S. Department of Justice Foreign Agents Registration Unit; the Public Records Office at the Federal Election Commission; the Internal Revenue Service public relations office in Los Angeles; and the reference staff at Stanford University Libraries, the Hoover Library, the British Library of Politics and Economic Science, and the library at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London. I am also extremely grateful to a number of individuals from the former Yugoslavia and beyond who collected documents and information on my behalf. Their assistance has been invaluable to the development of this research.

1. There have of course been other wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina since its declaration of independence in 1992. This chapter does not concern itself with the brutal Croat-Muslim war in Herzegovina and central Bosnia. The role of the Herzegovinian lobby overseas and its influence on the conduct of the HVO's (Croatian Council of Defense) and HDZ's (Croatian Democratic Union) war aims is nonetheless an important subject for investigation.

2. For a devastating analysis of how the United Nations humanitarian effort in eastern Bosnia has assisted the Serbian goal of ethnic purity through the uneven distribution of aid, see Carole Hodge, "Slimy Limeys," *New Republic*, January 9 and 16, 1995.

3. Congressional activity accelerated after January 27, 1994, when the Senate, led by Dole and Lieberman, voted eighty-seven to nine to support a nonbinding amendment that requested an end of the arms embargo. Five months later, on May 12, the Senate voted on two amendments. The first one was drafted by Senator George Mitchell and sought a multilateral lifting, through the UN Security Council. The second one, again sponsored by Dole and Lieberman, sought a

unilateral termination of the embargo. Both received equal numbers of votes: fifty to forty-nine in favor of their respective demands. On July 1, 1994, Dole and Lieberman again attempted to terminate U.S. participation in the embargo, but the vote was split fifty-fifty. Five weeks later, on August 11, the Senate voted again. The amendment, presented by the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn, was designed to end U.S. enforcement of the embargo, but it did not seek to terminate it altogether. Nunn's amendment was adopted fifty-six to forty-four and was countered by Dole and Lieberman, who secured fifty-eight votes in favor of a unilateral lifting (there were forty-two votes opposed). On July 26, 1995, the Senate voted in favor of bill S21 presented by Dole and Lieberman by sixty-nine to twenty-nine.

4. Genocide is defined under Article 2 of the Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (U.N. GOAR Res. 260A (III) of December 9, 1948) as acts "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

5. See Carroll J. Doherty, "Bosnia's Weapon in the U.S.," *Congressional Weekly Report*, July 29, 1995.

6. *Demonstration in DC on September 9, 1995*, SerbNet press release, dated August 26, 1995, and broadcast on the Serbian Information Initiative.

7. Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 5–6. This is an important conclusion that introduces a critical issue: the role of national ideologies in the planned destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Within the canon of writings on nationalism there has been an ongoing debate that has greatly influenced political commentary on the war in Bosnia. In essence, it is a debate over cause and effect. Do national ideologies have a degree of autonomy that precedes and shapes political outcomes? Or rather, as Ernest Gellner argues, is nationalism a theory of political legitimacy that evolves in order to justify the emergent political reality? Those who refute Gellner's thesis and suggest that "nationalism" is the initial source of provocation for the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina often wade into the troubled waters where historiography meets mythic interpretation. In order to make the claim that the war was "historically inevitable," many petitioners have resorted to a mélange of folkloric tales and politicized accounts of earlier atrocities in the name of "historical analysis." The most commonly heard justification for the war is that the conflict is the result of "age-old ethnic hatreds" where history is the primary battleground.

8. During the London Conference of August 1992, Serbia and the Bosnian Serb command were clearly identified as the aggressors. There was no recognition of a separate Serbian state within Bosnia. Rather, the international community recognized the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

9. The concept of revisionism should be carefully defined. In this context, I use the term without specific reference to the traditional ideological spectrum with its right and left axes. Rather, in this account, the term "revisionism" denotes the attempt to recast history and current affairs in order to justify a particular agenda.

By "moral relativism" I mean the attempt to sweep away any absolutes of conduct. I include the notion of moral equivalence, which in the context of the Serbian propaganda campaign presupposes a relativist climate, although the two terms are distinct.

