

**THE ROLE OF SERBIAN
ORIENTALISTS IN JUSTIFICATION
OF GENOCIDE AGAINST MUSLIMS
OF THE BALKANS**

Law, during the years 1991-1997, served as an associate professor in the field of international law and human rights at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He also worked as a research fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, D.C., and as a senior advisor to the Program of Public International Law and Foreign Policy at the U.S. State Department. He has also worked as a senior advisor and political analyst at the U.S. State Department, and was in charge of a special task force for strategic research at the U.S. State Department, North Carolina.

P R E F A C E

The name of Norman Cigar is fairly familiar to the public of BiH first and foremost by his book **GENOCIDE IN BOSNIA - A POLICY OF "ETHNIC CLEANSING"** (Sarajevo, 1998.), published by the Bosnian Cultural Center and the Institute for the Research of Crimes Committed against Humanity and International Law. During the aggression on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991 - 1995), Norman Cigar gave several interviews to the local newspapers, though his just stand towards BiH has been presented in detail to a wider reading public in English language.

Norman Cigar is a researcher at the Institute of the Balkan Studies in Washington, DC, and a senior research fellow with the *Program of public international law and foreign policy*. He was a Professor at the Navy Academy for *Modern Warfare, Department of National Security*. In his career, he also served as a military and political analyst at Pentagon. He also worked as a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin, and was in charge of a special detachment for strategic research at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

He has published several books from his area of expertise, and has written for dozens of prominent newspapers and magazines.

In this Study that we publish in both Bosnian and English version, Norman Cigar, using an unbiased method of an analyst, presents the shameful role played by the Serbian orientalists in preparing the Yugoslav public opinion - especially the Serbian one - for the Serbian aims of the war-to-be and genocide to be committed against non-Serb population, particularly Bosniacs and Albanians, who were the first standing in their way.

The Study was prepared during the very aggression on BiH, throughout 1993 and the first half of 1994. It was prepared during the Serbian orientalists' campaign for obtaining justification for mass victimization committed in BiH, particularly obtaining new motives for the continuation of criminal campaign. The aim of this campaign was to successfully end another stage of taking over others' living space (accomplished through acts of genocide) in order to forget both this crime and the ones committed before, "to let bygones be bygones". The need for a quick and successful ending of this stage and campaign was urgent, despite the fact that it had not been fully implemented and its goals completely fulfilled. Apart from slackening of offensive of the aggressor and strengthening of resistance offered by the victims, this need was conditioned with provisional decisions of the International Court of Justice in April and September 1993, and particularly with the Decision of the United Nations Security Council of February 19, 1993, on establishment of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991 (ICTY).

Special importance in this regard should have been attached to the decisions of the Security Council on forming "UN safety areas" (after months of hard negotiations). These areas were supposed to be a UN refuge for the Muslim population, or at least that is what has been passed in the Security Council Resolutions. For Bosniacs endangered by the Serbian genocidal policy these "UN safety areas" should have been a safe haven.

Provisional decisions of the International Court of Justice and an inauguration of a new, special court served the function, though with less effect, as did Jodl's Paper (Alfred Jodl) presented before the German "reichsleiters" and "gauleiters" on 7 November 1943..

In this Study, Norman Cigar quotes dozens of publications, produced by the Serbian orientalists, that have approved genocide against Bosniacs in the name of "scientific and intellectual justification". These publications include books and articles that spread like pestilence through the powerful media and reached enthusiastic and foaming minds, sowers of terror.

In his quest for power, Milošević used whatever was at hand, the Serbian Orthodox Church, The Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Serbian history, the Serbian version of the history of the Balkans, the Serbian oriental studies... The problem does not lie only in the fact that Milošević used all these, it also lies in the fact that all these had been voluntarily offered to be used!

Serbian orientalists or the self-proclaimed Serbian orientalists and "Islamologists", have gladly put themselves at the disposal the fascist and its genocidal policy purposes. They have done their homework and voluntarily offered their dirty services to the Milošević's regime. Actually, they took part in its creation. This kind

of Satan literature, this kind of hatred generator has been witnessed and well remembered during the anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic campaign in Europe seized by fascism, the Europe of 1930s and 1940s.

The Study, apart from a brief Introduction, contains five chapters, the first of which sets the difference between orientalism and islamology on one hand, and politically and chauvinistically-oriented Serbian "orientalism" and "islamology", generating hatred toward its victims and motivating victimizers, with a fascist goal of destroying the victims and taking over their living space. However, Dr. Cigar has also pointed out that the Serbian orientalism relied on the classical, West-European "orientalism" from the colonial period, whose purpose was to justify the colonialism while presenting the colonial population as less worthy... this is how a crime against communities standing in the way of fulfillment of the "Greater Serbia" plan obtained its "scientific" support.

The second chapter deals with the symbiosis of the Serbian orientalism with nationalism and anything that has resulted from this process. The third chapter follows the propaganda campaign of "orientalists" paving the way for genocides - to-come, suggesting that committing a genocide "serves the purpose" of the Serbian people, defending "endangered" orthodox religion, and Christianity and Europe in general.

In order to justify such severe criminal acts, they were also in need of supporting arguments. They have found them in an insinuation, allegedly scientifically confirmed, that the Muslims represent "an existential threat" to the Serbian people. The fourth chapter of the Study unmasks this false dilemma "it is either us or

them". From there to the justification of already started and almost completed act of genocide it takes very little. The fifth chapter shows the transformation of the so-called scientific analysis into a mere justification of the crime committed.

In the conclusion, Dr. Cigar did not only adequately and precisely evaluate the role and responsibility of these Serbian orientalists and "islamologists", but also precisely foresaw the events on the wider territory of the Balkans, regardless of how they end in BiH. He has precisely foreseen the destiny of minorities, especially Muslims living in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, who endanger it with the mere "fact that minorities form a significant part of population of the rump Yugoslavia". That was when Dr. Cigar clearly saw that the Muslims stand in the way and that the Serbs want to get rid of them. Reality soon came as a confirmation. Albanians at Kosovo, despite their peaceful Ghandi-like tactics, have suffered a genocide.

This Study of Norman Cigar is by itself a witness of how science can be a mask or, to use a better term, ugly cheek behind which a terrible arrangement of insanity and madness takes place. Each statement in this Study is substantiated with a relevant quote or a fact, and it is accompanied by a scientific apparatus. The Study also poses certain unpleasant questions both to us and politics, the questions that require answers.

Publishers

I

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim community of the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been the victim of what can be termed, by any accepted legal and moral measure, genocide. At the heart of this tragedy was a Serbian nationalist ideology heavily influenced by Orientalism taken in a broad sense and writ large, a stark embodiment of the process marked a manichean division into “them” and “us” as studied by Edward Said in his pioneer work on this phenomenon.¹ To be sure, a linkage between scholarship and government is not new, as Orientalists have been used at various times and places to explain and support state policy toward Muslims.² However, seldom in modern times has

1 Edward W. Said, *ORIENTALISM*, New York: Vintage, 1979.

2 See, for example, Stuart Schaar, *ORIENTALISM AT THE SERVICE OF IMPERIALISM*, *Race & Class*, Summer 1979, p. 67.

Orientalism had, such a direct relationship to policy as it has to that of "ethnic cleansing," as the process of genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been commonly called.

Serbian Orientalists Providing the Scholarly Reassurance

Serbia's Orientalists ordinarily would not draw more than passing attention. Their scholarship is unremarkable and their numbers and production are small. What has made them significant, however, has been their linkage to policy toward Bosnia-Herzegovina's Muslims. They have been at the forefront of the anti-Islamic movement since the 1980s, and they have contributed significantly to genocide against the Muslims by making this process intellectually respectable among all strata of the Serbian community. The focus of this study is on Bosnia-Herzegovina because of the scale of victimization that has occurred there, although the conclusions also apply to other areas of former Yugoslavia with large Muslim populations such as Kosovo, the Sandžak, and Serbia itself.

The Serbian Orientalists' recent writings and public statements have virtually always been linked intimately to a political context and objectives. The fact that their intent in mounting an intellectual attack on Islam and the Muslims was to provide the scholarly support for an emerging nationalist ideology was usually transparent. That these scholars were asked so frequently by the Belgrade and Bosnian Serb authorities and government

controlled media to explain and justify to the public the official state policy toward the Muslims, moreover, is a clear indication of the government's perception of the utility of such expert support, and of the expectation that such cooperation would be readily forthcoming.

