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NEW EVIDENCE FURTHER IMPLICATES FRANCE IN FALL OF SREBRENICA

By Andreas Zumach

Geneva. **Eyewitness reports and internal documents from the United Nations and Western governments recently obtained by *BASIC Reports* clearly indicate France's prime responsibility for allowing the Bosnian Serb conquest of the UN safety zone in Srebrenica in July 1995. The "official" account of the fall of Srebrenica, and the mass execution of 8,000 Muslim inhabitants that followed, has been regarded as one of the greatest failures of UN peacekeeping forces and has been used by the major Western powers to undermine public confidence in the future peacekeeping ability of the United Nations. The question of deploying UN forces in Bosnia again, instead of a NATO-led force, has been ridiculed by Western governments with reference to Srebrenica. However, this new evidence clearly demonstrates that France and its allies, not the United Nations, should be held accountable for the disaster.**

This new information provides further evidence that French President Jacques Chirac played a key role in disallowing any NATO action to prevent the Serb attack. These documents also reveal that current UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (who at the time of the attack was UN Undersecretary for Peacekeeping), as well as US President Bill Clinton and former UN special envoy to the former Yugoslavia Yasushi Akashi, were informed of Chirac's intention not to take any serious measures to prevent the fall of the enclave. The new evidence also calls into question the recent appointment of a French diplomat to head the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). (For background on the Srebrenica attack, see *BASIC Reports* #48, 20 November 1995.)

French Lt. Gen. Janvier denied request for NATO aircraft

On 24 May 1995, French Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier, in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia, pleaded to a closed session of the UN Security Council in New York that the UN should give up Srebrenica and the two other UN safety zones in Eastern Bosnia, Zepa and Gorazde. A month later, in June 1995, the French intelligence service learned of Serb preparations for an attack on Srebrenica. This information was given to General Janvier at UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb only in his capacity as a French military officer, not in his role as Supreme Commander of the UN forces. During the Serb attack on Srebrenica between 5 and 11 July, Janvier denied five requests from the local Dutch UNPROFOR commander to call in NATO aircraft to stop the assault. Janvier has never denied these incidents.

Since *BASIC Reports* revealed the story in November 1995, French government sources and UN officers stationed at Zagreb headquarters during the attack have told *BASIC Reports* that Janvier received direct orders by telephone from French President Chirac not to call in NATO air forces.

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Secret Hague meeting

Reports of a top secret evaluation meeting of the role of the Dutch UNPROFOR battalion in Srebrenica in The Hague on 1 November 1995 have also shed new light on the course of events. At the Hague meeting, Dutch officers gave the following account: on 10 July, Janvier received a call from Paris at 20:15 while he was consulting with his staff about the escalating situation in Srebrenica. At that time, the Serb forces had overrun all UNPROFOR positions in the safe area, had entered the outskirts of Srebrenica, and were indiscriminately shelling the city with tanks and heavy artillery. Janvier left the meeting to receive the phone call from Paris in another room, accompanied only by French officers. When he returned, Janvier told the officers at UNPROFOR headquarters that Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic did not intend to conquer Srebrenica, and ruled out the request for NATO aircraft. Sixteen hours later, Mladic had conquered Srebrenica and driven out 40,000 inhabitants.

Information about the 1 November meeting in the Hague was later leaked to the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, launching a criminal investigation on the grounds that the details of the Hague meeting, officially classified as a "state secret" by the Dutch government, "might be damaging to the Defense Secretary and the State of the Netherlands." (These events are documented in detail by Dutch journalists Frank Westerman and Bart Rijs, in their recently published book *Srebrenica -- Het Zwartste Scenario* ("The blackest scenario"), Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Publications.)

Statements by former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also support the evidence that certain Western governments had taken control, only to later blame the United Nations for the fall of Srebrenica. On several occasions after the fall of Srebrenica, Boutros-Ghali made it clear that he and his leadership team were never in control over Janvier. In an interview with the French weekly *Nouvel Observateur*, he declared that French and British UNPROFOR generals "only followed orders from their governments in Paris and London." Internal documents obtained by *BASIC Reports* show that UN headquarters in New York was informed by Akashi weeks before the Srebrenica assault that decisions regarding requests for NATO aircraft to defend UN safe areas in the

former Yugoslavia would be up to President Chirac, and that Chirac did not intend to bring into action the newly-formed rapid reaction force around Sarajevo (made up predominantly of French and British forces).

