

# Postwar agenda

From the Editors in the [August 11, 1999](#) issue

The NATO countries have been clear about the postwar agenda in Kosovo and Serbia. The first goal has been to create conditions under which peace and order might return to Kosovo. That means providing a credible police force that not only allows the Albanian refugees to return but also—a much more difficult task—protects Serbs from retaliatory violence. The second goal has been to bring relief and development aid to the region, thereby laying the basis for future economic and political stability and eventual integration into Europe. NATO has insisted that the second goal be conditionally linked to a third: the removal of Slobodan Milosevic from power in Serbia.

The first goal remains unrealized. On July 23, 14 Serb farmers were shot dead while they were harvesting crops near the village of Gracko. In Pristina on August 2 an 80-year-old Serb woman, feet and hands bound, was drowned in her bathtub. According to a NATO official, a young Albanian couple moved into her apartment hours after the murder. And these are but two examples of the scores of revenge killings, many of them execution-style, that have taken place since NATO-led peacekeepers entered Kosovo on June 12. Almost certainly the Kosovo Liberation Army is complicit in many of the slayings as it pursues a policy of intimidation designed to drive the remaining Serbs out of Kosovo. The policy is working.

No one should have expected a peaceful multiethnic society to be established overnight in Kosovo. And no one can be surprised that some Albanian Kosovars—who were forcibly removed from their homes and then returned to find their loved ones murdered, their possessions looted, and their homes destroyed and sometimes obscenely violated—have taken revenge against suspected perpetrators or accomplices. As for the Kosovar Serbs, they can hardly be expected to be so devoted to creating a multiethnic Kosovo that they would risk their lives by staying.

While it is unreasonable to expect security forces to prevent all acts of retaliatory violence, tougher measures must be taken to protect Serb lives and property. And Western forces need aggressively to challenge the KLA, making it clear that its

leaders are no less subject to war-crimes indictments than is Milosevic.

As for the second goal, world leaders gathered in Sarajevo at the end of July to pledge their economic aid to the region. But only the U.S. offered specific figures—\$700 million in economic aid, plus \$500 million in humanitarian assistance. Much, much more is needed. The leaders also made it clear that Serbia would receive no reconstruction help, only humanitarian aid, so long as Milosevic remains in power.

While the need to isolate Milosevic, an indicted war criminal, is understandable, linking all development aid to Serbia to Milosevic's ouster strikes us as unwise. Integrating Serbia into the economic life of Europe is, in the long term, one of the best ways to encourage its political integration.

Economies will stagnate in Serbia and throughout the region unless the NATO-bombed bridges over the Danube are rebuilt and the river reopened to commercial traffic. Such assistance can be termed "humanitarian" rather than "development" aid, for the sake of maintaining the principle of not dealing with Milosevic. In this case, raising bridges may well help lead to Milosevic's fall.