

# Minding Milosevic's Mind

## Improving International Justice by Creating Deeper Insight into Judicial Actions

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**W**hen former Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic was arrested and brought to The Hague, I was employed by the Tribunal to evaluate and teach the prosecution staff what specific nonverbal messages revealed about the unconscious mind of Milosevic. For many years I evaluated Milosevic and made recommendations regarding his behavior and future actions [for NATO and the UN].

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) attempted to provide a court-appointed legal team to advise Milosevic; the team consisted of former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and British lawyer John Livingston. This move would have done much to throw out the idea that Milosevic was "one man alone against an unjust world court." The ICTY move would have also restricted the number of people who would be able to hold meetings with Milosevic without being monitored. However, Milosevic rejected the offer. Had he accepted the team assigned to him, it would have interfered with his own legal defense. Moreover, it would also suggest that he accepted the court's legitimacy. Finally, it would have shown that he was not defending himself alone.

Milosevic had other reasons to refuse the Tribunal's suggestion as well. First, he was a bright and talented attorney himself. Second, he also had two attorneys who were present every time he was in the courtroom; they sat 5 or 6 feet from him, heard everything that was said, and made eye contact regu-

larly. I know this because I sat next to them so I could read Milosevic's responses as they made eye contact. We never talked. And, finally, when there was a break in the proceedings Milosevic would be escorted to a small room adjacent to the courtroom. The room had three chairs gathered around a steel table and a direct-line phone sitting in the center. When lifted it connected him instantly to a phalanx of attorneys in Belgrade awaiting a briefing and assignment from their president and the two lawyers on the scene.



### The Methodological Tools Used to Evaluate President Milosevic

Over the past 30-plus years I have been developing a system of analyzing behavior based solely on what is observable and testable. I call this the Goodfield Method. President Milosevic was evaluated using his observable, nonverbal behavior. Here are the basic ideas associated with the method, and following this overview are the results of Milosevic's

evaluation.

