

AMERICA AT WAR IN MACEDONIA

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see map at <http://www.bsrec.bg/taskforce/SYNERGY/oilprojects2.html>.

Washington's covert war in Macedonia purports to consolidate America's sphere of influence in southeastern Europe. At stake is the strategic Bulgaria-Macedonia-Albania transport, communications and oil pipeline "corridor" which links the Black Sea to the Adriatic coast. Macedonia stands at the strategic crossroads of the oil pipeline corridor.

To protect these pipeline routes, Washington's goal is to install a "patchwork of protectorates" along strategic corridors in the Balkans. The promise of "Greater Albania" used by Washington to foment Albanian nationalism is part of the military-intelligence ploy. Amply documented, the latter consists in financing and equipping the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and its National Liberation Army (NLA) proxy to wage the terrorist assaults in Macedonia.

The development of America's sphere of influence in Southeastern Europe - in complicity with Britain - supports the interests of the oil giants including BP-Amoco-ARCO, Chevron and Texaco. Securing control and "protecting" the pipeline routes is paramount to the success of these multi-billion dollar ventures:

AA successful international oil regime is a combination of economic, political, and military arrangements to support oil production and transportation to markets.¹

The Anglo-American consortium which controls the AMBO Trans-Balkan pipeline project linking the Bulgarian port of Burgas to Vlore on the Albanian Adriatic coastline largely excludes the participation of Europe's competing oil giant Total-Fina-Elf.² In other words, US strategic control over the pipeline corridor is intent upon weakening the role of the European Union and keeping competing European business interests at arms' length.

Who is Behind the Trans-Balkan Pipeline?

The US based AMBO pipeline consortium is directly linked to the seat of political and military power in the United States and Vice President Dick Cheney's firm Halliburton Energy.³

The feasibility study for AMBO's Trans-Balkan Oil Pipeline, conducted by the international engineering company of Brown & Root Ltd. [Halliburton's British subsidiary] has determined that this pipeline will become a part of the region's critical East-West corridor infrastructure which includes highway, railway, gas and fiber optic telecommunications lines.⁴

And upon completion of the feasibility study by Halliburton, a senior executive of Halliburton was appointed CEO of AMBO. Halliburton was also granted a contract to service US troops in the Balkans and build "Bondsteel" in Kosovo, which now constitutes "the largest American foreign military base constructed since Vietnam".⁵ Coincidentally, White and Case LLT, the New York law firm that President William J. Clinton joined when he left the White House also has a stake in the AMBO pipeline deal.

Militarisation of the Pipeline Corridors

The AMBO Trans-Balkans pipeline project would link up with the pipeline corridors between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea basin, which lies at the hub of the World's largest unexplored oil reserves (see map of <http://www.bsrec.bg/taskforce/SYNERGY/oilprojects2.html>). The militarisation of these various corridors is an integral part of Washington's design.

The US policy of "protecting the pipeline routes" out of the Caspian Sea basin (and across the Balkans) was spelled out by Clinton's Energy Secretary Bill Richardson barely a few months prior to the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia:

"This is about America's energy security. It's also about preventing strategic inroads by those who don't share our values. We're trying to move these newly independent countries toward the west. We would like to see them reliant on western commercial and political interests rather than going another way. We've made a substantial political investment in the Caspian, and it's very important to us that both the pipeline map and the politics come out right."⁶

The Anglo-American oil giants, including BP-Amoco-Arco, Texaco and Chevron - supported by US military might - are competing with Europe's oil giant Total-Fina-Elf (associated with Italy's ENI) which is a big player in Kazakhstan's wealthy North East Caspian Kashagan oil fields. The stakes are high: Kashagan is reported "so large as to even surpass the size of the North Sea oil reserves."⁷ The competing EU based consortium, however, lacks a significant stake and leverage in the main pipeline routes out of the Caspian Sea basin and back (via the Black Sea and through the Balkans) to Western Europe. The key pipeline corridor projects - including the AMBO project and the Baku-Ceyhan project through Turkey to the Mediterranean - are largely in the hands of their Anglo-American rivals, which rely heavily on US political and military presence in both the Caspian basin and the Balkans.

