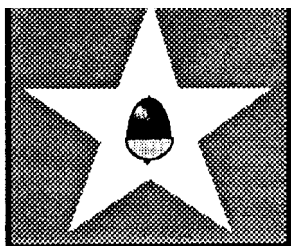


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**Some Reverberations From
The Kosovo War**

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On 24th March 1999, the USA and NATO thrust their fingers further into the former-Yugoslav mangle, this time over Kosovo. The USAF, with some allied help, embarked on an aerial bombardment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia [FRY] to compel the Belgrade government to accept the diktat that NATO had presented to it at Rambouillet earlier in the month. To the surprise and dismay of alliance leaders (and even more, of some publics), the Serbs did not immediately cave in. To bend the Milosevic government to its will, NATO had to: fly 37,465 sorties over 78 days; begin to threaten the possibility of a land operation as well; enlist the help of Russia (hitherto, despite membership of the Contact Group, largely excluded from the process of dealing with the Kosovo crisis); and compromise on the terms of the ultimatum presented at Rambouillet.¹

The war may well prove to have been a turning point in the development of the post-Cold War world. As a result of it, international perceptions of NATO, and, to a lesser extent, the alliance's perception of itself, have changed. In consequence, many countries' attitudes towards the alliance and to their own security affairs may also have changed. The war has also shaken yet again the kaleidoscope that is the territory of former-Yugoslavia. These changes form the subject of this paper.

International Repercussions Of The War

The Road to Intervention

By the beginning of 1999, the international community [IC] found itself yet again between a rock and a hard place in former-Yugoslavia. On the one hand, there was a settlement of sorts in the November 1995 Dayton agreement which halted the fighting that had characterized the previous five years, and it had been achieved without a breach in the cherished principle of the inviolability of international borders. The preservation of the post-Dayton *status quo* was considered fundamental to stability. On the other hand, yet another minority was being brutally repressed, this time the Albanians of Kosovo, by a key signatory of Dayton, the FRY.

Trapped by their initial inaction, then ineffectual action in the period up to September 1995 and haunted by their failure to prevent or respond to the Srebrenica massacre, the USA and NATO could not again fill the role of passive bystanders. Moreover, they had responsibility for the Dayton settlement and that would be endangered by further strife in the area. They would have been happy if FRY security forces had been able to suppress the Kosovo Liberation Army [KLA] without too much fuss; after all, the KLA had been condemned by America's FBI and DEA as a terrorist organization, and Germany maintained that it was the main source of the narcotics trade in the country's south. However, the KLA proved to be

a popular, mass movement.² Its suppression was beyond the capabilities of the security forces without the employment of the state terror that was their usual last resort. Once again, the international media spotlight fell on the region and the something-must-be-done lobbies clamoured for action.

Unfortunately, there was another pressure acting on NATO. April 1999 was to see the alliance celebration of its fiftieth anniversary and the admission of three new members. To mark the occasion and prove NATO's continuing relevance to the post-Cold War world, a new strategic concept was to be unveiled. This calls for the alliance to be prepared for new (ie, non-Article 5) missions "to respond to a broad spectrum of possible threats to Alliance common interests, including: regional conflicts, such as in Kosovo and Bosnia; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery; and transnational threats like terrorism".³ The Alliance wished to demonstrate its credibility and authority before the Washington summit convened.

NATO wanted a peaceful settlement of the Kosovo crisis. But it wanted more to impose its will on Slobodan Milosevic, the alleged source of all that was evil in the Balkans, save the latest victims of his repression and thus demonstrate that NATO was a powerful force for good. Diplomacy backed by the threat of force was tried, culminating in the Rambouillet conference. Perhaps the western negotiators simply tired of the negotiation (believing, with much justice, that Milosevic, as in the past, was insincere and merely playing for time); perhaps, given the imminence of the Washington summit, they just ran out of time; or perhaps the USA by this time actually wanted a demonstrative use of force to humiliate Milosevic and establish credibility. For whatever reason, the Paris continuation of the Rambouillet conference culminated in an ultimatum to the FRY that was couched in terms unacceptable to any sovereign state.⁴ Milosevic rejected the diktat, resumed his war against the KLA with heightened ferocity, and, on 24th March, NATO started its air offensive.