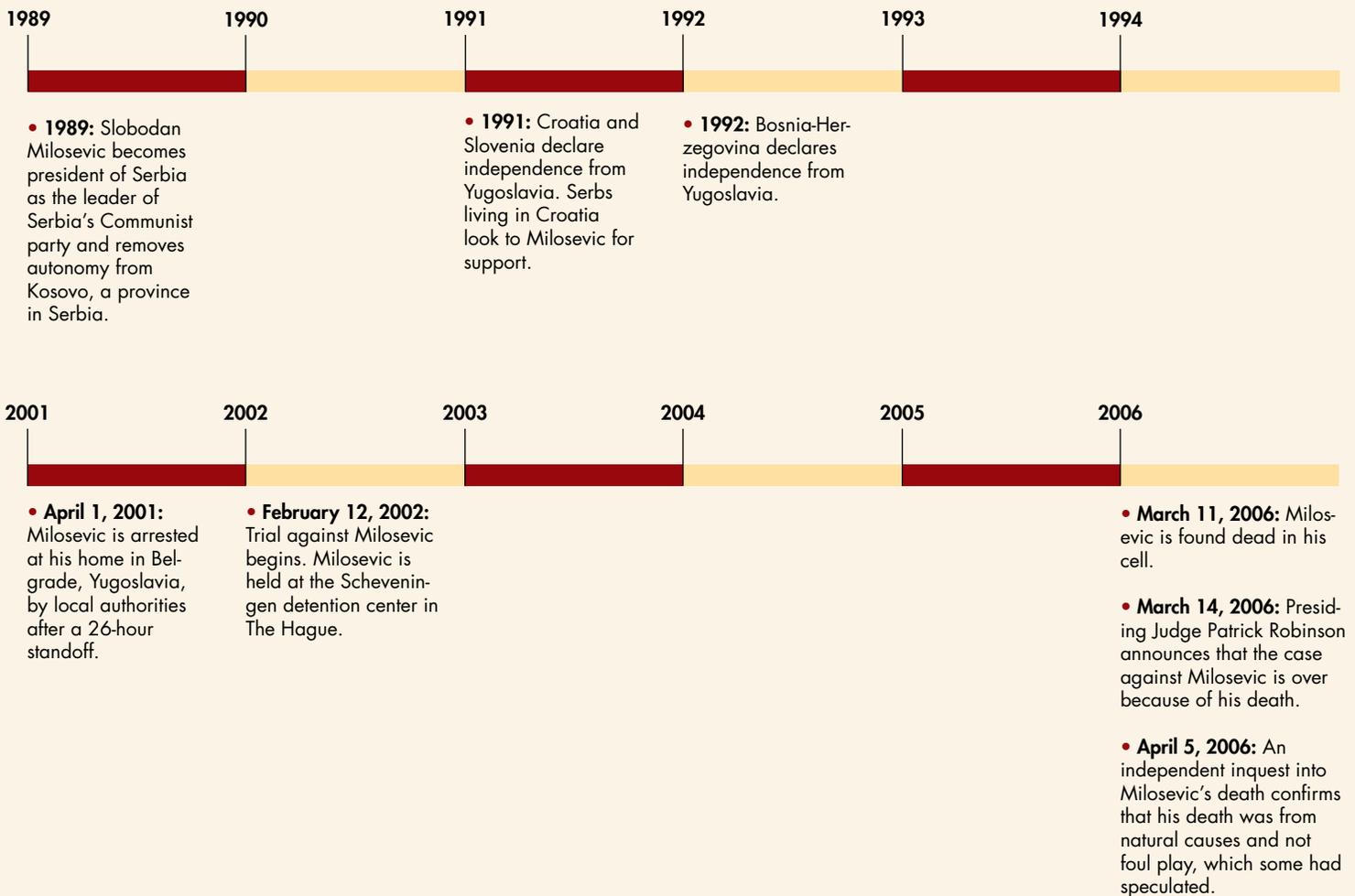
To conduct this analysis, what I call the nonverbal leak (NVL) must be established. It is a referential message reflecting the unconscious other-half of the person's message. The NVL is a repetitive, patterned movement from the shoulders up that reflects unresolved, perceived trauma manifesting old decisions or strategies from one's past. It is unconscious and visible to others; it is testable. It is a way of looking at the unconscious strategies that the individual presents in his or her total nonverbal behavior.

The next step is to establish the symbolic meaning of the NVL. This means decoding the nonverbal responses into their unconscious symbolic meaning on three levels: impact, primary emotion, and primary coping strategy. This is the sum total of an individual's interaction regarding the expression of basic emotional strategies.

**Impact (Symbolic Level One, SL-1)** is a perceived traumatic event. It is real in the sensory system of the person who experiences it. It comes into the system primarily through the eyes. A crisis occurs, and this shock to the system can be recorded on a conscious or unconscious level. The impact on a person is on an intra-psychic, psycho-physiological, or interpersonal level. In the Goodfield Method there are six manifestations of impact: shock (eyes large), fear (teariness), denial (eyes up, trance, white below eyes), disbelief (eyes closing), pain (tearing, turn away from), and trance (eyes that stare in an unfocused way).

**The Primary Emotion (Symbolic Level Two, SL-2)** is the first reaction a person has to the traumatic event; it is what he or she really wants to do. If the response in an SL-2 situation is anger, then the person wants to express

### Timeline of Events from 1989–2006



it clearly and directly with no holding back. SL-2 can also be anger directed outward or sadness.

**The Primary Coping Strategy (Symbolic Level Three, SL-3)** is what the person does; it is not what he or she wants to do. It is the realization for the person that when he or she gives in to the feelings of what he or she wants to do, it could make the situation even worse. It is the compromise that works for that person at that moment. With time and similar perceptions of what his or her world is like, the person develops similar strategies for similar situations.

The SL-3 is the person's basic strategy for dealing with those feelings in his or her life. SL-3 strategies include denial, trance, anger turned inwards or outwards, control, biting down, distancing, and calculated emotional response (CER).

#### **What the Goodfield Method Revealed about Milosevic**

After many hours of close observation from May 30, 2002, to April 15, 2003, I presented the prosecution staff with a series of precise suggestions regarding what they might do to obtain a conviction

against the former president.

