

## **Balkan History, Madeleine's War, and NATO's Kosovo\***

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Early in 1999, a small, poor, and backward corner of Europe became the center of world attention. On March 24, the self-proclaimed greatest military alliance in history began a 78-day bombing campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), allegedly to force it to accept the terms of an international settlement for regulating the FRY's relations with its rebellious province of Kosovo. NATO's "Operation Allied Force" soon went awry, however, as myriad miscalculations on the part of all the relevant players to this drama quickly threatened to spiral out of control. Then-Russian president Boris Yeltsin openly warned that NATO's actions could lead to world war, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade heightened Great Power tensions even further, and the unity of the Atlantic Alliance itself was severely tested. In the aftermath of the conflict, Kosovo has joined Bosnia in becoming another Balkan protectorate of the international community; Macedonia may yet become a member of this collection, and even Albania's future is uncertain.

Ironically, the more deeply involved the "international community" has become in the Balkans' various conflicts, the less success it seems to have in creating stability in the region. Nowhere is this more evident than in an examination of the problems and pitfalls associated with international policy regarding the Kosovo crisis.

### **Balkan History**

The bulk of recent writings on the breakup of the former Yugoslavia have focused blame for the state's disintegration on malevolent politicians and leaders who deliberately stirred up popular prejudices to keep themselves in power. Richard Holbrooke, for instance, claims that "Yugoslavia's tragedy was not foreordained. It was the product of bad, even criminal, political leaders who encouraged ethnic confrontation for personal, political, and financial

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gain.”<sup>1</sup> Along similar lines, Warren Zimmerman has noted that “Yugoslavia’s death and the violence that followed resulted from the conscious actions of nationalist leaders who coopted, intimidated, circumvented, or eliminated all opposition to their demagogic designs. Yugoslavia was destroyed from the top down.”<sup>2</sup>

A succinct summary of much of the thinking in this school of thought can be found in a recent report on the November 2000 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina produced by the International Crisis Group:

Despite five years and five billion US dollars of international community investment in Bosnia, the 11 November Bosnian elections demonstrated once again that international engagement has failed to provide a sustainable basis for a functioning state, capable of surviving an international withdrawal. The elections highlighted once again the near complete failure—in the face of determined nationalist extremism—of an international approach that places emphasis on hopes that moderate, co-operative Bosnian partners will come to power through elections. The elections also revealed the complete unsuitability of the present Dayton constitutional structures, as well as the international community implementing structures and policies ... Many in the international community had naively hoped that democratic change in Zagreb and Belgrade would translate into change among Bosnia’s Croats and Serbs. To the contrary, these democratic victories appear to have energized Bosnia’s ethnic extremists.<sup>3</sup>

A careful reading of the above suggests that these “ethnic extremists” must have almost superhuman abilities. Neither the passage of time nor the

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<sup>1</sup> Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 23–24.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1993), vii. This mode of thinking leads to some rather perverse logic; for instance, the belief that in bombing a country for seventy-eight days one is waging a war against an individual, not against a country or a people. NATO Secretary-General Lord George Robertson, for instance, recently claimed, “The nineteen democratic nations of the Alliance did not commit an act of aggression against the Yugoslavian [sic] people. We did not have anything against them. We acted against Milosevic.” See Yuri Pankov’s interview with Robertson, “Dialogue, Not Confrontation,” in *Krasnaia Zvezda* (Moscow), 20 February 2001.

<sup>3</sup> *Bosnia’s November Elections: Dayton Stumbles* (Sarajevo/Brussels: International Crisis Group Report No. 104), 18 December 2000, Executive Summary.

expenditure of billions of dollars can defeat their agenda. They are able to defy the will of the international community, and have found ways of sabotaging or subverting constitutional arrangements designed by the brightest minds at the U.S. State Department.<sup>4</sup> They are impervious to positive democratic changes in Bosnia's immediate regional environment. They are even able to waylay the will of the people, as expressed in elections organized, supervised, and paid for by the international community.

Such views, however, do not take us very far in understanding what is happening in the Balkans. The belief that entire societies can be manipulated in this way, as Rogers Brubaker points out, reduces the general population to being "passive dupes, vehicles or objects of manipulative designs" instead of "active participants" and "political subjects in their own right."<sup>5</sup> Nor can such views explain why nationalist parties in places such as Bosnia are able to win election after election for more than a decade,<sup>6</sup> even though the leaders of these parties come and go.

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<sup>4</sup> On this note, it is worth pointing out that many people involved in Balkan policy over the past decade have decried the appalling lack of understanding about the Balkans exhibited by international personnel dealing with the region. As Jacques Klein, the head of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia recently noted, "There are more people [in Sarajevo] who know nothing about this place than in any other capital where I've ever served." See Klein's comments as quoted by Robert Wright, Irena Guzelova, and Jonathan Birchall, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Fear proves to be the biggest vote-winner," *The Financial Times* (London), 18 December 2000, Bosnia-Herzegovina Country Survey. Along the same lines, the above-quoted report by the ICG (p. 17) claims that the international effort in Bosnia has been "hampered by a rapid turnover of often unqualified personnel, lacking relevant experience, including sometimes in senior positions." To this, one should add that many of today's so-called "Balkan experts" often exhibit a woeful ignorance of, or even interest in, anything that happened in the former Yugoslavia prior to 1987.

<sup>5</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 72. Brubaker's comments were made in reference to the Krajina Serbs in the period 1990–91. If the average citizen in Southeastern Europe is indeed a "passive dupe," perhaps we should reconsider the extent to which it is worth the effort to foster Jeffersonian-style democracy in the region.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, in every election held in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the twentieth century, the inhabitants have voted along ethnic lines, essentially making elections ethnic censuses. See Xavier Bougarel, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: State and Communitarianism," in D.A. Dyker and I. Vejvoda, eds., *Yugoslavia and After: A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996), 87–115. With regard to the post-Dayton period, of

Alija Izetbegović once described the mass appeal of national issues by saying, “If you call for an open forum on democracy, a hundred intellectuals show up. If the forum is about nationalism, you will get ten thousand people from all walks of life on the streets.”<sup>7</sup> In a more scholarly vein, as Ivo J. Lederer observed in his classic 1969 essay, “Nationalism and the Yugoslavs,”

[t]he eastern European “way of life” is akin to a stream made up of a variety of tributaries of which nationalism is only one, but nationalism has run so deep and strong that it has appeared to possess an elemental, almost gravitational, quality. Time, location, and circumstances have, of course, altered its flow, as have war, revolution, social-economic transformation, ideology, perhaps even some of the brave efforts at emancipation from the bondage of historical fancy. Still nationalism has been the fundamental fact of life for nearly two hundred years. Nowhere has this been so clear and agonizingly the case as in the lands of the Yugoslavs.<sup>8</sup>

But while astute politicians and scholars have recognized the historical force and social depth of this phenomenon, far too many others have failed to grasp its significance.<sup>9</sup> This misdiagnosis of the problems facing southeastern Europe, however, often leads to seriously flawed policies. Anyone familiar

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course, one could question the degree to which elections have any real meaning, insofar as representatives of the international community have been given the power to dismiss publicly elected officials from office—a power used with increasing frequency in recent years.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by Carsten Wieland, “Izetbegovic und Jinnah—die selektive Vereinnahung zweier ‘Muslim-Führer’.” *Sudosteuroopa Mitteilungen*, no. 4 (1999): 351.

<sup>8</sup> Ivo J. Lederer, “Nationalism and the Yugoslavs,” in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, eds. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 396.

