

# Srebrenica: 3 Years Later, And Still Searching

By George Pumphrey

[www.emperors-clothes.com](http://www.emperors-clothes.com)

- [Note: this article argues that the Srebrenica massacre was a fiction told to isolate the Bosnian Serb Army and justify NATO attacks. At the end you'll find links to other articles which expose NATO genocide stories used to justify the recent bombing of Yugoslavia.]

The third anniversary of the takeover of Srebrenica by Bosnian-Serb troops on July 11, 1995 has come and gone. The significance of this takeover determined not only the outcome of the Bosnian civil war, but reached far beyond the Balkans.

It was the events around Srebrenica, and the subsequent indictments against the Bosnian Serb political leader, Radovan Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb military Commander, Radko Mladic on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, that changed the political constellation at the negotiation table at Dayton. With its leadership under indictment, the Bosnian Serb side had to content itself with being represented by Slobodan Milosevic, president of a, by then, foreign state. The fact alone of an international tribunal being given jurisdiction over people and events taking place thousands of miles from the contexts of those sitting in judgement, without an existing set of legal norms creates already a new basis for the concept of "justice." Srebrenica has been the main source of this tribunal's credibility and its *raison d'être*.

As in the past two years, this year also the war crimes tribunal has sent out teams to search for mass graves containing the remains of the 8,000 Muslim soldiers that are widely believed to have been massacred in the aftermath of the takeover. But a closer look at the background of the Tribunal's search sheds a bit of light on the shadowy side of the Tribunal's work.

The New York Times published an article written by one of its correspondents, Mike O'Connor, (republished in the International Herald Tribune May 14, 1998) entitled "Mass Graves in Bosnia Bolster War-Crimes Cases." This article is very helpful in examining the work of the Tribunal in The Hague, which is why it will be extensively quoted.

Deep in a remote rural stretch of Bosnia, war-crimes investigators have found a tangle of buried bodies that they say is the remains of some of the 7,500 Muslim men that were hidden to try to thwart the prosecution of Bosnian Serb leaders for genocide. (...)

Exhumations in 1996 recovered 460 bodies, but 7,500 others were still missing from the town of Srebrenica. Finding the others has been the goal of war-crimes investigators for more than two years.

(...) The discovery Tuesday - and the thousands of bodies that investigators expect to find nearby - will bolster the cases against 2 Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, the investigators say. Both have been indicted for genocide by the tribunal in The Hague.

Investigators for the tribunal spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity.

Satellites that can locate bodies decomposing underground, according to foreign military officers working with the tribunal, aided the search. Witnesses to the reburial also offered testimony, tribunal officials said.

The first remains were uncovered Tuesday morning. Investigators unfurled a thin silvery sheet to protect their find from the sun. Next to it, small orange flags had been stuck in the ground to mark pieces of evidence such as bits of clothing or shell casings.

Tuesday evening, according to a tribunal official, a layer of tangled bodies across an area of 200 ft<sup>2</sup> (18 m<sup>2</sup>) had been exposed. The bones were so intertwined, the official said, that it was

not possible to exhume any of them Tuesday.

Proving that the soil around the bodies came from the original mass graves, or that shell casings found here match those found at execution sites, will establish the connection they are looking for, investigators said.

When the original sites were inspected in 1996, investigators suspected most of the bodies had been moved. Doubts were cast on American military's satellite surveillance, with some investigators charging at the time that slipshod monitoring had allowed Bosnian Serb authorities to move the bodies undetected.

Now, however, tribunal officials say the bodies were moved in October 1995, before the pinpoint satellite surveillance was requested by the tribunal. Once the original sites were discovered to have been tampered with, American satellite photographs of the region were reviewed and were found to show trucks and earth-moving equipment at the original burial sites, according to tribunal officials.