In my opinion, Milosevic was not crazy or evil. Milosevic was a person who suffered from an extraordinarily traumatic childhood and, as a consequence, made many basic decisions on an unconscious level that led him to see the world the way he did and to react to the world of his perception. He also adopted some strategies that predisposed events and actions to happen as they did.

Milosevic's NVL started with his eyes open, then his tongue coming in and out quickly. His top lip drew tight,



• **1995:** Massacre at Srebrenica in Bosnia. See page 43 for details.

• **Summer 1995:** Croatia recovers most of the land the Serbs had taken from them by launching a violent military campaign.

• **November 1995:** The Bosnian War formally ends with the Dayton Peace Agreement, which Milosevic signs.

• **July 1997:** Milosevic is selected as Yugoslav president by federal parliament, which consists mainly of his supporters. Only the republics of Serbia and Montenegro remain part of Yugoslavia.

• **May 1999:** The UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia indicts Milosevic. The indictment lists charges against Milosevic regarding Kosovo, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. All three sets of charges are combined into one trial. The charges include genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, and violations of the laws or customs of war. Charges relating to specific republics are listed below.

• **Bosnia-Herzegovina:** for offenses between 1992 and 1995—charges include the most serious charge, genocide. Milosevic is accused of murdering thousands of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats.

• **Croatia:** for offenses between 1991 and 1992—charges are for the murder of civilians and the forced removal of 170,000 non-Serbs from their homes.

• **Kosovo:** for offenses between January and June of 1999—charges are for the forced removal of 800,000 Kosovo Albanians and the murders of nearly 600 individually identified ethnic Albanians.

## Yugoslavia

• **Yugoslavia consisted of six republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia until Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia seceded.**

• **As of February 4, 2003, Yugoslavia does not exist in name, but a federal government retains ceremonial powers for the two remaining republics of Serbia and Montenegro.**

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causing it to thin as the lines on the sides of his mouth became exaggerated. He would then close his eyes and open them quickly. There was a variation on this when he was trying to control his reactions.

On a symbolic level his message was clear: "I am sad and angry, and I will let my anger out or get revenge when I feel it is right to let it out" (CER).

There are specific physical reactions in his NVL that are quite rapid and revealing. They occurred in the following sequence:

**1) I am skeptical.** Revealed by an elevated eyebrow.

**2) I must control my anger.** Revealed by pulsing, bilateral jaw muscles during questioning by prosecution attorneys. During times like this he would often place his right index finger into his masseter (a muscle that raises the lower jaw) and put his middle finger across his top lip. The message is, "I'm angry, and I'm trying to control it."

**3) I'm letting my anger out.** When he interrogated witnesses or responded quickly to judges from the Tribunal, his anger was revealed by tongue out (particularly towards Judge Robert May). His tongue would go in and out quickly, indicating a direct expression of aggression. His message was, "I make a plan, and when the time is right I will express my anger" (CER).

**4) I will control my feelings.** This was revealed by a controlled, tightened top lip, giving a tight, thinning upper appearance.

**5) I will deny what I see or hear.** This was revealed by closing the eyes.

**6) I will restore my system's balance by internalizing my feelings and swallowing unexpressed emotions.**

Milosevic's NVLs are not pathological; they are, in fact, commonly seen in many people. What makes his NVL important to the prosecution is that it gives them an ongoing "intelligence briefing" in relation to their courtroom tactics and strategies. Of course, we all communicate with our complete body on both conscious and unconscious levels, and Milosevic was no exception.

### **Comments about Milosevic's Apparent Duality: There Are Two Realities Governing Milosevic's Behavior**

When Milosevic was appearing before the Tribunal, he sat at a table draped with a curtain that obscured the view of his legs. However, I sat at an angle that revealed some interesting information.

