

# The Conflict in the Balkan Countries

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# **The Conflict in the Balkan Countries**

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

January 25, 2012

This collection of letters and reports on the Balkan conflict is a record of my own personal experiences in the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

Accustomed to looking for some ways of reconciliation in a number of other conflicts over the years, I had felt quite stymied, since the wars in these countries broke out in 1991. How to get even a finger-hold on what was happening there? An opportunity seemed to open at the moment, in 1995, when the U.S. and NATO bombers began to bomb Serb artillery emplacements and tanks in Bosnia, and the balance of power shifted immediately. The Croats, so much of whose territory had been occupied for several years by Serbia, were suddenly winning, Serbs in retreat from the Krajina and West Slavonia.

It struck me as the Catholic moment in this war. If the Catholics of Croatia, instead of repeating, against the Serbs in their midst, the ethnic cleansing that the Serbs had practiced against them and the Bosnians, assured them instead that they could safely live among them in peace, the whole climate of war would change.

How to get to the Catholics of Croatia? Clearly this was a matter for their bishops, who could be expected to respond to a papal exhortation. And so I wrote, by FAX, to Cardinal Sodano, the Holy See's Secretary of State, urging that the Holy Father should make such an appeal. What came of that I do not know. No direct reply came from Cardinal Sodano. Cardinal Pio Laghi, to whom as old friend I sent a copy, responded saying he had urged this at a meeting of the Secretariate. The Krajina Serbs were, in fact, driven out and dragged themselves in pathetic columns of refugees across the handle-bar of Croatia and through the Northern reaches of Bosnia. Their sufferings became a principal memory I heard from Serbs some years later when I visited Belgrade during the Kosovo War.

Having urged such a course on the Catholics, I felt I must make the same appeal to the Bosnian Muslims, and again it was a question: to whom to write. Mohammed Sacirbey, with his American education, had been recalled from his position as Bosnian Ambassador to the United Nations to take over the Foreign Ministry when his predecessor was killed in a helicopter crash. He seemed the right person for me to address, and my many Muslim friends in the Boston area and elsewhere in the United States wrote likewise in support of my urging. And then, when the Dayton negotiations were to open at the beginning of November, I wrote to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to say that enabling return to their homes of the masses of refugees and displaced persons was the only key that could save the Bosnian Serbs themselves from the consequences of their actions. Documentation of all those approaches is here.

The remaining Croatian territory from which Serbs had not been expelled, East Slavonia, on the border with Serbia, had remained under UN jurisdiction since the Serb defeats of 1995, but was to be handed back to Croatian sovereignty on New Year's Day of 1998. This time I wrote directly to the Pope, John Paul II, and to the Cardinal Archbishop of Zagreb, Franjo Kuharic, with a similar plea. The *Assessore* of the Holy See's Secretariate of State, at that time American Archbishop James Harvey, wrote back on behalf of Pope John Paul a gracious acknowledgement of the suggestion, but it became obvious that the Serbs of Vukovar and the region had fled to Serbia by the time the transfer of authority arrived.

In that summer of 1998 I brought, along with my colleague Dr. Rodney Petersen, who heads the consortium of our theology schools in the Boston area, a workshop group of theology grad students, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox, to the various Balkan countries. We were welcomed in Belgrade by Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and made the acquaintance of Mr. Bogoljub Karic, influential industrialist, publicist and university founder, and his able counselor, Mr. Aleksander Vidojevich, both of whom would be important help to me later, at the time of the Kosovo War. Among those we met in Croatia the most impressive was the Bishop of Djakovo, Msgr. Marin Srakic, a man of great and practical compassion for all the sufferers of the war who, I was to learn some years later, had urged the Catholics of his East Slavonian diocese to write and keep contact with Serbs who had been their neighbors, assuring them that they would be received in peace if they returned.

We brought with us a film crew, led by Professor John Michalczik, from Boston College and made a documentary film, eventually titled "Prelude to Kosovo: War and Peace in Bosnia and Croatia".<sup>1</sup>

The following year, 1999, brought the Kosovo War. I was asked, first by Rev. Joan Campbell, Director General of the National Council of Churches in the U.S., and by Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky of the Orthodox Church of America, to join an expedition with the Reverend Jesse Jackson to seek the release of three American soldiers who had been captured by Serbs in Macedonia and to reintroduce some diplomacy into a situation from which it had wholly disappeared, leaving only the bombing. That expedition is thoroughly documented in these pages.

Believing, in the aftermath of the war, that work of reconciliation should be attempted among those who, as theology students, would be occupied with pastoral concerns through their lives, Dr. Rodney Petersen and I, at the prompting of our graduate student Laurie Johnston, organized a conference of Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim and some Protestant students at Caux in Switzerland, under the aegis of the Swiss Moral Rearmament movement, for February 2000. That too is documented here.

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<sup>1</sup> The DVD can be obtained from Etoile Productions, <http://www.imdb.com/company/co0021580/>



August 11. 1995

His Eminence  
Angelo Cardinal Sodano  
Secretary of State  
Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano  
FAX 69.88.52.55 -- first of 3 pages

Dear Cardinal Sodano,  
Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

Please excuse my presumption in writing to you so directly. My long experience of dealing with Cardinal Laghi, while he represented the Holy See in the United States and I was mediating very directly in Middle Eastern and Northern Irish conflict situations, emboldens me to do so.

As the Croatian military forces regain control of the Krajina area, it seems to me that a critical moment occurs in the whole conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and one that creates an opportunity for the Catholic community, both the Catholics of Croatia and their fellows in other parts of the world, to make a significant contribution to the peace.

This war has been characterized by the expulsion of civilian populations from their ancestral homelands, with much brutality and frequent outright massacres. Bosnians, especially Muslims but also Catholics of Croatian ethnicity, have been the principal victims, but in the Krajina, previously a mixed area where roughly equal numbers of Croatian Catholics and Serbian Orthodox lived side by side for centuries, practically the whole Croatian population suffered this fate

Cardinal Sodano, August 11, '95 -- 2

in 1991. Now they are returning, and the Serbian population native to the area is in terrified flight.

What can break the cycle of violence and retribution? If at this point the Croatians were to act with great generosity toward the Serbs who have, for centuries, been their neighbors, inviting and welcoming this civilian population back to their homes and, by carefully planned policy, making it practically feasible for them to return, the entire character of this war could be changed decisively. To do this would be strikingly in keeping with their profession of Catholic faith, a response in the loving forgiveness of Christ to the terrible suffering even of those who have most offended them.

I know how much this asks of the Croatian Catholic people. It would call for great resolve and resources of faith. The gravity of the times requires greatness in faith from these afflicted people. I address this to you because I think the Croatians could be helped definitively to see this as their right course, and to follow it, by exhortation from the Holy See, and by such clear leadership from their own hierarchy and clergy, with the support of Catholics elsewhere in the world, as could best be organized from the Holy See.

Would this, at a practical level, be tilting at windmills? I think not, despite the many difficulties that would stand in the way of persuading Croatian leadership to adopt such a policy, or the Serbs to respond to it.

The Serbs of Croatia have been severely shocked by the bombing and shelling of their cities, and the harrassment of refugee columns as they fled the land. The immediate fear of their military joining with the Bosnian Serbs in the ravaging of Muslims and Catholics in that area seems to have passed, as the refugees have moved on into Serbia, their military mostly disarmed.

Cardinal Sodano, August 11, '95 -- 3

But these people now face relocation in Kosovo: settlement in another situation of disputing the land with, this time, an Albanian population, thereby spreading the conflict still more widely and themselves living with further tragedy. They are already disillusioned with the actions of Serbian government, even though for the bad reason that they wanted Serbian military help to defeat the Croatian advance. They can be expected to understand the new dangers they face.

It would take great effort by the Croatian people and government to convince them that they could safely return to their ancestral homes, to live in peace with their old Croatian neighbors. But this is the one development that would really transform the situation, not only for themselves but for the other peoples of the former Yugoslavia, and make their eventual reconciliation a credible possibility.

This is the Catholic moment of this terrible war. I believe that, with a response worthy of Catholic faith, it could be made a moment of healing and hope, and of great spiritual growth for all these peoples, Catholic, Orthodox Christian and Muslim alike.

I write this with much deference, and prayerful good wishes,

in Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Cc: His Eminence, Pio Cardinal Laghi  
Very Rev. Fr. General Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.  
His Eminence, Bernard Cardinal Law

August 11, 1995

Very Reverend Fr. General  
Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.  
Curia Generalizia S.J.  
Borgo S. Spirito, 4, 00193 Roma  
FAX 011-39-6-686-8214 -- first of 4 pages

Dear Father General,

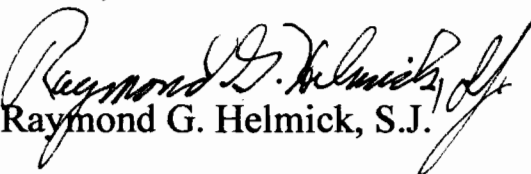
Christ's Peace!

Having just sent the accompanying FAX message to Cardinal Sodano, in the matter of Croatia, I thought I should put it before you for your information.

After all the mediating intervention I have done, and still do, in the Middle East, Northern Ireland and elsewhere, as you will likely recall from my several stays with you in 1986, and mindful of the generous help I always had from then Archbishop Pio Laghi when he was Pro-nuncio in the U.S., I have sent a copy of this to him also.

Hoping for your approval of the line I have taken, I would be grateful if you could help see that this message gets through to the right quarters.

With prayerful best wishes in Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



August 11, 1995

His Eminence,  
Pio Cardinal Laghi  
Congregation for Catholic Education  
Palazzo delle Congregazioni  
00193 Roma, Piazza Pio XII  
FAX 011-39-6-69-88-41-72 -- first of 4 pages

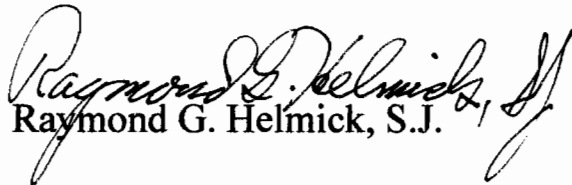
Dear Cardinal Laghi,  
Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

I have just sent the attached message to Cardinal Sodano, hoping it might be of some use in what I see as a very fleeting moment in which Catholic intervention could be truly helpful in healing the catastrophe of what was once Yugoslavia.

Once I had drawn the conclusions I spell out there, I gave much thought to how I could best communicate them. I decided, with some helpful advice from my brother, on writing directly to Cardinal Sodano. Because I don't expect him to have any idea who I am, I took the liberty of referring to you, remembering the most generous way you always helped me with Middle Eastern and other peace efforts when you were here in the United States. I would be grateful if you would confirm to Cardinal Sodano that I'm not just some nut.

Best wishes, in Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

August 11, 1995

His Eminence  
Bernard Cardinal Law  
Archbishop of Boston  
2101 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, MA 02165

Dear Cardinal Law,

Christ's Peace!

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I just sent by FAX to Cardinal Sodano about the new situation created in what used to be Yugoslavia by the Croats. With it are the covering letters with which I FAXed copies to Cardinal Laghi and Father Kolvenbach.

I was anxious to get this idea through to the right level quickly, because I think it is only for a very brief moment that there will be the opportunity for a really significant move by Church leadership to make a definitive healing difference in this war. I thought of trying to put it into some sort of media appeal, Opened or whatever, but didn't think public exhortations to the Holy See or Croatian Catholics and their hierarchy were a very proper way to go about it, or that I could even get through in any serious way to Croatian opinion. Writing to Cardinal Sodano was Bill's suggestion, for which I was grateful, as were also the copies to Cardinal Laghi and Father Kolvenbach. I have to suppose that, for Cardinal Sodano, I'm someone he's never heard of. Especially in August, when everyone's away from Rome, I thought I needed some help in seeing that the message got through. If you can help in any way yourself, assuming you agree with what I've written, I'd be very grateful.

All my best wishes for you,

in Christ,

  
Ray Helmick, S.J.



October 11, 1995

Mr. Mohammed Sacirbey  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Foreign Office  
Sarajevo, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Dear Mr. Sacirbey,

When Croatian forces first recovered the Krajina region from the Serbs in August, it seemed to me the greatest priority of that time that the Croatians should not duplicate the crime that had been visited on them and on your people of Bosnia, driving out the Serbian population in another "ethnic cleansing." If, instead, the Croatians, government and people, were to make it genuinely safe for the Serbian population of that region to live in peace with their neighbors, in the places where their families, like the Croatians themselves, were so rooted for centuries, giving them not only rhetorical but practical assurances, then the entire situation would be transformed and the way opened to drain the poison out of the conflict of recent years.

Since the Croatian population is so predominantly Roman Catholic, I thought the best opportunity to promote such an idea was to request the Holy See to mobilize support for it from the Croatian Catholic hierarchy and clergy, appealing to their deepest faith tradition to act with generosity toward these defeated Serbs. I am Catholic myself, a Jesuit priest, professor of peace studies at Boston College and long active in efforts to promote the peace in such places as Northern Ireland and the Middle East. Therefore I sent the letter of which I enclose a copy here to Cardinal Sodano, the Secretary of State of the Holy See.

Mr. Mohammed Sacirbey, October 11, '95 -- 2

Now that the tide has turned in areas of Bosnia as well, I want to make a like appeal to you, and through you to the terribly wronged people of your country. I have been enlisting the help of Muslim friends here in the United States, with whom I have worked closely for peace in other areas of the world. I know that it is repugnant to the deepest and most generous faith tradition of Muslims, as it should be of Christians, to behave with such brutality to others as the Serbians, whipped up to paranoid frenzy by a criminal leadership, have acted toward your people. The destruction of this war should not now be compounded, but instead reversed.

I wish I came to you now with a stronger hand, fortified by a more positive response from the Catholics to whom I have appealed. What I hear from Catholic spokesmen, clerical and lay, in Croatia is mostly about the offenses of the Serbs, which are unquestionable. The Serbian population of the Krajina has mostly fled, whether from their own fear and rejection of Croatian rule or driven out by actions of the Croats. It becomes clearer day by day that for the few, mostly elderly, Serbs who remained, the looting and destruction of their homes and property and widespread brutal murder is common, as ugly a picture as what the Serbs had done themselves.

Nonetheless, I believe that it is within the power of your Bosnian government, now that areas of your country come back under your control, to institute an altogether different policy. I think it is to your advantage to do so, besides restoring the civilized decency and inter-ethnic peace that has characterized the society of your country in the past. And I believe your doing so could influence the Croats.

I am glad to see my own government, in the United States, at last actively engaged in promoting peace among the nations of what was Yugoslavia. If the effort is only to confirm and take advantage of a successful completion of the genocidal "ethnic cleansing" campaigns

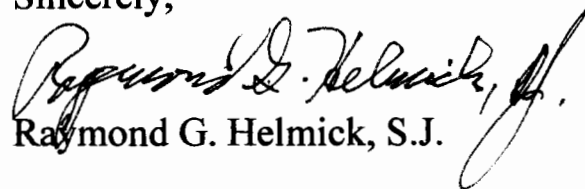
Mr. Mohammed Sacirbey, October 11, '95 -- 3

of recent years, then I do not believe it will provide the basis of justice on which a lasting peace can be built. It is not within the power of U.S. and other international mediators to get beyond that. It could only be from yourselves that the initiative could come to welcome back the displaced Serbian populations of such areas as have returned to your control, and make it possible for them to live in peace. This could then also be a fundamental demand in your negotiations with the Serbian government figures who will be speaking for the rebel Serbs of Bosnia, that it be made equally possible and safe for other Bosnians who have been ruthlessly expelled from areas siezed by the rebel Serbs to return to their homes and live in peace.

Such a reciprocal proposition, I expect, would have the support of the U.S. and other mediators. The welcome to the displaced Serbs of such parts of Bosnia as you control could be made unilaterally, and that would strengthen your hand, both with the Serbs and with the Croatians, in urging and demanding like conduct from them. Success in this would disinfect the situation in the entire region, transforming it beyond recognition. Even a partial success in implementing such a policy would carry vast promise for a better future.

I feel confident in placing such a proposition before yourself. All the time you were such a lonely voice, as Ambassador, before the American population, I understood the fundamental decency and humanity with which you pleaded for justice for your own people. I appeal now, trustingly, to the civilized tradition and strong but never fanatical Muslim faith that has characterized your people, with which, as an American Catholic peace activist, I feel strong affinity.

Sincerely,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

October 30, 1995

Mr. Mohammed Sacirbey  
Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina  
c/o Bosnian Delegation  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base  
Dayton, Ohio 45433

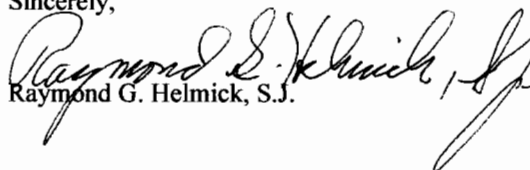
Dear Mr. Sacirbey,

Earlier this month I tried quite urgently to get the enclosed letter to you. Just today it came back to me undelivered, having gotten as far as Zagreb and been returned due to interruption of the postal service by the war.

I'm sure there are ways that both diplomats and the press get through to you in Sarajevo. It seemed the most reasonable way for me to send it on to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, where your negotiations are to begin on Wednesday.

My best wishes for you and your country.

Sincerely,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



November 1, 1995

President Slobodan Milosevic  
Serbian Delegation  
Wright Patterson Air Force Base  
Dayton, Ohio 45433

Dear President Milosevic,

Christ's Peace!

At the time in August when Croatian forces recaptured the Krajina, I wrote to the Secretary of State of the Holy See, Angelo Cardinal Sodano, asking for Catholic Church intervention with the Croatian government and people to act generously toward the Serbian people who have centuries-old roots in that area, making it genuinely, and not merely rhetorically, possible for them to return to their homes safely and in peace.

An appeal by way of the Holy See seemed the most practical way to reach the Croats. My conviction was that the practice of mass expulsion of population, "ethnic cleansing" as it has euphemistically been called, has been the devil of this war, and that if that policy could be convincingly reversed, the climate of the entire war would be changed. Reconciliation and the restoration of the civility that has so long characterized the region of what was called Yugoslavia could be achieved to a degree that would be possible in no other way.

President Slobodan Milosevic, November 1, '95 – 2

Subsequently, as the tide of war began to turn against the Bosnian Serbs, I wanted to make the same point with Bosnians. Having made many Muslim friends in the United States over the course of many years' effort to work with them and with American Jews for peace in the Middle East, I approached them with the request that they make a like appeal to Bosnian Foreign Minister Mohammed Sacirbey, who seemed the most appropriate person for all of us to contact in that quarter, and I wrote to him myself to that purpose. I enclose copies of both letters for you here.

I am sure it is wisdom in our United States diplomats to appeal most directly to you, President Milosevic, to find the ways to still the war. I myself believe that terrible things have been done by Serbs in the course of this war. I have always known that the needs of ethnic Serbs throughout the region must be served, and their genuine fears put to rest. The vast population expulsions, with massive killings, have been a blot on their society, like the outrages of the Croatian Ustashe in an earlier age. I am familiar with the excesses in many other conflicts with which I have dealt, and know that they basically represent paranoid anxiety and despair, not essentially evil character in people.

As the formal negotiations get under way, I appeal now to you to see the options in the situation in this way. There is not now going to be a "greater Serbia," absorbing large tracts of Croatia and Bosnia. As the accepted representative of the ethnic Serbs of those countries, you now have the task of making their life with the neighbors they will always have (certainly in Bosnia, but only if their return can be won in Croatia) as safe as it can be.

I would hope a primary objective of your diplomacy would be a safe and peaceful return of Serbs to the areas from which they



President Slobodan Milosevic, November 1, 1995 – 3

Have been expelled in Croatia and Bosnia. The reciprocal side of such a policy should be the safe and peaceful return of Bosnian Muslims and Croats to areas from which they have been expelled by Serbs.