International Reactions to the War

In this way, NATO embarked on its first war by attacking another state. In doing so, it went against its own statutes by failing (at least in some people's eyes) to exhaust the possibilities of diplomacy, by initiating aggression and by doing so outside its declared area of responsibility. By failing to gain UN authorisation, either from the Security Council or through a "uniting for peace resolution" in the General Assembly, it almost certainly broke international law by committing aggression to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.⁵ The debate on the legality of NATO's action will doubtless continue for some time; the morality of its intervention is much less controversial, at least to western liberals. The important issue for the purposes of this paper, however, is how NATO's action is perceived by others. To many countries, NATO in general and the USA and Britain in particular seem to have arrogated to themselves the combined roles of prosecutor, judge, jury, policeman and executioner in any case they deem to offend against their conceptions of what is right and moral. This perception is reinforced by the habit of the USA, Britain and NATO of describing themselves as "the international community". This assumption that a western clique, sometimes as small as Washington and London alone, knows best and can speak and act for the whole world is resented and rejected by many states. The more that western countries ignore their own failings and act as if they represent the civilized world, with other countries being inhabited by morally inferior beings, the more opposition they will stir up.

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During the Cold War, NATO was more than a defensive alliance. It was an example to many of a collective dedicated to upholding and promoting democracy and the rule of law, a moral force to be respected and followed. Some of the guilt has been rubbed off that gingerbread by the attack on Yugoslavia. Of course, the Serbs do not make convincing innocent victims in view of their dreadful excesses over the past decade, but the US and NATO self-image of a Daniel come to judgement is not shared by many other countries. Far from being history's first disinterested, purely humanitarian war as some western leaders have portrayed it, the attack on the FRY is seen in Russia, Ukraine, China, India and indeed most of the Third World as part of an attempt to reshape the world in an image acceptable to the west. There is a perception that "humanitarian intervention" is the latest camouflage, indeed licence, for neo-colonialist interventionism in pursuit of great power interests.⁶

The image of disinterested morality as a driver of policy is given a further knock by the obvious partiality and double standards shown by western powers, especially the USA, as to where their humanitarian consciences are stirred. If the right to return to their homes should be achieved by force for ethnically-cleansed Kosovar Albanians, then why not for Palestinians too? Or for the Serbs expelled from Krajina by the Croats? If NATO believes it necessary to act when faced with a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo, why does it not react to a much larger one, with similar origins and in its area of responsibility, in Kurdistan? Could it be because it is created by an ally, the American-equipped Turkish Army? Why does it do nothing about Chechnya? It would appear that the lesson is, if you wish to be an oppressor, either make sure that you are a friend of the USA, like Israel, or that you are too powerful to be intimidated, like Russia. (Or perhaps the real lesson for western leaders should be, avoid moral absolutes and oversimplifications, and excessive hype and spin when justifying policy.)

The USA and NATO see themselves as a force for good in the world. With some justification, they reject the above interpretations of the facts and of their motives. However, it is perceptions that shape policy and much of the world perceives their actions, including the new NATO strategic concept and the sidelining of the UN, as threatening. Other unilateral American actions reinforce the image of the USA as a hegemonic state, for instance: the continuing sanctions and bombing against Iraq and the mid-1998 bombing without clear justification and in defiance of international law of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan; the rejection of the nuclear test ban and ABM treaties and the jurisdiction of the putative International Criminal Court; the attempt to apply sanctions against countries that trade with US-defined rogue states. Fear of American intentions, which may be backed by a NATO seen by many as the USA's poodle, will provoke reactions undesirable to the west.⁷ Indeed, the terrorist outrages perpetrated against the USA on 11th September 2001 provide an awful example.

The end of the Cold War was welcomed, amongst other reasons, for ending an expensive arms race and reducing the likelihood of nuclear war. The perception of US/NATO hegemonic ambitions (however misguided) will encourage not only so-called rogue but also other states to look to their defences. Of course, they will not be able to compete across the board in high-tech weaponry, but they may seek to achieve capabilities in niche areas and combine these with effective asymmetric approaches to limit the effectiveness of western armed forces. Above all, driven by the lessons of the Gulf and Kosovo wars, some will work to acquire weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. Their efforts in both conventional and NBC areas may well receive increased help from Russia and China.