10. The story of John Kennedy was revealed by Robert Hardman, "Lobbyist Has Clutch of Royal Contacts," *Daily Telegraph*, January 28, 1995; and by David Leppard and Adrian Levy, *Sunday Times*, January 29, 1995. Kennedy had stood for Parliament as a Conservative candidate, worked for a number of lobbyists and Prince Michael of Kent. He was also a researcher for Henry Bellingham, the private secretary of the then defense secretary, Malcolm Rifkind. The *Sunday Times* article described Kennedy as a "Serbian hardliner" and reported on an intelligence dossier assembled on him which "claimed to show that the 29-year old Yugoslavian born aristocrat is the figurehead of a network of Serbian militants who have gained a foothold in Britain." The *Daily Telegraph* article stated that Kennedy had promoted the "interests of a group of Serbian industrialists in London" and reported that "In the last few years, he has had many meetings with the Bosnian Serb leader, Dr. Radovan Karadžić, and the Serbian President, Mr. Slobodan Milošević. Referred to as 'Senator Kennedy' by elements of the media in Belgrade, he has arranged trips to the former Yugoslavia for British MPs."

11. The press conference was scheduled for noon on July 15, 1992. Later that day, Karadžić again promised a cease-fire. For a discussion of Karadžić's visit to London and meeting with Lord Carrington, see Mark Almond, *Europe's Backyard War* (London: Mandarin, 1994), 251.

12. Storer Rowley's reliance on Ostojić's information was immediately evident from his description of the tunnel. Rowley wrote, "South of Sarajevo, Serbs said, Bosnian forces routed Serbs living in towns like Bradina, killing and executing some Serb prisoners and keeping up to 3,000 Serb civilians in a dark railroad tunnel for several days. Other Serbs were said to have been held inhumanely in grain silos in the nearby town of Tarcin and in a 'concentration camp' at Konjic." See "Atrocities Mount in Bosnian War," *Chicago Tribune*, June 22, 1992.

13. Rowley's article first appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on June 22, 1992,

as "Atrocities Mount in Bosnian War." On June 24, it was published in the *Toronto Star* with the title "The Brutal Killing Fields of Bosnia." The same day, the *Calgary Herald* offered a more extensive history and charged that in the "Battle for Bosnia: Atrocities Bring Back Memories of War."

14. *Keesing's Record of World Events*, News Digest for August 1992, 39035.

15. Ibid. 39035.

16. There was no question of Serbia remaining in isolation, as its leaders maintained. Further evidence of direct assistance to the regimes in Pale and Knin was revealed in the first few months of 1995. See, for example, Roy Gutman, "Crossing the Border: Russia Helps Yugoslavia Send Weapons," *Newsday*, March 30, 1995.

17. See Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina* (London: Article XIX, 1994) 22–31.

18. By 1995, with the help of electronic technology, Karadžić too was represented abroad as his news service, SRNA, found correspondents in New York, Cleveland, London, and Moscow and started broadcasting on electronic newsgroups like the Serbian Information Initiative.

19. Brochure issued by the Serbian Unity Congress in 1994.

20. Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia and the West, 1939–84* (London: V. Gollancz, 1985) is one of the most prominent pro-Serbian voices in the United Kingdom. In numerous letters published in the *Daily Telegraph*, Beloff has questioned the reports of mass rape and genocide conducted by Serbian forces and instead accused official German sources of disseminating anti-Serbian propaganda. Her letters mirror the official line put out by the Milošević and Karadžić regimes. See, for example, "Doubts about Serbian Rapes," *Daily Telegraph*, January 19, 1993, where Beloff argues, "the most likely explanation for German behavior is that they need to 'satanise' the Serbs in order to cover their own responsibility for pitching Yugoslavia into civil war. In the interests of EC consensus at the time of signing the Maastricht Treaty, the British government endorsed the break-up of Yugoslavia without consulting the Yugoslav electorate." More recently, Beloff has been lobbying the highest representation of the Jewish community in the United Kingdom, the Board of Deputies, arguing that genocide did not take place in Bosnia. See "Beloff in 'Stimulating' War Report to Deputies," *Jewish Chronicle*, September 29, 1995.

21. Nora Beloff, "The Dossier of Milivoje Ivanišević: Evidence of Crimes against Serbs in the Srebrenica-Bratunac-Skelani District from April 1992 to March 1993," *Unity Herald*, May 1993.