This need not be at all incompatible with the already agreed objective of having areas of regional jurisdiction for the Bosnian Serbs and for the Bosnian-Croatian Federation. It is already clear that the American mediators will not accept the secession of such areas from Bosnia-Herzegovina or their annexation by Croatia and Serbia. The divided internal jurisdiction will give the several peoples assurance of fairness and judgment by their peers. Since it will be within one state, though a complex one, there is no reason why Serbian residents should not be free to appeal to Serbian jurisdiction at need, and Bosnian or Croatian residents likewise be free to appeal to the jurisdiction of their peers within any area of the country.

When I look back at the 20<sup>th</sup>-century history of your region, it is clear that the conflicts of the earlier years, as all your people struggled against the imperial incursions of both Turks and Austrians, were for their freedom to be a Yugoslavia. That ideal has been poisoned at various times by the hegemony aspirations of various internal forces. But despite all that, the underlying accomplishment of your society throughout the century has been one of civilized pluralism, the most impressive single European manifestation of creative diversity. Its recovery should be the reasonable ambition of your regional society now that there is a chance to restore the peace. There is good reason not, at this juncture, to look for a single state or structure. But patterns of mutual accommodation are within your reach, and can calm the bad feelings that these recent paranoid excesses have generated.

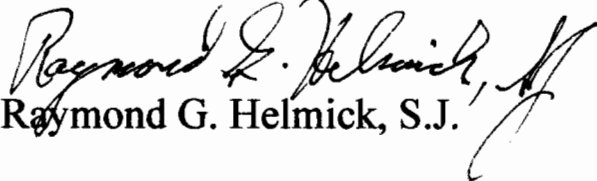
President Slobodan Milosevic, November 1, '95 – 4

That would spare you the prospect of the ethnic rages spreading now to parts of Serbia itself, like Kosovo, or into Albania and Macedonia, with further irreversible damage to all your countries.

President Milosevic, the place of Serbia has been damaged by this war. I know that Serbs and their many friends feel they have been judged by a different standard than the other people in this fighting. The spectacles of Vukovar, of Dubrovnik, of Sarajevo, Srebrenica and most recently the region of Banja Luka have so shocked all of us elsewhere in the world as to leave a stain that has not been gainsaid even by the horrors of the Krajina expulsion or the siege of Mostar. The perpetrators of the worst of those events, Dr. Karadjic and General Mladic, have had to yield to you to negotiate on behalf of the Serbs of Bosnia because of the repulsion their deeds have earned. It is open to you now, by some imaginative diplomacy that, while jealously guarding the safety and rights of the Serbs in Bosnia and everywhere else in the region, aims at healing and a restoration of civility, to restore the deserved good name of Serbs. I wish you well in that endeavor, and look for the good of all the peoples of your region.

With prayers and best wishes, I am yours,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



November 1, 1995

His Eminence  
Pio Cardinal Laghi  
Congregation for Catholic Education  
Palazzo deele Congregazioni  
00193 Roma, Piazza Pio XII

Dear Cardinal Laghi,

Christ's Peace!

Thank you for the very encouraging response you sent when you received a copy of the appeal I made to Cardinal Sodano last August in the matter of the Krajina Serbs.

I wanted to be sure you are kept up to date with further development in this regard, and so I've asked my brother Bill to bring you copies of the subsequent letters I have written to Foreign Minister Mohammed Sacirbey of Bosnia and President Milosevic of Serbis.

I felt from the start that a Catholic effort to bring about a generous response to the plight of the Serbs of the Krajina should be matched by a similar effort among Muslims with respect to Bosnian Serbs. My Muslim friends in the United States have been most enthusiastic in cooperation, and Mr. Sacirbey will have heard from many of them besides hearing from me.

Cardinal Laghi, November 1, '95 -- 2

It is just within the last couple of days, as I read the materials related to the Dayton, Ohio negotiations, that I realized I should be writing to Mr. Milosevic as well. Copies of my letters to both Mr. Sacirbey and Mr. Milosevic are enclosed here.

Best wishes and prayers,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



December 19, 1997

His Eminence  
Franjo Cardinal Kuharic  
Archbishop of Zagreb  
Nadbispupski Duhovni Stol  
Kaptol 31, p.p. 553  
10000 Zagreb, CROATIA

Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

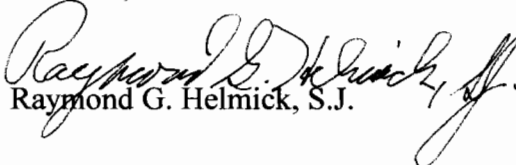
As we celebrate this year the birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace, the war, only partially quieted, approaches a new defining moment as, on January 15th, Eastern Slavonia returns from Serbian control to that of Croatia.

I know how terribly your people suffered as, throughout the years of tragedy for Croats and Bosnians, Serbian forces pursued the policy of "ethnic cleansing." Many of us hoped, from the time the tide of war changed in 1995, that Catholic Croatia would not simply repeat that cruel behavior, turning it now against the Serbian population of Western Slavonia and the Krajina. But that is what was done: the Serbs whose ancestors had long lived in those areas were driven out just as their forces had earlier done to Croats. An opportunity for the Catholics of Croatia to make it safe for their ethnic Serbian neighbors to live with them in peace was lost.

Now, as the date for the return of Eastern Slavonia comes near, Serbs, both those whose ancestors have lived for many generations in this part of Croatia, and those who were planted there as colonists after 1991, flee for their lives from Croatian vengeance. It would still change the entire climate of this conflict, making peace among all three major population groups, Serbs, Croats and Muslims, far more possible, if Croatia's Catholics now turned, in the spirit of Christ, to forgiveness and reconciliation, becoming protectors of their Serbian neighbors. The Orthodox Christians of Serbia and the Muslims of Bosnia might well respond in kind.

I fervently beg Your Eminence, and your colleagues of the Catholic hierarchy and clergy of Croatia, to make this your appeal at Christmas. I have written in like manner to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, as I did in August 1995 to Cardinal Sodano. Every blessing of Christmas be with Your Eminence and all your much-persecuted people.

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



December 19, 1997

His Holiness  
Pope John Paul II  
Città del Vaticano  
Rome, ITALY

Most Holy Father,

Christ's Peace!

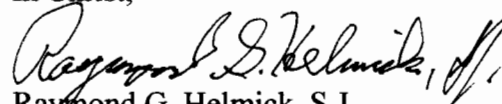
As we celebrate this year the birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace, the war in what was once Yugoslavia, only partially quieted, approaches a new defining moment. On January 15th, Eastern Slavonia returns from Serbian control to that of Croatia.

Throughout the years of tragedy for Croats and Bosnians, Serbian forces pursued the policy of "ethnic cleansing." Many of us hoped, from the time the tide of war changed in 1995, that Catholic Croatia would not simply repeat that cruel behavior, turning it now against the Serbian population of Western Slavonia and the Krajina. But that is what was done: the Serbs whose ancestors had long lived in those areas were driven out just as their forces had earlier done to Croats. An opportunity for a response of lived Christian faith by the Catholics of Croatia, making it safe for their ethnic Serbian neighbors to live with them in peace, was lost.

Now, as the date for the return of Eastern Slavonia comes near, Serbs, both those whose ancestors have lived for many generations in this part of Croatia, and those who were planted there as colonists after 1991, flee for their lives from Croatian vengeance. It would still change the entire climate of this conflict, making peace among all three major population groups, Serbs, Croats and Muslims, far more possible, if Croatia's Catholics now turned, in the spirit of Christ, to forgiveness, reconciliation, and became protectors of their Serbian neighbors. The Orthodox Christians of Serbia and the Muslims of Bosnia might well respond in kind.

I reverently beg Your Holiness to make this your appeal at Christmas. I will write in like manner to Cardinal Kuharic, as I did in August 1995 to Cardinal Sodano. Every blessing of Christmas be with Your Holiness and all the Church committed to your care.

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 9, 1999

Mr. Bogoljub Karic  
Nemanjina 11  
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

FAX: 011 381 11 3617591 (or 3617747)

Dear Mr. Karic,

Christ's Peace!

How can I thank you and Mrs. Karic enough for the extraordinary help you gave us of the Jackson delegation in our difficult task last week? I have known you and your good will from last year, and I treasure the friendship of Aleksandar Vidojevic. I was glad that I came this time in the company of Landrum Bolling and David Steele. Their long and sympathetic study of your country, their efforts for the healing of wounds and for building relations of civility and respect within and between our countries exceed mine, but I share with them their hopes for your good.

Your help was indispensable to our entire delegation when we faced that crisis over our admission to the prisoners as a religious delegation, and far more so when it came to presenting our case for the release of these three young men to your President Milosevic. In addition, it was of great value to the three of us, Landrum Bolling, David Steele and myself, to have that good conversation on Saturday afternoon.

I enclose, with this letter, one for your President Slobodan Milosevic. In it I promise him that I will write to you an analysis of what I saw as incomprehension of American thinking from the many conversations I had with you and others. Mrs. Albright told us, on our return, that the Yugoslav government knows exactly what the U.S. and NATO demand, that there could be no misunderstanding. I thought that an example of incomprehension on her part, and said so. What I experienced was that your government receives demands, reads them as ultimatums, darkly suspects their motives and rejects them. Our government receives your proposals, finds them trivial and inadequate and rejects them. Neither seems to comprehend the perceptions behind the other's statements, or the true objectives of the other's policy.

My observations to my own government on this are made directly to them. But I will tell you that we, as a delegation, called strong attention to the Serbian experience of ethnic cleansing in 1995, when the Krajina and West Slavonian Serbs were expelled from Croatia by assaults as cruel as anything that is happening now in Kosovo. To give you some insight into my own attitude and activity on that matter, I will attach to this letter copies of what I wrote at that time. It was not condemnation after the fact, but efforts to

**Mr. Bogoljub Karic, May 9, 1999 -- 2**

prevent the evil as it happened, as I wrote to the Vatican Secretary of State requesting papal intervention on behalf of the people of Krajina. I wrote again, this time directly to the Pope, before the return of East Slavonia to Croatian administration in January of 1998. This received a positive response from the *assessore* of the Papal Secretariat of State, though I am not aware of any such active church appeal for the safety of Serbs in the area as I sought.

But I should come to what I have called areas of incomprehension.

### **American Intentions as to the Status of Kosovo.**

I kept hearing, from you and others, the belief that the United States intended to set up an independent Kosovo, and that under KLA control. I'm sure this is not true, and that your believing it is an obstacle to understanding that can and should be eliminated.

I have heard high American officials, Sandy Berger and, on our return, President Clinton himself deny it. I know what gravely unacceptable results, for American and NATO interests, would follow either from the independence of Kosovo or from the empowerment of the KLA. And I observe that the U.S. officials, whom I hear denying that this is their policy, understand very well how any such developments would jeopardize their real interests.

Sandy Berger made these points very absolutely before we departed for your country, and wanted to be sure that none of us misunderstood them. An independent Kosovo, he recognized, would launch a "Greater Albania" movement, drastically destabilizing to a fragile Albania itself, and to Macedonia and Montenegro. It would likely engender a war that could quickly involve Greece and Turkey, canceling out the whole Southern reach of NATO, and perhaps spread even wider. American and NATO policy does not accept that and will not permit it. Any expectation on your part that such things are American and NATO objectives are wholly mistaken.

### **Retention of Kosovo as Part of Serbia.**

The irony of this is that, as Mr. Berger put it, there appears to be no other way that Kosovo can be retained as territory of Serbia than that it be put under the protection of an adequate international force. Alienation in Kosovo has reached such a pitch that every young man capable of carrying arms will be back from exile with a gun. The U.S., Mr. Berger told us, will not arm them, for the reasons already given, that we too would see them as danger. But they will certainly be armed, and will mount such a long-term insurrection as Yugoslavia will not be able to contain. The province will become unsafe for its Serb population and ungovernable by Serbian force.



**Mr. Bogoljub Karic, May 9, 1999 -- 3**

We were told both by Mr. Berger, before our visit to you, and by President Clinton after it, that the U.S. feels itself equally responsible to protect the Serbs in Kosovo, whether from the KLA or from acts of vengeance by non-KLA Albanian residents, as it is for the Albanian Kosovars themselves. President Clinton made it clear that the KLA would have to be disarmed and even that the international force of which he spoke would have to provide that the most dangerous KLA elements were kept outside. Fundamental to this view, as expressed both by Berger and the President, is a recognition that the KLA would not surrender its weapons to any other force than an American-led NATO. That is a basic reason for the American insistence on a NATO core in an international force.

### **The Nature of the Conflict in Kosovo.**

American thinking, at an earlier stage of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, was content to believe that people in your part of the world had their ancient quarrels that could never be settled. This gave outside countries a rationalization to believe there was nothing that could be done about war in your countries, that people had always been killing each other and always would.

Our planners have become more sophisticated now. They recognize that people in the former Yugoslavia demonstrated their capacity to live together in peace over many years, and that it took deliberate actions of provocation to create a war. Only so could the ancient hatreds be revisited.

In American opinion, the Kosovo crisis dates only to 1987, when Mr. Milosevic made his speech there. In fact all the rest of the Balkan crisis rests on that deliberate and artificial resuscitation of an ethnic nationalism which had to rely on an appeal to religious identity to make it so divisive.

The withdrawal of Kosovo's already established autonomy status is seen as the key decision that has made this division violent. Even so, that followed a period of several years in which Mr. Ibrahim Rugova's non-violent resistance movement provided an opportunity to address the problem in peace. That opportunity was squandered as Mr. Rugova's party was ignored for all that time, until he was discredited by the outbreak of widespread violence March of 1998. Now, because Rugova remained so long in government custody, apparently under duress, American planners fear that he may have become too compromised to retain his standing with his own people.

As for the KLA, our planners do not accept that the war arose from long plotted conspiracy by these militants and their predecessor organizations. The KLA remained a minor element in the situation, not seriously dangerous, until the time last year when the Yugoslav forces over-reacted to provocations and brought about its sudden growth.

**Mr. Bogoljub Karic, May 9, 1999 -- 4**

### **Character of the International Force.**

When we spoke last week, I interrupted you when I heard you speak of American demand for a purely NATO occupation of Kosovo. I said that I felt you had not heard the significant change in the language used by the American government. Some weeks ago, the U.S. was indeed speaking only of a NATO force. The language has changed, and now calls for "an international force." The U.S. and NATO now actively pursue Russian, Ukrainian and Swedish participation in that force, as well as other neutral nations.

The remaining insistence on U.S. and NATO participation in this force is not based on any desire to dominate Yugoslavia, or even Kosovo itself. It is instead because the exiled Kosovars will not trust any force that does not include them, armed and in adequate numbers, nor will the KLA otherwise agree to be disarmed. A purely UN-led force could simply not accomplish either of those goals.

What I heard frequently from Yugoslav officials, particularly from your Foreign Minister Jovanovic, was that only Yugoslav forces would be allowed in Kosovo, and that they alone would protect the Kosovars, who were invited to return. American officials dismiss this as impractical, even evasive. They are convinced that the Kosovar Albanians have been so much traumatized by Yugoslav Army and Police actions of the last year, and especially by the actions of the paramilitary militias, that there is no hope whatever of their returning while those forces are still present in the province.

### **Convictions About the Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo.**

When American officials hear the denials by the Yugoslav government that ethnic cleansing happens at all in Kosovo, denials of the specific charges of burning villages, forcing people from their homes, widespread murder of men of military age, or organized mass rape of Kosovar women, they do not believe you at all. The stories told by the refugees are consistent and backed by credible evidence.

They do not doubt that some accounts have been exaggerated or invented. But the total impact of the accounts convinces them. They have aerial photographs to support the tales of military columns burning out villages and driving civilians before them, pictures of new mass graves, medical tests of distraught young women who have been raped. In the case of those still inside Kosovo, they have further aerial photographs of them living out in the open in the forests, deprived of all supplies. All of this is totally consistent with what they have seen of Serbian practice in Bosnia. Denial impresses them simply as evidence of bad faith.

They hear the Yugoslav invitations to the exiles to return, but notice the condition required that they be able to prove their citizenship. So many refugees have told of

**Mr. Bogoljub Karic, May 9, 1999 -- 5**

having their passports, identity papers, even the license plates of their cars taken from them and destroyed before they crossed the borders, that this invitation too impresses American and NATO observers as merely pretense.

Consequently these officials firmly believe that your government has driven these exiles from their homes and intends to keep them out of Kosovo despite all claims to the contrary. Just as the U.S. officials reject the proposal of an independent Kosovo because of the dangers of regional destabilization it would pose, they understand that leaving these exiles outside of Kosovo presents exactly the same dangers. The influx of all these ethnic Albanians into Macedonia and Montenegro, the presence of all these angry and dispossessed people in Albania itself, pose the risk of a regional war as much as if there were an independent Kosovo state attempting to construct a Greater Albania. The one can no more be tolerated by the U.S. and NATO than the other.

All of this means that the U.S. and NATO find themselves obligated to win this war. Such episodes as the bombing, surely by accident rather than design, of hospitals, busses, residential neighborhoods, and now the Chinese Embassy embarrasses them gravely. You might expect that these embarrassments would weaken their resolve. But they cannot afford to lose, as it would mean the destruction of their alliance.

Their air war has not done what they expected. Yugoslavia was not brought quickly to its knees as they had thought. The bombing has not stopped or even slowed the process of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and may even have accelerated it. But that does not mean that Yugoslavia has won or will win. Instead, the NATO forces are trapped into a continuing air war which they can no longer halt. Because they are so much stronger militarily than Yugoslavia, this will mean eventually the wholesale destruction of your country and its power.

No one, certainly not the American and NATO officials who make the decisions about the war, really wants that. Winning that way will be no real victory, nor will it do any real good for the exiled Kosovo population. But the effective decisions, defective though they are, have already been made irreversibly.

I paint indeed a dreadful picture. As I see it myself, the true American and NATO objectives are in fact honorable. They intend to save the Kosovo population from what has become a genuinely criminal assault. They have no intention of removing Kosovo from the territory of Yugoslavia, but instead have a firm resolve to maintain the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia with an autonomous province of Kosovo, as it was before. I have heard your Foreign Minister Jovanovic describe the NATO plans for Yugoslavia as "limited sovereignty," like that which first the Nazis and then the Soviets sought to impose. I don't believe that is the case. Rather, I believe the NATO powers are striving to prevent Yugoslavia's total loss of sovereignty over Kosovo, a prospective loss incurred by the massive over-reaction by Yugoslav forces to the unrest in Kosovo last year.

**Mr. Bogoljub Karic, May 9, 1999 -- 6**

I see no probability that these disasters can be averted without agreement on the basic demands made by the U.S. and NATO. The refugees must be enabled to return. That cannot happen while the forces that have driven them out remain in place. Another force must necessarily take their place. Otherwise the KLA will fill the vacuum, driving out or murdering the remaining Serb population, and exposing the entire region to the dangers posed by the Greater Albania idea. Allowing the refugees to remain outside of Kosovo threatens exactly the same regional dangers.

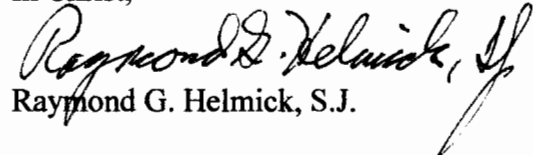
The force that could retain Kosovo within Serbia can only be one that convinces the Albanian Kosovars that they can safely return to their homes. That is clearly not the Yugoslav Army and Special Police, who are responsible for the ethnic cleansing in the first place. Your forces have no way of producing that confidence among the critically essential Albanian population. Nor can a force led only by the UN accomplish it. The objective can only be reached if there is the NATO core to the international force that has been demanded. It has become a choice between that and chaotic regional destruction.