In Serbian academic circles, there is not perhaps always a clear-cut distinction of who is an "Orientalist," as many scholars in the humanities and social sciences deal extensively with Islam when writing on most historical and political topics, given Islam's unavoidable connection with Serbian affairs for the last six centuries. Although the focus here is not on this broader network of scholars, strictly speaking not full-time Islamic experts, they are also influential on Islamic policy in their own right and also contributed to the shaping of intellectual and public opinion as the salience of the Islamic issue increased. They too approached their subject with a hostile attitude little different from that of the professional Orientalists. However, it is the more or less "professional" Orientalists who bear a special responsibility, for it can be argued that they of all people in Serbia should have known best what effect their interpretation of Islam would have.

II

ORIENTALISM AND NATIONALISM: DEVELOPING THE SYMBIOSIS

Nationalism and Scholarship in Serbia

The Serbian Orientalists' politicization and public role grew in tandem with the rise of the Serbian nationalist movement in the 1980s. If there was a defining moment and a traceable catalyst to the subsequent series of events in the former Yugoslavia, it was the *Serbian Memorandum* released in 1986 by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Drafted by Serbia's leading intellectuals, who envisioned a greater role for themselves in society and politics. The *Memorandum* crystallized the revival of earlier Serbian nationalist goals, of which the formation of a Greater Serbia was the driving paradigm. The *Memorandum*, however, also set the stage for the outbreak of violence since its

implementation involved territorial expansion and ethnic exclusivity. This was bound to threaten the fundamental security and even existence of Yugoslavia's other communities. Unless the latter accepted the Memorandum's far reaching implications passively an unlikely scenario it could only be put into effect through the use of force.

Thanks to Slobodan Milošević, Serbia's rising Communist strongman, the ruling Communists forged a marriage of convenience with Serbia's non-Communist nationalists and with the Serbian Orthodox Church - the Red Brown Black symbiosis - which provided the initial impetus and structure for Serbian nationalism. It was Milošević who not only brought the nationalists into the political mainstream, but who also provided the machinery in the form of a political organization, media and financial assets, and the military muscle that transformed inchoate sentiments into a concrete state program which could be implemented on the ground.

The Anti-Islamic Drift of Nationalism

By the late 1980s, the Serbian government, the nationalists, the popular media, and the Orthodox Church had all become openly hostile to Islam, and incidents of anti-Muslim harassment had increased dramatically. Instead of reproving such trends, Serbia's Orientalists sought to buttress and justify them, and themselves often offered further incitement.

To be sure, Serbia's academics have also targeted other communities including the Croats, Albanians, Gypsies, Slovenes, and Macedonians in recent years with their negative campaigns based on stereotyped portrayals accompanied by recommendations for decisive measures. Although the Muslims have not been unique in that respect, as a community the latter have probably been especially vulnerable to such intellectual attacks because of specific geo-political considerations such as their location which obstructed the establishment of a Greater Serbia. This also increased the likelihood that they would become the target of a sustained physical assault aimed at disposing of them.

To a great extent, the negative portrayal of any specific community was driven by Serbia's political elite in response to concrete political goals which the Muslims, and other non-Serbs, hindered by their very presence. The specific political focus at any particular time varied, however, and the Serbian Orientalists dove-tailed their activity to the specific need of the moment. In the 1980s, the most salient issue for Serbia was that of the autonomous province of Kosovo, most of whose population consists of Muslim Albanians, and many of the Orientalists' earlier writings were focused on Islam with specific reference to Kosovo. Later, as the political emphasis shifted, the Islamic factor in Bosnia-Herzegovina gained rapidly in importance, eliciting a parallel refocusing on the part of Serbia's Orientalists.

III

PAVING THE WAY FOR GENOCIDE

The Risk of Fanning Fear and Hostility

Instead of promoting an atmosphere for coexistence and peaceful solutions, Serbian Orientalists played a significant part in fueling and whipping up fear and hatred among their fellow-Serbs. Well before the actual break-up of Yugoslavia, these scholars had begun to shape a stereotypical image of Muslims as alien, inferior, and threatening, and helped to create a condition of virtual paranoia among the Serbs, while advocating a harsh policy to deal with the Islamic community. It was during the preparatory phase that the anti-Islamic environment was created, which facilitated the subsequent slide into genocide after open conflict erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina in April 1992.

Fanning hostility toward the Muslims was particularly irresponsible given the bitter lesson of World War II, in which hundreds of thousands of victims perished in communal strife. The Muslims had already been the victims once of ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Serbian Chetnik nationalist movement in their quest to create a Greater Serbia.³ A revived

³An important characteristic of the Serbian chauvinist plan "Great Serbia", which was defined in 1844, and the establishment of its hegemony in the Balkans, was its implementation by stages.

Shortly before World War II, the ideological advocates of the Movement were the General Staff and the Serbian Culture Club. An integral Yugoslavship was considered a failure of Alexander's, and they preferred gathering of Serbian countries into a state unity. Once this unity becomes homogenous, it will become undisputed hegemony in Yugoslavia, thus allowing for the Serbian hegemony in the Balkans. This was the basis for making the country fascist and joining Germany, which resulted in the accession of Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact on March 25, 1941, while the World War II was considered an opportunity for the fulfillment of this plan.

By organizing an uprising on March 27, 1941, the British Intelligence spoiled these plans and divided the Movement in at least two fractions. After the country's capitulation, one of them sided with the German aggressor and took over the collaborationist power. A pre-war **civilian Chetnik organization** led by Kosta Pecanac was a part of this ruling power. The other Chetnik organization chose to steer a middle course between the aggressor and the Great Britain. Its core consisted of a group of officers that escaped the captivity and gathered on Ravna Gora. The head of this organization was an intelligence colonel, Draža Mihailović, and they proclaimed themselves "**Military Chetniks**".

Initiation of the uprising of the National Liberation Movement and its acceptance of cooperation with this group gave them the image of rebels, and brought them considerable strength. However, their aim was not to enter conflicts with the aggressor but to prepare forces for "**the decisive moment**" in which "**Great Serbia**" will be "marked" and then "**purified of all non-Serb elements**". So, the break up with the National Liberation Movement and the cooperation with the aggressor was imminent.

anti-Islamic campaign in support of the same political goals as had driven Serbian policy during World War II was bound to risk sparking the same fate again for the Muslim community.

Diversity as an Evil:

Setting the Ethno-cultural Boundaries

One of the Serbian Orientalists' key accomplishments was that of differentiating and isolating the Muslim community by setting and emphasizing cultural markers which focused on Islam and the Muslims as exotic - in a negative way - and blatantly, and automatically, inferior and even abnormal. To make condemning the Muslims easier, rather than describing and analyzing, Serbian Orientalists - very much as in the process which is at the heart of

Operational fulfillment of the above mentioned goals has been presented in two basic documents: Reconstruction of Stevan Moljevic's Project of June 30 "**HOMOGENIZED SERBIA**" and **Draža Mihailović's Instructions December 20, 1941** (printed in COLECTION OF DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR OF THE YUGOSLAVIA PEOPLES, volume XIV, book 1, pages 1 - 10 and 93 - 103), while commitment of genocide has been documented in thousands of original documents of various provenances. The most significant ones are contained in 4.333 pages of the XIV volume from the mentioned COLECTION, published by the Institute of Military History, Belgrade 1981 - 1985. During the 4 years, the Chetniks have killed at least one hundred thousand persons of non-Serbian population in the fulfillment of their goals, but they have also killed some of their compatriots as well. Final chetnik's joining with the aggressor and the victory of the National Liberation Movement disabled more complete execution of the Plan, to a higher extent.

Said's *Orientalism* - created a straw-man Islam and Muslim stereotype which could be shaped so as to isolate and attack the Muslims. At the same time, the Orientalists could also use this straw-man as a tool by which to mobilize support among their audience. As part of this procedure, Serbian Orientalists consistently misinterpreted and intentionally distorted Islam and the Muslim community's condition and objectives. What emerged was a stark dichotomy between the Serbs and the Muslims, with the latter charged with all the negative characteristics imaginable, described as "alien," and relegated to a position of cultural and moral inferiority. In - fact, the Yugoslav Army journal asked Professor Darko Tanasković - an Islamic studies expert at Belgrade University, whom the state controlled Belgrade daily *Politika* has called "our leading Islamic scholar" - specifically to analyze for its readers the differences between "them" and us, the Muslims and Christians.⁴

Muslims as Aliens. In many ways, the treatment which Islam and the Muslims have received at the hands of Serbia's Orientalists conforms very much to that common to traditional Orientalists. As one scholar has taxed it, the thrust is to create "the mirror image of the paradigmatic Occident, and thus a repository of negativity, both as abstract negativity and as particular negatives with respect to things Occidental."⁵ In other words, for

⁴ Interview with Darko Tanasković by Aleksandar Tomić, *EVROPA NEĆE IZBEĆI DEMOGRAFSKI DŽIHAD* [Europe Will Not Avoid the Demographic Jihad], *Vojska* (Belgrade), 23 September 1993, p. 8. *Vojska* is an official publication of the Yugoslav Army.

