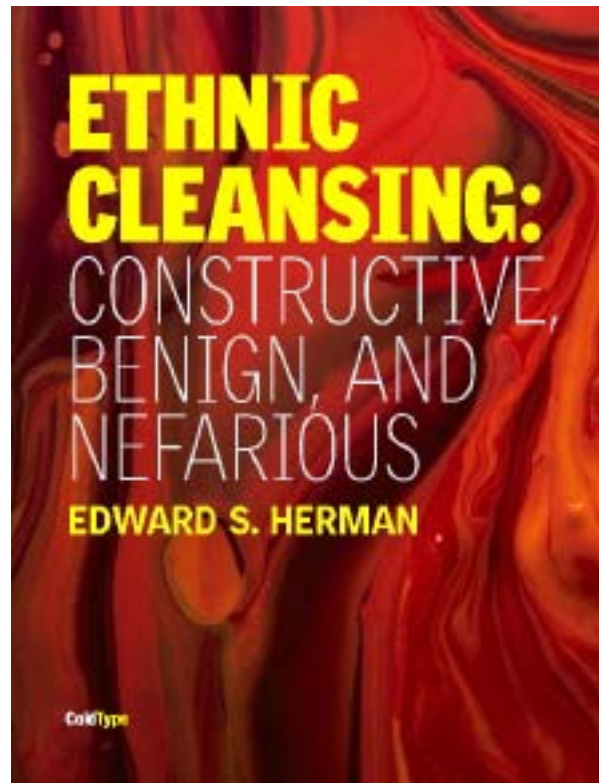




**ETHNIC
CLEANSING:**
CONSTRUCTIVE,
BENIGN, AND
NEFARIOUS

EDWARD S. HERMAN



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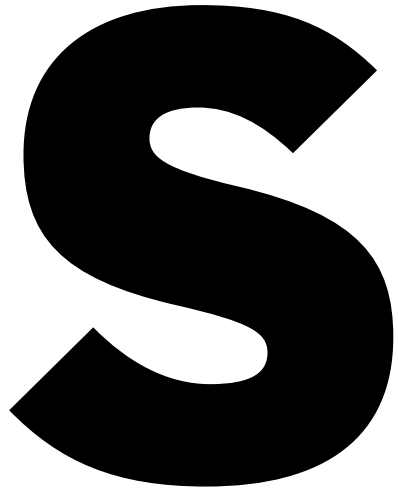
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Some years ago Noam Chomsky and I found it useful to distinguish between three categories of terrorism—constructive, benign and nefarious – the classification based strictly on the utility of the terrorism to U.S. interests as perceived by the ruling political elite [1] Thus, when terrorism is seen by U.S. officials as highly advantageous to U.S. interests, it is treated by those officials, and hence by the media, as a positive development and hence “constructive.” This was the case with the vast massacres by Suharto and colleagues in Indonesia in 1965-1966, that wiped out the base of a communist party and cleared the ground for an open door to foreign investment and a realignment of Indonesian foreign policy in favor of the West. In this instance not only was there no moral indignation expressed at the mass murder of many hundreds of thousands of civilians, it was treated as a “dividend” from our policy of military aid to the Indonesian army (Robert McNamara), and a “a gleam of light” in Asia (James Reston). [2]

When the terrorism is not especially helpful to U.S. interests but is carried out by an ally or client that U.S. officials want to placate or protect, the killing of large numbers of civilians is treated as of little interest and no evident moral concern—it is “benign” – as in the case of Indonesia’s invasion-occupation of East Timor in 1975 and after, which resulted in the death of a third of the East Timorese population, but which was aided and diplomatically protected by the U.S. government, based on the perceived merits of the Suharto dictatorship and kleptocracy. [3]

On the other hand, a terrorism carried out by a communist or any other designated enemy state is given great attention, arouses great moral fervor, and is treated as “nefarious.” This was the case with the killings by Pol Pot in Cambodia, the NLF in Vietnam, and Saddam Hussein in Iraq – except during the period in the 1980s when Saddam was serving U.S. interests by killing Iranians. This classi-

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fication system was and remains useful, and is notable in its successful tracking not only official designations but media treatment as well. For the first two kinds of terrorism, the media are reliably very quiet, with little coverage, antiseptic and sometimes apologetic treatment of murderous behavior where it is mentioned at all, [4] and with no indignation. With nefarious terror, on the other hand, coverage is intense, detailed, includes many personal stories of suffering, and elicits great indignation. [5]

Over the past two decades, during which ethnic cleansing has frequently been featured by Western officials, pundits and human rights activists, a closely parallel system of official treatment and media follow-on is also evident. As with terrorism, in the official view ethnic cleansing can be constructive, benign, or nefarious, and the media recognize this and adjust with almost clockwork precision to the demands of state policy in treating its different manifestations.