For President Milosevic, recognition of these realities and acceptance of this way of retaining Yugoslav sovereignty in Kosovo, which is otherwise likely to be forfeit, is an honorable course. The U.S. placed its reliance on him in 1995 to restore safety and civility to the region. We in our religious delegation last week came to him looking, with your invaluable help, for an action of decency and diplomacy. He fulfilled our hopes. He is the President of Yugoslavia, and has the responsibility to provide in this way for the safety of its citizens.

I hope this letter is helpful to you, for its purpose of elucidating, as I truly understand them, the real perceptions that lie behind American actions and demands. It is my conviction that you yourself and your government have understood them mistakenly. I have argued to my own government that they too misunderstand the motives behind Yugoslav actions. What is most necessary to bring about agreement, as I see it, is a kind of communication between your government and ours that is simply not taking place at present. Our delegation's objective was to open this up, and we argued for it here too.

I am grateful for what you, your wife and your President did, in response to our appeal, last week. I wish you, your fellow citizens, and among them the tortured people of Kosovo, only good. That you yourself wish only good for your neighbors and fellow citizens in Kosovo I accept. We have experienced such good will from you in our own mission that I have good hope for your coming to a resolution of these tragic differences. God love you all,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 9, 1999

Madame Milanka Karic  
London

FAX: 011 44 181 367-9487

Dear Madame Karic,

Christ's Peace!

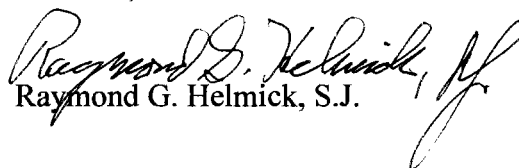
You helped us so much when we were in Belgrade last week, the Jackson delegation seeking the release of the three American prisoners. We were seeking more, of course, an opening to diplomacy through this generous gesture. Landrum Bolling, David Steele and I were particularly concerned to foster that in our conversations with your husband. As I watch the new developments of these last few days, I wonder if we may not have had some degree of success at that.

It is in that context that I have written the attached letters, to your husband and to President Milosevic. I tried twice today to send these by FAX, to each of the two numbers listed on the letter to your husband. I did not get through, but had only continued ringing of a phone each time.

Perhaps I need only to call tomorrow at a time when people are in the office and can set the machine for FAX reception. But I was not certain whether his building is still undamaged or whether the lines were in order. But I thought it well to send this to the FAX number you gave me for your office in London. I hope there will be someone there who knows how to get it all to you in Belgrade as quickly as possible.

I pray for you as you go through this ordeal of the bombing. Best wishes,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

May 11, 1999

Mr. Sandy Berger  
National Security Adviser  
The White House

FAX (202) 456-9300

Dear Mr. Berger,

Christ's Peace!

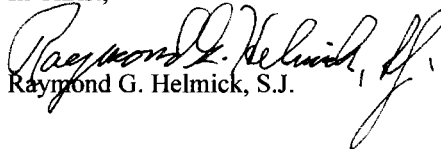
Having traveled to Belgrade last week with the Jackson delegation, I had extensive conversations with Bogoljub Karic, his wife and a number of his assistants, working in those with Landrum Bolling and David Steele.

I came back with the conviction that they and other officials we had met there had little comprehension of the perceptions and objectives behind American policy and actions. I had drawn heavily on the briefing you yourself gave our delegation before we left in trying to explain these things, and promised that I would write a catalogue of then points on which I felt they misunderstood what the U.S. aimed at. I was ready with that by Sunday last, the 9<sup>th</sup>, but had great trouble getting through to them by FAX. The many FAX and phone numbers I had were all in the Karic building, which has been evacuated now because of danger from the bombing. Not until today was I sure I had gotten the FAX through, to a number I had from Aleksandar Vidojevic this morning. And then I found that I had succeeded Sunday, when I sent it to Mrs. Karic's London number, in the hope that someone there would be able to send it further.

You should be informed, I know, of any such thing that I send. The whole transmission is here, including the covering sheets to Mrs. Karic in London and to Aleksandar Vidojevic, as well as the attached copies of what I had written to Catholic authorities in Rome and Croatia in 1995 and 1997. I waited to send you a copy until I knew it had been received there. I've also just now sent a copy to David Steele at CSIS, so that he and Landrum Bolling would know of it before their State Department meeting today.

With all best wishes,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 20, 1999

His Eminence  
Angelo Cardinal Sodano  
Secretary of State  
Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano

FAX 69.88.52.55

Dear Cardinal Sodano,  
Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

Between April 29 and May 3 I took part in the delegation led by the Reverend Jesse Jackson to Belgrade, which resulted in the release of the three American soldiers held prisoner and, we hope, in creating a new opening for diplomacy in this war. I was asked to join the delegation explicitly so that there would be Catholic representation on this broadly interreligious venture.

On my return, pressing teaching duties at the end of our semester in our university delayed me somewhat in writing a full report. But I felt an account of what we had learned, not only on our visit but in our meetings with American authorities before and after it, would be useful to Church authorities.

I attach a list of the delegation. Our intention was to appeal for a generous act of compassion from the widest range of faith communities in the United States: Christians of all the traditions, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, as well as Jewish and Muslim. We asked the release of three American soldiers, but in fact looked for much more, that an opening be created for a return from the cycle of violence for violence to diplomacy. That is too subtle a thing to judge. It cannot be *post hoc propter hoc*, but we see with satisfaction the flurry of diplomacy that has taken place since, despite the interruptions of the embassy bombing and the Russian crisis. Reverend Jackson said it best: that he hoped we had opened a key-hole in the door to peace.

American government was very nervous about our mission. White House officials first asked us to postpone our leaving from Saturday, April 24, until after completion of the NATO summit the following day. They then telephoned each of us asking that we not go, and asked NATO to retract a promise that we would have a safe hour to fly into the Belgrade airport. That eventually led to our delaying our departure to Wednesday, April 28, flying commercially to Zagreb and travelling to Belgrade by bus. We left with the released prisoners the same way. Croatian and Yugoslav governments provided the busses on their respective sides of the border.

Mr. Thomas Pickering briefed us for an hour at the State Department the evening before our departure. After saying that our visit did not have government approval and cautioning us against being used for propaganda purposes, he actually wished us well, both for gaining release of the prisoners and for the wider diplomatic goal. We could not in fact have done this as representatives of American government.

Mr. Sandy Berger briefed us for another hour at the White House just before we departed on Wednesday. He began by saying he wished we would not go. He cited physical danger, asserting that there would be no pause in the bombing for us and warning us against being placed in locations of particular danger by accident or calculation. He then said we would be used, which we knew. Our response was that we would willingly be used to open a process of diplomacy but would take precautions against propaganda use. His third *monitum* was that we would be breaking the isolation of President Milosevic that it was U.S./NATO policy to enforce, and that we might thereby prolong the war. We objected to the latter implication and he withdrew it as over-statement, recognizing that the diplomatic isolation of Serbia had not been effective in Greece, Macedonia, Romania and especially Russia and China. At that point Mr. Berger acknowledged that we were surely going, asked that we not regard ourselves as negotiators nor misrepresent U.S. policy.

This was the most interesting part of the conversation, as Mr. Berger wanted to be sure we had no misconceptions of American policy. In particular, he emphasized that the U.S. and NATO did not favor and would not accept an independent Kosovo. As reason, he cited the danger of regional war: turmoil in an already fragile Albania if a Greater-Albania movement were launched, destabilization of Macedonia and Montenegro through Albanian irredentism, leading with some probability to a regional war that could involve Greece and Turkey and possibly widen even more.

The U.S., he said, would not arm the KLA, as its purpose was to create the independent Kosovo that he so rejected. They would nevertheless be armed by other sympathizers, he said, and become an altogether unmanageable force against Serbia if the refugees were left outside of Kosovo. Every young man capable of bearing arms would be back with a gun, and nothing that the U.S. or NATO could do would prevent that. Hence leaving the refugees outside was as dangerous as the independent Kosovo itself, and for the same reasons of regional disruption.

Those perceptions grounded the policy demands made by the U.S. and NATO. In order to return the refugees to their homes, they must be made to feel safe in returning. That required a) removal of the Yugoslav forces, which they would otherwise dread, and also b) provision of an international force in which they would actually place sufficient trust to return. The language had changed from an initial demand for a NATO force to one for an international force, but a force with the NATO core without which the refugees would not have the confidence to return. Russian, Ukrainian, Swedish participation in this force was actively sought, as well as other neutral nations.



The rest of this you have heard. What was of interest was the grounding of the demands in a particular set of perceptions. It was this that we found drastically misconstrued once we began conversations with authorities in Belgrade. The demands made on Yugoslavia were seen there simply as ultimatums to reject, their motivation darkly suspected.

We traveled officially as guests of the Yugoslav religious leaders, meaning principally Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church. There had to be government permission as well, and that had been provided to us principally by Mr. Vuk Draskovic, with whom we maintained telephone contact during our preparations. The Yugoslav *Charge d'affaires*, Mr. Vladislav Jovanovic, had written assuring us of our welcome. By Wednesday, April 28, the day we were actually able to leave Washington, Draskovic had been dismissed from the cabinet. We asked ourselves whether the mission was still possible and found that elements in the Yugoslav government still encouraged us to go. It took a while for us to understand that the encouragement came from Mr. Bogoljub Karic. But as soon as we arrived a smaller group of us were brought directly to a late-night dinner with Mr. Jivadin Jovanovic, the Foreign Minister.

His discourse admitted nothing of an ethnic cleansing program in Kosovo. All refugee flight resulted from the NATO bombing, and reports of murder and rape met simple denial. More interesting was his view of motivation for the NATO attack. The Nazis, he told us, had tried to impose limited sovereignty on Yugoslavia, and been repulsed by the partisans. The Soviets had tried the same, and Tito had separated Yugoslavia from the Comintern. Now the Americans were at the same game and would also fail. Every generation of Serbs in this century had had to fight for the freedom of the Fatherland, and this generation would fight their war in their turn. No other motive could be seen for the NATO attack than a malicious quest for domination. Jovanovic was quite sure NATO and the U.S. intended independence for Kosovo, and took the Rambouillet formula, with its referendum after three years of protected autonomy, as the sign of that objective.

On Friday morning, April 25, we visited Patriarch Pavle, surrounded by all his bishops in his Synod room. The Patriarch, never hesitant to condemn the several wars and the ethnic cleansing or to criticize President Milosevic directly, received us most cordially. He had asked for the release of the three American prisoners from the time of their capture, and strongly supported our appeal. He also condemned the bombing campaign in the strongest terms. Others of his bishops spoke only of the bombing, as e.g. the "Satanic attack by the American Fascists" (the Bishop of Novi Sad) and had nothing to say of Kosovo, of Bosnia, of Croatia or anything else.

In the afternoon, we went to meet other religious leaders. We had had in mind the Catholic Archbishop (he was away for a surgical procedure in Slovakia but sent his Auxiliary), the Chief Rabbi and the Mufti. The meeting took place under the aegis of the government Minister of Religious Affairs, who presided, in a large hall at his office. Some thirty or so Protestant leaders, of denominations as varied as Lutheran (Austrian from Voivodina) or Reformed (Hungarian), but ranging as far as Jehovah's Witnesses

and Seventh Day Adventists were also present. The Patriarch met us once again, and gave more briefly the same address as in the morning, but most other speeches carefully restricted themselves to condemnation of the bombing – quite sincere, clearly – and nothing else that could upset the hovering government minister. We did not realize it at the time, but a trap awaited us in the matter of visiting the three American prisoners.

Quite suddenly, we received word that two persons only, Reverend Jackson and Congressman Rod Blagojevich, who had accompanied us as the only Serbian-American member of the U.S. Congress, would be allowed to enter the prison – with two media representatives, one reporter and one television cameraman. This, we realized, would effectively negate the religious character of the mission.

As it happened, a delegation of eleven members of the U.S. Congress, meeting with six members of the Russian Duma in Vienna, had wanted to come to Belgrade. This much we know. What we did not know then, but have read subsequently, is that Mr. Pickering of the U.S. State Department had asked them not to proceed to Belgrade, knowing that the Milosevic government preferred to release the prisoners to them. That would have made it a strictly political exchange, and a *quid pro quo* would be expected. Our religious delegation had no *quid pro quo* to offer, but made a humanitarian plea on a basis of faith conviction.

We had known that the number of our delegation to enter the prison would be limited, but had expected its religious character to be respected. Since our Reverend Jackson is known, in his public image, as a political as well as a religious figure, the effect of limiting the visit to him and the Congressman was to transform it into a visit by two politicians. There seems even to have been some confusion on the part of the Yugoslav government. Reverend Jackson has a son, Jesse Jackson Jr., who is himself a member of Congress, and we noted only later, on a schedule that the Yugoslavs had given us when we first arrived, that they described our delegation as led by Congressmen (in the plural) Jackson and Blagojevich. With or without that error on their part, they were effectively nullifying the religious character of the delegation.

Many of us felt that those two ought not consent to go to the prison under those conditions, but they were faced with an immediate *fiat*: get into the car and go now, or you will not see the prisoners at all. There was turmoil among the rest of the delegation at this turn of events. We were invited to the offices of Mr. Bogoljub Karic, wealthy businessman, intimate of President Milosevic and Minister Without Portfolio in the government, for what appeared to be simply a courtesy reception. The delegation at first refused to go, saying they needed to meet privately among themselves and decide on a course of action. I felt the need, at that point, to confront the issue, and quite deliberately precipitated that by telling the Yugoslav attendants of the delegation that, unless this crisis could be resolved, we would need to return to our hotel and announce the failure of the mission to the international press.

Three of us in the delegation, Mr. Landrum Bolling (Director of Mercy-Corps International), Rev. David Steele (Center for Strategic and International Studies,

Washington) and myself, were already well acquainted with Mr. Karic. We received a promise that we could hold our private meeting, away from the ever-attendant media, at Mr. Karic's office and then present our case to him. On our arrival at his office, the large media party was in fact brought into the meeting room with us, and we had to insist on their withdrawal. Eventually Mr. Karic recognized the nature of our problem, promised that he and his very powerful wife would go to President Milosevic and his wife and get us permission to visit the prisoners as a religious delegation.

He told us also that we could not expect the release of the prisoners, and tried to offer palliatives, such as arranging a visit to the prisoners by their families, as substitute for their release. We regarded any such suggestions as exposing the families to use as propaganda tools, and dismissed them.

While we had carefully kept all this *contretemps* from the media, one of the reporters huddled in the corridor and on the stairs outside our meeting room came to understand what was happening. She reported on the international wires that our religious delegation had been excluded from visiting the prisoners, and that I, in particular, the one Catholic priest in the delegation, prepared to bring communion to the two Catholics among the prisoners, had been prevented from doing that. Many of our delegation were indignant at the reporter for doing that. I felt myself, though we had tried to prevent this, that it may have helped our cause, and told her so.

The actual prison visit by Jackson and Blagojevich had been severely restricted. The three soldiers had been kept in solitary confinement all the thirty days since they had been captured, having seen one another only on the occasion of the Red Cross visit. They were brought without explanation to a place they did not know, and there found Jesse Jackson. They were not permitted to speak to one another. Jackson and Blagojevich were prohibited from asking them anything other than previously agreed questions, of the order of "Are you well?", "Is your food adequate?", "Have you medical care?" etc. They were permitted to give the prisoners Bibles, which all of us had signed. They left with them tape-recorded telephone messages from their families, which the prisoners in fact did not get to hear. Everything was under the direct supervision of the military governor of the prison, whose attitude was massively hostile.

Jackson and Blagojevich came away very discouraged, reading all this as indication that the government had no intention of releasing the prisoners. They had not known what the rest of us had done in the meantime, in our meeting with Mr. Karic, and we had a task of healing relations within our delegation. That was accomplished. On the following day, Saturday, May 1, began with a session at the bombed Foreign Office, where Foreign Minister Jovanovic first gave us a lengthy defense of Yugoslav policy and condemnation of the NATO campaign in the presence of a large party of international and local media. After the media left the room he gave us the seven-point Yugoslav policy proposal as it then was, and as is available from other sources.

Reverent Jackson then went to meet President Milosevic, with a smaller delegation consisting of Joan Campbell, General Secretary of the National Council of

Churches, Congressman Blagojevich, Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky of the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S., past President of the National Council of Churches, Rabbi Steven Jacobs, and Dr. Nazir Khaja, Chairman of the American Muslim Council. I did not attend this meeting, which lasted three hours, and have therefore only second-hand knowledge of what was said. Instead, I went back with Mr. Landrum Bolling and Rev. David Steele to a further meeting with Mr. Karic.

We had also a lengthy discussion, which covered not only the release of the prisoners but also an analysis of the political situation. Following on that discussion, I later wrote to Mr. Karic, after our return, reviewing that conversation in detail. And I wrote to Mr. Milosevic himself, asking Mr. Karic to deliver that letter and discuss with the President the content of what I had written him regarding misperceptions of American and NATO objectives. Copies of those letters accompany this.

By the end of the Jackson meeting with Mr. Milosevic, the President told him he did not believe he could release the prisoners. Jackson argued essentially, as he reported, that if Yugoslavia were to keep these three young soldiers as trophies of war, hoping to exchange them for some kind of concessions, they would get nothing in return for them. Hence it was better to invest them in an effort for peace.

As soon as the Jackson meeting with Mr. Milosevic finished, Mr. Karic and his wife entered, to spend the next two hours with him and his wife. The decision evidently came during that meeting to release the prisoners. Late in the afternoon, Jackson, Joan Campbell and the Congressman were summoned to the Foreign Office, where Foreign Minister Jovanovic read them the President's letter, instructing him to hand the three prisoners into the custody of our delegation. News of that was posted at once by the Yugoslav press agency Tanjug, and picked up instantly from the Internet by the reporters following us.

We held yet another of our many press conferences as soon as Jackson and party returned to the hotel. Jackson publicly requested, as diplomatic response to this action of diplomacy, that the U.S. and NATO should grant at least one night's pause in the bombing. He noted how tragic it would be if one or more of these young men should be killed in the bombing during the night before the promised release. He requested further that the two Yugoslav soldiers held prisoner by NATO in Germany be released in return.

President Milosevic, in connection with the release, had asked, perhaps rather improbably, to meet President Clinton anywhere: in Belgrade, in Washington, in Geneva or any other agreed place, and had given Jackson a letter to be delivered to President Clinton presenting Yugoslav proposals. Jackson asked that President Clinton make a telephone call to President Milosevic, thanking him for the release of the prisoners. For this, there was a precedent, which he cited. In 1984, Jackson went to Syria and obtained from President Asad the release of a captured American airman, Robert Goodman. President Reagan, on that occasion, telephoned his thanks to President Asad, and the exchange led to continuous diplomatic activity over the next two years.

That night, there was no bombing of Belgrade itself. The rest of Yugoslavia suffered heavy bombardment. In the course of it, an American F16 went down, raising the risk that another American prisoner might have been captured, but the pilot was rescued. At about midnight, Foreign Minister Jovanovic came to our hotel, distraught at the continued bombing. We feared he might announce to us that the promise of release would be retracted, but he did not.

The events of the release itself are fully chronicled elsewhere. We brought the three soldiers out of Belgrade by a bus provided by the Yugoslav government, under military escort. To protect the soldiers from media attention, we had all the attendant reporters and cameras on a second bus, and had to take special measures, surrounding them in the midst of our delegation, to prevent their being overwhelmed by the media when we changed to other busses at the Croatian border.

Of more interest were the comments of high-ranking American generals whom we met while staying overnight at the Ramstein Air Force base in Germany. They spoke with astonishing openness of their criticism of the bombing policy as militarily ill-conceived. The policy, they believed, had been crafted in the State Department, and no military authority gave it approval. The Yugoslav delegation at Rambouillet had been given a choice: sign this or we bomb you, much as had been done to Mr. Milosevic at Dayton in 1995. State Department officials had assumed that a few days of bombing would bring Milosevic to heel. When that failed to happen, they simply had no other policy to fall back on. They were committed to the bombing, which had not prevented the ethnic cleansing, perhaps even accelerated it. NATO could not afford to lose the war, once started, and could only continue the bombing, with drastic results for the infrastructure of Yugoslavia but no hindrance to the atrocities in Kosovo.