<sup>9</sup> On the reasons why many Westerners fail to appreciate the popular strength of nationalism, see, for instance, Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), chapter 1. See also Walker Connor, “Ethnonationalism,” in *Understanding Political Development*, Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1987), 196–220. Indeed, medievalists have begun to attack the entire contemporary academic paradigm of nationalism as a “modern” phenomenon by showing that the “invention” of nations and nationalism itself long predate the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On this note, see Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

with the reality of post-1945 Yugoslavia is aware of the fact that the problems of that former country long predate the emergence of Slobodan Milošević or Franjo Tuđman. Of course, one could argue that malevolent politicians were to blame for earlier bouts of Balkan violence as well. But this argument then becomes tautological: if previous bouts of ethnic conflict were also produced by evil leaders, then it seems there are always evil leaders about willing to whip up ethnic hatred. But if there are always evil leaders about willing to stir up ethnic hatred, are we then always doomed to suffer from ethnic conflicts?

Two points bear stressing here. First, nationalist conflict in the Balkans is not *merely* the result of evil leaders stirring up ethnic hatred for the sake of their own personal political gain. Although we can always count on politicians to embrace policies that will further their ambitions, as A.J.P. Taylor once noted, “[s]tatesmen exploit popular emotion; they do not create it.”<sup>10</sup> Instead, nationalist leaders gain popular support when ethnic groups believe they face an existential threat to their survival, a threat best confronted by the creation of strong, viable nation-states enjoying significant levels of popular support and legitimacy.

What determines the timing of these outbreaks of interethnic conflict in the Balkans is usually a function of events in the wider geo-strategic order. More specifically, when the international order imposing a modicum of security in the region breaks down, individuals resort to seeking security in their collective national/ethnic identity.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the Ottoman Empire's decline in the nineteenth century provided the space for Balkan nations to rebel against their imperial overlords, most notably in the Serbian rebellion of 1804 and the Greek insurrection of the 1820s. The process proceeded throughout the nineteenth century, with, for example, the Herzegovinian peasants' rebellion in the late 1860s. In light of more recent Bosnian history, it is worth recalling a passage from the “Unification Proclamation” issued by the leaders of the Serb revolt in 1876:

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<sup>10</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe: 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 233.

<sup>11</sup> For useful interpretations of ethnic conflict in the Balkans from this perspective, see Barry R. Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” and Jack Snyder, “Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State,” both in Michael E. Brown, ed., *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 103–24 and 79–101, respectively. For a detailed examination of how the security dilemma affects Bosnia-Herzegovina, see Susan L. Woodward, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: How Not to End Civil War,” in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 73–115.

After so much waiting and without hope for any type of help, we resolve that from today we forever break with the non-Christian rule of Constantinople, and desiring to share our fate with our Serb brothers ... proclaim that we are uniting our homeland Bosnia to the Principality of Serbia.<sup>12</sup>

But the Serbs were not the only ethnic group striving to carve their own nation-state from the “sick man of Europe.” For instance, in June 1878, Albanians from various parts of the Balkans gathered to form the Prizren League, an organization devoted to developing an Albanian national program to counter that of the various Greek, Serb, and Bulgarian programs then emerging as the Ottoman Empire decayed. The delegates to the meeting proceeded to claim areas of present-day Macedonia, Kosovo, and Montenegro for the Albanians.<sup>13</sup> Many other ethnic groups in the Balkans had their own versions of a “greater” national program as well.

This desire on the part of the peoples of southeastern Europe to create viable nation-states differed little from similar national programs in other parts of Europe. As Gale Stokes has described this process,

[r]emapping state boundaries onto ethnic lines is one of the major threads of post-French Revolutionary European history. The process began with the unifications of Italy and Germany, ran through the creation of new states at the end of World War I, and had its most catastrophic outcomes at the end of World War II with the Holocaust and the expulsion of the Germans from Eastern Europe ... [T]he wars of Yugoslav succession are not some aberrant Balkan phenomenon; they are the last stages of a process of European redefinition that has been going on since the French revolution.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “The Unification Proclamation” of 1876, as quoted by Nebojša Radmanović in *Krajiški Vojnik* (Banja Luka), 28 June 1997, 34.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 42–45.

<sup>14</sup> Gale Stokes, “The Unpalatable Paradox,” *Nationalities Papers* 27 (June 1999), 327–29.

Indeed, as Istvan Deak adds, “the creation of nation-states has been so much a part of modern European history as to allow us to call it inevitable.”<sup>15</sup>

Here it bears stressing that war and its attendant violence has been part and parcel of the European state-building process; in Charles Tilly’s classic formulation, “War made the state, and the state made war.”<sup>16</sup> Viewed in this context, however, many of the explanations offered for the violence attending the disintegration of the former Yugoslav state, whether “ancient ethnic hatreds” or “elite manipulation,” assume only secondary importance. Instead, it is infinitely more fruitful to understand the logic underlying the military strategies during the “Wars of the Yugoslav Succession” as being driven by the imperatives of creating viable states. In the former Yugoslavia, as Susan Woodward notes, the various ethnic factions were each struggling to win “the geopolitical and institutional preconditions of sovereignty: obtaining the strategic and economic assets and borders of a secure future state, destroying those of one’s enemies, and building (in the course of war) the armies and foreign alliances of a new defense.”<sup>17</sup>

A second point bears mentioning here as well. Given the general state of illiteracy prevailing in the Balkans in the nineteenth century, and the absence of anything resembling twentieth-century mass media, a review of Balkan history over the past 200 years should make us rethink the emphasis recently placed on the role of the mass media in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. This is not to say that the means of communication in a peasant society at the time were benign; Misha Glenny, for instance, cites one Albanian epic poem:

As always, Albanian and Slav  
Were at blood since a tragic fate  
Placed fire and gunpowder side by side.  
Placed side by side Albania and Montenegro!<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Istvan Deak, “A Somewhat Pessimistic View of Charles Ingrao’s ‘Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Central Europe,’” *Nationalities Papers* 27 (June 1999), 320.

<sup>16</sup> Tilly, “Reflections on the History of European State-Making,” in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 42.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1995), 272.

<sup>18</sup> *Gjaku i marrun* (Blood avenged), cited by Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804–1999* (London: Granta Books, 1999), 151.

But while historical and cultural legacies may have emphasized conflict between ethnic groups rather than coexistence, it is a far cry to claim that such conflict was conjured out of nothing by evil leaders. That is, unless we want to believe that just as radio and television supposedly whipped Albanians, Bosniacs, Croats, and Serbs into fratricidal frenzies in the 1990s, *guslas*, *frulas*, *tamburas* and epic poems did the same in the nineteenth century. Indeed, if, over the course of forty-five years, a communist regime with all of the propaganda instruments such a system had at its disposal was unable to inculcate a sense of “brotherhood and unity” amongst the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, it is hard to believe that Izetbegović, Milošević, or Tadjman could drive them into a fratricidal frenzy in a matter of two or three.

Instead of blaming evil leaders and malevolent media for the violence of the 1990s, a more powerful explanatory model should seek to understand Balkan nationalist struggles over the past two centuries, as Stokes suggests, as simply a later manifestation of a common European state- and nation-building process. What interrupted this “inevitable” flow of modern European history in the Balkans was the tendency of the Great Powers to use the Balkans as the playground for their competitive games, the main thesis of the Glenny book.

One of the most important efforts by the Great Powers to protect their interests in the Balkans was the Congress of Berlin in 1875, and Glenny provides a vivid account of the disdain with which representatives of the Great Powers treated the delegations of various Balkan ethnic groups. Forty years after the Congress of Berlin, in the midst of the Great War (the spark of which had of course been lit in the Balkans), Nicholas Murray Butler would write,

Everyone can now see that the Treaty of Berlin was one of the most colossal blunders in modern political history. It so shuffled the cards of diplomacy as to mislead the people concerning the game which was being played, and instead of settling the grave questions with which it dealt, that Treaty simply glossed them over and opened the way for a new military struggle ...<sup>19</sup>

Subsequent attempts by the Great Powers to address the shortcomings of the Congress of Berlin fared little better in achieving a stable solution for southeastern Europe. In 1918, as Michael Ignatieff points out, Woodrow Wilson

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<sup>19</sup> See Nicholas Murray Butler’s introduction to Vladislav R. Savič, *Southeastern Europe: The Main Problem of the Present World Struggle* (New York: Fleming R. Revell Company, 1918). Butler, incidentally, was at the time the President of Columbia University.