⁵ Aziz Al-Azmeh, THE ARTICULATION OF ORIENTALISM, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Fall 1991, p. 386-7.

Serbian Orientalists, Islam seems little more than the clear cut polar negative backward, alien, immoral, and aggressive in apposition to everything positive found in Serbian culture. The negative portrayal of the Muslims that had begun in the 1980s was degraded even further once actual fighting erupted in 1992.

A key strand of the Orientalists' campaign focused on the idea that Muslims belonged to an exotic and alien religion and culture and that, as a corollary, they would never have a place in Europe. The Muslims thus allegedly had less legitimacy somehow to live in Bosnia-Herzegovina than did the Serbs, despite the fact that, in reality, it is the Muslims who are native there, while it is the Serbs who are the newcomers.

In the late 1980s, for example, one Serbian Orientalist, Aleksandar Popović, although teaching in Paris, wrote a pamphlet published in Belgrade to inform the "educated public" about Islam. He saw this as a difficult task because, as he claimed, Islam is "a totalitarian system, one whose totalitarianism far exceeds that which a well-intentioned and uninformed Western mind could comprehend or imagine."⁶ Tanasković, in a similar vein, took an active part in the debate that arose over dietary regulations for Muslim personnel serving in the Yugoslav Army. During the Communist period, eating pork in the Yugoslav National Army was often used as an informal "loyalty test" for Muslims to show that they were not religiously devout. As such, Muslims often had little choice but to either eat pork or go hungry while doing their military service. When the issue came to the fore in the late 1980s,

⁶ Aleksandar Popović, JUGOSLOVENSKI MUSLIMANI [Yugoslav Muslims], *Akvarius*, Belgrade 1990, p. 5.

Tanasković, as well as other Orientalists, took the opportunity to portray the Muslims as an aberrant element in society by ridiculing the accommodation of separate food requirements for Muslims. He even claimed that if a Muslim refused to eat pork and went hungry this would fuel political separatism and disrupt a military unit, for the Serb personnel in the unit would "recoil" from serving together with such unsociable companions.⁷ More generally, he was concerned with rejecting what he saw as the attempt by the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina to claim they too were an old European people, calling it "naturally, a notorious absurdity."⁸

Another Serbian scholar, Nada Todorov, purported to see the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina as motivated by their "Islamic way of life," which has nothing in common with European civilization.⁹ At the root of the problem according to Miroljub Jevtić, a political scientist and specialist on Islam at Belgrade University, are the alien nature and religious basis of "Arab cultural imperialism" which determine the local Muslims' worldview, and the fact that the Arabs today allegedly "have succeeded in imposing their culture as a universal value created by God, in which mankind has no say."¹⁰ For Jevtić, this presents an unresolvable difficulty, for:

⁷ Darko Tanasković, IZMEĐU KUR'ANA I KAZANA [Between the Qur'an and the Pot], *NIN*, 25 June 1989, p. 23.

⁸ Interview with Tanasković, *Vojska*, op. cit., 23 September 1993, p. 10.

⁹ Interview with Nada Todorov by Colonel Nikola Ostojić, GENOCIDNE PORUKE IZ '1001 NOĆI' [The Genocidal Messages from 'The Thousand and One Nights'], *Vojska*, 8 April 1993, p. 20.

¹⁰ Miroljub Jevtić, "REZERVISTI ALAHOVE VOJSKE" [The Reservists of Allah's Army], *Duga* (Belgrade), 9-22 December 1989, p. 22. *Duga* favors hardline Serbian nationalist views.

"You can fight against America's cultural imperialism, since it is created by people - the Americans - who are at the moment richer, but who are, nevertheless, only people like you. On the contrary, in Islam, if you want to defend yourself against God, you can only do so using Arabic. It is not the Arabs who have commanded that. It is God who said it! He accepts only prayers recited in Arabic."¹¹

For Jevtić, in fact, nationalism and other concepts which he views as uniquely Western and Islam are mutually exclusive. Thus, he accused Albanian nationalism in Kosovo of being only a front for Islamic fundamentalism, for the Albanians are "false Europeans, [who] are really Muslims."¹²

Islam as a Remnant of the Past. Not only was Islam alien, but it was also portrayed as backward. Much as European Orientalists of an earlier colonial era had done, their Serbian counterparts taxed Islam with being retrograde and the root cause of a threat to "modern civilization," both in general terms and, specifically, to Serbia. Any accusation that could serve to denigrate Islam and isolate the Muslims was fair game. Todorov, for example, claimed that "In Islamic teaching, no woman has a soul, but instead serves only to satisfy a man's needs and to serve him."¹³ Typically, Tanasković alleged that the domestic Muslim

¹¹ Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 22.

¹² Miroljub Jevtić, LAKRDIJA ZA EVROPU [A Farce for Europe] *Evropske Novosti* (Frankfurt, Germany), 22 December 1993, p. 2. *Evropske Novosti* is the European edition of the Belgrade daily *Večernje Novosti*, published in Germany to bypass the international sanctions on Serbia.

¹³ Interview with Todorov, *Vojska*, op. cit., 8 April 1993, p. 21.

leadership was surreptitiously inducing their followers to revert to an earlier, and assumedly inferior, consciousness, particularly one with increased ties to their co-religionists abroad. Or, as he asked rhetorically:

“The question arises unavoidably whether these representatives of the Muslim nation, even if chosen democratically, really have the right and the authority today, on the threshold of the twenty-first century to tacitly return those who have elected them away from the indisputably chosen status of a unique, nation to a position of Muslim converts (*poturica*) from ages past in the eyes of the rest of the Yugoslavs.”

He summed up his indictment with a well-worn criticism of converts to Islam, even of those whose ancestors might have converted centuries earlier: “A convert to Islam, it is well-known, is worse than a Turk [a non-local Muslim].”¹⁴

Jevtić was perhaps the most active proponent of such ideas. Typically, he claimed that “Islamic fundamentalists,” a label he applied freely to any Muslim, are little more than a reflection of “the darkness of the past” who understand “slavery and equality not the way a civilized person does but rather the way their God understands it.” Supposedly, Islam mandates the banning of tourism, sports, and going to cafes where alcohol is served, thus inevitably leading to xenophobia and to “one hundred percent segregation.” “If you cannot eat, drink, be buried in the same

¹⁴ Darko Tanasković, TURCI BRANE SARAJEVO [The Turks Are Defending Sarajevo], *Epoha*, (Belgrade), 7 January 1992, p. 21. *Epoha* is published by Serbia's ruling Socialist Party of Serbia.

cemetery or marry a neighbor of another faith, what then can you do?” he asked rhetorically.¹⁵ Jevtić further placed Muslims beyond the pale of coexistence, painting Islam as alien to “all mercy and non-violence toward those who have a different way of thinking from the Islamic doctrine in force.”¹⁶

The Orientalists also alleged Islamic hatred for everything that was not Islamic. For Todorov, this was especially true of hatred for Serbia, as “Islam has disdain for other religions, and especially for Orthodox [Christianity].”¹⁷ Tanasković likewise concluded that “many [in Serbia] still view [Islam] as foreign, and also as hostile.”¹⁸

Islam and Violence. In particular, Islam was portrayed as inherently violent. Jevtić, for example, claimed that Alija Izetbegović “does not want peace and could not accept it, since if he did, that would mean denying his membership in Islam.”¹⁹

To justify current Serb policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a static view of Islam was stressed. For example, when Montenegro's Minister for Religion expressed the opinion that monotheistic religions, including Islam, have as their basis nonviolence, magnanimous forgiveness, compassion, and humaneness, Jevtić was quick to correct him, arguing that such qualities most

¹⁵ Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 21.

¹⁶ Miroljub Jevtić, OPROŠTAJ BEZ MILOSTI [Parting without Mercy], *Evropske Novosti*, 7 July 1993, p. 2.

¹⁷ Interview with Todorov, *Vojska*, op. cit., 8 April 1993, p. 21.

¹⁸ Darko Tanasković, NACIJA I VERA, IZMEĐU ‘m’ i ‘M’ [The Nation and Religion, between a Small and Capital ‘M’], *NIN* (Belgrade), 24 September 1989, p. 25. At the time, *NIN* reflected the Milošević government's views.