Cable Z-1020: Akashi to Annan

The actual course of events in Srebrenica, as described above, appears to be predicted in a 19 June 1995 cable, number Z-1020 (excerpted in this issue of *BASIC Reports*), from special envoy Akashi to then-Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Annan in New York. The cable recounts Akashi's 17 June meeting with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade. According to the cable, during the meeting Milosevic told Akashi "that he [Milosevic] had been advised by President Chirac of President Clinton's agreement that air strikes should not occur if unacceptable to Chirac." According to Akashi, "Milosevic added that Chirac had also stated that he did not expect the rapid reaction force to be employed at all..."

According to French government sources, Chirac had lengthy telephone conversations with Milosevic on 3, 9, and 11 June, after which the Bosnian Serbs released 401 UNPROFOR soldiers taken hostage a month before as "insurance" against NATO air strikes. While firsthand evidence of the content of the conversations between Chirac and Milosevic has not been forthcoming, the Akashi cable strongly supports the view that France and its allies, not the United Nations, were responsible for allowing Srebrenica to be overrun.

Annan silent on new evidence

The new evidence describing the actual events at Srebrenica also raises questions about the role of Annan in his position as Undersecretary for Peacekeeping at the time of the attack. When questioned by *BASIC Reports* at a Geneva press conference on 30 January 1996 about his silence on the Srebrenica events, and the undermining of UN credibility as the result of its wrongly being held responsible for the catastrophe, Annan answered diplomatically that "the whole international community, not only the UN, failed in Srebrenica." Annan went on to say that he had "heard the allegations that Chirac gave Milosevic assurances there would be no air strikes," but that he "had not seen the proof for these allegations."

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Annan has not yet responded to the new evidence reported here, including the cable sent to him from Akashi.

Controversy over new peacekeeping head

In light of France's role in Srebrenica, the appointment of a French diplomat as UN Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping is also raising new concerns about the UN's future peacekeeping role. In late January 1997, Secretary-General Annan, who held the DPKO position for the past four years, appointed French diplomat Bernard Miyet as his successor. France's widespread national interest in many conflict regions, particularly East Africa, has further intensified controversy over the appointment.

Numerous UN diplomats and representatives of UN relief and humanitarian organizations have expressed disapproval over Miyet's appointment. Their criticisms center around the need for a representative from a member state with more experience in peacekeeping, more dedication to reforming UN peacekeeping operations, and fewer national interests at stake in conflict regions. "Since the early 1990s, UN peacekeeping has been dominated by France, the US and Britain; in the future, it will be even more controlled by French interests," one high-ranking UNICEF officer currently involved in Great Lakes relief operations told *BASIC Reports*.

US-French trade-off over UN posts

Some UN observers predict that conflicting interests between the United States and France could paralyze the United Nations. Indications of discord were already evident late last year during the debate over peacekeeping operations in Eastern Africa. Clearly, Washington would have preferred to have the UN peacekeeping post filled by a diplomat from a state other than France, but conceded when France insisted on the post as a condition for not exercising its veto of Annan as candidate for Secretary-General. The French government has denied that any such deals were made, but high-ranking sources at UN headquarters in New York confirmed in interviews with *BASIC Reports* that the peacekeeping post was part of a political trade-off between France and the United States.

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Andreas Zumach is a journalist based in Geneva.

**CABLE FROM AKASHI TO ANNAN,
19 JUNE 1995**

Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from an "outgoing code cable" marked "code restricted" and "most immediate" from special envoy Yasushi Akashi to Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Kofi Annan three weeks before the fall of the UN safe area of Srebrenica.

TO: ANNAN, UNATIONS, NEW YORK
INFO: GHAREKHAN, UNATIONS, NEW YORK
STOLTENBERG, ICFY, GENEVA
FROM: AKASHI, UNPF-HQ, ZAGREB
DATE: 19 JUNE 1995
NUMBER: Z-1020
SUBJECT: Discussions with President Milosevic -
17 June 1995

...