22. This dossier, "Moslem Camps in Konjić Municipality: Celebici, Sport Hall-Musala in Konjic and Donje Selo," was published by the Serbian Council Information Center and reportedly prepared by Vojin S. Dabić, Ema Miljković, Ksenija Lukić, Sreten Jakovljević, Mila Djordjić, and Marko Marcetić.

23. Ibid.

24. As Mark Thompson, *op. cit.*, notes, "the propagandists of nationalism in Serbia . . . had won once the fighting began. The logic of the war then ensured the maximum mutual alienation of the peoples represented by the warring sides, confirming the imperative for national territory, justifying the conflict and even legitimating, retrospectively, the politics which had produced the war" (52).

25. From 1991 onward, *Politika* became increasingly blatant in its support for Karadžić and his party, the Serbian Democratic Party in Bosnia. The shift in editorial bias was noted in the gradual character assassination of Alija Izetbegović. In February 1991, Izetbegović's authority to represent Bosnia in the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was challenged. By July 1991 *Politika* was parroting the SDS's demand that the "principle of self-determination up to secession should apply to all peoples" but not to the exclusion of others. It had become the organ of the SDS.

26. For a detailed discussion, see Thompson, *op. cit.*, 67–83.

27. The Serbian American Voters Alliance based in Los Angeles is the first entry for Serbian PACs.

28. Letter from Helen Delich Bentley to "all Serbian Americans," August 4, 1990.

29. See Cigar, *op. cit.*, 32–34.

30. In the pluralist democracies of the United States, Canada, and Britain, ultra-left-wing groups and journalists were joined with right-wing xenophobes, representatives from Belgrade and Pale, and the leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church in a program of political action. For example, a parliamentary group calling itself the Committee for Peace in the Balkans was established in the United Kingdom in 1995. Among its founding members were the Socialist champion of the Labour Party, Tony Benn M.P., and Sir Alfred Sherman, a former Thatcherite notorious for his racist and anti-immigrationist writings in the 1970s. The union of the extreme left and extreme right was regularly recorded in the journals and newsletters of Serbian American organizations as well as on popular electronic newsgroups. Sherman was remembered for introducing Jean-Marie Le Pen, neo-Nazi and leader of the French National Front, to the United Kingdom in 1987. Sherman's own racist polemics are an interesting read. See Alfred Sherman, "Britain Is Not Asia's Fiancée" *Daily Telegraph*, September 11, 1979; *idem*, "Spain Had Heroes; Bosnia Only Laptop Bombardiers," *Daily Telegraph*, May 3, 1994; *idem*, "The Coming of the Sword," *Jerusalem Post*, March 23, 1994; *idem*, letters, *Spectator*, May 8, 1993. *Living Marxism*, the journal of the Revolutionary Communist Party and its front, the Campaign against Militarism, were two of the main revisionist standard-bearers under the guidance of journalist Joan Phillips. A few papers, like the *Workers Revolutionary Party's Workers Press Weekly*, could point to the infiltration of right-wing extremists among Serbian propagandists. See David Dorfman, "C18 Sides with Serb Chetniks," *Workers Press*, June 24, 1995.

31. For a more detailed discussion, see Tom Bowman, "Bentley Support for Serbs Raises Question of Conflict: Republican Used Office for PR effort," *Baltimore Sun*, June 8, 1992. See also Philip J. Cohen, *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, forthcoming).

32. There was something most peculiar about Bentley's lobbying efforts. According to a letter dated August 4, 1990, the representative from Maryland was concerned about HR 352, which she described as the "Broomfield Bill on Kosovo and Yugoslavia." At the time, there was a "Broomfield Bill," but it aimed to scrap all navy ships built before January 1, 1946 and could not be confused with Serbian American interests. It made no mention of Kosovo and Yugoslavia. See Daniel Machalaber, "Does This Old Fleet Never Go to Sea? Well Hardly Ever," *Wall Street Journal*, November 12, 1990. The author could find no record of a Broomfield bill on Kosovo reported in official congressional journals. Was Helen Delich Bentley, a concerned representative for the Seafarers Union and other maritime bodies, encouraging the Serbian American community to support another political agenda?

33. *Congressional Record*, August 2, 1990, H6821.