... enunciated the right of self-determination for the peoples of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, and the draftsmen at Versailles then laid out the borders that the Balkan states have been fighting over, off and on, ever since ... Eighty years later, America continues to try to remedy the errors of Versailles.<sup>20</sup>

One is tempted to believe that more recent efforts by the Great Powers to create "order" in the Balkans will be seen by subsequent generations in the same light. Tellingly, the turning point in the Albanian struggle for Kosovo was what happened in Bosnia; more specifically, the agreement negotiated to end the conflict there, the Dayton Peace Accords (hereafter, the DPA). For, regardless of the spin international officials use to describe the DPA (i.e., that it created the basis for a "united state with two multiethnic entities"), the fundamental reality of Dayton was that it ratified the creation of mono-ethnic entities created by force and the violent expulsion of ethnic minorities. In this, it was similar to U.S. support for the expulsion of the Krajina Serbs in August 1995, for among Western countries there was "the unspoken but ever-present feeling that if there were no more Serbs in Croatia, then, in future, there would be no more problem either."<sup>21</sup> The lesson for extremists (on both sides) in Kosovo was thus obvious: violence and ethnic cleansing would be tolerated and endorsed. One need only pick the right international patrons.

Timothy Garton Ash once noted that "what we are proposing to do in our Balkan quasi protectorates is not just to freeze war. It is also to freeze history."<sup>22</sup> What have been the results of this effort to "freeze" history? Take, for instance, the case of Bosnia. Over the past eight years, the international community has spent an astronomical \$50–90 *billion* trying to bring peace to the country, to rebuild its infrastructure, reform its political and economic systems, and produce a non-national, pan-ethnic democratic consciousness on

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Ignatieff, "The Dream of Albanians," in *The New Yorker*, 11 January 1999, 36.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 121. Not all international officials shared this opinion. As Glenny (p. 650) cites a statement by Carl Bildt at the time, "If we accept that it is alright for Tudjman to cleanse Croatia of its Serbs, then how on earth can we object if one day Milošević sends his army to clean out the Albanians from Kosovo?"

<sup>22</sup> See Ash, "Cry, the Dismembered Country," *The New York Review of Books*, 14 January 1999, 32.

the part of its population.<sup>23</sup> Over 20,000 international troops and 15,000 international civilian personnel are currently in Bosnia organizing elections, postponing elections, reversing electoral results, imposing laws, rewriting primary school textbooks, creating television networks, monitoring customs services, police forces, and military units, regulating the airwaves, reforming the judiciary, setting up a stock market... The list is literally endless. And for all of this effort, the locals still have an unlimited number of ways of obstructing and/or derailing the best-intentioned of efforts. A report issued by the U.S. Congress's General Accounting Office in 2000 noted that "there has been no measurable progress in reducing crime and corruption in the four years since the end of the war."<sup>24</sup> In part due to such corruption, if one factors out the donor aid Bosnia has received, the country would have experienced *negative* economic growth in the postwar period.<sup>25</sup> On 3 March 2001, in perhaps the greatest blow international policy has yet suffered in Bosnia, Croat leaders gathered in Mostar to declare their disassociation from the Bosniac-Croat Federation, the cornerstone of American policy in Bosnia for the past seven years. Not surprisingly, Bosnia-Herzegovina's young people are voting with their feet to escape this situation; a recent study by a UN agency found that sixty-two percent of the country's young people would leave Bosnia if they had a way out.<sup>26</sup> As one international official captured the problems experienced in trying to impose the international agenda on Bosnia,

We've played all the cards: the money, the advice, the pressure. We have done everything my country has learned to do in two hundred

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<sup>23</sup> For the estimate on how much the international community has spent in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s, see Jasna Hasović, "Pola budžeta za plate slušbenika," *Dani* (Sarajevo), 8 September 2000. Determining a precise amount is impossible because different agencies use different methodologies for calculating their expenses. Contrast these figures with Bosnia-Herzegovina's annual GDP, estimated at \$6.2 billion in 1999. Hasović and others estimate that over half of this amount has been spent on the salaries of foreign "experts" themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Christopher Marquis with Carlotta Gall, "Congressional Report Says Corruption is Stifling Bosnia," *New York Times*, 7 July 2000, A3.

<sup>25</sup> *Why Will No One Invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina?: An Overview of Impediments to Investment and Self Sustaining Economic Growth in the Post Dayton Era*. Sarajevo: International Crisis Group, 21 April 1999, 8.

<sup>26</sup> The public opinion survey by the UN Development Program was cited by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch in a speech before the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee in Brussels on 22 January 2001.

years of meddling in other countries. I still wonder if it is enough to achieve what we want.<sup>27</sup>

The above analysis is not meant to deny the essentially noble purposes of much of what the international community is attempting to accomplish in the Balkans. But a mistaken understanding of the forces driving the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia has led to mistaken remedies. The root of the “problem” in the Balkans has not been “evil leaders.” Rather, it has been the efforts of the various ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia to create states reflecting their national identities and aspirations, states which provide them with a measure of collective security, and states which allow them to participate as recognized partners in the international community. Unfortunately, many of the short-term policies adopted to deal with “evil leaders” in the Balkans, uninformed by a comparative perspective of similar phenomena during other historical periods or in other parts of the world, have been counter-productive, if we believe that the real goal of international engagement should be to foster the economic and social stability needed to sustain democratic polities. They have also led to policy disasters such as NATO’s war in Kosovo.

### **Madeleine’s War**

Soon after Dayton, extremists in Kosovo created an obscure organization named the “Kosovo Liberation Army.” The KLA’s initial actions involved murdering mailmen, forest rangers, Serb refugees, and the occasional ambush of a police patrol. (Tim Judah provides the most detailed account in English of the KLA’s origins published to date.) By February 1998, the U.S. State

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<sup>27</sup> *New York Times*, 13 September 1998. In a similar vein, after a particularly difficult period of trying to force Bosniacs, Croats, and Serbs into agreeing to a common currency, license plates, and passports, former Deputy High Representative Jacques Klein claimed, ““Never in the history of diplomacy was so much time and effort expended by so many diplomats over such trivia.” See the speech by Klein before the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 21 April 1999, available at <http://www.ohr.int/speeches/s990421a.htm>. It is an interesting exercise to contrast this exasperation with the thoughts of one of the protagonists in the Andrić novel *Bosnian Chronicle*, Hamdi Bey Teskeredić, who, when the people of Travnik learned that a French consul was being sent to their town, exclaimed, “We’re on our own ground here, and anyone else who comes is a stranger and won’t be able to hold out long. Many people have come here intending to stay, but so far we’ve seen the back of all of them.” See Ivo Andrić, *Bosnian Chronicle* (London: Harvill Press, 1992), 3.

Department's top Balkan envoy, Robert Gelbard, would claim that "the KLA is, without doubt, a terrorist organization."