In the course of our discussions on air power, Milosevic stated that he had been advised by President Chirac of President Clinton's agreement that air strikes should not occur if unacceptable to Chirac. Milosevic added that Chirac has also stated that he did not expect the rapid reaction force to be employed at all, but that its creation could help get negotiations back on track. Despite these assurances, Milosevic was most concerned that the rapid reaction force would be exploited by the Bosnian government to provoke international intervention. I stated that Minister Muratovic had been quite cool to the arrival of the force, insisting that a separate contract was required with the government. I also emphasized that the reserve would be an integral part of the United Nations forces, and that it would follow peacekeeping principles and remain impartial as set out in resolution 998 (1995).

...

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UN SMALL ARMS PANEL
MAKES PROGRESS

by Dr. Natalie J. Goldring

Diplomats reported significant progress as the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms concluded its second formal session in New York on 31 January. Regional workshops and plenary sessions have helped clarify important issues related to the scope of the panel's work and definitions of weapons to be covered in its report. Panel members agree, however, that the toughest tests lie ahead, as the panel seeks consensus on policy recommendations. Members are also concerned that preliminary agreement over issues such as definitions could disappear during debates over other provisions of the panel's report.

At the meeting, the panel agreed on the general structure for its report to the Secretary-General, with the first two chapters providing an introduction to the panel's work and an overview of light weapons issues. The three remaining chapters will each address one aspect of the panel's mandate: the types of small arms and light weapons actually being used in conflicts being dealt with by the United Nations; the nature and causes of excessive accumulation and destabilizing transfer of these weapons, including their illicit production and trade; and ways and means to prevent and reduce such accumulations and transfers. (See "UN Experts' Panel on Small Arms Faces Obstacles," *BASIC Reports* #54 for additional information.)

Definitions largely resolved

The panel has created a draft typology of the small arms and light weapons to be covered in its report, including all weapons, ammunition, and explosives that are built to military specifications and are being used in conflicts being dealt with by the United Nations. In special circumstances, some non-military weapons that have been used in violent conflict and have been deemed to be destabilizing may also be included.

According to a Western representative on the panel, there are still significant questions about the upper limit

of the definition of these weapons. The panel has reportedly decided to include all portable weapons, while excluding any weapons that are covered by the UN Register of Conventional Arms. However, certain key issues, such as the definition of "portable," remain unresolved.

Disagreement over "nature and causes"
of excessive transfers

Panel members still disagree over the causes of destabilizing transfers of small arms and light weapons. Some panel members interviewed for *BASIC Reports* emphasized the importance of "root causes," such as socio-economic factors, while others argued that military issues were more relevant. The Sri Lankan representative said that root causes were useful in understanding the factors that drive demand, but described this panel as a "disarmament effort," and said that illicit transfer "is the major issue that is contributing to destabilizing accumulation." While the Colombian representative agreed with his assessment of the importance of dealing with the illicit trade, she emphasized that, "Roots and causes are the starting point to talk about any recommendations and solutions." The Western representative concurred, saying, "...we have to have the root causes, otherwise the report won't be complete."

Recommendations remain contentious

According to all of the panel members interviewed by *BASIC Reports*, it will be difficult to achieve consensus on recommendations. For example, the panel has not yet resolved a dispute over whether the UN Disarmament Commission's guidelines on illicit transfers should be the starting point for its recommendations. In addition, the Western representative said, "We can't skew the report to any particular incident in any particular region." The Belgian representative agreed, saying, "The problem we will have to face is also to make general recommendations without specifying one cause in preference with others. We cannot say that the drug problem is the cause everywhere."

In interviews, panel members suggested many policy approaches. While some of these recommendations have already been discussed by the panel, there is no consensus on any of these issues.

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Recommendations mentioned by panel members included national transparency with respect to the types of weapons in different countries and the weapons that have been captured, as well as stronger border controls and improved training for customs officials. Stressing the importance of strong national legislation, the Colombian representative told *BASIC Reports*, "We know that if legislation is not strong enough in regard to the arms of a particular country, it is likely that these arms will flow outside the country."

Regional options under consideration include regional buy-back programs and using the destruction of weapons in Mali and the proposed regional moratorium on light weapons import, export, and manufacture as a model for other regions. Panel members are interested in regional registers dealing with small arms, but expressed doubts about the feasibility of expanding the global UN Register of Conventional Arms. At the international level, the panel is considering international codes of conduct and an international conference to draw attention to the light weapons issue.