Washington's design is to eventually distance all three AMBO countries, namely Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania from German-EU influence through the installation of full-fledged US protectorates. In other words, US militarisation and geopolitical control over the projected pipeline linking Burgas in Bulgaria to the Adriatic port of Vlore in Albania is intent upon undermining EU influence as well as weakening competing Franco-Belgian-Italian oil interests.

Negotiations concerning the AMBO pipeline have been supported by US government officials through the Trade and Development Agency's (TDA) South Balkan Development Initiative (SBDI) "designed to help Albania, Bulgaria and FYR Macedonia further develop and integrate their transportation infrastructure along the east-west corridor that connects them."⁸

The TDA points to the need for the three countries to "use regional synergies to leverage new public and private capital [from US companies]" while underscoring the responsibility of the US government "for implementing the initiative." With regard to the AMBO pipeline, it would appear that the EU has largely been excluded from the planning and negotiations. "Memoranda of understanding" (MOU) have already been signed with the governments of Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia which strip the countries' national sovereignty over both the pipeline and the transport corridors by providing "exclusive rights" to the Anglo-American consortium:

"[The] MOU states that AMBO will be the only party allowed to build the planned Burgas-Vlore oil pipeline. More specifically, it gives AMBO the exclusive right to negotiate with investors in and creditors of the project. It also obligates [the governments of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania] not to disclose certain confidential information on the pipeline project."⁹

"East-West Corridor 8"

The AMBO pipeline project is linked up with another strategic project entitled "Corridor 8", initially proposed by the Clinton Administration in the context of the "Balkans Stability Pact". Of strategic importance to both the US and the European Union, "Corridor 8" includes highway, railway, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure. In turn, the existing infrastructure in these sectors is slated for deregulation and privatisation (at rock bottom prices) under IMF-World Bank supervision.

Although rubber-stamped by EU transport ministers as part of the process of European economic integration, "Corridor 8" feasibility studies were conducted by US companies financed

directly by the TDA. In other words, Washington seems to have set the stage for the takeover of the countries' transport and communications infrastructure. American corporations including Bechtel, Enron and General Electric (with financial backing from the US government) are competing with companies from the European Union.

Washington's design is to open up the entire corridor to US multinationals in a region situated in the European Union's "economic backyard", where the power of the Deutschmark tends to dominate over that of the US dollar.

"EU Enlargement"

In early 2000, the European Commission began negotiations on EU associate membership status with Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania. And in April 2001, at the height of the terrorist assaults, Macedonia became the first country in the Balkans to sign a so-called "stabilisation and association agreement" (SAA) constituting an important step towards full EU membership. The agreement provides the basis for "trade liberalisation, political co-operation, economic and institutional reform and transplantation of EU legislation." Under the SAA, Macedonia would (de facto) be integrated into the European monetary system, with full access to the EU market.¹⁰

The terrorist assaults coincided chronologically with the process of "EU enlargement", gaining momentum barely a few weeks before the signing of the historic "association agreement" with Macedonia. Amply documented, the US has military advisers working with the terrorists. Was this a mere coincidence?

Also, Robert Frowick, "a former US diplomat", was appointed to head the OSCE mission in Macedonia in mid-March, again barely a few weeks before the signing of the "association agreement." In close liaison with Washington and the US embassy in Skopje, Frowick initiated a "dialogue" with NLA rebel leader Ali Ahmeti. He was also instrumental in brokering an agreement between Ahmeti and the leaders of the Albanian parties, which form part of the government coalition.