¹⁹ Miroljub Jevtić, NEMA MIRA U BOSNI, [There Is No Peace in Bosnia], *Evropske Novosti*, 28 December 1993, p. 4.

definitely did not apply to Islam, based on his own reading of the Qur'an.²⁰ Likewise, to explain this alleged propensity for violence, Tanasković also blamed "The tone of the Qur'an," for it is "openly authoritarian, uncompromising, and menacing."²¹

Jevtić's interpretation of why the Muslims were supposedly so ready to kill others focused on their religious upbringing. Writing in the press in late 1993, he explained:

"Islam clearly prescribes that its faithful must bring a victim to Allah. That animal victim is a ram which is slaughtered ritually, so that its blood gushes out all over. If the members of the Islamic civilization become used from their childhood to seeing how a lamb which is, everyone's favorite animal is slaughtered, then it is clear that a person who partakes in the Islamic worldview becomes easily accustomed to the shedding of blood in a very brutal fashion. It is not a great step to go from killing animals to killing human beings."²²

For Todorov, whose analysis was carried in the military press, the traditional ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS tales - which she posited that the Muslims all read in their childhood - deserve special blame for what she saw as the Muslims' violent behavior, since this book allegedly provides "subliminal direction" to the Muslims to torture and kill Christians.

²⁰ Jevtić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 7 July 1993, p. 2.

²¹ Interview with Tanasković, *Vojska*, op. cit., 23 September 1993, p. 8.

²² Miroљub Jevtić in *Javnost* (Sarajevo), quoted in *LJUDI I VREME* [People and Time], *Vreme* (Belgrade), 15 November 1993, 55. *Vreme* is a liberal opposition weekly.

As Todorov explained, these stories "have an impact on children who grow up in areas which have a distinct Islamic influence."

The effect of these stories supposedly can be demonstrated easily: "Since these stories are full of eroticism, it is certain that they [the Muslims] read them carefully during puberty, and that their effect on the personality of [the Muslims] is clearly evident. The messages remain inwoven either in consciousness or sub-consciousness. In committing atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, [the Muslims'] conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious levels of personality have been at work."²³

Muslims as Traitors. Another strand of discourse focused on the alleged treachery of the Bosnian Muslims for having converted to Islam. Serbian Orientalists, as well as other nationalists, including the Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy, have been prone to make sweeping statements as to the unacknowledged or unconscious Serbian ethnicity of the Muslims as well as of most of their other neighbors. Usually, Serbian Orientalists insisted that the Muslims were really Serbs who had abandoned their original faith. Typically, one scholar, Mile Nedeljković, devoted most of his monograph *KRST I POLUMESEC* [*The Cross and the Crescent*] to arguing that Bosnia-Herzegovina had always been Serbian and Orthodox, and that the Muslims were therefore merely apostate Serbs.²⁴

²³ Interview with Todorov, *Vojska*, op. cit., 8 April 1993, p. 20.

²⁴ Mile Nedeljković, *KRST I POLUMESEC* [The Cross and the Crescent], *Politika*, Belgrade 1993.

As is true of virtually all of Europe's peoples, today's Muslims in Bosnia are an amalgam of various ethnic origins. However, the overwhelming majority were drawn from the local Catholic and Bogumil Christian population who converted in phases over three centuries while retaining their original language. And, in no way are they a foreign community, notwithstanding the common Serbian practice of calling them by the pejorative term of "Turks" or "Turkicized." Despite the politically motivated claims by many Serbian nationalists that today's Muslims are of Serbian origin, there is little evidence of Serbs having converted to Islam in significant numbers as they settled in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the heels of the Ottoman conquest.²⁵

Paradoxically, the claim that the Muslims were wayward Serbs - its dubious scholarly basis aside - only served as additional ammunition for the anti-Islamic campaign. Jevtić, for example, stressed an interpretation of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina as traitors: "Those who accepted Islam accepted the conquerors *de facto* as their brothers and the crimes of the latter as their own. That means that their own hands are also covered with the blood of their own ancestors, the former Bosnian non-Muslim

²⁵ For a insightful overview of the Muslim community's history and ethnography, see Vatro Murvar, *Nation and Religion in Central Europe and the Western Balkans; The Muslims in Bosnia, Hercegovina and Sandžak: A Sociological Analysis*, Brookfield, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1989. Some Serbs in Serbia also converted to Islam over the centuries, but they were either killed, forced to abandon Islam, or fled to Bosnia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire when the Serbs "cleansed" the territory as part of establishing their state in the 19th century.

population." By converting to Islam, they had destroyed Christian Bosnia and had "enabled the Ottomans to rule over Christian Bosnia for a long time."²⁶

Anything that could be used to criticize the Muslims was fair game, even the accusation that by converting they had betrayed "Stjepan Tomasević, the last Catholic Bosnian king," hardly someone for whom a Serbian nationalist would ordinarily show much concern. Ruing the renewed religious Islamic activity and piety in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1980s, Jevtić argued that "Not a single normal country would tolerate that a religious community actively publicize and popularize an occupier [the Ottomans] who covered this land in [mourning] black."²⁷

Isolating the Muslims

Serbian Orientalists also sought to isolate the Muslims from their neighbors. They appeared to be especially irked by close links between the Croats and the Muslims and sought to sow discord instead. Jevtić, for example, condemned such good ties as a "marriage of convenience" and interpreted this as aimed specifically against Serbian interests. Moreover, he sought to warn Croatia that this was against Croatia's own interests, for the Muslims' birthrate would be so high that they would "devour Croatia."²⁸ Good relations between the Catholic Church and

²⁶ Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 22.

²⁷ Miroljub Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 23.

²⁸ Interview with Miroljub Jevtić by Jasmina Babić, VERA I POLITIKA [Religion and Politics], *Stav* (Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Serbia), 1 May 1992, p. 37.

Islam were also an irritant and something which did not fit the Orientalists' taxonomy. Thus, when Kosovo's new Christian Democratic Party selected a Muslim as its president in late 1993, Jevtić labelled this "a farce," and noted disparagingly that "only in Kosmet [the Serbian name for Kosovo] could that happen!"²⁹

A Delegitimized Community

In a very real sense, Serbian Orientalists contributed to the deligitimization of the very existence of the Muslims as a community and, by dehumanizing them, also delegitimized Muslims as individual human beings.

The negative categorizing such as was common in the Orientalists' discourse can have a devastating effect by dehumanizing the target group and can contribute to facilitating their killing as members of an undifferentiated collection of undesirables.

As an expert on genocide, Herbert C. Kelman, notes perceptively:

"Sanctioned massacres become possible to the extent that we deprive fellow human beings of identity and community Thus when a group of people is defined entirely in terms of a category to which they belong, and when this category is excluded from the human family, then the moral restraints against killing them are more readily overcome."³⁰

²⁹ Miroljub Jevtić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 22 December 1993, p. 2.

³⁰ Letter Herbert C. Kelman, VIOLENCE WITHOUT MORAL RESTRAINT: REFLECTIONS ON THE DEHUMANIZATION OF VICTIMS AND VICTIMIZERS, *The Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1973, p. 49.

IV

THE MUSLIMS AS AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO EVERYTHING

The Permanent Built-in Threat

A key element of the Serbian Orientalists' message has also been that the Muslims represent an imminent and lethal threat. As such, these scholars sought to alert their countrymen of the potential danger by explaining and suggesting policies to counter the Muslims' alleged conspiracies. Well before the current upheaval, Jevtić was actively promoting the idea that Islam was "The most significant threat to Yugoslavia, even more significant than... Serbian-Croatian relations."³¹ Popović, in particular,

³¹ Interview with Miroljub Jevtić by Slavoljub Kačarević, ISLAM BEZ MASKE [Islam without Its Mask], Intervju (Belgrade), 15 September 1989, p. 11. Intervju is an outspokenly nationalist periodical favorable to the Serbian government.

believed his mission was to warn of the danger of increasing activity by the Muslims in Yugoslavia, as he highlighted such areas as the building of new mosques and religious schools, and accused the Muslims of spreading "vulgar deception... various rumors... and false reports" abroad about their condition.³²

Although Muslims allegedly were hostile to the West as a whole, their special target was supposedly Serbia. "It is well known," according to Jevtić, "that Serbia, by means of its struggle, liberated our portion of the Balkans from the Caliphate, and it is therefore not surprising that Serbophobia is highly developed among fundamentalist Muslims."³³

Since clearly not all Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina are religiously observant (including many who have been members of the Communist Party), Serbian Orientalists have been forced to stretch their definition of "fundamentalism" to cover a wide area. By broadening the term, they could put any political activity whatsoever involving Muslims under this rubric. Jevtić, for example, spoke of "secular Islamic fundamentalism" and "Communist Islam" in order to encompass anyone and everyone who is in any way a Muslim as valid targets for censure.³⁴

During the pre-war period, Jevtić - probably with at least some encouragement from Serbian official circles took to task the Communist authorities who then still ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina

³² A. Popović, JUGOSLOVENSKI MUSLIMANI [Yugoslav Muslims], op. cit., p. 51.

³³ Mirosljub Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 23.