Anonymous investigators say that the find "will bolster the cases against [the] two Bosnian Serb leaders." The question should be raised: on what basis did the tribunal make its charges of no less than "genocide," if they now have to frantically run around to scrape up enough bodies to make their indictment plausible? If they now have to try to "prove that the soil around the bodies came from the original mass graves," does it mean that what they had considered to be "the original mass graves" were either empty or with too few bodies to justify the indictments? Were Karadzic and Mladic charged according to the principle: "Indict now. Look for evidence of a crime later"? "Charge the Serbs! If you don't know what for, they do" seems to be the modus operandi in The Hague. But it was this widely publicized "genocide" indictment that has caused irreparable damage to the political and social constellation in this region of Europe, creating also a new set of political factors in the world. Some of them are:

- the discrediting of the United Nations for having supposedly allowed a "genocide" to take place on territory under its authority;
- promoting NATO as the new "peace keeping" force;
- making great strides to create public acceptance for inquisitorial, McCarthyist standards both in "justice" and "journalism" on both national and international levels;
- the definition of a new "moral" standard based on "human" rights, determined by membership in particular "ethnic" groups with rights to be respected and all others without rights worthy of respect;
- growing international acceptance of the concept of a people being classified per se as "evil."

This has all been made possible through a massive propaganda campaign colporteurage - yet to be proven - "genocide," as if it were a certitude. Politicians have justified and based momentous decisions upon the supposition that the massacre is fact, decisions determining the welfare of the peoples of this region and beyond.

The media bases each succeeding generation of falsification on preceding generations of unproven factors. Both are so often repeated as a certainty, that the public does not even demand substantiating evidence.

O'Conner writes that "7,500 Muslim men were hidden to try to thwart the prosecution of Bosnian Serb leaders for genocide. 'Their' bodies were moved in October 1995, before the pinpoint satellite surveillance was requested by the tribunal." These and other allegations are in gross contradiction to other information published in the press.

#### 1) The Numbers game:

First of all, the number 8,000 most often and most consistently given in the press is itself the first falsification. The prosecution has never proven that 8,000 Muslims were killed. It is indicative to note how the number 8,000 came into circulation.

The International Committee of the Red Cross published a press statement Sept. 13, 1995 in which it was stated:

"The ICRC's head of operations for Western Europe, Angelo Gnaedinger, visited Pale and Belgrade from 2 to 7 September to obtain information from the Bosnian Serb authorities about

the 3,000 persons from Srebrenica whom witnesses say were arrested by Bosnian Serb forces. The ICRC has asked for access as soon as possible to all those arrested (so far it has been able to visit only about 200 detainees), and for details of any deaths. The ICRC has also approached the Bosnia-Herzegovina authorities seeking information on some 5,000 individuals who fled Srebrenica, some of whom reached central Bosnia."

Sept. 15, 1995 in the New York Times these numbers were juggled to make:

About 8,000 Muslims are missing from Srebrenica, the first of two United Nations-designated 'safe areas' overrun by Bosnian Serb troops in July, the Red Cross said today. (...) Among the missing were 3,000, mostly men, who were seen being arrested by Serbs. After the collapse of Srebrenica, the Red Cross collected 10,000 names of missing people, said Jessica Barry, a spokeswoman. In addition to those arrested, about 5,000 'have simply disappeared,' she said.

Aside from simply adding the 3,000 Muslim men found still in Srebrenica (that the Serbs then took as prisoners of war) and the 5,000 Muslim men, (reported by the International Red Cross to have left Srebrenica before the arrival of Bosnian Serb forces) to inflate the figures - and therefore the gravity of the accusation - they make no mention of the fact that by mid-September 1995 a sizable portion of the group of 5,000 had already reached Muslim territory and safety. The fact that the Red Cross was asking the Bosnia-Herzegovina authorities for information about the number of the 5,000 (the original figure) - "some of whom [had already] reached central Bosnia" - has completely disappeared from the news. The entire 5,000 are still today - 3 years later - being counted as "missing."

The Red Cross report was lacking the objectivity that one would hope for from a non-partisan organization. Its very off-hand "some of whom reached central Bosnia" gives the impression of only a handful could be accounted for by mid-September. But again the press gave another picture:

"Some 3,000 to 4,000 Bosnian Muslims who were considered by UN officials to be missing after the fall of Srebrenica have made their way through enemy lines to Bosnian government territory. The group, which included wounded refugees, sneaked past Serb lines under fire and crossed some 30 miles through forests to safety."