On our return to Washington, we met President Clinton, Mr. Berger and Mrs. Albright. The President was delayed somewhat, as his meeting with Mr. Chernomyrdin went longer than programmed. In the meantime, Vice President Gore came into the room, greeted each of us and expressed satisfaction with the results of the mission, both the release of the soldiers and the diplomatic outcome. The President then came in with Mr. Berger and Secretary of State Albright. Mr. Clinton also welcomed the whole result of the intervention, felt that the religiously inclusive character of the delegation had been an advantage, and expressed the hope that the diplomatic opening we had looked for might be achieved. Reverend Jackson gave him a thorough report, especially of his meeting with Milosevic, from carefully prepared notes.

I had the distinct impression that President Clinton understood the implications of the war better than any of his advisers whom we had met, with the possible exception of Mr. Pickering. He was acutely aware of the grievances of the Serbs, and open to the representation by some of our Serbian-American delegation members, particularly Fr. Irene Dobrijevic, of the damage done to Serbian consciousness by the ethnic cleansing of the Krajina and other parts of Croatia in 1995.

He reaffirmed what Mr. Berger had told us before our journey of U.S. opposition to Kosovo independence. His description of the KLA as a force that could not be trusted was barely short of what we had heard from the Serbs. He emphasized the responsibility of the international force that he hoped would protect returned refugees in Kosovo to protect the Serbs who lived there as well, and spoke of the international force as a way to ensure that "the right Kosovars" returned to Kosovo, and not those who would create new disorder. Inclusion of a NATO core in the international force was necessary, in his view, partly because it was only to NATO that the KLA would hand in its arms.

Reverend Jackson and several others of us made basically the same requests as we had at the time the release of the soldiers had been announced: a bombing pause, release of the two Yugoslav prisoners, and the phone call to President Milosevic. President Clinton acknowledged all of those, and made no commitment to any one of them, to the obvious relief, as it appeared, of Mr., to the obvious relief, as it appeared, of Mr. Berger and Mrs. Albright.

Congressman Blagojevich raised the recommendation he had made several times before, including a written Op-Ed article in the *Chicago Tribune* some days before our departure, of a partition solution for Kosovo. This is a matter on which I had differed with the Congressman several times during our journey, since I see the recommending of it as an endorsement of ethnic cleansing. Eventually I had put it to our delegation as a question, whether we chose to present ourselves under the banner of partition or not. The delegation had rejected it. When the Congressman brought it up to President Clinton, he acknowledged that he was aware of Mr. Blagojevich's opinion, and did not accept it as policy for that same reason.

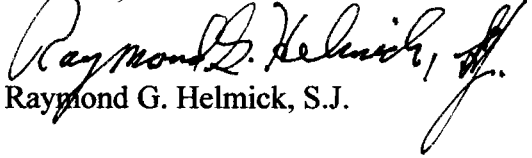
The President also spoke of initiating a rebuilding and development plan for the entire Balkan region, amply funded so that the whole region would be stabilized. Those things, of course, have a way of falling between the cracks once the Congress is asked to fund them.

When the President and Mr. Berger left, after some three quarters of an hour, Mrs. Albright stayed for another half hour. She was at pains to deny our contention that there was mutual lack of understanding between American and Yugoslav governments and hence need for diplomatic exchange. There could be no misunderstanding, she said, The Yugoslavs knew exactly what was demanded of them, what they must do. Everything was absolutely clear. We responded to that with accounts of the drastic incomprehension we had encountered, and I closed that meeting with a further appeal, on that basis, for the phone call from Mr. Clinton to Mr. Milosevic.

After sending the letters attached here to Mr. Milosevic and Mr. Karic, I sent copies to Mr. Berger at the White House.

I have made this report ample, in hopes that some items of information in it may actually be of some help to you. I will send a copy, also, to Fr. Kolvenbach. With all best wishes,

in Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



May 22, 1999

President William Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

After returning with the Jesse Jackson delegation from Belgrade, I wrote back to our hosts there, President Milosevic and Mr. Bogoljub Karic, thanking them for the return of the prisoners and analyzing what I had seen as miscomprehension, on their part, of the objectives behind American policy. I sent a copy of all that, by FAX, to Mr. Berger.

By yesterday I had also finished a report of our visit for the Holy See, of which I FAXed copies to Cardinal Sodano and to Fr. Kolvenbach, the General Superior of my Jesuit order. I enclose a copy of that for you, as the Holy See is another of the diplomatic parties active in this matter.

I am left with one matter left over, on which I felt I needed to write to you. That is **our American attitudes toward the KLA**. Those run a gamut from support of them as Freedom Fighters, which means recruitment, funding and armaments, to classification of them as practically terrorists. I listened carefully as Mr. Berger spoke, before we left, of U.S. policy giving no support either to Kosovo independence or to the arming of the KLA. He was quite sure, however, that if the refugees were not brought back to Kosovo, the KLA would be armed, whether we liked it or not, and would be a dangerous element for the destabilization of the region. When we saw you on our return, you saw as one of the uses of a NATO-core international force in Kosovo that it would bring the right Kosovars back and keep the really dangerous KLA elements out.

All this needs to be thought through carefully. I think it an error to classify the KLA as "terrorist group." That becomes self-fulfilling prophecy, and we will rue it if we end up having to fight them. They will have many friends right here at home.

I brought back with me from Belgrade a lot of glossy English-language literature full of that "terrorist" language. Serbs of course understand the KLA as their enemy, as Israelis did the PLO, as the British did the IRA (and Sinn Fein), as the Turks do the PKK (and HADEP), as Rhodesians did ZANU and ZAPU, as South Africans did the ANC. Without doubt, the KLA has committed atrocities on Kosovan Serbs, and has murdered its own people who dissented from it. But these are the actions of embattled defenders of a victim people, not of oppressors. Their acts of terrorism are expressions of a people's desperation. That is an aspect that has been ignored in the other cases I refer to, always to our cost or the cost of those who defined their enemies only in this way.



## **President Clinton, May 22, '99 – 2**

The KLA is new, despite a lineage that goes back a century and more to conspiratorial separatist groups. Up to the time, early last year, when Yugoslav authorities reacted with massive violence against a village in response to a relatively minor act of guerrilla violence, the KLA was small, of little political importance compared to Ibrahim Rugova's non-violent movement. Yugoslav action was itself responsible for the KLA's growth. In this it resembled the way the moribund IRA was brought back to life in reaction to Unionist and British actions in the early 1970s. The KLA is still not a recognizably unified force with acknowledged leadership.

But the KLA is still not a force to which the U.S. can respond with any degree of trust or cooperation, however much some of our congress and media may want to arm and assist them as "our" ground troops. Their objective is independence, which is truly incompatible with American or European interests. And in victory, they would be a mortal danger to the small (10%) Serb population of Kosovo, which it will be our responsibility to protect. Ethnic cleansing all over again.

The situation bears comparison to that of the Iraqi Kurds. Their two main parties, KDP and PUK, agreed in the late '80s that a non-separatist policy of autonomy within a democratic Iraq was best for them. Even as they have come to fight each other since 1994, they have remained faithful to this resolve. Consequently, when the U.S. and international community decided, since 1991, to provide them protection and air cover, we could leave their Pesh Merga militias in possession of the ground, reasonably confident that they would not dismember Iraq. You have seen something of my own long-term arguments with the PKK in Turkey, urging them also to renounce separatism, and my position that they have effectively been open to that, declaring it their policy since early 1993, and should be dealt with on that basis.

With the KLA, that moderation is lacking. They cannot be trusted not to produce regional havoc if they come to power. Consequently, when the Kosovars are brought back, as we all hope, we need to disarm the KLA, and simultaneously find a way to employ them that respects their dignity as defenders of their people during this crisis.

I see evidence enough that your administration understands the importance of NATO in carrying out that objective. NATO is clearly the only force to which the KLA would even consider handing over its arms. I worry that we may alienate the KLA by treating them as real or potential enemies, even terrorists. Even your own formula, of keeping the most dangerous elements from returning, is very suspect to my way of thinking. We need all of them back in Kosovo, satisfied that the NATO-core international force is making their people safe. Only on that basis can we expect to restore a working autonomy regime within the context of Serbia and Yugoslavia. We could otherwise find ourselves at war with a disillusioned KLA, to our great political damage. It is very much in our interest, and that of peace in Kosovo and the rest of Yugoslavia, to fine-tune our policy in this regard.

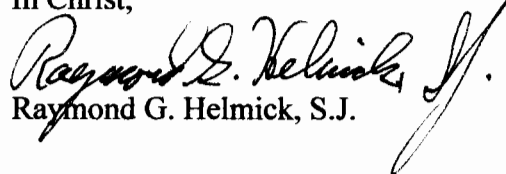
**President Clinton, May 22, '99 – 3**

I hope you will understand the point of my concern on this question. My own experience for several decades now has been with a great number of conflicts in which insurgent forces have set themselves up against governments. I have become very wary of the self-fulfilling prophecies by which we or others define such groups as our enemies and end up having to fight them down to some sort of finish. I have adopted it as normal expectation that the people I need to talk to are those who are at the root of whatever trouble I seek to confront, and that I need to talk to them with respect. It is this kind of thinking that brought all of us in the Jackson delegation to Belgrade and Milosevic, and led me afterwards to write to Mr. Karic and President Milosevic as I did.

When we of the Jackson delegation met you after our return, we recommended that you make a telephone call to President Milosevic. This was on the model of the phone call Ronald Reagan had made to President Asad of Syria back in 1984, when Jesse Jackson first brought an American prisoner, airman Goodman, back from captivity. It may be late for that phone call now, but it is in this spirit that we recommended it. And there are surely other ways of accomplishing the same effect.

With all best wishes,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

June 23, 1999

Rev. Jesse Jackson  
Rainbow Coalition  
1002 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Jesse,

Christ's Peace!

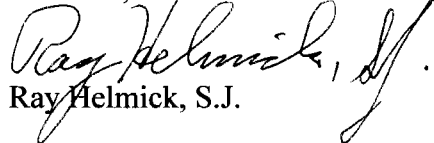
James called early in the month and left me a voice-mail message about a press conference June 7<sup>th</sup>. I'm sorry not to have been there, but I spent the first three weeks of June bringing a workshop group of grad students to South Africa and Ghana. Fred Smith from Emory and the Carter Center was one of our group, and you may have heard of it.

Several of us in the BTI -- Boston Theological Institute: the consortium of nine of our theology schools around the Boston area -- have been thinking reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia area, and putting it in terms of what Moral Rearmament did between the Germans and French after the Second World War. We would like to get some folks together from the Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholic, Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims, possibly using MRA's Caux base as one meeting place (though there are others), likely starting with young seminary and clerical students. We would want to work through other levels of the society, but keep the spiritual and religious base. And we would draw on the contacts we have with the Serbian Patriarchate, the Vatican and a lot of Muslims friends in this country and elsewhere, including the Balkans.

I thought you might be interested in this, and would like to see you and the Rainbow involved in it.

Best wishes. I hope you're getting good response from the Vatican on you visit these days.

In Christ,

  
Ray Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

July 8, 1999

Mr. Sandy Berger  
National Security Adviser  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Mr. Berger,

Christ's Peace!

Thank you for having Mr. Greg Schulte write, for you and the President, in acknowledgement of the various things I had written after returning from Belgrade with the Jackson expedition. I'm glad to see more recent developments in that quarter, and appreciated the remarks Mr. Schulte made for you.

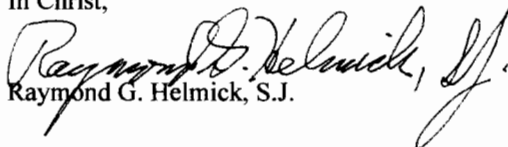
I've been in the habit, for many years and several presidents, of sending copies of anything I wrote that could have political consequence to the White House, to be accessible to the President or his assistants. While Tony Lake was in your position, I always knew he was the proper person to route these things. I've been less certain since.

But quite soon after his election, I wrote to Mr. Ehud Barak, resuming what had been a rather substantial correspondence with his predecessors, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin. I had never known what I could usefully write to Mr. Netanyahu, and so never attempted it, though I had continued correspondence with Yasser Arafat and many other Israelis and Palestinians. I thought this letter ought to be known in the White House.

And working at a different level, I've been writing the last couple of days to UUP figures in Northern Ireland, people I've known closely over many years now, Roy Beggs and Ken Maginnis. I've never felt that Roy ought to be among the No voters on the Good Friday Agreement. He has in the past recognized some elements in the situation that must be nagging at his very active conscience now. If he could be persuaded to change his position now, it would make a serious crack in the rejectionist camp. And while Ken, always a very demanding monitor of what the IRA is doing, has been very constructively on side all the last year, my friends and I felt he needed some encouragement just now too. I spent a while sweating over my computer, trying to compose a comparable letter to Martin Smyth, a long-time good friend, but didn't feel anything I could say would move him.

With best wishes,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

July 26, 1999

Mr. James Gomez  
Rainbow Coalition  
1002 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20007

FAX: (202) 728-1192

Dear James,

Christ's Peace!

Thanks for calling in that the date for that celebration will be Friday, August 6, at 8:00. That had been my understanding first, when you called, but the FAX I got the next day had said Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup>, at mid-day.

I'm going to be away in Switzerland, as I told you, talking up a reconciliation program for Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholic, Bosnian and Kosovar Muslim theology students with the Moral Re-Armament people. I'd written about that to Jesse last month. I checked out Chicago Jesuits, looking for someone to stand in for me. They were very cooperative, but the first two I asked were going to be away.

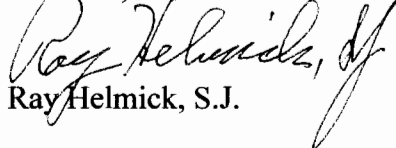
Fr. Dan Hartnett, S.J., is the one who has agreed to go. As I left it with him, that was for the Saturday noontime, but I trust he'll be free the Friday night too. If he isn't, it's back to the drawing board.

Dan is Professor of Applied Ethics at Loyola University, Chicago. He's been in Peru up to last year, Superior and Jesuit Novice-Master there, but got back to Chicago to recuperate from something or other last year. I know you and Jesse will like him.

Contact numbers: his phone is (773) 508-2021 at home (Gonzaga House, 6235 North Kenmore Ave., Chicago 60660-2101), (773) 508-8878 in his office, FAX (773) 508-2180. And he has e-mail: [dhartne@luc.edu](mailto:dhartne@luc.edu). I've given him the contact numbers for Rainbow/PUSH out there in Chicago.

You can get me e-mail too now, by the way. (My e-mail address was fiction at the time we made the Belgrade trip, but I've gotten onto it since.) It's a simple address: [helmick@bc.edu](mailto:helmick@bc.edu). I don't have an e-mail address for you yet. All the best,

In Christ,

  
Ray Helmick, S.J.



August 31, 1999

Mr. Bogoljub Karic  
C/o Madame Milanka Karic  
London

FAX: 011 44 181 367-9487

Dear Mr. Karic,

Christ's Peace!

I was not sure just where to find you now. I had read that you were presently in Montenegro. But I knew, from having written in May just after my visit to Belgrade, that a FAX through Madame Karic's London number does get to you right away.

I would like your help with a project we have developed through the Boston Theological Institute, the consortium of theology graduate schools with whom I first traveled to Belgrade in the summer of 1998. We have brought a group of students from those schools on an academic workshop visit each year at that time, as we did to that time. This year we visited South Africa, with some of the same students in the group. It was one of them, a young woman named Laura Johnston, who raised this idea on the plane coming back from South Africa.

She spoke of the great success Moral Re-Armament had, in the years after World War II, in bringing together groups of Germans and French in what became an important program of reconciliation. They acquired the hotel that they have subsequently used as their main headquarters, at Caux in Switzerland, and had eventually large numbers of Germans and French there. Most significantly, one of their French guests was Robert Schumann, who implemented Jean Monnet's idea of the Coal and Steel Community, and in fact, they introduced him to Konrad Adenauer, at that time still an obscure person.

Laura's idea was that we, with our theological credentials, should bring together initially a group of theology students: Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholic and Bosnian Muslim, and initiate a comparable program right there at Caux. Dr. Rodney Petersen, the Director of the BTI whom you met last year, and I both endorsed the concept, and have worked a great deal since to implement it.

I have worked extensively in the past on Middle Eastern affairs with our local Boston MRA representative, Mr. Bryan Hamlin, who with his wife is very central to the whole international program of the MRA. I approached him, and through him the MRA directors in Caux. All three of us, Rodney Petersen, Laura Johnston and I, have since been over to Caux, each for at least a week, to discuss the idea with their people, and of course we have approached a great number of others, among them David Steele.

Mr. Bogoljub Karic, August 31, '99 – 2

By this time, I think our program is definitely going to proceed. The MRA people are solidly behind it. David Steele gave us much encouragement – Laura Johnston actually spent the summer as his intern at CSIS. We have made a good start at raising some funds for it.

We are only now beginning to approach seminarians and Muslim theology students themselves, through their institutions. I didn't want to hold this out to them until we had substantial certainty that we would be able to do it. Some others have tried similar things, I know, particularly in Bosnia, but have generally found the RS Serbs too battered and despondent to take readily to such efforts. I don't want to limit this to those of the three groups in Bosnia. I think Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, who should of course be represented, would be helped by others from Serbia and Croatia proper. And there should be Kosovars, both Serbian and Albanian.

The help I would like from you is principally to encourage Serbian participation. I will be writing both to Patriarch Pavle and to Bishop Artemije as my principal contacts to bring some Serbian seminarians into this initial program, and I would be grateful if you would also commend it to them. We have good contacts for the Catholics and the Bosnian Muslims. I have been in enough contact myself with the Holy See, and particularly with Cardinal Sodano, that I believe I can rely on support from that lofty level. At a more practical level, I will be asking the help of Fra Ivo Marcovic in Sarajevo, Msgr. Zovkic of the Sarajevo Archdiocese (he is a close admirer of MRA himself and has already been in discussion with us about this) and Bishop Marin Srakic of Djakovo. Our Muslim contacts are also good in Bosnia, though I haven't yet the connections I need in Kosovo. We need to have the theology students best able to participate in such a program.

For a first session, I don't want this to go beyond a group of twenty five to thirty. Of course, if we meet with success, this has to be a long-term commitment. I won't let it be confined to theology students, though I think that is where we should start. MRA, after World War II, had the good fortune to find Robert Schumann. I don't know who the Robert Schumann of Serbia is, though it could be you. We will, in any case, look eventually for people from many strata of Serb, Croat and Bosnian society. This is no program for the restoration of Yugoslavia, but for reconciliation of neighboring peoples.

We hope to do this first program during February, quite likely in the last week, from Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February through Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February, with the traveling done on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> to leave a full eight days for the program. I have no doubt myself that, from this beginning, we will have launched a process that will extend much further.

The first requirement, to my mind, should be that students of the three groups come to an understanding of what the experience of the war has been to each of the others. That will be the principal matter of this first session.

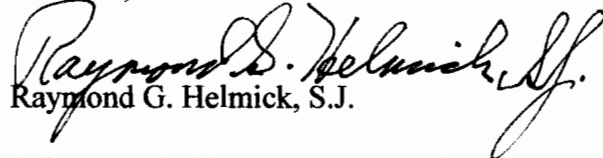
Mr. Bogoljub Karic, August 31, '99 – 3

It is very important, to my mind, that the peoples of this group of countries have, from the start, full ownership of the program. It should not come to them as something that foreigners do, as if people elsewhere knew better than they do. We will be exploring their own values to find the means of reconciliation from among themselves.