³⁴ Mirosljub Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 20 and 22.

for allegedly not seeing this phenomenon as he did. In fact, he assessed that even non-observant Muslims were allegedly working unconsciously on behalf of a *jihad*, and rued that "What is saddest of all is that the proponents of such a policy most often are not formally believers, but rather very often high [Communist] government officials."³⁵ Despite the fact that there was no proof that such a phenomenon existed outside of his writings, Jevtić nevertheless claimed that this "is the most dangerous type of fundamentalism since its Islamic essence is hidden and thus can easily penetrate the social scene."³⁶

To a great extent, the very essence of Islam interpreted as an immutable, undifferentiated abstraction, in and of itself supposedly constituted a threat. It was claimed that hostility to Serbs, to western culture, and to Christianity were already pre-programmed by the Muslims' culture, history, and religion. Often, the present was seen as an extrapolation of the past, based on the Serbian scholars' tendentious reading of the Qur'an and a linear application of early Islamic history to today's society. Their interpretation of the Qur'an, in particular, was often used as "proof" of Muslim aggressiveness and antipathy toward all non-Muslims.

For example, when Bosnia-Herzegovina's Communist Party chairman, Nijaz Duraković, in 1989 highlighted and promoted what he saw as Bosnia's tradition of tolerance and coexistence

³⁵ Interview with Jevtić, *Intervju*, op. cit., 15 September 1989, p. 12.

³⁶ Mirosljub Jevtić, ZAŠTO NIJAZ DURAKOVIĆ NE VIDI ISLAMSKI FUNDAMENTALIZAM [Why Nijaz Duraković Does Not See Islamic Fundamentalism], *Intervju*, 8 November 1989, p. 52.

among different religions and cultures, Jevtić shot back: "What kind of tolerance can one talk about when Islam came with swords on whose points it carries the head of the last Bosnian king?" Claiming that the Ottoman heritage was not one of tolerance but of slavery; he asked: "Can one talk about religious tolerance in the Islamic - based -Ottoman Empire in any terms other than the way that a shepherd deals with his flock, which he [only] raises in order to have more meat later?"³⁷

According to Jevtić, Islam by its nature allegedly "excludes every other outlook on the world and seeks for itself a monopoly of the scene. That is why it is dangerous for all modern societies."³⁸ As he added, "Islam is opposed to any just relations, tolerance, dialogue or coexistence," and, in fact, the Qur'an and Shari'a allegedly permit "the destruction of those who have another religion."³⁹ Not only did he accuse Muslims of destroying places of worship belonging to other faiths, but "that is an obligation according to their religion."⁴⁰ At a conference in 1993, ironically focused on religious tolerance, Tanasković proposed, based on his interpretation of early Islamic texts, that for Islam "permanent peace with members of other religions is impossible." Islam's "permanent war restricts the parameters of tolerance," he

³⁷ Miroljub Jevtić, *Intervju*, op. cit., 8 November 1989, p. 53.

³⁸ Miroljub Jevtić, *Intervju*, op. cit., 8 November 1989, p. 20.

³⁹ Miroljub Jevtić, *Intervju*, op. cit., 8 November 1989, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Miroljub Jevtić, quoted in LJUDI I VREME [People and Time], *Vreme*, 24 May 1993, p. 54.

added.⁴¹ Indeed, seeking to link the past and present in a static portrait, Jevtić accused the local Muslims of being "the carriers of genocide" from medieval times until today.⁴²

The Muslims' Conspiracy Against Serbia and the West

Beyond that, the Orientalists already in the 1980s purported to see a conscious and systematic conspiracy to subvert and destroy Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox religion. In an apparent attempt to win over the sympathies and support of the West, as well as perhaps to give the Serbs a feeling of undertaking unselfishly a noble mission on behalf of a wider world, the local Islamic threat was often portrayed as a prelude to a new invasion of Europe and the destruction of Western civilization as a whole.

Islam was portrayed as an international monolith and an aggressive faith and community which are the same all over the world. As part of this phenomena, Muslims worldwide have been alleged to be acting in collusion in a conspiracy against the West and, in particular, against the Serbs. Culprits abroad, ranging from nameless Islamic forces to specific actors such as Saudi Arabia, supposedly aided and abetted the local Muslims. Tactics could be

⁴¹ Reported by Andjelika Cvijić, EKUMENIZAM - PROBLEM EPOHE [Ecumenism - the Issue of This Era], *Spona* (Frankfurt, Germany), 2 December 1993, p. 14.

⁴² Miroljub Jevtić, *Duga*, op. cit., 9-22 December 1989, p. 19.

violent - with a perennial focus on the *jihad* - or non-violent, such as an allegedly coordinated decision to maintain a high birthrate or the building of new mosques. Tanasković, for example, claimed to see an "economic, diplomatic, and especially a demographic *jihad*" aimed at all of the Balkans and Western Europe.⁴³ According to Jevtić, too, "The goal [for Saudi Arabia] is to have the former Bosnia-Herzegovina as its gateway to Europe."⁴⁴

In practical terms, Serbian Orientalists sought to link the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina with an undifferentiated homogenous Islam worldwide.

They lumped together all conflicts in which Muslims were involved - whether in the Philippines, Azerbaijan; or Kashmir and stressed that it was a seamless phenomenon of which Bosnia-Herzegovina was an integral link. This was convenient for policy rationalization, despite the violence such an approach represented to intellectual and ethical principles. Thus, Jevtić continued to paint Alija Izetbegović as being no different from the leaders of the most extreme Islamic movements elsewhere, railing that his policies represented "with no doubt whatsoever the most radical form of Islamic fundamentalism... since all that Izetbegović sketches out as his political program differs in no way from the actions taken by the late imam Khomeini in Iran, or from those which are being taken by the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria."

⁴³ Interview with Tanasković, *Vojska*, op. cit., 23 September 1993, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Miroljub Jevtić, IGRA ZA SAVEZNIKE [Game for Allies], *Večernje Novosti*, 5 August 1993, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service - FBIS Eastern Europe - EE*, 93-152, 10 August 1993, p. 53.

He even maintained that Izetbegović did not want an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina except as a stage to a universal Islamic state. "All this" he rued, "shows that it will be difficult for anything to come out of the expectations that the [Bosnian] Muslims will become westernized."⁴⁵

It was Jevtić, again, in his book devoted to the subject of the *jihad*, who gave full elaboration to this phenomenon. He saw the very concept of *jihad* as an inseparable part of Islam, something that was present and unchanging everywhere and at all times. Even while Yugoslavia was still in existence, although as he admitted at the time there were no violent acts as such, Jevtić claimed nevertheless to see a quieter, but no less dangerous, form of *jihad* being waged. Taking guidance from "international Islamic organizations, which, thanks to great financial resources, are striving to conquer the world," Yugoslavia's Muslims allegedly were already using such insidious tactics as "a high birthrate, the building of mosques, and pressure on non-Muslims." He assessed that "On the basis of detailed reports, it is clear that this strategy is much more effective in attaining its goal without creating an uproar," while warning that this represented "the most serious threat to Yugoslavia."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Miroljub Jevtić, NIŠTA OD ZAPADA, [Nothing from the West], *Evropske Novosti*, 31 March 1994, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Miroljub Jevtić, SAVREMENI DŽIHAD KAO RAT [The Contemporary Jihad as War], Narodna Biblioteka Srbije, Belgrade 1989, p. 316.

Behind every action by the Muslims lay an alleged master plan to undermine Serbia. According to Jevtić, Serbia's Muslim minority served as a bridgehead for "the complete Islamization of Serbia." When Belgrade's Muslim community, for example, requested land for a cemetery for its members in 1990, Jevtić reacted with alarm. He warned that "From land for the dead, the next step is to conquer land for the living. They will then seek a mosque, fully legitimately, but then, around the mosque, they will seek land on which to settle Muslims. Then, it will not be long before non-Muslims will leave, initially voluntarily but later under pressure... What is planned is to settle Muslims in those areas, and to then step up the birthrate in order to achieve numerical superiority gradually." As his clinching argument, he pointed to an object lesson, namely what he saw as the ruined nightlife of the Pigalle quarter of Paris after North African Muslims had settled there. Viewed in this light, even the request for a cemetery, he concluded, is an "enormous political issue." Serbia, in fact is only part of a broader Islamic plan to reconquer lost territories not only, in the Balkans but also on the Iberian Peninsula, according to Jevtić.⁴⁷ Translating his dire assessments into concrete terms, Jevtić warned, at a time when the political situation was becoming particularly tense, and without any basis in fact, that there were moves afoot to repatriate over a million

⁴⁷ Mirosljub Jevtić, ŠTA SE KRIJE IZA GROBLJA: ISLAM JURIŠA NA SRBIJU ["What is Hidden behind the Cemetery? Islam Is Attacking Serbia"], *Ilustrovana Politika* (Belgrade), 18 December 1990, p. 25. *Ilustrovana Politika* is controlled by the Serbian government.