Constructive Ethnic Cleansing: Croatia and the Krajina Serbs

As a model instance of constructive ethnic cleansing, we may take the case of the Croat ethnic cleansing of Serbs from the Krajina region of Croatia in August 1995. Long before that date the Clinton administration had aligned itself with the Croats and Bosnian Muslims in the externally stoked civil war that engulfed the region from 1991 onward: it had supported sanctions on the Serbs alone, sponsored and used the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as an anti-Serb political-PR-judicial instrument [6], encouraged the Bosnian Muslims to withdraw from the Lisbon agreement in March 1992 – an agreement that would have settled the conflict and prevented the further large-scale blood-letting – helped organize an alliance between the Muslims and Croats to help them better fight the Serbs, and supported the import of arms and mujahadeen to help the Muslims fight and kill more effectively, among other matters.

To further weaken the bargaining position of the Serbs, the Clinton administration actively supported the Croatian army's attacks on the Serb communities in Croatia in Operation Flash in May 1995 and then in the massive ethnic cleansing of Krajina Serbs in Operation Storm in August 1995. Richard Holbrooke visited Zagreb two days before the beginning of Operation Storm, and clearly did not exercise any restraining influence on the imminent cleansing operation. Active U.S. support came in the form of military aid, the provision of military "advisers"

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closely affiliated with the U.S. armed forces, direct participation in the military operations via intelligence provision and even selective bombing missions, and a refusal to cooperate with the ICTY in providing information on possible war crimes committed by the Croatian armed forces. [7]

Another form of U.S. support was an intense and indignant focus on the Srebrenica massacre, [8] which took place during the month before Operation Storm and helped justify and distract attention from the Croatian ethnic cleansing and massacre. Operation Storm involved the removal of some 200,000 to 250,000 Krajina Serbs, in contrast with perhaps one-tenth that number of Bosnian Muslims removed from Srebrenica. [9] Operation Storm may also have involved the killing of more Serb civilians than Bosnian Muslim civilians killed in the Srebrenica area in July: virtually all of the Bosnian Muslim victims were fighters, not civilians, as the Bosnian Serbs bused the Srebrenica women and children to safety. The Croats made no such provision and hundreds of women, children and old people were slaughtered in Krajina. [10] The ruthlessness of the Croats was impressive: Tim Ripley notes that “UN troops watched horrified as Croat soldiers dragged the bodies of dead Serbs along the road outside the UN compound and then pumped them full of rounds from the AK-47s. They then crushed the bullet-ridden bodies under the tracks of a tank.” [11]

Media treatment of the Srebrenica and Krajina cases followed the familiar pattern of fixing victim worthiness and unworthiness in accord with a political agenda. With the Serbs their government’s target, and their government actively aiding the massive Croat ethnic cleansing program in Krajina, the media gave huge and indignant treatment to the first, with invidious language, calls for action, and little context. On the other hand, with Krajina, attention was slight and passing, detailed reporting on the condition of the victims was minimal, descriptive language was neutral, indignation was absent, and the slight context offered made the cleansing and killings acceptable.

The contrast in language is notable: the attack on Srebrenica “chilling,” “murderous,” “savagery,” “cold-blooded killing,” “genocidal,” “aggression,” and of course “ethnic cleansing.” With Krajina, the media used no such strong language—even ethnic cleansing was too much for them, even though this was an obvious, carefully planned, and major case. The Croat assault was merely a big “upheaval” that is “softening up the enemy,” “a lightning offensive,” explained away as a “response to Srebrenica” and a result of Serb leaders “overplaying their hand.”

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The Washington Post even cited U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith saying the “the Serb exodus was not ‘ethnic cleansing’.” [12] The paper did not allow a challenge to that judgment. In fact, however, the Croat operations in Krajina left Croatia the most ethnically purified of all the former components of the former Yugoslavia, although the NATO occupation of Kosovo allowed an Albanian ethnic cleansing of Serbs, Roma and others that rivalled that of Croatia in ethnic purification. [13]

Although in recent years there has been a trickle of expelled Serbs returning to Croatian Krajina, in neither the Krajina nor Kosovo cases has there been any effort by the NATO powers to organize the return of the ethnically-cleansed Serbs to their homes from which they were removed by force. Civilian victims associated with a Western target are unworthy. Based on no substantive differences whatever, their killers and ethnic cleansers are allowed to be retaliating and taking revenge, rather than pursuing ethnic cleansing for more sinister motives (racial hatred, land hunger), and these unworthy victims have no right of return.

In the case of Kosovo, the UN is actually planning for 40,000 additional Serb refugees in case of an expected granting of full independence to Kosovo and Kosovo Albanian control. [14] Thus, not only are unworthy victims not treated with sympathy or allowed any right of return, the international community will even plan to collaborate in a further round of ethnic cleansing by a Western ally or client, and the media won't complain or even notice.

