

Serbian holocaust inspired by Hitler

Fifty-four years ago in Europe, boxcars were loaded with ethnic and religious minorities who were being sent to their deaths in distant concentration camps. Today in Europe, boxcars are being loaded with ethnic and religious minorities who are being sent to their deaths in distant concentration camps.

So much for the new world order.

Serbia has been accused of loading non-Serbians into boxcars and shipping them to camps in Bosnia where they are systematically tortured and murdered. Sound all too familiar?

Accusations of Serbian run concentration camps have just recently been made public, although the U.S. State Department has admitted that it has been receiving reports about the camps for at least several weeks, perhaps months. And what is being done? Nothing.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the U.S. quickly built international support for military intervention through the United Nations, and the American public was whipped into a frenzy. Iraq's every atrocity was held up to public scrutiny in order to justify intervention.

So far, the U.S. has done nothing to encourage action against Serbia. The Pentagon has said that it is responding to requests from the U.N., and so far the U.N. has only requested humanitarian assistance. The U.S. could generate a request for intervention through the U.N., but apparently George Bush feels that saving his political life is more important than saving the lives of Bosnians, Croats or Slovenians.

It is uncertain which is more frightening: the existence of the Serbian concentration camps, or the world's refusal to take any action. The Nazi's persecution of the Jewish people began on Nov. 9, 1938 with *Kristallnacht*, or "Night of Crystal" in reference to the smashed windows of Jewish-owned businesses. And as Jewish persecution increased, the world chose to close its eyes. The U.S. was still struggling with the Great Depression and people believed that Europe should be left to its own devices.

The situation today is stunningly similar, the main difference being that it is primarily Muslims, not Jews, who are being murdered. And much as anti-semitism was partly responsible for the world looking away during the first holocaust, decades of Islamic terrorism has done little to foster an environment of support for the Muslim plight. And so the second holocaust is being allowed to occur unimpeded.

The U.S., in conjunction with the U.N., should take immediate military action to prevent the further murder of innocent civilians. Air strikes against Serbian artillery positions could be carried out with little risk to pilots or aircraft, and the threat of escalation may be enough to convince Serbia to end its war of "ethnic cleansing" and prevent history from repeating itself.



COMMENTARY

Democracy requires participation

By Barry Rubin

As more than four thousand Democrats descended on New York to reaffirm their commitment to the political and democratic process by nominating a Presidential candidate, a different drama was being played out all across the country. Everywhere one looks, more and more Americans are losing faith in their government and its ability to solve problems.

Democracy is in danger and the people are restless. Scandals, large and small, hit Congress: unpaid dining room tabs or checks bounced at a members-only bank reinforce sleazy images and the stench of pockets bulging with questionable campaign contributions. And the message gets through. Poll after poll reflects the distrust, even disgust, the public feels with the institution of Congress.

The antidote for this public discontent is citizen engagement, active and sustained public participation in formulating and implementing solutions to our public problems. Change occurs only when citizens make their voices heard loudly and clearly by all the institutions that can cause change — schools, corporations and all levels of elected and appointed government officials, to name but a few. Citizens must work to create a democratic dialogue where leaders are educated and informed by citizens' views, through a system that is participatory and responsive.

It takes only a pen and a few minutes to open a dialogue with legislators. A recent report, "Is Anyone Listening," prepared by 20/20 Vision, concluded that "letters to Senators and Representatives become currency; a high quality letter can make a tremendous impact — only one good letter is needed to make a difference." 20/20 Vision is an example of an organization that enables citizens to make a difference. Based in Amherst, Mass., it helps citizens decide locally how best to reorder our national priorities away from military spending to preserving the environment and our future at home. One month it may recommend sending a letter to a Senator on an upcoming bill; the next it's a letter to the editor of the local paper suggesting coverage of an important issue with a local slant. The genius of 20/20 is that it gives busy citizens the skills and the opportunity to participate effectively in public policy in a sustained and reasoned way.

People may be turned off by politics and candidates; they may not vote, but they do care. Examine a person who stays at home instead of going to the polls on election day and you'll find someone concerned about the economy, the environment, health care, crime, education — the list goes on. They just don't see that they have opportunities to make a difference. They're wrong.

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sentatives aware of its views and hold them accountable for their actions. Bemoaning our national fate and complaining about unresponsive politicians just won't wash, not when there are organizations like 20/20 Vision to help us take back our democracy.

Write a letter, make a call, express your views. Attend a town meeting, lobby the school board, visit the mayor. To borrow from the popular commercial, just do it.

Barry Rubin is chairman of the board of 20/20 Vision, a non-profit citizens empowerment organization concerned with national and global security.

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