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# **FROM COLD WAR TO WAR ON TERROR:**

## **NATO, Russia and the Balkans 1991-2002**

by

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A Master's Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy  
of Loughborough University

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## **Abstract**

The end of the Cold War brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union and caused the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to think hard about its changed role in the world. Coincident with these momentous events was the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the attendant civil wars in the Balkans. At a given point in history, therefore, NATO and its former Cold War protagonist Russia found themselves undergoing fundamental changes while being forced to deal with the immediacy of the crisis in the Balkans.

This thesis examines, from a NATO perspective, how the Alliance and Russia came to terms with their changing status after the Cold War, and how their relationship developed throughout the 1990s and beyond. In particular, it focuses on the course of the relationship during the bloody civil war in Bosnia, and in the NATO campaign against Serbia in Kosovo, known as Operation Allied Force.

The thesis considers the disparate nature of the twenty-six member Alliance and, ultimately, its dependence upon US political leadership and military power to act effectively. It considers also the relative weakness of the post-Soviet Russian Federation, and its attempts to maintain its great power status despite its greatly reduced circumstances. The conduct of the unequal relationship between a powerful NATO and a weakened Russia is traced through the course of their interaction in Bosnia from 1991 to 1995, and their subsequent cooperation in peacekeeping there. It is examined further in the case of the war over Kosovo, and the deep rift which it caused between the Alliance and Moscow, only partially bridged by their peacekeeping activities in the province.

In conclusion the thesis attempts an evaluation of the significance of the Balkans in the overall context of NATO-Russia relations, and offers some thoughts for the future of the relationship.

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## Introduction

This work is concerned with the relationship between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), arguably the most powerful political and military alliance in the world, and the Russian Federation, the much-reduced successor state to NATO's erstwhile adversary, the Soviet Union. The period under consideration is from 1991 to 2002, tracing the course of the relationship from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the establishment of "a new quality"<sup>1</sup> in their interaction via the creation of the NATO-Russia Council. In particular, the thesis focuses on relations as played out in the Former Yugoslavia, the disintegration of which in the early 1990s provided a severe testing ground for the development of security relationships in Europe.

### *Why Should Russia Matter to NATO?*

The relationship between the security pre-eminence of NATO and the reduced (from its Soviet predecessor) power of the Russian Federation is, on the face of it, an unequal one. No one any longer argues seriously in terms of a perceived Russian threat to the West. For some years now NATO has concentrated its attention on other security challenges in the knowledge that its former ideological adversary is not in a position to threaten it. If proof were needed the tragic episode of the loss of the Kursk, and the painfully protracted engagement in Chechnya provide stark examples of Russian military decline. Yet Russia's very weakness, and the dangers attendant upon it, oblige NATO to give due regard to its relationship with Moscow.

That this should be so may not be immediately apparent. As the course of the NATO enlargement debate has demonstrated, realpolitik has played a significant role in any calculation of the balance of advantage in the NATO-Russian relationship. One may reasonably ask why the stronger party should take account of the views of the weaker when other forces, not least economic, will compel the latter to behave in certain ways amenable to the former anyway. There is an appealing simplicity to the argument that the pain involved in cultivating Russia is not worth the perceived gain to NATO and the West generally, but this may well be an imprudent course.

Despite its decline there are strong cards still available to Russia. First, at a time when there is already a good deal of debate about the potential for transatlantic divergence within NATO, the relationship with Russia remains a significant test of Alliance cohesion. As the experience of George W. Bush's administration indicates, there is a greater tendency to unilateralism in the US, a subject discussed further in the conclusion to this work. An impatient approach from Washington could alienate its allies to their mutual detriment. For its part Russia has proven, over time, keen to engage with leading European states and institutions such as the EU, but on its own privileged terms as a symbol of its self-proclaimed continued great power status. As far as Moscow has been concerned such engagement is all the more desirable if it holds out the prospect of counterbalancing NATO/US hegemony in European security affairs. To that extent Russia has shown increasing interest in the EU's attempts to give effect militarily and politically to a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)<sup>2</sup>, and although Russian inclusion is some way off, its engagement is indicative of a European focus to Moscow's foreign policy, and the potential for European security structures and activities independent of NATO/US.

Secondly, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council Russia continues to hold a veto on UN actions, something which can be used to frustrate the designs of other members. This is an important forum when it comes to consensus building on how to deal with major international issues, and Moscow cannot realistically be expected to automatically support any state or grouping of states deemed inimical to its own interests. Thus, from NATO's viewpoint, cultivation of Russia has been seen as desirable because its leading member states need to work through the UN, for example in enforcing peacekeeping mandates. That would seem to be consistent with the logic of NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept, which gave much greater emphasis to the language of cooperation and partnership than its 1991 predecessor. Even allowing for instances such as Operation Allied Force (see chapter three), when NATO *was* prepared to sideline Russian views when occasion demanded, for the most part, NATO-led peacekeeping activities in the Balkans have been authorised by UN Security Council resolutions.