Throughout 1998, the conflict between the KLA and Yugoslav government forces constituted a fairly typical guerrilla war and counter-insurgency campaign, with all of the excesses common to such warfare;<sup>28</sup> as Istvan Deak notes, "history has still to show a police or military force that did not grow ruthless when attacked by fighters dressed as civilians."<sup>29</sup> Prior to March 1999, the fighting in Kosovo had been confined to areas in which the KLA had been active; Kosovo's major urban areas, such as Priština, Djakovica, and Kosovska Mitrovica, and large parts of eastern and southern Kosovo, saw little or no violence. Even vociferous supporters of the NATO intervention

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<sup>28</sup> On this note, it is worth pointing out that several KLA leaders are now under investigation by the Hague Tribunal for war crimes committed by KLA forces in 1998—long before the NATO intervention. See Tom Walker, "KLA Faces Trials for War Crimes on Serbs: Inquiry Turns on Albanians," *Sunday Times* (London), 3 September 2000. The commander of the Kosovo Protection Force, Agim Ceku, is already believed to be the subject of a sealed indictment for war crimes because of his activities during the war in Croatia from 1993–95. The political leader of the KLA, Hashim Thaci, has been directly linked to a massacre of twenty-two Serb civilians in the village of Klečka in the summer of 1998, and with the assassination of political rivals within Kosovo. See Chris Hedges, "Kosovo's Rebels Accused of Executions in the Ranks," *New York Times*, 25 June 1999, 1. See also Tom Walker, "KLA Chief Accused of War Crimes," *Sunday Times* (London), 10 October 1999. Recent assassinations of Thaci's political opponents in the wake of Kosovo's October 2000 municipal elections suggest his understanding of a democratic transfer of power is rather different than Western notions of the term. It is very unlikely, however, that these individuals will ever be formally charged because they have become too closely identified with Western policy (and policymakers) in the region.

<sup>29</sup> See Istvan Deak, "Out of the Past," *New Republic*, 8 June 1998. Indeed, as this is being written and we watch the growing death toll in the violence between Israeli forces and Palestinian demonstrators, we are reminded yet again that the struggle between different peoples over land is almost always a brutal and bloody affair. Consider, for instance, the price of the first six weeks of fighting between Israelis and Palestinians in the most recent unrest: according to a UN report, Israeli forces have destroyed 431 private homes, thirteen public buildings, ten factories, and fourteen religious buildings. The human costs of the fighting left over 200 people dead in the first six weeks, the vast majority of whom were Palestinian civilians. Other tactics adopted by Israeli security forces have included extra-judicial assassinations of suspected "troublemakers," and prohibitions on travel for communities of tens of thousands of people. See William A. Orme Jr., "Palestinian Economy in Ruins, UN Says," *New York Times*, 6 December 2000, A12.

now admit “there was no humanitarian crisis in Kosovo in 1997, or in 1998, or in most of 1999, in any conventionally understood sense of the term.”<sup>30</sup>

Yet, as Timothy Garton Ash notes of the KLA, this “bunch of farmyard Albanian ex-Marxist-Leninist terrorists”<sup>31</sup> very quickly managed to draw NATO into the first war in its fifty-year history. How it managed to do so will remain a matter of controversy for a long time to come; certainly, it has much to do with Western misconceptions of what has been driving events in the former Yugoslavia (i.e., “evil leaders” instead of historical processes). Similarly, it also has much to do with the very palpable need among Western leaders, and especially those in the U.S., to find a new *raison d’être* for NATO’s continued existence.

There is also ample evidence that all sides simply stumbled into the war. Milošević believed that NATO was bluffing, and that even if NATO attacked, European public opinion would never tolerate a long-term campaign. Milošević may also have calculated that standing up to a NATO attack could strengthen his position at home.

But Milošević was not the only one to miscalculate. NATO did not have any contingency plans worked out for a longer conflict, and the original list of bombing targets was exhausted within a matter of days. In a very cogent analysis of American miscues along the way to the Kosovo war, Christopher Layne and Benjamin Schwarz point out that on March 24, the first day of the bombing campaign, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the single person most associated with the war, declared “I don’t see this as a long-term operation.” Just eleven days later, however, Albright would say, “We never expected this to be over quickly.”<sup>32</sup>

In light of more recent evidence that has emerged since the end of the war, however, it is worth considering to what extent the decision to go to war against the FRY really was a miscalculation. Considerable circumstantial evidence points to the conclusion that hawks within the Clinton Administration, led by Albright, were eager for a showdown with Milošević and were determined to create a scenario in which a military confrontation would be all but inevitable. A significant turnaround in U.S. policy was clear by November

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<sup>30</sup> David Rieff, “Kosovo’s Humanitarian Circus,” *World Policy Journal* 17 (Fall 2000), 27.

<sup>31</sup> See Timothy Garton Ash, “Kosovo: Was it Worth It?” in *New York Review of Books*, 21 September 2000, 53.

<sup>32</sup> See Christopher Layne and Benjamin Schwarz, “For the Record,” *National Interest*, Fall 1999, 9–15. For an example of the extent to which the war in Kosovo came to be associated with the U.S. Secretary of State, see the cover story of *Time* magazine for 17 May 1999, entitled “Albright at War.”

1998 when the State Department began to claim that Milošević was the problem in the region, not the solution. By this time, the CIA had already spent a considerable amount of time providing KLA operatives with American military training manuals, field advice, satellite telephones, GPS systems, and even General Wesley Clark's mobile phone number.<sup>33</sup> And when a controversial effort to find a political solution to the crisis was made in February and March 1999 during the Rambouillet talks, a senior State Department official claimed that the U.S. had "deliberately set the bar higher than the Serbs could accept."<sup>34</sup>

After the failure of the Rambouillet talks, the U.S. decision to begin a bombing campaign dramatically escalated the fighting in Kosovo, and directly triggered the massive refugee movements that followed; as Glenny notes, "[i]nstead of preventing a humanitarian catastrophe, NATO's decision contributed to a flood of biblical proportions."<sup>35</sup> Oddly enough, the U.S. State Department itself has accepted the view that the NATO bombing triggered the massive forced expulsions of the Albanian population in Kosovo. In a report released in the midst of the Kosovo war, the State Department claimed, "In late March 1999, Serbian forces *dramatically increased* the scope and pace of their efforts, moving away from selective targeting of towns and regions suspected of KLA sympathies toward a sustained and systematic effort to ethnically cleanse the entire province of Kosovo."<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, NATO's post-hoc justifications for the attack have crumbled since the end of the war. Two weeks into the air campaign, NATO claimed that it had attacked for fear that the Yugoslav military had been planning a so-called "Operation Horseshoe" to drive the Albanian population out of Kosovo. In April 2000, however, it was revealed that the alleged Operation Horseshoe had been part of a NATO dis-information campaign developed at the German defense ministry.<sup>37</sup> Once the NATO attacks began, of course,

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<sup>33</sup> Tom Walker and Aidan Laverty, "CIA Aided Kosovo Guerrilla Army," *Times* (London), 12 March 2000.

<sup>34</sup> George Kenney, "Rolling Thunder: The Rerun," *Nation*, 14 June 1999. The Rambouillet talks themselves have been derided by critics as a perfect example of the recent American penchant for "drive-by diplomacy."

<sup>35</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, 658.

<sup>36</sup> See *Erasing History: Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, May 1999, Overview section. Italics added.

<sup>37</sup> John Goetz and Tom Walker, "Serbian Ethnic Cleansing Scare Was a Fake, Says General," *Sunday Times* (London), 2 April 2000. Judah (pp. 240–41) also questions the extent to which "Operation Horseshoe" really existed, and Ash (p. 57) cites a report on the Kosovo conflict compiled by the House of Commons' Foreign Affairs Committee which is also skeptical.

