

REMARKS BY EDWARD HERMAN  
(Item No. 11) PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF FINANCE, THE WHARTON SCHOOL

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 17, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on June 10, 1999, I joined with Rep. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY, Rep. BARBARA LEE, and Rep. JOHN CONYERS in hosting the fifth in a series of Congressional Teach-In sessions on the Crisis in Kosovo. If a lasting peace is to be achieved in the region, it is essential that we cultivate a consciousness of peace and actively search for creative solutions. We must construct a foundation for peace through negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy.

Part of the dynamic of peace is a willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue, to listen to one another openly and to share our views in a constructive manner. I hope that these Teach-In sessions will contribute to this process by providing a forum for Members of Congress and the public to explore options for a peaceful resolution. We will hear from a variety of speakers on different sides of the Kosovo situation. I will be introducing into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD transcripts of their remarks and essays that shed light on the many dimensions of the crisis.

This presentation is by Edward Herman, Professor Emeritus of Finance, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. He taught for a decade in the Annenberg School of Communications at Pennsylvania State University, with a course in Analysis of Media Bias. He is a professional economist and media analyst. He is also a renowned author with some 20 books on economics, political economy, and the media. Among them are *The Political Economy of Human Rights* (2 vols, 1979, with Noam Chomsky) and *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media* (with Noam Chomsky, 1988).

Professor Herman exposes the manner in which the mainstream media has uncritically adopted a variety of "loaded words" that present a distorted and misleading impression of the reality of the War in Yugoslavia. One by one he dissects terms such as "credibility" and "negotiations," and describes the cynical manipulation of phrases such as "collateral damage" and "genocide and ethnic cleansing." He concludes that "western hostility to genocide and ethnic cleansing has been highly selective," citing a number of severe humanitarian crises in which the United States and NATO chose to do nothing.

Following Professor Herman's remarks is an article authored by him, along with David Peterson, that appeared in *Z Magazine*. This article, entitled "Bomb the New York Times?", discusses the hypocrisy of the western media when it justifies the bombing of Serbian media installations because of the Serbs' lack of "balance" in their treatment of the war.

PRESENTATION BY PROFESSOR EDWARD HERMAN, THE WHARTON SCHOOL

Although this is a free society, the U.S. mainstream media often serve as virtual propaganda agents of the state, peddling viewpoints the state wishes to inculcate and marginalizing any alternative perspectives. This is especially true in times of war, when

the wave of patriotic frenzy encouraged by the war-makers quickly engulfs the media. Under these conditions the media's capacity for dispassionate reporting and critical analysis is suspended, and they quickly become cheer-leaders and apologists for war.

This is reflected in their uncritical acceptance of loaded words that cry out for careful analysis, but which are used by the media instead to confuse and obfuscate issues. Let me illustrate with some key words in current usage that purr or snarl in service to propaganda.

**Credibility:** Credibility is a purr word, that oozes goodness. We all want to be credible and to have our country and NATO credible. But when Senator JOHN MCCAIN called for a ground war in Yugoslavia in order to preserve our own and NATO's credibility, common sense tells us that he ignored the danger of turning a mistake into a catastrophe. Isn't it a sign of moral weakness to be unable to admit a mistake? And isn't the failure to do so exceedingly stupid? Isn't the kind of credibility that comes from continuing a mistaken course obtained at the cost of a loss of credibility as a rational actor? The media have been extremely lax in failing to look behind this purr word to the real issues at stake. And they have thereby allowed it to serve as an instrument of war propaganda.

**Humanitarian bombing:** NATO allegedly began bombing in March for humanitarian purposes. Humanitarian is a purr word, but humanitarian bombing is an oxymoron, blending the warm-hearted with dealing death. As the NATO bombing exponentially increased the damage inflicted on the purported beneficiaries, as well as large numbers of innocent Serb civilians, it has been anti-humanitarian in fact at all levels. The CIA and NATO military officials like General Wesley Clark have admitted that the negative humanitarian effects were expected. These facts lead me to conclude that the phrase is a propaganda fraud covering over a hidden agenda, in which Kosovo Albanian welfare had little or no place. But the media have never considered the phrase an oxymoron or the policy a human rights fraud. With the end of the bombing, the media trumpet the official view that NATO won a "victory," but they do not ask whether this triumph was in fulfillment of the alleged humanitarian aim—they have implicitly abandoned that purported objective in favor of victory over the Serbs.