Muslims who had settled in Turkey' after they had been forced to leave the Sandžak in earlier times. "What would happen to Serbia if people who [now] have a Turkish consciousness were to move back here?" he asked rhetorically.⁴⁸

Serbian scholars intensified their warnings of the alleged Islamic peril in conjunction with the all-out propaganda campaign which the Serbian authorities launched once Bosnia-Herzegovina had been attacked in 1992, adding now an increased emphasis on the threat from the establishment of a Muslim state. For Jevtić, the danger now allegedly was greater, taking the form of a "sinister plan" by the Muslims to set up a medieval state.⁴⁹ Extending the net more widely, Vojin Dabić, professor of contemporary history at Belgrade University, saw not only the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also those in the Sandžak, the Albanians in Kosovo, and the Turkish minorities in Bulgaria and Greece as "a danger for Europe, since Islam cannot accept that religion is separate from the state. They [Muslims] subscribe to a bizarre symbiosis of religion and state, and of religion and nation."⁵⁰ Yet, by an "Islamic" state what these Orientalists meant was not even one led by a government inspired by political Islamic or headed by Islamists, which is a changeable variable dependant on specific

⁴⁸ Mirosljub Jevtić, "TURCI (OPET) ŽELE SRBIJU, ["The Turks (Again) Want Serbia"], *Srpska reč* (Belgrade), 19 August 1991, p. 64. *Srpska reč* is published by a Chetnik party, the Serbian Renewal Movement.

⁴⁹ *Belgrade TV News*, 6 December 1992.

⁵⁰ Interview with Vojin Dabić, POLUMESEC MUČI ZAPAD [The Crescent Worries the West], *Evropske Novosti*, 14 April 1993, p. 18.

circumstances, but simply a state in which the majority of the population would be Muslims, as in contemporary Albania, which is an ascriptive constant. That is, simply being Muslim, irrespective of political orientation, was in itself inadmissible, a sufficient criterion for condemnation, and justification for suppression.

The Warning Mission

According to these Orientalists, the Muslim threat, as noted, went far beyond Serbia, and they saw as their mission to also warn an unsuspecting West. For Jevtić, the threat was that “international Islamic planners, aided by domestic fellow - thinkers, have as their objective to Islamize all of Serbia, but only as the first step of a breakthrough into Europe.”⁵¹ Other scholars sought to portray Serbia’s Muslim problem as part of a broader, unified, Muslim threat shared by the entire West. Dabić, for example, pointed to the Muslim communities in Great Britain, Italy, and France, countries which in his view are “flooded” and “suffocated” by Muslims, and sought to gain the Western countries’ sympathy, since, as he argued, Serbia was only trying to deal with the same problem as theirs.⁵²

⁵¹ Miroljub Jevtić, *Srpska reč*, op. cit., 19 August 1991, p. 65. In fact, he stressed that “We hope that all of that is clear enough to the highest olders of power in the country.”

⁵² Interview with Dabić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 14 April 1993, p. 18.

Serbian Orientalists also lent their academic authority to buttress such anti-Islamic arguments abroad in order to convince foreign public opinion of the appropriateness of Serbian policy. Typically, Tanasković, warned a prime-time American television news audience that the Islamic countries helping Bosnia “have long-term aims... not so much to help the Moslems from Bosnia, but to organize their own stronghold in Europe for their future activity.”⁵³

As part of this effort to win sympathy abroad for Serbia’s anti-Islamic policy, a key tactic was to convince foreign audiences that Bosnian president Alija Izetbegović was an extremist beyond the pale, someone whom the West could not trust and should not support. For example, seeking to dissuade the United States from helping the United Nations designated safe zone enclave of Goražde in eastern Bosnia when Serb forces attacked it in April 1994, Jevtić argued that “Alija Izetbegović’s fundamentalist party surely is not a friend of the United States’ vital interests. The people around Mr. Clinton (Bill William Clinton) are aware that Alija [Izetbegović]’s ideal is Iran and Saudi Arabia, not Disneyland. This leads to the question: ‘Is it in the United States’ interest that American young men die and airplanes fall in support of that?’”⁵⁴

⁵³ 53. National Broadcast Corporation - *NBC Nightly News*, 26 Oktober 1992.

⁵⁴ Miroljub Jevtić, STOP ZA BOMBE [Stop the Bombs], *Evropske Novosti*, 21 April 1994, p. 2.

Serbian Orientalists found the West's general refusal to take their arguments seriously both frustrating and puzzling, and they often reached for eccentric explanations to account for this lack of sympathy with Serbia's anti-Muslim policies. Tanasković, for example, was annoyed when Italy's then Foreign Minister, Gianni De Michelis, apparently said that Islam in Turkey and the Balkans was moderate and acceptable, and a welcome counterweight to Iranian influence. Accusing De Michelis of a "lack of historical perspective and even naivete," Tanasković warned that, instead, "this region [the Balkans], which has the oldest European civilizations, will become some sort of orientalized anteroom of 'the new Europe'". For Tanasković, the lack of European concern about Islam in the Balkans was "difficult to understand and to accept" and he disparaged the "gullible European democrats and their newly-minted prize Balkan pupils [who] insist on teaching US."⁵⁵ Jevtić, likewise, admonished the United States for supporting the Muslims, and posited that the United States "does not realize that it is thereby digging its own grave."⁵⁶ Trying to explain such American support, Jevtić concluded that Washington was really playing up to two regional powers Germany and Saudi Arabia - in order to elicit their help in order "to control the Islamic world."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Darko Tanasković, IZUVANJE U PREDSOBLJU EVROPE [Removing One's Shoes in Europe's Anteroom], *Duga*, 15-28 March 1992, p. 37.

⁵⁶ Interview with Jevtić, *Stav*, op. cit., 1 May 1992, p. 37.

⁵⁷ Jevtić, *Večernje Novosti*, op. cit., 5 August 1993, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service - FBIS Eastern Europe - EE*, 93 - 152, 10 August 1993, p. 53.

Within this context, Germany was a particular *bête noire* for Serbian Orientalists as was also true for other Serbian intellectuals and government officials, who all sought to capitalize on hostility to Germany's past to mobilize support both at home and abroad for Serbian actions. Dabić, for example, assessed Germany's criticism of the Serbs' treatment of the Muslims thus: "As soon as Germany realized that its interest in Bosnia was to ensure a corridor to the southern seas, it began to target us."⁵⁸ Dabić was asked by the interviewer: "The Germans have clearly expressed their objectives this time too. When their march to the southeast through Serbia was stopped, they decided to move instead through Bosnia, the Sandžak, and Bulgaria. Is that why they are punishing Serbia?" Dabić replied to that leading question with a series of non sequiturs: "Traditional German policy has from time immemorial been one of confrontation with [every] Serbian state. That path led right through Bosnia. This is a new attempt at annexation, after which the destabilization of the Sandžak would be on the agenda. Throughout history, one can see that the Germans stubbornly prevented the Serbs from expanding."⁵⁹

Dabić also rationalized the West's lack of sympathy by concluding that the West was now taking its revenge for the support that Yugoslavia's Communist government had provided earlier to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation - PLO and for

⁵⁸ Interview with Dabić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 14 April 1993, p. 18. Dabić was asked by an interviewer:

⁵⁹ Interview with Dabić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 14 April 1993, p. 18.

the facilities it had put at the disposal of various terrorist groups.⁶⁰ However, at times some scholars at least were more optimistic that the West eventually would come to share the Serbs' view of the situation. Dabić, for example, despite his disappointment so far, was confident that "America and Western Europe will not permit the creation of Islamic states in the heart of the Balkans - one Albania is enough - since such creations would be a new base for the spread of terrorism and for an even more aggressive Islamic assault against the West."⁶¹

Tanasković claimed subsequently that West Europeans at least were coming to appreciate the alleged monolithic "continental phenomenon" of a political and cultural Islamic threat common to all of them, whether, as he said, in Lyons (France), Bradford (England), or Sarajevo.⁶²

In fact, one scholar, Radoslav Stojanović, a professor in Belgrade University's Faculty of Law, and a member of the Executive Council of one of the opposition parties, the Serb Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka), was especially optimistic of the convergence of Serbian and western interests toward the Muslims. He believed that the West's real priority in becoming active in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to stop "Islamic fundamentalism."

⁶⁰ Interview with Dabić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 14 April 1993, p. 18.

⁶¹ Interview with Dabić, *Evropske Novosti*, op. cit., 14 April 1993, p. 18.

⁶² Interview with Tanasković, *Vojska*, op. cit., 23 September 1993, p. 9.