Yugoslav military units and paramilitary forces did begin a massive operation to expel ethnic Albanians from possible invasion routes into the country—a completely predictable response, but one for which NATO leaders did nothing to prepare. As Douglas Macgregor notes, “Faced with a population that concealed and supported the KLA, the Yugoslav forces did exactly what U.S., French and British forces have done in counterinsurgency operations: they expelled the population and removed the insurgency’s base of support.”<sup>38</sup>

Another aspect of the NATO propaganda campaign involved the claim that “genocide” was being committed in Kosovo. NATO and U.S. officials liberally claimed that up to 100,000 people had been killed by Serb forces. Yet in August 2000, a spokesman for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) announced that the number of people killed in Kosovo during the NATO attacks would probably fall between two-three thousand. Moreover, as various observers have noted, with NATO bombs falling all over the province, and factoring in the fighting between the KLA and Yugoslav forces, “not all of the dead can be proved to be the victims of murder or execution.”<sup>39</sup>

In military terms, NATO could take little pride in its performance. A preliminary NATO review of the Kosovo campaign concluded that Operation

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<sup>38</sup> See Douglas Macgregor, “The Balkan Limits to Power and Principle,” *Orbis* 45 (Winter 2001), 100. It should be pointed out that during the Kosovo war, Colonel Macgregor was chief of strategic planning and director of the Joint Operations Center, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.

<sup>39</sup> See Jonathan Steele, “Figures Put on Serb Killings Too High,” *Guardian* (London), 18 August 2000; Daniel Pearl and Robert Block, “Despite Tales, the War in Kosovo Was Savage, but Wasn’t Genocide,” *Wall Street Journal*, 31 December 1999, A1. This is not to dismiss the war crimes committed by Serb paramilitary forces in Kosovo, actions for which the ICTY indicted Milošević and four of his top associates on 27 May 1999. Nevertheless, it is clear that the NATO attack dramatically escalated the scale of the violence in Kosovo at the time. For a very explicit denunciation of crimes committed by Serb forces during the Kosovo campaign, see the interview with Fr. Sava Janjić in *NIN* (Belgrade), 8 July 1999. Although it will never be known how many people died during the NATO bombing campaign, there were certainly plenty of instances such as that of Suad Qorraj, a KLA operative during the war, apparently killed in inter-Albanian feuds after NATO moved into Kosovo. Despite the fact that Qorraj went missing on June 23—two weeks after the Yugoslav army pulled out of Kosovo—when Qorraj’s burnt body was found on 1 August 1999, his family put up death notices claiming he had been “killed by Serbs.” Nick Wood, “U.S. ‘Covered Up’ for Kosovo Ally,” *Observer* (London), 10 September 2000.

Allied Force “had almost no military effect.”<sup>40</sup> According to a secret U.S. military assessment leaked to the press, 38,000 sorties (including the use of 31,000 rounds of radioactive depleted uranium shells) over 78-days of bombing managed to destroy fourteen tanks and an insignificant number of armored personnel carriers and artillery pieces.<sup>41</sup> When all was said and done, NATO had inflicted embarrassingly little damage on the Yugoslav military. As Ash points out,

It is a remarkable fact that for at least a month the most powerful military alliance in history, with member states representing some two thirds of the world’s economic and military strength, with four million men and women under arms, and combined defense spending of around \$450 billion, seemed to be losing the war to a small, impoverished Balkan country with a defense budget of scarcely \$1.5 billion and about 110,000 active-duty soldiers.<sup>42</sup>

Unable to destroy the Yugoslav army from the air, afraid to fight it on the ground, but desperate to salvage its “credibility,” as the war dragged on NATO decided to expand the bounds of what was an acceptable level of “collateral damage.” As NATO’s target list expanded, bombs started falling on prisons, hospitals, refugee convoys, television studios, and the occasional foreign embassy.

This new strategy, however, also required NATO to engage in what can only be described as war crimes. As Michael Mandelbaum points out, the targeting of electrical grids and water facilities violates Article 14 of the 1977 Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Convention, which bars attacks on “objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.”<sup>43</sup> A Human Rights

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<sup>40</sup> Daniel Goure and Jeffrey Lewis, “The Strained U.S. Military: Evidence from Operation Allied Force,” *National Security Studies Quarterly* 6 (Winter 2000): 25–35; Tim Butcher and Patrick Bishop, “NATO Admits Air Campaign Failed,” *The Electronic Telegraph*, 22 July 2000.

<sup>41</sup> See John Barry and Evan Thomas, “The Kosovo Cover-Up,” *Newsweek*, 15 May 2000, 23–26. Britain’s Royal Air Force did not do too well in Kosovo either. A secret RAF report leaked in August 2000 showed that of 150 “dumb” bombs (i.e., conventional munitions not using laser-guided technology), only three could be confirmed to have hit their target—a two percent success rate. See Michael Evans, “Kosovo ‘Dumb-bombs’ Missing in Action,” *Times* (London), 15 August 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Ash, 57.

<sup>43</sup> See Mandelbaum, “A Perfect Failure: NATO’s War Against Yugoslavia,” *Foreign Affairs* 78 (September/October 1999), 6.

Watch study of NATO's conduct of the Kosovo war estimated that 500 civilians had been killed, and that a third of all the incidents and more than half of the deaths occurred as a result of attacks on illegitimate and/or questionable targets. The report concluded that NATO committed numerous violations of international humanitarian law in its Kosovo campaign.<sup>44</sup> Amnesty International was more explicit, openly calling the bombing of the Serbian state television and radio building (SRT), in which sixteen civilians were killed, a war crime and calling on NATO governments to bring to justice the persons responsible for the decision to attack this and other targets.<sup>45</sup>

NATO's prosecution of the war raises many other disturbing issues as well. NATO's use of cluster bombs, harshly criticized by international human rights groups,<sup>46</sup> has left a legacy of destruction that will last for years. Over 150 people have been killed by unexploded NATO ordinance in the postwar period. The Pentagon, however, has prohibited U.S. soldiers from being used to defuse leftover munitions.<sup>47</sup> Along with the damage done to the FRY's infrastructure and population, one must also consider the environmental damage done by NATO's bombing of chemical plants and oil refineries along the Danube. (If the Danube flowed northwards and westwards towards Austria and Germany rather than southwards and eastwards towards Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, rest assured that those oil refineries and chemical plants would never have been touched.) Not surprisingly, a United Nations task force in-

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<sup>44</sup> *Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign*, Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 7 February 2000.

<sup>45</sup> *Collateral Damage or Unlawful Killings? Violations of the Laws of War by NATO during Operation Allied Force*. London: Amnesty International, 7 June 2000. As the report points out, at the price of killing sixteen civilians, NATO's attack succeeded in turning off SRT's signal for three hours in the middle of the night. Predictably, the Pentagon's own assessment of its performance during the Kosovo war has been called a "whitewash" by other groups. As William Arkin, a military consultant to Human Rights Watch has noted, "This was a war advertised as humanitarian in purpose, in which the Pentagon stressed that it was doing everything possible to minimize civilian casualties. Yet its report does not mention one measure taken or one lesson learned." "Pentagon Report Whitewashes Civilian Deaths in Yugoslavia," Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 8 February 2000.

<sup>46</sup> "NATO Use of Cluster Bombs Must Stop," *Kosovo Human Rights Flash* #36. New York: Human Rights Watch, 11 May 1999.