**Military targets:** NATO has repeatedly claimed that it is avoiding civilian and sticking to military targets. However, it has steadily expanded the definition of military target into anything that directly or indirectly helps the Serb war effort, so that electric and water facilities that primarily serve civilians are included as military targets. This is in violation of international law and the army's own rules of warfare, and therefore amounts to the commission of war crimes (on which Christopher Simpson gives interesting details). NATO has been one step away from finding the direct bombing of civilians proper military targeting—after all, those civilians pay taxes that help fund Milosevic's war machine. The media have treated this process of redefinition, and the de facto commission of war crimes, with the lightest touch. In fact, pundits like Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* have urged the direct bombing of civilians and thus the commission of war crimes. On NATO principles justifying the bombing of Serb TV, the *New York Times* is eminently bombable. So is a "command and control center" like the White House.

**Collateral damage:** This is our friend from the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars. It purrs, suggesting inadvertence and "errors." But

where the likelihood of "errors" in a bombing raid have a probability of over 90 percent, the damage is intentional even if the particular victims were not targeted. If somebody throws a bomb at an individual in a crowded theater, and 100 bystanders are also killed, would we say that the bomb thrower was not clearly guilty of killing the 100 because their deaths were unintended and the damage was "collateral"? We only reserve such purr word excuses for "humanitarian" bombing.

**Negotiations:** During the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars, U.S. officials regularly claimed to be interested in "negotiations," when in reality they were only ready to accept surrender. With incredible patriotic gullibility the media swallowed the official propaganda claims and helped pave the way for war and the prolongation of war. At Rambouillet, NATO offered Yugoslavia an ultimatum that included NATO's right to occupy all of Yugoslavia. This offer was one no sovereign nation could accept and was designed to be rejected. But just as in the earlier cases, the media accepted the false official version, that Milosevic rather than NATO was unwilling to negotiate or accept reasonable terms. And once again the media helped pave the way for war.

**Rule of law:** This is a purr phrase, that is used only when convenient. During the Persian Gulf war, at which time the Bush administration could get Security Council agreement for action against Iraq, President Bush declared that the issue at stake was the "rule of law" versus the law of the jungle. However, at the time of the incursion into Panama in 1989, when Security Council approval was not obtainable and the incursion was in violation of the OAS agreement, the matter of law was muted. Similarly, unable to obtain Security Council approval for the NATO attack on Yugoslavia, with the attack in seeming violation of the UN Charter, and with U.S. participation eventually in violation of the War Powers Act, U.S. and NATO officials do not stress the urgency of the rule of law. And the U.S. mainstream media cooperate by setting this issue aside as well. They now ignore their old favorite Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who says that "The aggressors have kicked aside the UN, opening a new era where might is right."

**Genocide and ethnic cleansing:** These snarl words have been frequently applied to the Serbs, helping justify the bombing that has turned a moderately serious Kosovo crisis into a regional catastrophe. The greatest single case of ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia in the 1990s occurred at Krajina in Croatia in 1995, where several hundred thousand Serbs were put to flight and many killed. This action was done with U.S. and NATO aid and was not objected to in any way by NATO.

Before the NATO bombing an estimated 2,000 had been killed in Kosovo in the prior year. This is half the number killed in Colombia the same year; a country that gets \$290 million in U.S. military aid. Two important cases where the word genocide might apply over the last 25 years are Ruanda, in which U.S. officials refused to apply the word and sabotaged any international intervention, and East Timor, where a third of the population died in the wake of Indonesia's invasion and occupation. In the East Timor case, the United States supplied the weapons for the killing and vetoed any effective UN intervention. As regards General Suharto, the world's only known triple genocidist (Indonesia, West Papua, East Timor), on his visit to Washington in 1995 a senior Clinton administration official was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying of him: "he's our kind of guy."

In sum, U.S. and western hostility to genocide and ethnic cleansing has been highly selective. The policy toward Kosovo has been

riddled with contradictions and hypocrisies, and has enlarged a local human rights crisis to a regional disaster. This has been helped by a system of doublespeak that the mainstream media have not only failed to challenge but have incorporated into their own usage. Contrary to their proclaimed objectivity, this failure has made them agents of state propaganda, rather than information servants of a democratic community.