34. *Ibid.*

35. The former representative for the "Serbian Republic of Krajina" recorded a private meeting on January 22, 1992, when she was provided with information on "the attitude of the people of Krajina towards current crisis." U.S. Department of Justice, Foreign Agents Registration statement for Zoran B. Djordjevich, filed August 31, 1992.

36. *Congressional Record*, August 11, 1992, H8009.

37. For a full account of MacKenzie's relations with Serbian public relations firms, see the Roy Gutman, "Serbs Bankroll Speeches by Ex-UN Commander," *Newsday*, June 22, 1992, reproduced in *idem*, *A Witness to Genocide* (New York: Macmillan), 168–73.

38. *Congressional Record*, August 11, 1992, H8010.

39. Letter sent by SerbNet, May 5, 1992.

40. Her letters and requests to the Serbian American community always ended with a postscript that reinforced the idea of victimization—Serbs struggling against greater forces. Emotional blackmail was her preferred tactic. On August 4, 1990, Bentley wrote, "PS. Several anti-Serbian Members of the House took to the floor last week to attack the Serbs in Kosovo and call for ethnic-Albanian control of the Province. I immediately took to the floor myself and was joined by Congressmen Jim Moody and John Murtha, in presenting our side of the story. *The American Srbobran* will soon include a copy of this entire debate on the floor of Congress, so you can see for yourselves what I am up against, and how the battle never lets up." She later would use a more direct technique to persuade her

followers of their common struggle. On May 5, 1992, Bentley wrote, "You need to know that the Croatians have spent about \$17 million on the public relations program which has successfully portrayed Croatia as the 'innocent victim.' We have nothing to offset this."

41. See Cohen, *op. cit.*

42. See Vladimir Grečić and Marko Lopusina, "Ujidenitelj srpske emigracije" (Chronicles of Serbian Emigration), *Intervju*, September 2, 1994.

43. This journal, which was published in London and New Delhi, repeatedly included articles that apologized for the Serbian leadership's role in the Balkan conflict. Its most prominent writer was one of its editors, Yossef Bodansky, an Israeli who is also director of the House Republican Task Force on Terrorism. Bodansky is an enigmatic figure whose articles reflect a strong anti-Islamic bias in their discussion of the Balkans.

44. Gutman, *Witness to Genocide*, 168–73.

45. See *The Big Story*, "Sold Out," Carlton Television, December 1994.

46. Letter of the Day, *Calgary Sun*, August 19, 1993.

47. The MacKenzie episode was just one illustration of the circularity behind the Serbian public relations campaign. MacKenzie continued to be a common source of authority behind Serbian American claims of media bias. Other paid propagandists were routinely cited, along with MacKenzie, including the notorious Sir Alfred Sherman. The 1993 Internal Revenue Service tax returns from the Serbian Unity Congress recorded that Sherman had in fact been paid for his writings. In the House of Commons on June 26, 1995, Sherman revealed that he was, as others had reported, one of Karadžić's key publicists offering advice to the Bosnian Serb leader. Sherman's appeals for ethnic purity and the expulsion of the indigenous population from Serb-held territories in Bosnia were reminiscent of his earlier racist campaigns and suggested that he was indeed a sincere sponsor of Karadžić's program of ethnic purity.

48. The actor Karl Malden was even asked to join SerbNet's finance committee, according to Bentley's letter of May 5, 1992.

49. On September 18, 1992, Bentley spoke before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and tried to persuade members that she had privileged information. Milošević would not run in the elections, "according to her intelligence." Such intelligence was questionable. The liaison between Bentley and Milošević seemed to be directed more from her end. Even after the JNA assault in Bosnia, Bentley extended an invitation to Milošević to visit the United States, according to an interview published in *Serbia: News, Comments, Documents, Facts, Analysis* (Serbian Ministry of Information), no. 12 (May 18, 1992).

50. For example, on June 9, 1993, the *American Srbobran* published an advertisement on behalf of SerbNet entitled "Send Your Donations to SerbNet and Publicity Will Continue to Be—Better."

51. According to Grečić and Lopusina, op. cit., "SerbNet received for its work the blessing of Bishop Christopher from Los Angeles and Bishop Irinej from Libertyville."