<sup>47</sup> "Four Kosovar Children Killed by NATO Cluster Bomb," *Reuters*, 22 September 1999; "Kosovo Child Killed and Five Injured by Leftover NATO Bomb," *Reuters*, 14 March 2000; Carlotta Gall, "UN Aide in Kosovo Faults NATO on Unexploded Bombs," *New York Times*, 23 May 2000; Jonathan Steele, "Death Lurks in the Fields," *Guardian Unlimited*, 14 March 2000.

vestigating the environmental impact of the NATO attack on Yugoslavia reported that NATO had obstructed its investigation and had refused to cooperate with UN experts.<sup>48</sup>

Politically, Operation Allied Force has proven to be a failure as well. Postwar Kosovo is effectively partitioned north of the Ibar River, and the political agreement negotiated to end the conflict, codified in UN Security Council Resolution 1244, in many ways affirmed the Yugoslav government's objections to the Rambouillet proposals. As Michael Mandelbaum points out,

The Albanians had fought for independence based on the right to self-determination. The Serbs had fought to keep Kosovo part of Yugoslavia in the name of the inviolability of existing borders. While insisting that Kosovo be granted autonomy, NATO asserted that it must remain part of Yugoslavia. The alliance had therefore intervened in a civil war and defeated one side, but embraced the position of the party it had defeated on the issue over which the war had been fought. This made the war, as a deliberate act of policy, a perfect failure.<sup>49</sup>

The final act in this "perfect failure," however, has yet to be played out. As the international community's effort to abide by UNSCR 1244 increasingly conflicts with the KLA's goals, the potential for conflict rises commensurately. Indeed, NATO forces (including American troops) have already come under fire from guerrillas on several occasions, and as one U.S. intelligence official noted of ties between NATO and the KLA, "Not only is the honeymoon over, but now the divorce has begun."<sup>50</sup> What remains to be seen is how brutal and unpleasant the divorce will actually be.

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<sup>48</sup> Frances Williams, Christopher Brown-Humes, and Neil Buckley, "Kosovo: NATO 'Hindered' Inquiry." *Financial Times*, 15 October 1999. Doctors in Bosnia report that refugees from the Sarajevo suburb of Hadlići, which was heavily bombed by NATO in 1995, are experiencing three times the rate of deaths from cancer typical for other residents of Bosnia. See "Svaki treći dan neko umire od raka, na grobljima više nema mjesta," *Oslobodjenje* (Sarajevo), 13 January 2001. See also Robert Fisk, "I see 300 graves that could bear the headstone 'Died of depleted uranium.'" *Independent* (London), 13 January 2001, 1. For an extended analysis of the environmental impact of the NATO attacks during the Kosovo campaign, see Vojin Joksimović, " Militarism and Ecology: NATO Ecocide in Serbia," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 11 (Fall 2000), 140–60.

<sup>49</sup> Mandelbaum, 5.

<sup>50</sup> See "Kosovo: What Next?" *Janes Intelligence Report*, 28 June 2000; Michael R. Gordon, "NATO Patrols Edgy Border, This Time Protecting Serbs," *New York Times*, 25 January 2001; "Ethnic Albanian Guerillas

One thing, however, is clear. As the contradictions inherent within UNSCR 1244 lead to greater instability within Kosovo, the Preševo Valley, and Macedonia, no one will be able to claim that KLA leaders were anything less than candid about their intentions. As Tim Judah cites the words of one KLA leader:

Kosova starts in Tivar [Bar in Montenegro] and ends in Manastir [Bitola in Macedonia]. We don't care what America and England think about it, we should unite with actions, not with words. We don't care what Clinton and other devils think!<sup>51</sup>

Finally, it is worth asking what the Kosovo campaign portends for the future of "humanitarian intervention," so widely touted as the justification for violating numerous aspects of international law, and for threatening regional and international stability. Carl Cavanaugh Hodge, for one, has argued,

Historically, the principle of national sovereignty has never been so absolute as is often assumed, yet its contribution to international peace has been significant enough that any abridgement of the principle in the name of superseding values ought to be accompanied by an authentic commitment to those values. Such a commitment was nowhere in evidence in the case of NATO's Kosovo adventure. The alliance failed—indeed never attempted—to protect the life and limb of the very people for whom it fought. It is therefore to be wished that Kosovo sets no precedent.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, despite claims that NATO's war against Yugoslavia marked a milestone in international relations, reality will most probably prove quite different. Ronald Steel is undoubtedly right when he claims the Kosovo conflict left the principle of "humanitarian intervention"

[a]bout where it began: as the exception rather than the rule. Intervention will occur where it can be done relatively cheaply,

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Claim Macedonia Attacks," *Agence France Presse*, 27 January 2001; "British Troops Battle Kosovo Albanians," *Reuters*, 1 February 2001; D. Joksić, "Makedonija puna obuāenih militanata," *Oslobodjenje* (Sarajevo), 4 February 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Judah, 103–04.

<sup>52</sup> Carl Cavanaugh Hodge, "Casual War: NATO's Intervention in Kosovo," *Ethics and International Affairs* 14, 53–54.

against a weak nation, in an area both accessible and strategic, where the public's emotions are aroused, and where it does not get in the way of other political, economic, or military needs.<sup>53</sup>

In other words, "humanitarian intervention" will be done when it is politically useful—not when it is morally obligatory.<sup>54</sup> All told, the architects and proponents of "Madeleine's War" have little to be proud of. As one of Britain's most respected commentators, Simon Jenkins of the London *Times*, summed up NATO's Kosovo campaign: if this was "victory," then it could at best be considered "a victory for cowards."<sup>55</sup>

### NATO's Kosovo

Perhaps even more disturbing than NATO's original decision to attack Yugoslavia is the fact that in the postwar period it has refused to create an environment in which the various ethnic groups inhabiting Kosovo can live in peace and security, or in which regional stability can be ensured. The obsession with force protection and the overwhelming determination not to suffer any NATO casualties in the province has made murder, kidnapping, arson, and extortion the defining features of life in Kosovo under NATO. As James Orbinski, the president of *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (the organization which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999), noted when announcing that MSF would

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<sup>53</sup> Ronald Steel, "East Timor Isn't Kosovo," *New York Times*, 12 September 1999, 19.

<sup>54</sup> On this note, Andrew J. Bacevic poses an interesting question. Given the fact that conflicts in other parts of the world often involve human tragedy on a much greater scale, Bacevic asks, "According to what criteria do the United States and its allies determine that some humanitarian catastrophes demand attention, while others—usually involving people of color—go unattended?" See Bacevic, "Banal and Dubious," *National Interest* 61 (Fall 2000), 94–97. During the Rwanda crisis—when upwards of 400,000 people were literally hacked to death in a matter of weeks—a report by the Organization of African Unity claims that Madeleine Albright consistently prevented bringing the issue of Rwanda up before the UN Security Council during her tenure as the U.S. Ambassador to the UN. The report cites the former Canadian ambassador to the UN as saying, "The role of the United States . . . is an almost incomprehensible scar of shame on U.S. foreign policy. The United States . . . knew exactly what was going on . . . I don't know how Madeleine Albright lives with it." See Colum Lynch, "West Turned Back on Rwanda Genocide, OAU Report Says," *Washington Post*, 8 July 2000, A14.

<sup>55</sup> Simon Jenkins, "A Victory for Cowards," *Times* (London), 11 June 1999.

leave Kosovo, "There has been a passive acceptance of acts of violence against minorities. A culture of impunity has emerged."<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, a typical month in postwar Kosovo certainly does not leave room for anyone to believe that NATO has created a haven of tolerance or stability, as the KLA and its offshoots have gone on an unchecked rampage of assassinations and other forms of terrorism. Consider, for instance, the situation on the ground in Kosovo in August 2000, fourteen months after NATO occupied the province to establish "peace." On August 2, Sejdi Koci, the leader of Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) in the town of Srbica, was wounded by an unknown gunman. Also on August 2, a mine planted on a road near the village of Mali Alas killed three Roma and injured one. On August 3, an assassination attempt wounded Agim Veliu, an LDK leader from Podujevo. On August 5, another senior LDK member, Shaban Manaj, was found dead ten days after his family had reported him missing. On August 6, an LDK leader in Srbica, Mehmet Gerkinaj, was also wounded in an assassination attempt. On August 9, the wife of Avni Salihu, an LDK leader in Dragaš, was killed when a bomb was thrown down the chimney of the Salihu family home. On August 13, an Albanian gang attacked and seriously wounded an elderly Serb couple in the village of Kriljevo, near Kosovska Kamenica. On August 18, hand grenades were thrown at a group of Serb children playing basketball at an outdoor court in Crkvena Vodica, wounding over a dozen. Also on August 18, the Orthodox church in Vučitrn was destroyed, and a bomb exploded in a UN building in Priština housing several international organizations. On August 19, the Orthodox church in Velika Reka was destroyed after being the target of five previous bombing attacks. On August 23, KFOR troops themselves came under attack when unknown assailants fired rifle grenades at the KFOR compound in Vučitrn. (The attack was believed to be in revenge for the killing of two Albanians by KFOR troops earlier in the month.) On August 27, an Albanian hit-and-run driver drove his vehicle into a group of children in the Serb village of Skulanevo (near Lipljan), killing one child and injuring several others. The same day, an eighty-year-old Serb man was killed by a burst of machine-gun fire while tending his cattle in the village of Crkvena Vodica.