O'Connor's NY Times colleague Chris Hedges published this information in the journal within a week of the takeover of Srebrenica (July 18, 1995). Similar news appeared in other journals at the time.

August 2, 1995 the Times of London published the following:

Thousands of the "missing" Bosnian Muslim soldiers from Srebrenica who have been at the center of reports of possible mass executions by the Serbs, are believed to be safe to the northeast of Tuzla.

Monitoring the safe escape of Muslim soldiers and civilians from the captured enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa has proved a nightmare for the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. For the first time yesterday, however, the Red Cross in Geneva said it had heard from sources in Bosnia that up to 2,000 Bosnian Government troops were in an area north of Tuzla.

They had made their way there from Srebrenica "without their families being informed," a spokesman said, adding that it had not been possible to verify the reports because the Bosnian Government refused to allow the Red Cross into the area.

According to the Washington Post, "The men set off at dawn on Tuesday, July 11, in two columns that stretched back seven or eight miles." Even if the Red Cross did not know that they left Srebrenica in 2 columns, they at least knew that 2,000 were safe. And UN officials knew of the 3, - 4,000 that had arrived earlier. Yet the communiqué given in September failed to report that the 5,000 that "simply disappeared," simply disappeared back into the ranks of the Bosnian military.

The Red Cross must have been aware that a "Big Lie" campaign was launched around the issue of Srebrenica. By withholding and understating important information, the Red Cross was, in effect, a party to the conflict. It is unlikely that correspondents, such as Mike O'Connor, and their editors are unaware of the fallacious content of the reports they publish. The pattern of conformity in this disinformation campaign is, to say the least, astonishing.

A little more than a week after Srebrenica, Zepa, a second Moslem enclave (and UN Safe Area) was taken by Bosnian Serb forces. Hundreds of the "missing" soldiers from Srebrenica were among the

**defenders of Zepa in the last days of fighting. As the New York Times recounts:**

**"The wounded troops were left behind, and when the Bosnian Serbs overran the town on Tuesday, the wounded were taken to Sarajevo for treatment at Kosevo Hospital. Many of them had begun their journey in Srebrenica, and fled into the hills when that 'safe area' fell to the Bosnian Serbs on July 11. These men did not make it to Tuzla, where most of the refugees ended up, but became the defenders of Zepa instead. 'Some 350 of us managed to fight our way out of Srebrenica and make it into Zepa,' said Sadik Ahmetovic, one of 151 people evacuated to Sarajevo for treatment today. (...) They said they had not been mistreated by their Serb captors."**

**(The Muslim defenders of Zepa left their wounded behind as they ran into the hills. It is also well known that the 5,000 Muslim soldiers, who left Srebrenica before Serbian troops took over, left their women and children behind. Obviously the Muslim soldiers must not have been too worried about their women, children and wounded comrades falling into the hands of their Serbian countrymen. The Serbian forces, generally portrayed as comparable to Nazis, had the wounded members of the Muslim forces evacuated to their Muslim hospital.)**

**The London Times article, quoted above mentions that 2,000 Srebrenica soldiers made their way to the north of Tuzla "without their families being informed". The question is, when, if ever, were the families informed. Other than the few articles that took notice of their resurrection from the dead, the public at large was never informed that they, in fact were never massacred. On the contrary. To maintain the myth of a gigantic massacre, is not only necessary to create the illusion of having proof that it did happen – thus the frantic searches for mass graves - but also to suppress the proof that it did not take place - which means prohibit that too many of the prisoners of war return "from the dead."**

**The figure of 3,000, given by the Red Cross, listed as having been arrested by Bosnian Serb forces, which is counted into the media's 8,000 "massacred," should also be taken with a grain of salt. One learns - again through isolated articles - that they too not only were not massacred, but that the Red Cross, the United Nations, and a host of "western" governments around the world all were well aware of this fact.**

**January 17, 1996, the Manchester "Guardian" published an article concerning one group of the former Muslim prisoners of war from Srebrenica and Zepa, who, liberated from the prison camp at Sljivovica - in Serbia, were flown directly abroad to Dublin:**