52. A release about the IOCC broadcast on the Serbian Information Initiative raised some questions about the IOCC's practices of delivering aid. In a statement issued by Mirjana Petrović, on June 5, 1995, it appeared that the IOCC was handing over humanitarian aid to the Bosnian Serb Army for shipment to Banja Luka. She wrote, "On Friday, May 12, IOCC staff members left Belgrade destined for Banja Luka with two trucks carrying 2,174 family food parcels. The trucks were allowed passage through the corridor about 3:30 am shortly before it was closed to all traffic at 4:00 am. Military police controlling the traffic at the check point advised IOCC staff that there was absolutely no way any non-military vehicles would be allowed through Brčko as it was being shelled heavily. IOCC staff returned to Belgrade and were then able to confirm that the trucks had safely reached Banja Luka, had been unloaded, and were waiting in Modrica to pass back through the corridor. The corridor opened late Saturday evening and the trucks were back in Belgrade by Sunday morning. The challenge to provide assistance to these refugees has been accepted, the task has begun."

53. A recent example is the press release issued by St. Sava Orthodox Church of Milwaukee on August 18, 1995. Addressed to President Clinton, U.S. senators, and members of Congress, it read,

Mrs. Sadako Ogata, Director of UNHCR stated on Monday, August 7th that the most recent act of aggression against the Serbian civilians of Krajina constitutes "the greatest humanitarian disaster in this war." On August 7th, 1995, at least 150,000 refugees are on the road fleeing bullets from the ground and the air from the Croatian forces. A similar number were trapped in Croatia and at the mercy of the brutal Croatian forces intent on a pure Croatia. Some 700 civilians were in hiding in Knin alone in a UN camp abandoned by the UN and by some accounts have since been slaughtered. This follows on the heels of another major aggression and ethnic cleansing of the Serbian civilians which occurred in Slavonija last May where the Croatian forces drove out between 15,000 and 20,000 Serbian civilians. Our United States Government representatives, White House and the Congress, have not uttered a single public objection to this disaster. Does our Government support the Croatian killing and ethnic cleansing of 300,000 innocent Serbian civilians just because they are Serb? If they do not, why do they watch and approve by words and deeds this greatest human disaster in the Yugoslav war. We respectfully request of our representatives that in the name of justice and human decency they assist in the following ways: 1. Public condemnation by the Executive and the Congress of Croatian aggression against Serbian civilians. 2. Demand of

Croatia that the UN be given full and free access to the occupied Serbian territories in the Krajina and that a full report be given to Congress within a reasonable period. 3. Full fledged hearings in Congress with Serbian representatives from Krajina, Bosnia and the republics of Yugoslavia. 4. A full explanation by the White House of the US role in the Croatian offensive and slaughter of Serbian civilians: state of the art American tanks used by Croatian forces, NATO and perhaps US planes involved in the bombing out of Serbian military communication posts, making Serbs defenseless in protecting civilian population against known massive military Croatian onslaught; Croatian officials publicly admitted US Government assistance and "tacit approval"; US military advisors have been working with the Croatian military since 1994. Are these actions in violation of the UN "arms embargo?" 5. That US AID fund humanitarian programs to help the Serbian refugee population: USAID has a specific policy, in place since the imposition of sanctions, which denies financing of humanitarian aid to Serbian civilians in need and which is in violation of UN resolutions that explicitly exempt humanitarian aid from the sanctions. The dangers of diseases spreading through Serbia and Montenegro which are under sanctions and without adequate medical supplies, and outside their borders is very real and will be a tragedy to which US policy has contributed. 6. If the US Government will not take a position for imposing sanctions against Croatia, they should lift sanctions against Yugoslavia. 7. Support for a veto of US violation of the UN arms embargo.

54. Over one-fifth of Djordjevic's contributions were marked with church address: St. Sava Cathedral in Milwaukee, St. Petka Serbian Orthodox Church in San Marcos, St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church in Saratoga, St. Elijah Serbian Orthodox Church in Saratoga.

55. In 1995, the Serbian American community sponsored a number of demonstrations under an umbrella organization called the Serbian American Coalition for Peace in the Balkans, which was supported by the Serbian American Orthodox Church.

56. Father Rade Stokic of the Serbian American Society in Saratoga, California, and Reverend Krosnjar Djuro of Libertyville, Illinois, both made recognizable donations to Djordjevic in April and June 1992, respectively.