He therefore fretted that the Serbs, by not understanding this, had thereby missed their chance to carve out an even larger Serbian zone of control, allegedly with at least the passive consent of the West. He regretted that, "Unfortunately, the Serbian government in both Bosnia and Serbia was unable to comprehend one thing: that the West was far more interested in preventing the creation of a Muslim state in Bosnia than in preventing the creation even of a Greater Serbia." This, as he saw it, was true because even a Greater Serbia would not threaten Europe, "Whereas a Muslim state in the Balkans, that is in Europe, could become the stronghold of the most extreme Islamic fundamentalism, and a state to which money would flow from the most extreme Islamic countries. Such a state could do horrible things in Europe. He is therefore complaining that Serbs, non understanding this, missed the opportunity to create even a larger Serb-controlled zone, allegedly with at least passive approval by the West. He regrets that "Unfortunately, Serb authorities either in Bosnia or in Serbia, are not able to understand one thing: that the West is much more interested in making impossible creation of a Muslim state in Bosnia than in hindering the plans of creating Greater Serbia".⁶³

⁶³ Interview with Radoslav Stojanović by Momir Djoković, *POVRATAK VREDNOSTIMA SRBIJE* [A Return to Serbia's Values], Spona, 10 June 1993, p. 15.

V

**TRANSITIONING FROM ANALYSIS TO
ADVOCACY: JUSTIFYING GENOCIDE**

Serbia's Orientalists have never gone on record to criticize ethnic cleansing against the Muslims even in general terms, much less condemning specific aspects of the process, such as concentration camps. On the contrary, their thrust was to deny the very fact that genocide was occurring. This could take any number of forms, whether by silence, by outright denial of any wrongdoing (including by pinning responsibility for any atrocities on the Muslims, and thus reversing the role of the victim and perpetrator), or even by providing implicit justification for whatever befell the Muslims. Serbian Orientalists continued to lend their expertise in assailing Muslims on an intellectual plane and in defending government policy, much as they had done during the earlier preparatory phase. Now, however, their

arguments appeared against the background of harsh measures that were actually being inflicted against the Muslims and, as such, provided direct scholarly explanation and vindication for war crimes, rather than simply having an abstract academic flavor.

Nedeljković's book, for example, justified the cleansing of Muslims from Serbia in the 19th century as a way of getting rid of traitors, and concluded euphemistically that anyhow the process - nowadays was forgotten as completely as "long-melted snow." The author further argued, with a view toward justification, that "As is true of every social group tied to an occupier [to the Ottomans], over time, the inhabitants [the local Muslims] who had based their position and property on the exploitation and plunder of the oppressed population also disappeared."⁶⁴ Jevtić, for his part, sought to deflect accusations of war crimes committed by the Serbs by countering with a *non sequitur* that it is the Islamic countries who are themselves the biggest offenders against human rights.⁶⁵

Other Serb scholars looked for inspiration on how to deal with the Muslims to Petar Njegoš, the stridently anti-Muslim 19th century Orthodox bishop and ruler of Montenegro, whose writings had extolled and justified the violent eradication of all traces of a Muslim presence in that country. At an academic gathering in 1993 celebrating Njegoš's birth, Serbian scholars

⁶⁴ M. Nedeljković, KRST I POLUMESEC, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶⁵ Miroljub Jevtić, SAMO GOLI INTERES, [Only Naked Interest], Evropske Novosti, 1 July 1993, p. 2.

praised him for having been a "great poet and humanist philosopher." One of them, Dragutin Vukotić, citing what he viewed as a permanent clash of interests between "East and West, [between] the cross and the crescent," concluded that "We must adhere to Njegoš's views today too, since they are relevant and not made obsolete by time ... The analogies are very apparent, and applying these assessments by Njegoš to our times is unavoidable."⁶⁶

Jevtić was perhaps at his most extreme in his denial of any possibility of compromise with the Muslims because of the very essence of their religion. "It must be clear to all people of good will," he preached, "that there is no peace, and can be no peace, with Islamic fundamentalism. It is a generally - known fact that Islam does not recognize the coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslims on an equal plane." In practical terms, his reading of a monolithic Islam induced him to urge the continuation of a violent solution to its logical end, for "Hope for peace with Alija [Izetbegović] is only an illusion," while "All negotiations with him are a waste of time, and are only the postponing of the final reckoning, which he is imposing."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Cited in DA ČOVJEK BUDE ČOVJEK [Let a Men be a Men], Spona, 7 October 1993, p. 22.

⁶⁷ Miroljub Jevtić, Večernje Novosti, op. cit., 28 December 1993, p. 4.

VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Role and Responsibility of the Orientalists

It is impossible to determine to what extent Serbia's Orientalists have been sincere in their beliefs, of course, as opposed to being driven by other motives, whether patriotism, material gain, or the desire for publicity. Whatever the incentives, it is striking that these scholars' partisanship has been not only overt but, at times, anachronistically crude and racist, and has lacked even the semblance of subtlety of earlier European Orientalists. As Said has pointed out, this sort of Orientalism is not an objective exercise of scholarship, much less an interchange with the population studied, but rather an uncompromising affirmation of dominance guided by political motives. As he assessed: "Now this, I submit, is neither science, nor knowledge,

nor understanding: it is a statement of power and a claim for absolute authority. It is constituted out of racism, and it is made comparatively acceptable to an audience prepared in advance to listen to its muscular truths."⁶⁸

To be sure, the Orientalists comprised only a handful of people in comparison with other actors on the Serbian political and cultural scene, and they constituted only part of a broader overall effort which has spanned most of the Serbian political class not just some isolated common thugs including Serbia's leading political figures, intellectuals, journalists, and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Despite their small number, the Serbian Orientalists, however, have occupied an important niche in the political process, for, as specialists, what they could provide was their scholarly knowledge of Islam. By bending scholarship and blending it with political rhetoric, they defined Islam and the local Muslim community in such a way as to contribute significantly to heightening hostility toward the Muslims and to making genocide acceptable as a solution for what they helped convince the Serbian public was the "Muslim threat."

Realistically, in this case, the Serbian Orientalists' impact on politics was not attributable to their scholarly publications, which probably reached only a limited audience. Rather, it was the extensive media exposure they enjoyed in Serbia, their direct consultations with government officials, and their participation in

⁶⁸ Edward W. Said, *ORIENTALISM RECONSIDERED, Race & Class*, Autumn 1985, p. 8.

official propaganda campaigns abroad which allowed them to play a significant role. Until the multiparty elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina in November 1990, the latter republic had been ruled by a hardline Communist government, which made it very difficult to respond publicly to the Serbian Orientalists' anti-Islamic diatribes. As a result, beginning in the 1980s, the Orientalists had for all intents and purposes complete leeway in Serbia to expound any argument, however unfounded, far-fetched, or insulting without fear of effective public contradiction. The fact that no important Serbian institution, such as the Serbian Orthodox Church or the opposition political parties, has taken a critical stand against the anti-Islamic attacks, of course, has facilitated the work of the Serbian Orientalists as they spread their message of hate. In fact, the Orientalists' input complemented and reinforced the case made by other segments of the Serbian political class, which often relied on other arguments, whether religious or geo-strategic as the case might be.

The experience in Serbia, more generally, may illustrate where the greatest impact of Orientalists can be. In most cases of policy development, the Orientalists' greatest impact may not be in actually determining policy *per se*, which is the domain of policy makers. Usually, such policies are likely to be crafted and implemented in any event in response to concrete political interests. Where the Orientalists do play a significant role, however, is in making such policies more effective by making them more acceptable at home and abroad by providing intellectual justification and the trappings of respectability. Nevertheless, Orientalists do have some influence thanks to their

specialized knowledge and insights, which allows them to reveal the shortcomings of a policy and to suggest alternatives. As a result, they may be able to modify or even force a change in policy if they are willing to articulate their arguments and to refuse to provide their support to what they consider misguided principles.

In the case of Serbia, it is very likely that ethnic cleansing would have happened anyhow, even without support by the Orientalists. However, determined opposition to the process by these scholars could have robbed the perpetrators of a significant portion of their legitimacy. On the contrary, the Orientalists became active parties in ethnic cleansing. Rather than using their recognized expertise to counter the process of victimization, they instead lent their unique credibility to reify, isolate, and condemn the Muslim community, and made anti-Muslim acts intellectually acceptable. And, they thereby enhanced the overarching nationalist ideology's credibility and the likelihood that it would gain the Serbian public's support.

Thanks to their standing as subject-matter experts, what the Serbian Orientalists provided was the key scholarly armature for the emerging Serbian nationalist ideology as applied to the Muslims. As sociologist Leo Kuper stresses, for the occurrence of genocide the development of an ideology is especially significant, insofar as a guide and justification are needed: "At least when operating collectively, they [the perpetrators of genocide] need an ideology to legitimate their behaviour, for without it they would have to see themselves and one another as what they really are

common thieves and murderers."⁶⁹ By contributing the intellectual underpinnings to the campaign against Islam, Serbia's Orientalists crystallized, and reinforced generalized stereotypes and provided a rationalization: for any measures the Serbian authorities might take against the Muslims in pursuit of their political goals. Serbian Orientalists thereby helped to make genocide a reality.