Third, there is a danger of NATO fostering opposition by neglect, that is to say allowing resentment to create links between those weak states which, individually, feel themselves to be disadvantaged by the overbearing attitudes and approaches of the more powerful, whether states or alliances. Contacts between Russia, China and India, based upon similar shared dislikes, are a case in point<sup>3</sup>. The ability of these states to influence events contrary to the wishes of NATO and the West suggests the emergence of a potential rival bloc to that of the Alliance. Further, for Moscow to seek to establish ties with Beijing despite many serious differences, reflects a perception in Moscow that NATO poses a greater threat to Russia than China does. NATO has thus been a catalyst for Sino-Russian rapprochement<sup>4</sup>.

Fourth, Russia's disastrous military decline, coupled with its perceived loss of standing in the international arena, has produced a degree of resentment and hostility in the country. This has fed into foreign policy thinking to produce an increased level of dissatisfaction with the West. Prior to the attack on the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York in September 2001, there were signs in Russia of a developing siege mentality<sup>5</sup>. The Military Doctrine adopted in 2000 was a clear indication of this development. Although not the first declaration of Russia's rejection of the 'no first use' principle on nuclear weapons, it provided a restatement of it, reinforcing the message that Russia remained determined to have its views regarded as those of a great power. After September 2001 the Putin government adopted a much more cooperative approach with NATO and the West, for example in the area of combating terrorism. It remains a matter of debate, however, as to how genuine this pro-western 'conversion' has been, some arguing that it is merely a sophisticated method adopted by the Putin leadership for ensuring a Russian balance of advantage<sup>6</sup>.

Its post-Cold War ascendancy may have inclined some in NATO to relative inactivity in dealing with Russia, even allowing for the risks outlined above. The leading view, however, has been to effect a working relationship which gives due recognition to Russian views and so acknowledges that the relationship matters. In the period since September 2001, there has been a growing willingness among the NATO allies and in Moscow to pursue cooperative engagement in a world increasingly concerned with international terrorism, one in which there has been something of a recognition that

Russian and western views on international security are perhaps not so divergent after all<sup>7</sup>. As NATO's post-9/11 agenda has been increasingly concerned with combating terrorism, drugs, human trafficking, arms proliferation and regional instability, there are seemingly clear advantages in partnering Russia, with its regional knowledge, influence and intelligence capabilities. All in all, therefore, there are many good reasons for NATO to engage Russia and to take full account of Russian sensibilities in formulating a relationship.

*From Cold War stasis to interventionism – NATO survival and adjustment*

One of the dangers inherent in talking about NATO is the tendency to regard it as a bloc or monolith. It is of course an alliance of twenty-six members which operates on the basis of consensus. When considering a particular NATO-approved course of action it may be possible to speak of a NATO position – and for all practical purposes I will do so – but it should be borne in mind that the position will have been arrived at via NATO's internal debate and discussion mechanisms and, as often as not, represents a compromise or reconciliation of interests. When considering NATO debates on proposed courses of action it is instructive always to view the debate through the lens of differing national positions, and how these may be reconciled or accommodated. In extremis we may speak of twenty-six "NATOs" to illustrate the point.

The NATO School in Oberammergau is at pains to point out to its students the collaborative nature of the NATO enterprise, where no action can be taken without complete consensus, thereby giving all Alliance members an equal say in matters. In strictly technical terms this is the case. However, it is not in dispute that some Alliance members (most obviously the US) wield more influence, politically and militarily, than others. That being so, there is much greater scope for them to achieve their desired outcome through Alliance channels when this coincides with national interest. This too needs to be borne in mind in examining NATO debates, actions and motivations. The point is that when we think about NATO, we should also think about which NATO we have in mind.

The NATO of the early 1990s was not the same organisation in size, shape or purpose as its current embodiment. The period with which this study is concerned opened with the end of the Cold War, which had far-reaching ramifications for Russia and the Alliance. At the outset the threads of their relationship were closely entangled as the new post-Soviet Russian Federation felt its way towards a national identity and independent foreign policy. For NATO there was fundamental political and organisational readjustment to be made. Among the European allies there were particular concerns stemming from the legacy of modern European history. A newly reunited Germany, for example, had its own identity to establish and that process was replete with implications for its European allies. Germany went on to play a key diplomatic role in recognising secessionist Yugoslav states, in the process highlighting major differences among Europe's leading nations and their inability to find a common approach on such a vital issue. Thus, at the beginning of the period with which we are concerned, we must bear in mind not only the readjustments under way in Moscow and in NATO's orientation, but within and among the NATO allies themselves. That said, by the end of the 1990s, with Russian revanchism extremely unlikely, with Germany reunited and reconciled to its place among its allies, with US leadership of NATO firmly re-established following the ineffectiveness of the Europeans in Bosnia, and with the sheer horror of Bosnia still fresh in the collective memory, it becomes more appropriate to think in terms of greater NATO cohesion vis-à-vis Alliance relations with Russia in the former Yugoslavia.