57. The deliberate Americanization and democratization of these Serbian groups was particularly important. The fact that their directors were elected and that representatives could be found in other North American cities gave them an appearance of legitimacy that served to polish the tarnished image of Serbs in the United States. To the outside examiner, they resembled civic organizations, little different from those found in other ethnic and minority communities. The structured and democratic appearance of associations such as the Serbian Unity

Congress was critical, since many relied almost exclusively on public contributions for their survival.

58. This point was stressed in a news release issued on August 26, 1995, calling Serbian Americans to Washington: "And it is our right as American citizens to protest these discriminatory actions."

59. The most notable advertisement placed by the Serbian Unity Congress, signed by eight of its directors, appeared in the *Washington Times* on September 8, 1995. The advertisement read:

Dear Mr. President: You are now committing a war crime, violating our constitution and offending American moral standards by continuing to bomb Christian Serbs in Bosnia, who only serve their God-given right of freedom and self-determination in their ancestral lands.

Your authority to permit the U.S. military under NATO's command to wage war against people who never threatened us is unconstitutional. Your authority to spend billions of our hard earned money in an undeclared war is downright irrational.

Your moral authority to involve our country in a civil-religious war which we helped start and have sustained by lies, double-standards and covert military assistance to the fundamentalist Islamic regime in Sarajevo and neo-fascist regime in Croatia is non-existent.

Mr. President, you and your advisers know full well that the Christian Serbs accepted our new peace proposal in principle three days before this terrorist bombing was ordered.

Therefore, Mr. President, we urge you to stop these punitive, grotesque and shameful aerial acts of terrorism and murder of civilians and give peace a real chance.

60. The fourteen directors who set up the Serbian Unity Congress were Miroslav Djordjevich of San Rafael, CA; Momcilo Tasich of Oakland, CA; Milovan Popovich of Prospect Heights, IL; Jasmina Wellinghoff of San Antonio, TX; Milosh Milenkovich of Elk Grove Village, IL; Milosh Kostic of Falls Church, VA; ; yet another Milosh Milenkovich of Parma Heights, OH; Peter Chelevich of Bloomfield Hills, MI; Milan Nedic of Van Nuys, CA; Danica Majostorovic of Chicago; Branimir Simic-Glavaski of Cleveland Heights, OH; Peter Djovich of Santa Ana, CA; as well as two Canadian-based officers, Marko Sandalj of Kitchener, Ontario, and Ljubomir Velickovich of Hamilton, Ontario.

61. Michael Djordjevich, "Amerikanci više ne napadaju srpsko varvarstvo" (The Americans are no longer attacking Serbian barbarism)," interview, *Intervju* (Belgrade) March 2, 1995, 39

62. According to the SUC's IRS returns for 1993, filed on November 17,

1994, the British commentator Alfred Sherman received \$1,500 from the SUC on June 28, 1993, to prepare a "research study" for the organization.

63. Charles Lane has already exposed Brock's misinformation and connections with the Serbian lobby. See "Brock Crock," *New Republic*, September 5, 1994. David Erne, a non-Serbian activist, approached the public relations campaign from a different angle and interfered with the investigation of war crimes. In March 1994, the Milwaukee lawyer and director of the SUC's information program deliberately abused his relationship with Professor Cherif Bassiouni to upset the work of the UN Commission of Experts. It was Bassiouni, the director of the International Human Rights Law Institute of DePaul University and chair of the UN commission, who was Erne's target. Claiming that he held the position of rapporteur on the UN commission, Erne produced a document entitled *The Historical Background of the Civil War in the Former Yugoslavia*, which was printed on UN letterhead with Bassiouni's name on the cover. The inclusion of Bassiouni's name and the UN emblem suggested that Bassiouni himself had authored the report, which argued that Bosnia had suffered from ancient hatreds and legitimated Karadžić as an "elected leader." According to the Commission of Experts, Erne had simply volunteered his services to Bassiouni's International Human Rights Law Institute based at DePaul University. This was spelled out by Carolyn M. Durnik, assistant project director, in a letter to Tomislav Z. Kuzmanović on January 30, 1994. Although Erne had no relationship to the UN commission, his aim was to influence Bassiouni's staff members and misrepresent Bassiouni's research to the international media and foreign governments. "In connection with this document, Professor Bassiouni has confirmed that you were not asked to write anything for the Commission of experts, but that you were requested by him to write background material for the DePaul University International Human Rights Law Institute, without any commitment or understanding that your contribution would be used in any way," wrote the UN under secretary-general for legal affairs, Hans Corell, who later accused Erne of violating the UN General Assembly rules regarding the use of the UN emblem. The breach of Erne's confidentiality agreement and the "distribution and misrepresentation of the report" was a "very serious matter," stated Bassiouni. However serious the matter, no charges were brought against the long term member of the Wisconsin bar, who escaped with an apology.