This agreement negotiated by Frowick has largely contributed to destabilising political institutions, while at the same time jeopardising the process of EU enlargement.¹¹ Moreover, the deteriorating security situation in Macedonia has provided a pretext for increased US political, "humanitarian" and military interference, while contributing to weakening Skopje's economic and political ties to Germany and the EU. In this regard, one of the "binding conditions" of the "association agreement" is that Macedonia conform to "EU standards on democracy".¹² Needless to say, without a "functioning government" in Macedonia, the EU association process with Brussels cannot proceed.

The puppet governments installed in Tirana, Skopje and Sofia, while largely responding to US diktats, are currently being swayed in the direction of the European Union. Washington's intent is ultimately to curb Germany's "Lebensraum" into Southeastern Europe. While paying lip service to "EU enlargement", the US has consistently favoured "NATO enlargement" as a means to pursuing its strategic interests in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, while Germany and France have opposed it.

While the tone of international diplomacy remains mannerly and polite, US foreign policy under the Bush administration has become distinctly "anti-European". According to one observer:

"At the heart of the Bush team, Colin Powell is [considered] the friend of the Europeans, while the other ministers and advisers are considered arrogant, hard and indisposed to listen or to give the Europeans a place."¹³

Germany and America

Amply documented, the CIA is behind the KLA and the NLA rebels, who are waging the terrorist assaults against the Macedonian security forces. While the CIA's German counterpart the Bundes Nachrichten Dienst (BND) collaborated with the CIA in overseeing and financing the KLA prior to the 1999 war, recent developments suggest that the BND is not involved in Washington's military-intelligence ploy in Macedonia.¹⁴

Barely a few weeks before the signing of the "association agreement" with the European Union, German troops stationed in Macedonia in the Tetovo region were (mid March 2001) "accidentally" targeted by the NLA. While the Western media - echoing in chorus the official statements - maintains that German troops were "caught in the cross-fire", reports from Tetovo suggest that the NLA shelling "was deliberate." In any event, the incident would not have occurred had Germany's BND been working with the rebel army:

"Up to 600 German troops were forced to leave Tetovo overnight after their barracks were caught in crossfire [They] were too lightly armed to defend themselves against the Albanians. The Germans will replace the departing troops with a Leopard tank squadron [belonging to the Panzer-Artillerie-Batterie division stationed in Nordrhein-Westphalen]. [T]he new [German] firepower may be used to knock out Albanian positions now established around Tetovo."¹⁵

In a bitter irony, two of the commanders responsible for the terrorist assaults in the Tetovo region had been trained by British Special Forces:

"Embarrassingly for KFOR, it emerged that two of the Kosovo-based commanders leading the Albanian push [into the Tetovo region] were trained by former British SAS and Parachute Regiment officers in the days when NATO was more comfortable with the fledgling Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). A former member of a European special forces unit who accompanied the KLA during the Kosovo conflict said that a commander with the nom de guerre of Bilal was organising the flow of arms and men into Macedonia, and that the veteran KLA commander Adem Bajrami was helping to co-ordinate the assault on Tetovo. Both were taught by British soldiers in the secretive training camps that operated above Bajram Curri in northern Albania during 1998 and 1999."¹⁶

These same British trained rebel commanders view Germany as the "enemy" because Bundeswehr troops stationed in Macedonia and Kosovo - rather than providing "protection" to NLA "freedom fighters" in the same way as their British and American KFOR counterparts - frequently detain "suspected terrorists" at the border:

"A spokesman for the Albanians' National Liberation Army (NLA) in Pristina warned the Bundeswehr its involvement would constitute 'a declaration of war by the Federal Republic of Germany'".¹⁷

In response to NLA threats, the Bundeswehr sent in its own Special Forces, the Fallschirmjäger (Parachutists) to work with its Panzer-Artillerie-Batterie squadron.¹⁸ German Defence Minister Rudolf Scharping confirmed that "he was ready to send more tanks and troops to bolster Bundeswehr forces".¹⁹ Yet in recent developments, Berlin has chosen to withdraw most of its troops from the Tetovo region and not in any way challenge the US military-intelligence ploy in support of the NLA rebels. Some of these German troops are now stationed on the Kosovo side of the border.