Benign Ethnic Cleansing: Israel's Removal of the Palestinians to "Redeem the Land"

As an illustration of benign ethnic cleansing, the case of Israel's long-term expropriation and removal of Palestinians in Israel proper, on the West Bank, in East Jerusalem, and Gaza is clear and very important, morally and politically. It is “benign,” because the United States does not benefit from this process, which has a negative feedback effect on Arab and many other peoples' view of the United States; this is a case of the tail wagging the dog, with the dog injuring itself as it spins around in service to its tail.

Its importance rests on several other considerations: This has been a very obvious – even model – case of ethnic cleansing, in which one ethnic group has used its military power and aid from the West (mainly the United States) to evict

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another ethnic group that stands in its way. This fundamental fact has been acknowledged by a long line of Israeli officials and intellectual defenders of Israel, who have admitted, sometimes regretfully, that to “redeem the land” occupied by Palestinians in favor of the “chosen people” would require systematic expropriation and associated killing and forced transfer.

Back in 1948, David Ben-Gurion was clear that “We must use terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation, and the cutting of all social services to rid the Galilee of its Arab population.” Fifty years later, in 1998, Ariel Sharon made the same point about the centrality of ethnic cleansing in Israeli policy: “It is the duty of Israeli leaders to explain to public opinion, clearly and courageously, a certain number of facts that are forgotten with time. The first of these is that there is no Zionism, colonization or Jewish state without the eviction of the Arabs and the expropriation of their lands.” On May 24, 2006, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told a joint session of congress that “I believed and to this day still believe, in our people’s eternal and historic right to this entire land.”

Despite these and numerous other statements along the same line, [15] the Western elites pretend that Israel’s expropriations and ethnic cleansing are not the basic (and profoundly immoral) causal force in the struggle over Palestine, and in a Kafkaesque mode it is the Palestinian resistance to their ethnic cleansing that is to be condemned.

It should be noted that Israel’s “eternal and historic right” to Olmert’s “entire land” may well underlie the current and renewed Israeli aggression in Lebanon and huge ethnic cleansing and refugee generation in southern Lebanon. Officially, Israel’s ground invasion of Lebanon is an act of self-defense against Hezbollah’s threat, aimed at creating a security buffer zone until the arrival of a “multinational force with an enforcement capability.” But increasingly, as the initial goal of a narrow strip of only a few kilometers has now been extended up to the Litani River deep in Lebanon, the real motives behind Israel’s invasion are becoming crystal clear.

Back in the 1940s Ben Gurion declared that Israel’s “natural borders” extended to the Litani in the north and the Jordan to the east – coincidentally the two sources of snow fed water in the region. Even in their current announced plan to evacuate the West Bank the Israelis intend to hold the Jordan “for security reasons.” The Litani is next. The Golan is also valued for its water. Thus, while offi-

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cially, Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon is claimed to be an act of self-defense against Hezbollah's threat, aimed at creating a security buffer zone until the arrival of a "multinational force with an enforcement capability," the initial goal of a narrow strip of southern Lebanon "has now been extended up to the Litani River deep in Lebanon, [and] the real motives behind Israel's invasion are becoming crystal-clear.... This is a war to annex a major chunk of Lebanese territory without necessarily saying so, under the pretext of security buffer and deterrence against future attacks on Israel." [16]

This drive to "redeem the land," requiring the takeover of land in the possession of others by force, also constitutes a model case of a quest for a "Greater" entity – here a Greater Israel – a drive which in the case of Milosevic's and the Serbs' alleged drive for a "Greater Serbia" was presented as a prime element of illegal activity in the ICTY indictment of Milosevic (see below under Nefarious). In no case has this drive for a Greater Israel been pointed to by U.S. officials or the U.S. mainstream media as an immoral and illegal program that should call for international intervention and prosecution in the mode of the Serb prosecution, although the Israeli program has been explicitly designed to ethnically cleanse a sizable civilian population.

This model case of ethnic cleansing also represents a clear instance of applied racism, in which the militarily stronger and ethnic cleansing state – its leaders, armed forces, and a major part of its media, intellectuals and citizenry, who would be called "willing executioners" if residing in a Western targeted state – in both words and actions treat the population in process of removal as inferiors (*untersmenschen* in the Nazi mode). These inferiors are not merely discriminated against but freely abused with beatings, harsh treatment at checkpoints, home demolitions and expropriations in accord with Israeli desires, theft of land and water, and killings without penalty. As the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem states, "Israel has established in the occupied Territories a separation cum discrimination regime, in which it maintains two systems of laws, and a person's rights are based on his or her national origin. This regime is the only of its kind in the world, and brings to mind dark regimes of the past, such as the Apartheid regime in South Africa."