Moreover, some countries and non-state actors will refuse to accept that massive technological superiority will enable western powers, especially the USA, to inflict pain with impunity. They will wish to strike back at their tormentors, and to do so where the effect will be greatest – in the homeland. Terrorism can be as effective as missiles, and even more difficult to counter. The September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon illustrate the point to perfection; expect more attacks, both physical against targets such as nuclear or chemical plants and cyber against air traffic control, financial institutions, etc. Spectacular terrorist incidents do not merely satisfy a need for retaliation, of course. They might be intended to deter a great power from pursuing a line of policy. They can also be employed to provoke reprisals, even war, to polarise opinion in the IC and unite disparate communities against a common foe. The 11th September attacks may well have been intended, at least in part, to bring closer Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations. Thus, not only is the post-Cold War peace dividend likely to prove illusory but the world may become an even more dangerous place than it was during the stable Cold War period.⁸

History is replete with examples of rivals, even enemies being driven into bed together by fear of an even greater threat. If the USA and NATO do not succeed in removing the growing perception of their wish to remodel the world along lines that are pleasing to them, they could accomplish this feat. For instance, much divides Russia, China and India. However, common fears about Muslim fundamentalist and western threats could yet lead them to form a bloc for mutual protection (a project already talked about by Russian strategic thinkers).

Another unfortunate consequence of NATO's bypassing the UN and resorting to force over Kosovo is the precedent that it sets. Why should other countries or regional blocs not act similarly in their neighbourhoods when they identify humanitarian problems or wish to resolve grievances not susceptible to diplomatic solutions? Has Russia the right to intervene in sovereign states to protect the interests of Russophones living there? Why should the Muslim world not take action against Israel in defence of oppressed Palestinians? Can China use force to achieve reunification? In short, others have as much, or as little, right to set themselves up as regional policemen and the world has taken a step back from the rule of international law and towards its previous condition where a state's right to wage war was untrammelled.

Somewhat paradoxically, in view of the perceptions outlined above, it may well be that the Kosovo adventure will weaken NATO's will to face up to future crises. On the one hand, the USA is irritatedly aware that it bore the brunt of the action and the cost (as it did in the Gulf war, in Bosnia in 1995 and is doing presently over Iraq). As the primary western player, America is most at risk from those seeking to inflict reprisals. At the same time, non-contributing allies are seen to snipe and cavil at American decisions and actions. Tiring of its allies, the USA could move further towards the unilateralism already displayed in the first eight months of the Bush presidency, though the need for allies in the "war against terrorism" may make this development less likely than it once appeared. But even if it remains engaged, its dislike of moral interventionism and apparently open-ended peacekeeping missions may intensify as a result of its Kosovo experience. The US may wish to restrict its future role to war fighting in the national interest, even though its presence as part of a peacekeeping force may be seen as essential to credibility by NATO partners and those in the conflict area alike. On the other hand, some European members of the alliance were worried at the time of the war, and more are worried retrospectively, about the justification for the bombing and

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about its conduct. Some countries, too, regret being involved in the mess that is post-war Kosovo. In one or two, anti-Americanism is already quite strong and fears may grow that the USA is trying to use NATO to pursue its own political and strategic interests. And few European publics show much enthusiasm for the political and cash expenditure required to make their militaries capable of meeting the demands of the new NATO strategic concept. It may well be even more difficult to achieve alliance solidarity and an active coalition of the willing when future interventions are mooted. It remains to be seen whether many of NATO's Europeans will be willing to go much beyond words of sympathy and political support in the war and subsequent peacemaking in Afghanistan, the invocation of Article 5 notwithstanding.

The War as a Deterrent to Future Ethno-Nationalist Conflict

Many people hope that the victories of the coalition in the Gulf War, and of NATO in Kosovo, together with the change in international law many believe that the latter intervention has wrought (ie, allowing for humanitarian interventions), will make at least Europe a safer place. Potential aggressors will have learned the lesson that they cannot, with impunity, attack other states and would-be oppressors will realise that they cannot get away with seriously maltreating their own people. Quite apart from Hegel's aphorism that the only lesson that one can learn from history is that people do not learn from history, there are reasons to question the assertion.

Even if one accepts the dubious contention that future wars can be won through airpower alone, peace enforcement/keeping can be expensive in manpower and resources. It can lead to an all but open ended commitment if the task is seen through to the end – a fact now reluctantly being faced by those involved in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Moreover, it can lead to casualties in even the most altruistic of interventions, as the Americans and others discovered in Somalia (and may yet find in Kosovo and Macedonia). Will sufficient NATO members have the political will to build up and maintain such strong intervention forces that the alliance will have the capacity to both keep the peace in places where it already has responsibilities and to intervene elsewhere? There is currently little evidence of this amongst European electorates. The peace dividend will not lightly be given up. On the contrary, there appear to be second thoughts in many quarters about the advisability of the Kosovo commitment. It may be more difficult to muster a coalition of the willing in the future, as America's opting out of the Macedonian mission demonstrates.