We would much appreciate it, too, if you could give us some financial help in mounting the program, possibly taking care of the transport of the students to Caux. I would see this as one of the ways in which the program could be given a genuinely home-based character.

I would be very grateful to hear your thoughts on this proposal, and receive whatever help you could give us in constructing the program. With best wishes to you and to Madame Karic, I am yours,

In Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Tel. +1 (617) 552-8215 (Boston College)

Or +1 (617) 325-1300

FAX +1 (617) 325 00380

e-mail [Helmick@bc.edu](mailto:Helmick@bc.edu)



**Blacklist**

Date: Fri, 8 Oct 1999 00:09:57 EDT

From: ACOVLA@aol.com

To: helmick@bc.edu

Hello Fr. Ray:

I thought you might be interested in this article since it concerns Serbia and Karic family. I had a chance to see documentary "Yugoslavia-avoidable war." It is very interesting since there are new details even for me. I will send it to John M. for review. As I understand there will be showing of this documentary next Wednesday at 1 Milk St. in Boston. I am planning to attend. See you soon.

Fr. Aleksandar

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Subject: [KDN] WSJ (10/1) Milosevic's Cronies Struggle For Removal From  
Blacklist

Date: Thu, 07 Oct 1999 21:01:21 -0400

From: Snezana Lazovic <sila@sympatico.ca>

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The Wall Street Journal

October 1, 1999

**Milosevic's Cronies Struggle For Removal From Blacklist**

By ROBERT BLOCK and NEIL KING JR.  
Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia - For Bogoljub Karic, Serbia's richest man and an erstwhile friend of President Slobodan Milosevic, the biggest bomb the West dropped on Belgrade during the war wasn't one that took out a bridge or a TV tower. It was, he whispers, "the list."

Drawn up by the European Union, the list contains the names of 305 Yugoslav government officials, military officers and Milosevic associates who have been barred from traveling to and doing business in western Europe. The U.S. and much of Eastern Europe have instituted similar bans as well. Mr. Karic's own name occupies position No. 75 on the list, driving the 45-year-old telecommunications and banking tycoon to fits of desperation and a mad struggle to clear his name.

Of all the sanctions imposed on Serbia in recent years for its role in

four Balkan wars and its policies of ethnic intolerance, none appears to have hit harder among the country's elite than the European visa ban, which was imposed almost as an afterthought during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia this spring. The ban remained in place after the war's end and has become a handy tool to goad Serbia's most influential figures into turning against the Milosevic government, Western diplomats say.

### "Paying a Personal Price"

"For the first time, members of Serbia Inc. are paying a personal price, and it's hitting them square in the forehead," says one senior U.S. official. The list "creates a lot of problems for me and my business," moans Djordje Nicovic, president of Kapital Banka AD, a small private institution that is struggling to survive because of its chief's status as a persona non grata. Dozens of leading Serbian figures now spend their days scrambling to get off the blacklist so they can see relatives abroad, visit their apartments in London and elsewhere or simply access money stashed in banks from Cyprus to Luxembourg. Some have tried to enlist foreign diplomats and overseas business partners to help them. A few have hired expensive lawyers to prepare lawsuits against the European Union. Others have sent electronic-mails to EU bureaucrats in Brussels suggesting that their name be swapped with someone else's, and have even offered to rat on friends.

### Untenable Position

To many Serbs on the list, the West has put them in an untenable position. If they are going to risk all and switch sides, they say, then the U.S. and Europe should step in to lend support. Yet so far, Western diplomats have kept their distance, saying: Jump ship, and we will talk about assistance later. Many figures who say they were willing to abandon the government just a month or so ago are now thinking twice, especially as Mr. Milosevic remains comfortably in power in Belgrade.

"Of course, we are afraid," says Mr. Karic - whose paranoia about the regime is such that before speaking to anyone in person, he removes the battery from his ever-present mobile telephone to prevent the secret police from possibly using the cellular network to eavesdrop on him. "The West doesn't have a clear strategy but wants us to confront the regime. The least they could do is back us completely."

Unseating Mr. Milosevic remains a difficult task, even after NATO's 11-week air war. In spite of street protests and growing public disaffection, Mr. Milosevic's grasp remains firm. Part of the dilemma is that the opposition movements have been hobbled by bitter rivalries and

conflicting ambitions.

#### Cronies' Fate?

"The West is pushing these guys to join the opposition just as the opposition is falling apart," says Ivo Daalder, a former White House official during the Bosnian war. "People are realizing that Milosevic is going to be around for a long time. So where does that leave all the cronies?"

A big problem for Mr. Karic and many other blacklisted Serbs is that they owe their wealth and position to Mr. Milosevic and his wife. Over the years of his rise from guitarist in a folk band to business magnate, Mr. Karic maintained a relationship with the ruling couple that gave him easy access to state credits and import licenses. But he knows that his businesses have little chance of prospering if he remains on the list.

According to Brian Crowe, the director general for external relations in the EU Council of Ministers, the body managing the visa-ban list, the criterion for being put on the list is the key to being removed: If you are close to the regime, working in support of Mr. Milosevic, you can be put on; if you can show that you aren't, then you can come off.

"We are not saying to people on the list, 'Do something against the government.' What we are saying is that they are on the list because of their activities. It's up to them to find ways to show they are not close to the regime or working to support Milosevic," Mr. Crowe says. So far, the council has received only about a dozen requests from people seeking to have their names cleared. None have been granted. The vast majority looking to be delisted appear to be using diplomatic channels rather than going directly to the EU.

The U.S.'s message, say members of the small team of officials working on the matter at the State Department, has been simple: Sever your ties with Mr. Milosevic and ally openly with an alternative faction.

"The times call for precipitous leaps," says James Dobbins, a special U.S. ambassador to the Balkans. "Are these guys going to side with openness and democracy and the free market or are they going to go down with the Milosevic ship? It's their decision to make."

Within the next week or so, President Clinton is expected to codify the U.S. list through a presidential proclamation. Until now, there has had to be a separate finding to deny each person on the list - which is similar but not identical to the EU's - an American visa. A proclamation will mean the U.S. can bar entry to Serbian government officials or anyone who has

supported war crimes or profited off the government, though that doesn't mean the list will necessarily grow longer.

At a time when the use of broad sanctions is under fire in Washington and Europe, this particular punishment has raised smiles in the West. "It's great. We're making just the right guys miserable and no one else," says one U.S. diplomat.

### Going to Great Lengths

Few have gone to such lengths to get off the list as Mr. Karic, a minister without portfolio in Serbia's republican government and the head of an international commercial empire stretching from Uzbekistan to the U.S. that controls everything from banks to television stations to tool factories and cellular-phone companies.

When the EU announced the ban on May 10, Mr. Karic, like most government officials at the time, wore his pariah status as a badge of honor. "I would have been insulted if my name were not there," he says.

But that bravado has since given way to despondency, since the sanctions didn't fall away with the war's end. Making matters worse for the likes of Mr. Karic, a dozen countries outside the EU - including the U.S., Canada, Cyprus, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary - have also adopted the blacklist.

On May 21, Mr. Karic earned the distinction of being the first prominent Yugoslav figure to feel the sting of being blacklisted when he and his wife, Milenka, who is also on the list, were turned back at the airport in Nicosia while trying to visit Cyprus, where he owns a bank. NATO spokesman Jamie Shea accused Mr. Karic of trying to "do a runner" and escape from Yugoslavia, which he denies.

### Full-Time Obsession

Since then, getting off the list has become a full-time obsession for Mr. Karic. When not pacing the floors of his many offices and homes in Belgrade, he spends his time networking with Western diplomats, high-powered European lawyers and anyone else who might be able to help.

"It's unjust to put us on that list," he complains. To prove his point, his lawyers in Brussels are preparing a case claiming that the EU is violating his right to travel and to visit his three daughters, who live and study in Britain. Another law firm in London, he says, is about to launch a lawsuit against the British government for freezing his assets, including homes and property worth millions of dollars.

His campaign isn't limited to lawsuits. Mr. Karic has also been doing some strategic political groveling. Recently, in his plush offices at a Belgrade business school that bears his name, Mr. Karic drops to his knees with his hands clasped in front of him to demonstrate how he pleaded with a foreign visitor to help him work in the West again. "We have to get on our knees and beg the West to help us," he says.

Soon after the war ended, Mr. Karic says, he secretly traveled to Budapest to meet Robert Gelbard, then the U.S. special envoy to the Balkans, and implored the diplomat to get him off the list. According to Mr. Karic, Mr. Gelbard told him the price of such a request was that he had to "do something" to distance himself from the regime.

Mr. Karic balked, saying he wanted assurances that if he confronted Mr. Milosevic, the U.S. would back him up. In the end no promises were made. Mr. Gelbard, now American ambassador to Indonesia, won't disclose details of his meeting with Mr. Karic or even confirm that they met. However, he says he was aware that Mr. Karic was feeling the pinch of the blacklist.

### The Wrong Hands

Unfortunately for Mr. Karic, a transcript of his conversation in Budapest somehow made it to Mr. Milosevic, straining his relations with the president. Soon after, Mr. Karic says that several government accounts were pulled from his bank, customs officers raided his TV station, and Yugoslavia's financial police conducted surprise audits of some of his companies. He sees these moves as punishment for his efforts to get off the list and a warning not to push too hard.

Last month, Mr. Karic announced that he had tendered his resignation from Serbia's government because his ideas for reforming Yugoslavia's privatization laws were being ignored. The government denies that Mr. Karic resigned and still treats him as a minister. Either way, Mr. Karic remains blacklisted.

Toma Fila, a lawyer representing several political figures on the list, has tried to persuade some of his clients to try to fight the ban, but has found few who are willing. One of his clients is Sinisa Zaric, manager of the Belgrade trade fair, who was recently added to the list. Mr. Zaric belongs to no political party and last year beat a government court case that accused him of fraud in connection with his management of the trade fair. But Mr. Zaric has no desire to challenge the ban, says his lawyer. The reason is fear.

"All I can do is write a letter to the European Union complaining, but the

minute I do that I put my client in danger because I am forcing him publicly to distance himself from the regime. And while they decide what to do there, he will lose all that he has here," Mr. Fila says.

### Little Sympathy

EU and American officials have little sympathy for such arguments. They see the emergence of tensions in the Serb government as a positive result of the ban.

Indeed, Yugoslav government insiders say that the list has caused a serious level of paranoia in the regime, with many ministers and apparatchiks eyeing each other suspiciously, wondering who is ready to betray whom in an effort to gain freedom. A personal friend of Mr. Milosevic says that the problem was getting so bad that the president gave his closest aides permission to try to get off the list, so long as they didn't betray anyone else and made regular reports to the government about what they were doing. But not everyone is hiding his or her efforts. Mr. Nicovic of Kapital Banka is openly fighting to get off the list, insisting that he has no connection with the regime at all and therefore nothing to lose as a result of his attempts.

The banker believes he was put on the list because of his former association with the country's central bank, National Bank of Yugoslavia, where he was head of the foreign-exchange operation until 1992. "But that was the old Yugoslavia, not this one," he says. He says there aren't any members of the government or any political parties on his bank's board, and no government money in the institution at all.

### Reassuring the Partners

After discovering his name on the list last May, Mr. Nicovic called his foreign business partners, including Volvo of Sweden and Citroen of France, to assure them that it was all a mistake. "They were surprised because they know me as a pure private businessman," he says. "Everyone believed that maybe I made some secret transaction with the government that was discovered by the international community. But I have convinced them this is not the case." Mr. Nicovic initially hired a lawyer in London to help get him off the list, but has since suspended his legal case to pursue the matter through diplomatic channels.

Of course, for some Serbs, the list has its merits. In fact, government loyalists have tried to use it to tie some people closer to the regime. Soon after the list was first released, Mr. Nicovic says, he was called to a meeting by Borka Vucic, the head of the country's largest banking consortium and a close friend of Mr. Milosevic, who told him: "You see,

Djordje, you are one of us now." Ms. Vucic was unavailable for comment.

Goran Matic, the Yugoslav minister of information and a prominent name on the list, rejects the idea that it is causing problems for the regime.

"It's pure stupidity," he says with a wave of his hand. "What would be the effect if, say, North Korea made a listing banning certain Americans from traveling there? Those Americans would be proud. It's the same here. There are no negative effects at all. For us to be on the list remains a question of political prestige."

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November 16, 1999

Njegova Svetost Patrijarh Srpski Gospodin Pavle  
Kralja Petra 5  
11000 Beograd  
Serbia. F.R. Yugoslavia

Your Holiness,

Christ's Peace!

You were so kind as to receive a group of our students from the various Christian schools of theology, joined in a consortium called the Boston Theological Institute, in the summer of 1998. You were also most helpful and courteous to me and the others who travelled to Belgrade during the time of the NATO bombing earlier this year, hoping to win the release of three young captive American soldiers, and also to reopen a path of diplomacy in a conflict that had become devoid of diplomacy. Bishop Mitrofan and Father Irene Dobrijevic were of that company and among those I most trusted. All of us were aware of how much we had to rely on your courageous assistance. I am highly grateful to you for the trouble you took for us on both of these occasions.

Several of us, of the Boston Theological Institute, including Dr. Rodney Petersen, Director of the Institute, whom you have met, have proposed bringing together a group of some thirty students of theology from the several countries that have experienced the wars of this past decade in the former Yugoslavia, to spend a period from Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> of February through Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> (Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> and Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> being the travel days) meeting together in Switzerland and reflecting on their pastoral responsibilities and opportunities in the aftermath of the war. We would like to create an opportunity in which they could come to understand what one another's experience had been, and learn to see each other as colleagues in the work of healing. This idea came first from one of the graduate students who had been with us to Belgrade, Ms. Laurie Johnstone, and was gladly endorsed by Dr. Petersen and myself.

The concept originated with a remembrance of the work done by Moral Re-Armament immediately after World War II, when they brought together numbers of Germans and French, of all walks of life, and in this way eventually played a serious role in the reconciliation of those two peoples. Consequently, we went directly to representative of Moral Re-Armament. Each of us has spent some time at their center in Caux, Switzerland, and discussed this project with them. They have given us their wholehearted support and cooperation.

Many people you know are pledged to help in this project. The Rev. Dr. David Steele, who has worked so closely with many people in the region, will be one of our facilitators, as will Barry Hart, of the Eastern Mennonite University in the U.S. Msgr.



His Holiness, Patriarch Pavle, November 16, '99 -- 2

Zovkic of Sarajevo, whom we met at Caux, has been most helpful. So have James Cairns of World Vision, and his colleagues Rudy Scholaert, who has been hard at work in Kosovo, and David Robinson. There are many others. We plan, in addition, to invite professors/mentors from their own theological schools to accompany the theology students and take part in the shaping of the program.

We would like your blessing on this project, and your help in identifying and inviting the proper theology students and someone from their faculty. It could be that you would see Father Bigovic, with whom we would like to work, in that latter role, but we leave it to your discretion.

We are aware that this has to be a long-term commitment on our part. Given the successful outcome we look for in this first meeting, more such meetings should follow. But since we look, in total, for about thirty students in this group, the Serbian seminarians from the different countries affected by the war, we would ask you initially to identify two who would come from the area of Belgrade. We will be writing additionally to Bishop Lavrentije, hoping that he can send us a seminarian from his diocese, even if the young man is studying elsewhere, and to Bishop Artemije in hopes that he can send us some seminarians from the Kosovo area, understanding that their training will be taking place elsewhere. We shall be asking too for Serbian Orthodox seminarians who come from the Republica Srpska in Bosnia and from the experience of Croatia.

We shall also be inviting seminarians from the Catholic faculties in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Djakovo, and from the Franciscans in Sarajevo (through Fra Ivo Markovic), and Muslim students both from Bosnia and from Kosovo. We are anxious, too, to have one or two Protestant seminarians, likely from Osijek.

There is some degree of urgency to our issuing the invitations, as the Swiss Moral Re-Armament people tell us application for visas to Switzerland should be made two full months before the participants departure, therefore early in December, and that they need to have their tickets in hand. We will of course be responsible for their costs of travel and their stay in Switzerland.

I earnestly hope that you will approve and help us with this endeavor. I believe nothing is more important, after the horrors of the conflict, than that people learn, and that their clergy be able to help them, to understand and validate one another's suffering and work for the restoration of their relations. This is our objective, and we would dearly like your thoughts on it and your assistance.

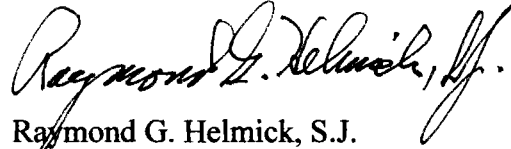
I will send copies of this message to Dr. Petersen and to Ms. Laurie Johnston. I have attached a brief mission statement of our proposal, more to be sure that you are able to open such attachments than for any other reason, and have asked Father Andreas to respond, answering whether he has been able to open it. If so, I would like to send you, for your information, copies of letters I have written, as far back as 1995, on behalf of the

Hios Holiness, Patriarch Pavle, November 16, '99 -- 3

Serbs who were then expelled from Krajina and other areas of Croatia, and the reports I sent, after the Jesse Jackson mission in May, to the Holy See, to President Milosevic and to President Clinton.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raymond G. Helmick, S.J." in a cursive script.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.  
Professor of Conflict Resolution  
Department of Theology  
Boston College

I sent this initially by e-mail, and have not been certain that it was received. Should you wish to reply so, my e-mail address is simply <[helmick@bc.edu](mailto:helmick@bc.edu)>. Should you wish to reply by Fax, the number is as above, or alternative +1 617 325-0380.



December 4, 1999

His Eminence Nikolaj Mrdja  
Metropolitan of Dabrobosnia  
Fax: 387-71-659-576 (Sarajevo office)  
fax: 387-71-867-814 (Sokolac)

Your Eminence,

Christ's Peace!

You will have heard, I believe, from Jim Cairns of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and others, that a group of us are hoping to bring together a number of theology students, Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholic, Bosnian and Kosovar Muslim, to meet next February for just over a week in Switzerland. Those extending the invitation are Dr. Rodney Petersen, Director of the Boston Theological Institute (the consortium of nine theology schools, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant, in the Boston area) and myself, along with the Swiss leaders of Moral Re-Armament, Mr. Christoph Spreng and others. We have had help from many persons in the area. I and others have written to His Holiness, Patriarch Pavle, to His Eminence, and to Bishop Artemije in Kosovo. I attach here copies of the letters I have sent to each of them myself, and a page that gives a general description of our proposed meeting.

I don't know whether you will remember meeting me, the Jesuit priest from Boston College who was with the mixed group of Boston theology students who visited Sarajevo in June of 1998. I attended the Mass at which you dedicated the cornerstone of a new church just outside Sarajevo one Sunday morning. Most of our group were delayed at an earlier meeting that day, and did not arrive at the restaurant where you had agreed to meet us all until you were actually leaving. But I was at the restaurant with Franciscan Fra Ivo Markovic for some time before that, and we had a long conversation. I was back in Bosnia the following October, last year, and went up to your house in Sokolac with Mr. Aleksandar Vidojevic from Belgrade and Mr. Vjeko Saija of Sarajevo, but we were not so fortunate as to find you that day. We did however visit Pale that day and met with officials of the Republica Srpska there. I was also one of the group of American clergy who visited Belgrade last May, during the bombing, in company of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, to request the release of three young American prisoners and at the same time try to reopen some diplomacy in a situation from which all diplomacy had disappeared.

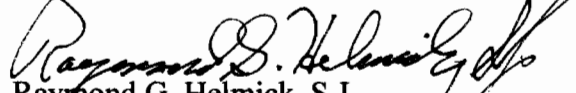
We are hoping that you would give your support to our inviting some of your seminary students. We would like to have four of your Serbian Orthodox students from Bosnia, and since we are looking for two further Serbian Orthodox students from Kosovo, as I have written to Bishop Artemije, I suspect that they may very well be studying in your seminary as well. And so, by this letter, I would like to extend to you a

His Eminence, Bishop Mrdja, December 4, '99 -- 2

formal invitation on behalf of our group, the Boston Theological Institute and Moral Re-Armament, to send these seminarians to our meeting.