High Israeli officials have for years described the Palestinians as "cockroaches," "lice," "grasshoppers," "animals," "two-legged beasts," a "cancer," along with other epithets of dehumanization, and they have repeatedly devalued Palestinian

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life as compared with that of Jews (most recently, Olmert's statement that "the lives and well-being of Sderot's residents are more important than those of Gaza residents"; more dramatically, Rabbi Yaacov Perin's "One million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail"). Palestinian numbers represent what in Israel is called a "demographic threat," and Israeli academic and human rights activist Jeff Halper states that "schemes of 'transfer' have become an acceptable part of Israeli political discourse...[as Israel] actively pursues policies of displacement: exile and deportation, the revoking of residency rights, economic impoverishment, land expropriations, house demolitions, and other means of making life so unbearable as to induce 'voluntary' Palestinian emigration." [17]

Hundreds of checkpoints make Palestinian movement difficult and insecure, even between local neighborhoods, and they are closed on Jewish holidays, paralyzing Palestinian economic and social life. As of two years ago 79 Palestinians had died as a result of delays at checkpoints and dozens of women had given childbirth (along with many still-borns) at or near obstructed checkpoints. [18] There have been over 11,000 Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes since 1967, fewer than 600 belonging to people accused of terrorist activities or their families (the latter a form of collective punishment that is a war crime). One Israeli cabinet minister, Yosef Lapid, a holocaust survivor, caused an uproar at one weekly cabinet meeting, at which the demolition of homes in the Rafah refugee camp was being discussed, when he said that a picture of an old Palestinian women on the rubble of her home reminded him "of my grandmother in the Holocaust," adding that there "is no forgiveness for people who treat an old woman this way." [19] His remarks, unreported in the New York Times, had no influence on Israeli policy.

The demolitions are almost all to clear the ground for homes or roads or "security zones" for the

, with minimal notice and zero indignation from the Western establishment. In Jerusalem, "Jewish-Israeli homes are never demolished, although 80% of the building violations take place on the Western side of the city." [20] When the settlers were removed from Gaza, they had long notice and received between \$140,000 and \$400,000 per family for this dislocation. Palestinians whose houses are demolished rarely receive even token compensation and, as Amnesty International notes, "the family may only have 15 minutes to take out what belongings they have before the furniture is thrown into the street and their home

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bulldozed” [21] This racist double standard, as well as the associated racist language and perspectives, has been normalized and has caused no negative reaction toward the racist state in the West.

Israel’s Western-approved ethnic cleansing program has been massive, proceeding both in spurts of larger-scale cleansing and in continual lower-intensity expropriations and removal for almost 60 years (1947-2006). Some 750,000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed in 1947-48, several hundred thousand were removed during and immediately after the 1967 war, and an exodus, partially “voluntary,” based on Israeli violence, threats, fear, and impoverishment has been continuous at other times up to the present day. The apartheid wall under construction within the boundaries of the West Bank has involved the removal of thousands, with larger numbers in prospect, plus damage to a great many whose lands have been partly expropriated or divided by the wall (which carefully avoids disturbing Jewish settlements, but not Palestinian settlements or property). Large numbers of Palestinians have simply moved out of their homeland, adding a 2.4 million non-refugee diaspora to a refugee diaspora of 2.5 million (the total Palestinian population worldwide is estimated to be 9.7 million).

It is an important fact that this durable and massive ethnic cleansing process has taken place in daily violation of international law, from which the ethnic cleansing state is exempt by virtue of long-standing primary U.S. support, a lesser but real support by the other great powers, and the weakness and compromised character of the Arab and other members of the international community. Israel has simply ignored dozens of Security Council and other UN rulings, the Geneva Conventions applicable to an occupying power, and decisions of the International Court. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates that “the occupying power shall not transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies,” a clear ban on settlements, ignored along with numerous other provisions of international law (which illegalize the theft of water, the checkpoints and abusive treatment, and the numerous other restrictions on movement).

Israel’s huge wall, built almost entirely within Palestinian territory, inflicting serious damage on several hundred thousand Palestinians and blatantly in violation of the Geneva Conventions, was found illegal by the International Court on July 9, 2004, the court requesting the international community “not to render any aid or assistance to the wall and associated regime.” But Israel has simply ignored

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this legal ruling, with the crucial support of the United States and de facto support of the international community, the latter (including the World Bank), continuing to do normal business with the outlaw and thus colluding in its law violations and ethnic cleansing program. [22]

Israel has been able to violate international law and continue its ethnic cleansing project without obstruction or any sort of penalty to this day. The United States vetoed a demand for international monitors during the second intifada in 2002, and has also prevented any international intervention in the serial and brutal Israeli armed attacks on Palestinian refugee camps and cities (e.g., Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah in 2002) and currently Gaza and Lebanon once again. Obviously, no tribunals have been established to deal with these blatant and large-scale war crimes and massive ethnic cleansing. This is benign ethnic cleansing.