It cannot be assumed that the political will shown in the recent war will automatically translate into effective deterrence for the future, even if the capability is fielded. Leaders change, and so do public moods. Future potential aggressors and/or oppressors may well calculate that new democratic leaders, or the societies they govern, will lack the political will of their predecessors. Alternatively, they may believe that their cause is just and that this self-evident fact will prevent intervention. Furthermore, dissatisfied ethnic groups will also draw their own conclusions from the Kosovo war. Rejecting Rugova's policy of passive resistance to Serb rule, the KLA embarked on war. The result of its resort to arms and the excessive Serbian reaction, captured on television, was NATO intervention. The lesson may be, go for a military option, even if it appears hopeless, and fight a good information war and you win a NATO air force. Other disgruntled minorities, ignoring the unique nature of the Kosovo case, will surely follow in the footsteps of the KLA in the expectation of the same result. Indeed, the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army [NLA] in Macedonia (an offshoot of the KLA) has already done so.

NATO success may thus be making future ethno-national conflicts more and not less likely.

Repercussions Of The War In Former-Yugoslavia

Ever since the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia [SFRY] began its tortured disintegration, the EU and NATO, never mind the wider IC, have failed to take a holistic approach to the problem. They seem to have lacked a clear idea of a desired end state. They also seem to have followed contradictory principles. They were concerned to preserve existing borders when they initially favoured salvaging the SFRY and then again when they insisted on them for its successor states, even though these were often merely arbitrarily drawn former-communist internal boundaries. Once disintegration was in train, they favoured self-determination for Slovenia and Croatia, but not for the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia or the Croats in Hercegovina. The Dayton agreement compelled the Serbs and Croats, over half the population, to belong to a state they fought to escape from. It refused to address the issue of justified Albanian grievances in Kosovo, for that would raise the question of Serbia's borders.

Thus, Dayton has all the hallmarks of a temporary expedient designed to solve (or shelve) immediate problems while inevitably creating new ones. Bosnia-Hercegovina continues to exist only because of the presence of SFOR. But, despite \$5 billion in aid, it does not prosper. Croat and Serb politicians in particular, with popular support behind them, have no desire to make the state work; while paying lip service to Dayton, they devote their efforts to preventing the central government from functioning properly and thwarting reform. Dayton has simply frozen the conflict; there is no conflict resolution, rather conflict perpetuation. And the Kosovo conflict was an inevitable consequence of that agreement and the refusal of the IC to do anything about the Albanian Kosovars' plight until fighting had begun (see note 2). However well-intentioned the eventual western intervention, it has created some new difficulties and exacerbated old ones – though, to be fair, other, probably worse consequences would probably have flowed had Milosevic's Serbia been given free rein. However, the war has not solved the Kosovo problem. It has merely changed the nature of the problem, and brought on or exacerbated others in wider former-Yugoslavia.

Kosovo

Albanian Kosovars have fought against Serb rule since the League of Prizren (the first Albanian nationalist organisation) was formed in 1878, the struggle intensifying when the province was forcibly incorporated into Serbia in 1913. The desire for independence has grown, not lessened, with time. Indeed, the KLA's insurgency was simply the latest in a series, an attempt to further the unfinished business of Albanian unification. It is inconceivable, after their long history as victims of repression,⁹ culminating in the mass expulsions and murders of 1998-99, that they should consent to revert to Serbian domination; even republican status within a democratic and economically vibrant FRY would be unacceptable as any federation would inevitably be dominated by the more numerous Serbs. Although Rugova still favours a patient and peaceful road to independence, in co-operation with the IC, it is likely that a lengthy deferment of hope would result in a resurgence of KLA military activity; this time, IC (mainly NATO) occupiers will be the targets. It is easy to imagine a Northern Ireland type of struggle, though with

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the vast majority of the population on the side of the guerrillas. Indeed, political frustration in Kosovo helped to fuel the rebellion in Macedonia that started in 2001.