This study will attempt to show that, from differing perspectives in the early 1990s, NATO's key members gradually effected a greater unity in the Balkans. NATO is seen here not as a monolith, or as an institution with a life force and momentum of its own. For all its impressive and quite effective (given that it has to accommodate twenty-six sovereign nations) standing bureaucracy and procedures, the Alliance is not independently self-sustaining and self-developing. Rather, it is regarded here as the outreach of its individual member states and a reflection of national or state interests. In the case of Alliance actions in Bosnia in the early 1990s, therefore, the role of key national capitals is reflected in this study.

By the time of the Kosovo crisis in 1999, however, - and in no small part as a result of the calamity in Bosnia – national positions, though never completely in solidarity, were closer and more amenable to NATO collective action. Consequently, in the case of Kosovo, I focus more immediately on the NATO-Russia dynamic at the expense of consideration of the views in national capitals. That is not to suggest that the allies were unanimous in their decisions and actions, since Alliance unity came under significant pressure as Operation Allied Force proceeded with no apparent end in sight. Rather, the fact that the early and open divisions among NATO members in Bosnia were sufficiently reconciled to enable NATO to take decisive action in Kosovo enables us to concentrate more readily on the NATO-Russian relationship, the former being regarded as a cohesive or at least aggregated set of interests.

This approach, acknowledging the significance and influence of national interests within NATO, helps to explain the apparent contradiction whereby a predominantly military defensive alliance, having lost its original *raison d'être* at the end of the Cold War, has not folded but has rather expanded its role and membership. On the face of it, the collapse of the Soviet Union should have resulted in the consequent demise of NATO, having deprived the latter of its purpose. Even a short-term cautionary span of post-Cold War life for the Alliance, pending any Soviet revanchism, would long since have ceased to be appropriate. As Glenn Snyder has pointed out “alliances have no meaning apart from the adversary threat to which they are a response”<sup>8</sup>.

In such altered circumstances it would have been reasonable to expect NATO to have left the field. Indeed, in one sense it has. Today's NATO is a far cry from its Cold War predecessor. Some attribute its persistence to a certain institutional dynamic based upon the value and adaptability of the alliance's assets. This argument is given full expression by Celeste Wallander who sees NATO's survival and continuation in terms of the strengths and adaptability of its institutions and assets, which come into play because, in Wallander's terms, security alliances can have multiple roles<sup>9</sup>. The argument is a forceful one if one concurs with the premises on which it is based. The prognosis that an alliance can survive and persist if it has multiple purposes is demonstrated by NATO's recent history. NATO's Strategic Concept of 1999, and the outcome of the Istanbul Summit of 2004, provide clear evidence of an institution

adapting, changing and defining the multiple purposes for its existence. Where I take issue with Wallander's approach is in the weight which she gives to institutional assets, at the expense of state interests. It seems much more likely that NATO has survived and prospered by the will of its constituent member states than by the efforts of an adaptable and multi-functional international bureaucracy. Politically, militarily, logistically, and in every other way NATO is the sum total of what its member states provide to it. It does not exist in a self-generating vacuum. Beyond very limited airborne early warning and maritime assets it does not have standing armed forces. Those forces involved in NATO-led operations such as SFOR and KFOR are nationally provided roulement personnel serving for four or six months at a time. The Alliance's 'permanent' senior military officials are seconded from their national forces for two or three years before returning to national duties. The picture is more varied for senior civilian and political officials, though again they tend to be seconded for a period rather than being NATO careerists. It is difficult in such circumstances to speak of a kind of NATO-centric corporate loyalty which might serve to sustain an institution shorn of its original purpose. It would be more accurate to speak of the sum total of national contributions to an agreed end. The agreed end, however, is determined, or accepted, by national governments, some more influential than others.

NATO survived and prospered because its most powerful members wanted it so. The point is well illustrated by Kenneth Waltz in his discussion of the continued relevance of structural realism in the post-Cold War era<sup>10</sup>. As Waltz observes, "a deeply entrenched international bureaucracy can help to sustain the organisation but states determine its fate"<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, some states are more influential than others. The US is the Alliance's most powerful member state in all respects. Washington's views are crucial in determining NATO direction on many issues, the history of post-Cold War enlargement being a good example (this will be discussed further in the first chapter). A clear illustration of Washington's centrality to NATO, and vice versa, was provided by John Kornblum, US senior deputy to the undersecretary of state for European affairs when he wrote "[t]he Alliance provides a vehicle for the application of American power and vision to the security order in Europe"<sup>12</sup>.