Above the table Milosevic appeared (not withstanding his NVL) to be relatively calm and composed, although his face revealed the stress of the trial as it proceeded to drag on day after day. However, beneath the table and hidden from sight of the court but not from the prosecutors, he moved his legs and feet. These movements indicated to the prosecutors that they were on target because he was agitated by certain specific questions. These reactions helped to guide them. These were below-the-table unconscious actions of a person trying to manage his deeper feelings of rage, fear, and discomfort, which were unacceptable to express. These leg and feet movements provide a look at Milosevic's unconscious coping strategies. Again, these strategies are similar to those used by many people who feel prohibited from expressing their feelings openly. What is unique, however, is the window they provide into a man who was accused of unspeakable atrocities in Kosovo, Croatia, and Bosnia. They also

gave the prosecution attorneys a unique opportunity to act on information revealed by his unconscious.

Milosevic's unconscious movements (NVL) revealed the following:

- He experienced pressure within his system.
- He had a strong ego structure.
- He did not want to let others know that he was experiencing any discomfort with regard to the judicial proceedings.
- He was acutely aware of the fact that his actions were being scrutinized during the judicial proceedings, a fact he denied by acting as if it was not happening.

“**How can it be that a person like Milosevic can go from being president to a prisoner referred to as the 'Butcher of the Balkans'?**”

- He did not want to be perceived as weak, fearful, embarrassed, foolish, or in any way intimidated or out of control regarding the judicial proceedings.
- He was willing to show and be perceived as showing anger, controlled rage, contempt, disdain, disbelief, curiosity, disregard, and superiority.
- He was untouched and unbroken and was convinced and determined that nothing would alter this presentation to the court and the world that watched via the gallery and television.
- His greatest weakness was his need to be perceived as strong.
- The incongruence between his projected image and the underlying controlled or repressed emotional reality

made him subject to manipulation.

- He kept very close count of the points being scored in his waged war for his country, position, and honor.

### **Where Did Milosevic Come From and How Did He Fall From Power?**

An individual's early years are critical to the development of his or her views and values. They weave the unconscious fabric that covers one's life from beginning to end. How can it be that a person like Milosevic can go from being president to a prisoner referred to as the "Butcher of the Balkans"? His life was quite a success story until unconscious factors overwhelmed his conscious judgment.

Milosevic was born on August 20, 1941, in the town of Pozarevac in the Republic of Serbia. With a history of depression in his family, he suffered from the malady through the Second World War and during his entire life. His traumatic background included the suicide of both of his parents. However, his life changed and his depression lessened when, at the age of 17, he met and married his wife, Mirjana Markovic. Mirjana had a similarly traumatic youth, including the loss of both of her parents. She and Milosevic shared a deep connection, and many later referred to her as the "Serbian Lady Macbeth." In their life together they had two children, a daughter, Marija, and a son, Marko.

The old unresolved traumatic events in Milosevic's life influenced his behavior. As a child Milosevic would have made the following decisions:

- I will hang on in the face of intolerable hardship.
- Pressure will strengthen my resolve.
- The views of others are not relevant, as they do not understand the facts.
- Revenge is justified and appropriate with all that I have experienced.

These decisions in and of themselves are not pathological. In fact, they are often seen as admirable qualities. These decisions have probably led many admirable people to overcome hardship and achieve success when others of weaker



character would have yielded to the stress or pressure. Over time these decisions, made on an unconscious level, became strategies Milosevic used for survival in everything, large or small, on a personal level and as president of his country.

What these strategies produced was a rigid person who erected a wall around himself. The only person able to enter his world was his soul mate from age 17, Mirjana Markovic. She supported and guided him. She was more than a wife and confidante; she was his link to life itself. She was granted access to her husband while he stood trial and this, I believe deeply, is what kept him alive.

After their marriage, Mirjana received a PhD and became a tenured professor at the University of Belgrade and a member of the Russian Academy of Social Sciences. In 1964, Milosevic received a law degree at the University

of Belgrade. Before entering politics, Milosevic had an extensive career in management and banking. For many years he was the president and CEO of Tehnogas in Belgrade, one of the largest industrial companies in Serbia. Subsequently, he was the President and CEO of Beobanka, the largest bank in Yugoslavia at the time. He conducted business regularly with organizations and institutions within the United States.