#### BOMB THE NEW YORK TIMES?

(By Edward S. Herman and David Peterson)

NATO spokespersons have justified the bombing of Serbian TV and radio on the grounds that these broadcasters are an "instrument of state propaganda," tell lies, spew forth hatred, provide no "balance" in their offerings, and thus help prolong the war. In an April 8th news briefing NATO Air Commodore David Wilby explained: "Serb radio is an instrument of propaganda and repression. It has filled the airwaves with hate and with lies over the years, and especially now. It is therefore a legitimate target in this campaign. If President Milosevic would provide equal time for Western news broadcasts in his programs without censorship . . . then his TV would become an acceptable instrument of public information."

The mainstream U.S. media have accepted this NATO rationale for silencing the Serbia media, viewing themselves as truth-tellers and supporters of just policies against the evil enemy. But this is the long-standing self-deception of people whose propaganda service is as complete as that of Serbian state broadcasters. Just as they did during the Persian Gulf war, the mainstream media once again serve as cheer-leaders and propagandists for "our side. And as the brief review below shows, on NATO principles the Times et al. are eminently bombable.

#### BALANCE

The Serbian media is bombable, says Wilby, because it has not provided "equal time" to western broadcasters. This ludicrous criterion is far better met by the Serbian media than by those of the U.S. (or Britain). An estimated one-third or more of Belgrade residents watch western TV news broadcasts (including CNN, BBC, and Britain's Sky News), and many Serbs watch CNN for advance warning of bombing raids. This greatly exceeds the proportion of U.S. citizens who have access to dissident foreign messages, and domestic dissent here is marginalized. FAIR's May 5 study "Slanted Sources in Newshour and Nightline Kosovo Coverage" showed that only 8 percent of its participants were critical of the bombing campaign, far below the Wilby standard for Serbia.

#### SPEWING HATRED

The demonization of Milosevic, the shameful use of the plight of Albanian refugees to stoke hatred and justify NATO violence, and the near-reflexive use of words like "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" surely competes with anything that the "state-controlled" Serbian media have served up. As with the earlier demonization of Saddam Hussein, *Newsweek* placed Milosevic on its cover titled "The Face of Evil" (April 19), while *Time* showed the demon's face with an assassin's crosshairs centered between his eyes (April 5). A State Department official has acknowledged that "the demonization of Milosevic is necessary to maintain the air attacks" (San Francisco Chronicle, March 30, 1999), and the media have responded.

*Times* Foreign Affairs columnist Thomas Friedman has repeatedly called for the direct killing of Serbian civilians—"less than surgical bombing" and "sustained unreasonable bombing"—as a means of putting pres-

sure on the Yugoslavian government (April 6, 9, 23, May 4 and 11), which amounts to urging NATO to commit war crimes. If Serb broadcasters were openly calling for slaughtering Kosovo Albanians the media would surely regard this as proving Serb barbarism.

#### EVADING OR SUPPRESSING INCONVENIENT FACTS AND ISSUES

Because the NATO attack is in violation of the UN Charter the mainstream media have set this issue aside, although in 1990, when George Bush could mobilize a Security Council vote for his war, he stated that he acted on behalf of a world "where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle." In 1990, it was awkward that Bush had appeased Saddam Hussein before his invasion of Kuwait, so the media buried that fact; in 1999 the media rarely mention that Clinton supported the massive Croatian ethnic cleansing of Serbs in 1995 or that he has consistently ignored Turkey's repression of Kurds (with Turkey actually providing bases for NATO bombing attacks on Yugoslavia).

#### THE BIG LIE OF NATO'S HUMANITARIAN AIM

That this is a lie demonstrated by the terrible effects of NATO policy on the purported beneficiaries; by the fact that these negative consequences were seen as likely by intelligence and military officials, which didn't affect their willingness to "take a chance"; by NATO's continuation of the policy even as evidence of its catastrophic effects mounted; by NATO's methods, which have included the destruction of the Serb's civilian infrastructure and the use of delayed action cluster bombs and depleted uranium shells that could make Kosovo uninhabitable; and by the NATO's failure to prepare for the induced refugee crisis and its unwillingness to accept more than nominal numbers of refugees. NATO's official responses to repeated civilian casualties from its bombing attacks have been notably lacking in human sympathy. British journalist Robert Fisk was appalled by a NATO press conference of May 14, the day after 87 ethnic Albanians were "ripped apart" by NATO bombs at Korisa. NATO spokesmen Jamie Shea and Major-General Walter Jertz "informed us 'It was another very effective day of operations.'" There was "not a single bloody word of astonishment or compassion," (*The Independent* [London], May 15, 1999). This response of NATO officials was not mentioned, let alone featured, in the U.S. media.