I wish you every blessing and solace from the Lord for the sufferings of your people.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.", written in black ink.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.  
Professor of Conflict Resolution  
Department of Theology  
Boston College

Subject:  
February Meeting in Switzerland  
Date:  
Mon, 06 Dec 1999 14:54:50 -0500  
From:  
"Raymond G. Helmick S.J." <helmick@bc.edu>  
Organization:  
Boston College  
To:  
Mitrophan <KRKA@aol.com>, helmick@bc.edu

Dear Bishop Mitrophan,

Christ's Peace!

I have such good recollections of you from the visit we made together to Belgrade this Spring, with Jesse Jackson and the others.

Since the summer, a group of us here in Boston, from the Boston Theological Institute (BTI: a consortium of nine graduate theology schools here in the Boston area, including Holy Croos Greek Orthodox and eight other schools, Catholic and Protestant) have been proposing to bring some theology students from the countries that formerly made up Yugoslavia, Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim, together to a meeting in February at the headquarters of Moral Re-Armament in Switzerland.

I thought I should let you know of this plan. I called your office just today, because I had had trouble contacting Bishop Nikolaj -- I couldn't get his FAX numbers, either in Sarajevo or Sokolac to respond, and had no other address.

You'll find here, as attachments, a short account of the basic proposal, and copies of letters I have sent to Patriarch Pavle, to Bishop Artemije and to Bishop Nikolaj. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on the proposal, and hope you could give it your encouragement.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.



December 8, 1999

Njegova Svetost Patrijarh Srpski Gospodin Pavle  
Kralja Petra 5  
11000 Beograd  
Serbia. F.R. Yugoslavia

FAX: 011 381 11 328 1691

Your Holiness,

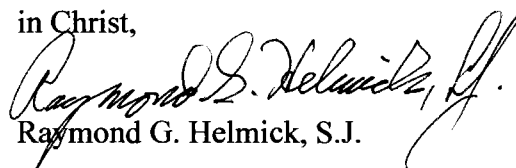
Christ's Peace!

I believe that you will already have the attached material: a letter I sent you by e-mail, through Father Andreas, November 16<sup>th</sup>, other letters I have addressed to Bishop Artemije in Prizren and Bishop Nikolaj in Sokolac, and a short description of the program we are recommending, to bring a group of theology students from the various countries of the former Yugoslavia together at Caux in Switzerland, the headquarters of the Moral Re-Armament organization, in February. Father Aleksandar Vlackovic, pastor of the Serbian Orthodox community here in the Boston area, will likely have been through Belgrade within the last few days, and have spoken, at least to Father Rakic, of it.

However, the transmission has been so complicated that I wanted to be very sure you had this material before you. I just now got a FAX number for you from the Greek Orthodox Seminary, Holy Cross, here in Boston, and thought I should not omit any way of being sure that you had these letters.

With all best wishes, I am yours,

in Christ,

  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

## **Religion as a Contributor to Conflict Resolution**

Paper for Caux Conference

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

February 18, 2000

A caution is required at the very beginning of this discussion of religion as a resource for the resolution of conflicts. It is not that religion has too often failed to fulfill that role, though that is true and we will have to discuss it; but rather that one ought not look to religion for purposes other than its own.

A religious faith is in itself an all-encompassing outlook on life, on the world and its meaning. It generates its own agenda, and reluctant though we may be, we must allow it to do that. Outsiders who try to utilize religion for their own purposes may have good or bad agendas of their own, and even those of us who regard ourselves as insiders to a faith community may yield to the temptation of using religion for an extraneous purpose. We in this room, of course, looking to religion as a help in resolving conflicts, have the best motives anyone might think of. But it is always an abuse of religious faith to make it instrument for something else.

I state this so sharply at the beginning out of a realization of how hard a saying it is. We all have difficulty in trusting the religious institutions to set their own agendas, because they have behaved so badly. Ethnic nationalism is a primary case in point. We see the instance in the former Yugoslavia, where ethnic identities have been so tied to religion that Serb and Orthodox are practically interchangeable terms in people's consciousness, Croat and Catholic become equally the badges under which Muslims are to be persecuted, excluded, "ethnically cleansed." In those countries, where Serb, Croat and Bosnian Muslim are all from the same Slavic stock, there is hardly any other content to ethnicity than religious difference.

In Ireland, ever since the Protestant Reformation, religion has not been basically about religion. Rather, Catholic and Protestant identities have been loyalty tests, right down to the present, for Irish Nationalism or loyalty to the English/British crown. We often have to remind ourselves that the Anglo-Irish conflict predates the Protestant Reformation by some four hundred years. Everyone in this picture, until then, was Catholic. But as soon as a religious difference became available, it was utilized immediately for this purpose of identifying political allegiance. Religion, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, invades every corner of the Middle East conflict, with dire results.

South Africa has seen its parallels. The practice and conceptualization of *apartheid* were basically invented in church. Religious doctrine, judged by its opponents to have been actually heresy, served then as its rationalization: church as locus of superiority assumptions. And we Americans, with our history of "Manifest Destiny" delusions, take our place in the line.

## **Religion as a Resource in Conflict Situations – 2**

Religion has in this way acquired a strangely sinister reputation among those who work for the resolution or transformation of conflicts. The assumption, conventional by now, is that religious faith commitment, or the sense of identification with a faith community, fosters division, hatred and violence.

This impression arises from a badly chequered history. European Western “Christendom” and its American and other once-colonial appendages have witnessed a widespread popular alienation from the institutional churches. I date this phenomenon to the religious wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which left the battered peoples of Europe with the conviction that their churches had failed them.

Several times I have remarked to Muslim friends that the Islamic community, on the whole, has experienced no comparable alienation from its faith or its institutions. The response they have often given me is that they hope such alienation will not result from the ways Islam is being used, instrumentally, for political purposes or as a means of expressing anger in our own time. Many Western Ashkenazi Jews seem to have acquired a similar alienation from religious authority and institutions as if by contagion from their European Christian neighbors. This manifests itself not only in Europe and America, but also in Jewish secularism in the state of Israel, to the great puzzlement of Sephardic Israelis, who have experienced no such alienation.

But from the time of Europe’s religious wars, after a bloody century not rivaled until our own, professed agnosticism or atheism became commonplace in Christian lands in a way seldom seen before. Institutional religious authority found itself suspect, in the eyes of the intellectual mainstream of society, of promoting only its own private power interests, not the faith agenda of the believing community. There had been reasons enough before to complain of corruption in the Christian Church. Medieval demands for reform in head and members had led eventually to the Reformation itself. But this sense of broken faith centered now on the cult of violence.

That massive breach of confidence in religion and its leadership coincided with the opening of what we have called “The Modern Age.” That term calls for definition. I see three principal building blocks in what we have regarded as modernity. First was the scientific revolution, beginning with Copernicus and Galileo and spreading to all areas of study of the material universe, which has given Western civilization its exponential technological growth. Then came, as a second component, the philosophical Enlightenment of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the cult of reason. The third element was the political liberalism which led, through the period of “Enlightened Despots,” to the English, American, French and Russian revolutions and the development of representative government.

For true believers in The Modern Age, these three things gave the answers to all the questions. Religious faith began to look like a curious atavism, a throwback to outmoded superstitions. European theologies, with all their differences and rivalries,



### **Religion as a Resource in Conflict Situations -- 3**

became of one kind, in that for all of them the central question became: "How can you believe these things in the modern age?" The liberation theologies of more recent decades have recognized that this shift to a near-exclusive preoccupation with apologetics led to an impoverishment of faith. They have identified it as adolescent theology, and in its place they make the central question of theology how our faith relates us to the poor or the oppressed, or more generally whether our faith is truly something to be lived, in action.

This amounts to a major theological transformation in our own time, but it is not only the theologians who have changed. The devastating cruelty and violence of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have finally taught that intellectual mainstream, so long alienated from religion, that the three holy icons of The Modern Age, science, rational enlightenment and liberal politics, have not in fact answered all the questions.

People mean different things when they speak of "Post-Modernism," but one phenomenon to which the term can be applied is the way serious people now look to the wisdom traditions, including often the whole spectrum of traditional faiths, to supply what modernism has failed to provide. They are as suspicious as ever of the institutions -- I surely join them in that. But this turning, at least with curiosity and often with hope, to the traditional sources of faith creates a new situation in which we should look at the relation between religion and violence. We should see what poisons have been in the mix -- let's not pretend they have not been there -- and ask how we might get to the healing and reconciling role that we would expect of religion.

There are of course some other potential reasons for this tarnishing of the religious record in areas of conflict. Besides this extrinsic cause, the instrumental use of religion, there may be intrinsic stimuli to the rejection and exclusion of others, and the licensing of violence against them: concepts of divine revelation or election that establish sharp separation between the recipients of God's word, or the elect, and the reprobate or unbelievers. Or great harm may be done by concepts of an angry, vengeful God, in whose service we may visit wrath upon our enemies.

Any of these phenomena, as I read it, truly contradict the reconciliation tenets of faith, which are a common theme across a broad range of confessional positions. And if here I speak primarily of Christian faith, it is because that is mine and is most familiar to me. I am conscious that some other faiths too lay great emphasis on reconciliation.

In Christian experience, a great watershed occurred with the legalization of the Christian Church under Constantine. If we read our way into the dialogue that today begins to take place between Christians and Muslims we soon hear about one great difference that is supposed to exist between us: that for Christians Church and State are separate while for Muslims religious and civil society are one. I have never believed that this dichotomy has been as clear or as absolute in actual historic experience as that

## Religion as a Resource in Conflict Situations -- 4

observation indicates. But it is true that, in its beginnings the Islamic faith community, gathered about the Prophet Mohammed first in Medina, and then in Mecca, did simultaneously govern civil society. The Christian community in contrast was, for its first three centuries, an outsider group, barely if at all tolerated by the Roman imperial State, alien and marginalized within its culture.

For as long as, and to the extent that that was true, the Christian community had neither power in nor responsibility for the State. The Christians were not all, as they are sometimes presented, the poor and enslaved, fringe people in Roman society. Prominent people, even some members of the senatorial class and imperial family, came into it from early on. But it was not until the opening years of the 4th century that the weight of the Christian community was such that the power class of the Empire felt they had need of it.

Constantine changed the game and this made a tremendous difference in what it meant to be a Christian. Where before it had been risk, something one undertook only out of deep conviction and that involved everything in one's life, now it was the smart thing to do, one of the conditions of worldly advancement. The Emperor needed the bishops and the community they could vouch for. The bishops understood that they had attained their position of privilege for reasons other than the advancement of Christian faith, but chose nonetheless to give unqualified adulation to the Emperor. They treated him and his intervention on their behalf as the direct act of God, while giving him the assent and moral support he sought from them. It was politic.

We can describe this as the Constantinian order in the Church. Church and State were to be two parallel bodies, reflective of one another: the State commanding the obedience of the subjects, the Church supporting its demands and providing the moral context within which the State would act. The administrative structures of the Roman State, such as dioceses and vicariates, were exactly duplicated in the Church, and remain even now. The **role** of the Church was to be the **paradigm to the State**. For more than a thousand years, this **PARADIGMATIC ROLE OF THE CHURCH**, the Constantinian pattern, remained the norm, and in some odd places we find vestiges of it even today.

Some may see this as particularly a problem of the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe, which by consistent tradition have organized themselves as national churches. I raised this somewhat over a year ago with an Orthodox theologian for whom I have great admiration, Professor Petros Vasiliadis of the Ecumenical Institute at the University of Thessaloniki. In the Balkan conflict, I felt, national governments had striven hard to commandeer the loyalties of their populations to the church as an instrument for their war purposes.

Professor Vasiliadis was interesting on the point. He said he preferred the Orthodox eccesiological model, with its theology of the local church, to the centralized Roman one. The central authority apparatus had its advantages, when quick leadership

## Religion as a Resource in Conflict Situations -- 5

response was needed in an emergency. But otherwise there was more opportunity for respectfully consultative government, collegiality to use the Roman term, in the Eastern model. I could not do otherwise than agree with him. The model of the local church, however, as place of the Spirit's leading, is not the church of a nation. It is the congregation, the assembly of believers who meet in one place. They are in carefully cultivated communion, granted, with others elsewhere, but nonetheless they are the *locus* of the Spirit's activity where they are. That is the model of the Pauline and other early churches.

But let's not deceive ourselves that it is only Eastern Orthodoxy that is afflicted with this determination of the state or other organized forces to co-opt the church for purposes foreign to its mission. All governments have caught on to the fact that churches are the custodians of Just War theory. When the war begins, every government appeals at once to the church to get up in the cheering section and proclaim that "God is on our side." We never belong there. Our role as proclaimers of *shalom* demands of us that we be searching actively for the alternatives to violence. But we have all seen churches fall right into the trap and preach national exclusivism and God's wrath, as if they were qualified to declare it, upon the enemy.

The Constantinian model eventually failed to sustain itself, as the struggles between church and empire in Europe eventuated in defeat for the church and the stripping away, by Napoleon's time, of those powers that paralleled the state.

But however much the Constantinian order may have compromised the very faith of the Church throughout its long course, the bishops and other authorities who had grown so used to it saw its demise as a sad event, the deprivation of their accustomed institutional position. They instituted a rear-guard action to preserve as much of the old order as they could. If the Church could no longer parallel all the powers of the State, they would preserve and institutionalize those they could, most especially their control of *marriage*, of *education* and of *the caring services of society* (hospitals, charity etc.) As a substitute for the no longer feasible paradigmatic role, we can describe this as a **PRAGMATIC ROLE OF THE CHURCH.**

It was heavily contested by the power of the State, and always exercised with regret for the paradigmatic role that had been lost. It was seen by both Church and State authorities as second best. We can see it in what Germans call *Kultur-politik*, the administration of these cultural areas of family, school and welfare, with Church and State competing for control. Especially the 19th-century *Kulturkampf* was a concerted effort of the Bismarckian State to wrest control of these functions from the churches, particularly from the Catholic Church, but we can see it as well in Nazi campaigns against the churches, in the repressive anti-church activities of the Communist states, and even in a good deal of current American policy of creating obstacles to Church control over schools or hospitals.

## Religion as a Resource in Conflict Situations – 6

What substitute remains to us if these two long-traditional models for the Church's role in society, paradigmatic and pragmatic, have both so failed? If, again, we look to the original experience of Christian community in the early centuries, we will not find it useful or historically true to pretend we live in a time other than our own, when Christians were without a recognized role or responsibility in society. But we can usefully look to the way in which their faith convictions as such, the living out of their faith, rather than institutionalized power, determined the role of Christian community in society. If our emphasis as Church were consistently on the building up of active faith commitment, i.e. basically catechetical, we could expect the presence of a Christian community to influence, in organic and pervasive ways, the free corporate decisions of the society. A useful descriptive term for such a manner of Church activity in society's concern is the mathematical figure of the *parabola*, the plane curve generated by a point moving so that its distance from a fixed point is equal to its distance from a fixed line, the curve widening out between parallel lines without ever touching them. Thus our *third* model of the Church's activity in society is the **PARABOLIC ROLE OF THE CHURCH**.<sup>1</sup>

There is no way to claim that such a procedure is accomplished fact in the Church of our own time, only a rather far-out aspiration. That there is a hankering still for the full Constantinian paradigmatic model can be seen in a couple of extraordinarily instructive episodes of recent history.

Since the publication in the 1960s of Rolf Hochhuth's play, *Der Stellvertreter* ("The Deputy," or "The Vicar [of Christ]"), the complaint has frequently been made that Pope Pius XII, during World War II, failed to act decisively enough against the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews. Much has been said and written for and against this charge, but we can properly ask: where were the Catholics of Germany that they needed to be ordered by the Pope to resist the Holocaust? Was their faith not internalized enough to lead them to this without a papal order?

During the Vietnam war, Catholics had a large role in the anti-war movement in the United States, and many of them complained that the Catholic bishops of the U.S. did not plainly condemn the war as unjust, and prohibit participation in it or payment of taxes that would be spent in prosecuting it. Had the bishops done that, quite probably they might have ended the war. Simultaneously they would have brought down to ruin the democratic structure of the United States with its separation of Church and State. Given the dire consequences of any such action, we can again ask: where were the consciences

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<sup>1</sup>These terms for the roles of Church in society -- *paradigmatic* for the Constantinian model, *pragmatic* for the familiar fall-back position, *parabolic* for the more faithful model recommended here -- are not my own, but come from a teacher I felt privileged to hear, Argentinian Methodist Professor Jose Miguez-Bonino, when I was in graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary in the late 1960s. Miguez-Bonino uses them extensively in his many works, but I have reflected on them over so many years as to have made my own use of them.

## **Religion as a Resource in Conflict Situations -- 7**

of U.S. Catholics that they could not reject a war they saw as unjust without the bishops commanding them to do so?

I offer these thoughts, borrowed in fact from an earlier paper, in the context of our Caux conference on religious leadership after the wars of the Balkans. We have had our discussions about the ways religion was abused during those times, turned to uses that were not worthy of it, have looked at what the Muslim and Christian faith communities have within them that promises healing from the spiritual wounds the wars have brought, and enquired what practical matters the faith communities can better address than can any other elements in the society.

Our inclination, after any time of such crisis as these successive wars have brought about, is to catalogue our grievances and ask what the other communities should do. Any of our faiths, if we are attentive to them, call us instead to ask what we can do for one another, to be reconciled and to our reverence for one another as the beloved children of God.

# JOINT STATEMENT

## Conference on **Religious Leadership after Conflict**

Caux, Switzerland  
February 12-21, 2000

Fifty men and women from regions of conflict in the Balkan countries gathered together in Caux, Switzerland, the home of the Moral Re-Armament organization, hoping to come to a better understanding both of one another's experience in the wars of the last decade, and their expectations for the future.

Students of theology, Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox and Protestant, accompanied by Professors of their own, were hosted by a team from the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), a consortium of nine Christian schools of Theology in the Boston area of the USA, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox. The idea of the conference, first conceived by a graduate student, Ms. Laurie Johnston, Master of Divinity student at Harvard Divinity School, was supported by Dr. Rodney Petersen, Director of the BTI, and Rev. Raymond Helmick, S.J., Professor of Conflict Resolution in the Theology Department at Boston College. They had the able assistance of Rev. Dr. David Steele of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., and Dr. Barry Hart of Eastern Mennonite University.

The participants discussed themes of identity, violence and reconciliation, truth and justice, repentance and forgiveness, and the peaceful transformation of conflict. In searching for ways to eliminate all forms of violence from their societies, they observed that, while every person who has committed a crime must be held responsible for his actions and justly punished, justice also means the restoration of the fractured relations in society.

Rabbi Arnold E. Resnicoff, Captain in the Chaplain Corps of the U.S. Navy, Father Vladimir Zielinsky, Orthodox priest and Professor at the University of Brescia, Mr. Paolo Mancinelli from the Community of Sant' Egidio, and Mr. Cornelio Sammaruga, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and now President of the Swiss Foundation of Moral Re-Armament addressed the group, adding valuable dimensions to their experience.

The best experience of hearing one another's faiths came in the many small group discussions and in the close personal contacts among persons of the different confessional traditions.

As followers of monotheistic religions, the participants became aware that they share many values which should enable them to understand each other and build together a just civil society, which will respect human rights, democratic standards and the rule of law. They recognized the need for those of each faith to respect one another's religious

convictions. The close contact with one another during the week rendered such mutual respect more feasible.

The participants all want to respect their own national and cultural identities. Yet having in mind that religion has universal outreach, they oppose identification of their faiths with national ideologies. Manipulative abuse of religion for daily politics is not acceptable.