NGO controversy continues

Controversy over the role of NGOs in the experts' panel's deliberations continued during the recent panel meeting in New York. A representative of the US-based National Rifle Association (NRA), which was granted UN NGO status last fall, demanded to be allowed to brief the panel. Although the request for a briefing was refused, he distributed a paper to several panel members which presented the organization's rationale for involvement in this effort.

During the fall 1996 meeting, some panel members seemed intimidated by the NRA's presence; after the January meeting several panelists simply dismissed the NRA's relevance to the panel's work. The Colombian representative told *BASIC Reports*, "It's a national lobby institute -- it's not international." When asked to comment on the NRA paper, the Sri Lankan representative said, "It's irrelevant to our work." The Belgian representative also said he did not think NRA lobbying was having any effect on the panel's deliberations. The Sri Lankan representative said, "Our mandate is with regard to pre-

venting and reducing excessive and destabilizing accumulations of small arms....The NRA is perhaps overreacting."

Regional workshops and next steps

As with the regional workshop in South Africa in September 1996, financial constraints prevented many panel members from attending the 16-17 January 1997 regional workshop in El Salvador. Nonetheless, those who attended said the meeting provided useful materials for the panel's report. The Colombian representative said, "They not only talked about the arms that have been there since the Cold War and exacerbated the tensions there. They also talked about the illicit transfer of arms which is taking place right now." Also because of financial constraints, only a few panel members were able to attend a related workshop on light weapons and peacekeeping which was held in Ottawa just after the El Salvador workshop.

The experts' panel is scheduled to have a third regional meeting in late May, most likely in Malaysia. Following this workshop, the Japanese government has invited the entire panel to meet in Tokyo from 26-28 May. The panel's last formal session is scheduled for July in New York. While the panel is scheduled to report to the Secretary-General shortly after that meeting, one panel member said that the panel might ask for an extension of its charter in order to do more work on policy issues.

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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

by Martin Butcher

Editor's note: all quotations from the *Concept* document are unofficial translations by the author.

At a summit meeting in Nuremburg on 9 December 1996, French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl agreed a *Joint Franco-German Security and Defence Concept*. The document was not made public, but was later leaked to the French newspaper *Le Monde*. The result was a strong political counter-reaction in France, including a full emergency debate in the French National Assembly, where opposition centered around France's continuing move towards full NATO membership.

Laurent Fabius, former Prime Minister and now leader of the Socialist Opposition in the Assembly, spoke of his regret over "the NATO-ization of Europe," characterizing the agreement as the "beginning of submission to the United States and NATO." Concerns have also been raised over the agreement's establishment of bilateral discussions between France and Germany on the role of nuclear deterrence in European defense. The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee will discuss the issue in late February as part of a debate on the future of European security.

Most of the *Joint Franco-German Concept* concerns armaments cooperation and conventional military cooperation inside NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) -- issues which have been the subject of discussions in the Franco-German Defence Council since 1988. However, bringing all of this together in a document signed by the highest national authorities does add strong political momentum to Franco-German defense integration. French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette told the National Assembly that the agreement is "neither a treaty, nor an accord.... Even less a secret document..." but simply a "document of political guidelines." However, it is clear that European defense integration, including nuclear defense, has moved a step closer.

Though it is addressed in only one paragraph of the document, the single most striking issue addressed in the agreement is that of nuclear deterrence. Though reports suggesting that the agreement extended France's "nuclear umbrella" to Germany were exaggerated, the *Concept* does contain two substantive developments on nuclear policy.

Bilateral dialogue on nuclear issues

First, France and Germany declare themselves "ready to engage in a bilateral dialogue on the role of nuclear deterrence in the context of a European defense policy." French sources told *BASIC Reports* that this is intended as a means of implementing the policy of "concerted deterrence" launched by Prime Minister Alain Juppé in 1995. These officials view a dialogue establishing what each country means by deterrence -- and whether the two views can be reconciled -- as a necessary first step in constructing concerted deterrence in Europe.