The IC (really a euphemism for the most significant states in NATO) is reluctant to move with any speed towards independence, however. It is reluctant to sanction border changes accomplished by force (even if it was its own force that wrought the change, even although it accepted self-determination elsewhere in former-Yugoslavia). Moreover, UNSCR 1244 recognises Kosovo as part of a sovereign FRY and one slap in the face for the UN is enough to be going along with. It also fears, probably with good reason, that other potentially secessionist ethnic groups might take heart from the KLA's success. Especially, there is a fear, now being realised, that Macedonia (FYROM) will become destabilized, but other minorities (eg, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Sandjak, Vojvodina, Transylvania) could follow the KLA example. Indeed, the ambitions of many leaders of the KLA itself are not confined to Kosovo; they would like to continue the struggle for a pan-Albanian state (no matter that Tirana gives them no encouragement). Furthermore, the IC is aware that the establishment of *de jure* independence any time soon would doom most remaining non-Albanian Kosovars to expulsion or worse (including in the largely Serbian area north of the Ibar). It would also sanction the existence of a state where, it is feared, narcotics, people and gun smuggling and other criminal enterprises may flourish with impunity. Finally, wresting Kosovo from even the nominal control of Belgrade would endanger the fragile beginnings of a move away from authoritarianism and ultra-nationalism in Serbia; the moderate nationalists that succeeded Milosevic are prepared to discuss everything but independence with Rugova, and the latter is ready to talk about nothing but.

In taking on Kosovo as a protectorate in all but name, the inevitable outcome of its success in war, NATO has paid a high price for maintaining its credibility and reversing the Serbs' ethnic cleansing. Will UNMIK and KFOR (and most importantly, their contributing nations) be able and willing to work together, and to co-opt sufficient Albanian support, to impose policies that will be deeply unpopular with many in the Albanian community? These include: a crack down on political violence, organized crime and support for secessionist movements elsewhere (eg, the Albanians of the Presevo valley in south Serbia and in Macedonia); a delay of full independence until the dangers of some of the possibly adverse consequences have receded; acceptance of minority and Serbian rights. Or will the IC, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, shrink from proactive measures to stabilise the area for fear of violent opposition? That course, again as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, will simply freeze the situation for as long as the protectorate lasts. One thing is certain; there is no easy, morally justifiable exit strategy in sight for the foreseeable future.

Macedonia (FYROM)

Long portrayed in the west as a model of multicultural democracy since its independence in 1992, Macedonia has, in reality, been a state run by and for Slavs with an increasingly resentful Albanian minority.¹⁰ After almost a decade of not very post-communist governments failing to bring in reforms, many Albanians have tired of waiting for redress of their legitimate grievances. More radical Albanian politicians have increasingly supplanted those prepared to co-operate with the Slavs. The IC's fight for the rights of Kosovar Albanians gave birth to the hope that the IC might at long last pay attention to those of their cousins in Macedonia also. However, after the ousting of Milosevic in the wake of the war, the focus of international attention shifted to bolstering presumed moderate Slav nationalists in both Belgrade and Skopje. In response, significant numbers of Macedonian

Albanians started to support the NLA (and, since August, the new, even harder line, Albanian National Army [ANA]) in an armed struggle. This direct copy of the Kosovo approach to the internationalisation of the problem has the active support of the KLA, which like the ANA, harbours pan-Albanian aspirations.

Thus, the long feared destabilisation of Macedonia has come to pass. Ironically, given that the prevention of this development was one of NATO's aims in the Kosovo war, an important catalyst in bringing it about has been the polarisation of the two communities over the war and the military and then political defeat of Milosevic.¹¹ Now NATO has been drawn willy-nilly into the internal affairs of Macedonia. The alliance has brokered an agreement between the government and the Albanian parties/rebels and despatched troops (significantly without a US contingent) to disarm the NLA (now, like the KLA before it, promoted from being "terrorists" to "insurgents"). However, the disarmament bids fair to being a largely token exercise in confidence building where none exists. And the Ohrid political agreement, which pleases neither party, is highly unlikely to survive the process of ratification by the Slav-dominated parliament; even key members of the government dislike it. The renewal of fighting by the ANA in early November 2001 is a harbinger of things to come, and the west's assumption of the role of honest broker seeking a fair settlement is losing credibility in both Slav and Albanian communities.

The Yugoslav Federation

One positive result of the Kosovo war has been the ousting of Milosevic. The IC is determined to support the apparently westward-looking moderates that ousted him, believing that this will spell the end of extremist nationalism as the dominant political force in Serbia. That happy ending is not impossible: neither is it assured. The reformist DOS coalition won the December 2000 election with 64% of the vote. Milosevic's SPS slumped to under 14%, with the ultra-nationalist parties doing rather better. The turn-out, however, was only 57.7%. The election, with only about 37% of the electorate actively supporting reform was not quite the ringing endorsement of change that has been hailed. Plainly, there is still much popular disillusion with politics and DOS, the grouping representing the educated, liberal middle class and minorities, has yet to make real headway in the Serb heartland. Virulent Serbian nationalism has not been decisively defeated.¹² There are reasons to fear its revival.