64. *Unity Herald*, November 1992, 27.

65. In a book by the French journalist Jacques Merlino, *Les vérités yougoslaves ne sont pas toutes bonnes à dire*, it was reported that Harff and Ruder-Finn had succeeded in "outwitting" Jewish opinion on the issue of Croatia. Merlino's charge later reappeared in the Serbian press and elsewhere. SerbNet assisted in the distribution of this perjured interview.

66. *Unity Herald*, February 1993.

67. *Unity Herald*, May 1993.

68. Fax dated January 4, 1995.

69. Letter faxed from Jelena Kolarovich, director of SUC central office, January 10, 1995.

70. See "Serbian Rights," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 10, 1991; "Balkan Rights," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 28, 1992; "The Serbian Perspective," *Washington Post*, March 11, 1992.

71. Alan Boras quoted Nesa Ilić as SUC spokesperson in the *Calgary Herald* on June 21, 1992. Slobodan Rascenin and Slavko Grujicuc sent a letter on behalf of the SUC entitled "Media Politicians Unfair in Casting Serbs as Villains," published on July 18, 1992. The SUC secretary, Momcilo Tasich, published an article, "Yugoslavia: Serbians Warn of New Horrors at the Hand of Old Enemies," which advocated diplomatic negotiations and population transfer. On January 15, 1993, Nesa Ilić sent a letter signed on behalf of the SUC defending Milošević as "the best choice for Serbians."

72. *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1992.

73. *Washington Times*, March 5, 1995.

74. For a brief account of Balkan lobbyists, see "So Far, K Street's Doing OK," *National Journal*, March 19, 1994.

75. *Jack O'Dwyer's Newsletter* suggested that the Serbian Unity Congress was actually offering more, and noted that the account was reportedly \$25,000 per month on top of a \$150,000 start-up fee for three months. See *Jack O'Dwyer's Newsletter*, September 9, 1992. In a matter-of-fact fashion, the *Legal Times* described the SUC's bid and recognized the efforts of SUC vice president and Milwaukee lawyer David Erne to secure the funds necessary to publicize the Serbs' message. See Judy Savasohn's report in the *Legal Times*, September 14, 1992.

76. Morton M. Kondracke, "Grecian Formula: The Arrival of an American Ethnic Group," *New Republic*, June 6, 1998.

77. In a personal letter to the author dated September 24, 1994, Rep. Anna Eshoo declared that "Having researched the Serbian Unity Congress PAC's Federal Elections Commission report for 1992, we discovered that they reported to the FEC a \$500 contribution to my campaign. However, I never received this contribution. My treasurer has no record of it, nor does any FEC report from the period reflect such a contribution."

78. Bennett Roth of the *Houston Chronicle* reports (August 19, 1993) that a donation was made on May 24, 1993, and returned two days later.

79. On May 17, 1993, and December 10, 1992, the SUC PAC made donations of \$1,000 to Hutchinson and Gejedenson, respectively. In less than one month both had returned their contributions.

80. Anna Eshoo, in private meeting at her office in Palo Alto, California, July 16, 1994.

81. Only one PAC stands out in the Federal Election Reports as explicitly pan-Hellenic. This is Dynamis Federal PAC, registered in Sacramento and based in Palo Alto, California. The number of donations made on behalf of this PAC to congressional representatives is quite small.

82. See Larry Makinson and Joshua Goldstein, *Open Secrets: The Encyclopedia of Congressional Money and Politics* (Washington, DC: Center for Responsive Politics, Congressional Quarterly, 1994), 26–29.

83. Two other PACs stand out from the 1992 records, the Hellenic American Council and the National Albanian American PAC. See Makinson and Goldstein, *op. cit.*, 701.

84. According to the report *FEC Releases 15 Month Congressional Election Figures*, May 9, 1994, Hamilton received \$193,441 from individual contributions.