**"Hundreds of Bosnian Muslim prisoners are still being held at two secret camps within neighboring Serbia, according to a group of men evacuated by the Red Cross to a Dublin hospital from one camp - at Sljivovica. (...) A group of 24 men was flown to Ireland just before Christmas (...). But some 800 others remain incarcerated in Sljivovica and at another camp near Mitrovo Polje, just three days before the agreed date for the release of all detainees under the Dayton peace agreement on Bosnia (...). The Red Cross in Belgrade has been negotiating for several weeks to have the men released and given sanctuary in third countries. A spokeswoman said most were bound for the United States or Australia, with others due to be sent to Italy, Belgium, Sweden, France and Ireland. (...) Since late August, the Red Cross has made fortnightly visits from its Belgrade field office. (...) Teams from the War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague have been in Dublin to question and take evidence from the men."**

**Why would war prisoners, whose normal first wish would be to reunite with their families and restart their interrupted lives in peace, be rushed off to Dublin, with "papers to remain in Ireland?" And this at a time where most industrialized countries are closing their borders to refugees! Were their families informed? Could it be that they too - in a large enough group - could become living proof of the fallacy of a huge Srebrenica "massacre" before the 1996 fall elections?**

**US decided to accept two hundred and fourteen Bosniaks who, after the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa, had been detained in Serbian camps and give them refugee status. "It is horrible that those people besides being captured during the bloodshed in Srebrenica had to spend at least another two months in Serbian detention camps under dreadful conditions," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns. Burns emphasized that at least 800 men out of 80,000 people who have been expelled from their**

homes after the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa had been taken to Serbia.

This is how the US government justified their aid in secretly skirting the men out of the country. What is known is that neither the Red Cross (which has been visiting the prisoners since August), the Tribunal, (in its frantic search for evidence for the "genocide" in Srebrenica and to have someone arrest the Bosnian Serb leaders) nor the American government have made mention since August 95 of these men being in custody, as war prisoners. Why? Are they trying to conceal evidence exonerating the Bosnian Serbian forces of the charge of "genocide" in connection with alleged mass executions?

2) The vanishing corpses:

Like the juggling of the numbers of "missing" and their whereabouts, excuses had to be found for the lack of corpses.

In August 1995, during a Security Council meeting, the US delegation to the United Nations accused the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs of having committed wide-scale atrocities against Muslim civilians. With what amounts to a satellite photo "peep show," Madeleine Albright had an excuse already prepared for the lack of evidence to support her charges. The NY Times in referring back to that session of the UN Security Council wrote:

"On Aug. 10, [1995] the chief United States delegate to the United Nations, Madeleine K. Albright, showed selected photos of the two sites to a closed session of the United Nations Security Council. She then said, 'We will keep watching to see if the Bosnian Serbs try to erase the evidence of what they have done.'"

One of the earlier versions was the vanishing corpses through a corrosive agent. In the same article, the NY Times adds:

"American officials said today that they suspect Bosnian Serb soldiers may have tried to destroy evidence that they killed thousands of Muslim men seized in and around the town of Srebrenica in July. The Serbs are suspected of pouring corrosive chemicals on the bodies and scattering corpses that had been buried in mass graves, the officials said. The suspicions first arose in early August, after Central Intelligence Agency experts analyzed pictures of the area taken in July by reconnaissance satellites and U-2 planes."

With the absence of traces of a corrosive substance, when it comes time to dig up the "evidence," the entire legend falls flat. Another explanation had to be found: the bodies were simply dug up and moved someplace else. This excuse has its advantages: With the needle in the haystack search for "mass graves," the tribunal could keep the public at bay for quite a while. But also disadvantages: How do you remove thousands of buried, decomposing bodies without being seen by the "watchful eye" of Madeleine Albright's satellites? Undismayed by this factual detail, the Tribunal and media continue their course.

In Nov. 1995 the Dutch Minister of Defense, Joris Voorhove, accused the Serbs of "trying hastily to destroy the evidence of the massacre they committed against thousands of Bosniaks around Srebrenica." Citing "intelligence services" as his source, he claimed in a TV interview, that "these days Serbs have been exhuming the corpses from the mass graves in order to remove the evidence of their crimes."