Serbia, after its series of defeats in the wars of Yugoslav succession, displays many disturbing similarities to post-World War I Weimar Germany. It has a tradition of autocratic rule. This has been tempered by many of the prerequisites for democratic development – a parliament, some media and interest groups not fully controlled by the government, and so on. However, legal guarantees of basic civil rights are weak, as is a free press, and there is no independent judiciary, no efficient and honest civil service. The army and the security services are not fully under civilian control. There is an excessive concentration of power and authority in the centre and civil society is underdeveloped, with the middle classes having had their development stunted by inflation, repression and emigration. There is no overwhelming societal consensus on core issues and thus on the direction in which the republic should be heading. Intolerance of minorities and of political dissent is the norm. The economy is in ruins and remains in the hands of supporters of the old regime. Rebuilding it will inevitably be a painful process, with much unemployment and falling standards of living for most citizens. It may also prove to be an incomplete and protracted process if a world-wide economic slump restricts foreign aid and investment.

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Turning Serbia into a properly functioning democracy and market economy will require a united and determined reforming government. DOS is unlikely to provide this. The 18 parties that formed the coalition only in early 2000 have a long history of disunity, indeed internecine strife. Disputes over ideology, the division of power and the spoils of office, together with personal rivalries, have already led to the first rift. Federal President Kostunica's conservative, nationalist DSS party has become a new haven for former regime supporters and an ally of the army and old vested interests opposed to sweeping reform (and cooperation with the ICTY). Serbian Prime Minister Djindjic seeks far-reaching reforms and there is an intensifying struggle between the two for power. Further infighting and dodgy deals are likely, to the detriment of political, judicial, legal, social and economic change. The chances of a resurgence of populism are as high as they were in Weimar Germany. Given the absence of any sense of guilt for the wars of the past decade and their consequences but rather a feeling of victimhood, the Serbs may well be beguiled again by ultra-nationalist rhetoric. The fear of further concessions to supposedly secessionist minorities in Vojvodina, the Sandjak and south Serbia and desire for *anschluss* with Republika Srpska, the full recovery of Kosovo and perhaps lands "lost" to Croatia and about to be lost to Montenegro still have plenty of political mileage in them. Bribes, such as the IC's \$1 billion's worth of aid to the country to hand Milosevic over to the ICTY will not change this fact.

Federal institutions have progressively ceased to function in Montenegro since 1998. The republic has established *de facto* independence. President Djukanovic, conscious of his government's dependence on pro-independence forces, appears to have decided that the time has come to make it *de jure*. It would appear that, as of late 2001, he can count on the support of up to 60% of the population. This is not a decisive majority on such a fundamental, polarising constitutional issue and much of the remaining 40% of Serbs and federalist Montenegrins, mostly concentrated in the lands bordering on Serbia, are deeply, potentially violently, opposed to secession.

President Kostunica would like to preserve the federation through negotiations to redefine the relationship between the republics. Prime Minister Djindjic would be happy to see the creation of a much looser confederation, but would rather accept a split than risk bolstering his rival's position and having the Montenegrin tail wagging the Serbian dog in a federation that would satisfy the demands of Montenegrin nationalists. Doubtless, there will be complex negotiations between governments and parties, but it is unlikely that Serbia will attempt to maintain the federation by force, whatever the outcome. There is little stomach just now in Belgrade for another war of Yugoslav succession. The situation will be fraught with uncertainties and dangers, however. What, for instance, would happen if pro-federation forces in Montenegro were to boycott a referendum on independence and/or refuse to accept an adverse result?

During the Kosovo war, the west encouraged anti-Milosevic elements in Montenegro to distance the republic from Serbia. Now that the situation has changed and there are more congenial governments in Belgrade, the west has changed tack. Pressure is being applied to Podgorica to keep the FRY alive. This change of heart is understandable, for the west is reluctant (as always) to see borders change for fear of the precedent it would establish for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, possibly even Serbia itself. However, such changes in direction suggest, once again, the lack of a strategic vision and the primacy of tactical improvisation. This latest attempt to resist the forces of nationalism may be as unsuccessful as the previous ones. It

also risks encouraging those opposing change to adopt an unreasonably intransigent, stability threatening line in negotiations.