Outlook for the Future

Even if there is a political settlement eventually in Bosnia-Herzegovina the damage already will have been "done, of course. But, even if the Muslims there become able to protect themselves, those in rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) will remain at risk, and the potential is high for the Serbs to trigger another round of ethnic cleansing on a massive scale.

The proponents of a Greater Serbia have expressed frequently in public their discomfort, with the fact that minorities make up a large portion of rump Yugoslavia's population and would clearly like to get rid of them. This "applies, in particular, to the large number of Muslims who live in both Serbia and Montenegro: the nearly two million Albanians who live in Kosovo (ninety per cent of whom are Muslim) and parts of Montenegro, the Bosnian Muslims of the Sandžak, and the Muslim Gypsies scattered throughout rump Yugoslavia.

⁶⁹ Leo Kuper, *GENOCIDE; ITS POLITICAL USE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1981, p. 84.

Although these territories were conquered during the 1912-13 Balkan Wars and their populations have been under pressure to leave ever since, coercion has intensified recently. There are abundant indications that the same process of defining and separating the Albanians and the other Muslims remaining in the rump Yugoslavia, with Islam as a key component of their "difference," is again gathering force, both politically and intellectually after a hiatus when the Serbs' focus had concentrated on Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina. Very likely, these arguments are being used to prepare the justification for an assault similar to that which has taken place against Bosnia-Herzegovina.

So far, the process in the Sandžak and Kosovo has largely taken the form of "quiet ethnic cleansing," a strategy which hinges on making everyday life extremely difficult for the Sandžak Muslims and the Albanians, in the apparent hope that they will be pressured to leave. This has taken the form of beatings and imprisonment by the police and harassment by the authorities and by roving Serbian militias. In Kosovo, there have also been dismissals from jobs including from most of the professions a closing down of the medical support system and of local cultural organizations, and the dismantling of the Albanian language educational system.

One can expect Serbian Orientalists to remain engaged in the anti-Islamic campaign undertaken within Serbia. They are now helping to prepare a case similar to the one for Bosnia-Herzegovina that could be used to justify harsher measures in the other territories. Jevtić, for example, claimed that "What is exceptionally important is that all research indicates that the Yugoslav "Shiptars" [a pejorative Serbian term for Albanians] are

even more loyal to Islam than the Turkified Serbs [Bosnian Muslims]. That is the reason why the roots of the 'Islamic revolution' are also sprouting their buds in Kosmet [the Serbian name for KOSOVO]."⁷⁰ He was also critical of international concern for the arrest in 1994 of Muslim leaders (or "extremists" as he called them) in the Sandžak, and urged the Belgrade government instead to react forcefully to the foreign protests in what he viewed as a strictly domestic issue. Otherwise, he warned, international interference would next be aimed even at the city of Belgrade in defense of the latter's Muslim population. Our public... is not active enough towards warnings that Belgrade is next. Since long time the capital of SRY Yugoslavia tends to be presented to the world as so to say Muslim town in which the members of this religion are endangered."⁷¹

If Serbia's Orientalists, as appears to be the case, continue to provide their scholarly support for the further persecution of Yugoslavia's Muslims, that will only add to their already unenviable burden of responsibility for one of Europe's saddest chapters in this century.*

⁷⁰ An abbreviation for a two-part name for provinces Kosovo and Metohija, which was up to 1974 a Serbian name for a province conquered in 1913 and divided into the Serbian part (Kosovo) and the Montenegrin part (Metohija, that is Dukadžin). Miroljub Jevtic, *Evropske novosti* (*European News*), op.cit., December 22, 1993, page 2.

⁷¹ Miroljub Jevtić, ZAŠTITNICI UGLJANINA [Ugljanin's Defenders], *Evropske Novosti*, 9 March 1994, p. 2.

* Study of Dr. Norman Cigar, ROLE OF SERBIAN ORIENTALISTS IN JUSTIFICATION OF GENOCIDE AGAINST BOSNIACS, first published in a journal **ISLAMIC QUARTERLY: REVIEW OF ISLAMIC CULTURE** (London) under the title: SERBIA'S ORIENTALISTS AND ISLAM: MAKING GENOCIDE INTELLECTUALLY RESPECTABLE, volume XXXVIII, number 3 (1994), pages 147-170.

NOTE ON AUTHOR

Dr. Norman Cigar, an American scientist, is a well-known journalist, analyst and researcher.

He was born in Trieste in 1948. He studied at the University of Oxford in England, and defended his doctoral thesis: *A Social History of Fas (Marocco)*.

He served as a military and political analyst at Pentagon, and currently he is a professor at the Marine Corps University, Department of National Security.

He was a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and was in charge of a special detachment for strategic research at Fort



Bragg, North Carolina. He also acted as a researcher at the Institute of Balkan Studies in Washington, DC, and as a senior research fellow with the Program of Public International Law and Foreign Policy.

He has published a series of works on events that took place in former Yugoslavia, two of which are especially interesting for the public of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Southeast Europe: GENOCIDE IN BiH - A POLICY OF ETHNIC CLEANSING and SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE FOR BRINGING LEGAL ACTION AGAINST SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ.

Apart from his many obligations and participation at numerous international scientific meetings, Dr. Cigar has personally engaged himself in eradication of destructive, fascist phenomena and analysis of emergence and functioning of modern conflicts in the world. Within this framework, he has worked for many newspapers: Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, Defense News, The Atlanta Constitution, Washington Times, The Sunday Telegraph, The Christian Science Monitor, Ljiljan, Rilindija, Vreme, Globus, Wall Street Journal etc.

SADRŽAJ

PREDGOVOR	9
I	
UVOD	15
Srpski orijentalisti osiguravaju naučnu podršku	16

II

ORIJENTALIZAM I NACIONALIZAM
- RAZVIJANJE SIMBIOZE 19

Nacionalizam i naučno mnijenje u Srbiji	19
Antiislamski val nacionalizma	20

III

UTIRANJE PUTA ZA GENOCID 23

Opasnost raspirivanja straha i neprijateljstva	23
Različitost kao zlo - Uspostavljanje etničko-kulturnih granica	25
- Muslimani kao drugi	26
- Islam kao ostatak prošlosti	29
- Islam i nasilje	31
- Muslimani kao izdajice	33
Izoliranje muslimana	35
Delegitimirana zajednica	36

IV

MUSLIMANI KAO EGZISTENCIJALNA
PRIJETNJA SVEMU 39

Stalna prijetnja	39
Muslimanska zavjera protiv Srbije i Zapada	43
Upozoravajuća misija	48

V

OD ANALIZE DO ADVOKATURE -
OPRAVDAVANJE GENOCIDA 55

VI

ZAKLJUČCI I IMPLIKACIJE 59

Uloga i odgovornost orijentalista	59
Izgleđi za budućnost	63

BILJEŠKE O AUTORU 67

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE 73

I

INTRODUCTION 79

Serbian Orientalists Providing the
Scholarly Reassurance..... 80

II

ORIENTALISM AND NATIONALISM:
DEVELOPING THE SYMBIOSIS 83

Nationalism and Scholarship in Serbia	83
The Anti-Islamic Drift of Nationalism	84

III

PAVING THE WAY FOR GENOCIDE	87
The Risk of Fanning Fear and Hostility	87
Diversity as an Evil: Setting the Ethno-cultural Boundaries	89
- Muslims as Aliens	90
- Islam as a Remnant of the Past	93
- Islam and Violence	95
- Muslims as Traitors	97
Isolating the Muslims	99
A Delegitimized Community	100

IV

THE MUSLIMS AS AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO EVERYTHING	101
The Permanent Built-in Threat	101
The Muslims' Conspiracy Against Serbia and the West	105
The Warning Mission	110

V

TRANSITIONING FROM ANALYSIS TO ADVOCACY: JUSTIFYING GENOCIDE	117
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VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	121
The Role and Responsibility of the Orientalists	121
Outlook for the Future	125
NOTE ON AUTHOR	129
S A D R Ź A J	133
TABLE OF CONTENTS	137

Na osnovu mišljenja Federalnog ministarstva obrazovanja, nauke, kulture i sporta, broj: 04-15-257/01, od 18.01.2001., knjiga "Uloga srpskih orijentalista u opravdanju genocida nad muslimanima Balkana", je proizvod iz člana 19. tačka 10. Zakona o porezu na promet proizvoda i usluga na čiji se promet ne plaća porez na promet proizvoda.

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