Milosevic held some of the most important political appointments and elected offices in the City of Belgrade and Republic of Serbia. He founded and was the president of the Socialist Party of Serbia. In 1990, in the first democratic elections in Yugoslavia since World War II, he was elected president of Serbia by a landslide, and he was again elected president of Serbia by an overwhelming majority in the 1992 general elections.

### **Milosevic's Death**

On March 11, 2006, Milosevic was found dead in his cell at The Hague. Immediately controversy and conspiracy theories arose surrounding his death. Some suggested that there was foul play involved. His family and supporters contended that he was poisoned or otherwise murdered. Additionally, there was speculation that he committed suicide. However, I believe Milosevic, as stated in the autopsy, died naturally of a myocardial infarction (heart attack) because I have had close contact with all levels of the professional staff at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, in September 1994, I trained the carefully selected, elite prison guards before the detention center was finished and received any alleged war criminals. I am convinced that there was no plot or foul play involved in the death of Mi-

losevic. Every effort was taken to keep him alive and well in what was seen as a case that would have likely resulted in his conviction of the majority, if not all, of the charges.

However, I do believe the loss of contact with his wife may have contributed to Milosevic's death. Near the end of Milosevic's life, charges were filed against his wife in Belgrade, which required the government of the Netherlands to arrest and extradite her to Belgrade. If she had been extradited it would have meant that she would not be allowed to see her soul mate ever again. With the end of the incredible dependency or symbiosis between the two of them, I worried that this broken bond would ultimately result in Milosevic losing the will to live. In that sense the legal officials in the Belgrade courts gave President Slobodan Milosevic a death sentence that his unconscious mind carried out in the form of a heart that simply lost the will to continue beating.

In a story that appeared in the *L.A. Times* on March 18, 2006, datelined The Hague, Vukasin Andric, a Serbian ear doctor who examined Milosevic on November 4, said, "I understood that he was ill by listening to his voice. I heard his voice tremble for the first time in my life when the court told him he could not go to Moscow. And that is when Milosevic felt the beginning of the end and started to be scared for his destiny and his life."

Patrick Barriot, a former French military doctor who examined Milosevic, remarked, "Compounding his sense of isolation was his 'profound sadness' over being separated from his wife, who was his high school sweetheart. She could no longer visit him because of a pending arrest warrant issued by Belgrade."

When last I saw Milosevic he looked drawn and pale with deeper lines showing on his face. The stress was showing, and his lack of contact with his wife was taking a toll. Mirjana, their son Marko, and Milosevic's brother, today

living in exile in Moscow (the charges against Mirjana were dropped the day after Milosevic's death), were never to see him again. With the lifeline to his wife permanently cut and his emotional support gone, he received a sentence of death from his unconscious, one he never could have received in any European court. The "Butcher of the Balkans" was dead of a broken heart and finally alone.

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## About the Author



**Barry Austin Goodfield, PhD**, is a professor, international lecturer, and author. He has advised presidents, prime ministers,

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dent Yeltsin. He continues to share his methods and train other top professionals who specialize in the nonverbal language of the human mind. He has spent 30-plus years identifying and codifying unconscious signals. His work is based on the only patented psychotherapeutic process, which he developed in the 1970s using advanced video techniques. Dr. Goodfield has helped senior corporate executives, attorneys, ranking international civil servants, and cabinet-level officials on five continents. He has profiled war criminals for law enforcement, prosecution staffs, and international courts. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, a Fellow of the American Board of Forensic Examiners, a Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Medicine, and a member of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress. During his time as a visiting professor at the Diplomatic Academy of London, University of Westminster, he published *Insight and Action: The Role of the Unconscious in Crisis from Personal to International Levels*. He has been lecturing for the Foreign Service Program of Oxford University in England. He currently splits his time between his institutes in Europe and France and his professional training duties and clinical practice in Glendale, Arizona. He may be contacted via email at [bgoodfield@aol.com](mailto:bgoodfield@aol.com). For more information visit [www.goodfieldinstitute.com](http://www.goodfieldinstitute.com).