Conclusions

It is obviously too early to say whether the terrorist attacks on the USA and the consequent "war against terrorism" will ameliorate or exacerbate the adverse effects the Kosovo war. There seems to be a growing *rapprochement* between Russia and the USA and even China does not appear to resent military intervention in its neighbour, Afghanistan. On the other hand, Muslim peoples, if not their governments, are having their suspicions about American and other western states confirmed. All will depend on the future direction of western, primarily US, policy. A perceived excessive reaction to the events of 11th September, either in scale or geographic scope, could easily result in the dissipation of the already meagre credit accrued by the west for helping Muslim minorities in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia and greatly increased Islamic hostility towards Christendom. The war is likely to have adverse consequences in former-Yugoslavia. Western governments and organizations are preoccupied with Afghanistan and terrorism. If this becomes an obsession which results in neglect of Balkan problems, the situation there can only deteriorate. The west cannot afford to take its eyes off this ball; and it must learn from past mistakes when addressing the future.

The west has made, and continues to make, fundamental errors in its approach to dealing with former-Yugoslavia.

- Firstly, it fails to adopt a unitary approach to problems common to most of the former Yugoslav successor states. Economic ruin, the lack of development of civil society, widespread crime and corruption which hamper and distort development and virulent, intolerant and exclusive nationalism are common to all the new states, save fortunate Slovenia which has shed the Balkan image and joined central Europe. The west has tried to deal with each country in succession, and almost in isolation, regardless of the fact that problems are not only common but interact; individual solutions are wont to fail through their narrowness and the knock-on effect they have on other issues and other countries.
- Secondly, the west follows contradictory and incompatible principles in its efforts to bring peace to the region. It insists on democratic governance, minority rights, peaceful resolution of differences - and the inviolability of frontiers. The successful development of democracy will merely emphasize ethnic divisions as majorities exercise their power over minorities in what is usually seen as a zero-sum game. It will also reinforce the desire of some ethnic groups to change borders at the expense of others, and to give such demands a form of legitimacy. Overwhelmingly, the peoples of former-Yugoslavia are simply not interested in building multi-ethnic societies with inclusive national institutions. Nationalism and the fear of domination by another group are immensely strong. Each ethnicity asks the question: "Why should we live as a minority in your state when you could be a minority in mine?" Sophisticated constitutions with built-in safeguards for minorities and an emphasis on civic (as opposed to ethnic) definition of national identity are not generally accepted as the answer in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia or, if you dig beneath the surface, in Croatia. And neither states nor minorities within them

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are averse to the use of force to have their way over what they regard as core issues.

- The west hopes that economic progress and cooperation will ease tensions, reconciling minority groups to their lot and majorities to the loss of historic lands. But if relative prosperity has not had this effect even on many Quebecois, Basques and Irishmen, to name but a few, why should it be expected to still discontent in the more politically backward lands of former-Yugoslavia? Moreover, the much-discussed answer of a Marshall Plan for the Balkans, including Serbia, ignores the fact that the region, unlike post-World War II western Europe, lacks the societal, legal and economic preconditions which made that US effort a success. Aid in the Balkans is all too likely to disappear into a black hole of theft and corruption, or to be misspent. The example of Bosnia-Herzegovina provides a warning about what could be expected. The same lack of a climate which favours economic progress will also deter private investment on the scale the region needs.

It is impossible to force communities to live together in harmony when they do not want to. Where ethnic cleansing has not been accepted as a *fait accompli*, they cannot be separated either. Peacekeepers can prevent ethnic conflict from exploding into violent confrontation. They can freeze conflicts, suppressing the symptoms, but they cannot remove the causes of the disease. They will not achieve conflict resolution, only conflict perpetuation, though short of armed struggle. Thus they will be needed for decades in former-Yugoslavia, with no guarantee that the basis of lasting peace can be created by their presence. The fervent wish of western peoples, governments and militaries to have their soldiers home by Christmas may be achieved – but it will be Christmas 2050 or later.