85. On September 3, 1992, Michael Djordjevich sent a letter to Representative Hamilton that praised him for being a fair and reasonable politician and invited him to attend the forthcoming SUC convention in San Diego. Hamilton's reply came on November 20, when the representative apologized for his intended absence. The letter was personal in tone and was sufficiently moderated to give the impression that the congressman believed that Serbs too were being unjustly punished. See *Unity Herald*, February 1993.

86. Djordjevich, *op. cit.*

87. See Jim Hoagland, "Caving in to Greek Lobby," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1994.

88. *Unity Herald*, May 1993.

89. *Unity Herald*, winter 1993.

90. On June 3, 1994, leaders of the Serbian Unity Congress met with the Serbian Renewal Party. Michael Djordjevich was listed on the visitors' agenda not only according to his professional function but also as someone who has "testified before the U.S. Congress." Conversation with Dick Christiansen of Meridian International.

91. *SUC Newsletter*, March 15, 1995.

92. See *SUC Newsletter*, December 1994.

93. Djordjevich, *op. cit.*

94. "Opening of the Serbian-American Affairs Office in Washington DC: Goals and Expectations," *Unity Herald*, November 1992, 21.

95. The clause of limitations was defined as "any effort to affect the opinions of the general public and direct lobbying, understood as attempts to influence legislation through communication with members or employees of legislative or any other governmental committees."

96. In one of her first public duties as director of the SUC's Washington office, Sremac was scheduled to hold a workshop on "lobbying, organization and activities" at the annual convention in San Diego. *Unity Herald*, November 1992.

97. The attempt to present the SUC as a non-political organization was critical

to the survival of the Serbian American lobby. From 1991 to 1994, the SUC's membership base expanded but dues paid amounted to only about 13 percent of its annual revenue for this four-year period. The overwhelming source of the SUC's income came from tax-deductible donations made as "public contributions." In later years, over 80 percent of the SUC's income was collected as tax-exempt donations.

98. According to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 Section 1(j), political propaganda was defined as including

oral, visual, graphic, written, pictorial, or other communications or expression by any person (i) which is reasonably adapted to, or which the person disseminating the same believes will, or which he [*sic*] intends to, prevail upon, indoctrinate, convert, induce, or in any other way influence a recipient or any section of the public within the United States with reference to political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party or with reference to the foreign policies of the United States or promote in the United States racial, religious, or social dissensions, or (ii) which advocates, advises, instigates, or promotes any racial, social, political, or religious disorder, civil riot, or other conflict involving the use of force or violence in any other American republic or the overthrow of any government or political subdivision of any other American republic by any means involving the use of force or violence.

99. Foreign Agents Registration Statement, Schedule B, dated July 15, 1994.

100. This was a standard tactic used by revisionists and deniers in other communities. Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993), argued that under the banner of constitutional freedoms, Holocaust deniers had used their appeal to respect their rights to free speech, not as a shield, as was intended by the Constitution, but as a sword. In the process, they would confuse thousands of Americans.

101. *CNBC America Talking* (November 21, 1994); *CNN International* (November 22, 1994); *CSPAN* (November 25, 1994); Pat Buchanan Radio (November 28, 1994); *CBS Up to the Minute News* (November 28, 1994); Jim Bohanan Radio (December 5, 1994); Voice of America (January 27, 1995).

102. In the Serbian press, Michael Djordjevich acknowledged some "honest journalists . . . [who] were of great help." He listed Peter Brock, David Binder, and Abe Rosenthal. See Djordjevich, *op. cit.*

103. See, for example, Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); and Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

104. While leaders of the Serbian American community have shown their

appreciation in the Serbian press for Rosenthal's writings, the *New York Times* columnist has not concealed his proximity to the Serb-nationalist cause. See Djordjevich, op. cit. In "Arrest Warrants Raise the Stakes," *New York Times*, July 28, 1995, Rosenthal admitted to having direct communication with Karadžić and the Serbian lobby in the United States.

105. It was only after Croatia's recapturing of the Krajina in the summer of 1995, when human rights abuses were conducted by Croatian troops against local Serbs, that the international press paid greater attention to Serbian victims. The difference here was that after "Operation Storm" there were genuine grievances and atrocities that one could identify. Serbian victims were documented as a result of factual reporting rather than fabricated propaganda, as the lobbyists intended.