The rationalizations for this systematic ethnic cleansing have been extremely crude and question-begging, but effective in the West. Israel is always allowed to be “retaliating” to terror, although there is invariably a sequence of tit-for-tat violence that the Western establishment regularly cuts off at the point of a Palestinian action, ignoring the prior Israeli provocations. [23] That the Israelis keep seizing large and small blocs of Palestinian-occupied land in response to “terror” and for Israeli “security” is laughable, and of course flies in the face of the long-standing Israeli admission of plans for “redeeming the land,” but the Israelis have been allowed to get away with this laughable basis for land theft and expulsions. Palestinian resistance to their removal is allowed to be “terrorism” and not retaliation for Israeli violence, which is never terrorism or causal.

The Palestinians are in a lose-lose situation: if they don’t resist removal they will be removed and the West will not help them; if they resist without violence, as in the first intifada, the West will not help them and they will continue to be removed; and if they resist with their puny force, they will be “terrorists” and the West will condemn their “violence” as it collaborates further in their ethnic cleansing!

Arabs and Third World peoples more generally can see that despite the preachings of the West on the enlightenment values of equality, the value of each individual, tolerance, and the importance of the rule of law, all of these values have been suspended in the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, with the West providing unstinting and hypocritical support to Israel’s brutal ethnic

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cleansing and applied racism. This has fed the anger of the Islamic world and beyond by providing an ongoing and exceedingly clear illustrative case of Western racism and discrimination, a case where the West is engaged in a wholly unprovoked war of aggression and colonial aggrandizement against a non-Western people.

Nefarious Ethnic Cleansing: The Case of the Serbs in Kosovo

The best known case in which the West has denounced and fought against ethnic cleansing has been that of the Serbs fighting in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo. In fact the term really came into its own in application to this case. The Serbs were also accused of genocide in Bosnia and Kosovo, although there was the difficulty that after the Kosovo bombing war was over in June 1999 and intensive forensic searches yielded only some 4,000 bodies from all sides, the hysterical claims of U.S. officials (which at a peak hit 500,000 Kosovo Albanian victims) were shown to be wild propaganda exaggerations. Thus, to establish a charge of genocide against Milosevic the ICTY had to extend his villainy to Bosnia and, accordingly, he was belatedly made part of a “joint criminal conspiracy” along with Bosnian Serb officials. [24]

There is no question but that there was ethnic cleansing in Bosnia in the years 1991-1995, and that the Bosnian Serbs were implicated in the ethnic cleansing operations of those years. But they were not alone – the Croats and Bosnian Muslims were very active participants, with substantial armed forces, imported mujahadeen fighters, and growing aid from the United States and other external allies (including Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) that produced an eventual military stalemate and threatened defeat for the Bosnian Serbs. [25] And as noted earlier, the largest single ethnic cleansing of the Yugoslavia wars was in Operation Storm, carried out by the Croats against the Krajina Serbs, with active U.S. assistance. In Bosnia the ethnic cleansing resulted from a struggle for land control by three ethnic groups or “nations” in a civil conflict unleashed by the unmediated breakup of Yugoslavia. None of the three was powerless, and all suffered casualties, the Bosnian Muslims the most, the Croats the least. [26]

One important difference from the case of Israel in Palestine is that all three ethnic groups in Bosnia were seeking to improve their strategic position, whereas in the Israel-Palestine case, only one side has been seeking to take land from the

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other contestant. A second difference is that in Bosnia and Croatia all three parties in the struggle were well armed, and in the end the Bosnian Serbs were even overbalanced by their military opponents, [27] whereas in the Israel-Palestine case the contestants are one of the world's strongest military powers (Israel), backed by a superpower, versus a virtually defenseless population that doesn't even have the support of several of its important local Arab neighbors. A third difference, following plausibly from the second, is that whereas the ratio of Muslim to Serb civilian deaths in Bosnia was perhaps two to one, the ratio of Palestinian to Israeli civilian deaths was for many years something like 25 to 1, dropping in the second intifada to 3 or 4 to 1 (with a higher injury ratio). [28]

In Kosovo, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) became very active in 1998 and the Yugoslav army responded with a crackdown that produced a large number of internal refugees. NATO threats and an accord in October 1998 forced the Serbs to accept a large body of OSCE monitors and to withdraw Yugoslav army forces from Kosovo. The KLA was not subject to any restraints by NATO and took advantage of the new arrangements to occupy more Kosovo space, and they engaged in numerous provocations to entice the Yugoslav police to crackdowns that would help precipitate NATO intervention. The Racak "massacre" of January 15, 1999, almost surely not a genuine massacre but an incident in which KLA battle deaths were converted into a civilian massacre by KLA-OSCE-ICTY and media cooperation, [29] helped precipitate a NATO war on behalf of the Kosovo Albanians. The war produced a flood of refugees fleeing the Yugoslav army, the KLA, and the NATO bombs.