ENDNOTES

¹ The war was ended under the terms of UNSCR 1244. These terms placed Kosovo under UN administration and the international security presence would be deployed under UN auspices "with substantial NATO participation". Serbian security personnel were to be allowed to return to maintain a presence at key border crossings and patrimonial sites. Kosovo was to gain "substantial self-government, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ... and the demilitarization of UCK". The presence of international security forces would be limited to Kosovo. Thus, there was a considerable watering down of the Rambouillet diktat. Despite great reluctance, the US had to accept UN and Russian involvement. Yugoslav sovereignty over Kosovo was affirmed, and the Rambouillet proposal for an interim period of three years followed (it was implied) by an independence referendum was dropped. Above all, also dropped was annex B to the accords, the status of forces agreement by which NATO forces would have been able to move and act at will throughout the whole of the FRY, becoming an occupation force in all but name.

² This outcome was, of course, entirely predictable and of NATO's own making. For years, Kosovar Albanians had followed the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova and met Serbian repression with Ghandiesque passive resistance in the hope that they would thereby gain international support. When the Kosovo issue was studiously ignored at Dayton, Rugova and his policy were discredited and the KLA's approach to the struggle for independence became inevitable.

³ Fact Sheet: NATO's New Strategic Concept, released by NATO at the Washington Summit on 24th April 1999.

⁴ The fact that the accept-it-or-be-bombed ultimatum (shades of Austria-Hungary's to Serbia in 1914) contained unacceptable provisions that were later dropped (see note 1) lends credence to the last supposition, as do descriptions of the goings-on at Rambouillet. It is all too easy to paint a picture of the USA, as the alliance leader, being *parti pris* in favour of the (hardly innocent) KLA and trying to manufacture an excuse for aggression. It is at least possible that the terms of UNSCR 1244 would have been accepted by the FRY if offered earlier; indeed, a resolution of the Serbian National Assembly of 23rd March, with the offer renewed by Milosevic on 22nd April through the Russian envoy Chernomyrdin, went almost as far as the terms eventually settled on.

⁵ NATO avoided these UN routes to legitimacy precisely because it feared, probably correctly, that neither would actually sanction action. It maintained, somewhat contradictorily, that its action was justified by UNSCRs 1199 and 1203 (a dubious contention) and that anyway general international law allows for action without UN sanction in cases of overwhelming humanitarian necessity. Britain was insufficiently confident of this case to submit it to the International Court of Justice, instead relying on jurisdictional technicalities to avoid having the case heard. (It is reported that, when the then British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook told US Secretary of State Albright that his department's lawyers doubted the legality of bombing, Albright's response was a curt "get new lawyers". [James Rubin in the "Financial Times", 29 September 2000])

⁶ Much 19th Century imperialism was clothed in terms of moral righteousness.

⁷ Of course, the image of NATO as a compliant tool of the USA is, to say the least, a misperception of the nature of the alliance and the way its system of checks and balances actually works. It is a very common misperception, however, and one which exerts more influence than the reality.

⁸ The themes in this paragraph and the next are developed in two other articles by the author. See "Conflict spills into the 21st Century" (Janes Intelligence Review [JIR] December 2000) and "History warns the west that Russia cannot be ignored" (JIR November 1999).

⁹ There have been times when the boot was on the other foot and the Albanians have been the oppressors – ie, when Kosovo was under Axis occupation 1941-44 and, through circumstances rather than desire, to a lesser extent during the period of autonomy 1974-89. Now, back on top, the Albanians are generally keen to make life in the province unendurable for most, though admittedly not all, ethnically Serb Kosovars.

¹⁰ According to a dubious census of 1994, of the population of 1,945,932, about 66.6% were Macedonians, 22.6% Albanians, 4% Turks, 2.2% Roma, 2.1% Serbs and 2.4% others. The Albanians claim their true proportion today is around 40%, with the real figure probably being around one third. Demographic trends suggest that the Slavs will be in a minority by as early as 2015.

¹¹ If Milosevic had been left to crush the KLA without outside interference, he might not have embarked on full-scale ethnic cleansing with the consequent destabilizing of Macedonia resulting from an influx of 200,000 Kosovar refugees (increasing Macedonia's Albanian population by 50%). See the doubts raised about the so-called Operation Horseshoe to do just this in James Bisset: "NATO's Balkan blunder" (Mediterranean Quarterly, Winter 2001, p11). This argument, however, presupposes that an anti-KLA campaign could have been won without such mass expulsions, a dubious contention in the light of the Serb military failures in 1998 and the apparent lack of an alternative strategy.

¹² See James Pettifer's excellent analysis of the context and results of the election in "Prospects for a new Yugoslavia" (CSRC paper G91, February 2001).

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