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From the IBPP Research Associates. Yugoslavia.

Dragoslav Jeremic

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This interview of Mr. Dragoslav Jeremic of Belgrade, Yugoslavia, was conducted via email by Global Network Initiative staffer Gil Grein and completed on April 12, 1999. Mr. Jeremic is a 70 year old retired chemist and university professor who specialized in teaching students about spectroscopy and other experimental techniques useful in studying organic molecular structures. Mr. Jeremic is also a Grandfather. The interview focused on the current crisis between NATO and Yugoslavia.

Grein: Do you support President Milosevic?

Jeremic: I never voted for President Milosevic, but I support him now when he is trying to prevent separation of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia.

Grein: Do you believe what NATO is saying about the mass killing of Kosovar Albanians in Kosovo? If you do not believe what NATO is saying, what is the reason you think there are hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Kosovo?

Jeremic: First of all, I was always against killing people. I have been against killing Jewish people during WW II, against killing Serbs by Nazi Croats (also during WWII), against killing people in Vietnam, against killing Croats in Croatia, against killing people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am against killing Albanians, but also against killing Serbs. When I was 12, Nazi troops occupied my country. That happened in 1941. At that time, I was in a village 2 miles away from Kosovo. Thousands and thousands of Serbs were killed by Albanians, and the rest moved to Serbia. I am a witness of that. Between 1974 and 1981, many, many Serb families had to move to Serbia because of the Albanian terror. That was a terrible time for Serbs in Kosovo.

I wish to underline the animosity between Serbs and Albanians, which is several centuries old. History and those animosities had to be known to NATO and NATO leaders. They had to know what was going to happen to Albanians after bombing Serbia. No, I don't apologize on behalf of Serbs, but I am trying to say that there are unfortunately many people who prefer violence. I don't agree with violence. But NATO is very responsible for troubles Albanians have. If I am informed well, NATO had information before starting the bombing of Serbia, as to what will happen with the Albanians.

There is one more serious problem concerning NATO's bombing of Serbia. The world has UN and Security Council is responsible for world peace. I am very afraid that this can become World War III. I pray the God to stop this madness.

Grein: How important is Kosovo to you? Why is it important?

Jeremic: Kosovo and Metohija are holy lands for each Serb. What is Jerusalem to Jewish, that is Kosovo and Metohija to Serbs. There are many, many monasteries between 700 and 300 years old. Kosovo and Metohija are Serbs roots. Could you imagine monasteries which were built 200 or 300 years before Columbus discovered America?

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Grein: Can you please describe your current situation in Belgrade.

Jeremic: Belgrade is bombed nearly every night. We are expecting bombing of the several bridges which connect two parts of the town. In Novi Sad, 40 miles away from Belgrade, 3 bridges were destroyed. NATO said that those bridges were military objects.

Grein: Has your family been affected?

Jeremic: No.

Grein: Are you, or any one in your family frightened by the bombings?

Jeremic: I am frightened by bombings, but I am much more frightened for what is to come after the bombings. Many factories have been destroyed, the only two refineries we had were destroyed, at the moment more than 200,000 workers are jobless, etc.

Grein: Is the availability of food, gas and other supplies affected by the bombings?

Jeremic: At the moment no, but we will suffer very soon. That will be terrible time.

Grein: Do you think the United States is more responsible for the bombings, or do you think the blame should be on NATO?

Jeremic: I know very well what is US science, US technology and how much they are important for progress. I know that the USA is the most powerful country, etc., but I don't understand this policy. Is the USA going to kill 10,000,000 Serbs?

Grein: How do you think we should end this conflict?

Jeremic: Any peaceful way. The earlier the better.

Grein: Have a good Easter.

Jeremic: Thanks, but my country and Belgrade is bombed each day. At this moment, while I am typing, surroundings of Belgrade are being bombed.

Additional Comment by Mr. Jeremic

Please, believe me. I am not nationalist. My son-in-law is Croat, and they live in Beijing. My daughter-in-law is Macedonian, and my son's family lives in Canada. My sister's son-in-law was Albanian. I don't care about nationalities. I know in each nationality there are criminal people and good people, and I respect good people. Unfortunately, there are periods when mad people are in position to kill others. We live in such a period. Albanians and Serbs are suffering victims.

Thanks for your nice wishes. I am alone and old. I am not afraid for my life, but for the future of young people, for the future of the world.

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Best regards, Dragoslav (Keywords: Grein, Jeremic, Kosovo, Serbia, Yuogoslavia.)