Approaching the day of reckoning and desperate for more concrete evidence of the massacre, Richard Goldstone, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, wrote a letter to the US Embassy in the Hague in Nov. 95, to pressure the US government to come forward with the evidence it evidently had promised. The letter was quoted in the Washington Post:

"Judge [Goldstone] called the 'quality and timeliness' of intelligence provided by the United States 'disappointing.' He complained about the failure to hand over spy photos that he said could help the United Nations-sponsored tribunal identify mass graves that appeared after the fall of Srebrenica in July. The judge also complained that much of the information provided by the United States so far was based on 'open-source material' not relevant to the original requests. He submitted an additional 25 questions to Washington, including a request for information about a transcript of a conversation between General Mladic and Yugoslav Army commanders who report directly to President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia."

[The reference to "open-source material," that the US government furnished the tribunal as

"evidence," simply means that the CIA uses media reports, some of which are obviously its own propaganda plants.]

The Clinton Administration made public 3 of the 8 photos shown the Security Council. One of these 3 showed "disturbed soil." "According to one American official who has seen the photographs, one shows hundreds and perhaps thousands of Muslim men and boys in a field near a soccer stadium about 5 miles north of Srebrenica. Another photo taken several days later shows a large area of freshly dug earth, consistent with the appearance of known mass graves, near the stadium, which is empty." One of the three photos reproduced in several newspapers showed two buildings, a main and subordinate road. Two light colored patches (indicated with arrows) in the middle of what could be a field with a parallel double-lined path (tire tracks?) leading from the main road to each of the light areas. The photo is entitled: "Possible Mass Graves; Kasaba/Konjevic Polje Area, Bosnia; unclassified Jul. 95." In the lower left corner the explanation of the arrows: "Recently disturbed earth."

As a NY Times journalist complained, the US government refused "to let reporters see the satellite photographs (...) which were said to include pictures of people crowded into a soccer field. American officials said the satellite photographs were classified, although Ms. Albright showed them to the other 14 members of the Security Council." This striptease sort of procedure, in itself, should provoke questions concerning the credibility of these photos portraying what we are told that they are supposed to show.

- Where are other more conclusive photos showing people in the process of being shot, dead bodies being removed, open pits being - or already - filled with bodies or being covered,....?
- How closely were diplomats of the Security Council able to examine (for authenticity, manipulation, falsification) the photos? Were they forced to appraise the photos quickly, or were they allowed to keep copies of the photos?
- Why are photos purported to be the most important - those showing "Muslim men and boys," - hidden from the public? Do they actually show what the US administration claim that they show?
- How does the US secret service discern the difference between "hundreds and perhaps thousands of Muslim men and boys" from the same number of Serb or Croatian males - and that from outer space? The Security Council members apparently saw something different on these photos: A NY Times journalist following the presentation to the Security Council reports: "The photographs showed a stretch of fields at Novo Kasaba, near Srebrenica, where Bosnian Muslim families were apparently herded together." A mere detail? Which is the true story? The version "Muslim men and boys" given by the CIA official the day before? Or the one of "Bosnian Muslim families" the day after members of the Security Council viewed the pictures? Had they realized that they were viewing mainly women and children, (perhaps being "herded together" to prepare to be taken by bus to Tuzla)? Is this not a first indication that perhaps the satellite photos will not stand up under independent appraisal? Could this embarrassing discrepancy be the main reason why the satellite photos were made inaccessible to the public?
- Where is the original photo taken by the reconnaissance aircraft? Why was the original photo not shown to the Security Council? The labeling that accompanied the published photo: "Possible Mass Graves" was added after the photo was taken, meaning that the built-in time and geographical settings from reconnaissance cameras, were edited out of the picture and arrows and other written interpretations of what one is supposed to see edited onto the photo. Left to make ones' own interpretations the same photo could have been interpreted to show something having nothing to do with warfare in the Balkans. How does one know that the photo was taken near Srebrenica, or at the time that it is claimed to have been taken - and not at some other time in some other part of the world?
- Could it be that the US government knows that the origin of this "disturbed soil" has nothing to do with "Mass Graves"? Could this be the reason why the photo is entitled: "Possible Mass Graves"? Would this not also explain why the State Department and CIA found it necessary to launch rumors that Serbs had allegedly removed the thousands of bodies that were supposed

to have been buried under this "disturbed soil" - albeit without any satellite photos to back up this new rumor?