In concluding, they expressed a realization of the importance of meeting each other, and the desire for a continuation of similar conferences, even if in different places, the exchange of information and written materials relevant for those who serve religious communities. As they left for home, they expressed their thanks to the persons from the BTI and their helpers for organizing the program and to their hosts at MRA for their always gracious hospitality.

24 March 2000

## **Religious Leadership After Conflict**

By Rodney L. Petersen

In consultation with Raymond Helmick, S.J. and Laurie Johnston

"Religious Leadership After Conflict" is the name of the conference that was sponsored by The Boston Theological Institute, hosted by the Foundation for Moral Re-Armament of Switzerland, from Feb. 12-21, 2000, in Caux, Switzerland, and supported by the Acton Institute, Hunt Alternatives, **the Jesuit Institute of Boston College** [*Ray – do you think I can put this???*]

**Answer: Not until they come in, which is in prospect but has not happened yet,**

by the John Templeton Foundation, and by World Vision.

This conference drew together over fifty persons from the former Yugoslavia, most of them theological

### **Change to theology**

students representing the different confessions throughout the region. Its purpose was to examine the particular theological and practical issues facing future religious leaders in areas of the world that have experienced serious ethnic and political conflict. Students from several different areas of the Balkans, ranging from Zagreb and Belgrade in the north to Pristina in the south came together to discuss past experiences and future hopes. The conference offered the theology students the opportunity to share their experiences and receive training in conflict resolution. They discussed the possibility of reconciliation in their deeply divided societies, and examined the ways in which their theological studies and institutions could better prepare them for the immensely difficult tasks they now face as they begin as young ministers, priests and imams to minister in a



post-conflict situation. They were able to brainstorm ways in which they themselves can work for peace when they return home.

### **Led by**

### **Change to With the help of**

a number of theology professors from their own institutions and from elsewhere in Europe and the United States, the conference participants shared their understandings of theology, examined the "public" dimension of religion, and discussed some of the issues they faced as they enter positions of official religious service. In particular, the students received training in dealing with people who have suffered trauma, in understanding the dynamics of religious and ethnic identities, and in dealing with ethnic conflict in productive ways. Our experience of the Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of 9 seminaries, schools of theology, and university divinity schools that include Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant schools, led us to think that perhaps by building a network of theology students, we might be able to help develop some similar cooperative relationships. A network of senior religious leaders currently exists in the Balkans. However, we hoped that by helping to build connections between theology students, an even closer network may develop in the future. Given religion's equivocal role in the conflicts there, it seemed vitally important for these future religious leaders to learn how to work together for peace in their region.

The conference was held in Caux, Switzerland, at the MRA conference center in the mountains overlooking Lake Geneva. This historic location was the site for extensive meetings between French and Germans seeking reconciliation after World War II. It was hoped that that spirit might be caught by the students and others attending this conference. For many years MRA has promoted dialogue and international reconciliation efforts through conferences at its center in Caux, Switzerland. Toward such ends the students examined a series of questions that included:

- What special responsibilities do we have as religious leaders in societies that have gone through conflict? Do we have a special vocation as peacemakers? If so, how can we carry this out when we are overwhelmed by the need to carry out basic duties, and when we seem to be betraying our own suffering people by reaching out to the other side?
- How do we minister to traumatized people?
- What are the possible roles for a **minister, priest or imam**

**Sequence of these titles? And what about the women and others not aiming at clerical roles?**

to play? This discussion could examine both theological and practical answers to this question, as well as the conflict between various roles: the religious leader as visionary/prophet vs. preserver of tradition and society, the leader as exhorter vs. pastor/comforter, the leader as primarily a spiritual person vs. the leader as a public spokesperson and advocate for social change.

- How does our polarized society affect our ability to minister?
- How has the conflict affected theological education? Are there ways in which our education could better equip us to minister in a post-conflict society? How can our educational process include
- What inspired you to want to be a religious leader? Was there a particular role model whom you admired?
- What are our fears and hopes - about being a religious leader, about the future of our religious community, about the future of our country?
- What responsibilities do we have towards our broader community (not just our own **parishioners**)? What responsibility do we have towards other religious groups?

**I'd omit "parishioners" as a specifically Christian term; simply "not just our own..."**

The students moved on from such discussions to do some very practical brainstorming, envisioning ways in the future in which their theological institutions might cooperate. They had the opportunity to discuss ways that they might contribute to peacemaking through independent projects of their own. As part of that process, they learned about a few existing opportunities for training in peacemaking that currently exist in the Balkans. They also heard about current efforts at peacemaking and interfaith dialogue by a variety of local and international organizations. Among the interpreters for the conference were the primary organizers of the Center for Religious Dialogue in Sarajevo, and of a similar Center currently being developed in Belgrade. In addition, one of our partner organizations, the international relief and development agency World Vision, is launching a large, multifaceted effort at reconciliation in Kosovo. Their effort has drawn praise from KFOR and OSCE, as well as a number of NGOs currently working in Kosovo. As part of their effort, World Vision provided the funding for a group of students from Kosovo to attend the conference.

The students learned a little about the Boston Theological Institute. As a large, consortium, the BTI has significant experience with facilitating cooperative, ecumenical education. Drawing on that experience, we encouraged the seminarians to think of ways in which they might encourage greater cooperation among their schools. This might take the form of exchanges of professors or students, joint conferences or other special events, or even conflict resolution workshops with mixed groups. Since we had access to an extensive network of contacts with professors and administrators at these organizations, we hope to be in a position to help advocate for whatever plans the seminarians propose. It is our continuing hope that as their informal relationships with one another develop into more formal relationships between institutions, this will ensure that future seminarians will be educated in an atmosphere of cooperation with people of other faiths.

As conference planners, we hope to provide ongoing support for these students as they engage in these future efforts. We have a variety of ideas for ways in which we might do this. Certainly, larger gatherings of students in the future would have an impact. We are also exploring the possibility of having computers donated for the students' use. Not only would this help raise the quality of their education, but it would also allow them

to stay in touch with each other. It may even be possible to establish cooperative computer labs to which students from several institutions can come.

We feel that our approach to the problem of stability in the Balkans is a unique one. It has been argued that part of the conflict in the Balkans stems from a populace that is **uneducated**

**Careful here not to use a term that will sound superior or patronizing: possibly “undereducated” would do, but I’d be wary even so. And is the un /under / education only about their own religious tradition, or is it also a non-understanding of the other traditions that leaves people prone to manipulation?**

in their own religious traditions, and therefore prone to manipulation by nationalist leaders who make use of religious symbols. One way to address this, therefore, is by contributing to the education of the future religious leaders. Also, our project has had a unique strength in that was targeted at young people who are sure to stay in the Balkans. The students were selected by such local religious leadership as the Serbian Orthodox Church and regional Roman Catholic and Protestant leadership. In an age in which many young people just want to emigrate, these students have demonstrated their commitment to their countries by deciding on a religious vocation – **there would be little chance of employment for them outside of**

**True or false, I wouldn’t raise this ghost, but simply say “deciding on a religious vocation within their own countries.”**

their own countries.

At the close of the conference a Joint Statement was issued which follows.

## JOINT STATEMENT

Conference on

### **Religious Leadership after Conflict**

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In the intervening weeks since the conference it has been heartening to hear of the rippling effects of the Caux conference. For example, conference organizer Laurie Johnston has established an email group for conference participants through which members have been exchanging ideas. Recently, a representative from World Vision wrote to share the exciting news that **one of the young professors and a Muslim leader from Pristina is now working**

**A little unclear that you are speaking of one person, not two. I'd phrase and punctuate it "one of the professors, a young Muslim leader from Pristina, is now working..."**

to organize a "Peace & Tolerance" conference in Pristina for youth from the different religious faiths

add ,

drawing upon his experience with the conference at Caux. These are the kinds of developments that conference planners hoped might happen.

Such continuing effects of the Caux conference might be seen as a form of "Track II" diplomacy. This form of diplomacy is defined by Joseph Montville, a director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, as such forms of diplomacy as occur apart

from or outside regular government “Track I” channels, specifically the work of religious organizations and other NGO’s.

Such diplomacy is furthered by the explosive growth of NGO’s seeking the common good in society. **At its inception the Christian community, or church, saw itself as bringing something new into being. This was the thrust of Paul’s emphasis upon the church as a body with parts that needed one another (I Corinthians 12:12-13). The corporate dimension of this image is carried into Peter’s metaphor of the church as a new nation and holy priesthood (I Peter 2:9-10). Developed with reference to classical philosophy by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the idea of the common good wends its way through classical theology into such papal encyclicals as *Mater et Magistra* (1961), promulgated under John XXIII. The document *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), issued by the Second Vatican Council, calls attention to the importance of global interdependence as the common good takes on a universal complexion involving the rights and duties of the whole human race. The state is perceived not as primarily coercive (Hobbes), nor as representing merely the sum total of the interests of its members (Bentham), but as having a positive good (Plato, Aquinas). It is to promote the common good. This ultimately resounds to the good of individuals. It is this idea of society that is heralded by John Tirman as he calls attention to as the flowering of NGOs in the late twentieth century. These voluntary societies often are rooted in the churches, as acknowledged by James Luther Adams. This implicit cultivation of civil society was as much our end as giving witness to our faith at the Caux conference. It is an illustration and recognition of the deep layers of dependency that exist between civil societies and faith communities, something increasingly being acknowledged among public policy theorists. Whether seen in legal scholars like Harvard’s Martha Minow or among policy makers in Washington, ideas like “forgiveness,” once reserved for the confessional or private devotion, are becoming central to working with the political order of the twenty-first century.**

**For forgiveness to find its proper place in Kosovo, Boston or Washington, new patterns of community are required. In his study of *Embodying Forgiveness*, Duke theologian L. Gregory Jones notes that new practices in life are required in**

line with the new allegiances that forgiveness calls forth. These practices grow out of a spirituality defined by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as that of “costly grace.” Such grace is pictured in the Passover story in Exodus, reminding us that the creation of a community of people often comes through a blood ritual epitomized earlier in the blood of the sacrificial lamb granted Abraham. This theme, as Robert Schreier reminds us, is pictured in Christian theology in the sacrifice of Jesus. It illustrates the cost of community. René Girard has drawn this out for any community. As we live with forgiveness we are called to “fill up...the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church” (Colossians 1:24). It is a spirituality of costly grace that enables new forms of reconciliation to grow out of authentic forgiveness. Such forgiveness makes for good rhetorical resonance. It becomes the basis for a critical dialectic among neighbors of different faith communities.

*I have doubts about all this last par and would rather prefer not to have a great deal more after quoting the participants' Final Statement. Those first two paragraphs after it are fine, as they speak of follow-up activity that has arisen directly from the conference. The rest has two problems.*

1. *It sounds too exclusively Christian, leaving the Muslims out of the picture. The Orthodox don't really figure in this either.*
2. *It reads as a sort of appended dissertation on conflict-resolution methodology, not really in place here as a part of this report. I'd confine the paper at this stage to indicating the sort of organizations – religious ones too, not just the secular term “NGO” – with which we could expect to cooperate.*



**Theologians and Peace in the Balkans**  
Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Submitted to America Magazine, April 24, 2000

What can Americans do to help with the peace in the battered countries that used to make up Yugoslavia?

That question occupied Laurie Johnston, graduate student at Harvard Divinity School, as we returned from a student seminar-workshop visit to South Africa and Ghana organized by the Boston Theological Institute (BTI: the consortium of Boston-area theology schools) last summer. Laurie had been with us on a similar workshop trip to the Balkan countries the previous summer, and her thoughts went to the reconciliation work that Moral Re-Armament had done between Germans and French after World War II.

Why not bring together a group of theology students from Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia at the Swiss Moral Re-Armament headquarters, Mountain House at Caux, high above the Lake of Geneva at Montreux, the site of those momentous meetings of another time? She brought her idea, right there on the plane, to Rodney Petersen, Director of the BTI, and myself, Professor of Conflict Resolution in the Theology Department at Boston College, and we both endorsed it, as a BTI project, at once.

Why theology students? They would have the responsibility of religious leaders, within their respective communities, as people tried to come to terms with the grievous traumas they have suffered through the '90s. Moral Re-Armament, in the '40s and '50s, had hosted large numbers of German and French citizens of many professions, far more than we could manage. Theology students seemed the right place to start.

All three of us, Rodney, Laurie and I, went to Switzerland over the course of the summer, each for about a week, to sound out Moral Re-Armament on lending us their premises and experience for this program. Bryan Hamlin, MRA's Boston representative, made us the contacts. Annemarie and Christoph Spreng of Swiss MRA and many of their colleagues gave us warm welcome and the greatest encouragement to go ahead.

Moral Re-Armament, in fact, can no longer afford to run the great hotel at Caux, which it had had to rescue from near-derelict condition in the 1940s, on its own. The organization runs meetings and seminars there for up to 500 people at a time, from distressed and conflicted countries all over the world, through the summer months, but leases it to a hotel school for the winter. They had not previously tried to use it during that time, but the Sprengs found that the school would gladly lease back the few rooms it was not using, and we could hold the actual meetings in the adjacent smaller building, the Villa Maria, which MRA always reserves for itself.

So nothing remained but to organize the meeting, invite participants and find the necessary funds, each a daunting enterprise in itself. Laurie, as initiator of the project, worked all-out at the meticulous details of this from summer on to the actual meeting in

## **Theologians and Peace in the Balkans -- 2**

February.

All of us had seen enough of the Balkans to appreciate the problem of gaining a critical level of trust for any such program. We had by then produced, in association with the Film Program of the Boston College Fine Arts Department, a video documentary on the Balkan wars, *Prelude to Kosovo: War and Peace in Bosnia and Croatia*, which was broadcast last summer on PBS stations in Boston and elsewhere in the country. I had been back in Belgrade myself with the Jesse Jackson expedition that traveled there during the bombing campaign of Spring, '99, to bring back the three American soldiers captured by Serbian forces and try to reopen a process of diplomacy that, by that time, had died between our country and theirs. In those circumstances, I had experienced the profound commitment to peace of Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Pavle and many in his church, and their vital help to our own mission.

Patriarch Pavle eventually put our proposal formally to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which gave its approval and helped us in inviting the participation of their students. Metropolitan Artemije of the Kosovo diocese, and Metropolitan Nikolaj of Dabrobosnia (Sarajevo) also gave their personal help so that, of the dozen Serbian Orthodox students, men and women, who eventually came to Caux, two were from Kosovo and two from the Republika Srpska region of Bosnia.

Catholic authorities helped also. Fra Ivo Markovic, the remarkable Franciscan priest of Sarajevo who had been awarded the first Tanenbaum Peace Award for his work of reconciliation during and after the war, agreed to come himself and brought two of his Franciscan seminarians, remarkable young men, with him. Msgr. Mato Zovkic, close adviser to the Cardinal in Sarajevo and confidant to practically every Catholic seminarian in Bosnia, as well as a keen participant in Moral Re-Armament, came too, bringing other outstanding seminarians with him. Croatian Bishop Marin Srakic of Djakovo, who had stood out as man of peace among those we met on our BTI student visit to the Balkans, sent two of his seminarians, and Vincent Batarelo, of the Caritas Croatia office in Split, helped bring us students from Zagreb and from Dalmatia. The dozen Catholic students who came to Caux also included three Albanians from Kosovo.

When we first traveled to Bosnia on the BTI workshop in 1998 we had visited the Islamic Faculty in Sarajevo and the Institute of Islamic Studies in Zenica. Friends there helped us bring together a group of another dozen Muslim students, mostly from Bosnia itself, but including three Albanians from Kosovo and two Serbian Muslims from the Sandjak area in the South, adjoining Kosovo. Four Protestant participants came as well, two of them brothers from Kosovo who co-pastor a church in Pristina and two from the Evangelical Seminary at Osijek in Croatia. The courageous staff of World Vision in Kosovo, who often travel about the country and meet people under grave personal danger, helped us in finding all these Kosovar participants, ten in all from the four faith traditions. World Vision also funded these students' participation.

### **Theologians and Peace in the Balkans -- 3**

We knew this conference would make enormous emotional and spiritual demands on its student participants. The project was nothing less than to help each of them to understand one another's experience of the wars. All had heard this talked about at home, often in the form of accusation against themselves and their own ethnic groups. All had a sense of themselves as victims. To acknowledge one another as mutually victims in need of one another's help to bring about healing among themselves would be heavy work. Familiar faces of their own Professors and confidants seemed necessary, so that they could have recourse to them during the days in Caux.

We had already the promise that Fra Ivo Markovic and Msgr. Mato Zovkic would take part. We asked Patriarch Pavle in Belgrade to send Professor Radovan Bigovic with his students. Muslim Professor Nezdad Grabus came to us from the Islamic Faculty in Sarajevo and Professor Xhabir Hamiti from the Islamic Faculty in Pristina. All five brought us more help than we could have imagined, becoming the directors of the extensive small-group meetings, of religiously mixed participants, that were the principal feature of the conference.

Laurie Johnston had spent last summer interning at the Center for Strategic and International Studies as assistant to Dr. David Steele, already a familiar and welcome figure to us from his work organizing mixed groups for reconciliation meetings in the Balkan countries. We asked him and Dr. Barry Hart, of the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University, also frequent organizer of such meetings in the former Yugoslavia, to act, along with myself, as Instructors for the conference.

Funding came slowly and painfully. Besides the generous help of World Vision with the Kosovo participants, the Acton Institute helped financially and sent one of its instructors, Dr. Todd Flanders, to work with us. The Templeton Foundation and Hunt Alternatives helped also.

And so, after innumerable crises over transport and visas, we came to the meeting, ten days from February 12<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. Pierre Spoerri of Moral Re-Armament had urged us to leave ample time. For the first couple of days, he said, everyone would be polite. Then we could have the fight, and afterwards we would really get down to business.

The students' statements were wary as they each spoke of their reasons for coming on the opening day. The pain of their experience and the unfamiliarity of their meeting with one another, across the confessional lines, in such circumstances, stood out raw and plain, but their courtesy to one another, while hiding nothing of the trauma, was exemplary. It soon became evident that, if blame for their agony was to be assigned, it would be to the world outside the Balkans and the cruel indifference with which it had stood by and watched. Everything had to be done with simultaneous translation, even though a great majority of participants were at least somewhat at home with English. This slowed proceedings, sometimes awkwardly, but also left time for tempers to cool.

## **Theologians and Peace in the Balkans – 4**

A first exercise asked the participants to explain to one another how they had come to choose a career of religious service in their communities. We had planned it in order to accustom the participants to speaking openly to one another about their personal choices. It brought out, with surprising candor, the actual religious and spiritual experience of the students, and helped to the high level of personal communication that characterized the conference throughout.

We had wanted Jewish participation, knowing how brilliantly the Jewish community of Sarajevo, under the leadership of Rabbi Jacobo Finci, had helped all the ethnic communities of the city to keep faith with one another under siege. But because the community was so small, it had no students of theology whom we could invite. The first of our several visitors, Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, Chief Chaplain to the American Forces in Europe (since then become Chief Chaplain to the U.S. Navy), supplied that need. Over the next two days David Steele and Barry Hart led the conference through an understanding of process in coming to terms with the trauma of war and aggression against oneself and one's community, the tragedy they had all in fact experienced. A most important exercise of this part of the conference was to compose, in the small mixed groups, written laments over the depravations of their wars. Rabbi Resnicoff brought to this a learned and most compassionate understanding of the Hebrew Psalms of lamentation, models of that essential process of grieving, to the great benefit of both Christian and Muslim participants alike.

The students insisted that they wanted theology to be the backbone of this conference, not merely sociology. They wanted to understand the deepest roots of one another's explicitly religious experience, and come to know how, from such beginnings, so much hatred, exclusion and enmity had been allowed to spring. We spoke much of the instrumental use/abuse of religion for the agendas of others, cynical use for purposes of nationalism or partisan aggrandizement, or the expression of rage, that they could all see in the recent wars of their countries. But there had to be, also, close inspection of the resources, present or absent in each religious tradition, for acknowledging and reverencing the faith and religious practice of others.