July wasn't much better. Neither was September.

Former KLA members (as well as members of its successor organization, the so-called "Kosovo Protection Force," or KPC), are routinely involved in

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<sup>56</sup> "Nobel-Winning Agency Blasts UN, NATO in Kosovo," *Reuters*, 17 August 2000. See also "Ethnic Cleansing Continues in UN-Ruled Kosovo, Under the Eye of the International Actors," *Medecins Sans Frontieres* press release, 7 August 2000.

various criminal activities and violence.<sup>57</sup> Under NATO's watch the province has become the transit point for some forty percent of the heroin sold in Europe and North America.<sup>58</sup> In the first year of NATO's occupation of the province, over 500 murders were committed (the vast majority against Serbs and other ethnic minorities), yet what is euphemistically called a legal justice system in Kosovo has failed to return a single conviction.<sup>59</sup> KFOR and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) report that theft, blackmail, and kidnapping in Kosovo increased seventy percent in 2000 as compared with 1999.<sup>60</sup> In the summer of 2000, KFOR troops discovered a list drawn up by the KLA's secret intelligence service to assassinate various politicians in both Kosovo and Albania. Of the fifteen people on the list, three had already been murdered.<sup>61</sup> In January 2000, UN police raided the apartment of Hashim Thaci's brother and discovered DEM 500,000 in cash, the proceeds of various racketeering activities.<sup>62</sup> Since NATO occupied Kosovo, over one hundred Serbian Orthodox churches, monasteries, and other buildings have been destroyed. As one senior U.S. Army officer described the new structure of power in Kosovo, "We call it a thugocracy. The mafia, the politicians and the so-called freedom fighters are all connected."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> E.g., the arrest on August 23 of Refki Sumen, a former KLA leader and currently a senior figure in the KPC, arrested on suspicion of being involved in extortion, smuggling, and homicide. "Kosovo Guerrilla Chief Arrested in Mafia Probe," *Agence France Presse*, 24 August 2000.

<sup>58</sup> See Maggie O'Kane, "Kosovo Drug Mafia Supply Heroin to Europe," *The Guardian Unlimited*, 13 March 2000. Before the war, international police officials estimate two metric tons of heroin passed through Kosovo en route to Western markets monthly. Since NATO occupied Kosovo, the amount has increased to 4.5–5 metric tons monthly.

<sup>59</sup> Steven Erlanger, "UN Official Warns of Losing the Peace in Kosovo," *New York Times*, 3 July 2000, A3.

<sup>60</sup> Nehat Islami, "Kosovo Crime Wave," Institute for War and Peace Reporting *Balkan Crisis Report* No. 210, 17 January 2001.

<sup>61</sup> *Bota Sot* (Priština), 11 July 2000.

<sup>62</sup> Lutz Kleveman, "Brothers in Arms Fall Out Over Spoils of Kosovo," *Electronic Telegraph*, 12 June 2000.

<sup>63</sup> See Roberto Suro, "In Kosovo, an Uncertain Mission." *Washington Post*, 20 September 2000, A1. In what has become all-too-characteristic of the U.S. approach to the Balkans, rather than coming up with a policy to deal with these problems, officials in the Clinton Administration decided that the overriding priority in an election year was to keep Kosovo "off the front page." See Jane Perlez, "Spiral of Violence in Kosovo Divides U.S. and Its Allies," *New York Times*, 12 March 2000, 1.

“Freedom of the press” in NATO’s Kosovo also takes some disturbing forms. On 27 April 2000, a newspaper linked to Hashim Thaci accused a Serb working for UNMIK of being a war criminal, and published his photograph, address, and workplace. On May 14, the individual in question was stabbed to death. UNMIK’s response was little more than a slap on the wrist, closing the paper in question for eight days. The editor of the paper immediately announced that it would continue to publish similar stories on individuals it had branded “war criminals.”<sup>64</sup>

Nor can NATO take any credit for stopping ethnic cleansing. As Dennis McNamara, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees’ special envoy to the Balkans, noted in March 2000,

[t]he tragedy is we got nearly a million (ethnic Albanian) people back and a quarter of a million new ones (Serbs and other minorities) left ... It is a destabilising factor and it makes it difficult to see how, in regional terms, a stability pact for southeastern Europe, which is predicated on population stability, can go very far until we can deal with that refugee problem.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, since June 1999 when NATO troops moved into Kosovo, we have witnessed what is perhaps the most comprehensive campaign of ethnic cleansing yet seen in the Balkans. Over a quarter of a million people—Serbs, Roma, Turks, Gorani, Bosniacs, Croats, and the Jews of Priština—have been driven from their homes. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called the new ethnic cleansing of Kosovo “orchestrated,” while a top U.S. official has

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<sup>64</sup> R. Jeffrey Smith, “UN Halts Publication of Kosovo Newspaper,” *Washington Post*, 4 June 2000, A22. See also Danica Krka, “Kosovo Media Practice Targeted,” *Associated Press*, 30 May 2000. Ironically, some Kosovo Albanian journalists now claim that their working conditions were better before the NATO intervention. As one journalist recently described the atmosphere of intimidation reporters are now working under, given KLA harassment, “Under the Serbs, you knew what to expect when you wrote something they didn’t like. They might come and beat you, trash the office, or throw you in jail, but that was part of the job, and you felt it was worth the risk. It was part of the struggle to end the repression. Now, with these hoods, you can’t predict what they will do. They might not even warn you, just come up and put a bullet in your head.” See Colin Soloway, “Intimidation Silences Pristina Media,” *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No. 215, 6 February 2001.

<sup>65</sup> “Refugee Cycle Threatens Balkan Stability,” *Reuters*, 20 March 2000.

labeled it “systematic.”<sup>66</sup> Perhaps the most serious rebuke of NATO’s efforts, however, has come from Carla del Ponte, the chief prosecutor for the ICTY, who recently claimed that “[w]hat is happening [in the Serbian province] is as serious as what happened before.”<sup>67</sup> That is, what is happening in NATO’s Kosovo is as serious as what happened in Milošević’s Kosovo.

Nevertheless, NATO officials need not worry that Madame del Ponte will turn her attentions on them because of Kosovo’s current state, or because of their earlier violations of international law, or even because of the environmental destruction they are responsible for in the Balkans. As NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said during the 1999 war, “without NATO countries there would be no International Court of Justice, nor would there be any International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia because NATO countries are in the forefront of those who have established these two tribunals, who fund these tribunals and who support on a daily basis their activities.”<sup>68</sup> Those who pay the piper, as they say, call the tune.