- The assumption that several days after having seen a full soccer field, an empty one would signify that those formerly seen there had been executed, is so farfetched, that it could be dismissed as crazy. How many soccer stadiums remain filled overnight, or days at a time? If those seen had in fact been Muslims captured, why would the first assumption not have been that they had been taken to a prisoner of war camp? This type of explanation says more about the ethnic prejudices of the author than it does about those of Bosnian Serb armed forces.

In the Bible, faith is defined as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This seems a very appropriate description of the Tribunal's handling of the US satellite and U-2 "evidence." It was on the basis of these photos that the Security Council and tribunal accused the Serbian leadership of having committed a massacre. The Tribunal's indictments against Karadzic and Mladic were primarily based on faith in the journalists' faith in the Security Council's faith in the CIA and its spy photos. Neither the press nor the tribunal were given access to all of the photos, yet both take it for granted that the Bosnian leaders are "guilty as charged."

But once the indictment handed down, the Bosnian Serb leaders shut out of negotiations and the Serbian President Milosevic under effective threat (that he too could suffer the fate of his Bosnian Serb Brethren), the Clinton Administration showed little interest in helping "further the cause of justice."

The White House spokesman, Michael D. McCurry, and other US officials responded to Goldstone's complaints by saying:

"There are certain types of intelligence information that our Government cannot share with the international community." The NY Times article continues: "Mr. McCurry cited 'national security reasons' as the reason the United States would withhold some evidence, and criticized the complaints by the prosecutor, Judge Richard Goldstone, as 'unfortunate.' (...) In defending their level of cooperation with the tribunal, Administration officials insisted that Judge Goldstone is getting most of his data from the United States and there would be no war crimes tribunal if not for the United States."

With this statement these "administration officials" confirmed what Serbs and independent observers have suspected from the beginning: that the tribunal is simply being manipulated by the US to serve its own foreign policy interests, and that its procedures have really as little to do with "rule of law" standards as its goals, with doing "justice."

It has been reported that in the New York central headquarters of the UN, all files relevant to Srebrenica have been classified "secret" for the next 30 - 50 years and are not even available for the tribunal. This decision was taken at the demand of the permanent members of the Security Council, the USA, France and Great Britain, in reference to their protection of the secrecy of government documents.

With what right does the US classify evidence that it claims to have, concerning what is often referred to as "the worst atrocities committed in Europe since WW-II?" One could understand the US government withholding evidence of war crimes committed by US troops. But what justification does the US have for classifying a "national security secret," crimes committed by those designated as "enemy forces?" Is the US administration hiding the proof of a crime or proof that it has no proof of a crime? Most disturbing of all is that hardly anyone raises this question.

As in November, the snow and icy winter began to set in, chances of exhuming graves were slim. Come January, and the approaching thaw, the Tribunal and their chief prosecutor, at the time, Richard Goldstone, began to get nervous. The US government was still not forthcoming with more conclusive evidence of a massacre. At one point, Goldstone threatened "the exhumation of the graves may become necessary in order to determine the identity of the corpses and the time and cause of death and to obtain the necessary evidence." What Goldstone formulated here as a threat should have been - if the tribunal were a normal court of law - the most logical first step for determining that a crime had been committed, a prerequisite for an indictment.

Confronted with the inevitability of the exhumation, American journalists began to prepare public

opinion for the disappointment that would soon come when the graves turn up empty. Washington Post journalist, John Pomfret, visited a site that "according to a Western investigator, could be 2 of several mass graves in the region believed to hold corpses of some of the estimated 12,000 Muslim fighters." Pomfret observes that: "while dirt obviously had been moved recently around the sites in Glogova, if Serbian gunmen had attempted to tamper with it or destroy evidence, they did not do a thorough job. Bones were readily visible on the clay dirt, as were bandages, shoes and other things that obviously once belonged to the men buried below." Mr. Pomfret, does not take the tampering too seriously, since he leaves the efforts of the would-be tamperers at the level of "attempting to" and admits that they did it unseriously. Could it have been that it was supposed to appear as though someone had "attempted" to tamper. Since the region was being watched by American IFOR forces, maybe Mr. Pomfret has also information about whether the would be tamperers were Americans. Besides his inflationary reporting - pulling the sum of "12,000 Muslim fighters" out of thin air - it would seem that along with his "Western investigator," Mr. Pomfret must also have a very "special" source of information concerning the would-have-been tamperers: How else would he know, that they were carrying guns - "gunmen" - instead of shovels? Little wonder they did not do a good job. Ever try to dig a hole with a rifle?

