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Title: Victimization as Causal Factor in Aggression: The Expected Consequences of NATO Bombing

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Abstract. This article describes the psychology of victimization as it impacts on North Atlantic Treaty Organization attempts to minimize aggression of the Yugoslavian and Serbian governments towards Kosovar Albanians.

Kosovar Albanians currently are victims of aggression from the Yugoslavian and Serbian governments. A sense of victimization on the part of supporters of these governments may well be causally related to the aggression.

What is the psychological basis of this sense of victimization? Many government supporters are still influenced by military history over 600 years old wherein a primarily Slavic-Serbian-Christian Orthodox force was defeated by a primarily Turkish-Islamic force on what has become the hallowed ground of Kosovo. The defeat ushered in centuries of occupation under the Ottoman Empire. Other contributors to lessened degrees of freedom and a sense of victimization have included imperialistic strivings of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the ravages of World War I and World War II, the rule of Tito, various Cold War machinations of East and West, German encouragement of the break-up of post-Tito Yugoslavia, and more recent Western bombing of Bosnian Serbs. Now--from a Serbian perspective--the cultural descendants of the Ottomans are demanding a break-up of Serbia and a newly unified Germany among other Western powers is militarily attacking Serbia.

In this context, the notion that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing should somehow bring the Yugoslavian and Serbian governments to the bargaining table in an effort to compromise with Kosovar opponents seems somewhat bizarre. It is much more likely that the bombing intensely reinforces the cognitive and socioemotional substrates--historical facts, myths, ideological infrastructures, seething and only partially conscious resentments--of the sense of victimization. Consequences of this reinforcement would include attenuation of opposition among pro-democracy Slavic-Serbs against the Yugoslavian and Serbian governments and increased resistance of virtually all Slavic-Serbs against demonized enemies: NATO, its constituent members, and the Kosovo Liberation Army.

As well, the increased sense of Slavic-Serbian victimization leads to an ever more inclusive sense of all Kosovar Albanians as opponents and an increased violence against these opponents. These consequences, in turn, ineluctably intensify a sense of victimization among the Kosovar Albanian opponents and increase the probability that these opponents will engage in behavior that will further increase the sense of victimization of their opponents in truly vicious circles.

This psychologically-based conclusion is supported by previous examples of aerial bombing in attempts to break an adversary's will. The only things broken for sure is the humanity among friend and foe alike. (See Clymer, A. (March 29, 1999). Allies shifting the focus to halting atrocities reported in Kosovo. *The New York Times*, pp. A1;A8; Fine, M. (1983). *The social context and a sense of injustice: The option to challenge*. *Representative Research in Social Psychology*, 13, 15-33; Frieze, I. H., Hymer, S, & Greenberg, M. S. (1987). *Describing the crime victim: Psychological reactions to victimization*. *Professional*

International Bulletin of Political Psychology

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