Other visitors helped significantly with the conference, as had Rabbi Resnicoff. Dr. Vladimir Zielinsky, a frequently dissident Russian, recently ordained an Orthodox priest and teaching at the Sacred Heart University in Brescia, Italy, arrived a few days into the conference and remained to the end, to the great benefit of the Orthodox students. Paolo Mancinelli came to us, briefly, from the Community of Sant'Egidio. And at the last Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga, recently retired as President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and now the newly elected President of the Swiss Foundation of Moral Re-Armament, came to address the conference.

The fight of which Pierre Spoerri had warned us was much slower in coming. The students came to enjoy one another's company, to share laughter, to recognize one

## **Theologians and Peace in the Balkans -- 5**

another's experience of pain and care for each other. Midway through the conference they had a break day, for some of skiing, for others of sightseeing in Geneva, that enhanced the bonding among them.

Then suddenly, on the next to the last day, it all seemed to break apart. The issue was the address list, with names, home addresses, phones, Fax numbers and e-mail for those who had it, that we had supplied to everyone. We had known, from the beginning, that this conference would be most difficult for the Serbs, who would feel that everyone blamed them, that they suffered as much or more than the others and were still always held guilty, whatever they did. Now they erupted when they noted, something that had passed by their observation before, that the Kosovars were listed simply as from Kosovo and not as from the Kosovo Province of Serbia in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. All the pain of Serbia's crushing loss of four successive wars became concentrated in that fact. It was the fault of the American organizers. Had we consciously chosen to supersede the recognition, by the international community, that Kosovo was and remained a part of Serbia? Was it simply oversight, and would we correct it, adding "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" to each Kosovar address? In vain did we answer that we had simply printed up the addresses as individual participants had given them to us.

The Kosovar Albanians had no intention of accepting such a correction. What we had intended to be a brief preparation for a small-group discussion that would help prepare a final statement of the conference became three and a quarter hours of wretched wrangling over this impasse. At one point the question arose: was this the end of the conference?

It was not, of course. Instead we had come to the most necessary part of the experience. The Serbs, as the one group most afflicted with a consciousness of the blame they received from all others, would have gone home with no real healing experience from this conference had they not expressed their pain in this way. It was as if some formula to express that pain had been sought all along, and nothing acted upon because of their forbearance with the rest of us. This matter of the address list lent itself to the need for an outcry. It was a fortunate discovery. It was as if one card had been plucked from the deck and found to provide the winning formula. If we had resolved the matter of the addresses successfully, they would have failed to express what they had to express, and would have had to seek another card, perhaps without success. Everyone else would have gone home without really gaining what they needed from the conference too as a result.

As it developed, that afternoon provided the real cement of the meeting. The Serbian delegation caucused that night to reflect on their responses. On the next and final day, a Sunday, many of the Catholic participants took the occasion to join the Orthodox at a liturgy in nearby Vevey. The bus ride down the mountain and back provided the occasion for many helpful conversations. The afternoon's small group meetings provided

## **Theologians and Peace in the Balkans -- 6**

the materials for a final statement of the conference hammered out that evening by the Professors who had accompanied the different confessional groups. Surprisingly, the ten Kosovar participants, from all four religious traditions, managed their own Declaration of purpose that all were able unreservedly to sign.

As they returned home the following day, participants showed every affection and concern for one another in the problems and deprivations of their different communities. Since then, they have been finding occasions to meet again and make their own plans for further conferences. They are burning up the e-mail with communications and holiday greetings to one another. The Balkan conflict has not reached a solution, but these students have committed themselves to finding one, and together.

## **Religious Leadership After Conflict**

By Laurie Johnston, Rodney Petersen, and Raymond Helmick, S.J.

Marko's grandmother was there, watching, while his grandfather was murdered. His grandfather was buried, like so many others during the war in Bosnia, in a mass grave, in the courtyard of their apartment complex. The grave is still there in front of their building, undisturbed, unmarked, and the murderers remain unpunished. Marko's grandmother knows who the murderers are, and many times he has asked her, "Who did it? Who killed my grandfather?" Yet she refuses to say. She knows that her grandson would not be able to resist the very human desire for justice – probably in the form of revenge – and so she remains silent. This is where the cycle of violence stops, she is saying with her silence.

When justice is unattainable, what mysterious grace is it that allows someone like that grandmother to maintain a peaceful silence and avoid being consumed by anger and vengeance? This is a crucial question for divided communities that are beginning to rebuild after conflict. It is one that the public policy community is asking increasingly with regard to areas such as Rwanda and the Sudan, Israel and Palestine, Northern Ireland and Chechnya, or the cities of North America. It is a profoundly religious question that presents a challenge to faith communities and will be central to their identity and vocation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is the question that a number of faculty and students in the schools of the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), the consortium of nine Seminaries, Schools of Theology, and University Divinity Schools in Boston, have been asking drawing upon the experience of organizations like the Mennonite Central Committee, the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome, and the Foundation for Moral Rearmament.

For example, MRA has an association with conflict resolution that draws upon a religious framework that extends back to the years prior to WWII. Its historic conference center was the site where large numbers of French and Germans were invited after World War II to explore the possibility of reconciliation. And indeed, some dramatic reconciliation did occur there, as a French woman, Irene Laure, was inspired to apologize to Germans for having demonized them all as Nazis. When we began to think of bringing young people training for ministry from the former Yugoslavia to Caux, it was in the hope that such a visit might allow them to share an experience of grace, and begin to see past the demonization of one another that has led to so much conflict in that region. In addition to the work of MRA, it was the Community of Sant'Egidio that had fostered the peace process in Mozambique and the work of the Mennonite

Central Committee is acknowledged world-wide for their work in conflict resolution.

Inspired by these efforts a group of us from the BTI, began to examine how people of faith might be a force for peace in divided societies. This began with a continuing series of study trips on the identity of the church in contexts of violence. Over the past several years workshops have been held in such places as Northern Ireland, South Africa, and then in the Balkans in 1997. The faces of the young people we met in these settings have remained vivid in our memories. They provided inspiration for one student, in this case who had been on the workshop in the Balkans, to envision a conference on religious leadership after conflict for young theologians at Caux.

The idea to bring together theology students to listen and to learn from one another after the intense Balkan wars of the past decade was a natural choice for people involved in theological education. But this choice was also an important one strategically: If it is true that religious traditions in the region have been manipulated by nationalist leaders, then the next generation of religious leadership will have to deepen their understanding and appreciation of their own theologies, confessional understandings and practices. We realized after the conference that some of these young people have had little exposure to people of other ethnicities and faiths – unlike their parents, who grew up in a society that was forced to be multi-ethnic. One of the consequences of ethnic cleansing is this new degree of separation and isolation. Thus, simply providing a space to meet people from the other groups was one of the most important things we could do.

Also, the project had a unique strength in that it was targeted at young people who are sure to stay in the Balkans. The students were selected by such local religious leadership as the Serbian Orthodox Church with the support of Patriarch Pavle, by regional Roman Catholic and Protestant leadership, and by local Islamic faculties. In an age in which many young people just want to emigrate, these students have demonstrated their commitment to their countries by deciding on a religious vocation – there would be little chance of employment for them outside of their own countries.

And so this past February, we were able to gather 40 students from Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, and Kosovo to spend an intense eight-day journey together getting to know one another and talking about their common difficulties. Some came as official representatives of their schools and religious communities; others were invited through mutual friends and existing peace organizations. They came from Muslim, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant communities, and were also accompanied by a few of their faculty members from the region, including Professors Nezdad Grabus and Xhabir



Hamiti, Msgr. Mato Zovkic, the Catholic Vicar-General of Sarajevo, and Professor Father Radovan Bigovic of the Orthodox Theological Faculty of Belgrade. Others who joined us included Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, Captain of the Chaplain Corps for the U. S. Navy, Orthodox Priest and Professor Vladimir Zielinsky of Sacred Heart University, Brescia, Italy, and Mr. Cornelio Sammaruga, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and now President of the Swiss Foundation of Moral Re-Armament.

The common journey began with a first exercise that asked participants to explain to one another how they had come to choose a career of religious service in their communities. We had planned it in order to accustom the participants to speaking openly to one another about their personal choices. It brought out with surprising candor the actual religious and spiritual experience of the students and helped to raise to a high level the personal communication that characterized the conference throughout.

The open and personal atmosphere allowed for many remarkable stories to be told, like Marko's about his grandmother. One brave young man stood up and spoke openly about how he watched a priest in his community minister to people who were suffering during the war, and this example awakened in him a desire to serve in this way as well. But in addition to such beautiful stories, there were also many conflicts and painful issues aired. The ongoing conflict in Kosovo is a very difficult issue for many throughout the region; our participants included both Albanians who had fled Kosovo during the NATO bombing, and Serbs who had fled Kosovo just weeks before the conference. Even those of us who have not experienced trauma of that sort have difficulty discussing issues like forgiveness, acknowledgment, and reconciliation. The conference led all of us to examine ourselves and the teachings of our faith more deeply as a result. The role that was played by the United States in the region continued to come up for question and analysis.

The conference ended on a truly hopeful note, as the participants put together a joint statement about their experiences at the conference. That statement is printed below. Yet there was also an additional statement put together by the students from Kosovo, who felt that their unique situation necessitated saying even more. In their statement, they wrote: "We vow that: We will teach coming generations to love one another and that hate isn't a virtue of a believer in God. We will continue to have contacts and we will act as one body who feels the pain of another. We will always raise our voice against those who exercise violence against God's precious creatures - humans, as well as against those who exercise violence against religious buildings of whatever confession they be. Our prayer together to God is: Oh God, give us life and energy to love You and never let us go astray from Your way. Forgive the sins of all peoples in Kosovo and bless our place. Amen!"

The Caux conference and its continuing effects might be seen as a form of "Track II" diplomacy, or diplomacy apart from or outside regular government "Track I" channels. Such diplomacy is furthered by the explosive growth of non-governmental organizations, particularly religiously-based ones such as those mentioned earlier, seeking the common good in society. At its inception the Christian community, or church, saw itself as bringing something new into being. This was the thrust of Paul's emphasis upon the church as a body with parts that needed one another (I Corinthians 12:12-13). The corporate dimension of this image is carried into Peter's metaphor of the church as a new social entity and holy priesthood (I Peter 2:9-10). Developed with reference to classical philosophy by Augustine and Aquinas, the idea of the common good wends its way through classical theology into such papal encyclicals as *Mater et Magistra* (1961), promulgated under John XXIII. The document *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), issued by the Second Vatican Council, calls attention to the importance of global interdependence as the common good takes on a universal complexion involving the rights and duties of the whole human race. The state is perceived not as primarily coercive (Hobbes), nor as representing merely the sum total of the interests of its members (Bentham), but as having a positive good (Plato, Aquinas). It is to promote the common good. This ultimately resounds to the good of individuals. It is this idea of society that is heralded by John Tirman as he calls attention to as the flowering of NGOs in the late twentieth century. These voluntary societies, James Luther Adams showed us, that are often rooted in the churches.

The implicit cultivation of civil society was as much our goal as giving witness to our faith at the Caux conference. It is an illustration and recognition of the deep layers of dependency that exist between civil societies and faith communities, something increasingly being acknowledged among public policy theorists. Whether seen in the work of legal scholars like Harvard's Martha Minow or among policy makers in Washington, ideas like "forgiveness," once reserved for the confessional or private devotion, or "reconciliation" are becoming central to working with the political regimes and the civil societies of the twenty-first century. If Track I diplomacy takes seriously the reality of and need for political order, Track II diplomacy acknowledges the deeper social orders and cultures out of which evolve the state.

All of us at the Caux conference were challenged by the place for churches and other faith-communities in society. We were led to think that if forgiveness is to find its proper place in Kosovo, Boston or Washington, new patterns of community are required. Duke theologian L. Gregory Jones notes that new practices in life are required in line with the new allegiances that forgiveness calls forth. Writing in his book, *Embodying Forgiveness*, Jones finds these practices growing out of a spirituality defined by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as "costly

grace." Such grace is pictured in the Passover story in Exodus, reminding us that the creation of a community of people often comes through a blood ritual epitomized earlier in the blood of the sacrificial lamb granted Abraham. This theme, according to Robert Schreier, is pictured in Christian theology in the sacrifice of Jesus. It illustrates the cost of community. As we live with forgiveness we are called to "fill up...the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Colossians 1:24). It is a spirituality of costly grace that enables new forms of reconciliation to grow out of authentic forgiveness. Such forgiveness makes for good rhetorical resonance. It becomes the basis for a critical dialectic among neighbors of different faith communities, in the Balkans and elsewhere and reminds us that in the reconstruction of civil society churches and, indeed, all faith communities have an important role to play.

Indeed, many of the participants at our conference at Caux seemed to realize this and at the time of this writing are trying to put into practice what they have learned. One young Muslim man in Kosovo has decided to organize a "Peace and Tolerance" conference for young people of different faiths in Pristina, drawing on his experience at the Caux conference. Others from Croatia and Serbia recently traveled to Sarajevo, where they met with some of the participants from Bosnia. As one of them wrote to me, "Believe me, some of these people from Belgrade would never even have imagined traveling to Sarajevo before!"

## **The Peace of Yugoslavia in a dialogue with Father Raymond Helmick**

*By Marian Gh. Simion*

During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world has Yugoslavia's self-mutilation theater, where even God seemed to be left powerless in changing the hearts of those who either perpetrated the hurt or took revenge. Despite the typical claims who did what first, or of truthfulness, it is clear that the clash was ignited by nationalism that ultimately used religious feelings as an instrument for dealing with long-forgotten histories.

Father Raymond Helmick, a Jesuit Priest and Professor of Peace Studies in the Theology Department at Boston College, has dedicated his time and energy for many year to dealing with peoples in conflict, in such places as the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Balkans and many others. Father Ray traveled repeatedly to the Balkans and exchanged letters with political and religious leaders. In 1999 he joined the Jesse Jackson delegation, which brought home three American prisoners from Belgrade and started rebuilding diplomatic bridges in the region.

### **Marian Simion:**

Father Ray, your numerous years of work in international mediation and conflict resolution made you a real messenger of the *Pax Cristi*, to the pride of the Theology Department of Boston College. As a Jesuit Priest, you *volens-nolens* had to address the message of peace in the language of religious diplomacy. Reading through some of your letters, I see that on August 1995 you wrote to the Roman Catholic authorities offering working ideas for the peace process. In October 1995, you wrote to Mr. Mohammed Sacirbey, a leading Muslim and the Minister of Foreign Affairs from Sarajevo, while in November 1995, you wrote to former President Slobodan Milosevic. What is the story of your work on the Peace process of the Balkans?

### **Father Raymond Helmick:**

*The first time I really saw an opportunity to do anything that could contribute was at this point in 1995, when the NATO bombing turned the tide against the Serbs. You remember that until that time, the Serbs seemed absolutely unbeatable. The Western Powers and the United States had simply claimed until then that bombing would make no difference. This new policy suddenly turned the tide, and the Croats were advancing on the Bosnian Serbs. So, the Bosnian Serbs were suddenly losing.*

*At that point, I thought that the Croats – Catholic for the most part – who had figured mainly as victims in the war thus far, had the upper hand. (The Croats too have been terribly cruel to the Muslims in the parts of Bosnia that had a largely Catholic population.) Since, they had the upper hand, what were they going to do? Would they simply repeat the same ethnic cleansing policies against the Serbs? I thought this shouldn't happen.*

*I know that on the Serbian Orthodox side, people like Patriarch Pavle have really been heroically opposed to atrocities that had been committed by Serbian forces with a*

*specious appeal to Orthodox faith and a contemptuous disregard for Muslims. So, I wrote the letter that you have to Cardinal Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, and my appeal was that first of all Catholics should not, as Catholics, be carrying out this ethnic cleansing.*

*I don't know what efforts of that sort were made by the Vatican. Nothing public came to my knowledge. I had written faxed that to Cardinal Sodano, and sent copies of it by fax also to Cardinal Pio Laghi, who had been the Pro Nuncio in United States and was at that point in charge of the educational congregation of the Vatican, and a member of the Secretariat of State. He wrote back to me to say that he had raised this question and had discussed it in a meeting of the Secretariat of State. I sent a copy also to the Jesuit Father General Kolvenbach, and he wrote back saying: Yes, I was not the only one suggesting that, that it was an obvious enough thing to ask, that it was something that he hoped I would pursue – and that was a really difficult thing to do. I knew that.*

*The ethnic cleansing was in fact carried out. What was done to the Krajina Serbs was really as atrocious as anything that the Serbs did to anybody. Of course, as people were telling me, it was very difficult to change people's outrage and desire for vengeance. That was certainly a challenge to any Catholic involvement. And the ways in which people's Catholic identity had really been co-opted by nationalism were a grave obstacle.*

**Marian Simion:**

On October 11, 1995 you wrote a letter to Mr. Mohammed Sacirbey stressing the transparency of the peace process. What happened on this side?

**Fr. Raymond Helmick:**

*How could the Muslims in Bosnia achieve something that was good for themselves? I thought by making it possible for people to return to their homes.*

*The Muslims were, of all people involved in the Balkans, the most willing to encourage the return of displaced persons and refugees to their homes. They were the most victimized, so it was in their interest to encourage the return to their homes. And there are very basic teachings of Islam that incline people to justice, so was something in their outlook that I could appeal to. That was the appeal I made to Mohammad Sacirbey.*

*Sacirbey had been the Bosnian Ambassador to the United Nations. He had been brought up largely in the United States. He was a person used to dealing with the Americans. I knew nobody in Muslim Bosnia. So, I was asking myself, who do I appeal to? He was the obvious person. I made a point to him that I know about a lot of Muslims in United States because of the work I've done in the Middle East. I circulated that letter to my Muslim friends here – really prominent Muslims friends – and they were also writing to Sacirbey.*

**Marian Simion:**

How were the ties of the Bosnian Muslims with the outside Muslim World?

**Fr. Raymond Helmick:**

*The Bosnian Muslims were never particularly fanatic. There have been some efforts particularly from Iran to send, I believe, revolutionary guards in small numbers to stiffen the backbones of the Muslims and try to make some more radical. That wasn't the normal outlook of Bosnian Muslims. They were European. They had been living in friendly relations to their Christian both Orthodox and Catholic neighbors all this time.*

**Marian Simion:**

On November 1, 1995, you wrote a long letter to former President Milosevic where you were frankly explaining him the little chances he had in achieving his goals. As you were making some recommendations, I am wondering if Milosevic or his diplomatic apparatus had filtered your proposal through religious presuppositions.

**Father Raymond Helmick:**

*I don't think that Milosevic ever took any kind of religion seriously. It was all an instrument to him to achieve nationalist goals. Patriarch Pavle to him was a nuisance – someone who wasn't going along with his co-optation of the Orthodox Church. The nationalist feelings of church people, both Orthodox and Catholic, were the major disappointments of the whole situation.*

*I was appealing to Milosevic out of what I assume was his intention to be as protective as he could be to the Serbs, who had just lost wars both in Croatia and in Bosnia.*

**This next paragraph is out of context. You've been asking, and I answering, about the 1995 situation and my November letter to Milosevic. This paragraph refers to several years later, at the time of the Kosovo war, and it even has a past tense, as if it were something that had happened before 1995. I don't remember what is in the interview that would follow up on what is here above. I don't think it is even altogether necessary to follow it further. If you want the final few lines here, it has to be in response to some other question of yours, about the later period. I don't recommend it, since you have already made the point about that expedition aiming at a restoration of diplomacy in your introductory section, at the top above.**

*I had dealt very directly with Patriarch Pavle at the time of the Jesse Jackson expedition to Belgrade during the Kosovo bombing period not only to release the American prisoners, but also to reinstate some diplomacy at the time when diplomacy was stone dead.*