Also to be noted, and not just for both Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Pomfret, many journalists have a privileged source: their anonymous "investigators," another name for intelligence agent. It would be interesting to learn with what means the Serbian forces supposedly disposed of 7,500 decomposing bodies. Such an enterprise would not only take a lot of time and effort, but would also require quite a large space. How is this supposed to have been accomplished without having been seen by the hi-tech satellite and U-2 surveillance?

Mr. O'Connor also affirms that the US is using "satellites that can locate bodies decomposing underground." The question should arise: Why has it taken them 3 years to locate the corpses that they claim to be in the area since July '95? And they still do not have them.

(It should not be forgotten that simply the fact of finding a "mass grave" is not necessarily proof of a mass execution. In wartime the battlefield victims of the opposing side may be disposed of in this way, until a transfer of the remains could be negotiated with the other side, to avoid the health problems that their decomposition on the surface could cause, particularly in summer.)

The work of the Hague Tribunal has been highly praised as an "example" of what is needed on a more general basis as an answer to "war crimes" and "genocide." Neither the tribunal nor the press has produced substantial evidence 1) that a genocide was ever planned or attempted by the Bosnian Serb leadership and 2) that a large scale massacre - thousands of Muslims - ever took place in the aftermath of the Bosnian Serbian takeover of Srebrenica. And this after nearly 3 years of promises to bring proof to support indictments. It is as adventurous to speak of a "genocide" without corpses as it is of a "murder" without a victim.

To be sure, if this becomes the international legal norm of jurisprudence, no national legal system - no matter how good it is, will withstand the pressure of such a totalitarian judicial system. This sort of procedure if allowed to set in on the international level will determine also national judicial standards. Humanity will find itself being juridicially set back to the standards of the era of the inquisition.

+++++

Sidebar: The Eyewitness, Erdemovic

Not anxious to exhume the suspected graves, and lacking other material proof of mass executions, the tribunal turned once again to its mainstay: "Eyewitness" testimony as "evidence." This is the most unreliable form of evidence, because it is the easiest to be manipulated and tailored to fit the desired circumstances. One need only affirm having been a witness to something. As long as the accused cannot prove the contrary - and the tribunal will not search for corroborating evidence to support the allegations, the defendant will be convicted. This turns the basic rule of "proof of a crime being with the prosecution" on its head.

When the "eyewitness" Drazen Erdemovic, came forward in March 96, asking to go the Hague, this caused a great sensation of enthusiasm in the Hague. Erdemovic described himself, in a confession to the French daily, "Le Figaro", as a "soldier in the Bosnian Serb Army." He said that he had



participated in mass executions of Muslim civilians from Srebrenica, describing in details the massacres of 1,200 people on one field of a farm in Pilice, near Janja, on the road Bjeljina- Zvornik. According to him the executioners "used 7,62mm bullets."1)

With such detailed information, one would think that the Tribunal would finally have what it would need to be able to locate and secure the necessary evidence to bring concrete charges against those who participated. They would have to simply exhume the bodies and in a forensic examination verify if they had been killed with 7,62mm bullets. That is of course, if the tribunal wanted to learn if Erdemovic was a reliable witness or giving false information out of some personal or political motivation.