Was any of this "ethnic cleansing"? Before the NATO bombing war began there had been many refugees created by Yugoslav army actions in pursuit of the KLA and treating Albanian villagers sometimes very harshly. There were, however, no cases reported of slaughters by the Serbs comparable to the U.S. massacre at Haditha, nothing remotely like the U.S. destruction of Falluja, and pre-bombing war civilian casualties in Kosovo were only a very small fraction of those produced by the U.S. forces in Iraq. [30] The Kosovo Albanians who became refugees in that period were victims of a civil war within a part of Serbia, whereas West Bank victims were in occupied territory outside of Israel. Most relevant to the issue of ethnic cleansing, Kosovo Albanians were not being pushed out to make way for Serb settlers, as Palestinians were displaced by Jewish settlers in the true case of ethnic cleansing on the West Bank. The German Foreign office stated

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explicitly that the turmoil and refugee generation in Kosovo before the bombing war was not a case of ethnic cleansing, [31] and British officials even acknowledged that in the runup to the bombing war the KLA killed more people in Kosovo, including Albanian “traitors” as well as Serb police and civilians, than did the Yugoslav army and police. [32]

Albanians who fled during the bombing war were war refugees, not victims of ethnic cleansing, and Serbs in Kosovo fled with even greater frequency than the Albanians. Nevertheless, in a remarkable propaganda coup, the war propagandists made and actually got away with the claim that the war was necessary to allow the return of Albanians whose exit was a result of the war itself.

A number of consequences followed from the fact that the Serbs were the targets of the United States and its allies. Flowing strictly from this political alignment, Serb treatment of their antagonists in the wars in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo was nefarious, and from 1991 onward the Serbs were the focus of attention and vilification and subject to inflated claims, sanctions and legal (ICTY) attacks from which others doing much the same thing were free. As regards ethnic cleansing, the term was applied to them freely, not only in Bosnia but in Kosovo, where it was not applicable. As noted earlier, ethnic cleansing was extremely applicable to the removal of Serbs from Croatian Krajina, but as this was done under U.S. auspices the term was not applied there, nor was it applied to Israel on the West Bank where ethnic cleansing was crystal clear.

In the three year period 1998 through 2000, the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Time and Newsweek used the phrase “ethnic cleansing” some 1,200 times in discussing Kosovo, in about four-fifths of the cases in reference to Serb policy, whereas during the entire decade of the 1990s they used the phrase only 14 times in discussing Israel, and only five times referring to Israeli policy. This reflects massive internalized bias.

Another consequence of the Serbs being U.S. targets was that they were allegedly guilty of striving for a “Greater Serbia,” an important feature of the ICTY case against Milosevic. But this accusation was silly and effectively fell apart during the Milosevic trial when the prosecutor Geoffrey Nice admitted to the court that Milosevic wasn’t striving to enlarge Serb claims but merely to keep all Serbs under one flag as Yugoslavia disintegrated – and there was a great deal of evidence that Milosevic wasn’t trying very hard even to keep Serbs in one state. [33] The contrast here with Israel in Palestine is dramatic – j17

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Israel has been openly trying to enlarge Israeli territory at the expense of another people. But as noted earlier, this is not something the U.S.-dominated international community interferes with, and this model case of ethnic cleansing isn't even worth discussing in the West. This is benign, not nefarious ethnic cleansing.

In the case of Kosovo, the West was so upset at the effects of the struggle there and victimization of the Kosovo Albanians that the Serbs were warned that force might be employed against them if they didn't restrain themselves, and the Serbs were compelled to accept a large number of OSCE monitors, although as noted earlier no restrictions were placed by the OSCE on the KLA. Again the contrast with the West Bank case is dramatic: there, where there was real ethnic cleansing by Israel on behalf of settlers taking over Palestinian property, and with massive Israeli operations in violation of the Third and Fourth Geneva Convention, no monitors were allowed, because the United States wouldn't support this, so ethnic cleansing could proceed unhindered.

Then, with the excuse of Racak, the United States could go to war and devastate Serbia and Kosovo, to protect those victims of Serbia in Kosovo in a great moral crusade against "ethnic cleansing"! Racak was not a massacre of civilians, the Serbs were not ethnically cleansing in Kosovo, and the Serbs were not violating international law in their civil war struggle in Kosovo as the Israelis were doing on the West Bank, but the United States has been able to get away with the active support of ethnic cleansing in the one case and illegal war against a non-existent ethnic cleansing on the other hand, with the support of the international community.

Conclusion

In the age of Kafka, ethnic cleansing is clearly acceptable when it is serviceable to the United States or carried out by one of its allies or clients, but it is assailed with great energy and indignation and opposed by force when engaged in (or asserted to be engaged in) by a U.S. target. In the former cases, the United States and its allies may actively aid the ethnic cleansing state, and, except for occasional nominal actions that the international community does not attempt to enforce, and its occasional whimpers calling for restraint, ethnic cleansing can proceed for decades in violation of both international law and the moral rules supposedly guiding the enlightened West. This of course requires great discipline by the intel-

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lectual class and media, who must keep the bulk of relevant facts out of sight and allow the ethnic cleansing state to expropriate and remove its unwanted ethnic target population under cover of a combination of silence and its alleged necessary response to “terror” and inability to locate a “negotiating partner.”