German spokespeople have stated publicly and privately that the aim of its talks with France is to bring French deterrent forces into a NATO framework. However, French officials emphasize the strengthening of a European security and defense identity based on nuclear deterrence as a means of reestablishing the balance of the transatlantic relationship. As France and the United Kingdom have also been discussing nuclear doctrine since 1992, there are now two bilateral nuclear talks proceeding simultaneously. It is unclear if these will become multilateral talks among the three nations -- and if so, when. How far this process supports the establishment of a European nuclear deterrent, as opposed to national deterrents of European nations, also remains unresolved. Observers see serious implications for the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, especially the likely hostile reaction of non-aligned countries to the indefinite perpetuation of nuclear weapons in Europe.

French and German priorities differ

In the second notable part of the agreement, the partners recognize that "The supreme guarantee of the security of the allies is assured by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, in particular those of the United States." Therein France accepts the supremacy of NATO

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in European security, acknowledges the key role of the United States in NATO, and retreats from the legacy of its 1966 withdrawal from the integrated military structure of NATO.

A German NATO source indicated to *BASIC Reports* that bringing France closer to NATO was an essential aim for Germany, as less-than-full French participation in NATO would prevent thorough reform of the alliance and block the creation of a genuine European defense capability. French sources said that their government saw moving closer to NATO as the price to pay for gaining a stronger voice in the debate on NATO reform.

The new approach set out in the *Concept* represents a distinct change in French policy, reversing its position, held since the 1940s, in favor of a strong national and European defense structure independent of the United States. In response to hostile questioning in the National Assembly, French Defense Minister Charles Millon said that the ideas on the US role in deterrence articulated in the *Concept* are not new, but simply a reiteration of ideas conveyed in NATO's 1974 Ottawa Summit Declaration. However, at that time, France was not planning to re-enter the military structure, and claimed to have a fully independent defense. It is not yet clear to what extent the policy shift is seen by France as a necessary part of building a European defense.

The *Concept* also commits France and Germany to work toward eventual integration of the WEU into the European Union (EU), and to create a common EU defense. It remains unclear whether this is meant to be a defense independent of NATO and the United States, or part of a bilateral agreement between North America and Europe. The wording is vague enough that Bonn and Paris can each claim to have moved the other. German Defense Minister Volker R  he has characterized the agreement as a move down the road towards NATO; Charles Millon sees the document as representing the Europeanization of defense policy.

Martin Butcher is Director of the Centre for European Security and Disarmament in Brussels.

SELECTED BASIC PUBLICATIONS

FORTHCOMING

- **Current Projects on Light Weapons** (February 1997 Addendum to Project on Light Weapons Working Paper #1, February 1996). This update will provide detailed summaries and contact information for light weapons research projects currently underway in countries around the world. Nearly thirty projects from a dozen countries are covered in the addendum.

NEW RELEASES

- **Extending the Nuclear Umbrella: Undermining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** (7 February 1997). A joint publication of BASIC and the Berlin Information-centre for Transatlantic Security, this Note addresses the French proposal for a European-ized nuclear deterrent and NATO nuclear cooperation, and analyses whether these arrangements are compatible with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- **1997 NPT PrepCom: Principles and Objectives on the Agenda** (6 February 1997). This Paper examines the decisions reached at the 1995 NPT Conference and makes recommendations for the April 1997 NPT PrepCom meeting in New York.

OF INTEREST

- **NATO Expansion: Time to Reconsider.** (25 November 1996). This special report from BASIC and the Centre for European Security and Disarmament in Brussels argues that NATO should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of expansion and that alternatives to NATO enlargement should be explored.

- **Light Weapons and National Legislation.** Located only on BASIC's Website (www.igc.apc.org/basic) and gophersite (gopher.igc.apc.org:70/11/orgs/basic/), this paper highlights useful aspects of different countries' policies on light weapons, as well as the differences among national policies and legislation governing transfers of light weapons.

- **Light Weapons and International Security** (New Delhi: British American Security Information Council and Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 1995). Through case studies and essays, this book explores the relationships among regional stability, internal conflict, the narcotics trade, and light weapons transfers. The book is based on research presented at the October 1995 Project on Light Weapons workshop in New Delhi, India, co-sponsored by BASIC and the American and Indian affiliates of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.

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