In 1992, in his native Tuzla, Erdemovic "first joined HVO (The paramilitary Croatian Council of Defence), then he went over to the Serbian side. In Serbia came in contact with ABC TV- station,2) and (...) offered his story, and his testimony to Tribunal in The Hague.3)" The International Herald Tribune adds: "Mr. Erdemovic, who (...) had been an ordinary soldier, said that after a falling out with his commander in Bosnia he decided to move to Serbia and tell his story, apparently in revenge."4)

Is this a reliable witness? Is it plausible that an ex-HVO paramilitary Croatian nationalist would have joined - would have even been accepted in - the Bosnian Serb army? It has also been reported - and denied - that chief prosecutor Richard Goldstone had offered Erdemovic benefit of the "state's witness" regulation, freedom from prosecution for himself and was guaranteed a new life abroad for his valuable testimony.5)

Erdemovic came to The Hague as a witness and became himself, the defendant charged with crimes against humanity, for his role in the executions that he described.

In an article in "The Nation," Diana Johnstone described the conviction as being:

"heralded as a great "first" in establishment of global justice. [The Erdemovic] case is considered of great importance to the Tribunal since his confession of taking part in executing over a thousand Muslims after the Serb capture of Srebrenica is considered prime evidence in the Tribunal's "main event," the future trial of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic. 6)

She also points out the catch: However, inasmuch as he confessed to his crimes, there was no formal trial and no presentation of material evidence to corroborate his story. In any case, since he had turned "state's evidence," there would have been no rigorous cross-examination from either a contented prosecution or a complaisant defense regarding the discrepancy between the number of Muslims he testified having helped execute at a farm near Pilica -- 1,200 -- and the number of bodies actually found there by the Tribunal's forensic team: about 150 to 200.7)

He was given an original ten-year sentence. Upon appeal, he changed his plea from "guilty" to a crime against Humanity, to "guilty" to a war crime. Citing among other things, "honest disposition; this is supported by his confession and consistent admission of guilt"8) his change of plea was accepted and his sentence was reduced from 10 to 5 years. (Does the "honest disposition" cited by the tribunal, would mean that those who defend their innocence would be particularly punished, particularly when the tribunal makes no effort of verifying the evidence?)

GP.

Sidebar:

1) Vanessa Vasic-Janekovic, A Man Who Knows Too Much (Covjek koji zna previse), quoted in the ARZIN index-60, 15.3.96

2) Why didn't ABC-TV take this "scoop" of a lifetime? The credit for breaking this story is "Le Figaro". This sounds like a common CIA "black propaganda" method: plant a false story in a reputable foreign paper to have the American press pick it up as a reprint. This hides the American hand at the origin of the story. The French press, at the time, was not as monolithically anti-Serb, as the German or American media.

3) ibid

4) Jane Perlez, Milosevic is expected to Aid in a War crimes Case; 2 Bosnian Serbs may face court, IHT, 14.3.96

5) cd sg Bosnien/UN/Jugoslawien; Tribunal verlangt in Belgrad Auslieferung von Srebrenica-Zeugen, dpa 12.03.1996 - 12:57

6) Johnstone, Diana; Selective Justice in The Hague: The War Crimes Tribunal on Former Yugoslavia is a Mockery of Evidentiary Rule; The Nation, 22.9.97

7) Ibid

8) Dražan Erdemović sentenced to 5 Years imprisonment; Press Communiqué of the ICTY;  
<http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/p299-e.htm>

\* **Opponents of the bombing** of Yugoslavia charge that NATO leaders have once again fabricated evidence of Serbian war crimes to demonize the Serbs and justify bombing. This charge gained much credibility when Spanish forensic scientists went public three months ago, charging that NATO had misled them and the world. Click on *Spanish Experts Say Serbs Not Guilty* or go to <http://emperors-clothes.com/news/sp-news.htm>

\* **To read the Emperors-clothes** commentary on the Spanish experts' report, click on *Spanish Experts Shoot NATO in its Logic* or go to <http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/jared/sp-comment.htm>

\* **Quite a few newspapers** picked up on the Spanish experts' critique of NATO genocide claims. To answer the critics, Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte of the War Crimes Tribunal made a statement in mid-November. Emperors-clothes analyzed this statement and found it lacking. Click on *Spinning the Kill: Albright's Tribunal Hastens to Save a Lie* or go to <http://emperors-clothes.com/analysis/spin.htm>

**[If you would like to browse other articles on Emperors-Clothes.com please click here or go to http://emperors-clothes.com](#)**