On the other hand, ethnic cleansing and claims of ethnic cleansing by a target country like the former Yugoslavia is treated with an intense focus of attention, great moral indignation, and aggressive “humanitarian intervention,” in keeping with Western enlightenment values. In this case, sanctions may be imposed and international monitors may be forced upon the delinquent country to constrain its misbehavior, and an incident such as the killing of 40 Kosovo Albanians by Yugoslav police can bring about a bombing war and occupation of part of the villain’s national territory. In this case also an international tribunal can be organized to bring the ethnic cleansing state’s leaders and military commanders to justice. Nefarious ethnic cleansing can be treated harshly.

In 1996 Israel could kill 104 Lebanese civilians, 86 of them children, in a bombing raid on a UN refugee facility, and in July 2006 kill another 36 children in a UN facility along with killing 4 UN observers in July 2006, and lie about their knowledge of the nature of the targets in all three cases, and receive no reprimand from its U.S. sponsor and hence no serious response from the “international community.” In fact, Boutros-Boutros Ghali’s taking the 1996 killings a bit too seriously for Clinton administration tastes may have hastened his replacement as UN leader. [34] This was the same Clinton administration that found the 40 killed at Racak (none children, one woman, all but the woman almost surely KLA fighters) a really terrible event worthy of a violent international response!

The hypocrisy involved in this applied double standard is breath-taking. As noted earlier, whereas both the Croat leadership in cleansing Serbs from Krajina and the Israeli leadership in removing Palestinians were very clearly doing this to get rid of an unwanted population to replace it with a competing ethnic group, the Yugoslav actions in Kosovo were features of a civil war. Whereas the Israeli leadership was and still is quite explicitly seeking a “Greater Israel” by land theft and people expulsion, Milosevic was trying to keep the Serbs of the former Yugoslavia within a single remnant political entity and not trying to enlarge Serb territory at the expense of some other ethnic group (as Prosecutor Geoffrey Nice acknowledged during the Milosevic trial). Whereas the Israeli leadership has for years described the Palestinians in extremely derogatory and racist language, no

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such derogation of Kosovo Albanians (or other nationalities) has ever been attributed to Milosevic, and Albanians in Belgrade have never been subjected to discrimination such as Arabs undergo in Israel (not to speak of the occupied territories). In sum, the differential treatment of Milosevic and Sharon, the one prosecuted – after a failed assassination attempt[35] – and the other honored as a Free World leader and “man of peace,” was not only not based on the realities of ethnic cleansing or any honest application of the law, it reflects pure power and structured injustice in the age of Kafka.

ENDNOTES

1. Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* (Boston; South End Press, 1979).
2. *Ibid.*, chapter 4, sec. 4.1.
3. *Ibid.*, chapter 3, section 3.4.4.
4. In a classic case, when Indonesian violence in East Timor reached its peak in 1977-1978, New York Times coverage fell to zero; see *ibid.*; see also Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (New York: Pantheon, 1988, 2002), chapter 2, “Worthy and Unworthy Victims.”
5. See *Washington Connection*, chap. 5, sec. 5.2; Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *After the Cataclysm* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), esp. chap. 6.
6. See Michael Mandel, *How America Gets Away With Murder* (London: Pluto, 2005), chaps. 4-6.
7. Raymond Bonner, “War Crimes Panel Finds Croat Troops ‘Cleansed’ the Serbs,” *New York Times*, March 21, 1999.
8. See Edward Herman,
<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=74&ItemID=8244>
“The Politics of the Srebrenica Massacre,” *ZNet*, July 7, 2005
9. On August 10, 1995, Madeleine Albright cried out to the Security Council that “as many as 13,000 men, women and children were driven from their homes” in Srebrenica.
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N95/858/26/PDF/N9585826.pdf?OpenElement> : “The Situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N95/858/26/PDF/N9585826.pdf?OpenElement>>S/PV.3564), UN Security Council, August 10, 1995, 5.30 p.m., pp. 6-7). Needless to say, Albright did not cry out about the

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200,000+ Karajina Serbs being driven out of their homes in the same time frame as she wept for the 13,000.

10. The Krajina Serb human rights organization Veritas estimated that 1,205 civilians were killed in Operation Storm, including 358 women and 10 children. See "Croatian Serb Exodus Commemorated," Agence France Press, Aug. 4, 2004; In the graves around Srebrenica exhumed through 2000, only one of the 1,883 bodies was identified as female.

11. Tim Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force* (Lancaster, UK: CDISS, 1999), p. 192.

12. "U.N. Report: Bosnian Serbs Massacred Srebrenica Muslims," Washington Post, Aug. 12, 1995. For illustrative language, see also John Pomfret, "Investigators Begin Exhuming Group of Mass Graves in Bosnia," Washington Post, July 8, 1996. "Upheaval" is in "Softening Up The Enemy," Newsweek, Aug. 21, 1995.