While the NLA received a shipment of brand new advanced weaponry "made in America", Germany donated (mid-June) to the Macedonian Security forces all terrain vehicles as well as weapons "for sophisticated infrared tracing in the battlefield." According to a report from Macedonia, the small contingent of German troops which still remains in the Tetovo region "was under heavy attack from the terrorists who attacked them with mortar from the mountains above Tetovo. That is probably the response of yesterday's [14 June 2001] donation to our army made by the German government".²⁰

While divisions between "NATO allies" are never made public, Germany's Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer - in a strongly worded statement to the Bundestag directed against "the Albanian extremists in Macedonia" - has called for "a long-term arrangement, aimed to make the whole region closer to Europe." (i.e. free of US encroachment). The German position is in marked contrast to that put forth by the US, which requires the Skopje government to grant amnesty to the terrorists, modify the country's constitution and incorporate the NLA rebels in civilian politics:

"The pact reportedly called for the rebels to stop their fight in exchange for amnesty guarantees. The rebels would also have the right to veto future political decisions regarding ethnic Albanian rights. The accord was reportedly mediated by Robert Frowick, a former U.S. envoy who currently served as a Balkan representative for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe."²¹

The Anglo-American Axis

The clash between Germany and America in the Balkans is part of a much broader process which affects the heart of the Western military-industrial complex and defence establishment. From the early 1990s, the US and Germany have acted jointly as NATO partners in the Balkans, coordinating their respective military, intelligence and foreign policy initiatives. While maintaining in their public statements a semblance of political unity, serious divisions started to emerge in the wake of the Dayton Accords (1995), as German banks scrambled to impose the Deutschmark and take over the monetary system of Yugoslavia's successor states.

Moreover, in the wake of the 1999 war in Yugoslavia, the US has reinforced its strategic, military and intelligence ties with Britain, while Britain has severed many of its ties (particularly in the area of defence and aerospace production) with Germany and France.

Launched in early 2000, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen and his British counterpart, Geoff Hoon, signed a "Declaration of Principles for Defense Equipment and Industrial Cooperation".²² Washington's objective was to encourage the formation of a "transatlantic bridge across which the DoD [US Department of Defense] can take its globalization policy to Europe."²³

The US defence industry - which now includes British Aerospace Systems (BaeS) - is clashing with the Franco-German defence consortium EADS - a conglomerate composed of France's Aerospatiale Matra, Deutsche Aerospace, which is part of the powerful Daimler group, and Spain's CASA. In other words, a major split in the Western military-industrial complex has occurred with the US and Britain on one side and Germany and France on the other.

Oil, guns and the Western military alliance are intimately related processes. Washington's design is to eventually ensure the dominance of the US military-industrial complex in alliance with the Anglo-American oil giants and Britain's major defense contractors. These developments evidently also have a bearing on the control over strategic pipelines, transport and communications corridors in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

In turn, this Anglo-American axis is also matched by increased cooperation between the CIA and Britain's MI 5 in the sphere of intelligence and covert operations as evidenced by the role played by British SAS Special Forces in training KLA rebels.

War, "Dollarisation" and the New World Order

"Protection" of the pipelines, covert activities and the recycling of drug money in support of armed insurgencies, militarisation of strategic corridors, defence procurement to "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) countries are all an integral part of the Anglo-American axis and its quest to

dominate oil and gas routes and transport corridors out of the Caspian sea basin and from the Black sea across the Balkans.

More generally, what is happening in the broader region linking Eastern Europe and the Balkans to the former Soviet republics is a relentless scramble for control over national economies by competing business conglomerates. And behind this process is the quest by Wall Street's financial establishment - in alliance with the defence and oil giants - to destabilise and discredit the Deutschmark (and the Euro) with a view to imposing the US dollar as the sole currency for the region.