### **The Balkans’ “Depleted” Future**

Gandhi once said that he would die for what he believed in, but he would never kill for it. “Operation Allied Force” turned Gandhi’s belief most perversely on its head. While NATO countries were unwilling to risk the lives of their own “soldiers” to save the people they had allegedly gone to war to protect, they were more than willing to rain death and destruction on the region for the sake of “credibility.” As Noam Chomsky points out in his own typically incisive analysis of the Kosovo war, British operations during the conflict were code-named “Agricola.” Agricola, Chomsky reminds us, was the father-in-law of Tacitus, who once famously denounced ancient Rome’s own military misadventures by saying, “Brigands of the world, they create a desolation and call it peace.”<sup>69</sup>

History may well judge NATO’s actions in the same light. Misha Glenny concludes his book by noting that the morality of NATO’s attack on

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<sup>66</sup> “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo,” S/2000/538, 6 June 2000. The comments by the U.S. official, James O’Brien, can be found in George Jahn, “Anti-Serb Violence Condemned,” *Associated Press*, 8 June 2000.

<sup>67</sup> “UN Tribunal Awaiting Arrests of Suspects Karadzic, Mladic,” *Reuters*, 18 July 2000.

<sup>68</sup> Shea’s remarks were made during a NATO Press Conference in Brussels on 17 May 2000.

<sup>69</sup> Chomsky, *The New Military Humanism: Lessons from Kosovo* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1999), 16.

Yugoslavia will ultimately be decided by the dedication of Western countries to the reconstruction of southeastern Europe.<sup>70</sup> Here we could pose the issue more broadly, and ask to what extent Western policy in the region over the past decade—characterized by such things as military interventions, economic sanctions, and the creation of dysfunctional protectorates—has lain the foundations for long-term peace and stability in the region. Will subsequent generations see Operation Allied Force as an effort that ultimately brought democracy and economic prosperity to the Balkans? Or will it be seen as another in a long line of attempts by the Great Powers, going back to the Congress of Berlin and the Versailles Treaty, to satisfy their own interests, even at the sake of setting the stage for new conflicts in southeastern Europe?

In the Bosnian context, a view typical of the interventionist Western attitude towards the Balkans calls on “Bosnia’s Serbs, Bosniacs, and Croats ... to move away from narrow ethnic politics and begin to move toward European integration.”<sup>71</sup> But has this been either the historical or the contemporary experience of Europe itself? The basis for Europe’s (somewhat successful) post-World War II efforts at political and economic integration has been based on the emergence of viable democratic nation-states enjoying a significant degree of popular legitimacy. As Ash describes this process,

... we in Western Europe have long since been molded into nation-states, in a process that lasted from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth-century ... It’s precisely on this basis of clear separation into nation-states that we have been getting together in the European Union, as well as becoming more ethnically mixed again, through immigration.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Glenny, 661.

<sup>71</sup> *Bosnia’s November Elections: Dayton Stumbles*, 2. This observation is not meant to advocate a partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rather, it is meant to critique an all-too-common Western interventionist approach, which both ignores most of European history and often assumes a neo-imperialist attitude towards the problems (and the peoples) in the region. If the modern concept of “Europe” is the goal towards which the peoples of southeastern Europe should strive, can they reach this goal by ignoring the historical path that “Europe” itself took to get there? Logically, perhaps, yes, but no one seems to have the right map.

<sup>72</sup> See Ash, “Cry, the Dismembered Country,” 32

Indeed, the results of the European Union's December 2000 summit in Nice suggest that there are definite limits to the degree to which Europeans themselves—that is, those outside the Balkans—are willing to integrate.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, if the international community's goal is to create stable democracies in Southeastern Europe, then one would expect that international efforts would be geared towards fostering economic prosperity in the region. As the authors of a recent study note,

[f]ew concepts in political science have been as widely accepted (particularly in the Western world) as the idea that socio-economic well-being is the crucial foundation of a sound democracy. The formation and growth of a middle class through robust economic development is considered to be the bulwark of democratic stability.<sup>74</sup>

But far from fostering economic growth in southeastern Europe, Operation Allied Force and many other aspects of Western policy over the past decade have set back the region by years, if not decades. One estimate of the cost of the NATO bombing campaign to NATO itself was \$40 billion.<sup>75</sup> The G17 group of independent economists in the FRY estimates that the NATO attacks resulted in an estimated \$30 billion worth of damage to the FRY's economy and infrastructure.<sup>76</sup> Contrast these figures with the annual UNMIK budget, which amounts to less than half of one-day's bombing.<sup>77</sup>

Nor was the FRY the only country in the region to suffer from Operation Allied Force; in fact, the economies of all seven countries of southeastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania,

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<sup>73</sup> See, for instance, Mark Mazower, "Nice and the Nation-State," *Financial Times* (London), 21 December 2000, 21. As Mazower points out, "The rise of the nation-state as the dominant form of polity on the continent—unimaginable even in 1850—was the basic story of the 20th century . . . the European nation-state, born of war, having survived Hitler and the cold war . . . [has] revealed its ability to survive through adaptation once more."

<sup>74</sup> Stefano Bianchini and Marko Dogo, "Foreword," in *The Balkans: National Identities in a Historical Perspective*, Stefano Bianchini and Marco Dogo, eds. (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998), 16.

<sup>75</sup> Michael R. Sesit, "Cost of Kosovo War Could Hit \$40 Billion," *Wall Street Journal*, 29 July 1999, A11.

<sup>76</sup> See "Ekonomске posledice NATO bombardovanja: Procena štete i sredstava potrebnih za ekonomsku rekonstrukciju Jugoslavije," available at <http://www.g17plus.org.yu>.

<sup>77</sup> Misha Glenny, "The Muddle in Kosovo," *Wall Street Journal*, 23 February 2000.

Macedonia, and the FRY) went into an economic recession after the Kosovo conflict.<sup>78</sup> Western efforts to reconstruct the region, such as the “Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe,” inaugurated with much fanfare in Sarajevo in July 1999, have been dismissed as being “little more than a photo-opportunity.”<sup>79</sup> Not surprisingly, regional leaders have grown tired of Western promises of aid. Former Romanian President Emil Constantinescu summed up the thoughts of many when he claimed, “We really have had enough of your nice words, while you do nothing to stop our losses, which grow bigger each day.”<sup>80</sup>

Now that the “evil leader” in Belgrade is finally gone and the Balkans are no longer front page news, the region will soon become *passé* for all of the laptop bombardiers, indignant columnists, and photo-op seeking politicians that Ash collectively calls the “something-must-be-done brigade.”<sup>81</sup> Indeed, top foreign policy advisors for the new U.S. administration are already calling for a decreased U.S. involvement in the Balkans. As the “something-must-be-done brigade” goes on to “save” other parts of the world, the peoples of southeastern Europe will again be left on their own to try to devise some formula for living side by side, in the absence of war, at least, if not in peace and harmony. Unfortunately, after Operation Allied Force they will be that much poorer, and dealing with yet another tragic legacy of bloody foreign intervention.

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<sup>78</sup> *Economic Survey of Europe*, no. 1 (2000) (Geneva: United Nations Economic Commission on Europe), 6.

<sup>79</sup> The statement was made by Professor Ivo Banac during a seminar at the Harriman Institute on 1 December 2000.

<sup>80</sup> Bianca Guruita, “The Price of Acquiescence,” *Transitions OnLine*, 7 October 1999. One estimate of the cost of the international sanctions regime on the FRY to neighboring countries as of 1996 was \$35 billion. See *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), 8. Given the catastrophic state of the Romanian economy, which can in part be attributed to the damage that Romania has incurred because of various Western policies, such as the sanctions regime imposed on the FRY, and the closing of the Danube (itself a result of NATO actions), it should not be surprising that a majority of Romanian voters on 27 November 2000 cast their ballots for parties of either the extreme left or the extreme right.

<sup>81</sup> See Ash, “Kosovo: Was It Worth It?” 60.