Thanks to the scale of the refugee crisis, the U.S. media have been unable to avoid reporting that the NATO bombing has been followed by catastrophic effects. But while some commentators have declared the policy a failure and have castigated the administration for it, most have followed the official line of blaming all of these nasty developments on Milosevic. They have focused intently and uncritically on alleged Serb abuses, all allegedly "deliberate," whereas NATO killings and damage are slighted, and when unavoidably reported are allowed to be "errors."

#### THE BIG LIE ABOUT THE "FAILURE" OF DIPLOMACY

As with Kosovo, during the Persian Gulf war experience the media accepted that the enemy has refused to negotiate, thus compelling military action. Although Bush himself stated repeatedly that there would be no negotiations—"no reward for aggression"—and that Iraq must surrender, the media pretended that the U.S. was laboring to "go the extra mile for peace," while they suppressed information on numerous rejected peace offers. Thomas Friedman, after acknowledging that Bush strove to block off diplomacy lest negotiations "defuse the crisis" (Aug. 22, 1990), subsequently reported that "diplomacy

has failed and it has come to war" (Jan. 20, 1991), without mentioning that the diplomatic failure was intentional.

In the case of the NATO war on Yugoslavia, the official position is that Yugoslavia refused NATO's reasonable offer at Rambouillet, and that Milosevic's intransigence thus forced NATO to bomb. This is a Big Lie—NATO's offer was never reasonable, requiring Yugoslavia to accept not only full occupying power rights by NATO in Kosovo—apart of Yugoslavia—but also NATO's right to "free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access" throughout Yugoslavia. The Serbs had indicated a definite willingness to allow a military presence in Kosovo, but not by NATO and certainly not with NATO authority to occupy all of Yugoslavia. NATO would not negotiate on these matters and issued an ultimatum to Yugoslavia that no sovereign state could accept.

As in the Persian Gulf war case, however, the mainstream U.S. media accepted the official line that the bombing resulted from a Serbian refusal of a reasonable offer after "extensive and repeated efforts to obtain a peaceful solution" (Clinton). The Serb position and the continued Serb willingness to negotiate on who would be included in the occupying forces was essentially ignored or deemed unreasonable; the ultimatum aspect of the process was considered of no importance; and the fact that the ultimatum required Yugoslavia to agree to virtual occupation of the entire state by NATO was suppressed. The NATO position, as the bush position in the Persian Gulf war, was surrender, not negotiate. And the media today, as then, pretend that we are eager to negotiate with a mulish enemy.

In sum, the propaganda service of the mainstream U.S. media to the Kosovo war would be hard to surpass, and on NATO principles the New York Times and its confreres are eminently bombable. But as usual, for the U.S. and NATO powers international law and moral principles apply only to others. To the godfather and his flunkies, an entirely different set of principles applies.

#### IN HONOR OF TOM PARKER

#### HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to share with my colleagues my appreciation and regard for Tom Parker. On Friday, June 18th, Tom's friends, family and admirers will gather in Milwaukee to celebrate his career and wish him well as he retires as President of the Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO.

Tom Parker is proud to be a machinist by trade. When he began his career at the Milwaukee-based heavy equipment manufacturing firm Allis Chalmers, he also joined the Machinists International Union. After leaving Allis Chalmers, Tom traveled around a bit, repairing printing presses and generators, and in 1962, he took a job at Miller Brewing and joined Machinist Lodge 66. He took an active interest in the union's advocacy efforts and worked himself into a leadership role. In 1973, Tom left the brewery to accept a full-time position as the local's Secretary-Treasurer.

In 1978, Milwaukee's labor community was shocked by the sudden death of Labor Council President Leo Winninger. Area union leaders urged Tom Parker to run, and he was elected