Control over "money creation" --imposing the rule of the US Federal Reserve system throughout the World-- has become a central feature of US expansionism. In this regard, Washington's military-intelligence ploy not only consists in undermining "EU enlargement", it is also intent upon weakening and displacing the dominion of Germany's largest banking institutions (e.g. Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank and WestDeutsche Landesbank) throughout the Balkans.

In other words, the New World Order is marked by the clash between Europe and America for "colonial control" over national currencies. And this conflict between "competing capitalist blocks" will become increasingly acute when several hundred million people from Eastern Europe and the Balkans to Central Asia start using the Euro as their "de facto" national currency on January 1st 2002.

See map at <http://www.bsrec.bg/taskforce/SYNERGY/oilprojects2.html>). =20

Notes

- 1 Robert V. Baryiski, The Caspian Oil Regime: Military Dimensions, Caspian Crossroads Magazine, Volume 1, Issue No. 2, Spring 1995.
2. Reference to the European Union in this article should be interpreted as the "European Union minus Britain".
- 3 See Albanian Telegraph Agency, Tirana 28 July 1998 and Milsnews, Skopje, 23 January, 1997 available at <http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a379fb721329c.htm>.
4. Milsnews, op cit.
5. see Karen Talbot's incisive analysis: "Former Yugoslavia: The Name of the Game is Oil, People's Weekly World, May 2001 at <http://www.ecadre.net/pages/news/stories/990197752.shtml>, see also Marjorie Cohn, "Pacification for a pipeline: explaining the US Military presence in the Balkans, The Jurist, Legal Education Network, June 2001, <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumnew22.htm>.
6. George Monbiot, A Discreet Deal in the Pipeline, The Guardian, 15 February 2001.
7. Richard Giragosian, "Massive Kashagan Oil Strike Renews Geopolitical Offensive In Caspian", The Analyst, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, 7 June, 2000, <http://www.soros.org/caucasus/0059.html>.
8. see the Trade and Development (TDA) by Region at <http://www.tda.gov/region/sbdi.html>.
9. Alexander Gas and Oil Connections,

<http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/nte04224.htm>, October 2000.

10. Under so-called "asymmetric trade preferences" with the EU.=20
11. For further details on the role of Robert Frowick, see Michel Chossudovsky, "Macedonia: Washington's Military-Intelligence Ploy". June 2001
12. see AFP, 10 April 2001.
13. According to Pascal Boniface, director of the Paris Institute of International and Strategic Relations, UPI, 11 April 2001.
14. For details on CIA-BND support to the KLA see Michel Chossudovsky, "Kosovo Freedom Fighters Financed by Organised Crime", Covert Action Quarterly, Fall 1999 also available at <http://www.heise.de/tp/english/inhalt/co/2743/1.html>)
15. Tom Walker, NATO Troops caught in a Balkan Ulster, Sunday Times, London, 18 March 2001
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. see Deutsche Fallschirmjäger nach Tetovo, Spiegel Online, 24 March 2001, see also, Bundeswehr verlegt Soldaten ins Kosovo, Spiegel Online, 23 March 2001.
19. Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 19 March 2001
20. Information transmitted to the author from Skopje, June 2001.
21. Facts on File, World News Digest, 30 May 2001.
22. Reuters, 5 February 2000.
23. The agreement was signed (according to a Pentagon official quoted in Muradian) shortly after the creation of British Aerospace Systems resulting from the merger of BAe with GEC Marconi. British Aerospace (Bae) was already firmly allied to America=92s largest defense contractors Lockheed Martin and Boeing. For further details see Vago Muradian, Pentagon Sees Bridge to Europe, Defense Daily, Vol. 204, No. 40 Dec. 01, 1999.

Recent articles by the author on the Balkans:

"Washington Finances Ethnic Warfare in the Balkans", April 2001, at
<http://www.emperors-clothes.com/articles/choss/fin.htm> or
<http://www.canadiandimension.mb.ca/extra/x0404mc.htm>

"Economic Terrorism", May 2001 at
<http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/choss/eco1.htm> or
http://alainet.org/active/show_news.phtml?news_id=3D1225.

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