13. Jan Oberg, "Misleading UN Report on Kosovo (Part A)," TFF PressInfo 77, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, Lund, Sweden, October 3, 1999

<http://www.transnational.org/pressinf/pf77.html>

14. "Europe Prepares to Evacuate 40,000 Kosovo Serbs," Focus News Agency (Bulgaria), April 18, 2006.

15. For several dozen Israeli leaders' statements of racist denigration and indication that ethnic cleansing is a necessary and proper course, see

<http://www.monabaker.com/quotes.htm>>Quotes,

<http://www.monabaker.com/quotes.htm>> The Middle East Conflict (Personal Website of Mona Baker)

<http://www.just-international.org/article.cfm?newsid=20001494>

Israel's Barbaric and Primitive Action: Examples of Hate Speech," International Movement for a Just World, 2005.

Olmert's speech can be found at

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/>

[PMSpeaks/speechcong240506.htm](http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/PMSpeaks/speechcong240506.htm)

16. Kaveh L Afrasiabi, "It's about annexation, stupid!":

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HH05Ak01.html

see also. Paul Larudee, "The Clearing of South Lebanon: The Lebanese Nakba and Israeli Ambitions":

<http://www.counterpunch.org/larudee08082006.html>

17. Jeff Halper, *Obstacles to Peace: A Re-Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (Carrboro, NC: The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, 2004), p. 17.

18. Ibid, p. 18.

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19. A.P., "Official Compares Israeli Action to Nazi's," *Guardian*, May 21, 2004.
20. Halper, *Obstacles to Peace*, p. 34.
21. AI, "Israel: Home Demolitions," Dec. 8, 1999.
22. See "Free Markets: Imprisoned People," in "Against 'Sustainable' Apartheid & Occupation," <http://www.stophthewall.org>
23. This is dramatically evident in the cases of the recent Israeli invasions of Gaza and Lebanon, where the U.S. mainstream media have simply taken the captures of a few Israeli soldiers as the precipitating events, neglecting both any prior Israeli actions and the evidence of Israeli plans for these actions that were simply waiting for the proper moment to execute.
24. For a discussion of "joint criminal enterprise," along with other relevant matters, see Edward Herman and David Peterson, <http://www.coldtype.net/herman.html>
25. This military stalemate is discussed in Tim Fenton's "The Military Context," in Edward S. Herman, ed., *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Context, Politics* (forthcoming).
26. Ewa Tabeau and Jakub Bijak, "War-related Deaths in the 1992-1995 Armed Conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Critique of Previous Estimates and Recent Results," *European Journal of Population*, Vol. 21, No. 2-3, June, 2005, pp. 187-215; Mirsad Tokaca of the Sarajevo-based Research and Documentation Center, as quoted in "Bosnian war 'claimed 100,000 lives'," *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, November 21, 2005; in Nedim Dervisbegovic, "Research halves Bosnia war death toll to 100,000," *Reuters*, November 23, 2005.
27. See note 25 above.
28. *Ibid.*; James Bennett, "MIDEAST TURMOIL: NEWS ANALYSIS; Mideast Balance Sheet," *New York Times*, March 12, 2002 .
29. See Mandel, *How America Gets Away With Murder*, pp. 72-80; Edward Herman, "Propaganda System Number 1," *Z Magazine*, July-Aug. 2001
30. The total killings in Kosovo in the year before the NATO bombing war was estimated at some 2,000, with less than half of those allocable to the Yugoslav army (see note 30). As the U.S. killings in Iraq are surely greater than 50,000, we are talking about a ratio of better than 50 to 1 in favor of the United States as killer.
31. Both the German foreign office, German courts, and British intelligence denied that Serb actions in Kosovo before the war were linked to ethnicity: see Noam Chomsky, *A New Generation Draws the Line* [London: Verso, 2000], pp. 112-3.

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32. British Minister of Defense George Robertson told the House of Commons on March 24, 1999 that until mid-January 1999 “the KLA were responsible for more deaths in Kosovo than the Yugoslav authorities had been.” (Cited in *ibid.*, p. 106.)

33. See Herman and Peterson, “Death of Milosevic in the Propaganda System.”

34. In Ran HaCohen’s “The UN from Qana to Jenin: Why the Secretary General’s Report Cannot Be Trusted,” Letter From Israel, Aug. 14, 2002, HaCohen describes how back in 1996 then Secretary General Boutros-Ghali had insisted on publishing a report on Israel’s killing of over a 100 civilians in Qana, over U.S. protests. The result was that a week later, on May 13, 1996, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher informed Boutros-Ghali that the United States would veto his re-election. Writing in 2002 HaCohen was explaining how the more pliable Kofi Annan, in dealing with Jenin, “without visiting the scene issued a shameful report, echoing Israeli propaganda, ignoring even ‘embarrassing’ material published in the Israeli press.”

35. A U.S. missile attack targeted Milosevic’s residence in Belgrade on April 22, 1999, but failed to assassinate him.



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