What are the implications of this backdrop to NATO-Russian relations? If we are to understand the thrust of the Alliance's activities we need to observe the statements and actions of national capitals, and in particular Washington, as well as those of NATO HQ in Brussels. A NATO which is in effect a conduit for national policies is effective only for so long as it is capable of discharging those policies. In other words if it is to continue to have a useful function it must be able to reconcile differing members' points of view to the ultimate satisfaction of its most powerful members. Waltz sums it up thus: "NATO lasted as a military alliance as long as the Soviet Union appeared to be a direct threat to its members. It survives and expands now not because of its institutions but mainly because the United States wants it to."<sup>13</sup> Intra-alliance management has now assumed an important function for NATO.

This is particularly true in the European context. There is now no serious military competitor to the Alliance on the continent. It is pre-eminent in continent-wide security matters, notwithstanding the plethora of organisations which go to make up Europe's 'security architecture', or sphere of governance. Post-Kosovo, NATO has demonstrated not simply its military and political will, but its capabilities and resolve. So where is the threat to what was originally a military defensive alliance? It is not too fanciful to suggest that in the longer term NATO cohesion is more likely to be affected by internal rather than external pressures, perhaps in its reaction to the European Union's attempts to give military expression to its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) concept through ESDP, or by the fissures in European attitudes exposed by the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

However, ESDP is unlikely to emerge as a competitor to NATO for several reasons. In the first place, as Operation Allied Force demonstrated, Europe's defence capabilities are operationally limited, and lag well behind the United States. Despite political pronouncements by European leaders there is no evidence of defence budgetary increases to fund the EU's drive to meet its Headline Goal. It is difficult to envisage successful large-scale European operations independent of NATO's (read US) intelligence assets or air lift capabilities. The real question mark against NATO posed by ESDP concerns the possibility not that it will succeed in creating a capable force, but that it will fail to do so<sup>14</sup>. The loss of face for European allies, and

consequent undermining of ESDP advocates in the US, combined with US donor fatigue would bring into question Europe's true reliability as an ally, with questions raised in turn about the validity and cohesion of NATO.

A powerful alliance, then, faced with no serious military threat to its existence, having moved beyond its original *raison d'être*, and expanded into the old Warsaw Pact, still looks eastward and struggles to make sense of its relationship with Russia. The nature of that engagement is not, however, straightforward. At the end of the 1990s there was a school of thought within NATO circles which believed that the Alliance's policy on relations with Russia was essentially three-fold<sup>15</sup>. There was an 'Official' level, revolving around high-level public pronouncements of engagement in all areas. At the 'Working' level, there was an effort to give practical expression to engagement in some quantifiable way such as arms control measures. Finally, there was a 'Realistic' level, characterised by Russia-fatigue based on a lack of long term planning or vision for the relationship.

This view, which has persisted beyond the 9/11 watershed, contends that NATO has failed to speak to the Russians in the zero-sum language which they understand. NATO's dialogue of partnerships and security for all is regarded as foreign to the Russian historical experience and understanding, serving only to reinforce Russian suspicion and intransigence. If this thinking is an accurate reflection of the reality of NATO-Russian relations it does not sit well with the official NATO approach to the subject. It is at odds with the spirit espoused by institutional initiatives from the 1997 Founding Act, through the Permanent Joint Council, to the NATO-Russia Council. It is also contrary to the tone of the 1999 Strategic Concept. However, it does appear to chime more readily with the assessment of the early Bush administration's outlook on Russia as a foreign policy non-priority. If partnership and cooperation are concepts beyond the Russian grasp then the outlook for the future is bleak indeed, notwithstanding a mutually expressed desire for NATO and Moscow to move to a qualitatively new relationship.

*From Soviet Union to Russian Federation – in search of a foreign policy*

It should be stressed at this point that the subject under discussion is NATO's relationship with Russia, and not vice versa. This shading of emphasis is important because the research has been NATO-centric. The thesis has been concerned with probing the Alliance's dealings with Moscow and NATO's attempt to accommodate change and progress in that relationship. Naturally, this lends itself to occasional discussion of Russian actions and reactions, but Russian views are gauged here in the light of NATO's actions, and the empirical evidence gleaned from case studies. The thesis does not attempt to provide a Russian vision of the relationship except in so far as that can be perceived from NATO-centric research. Nevertheless, it may be useful at this juncture to provide a synopsis of Moscow's post-Cold War approach to foreign policy issues, by way of context to the main area of research.

The early years of the 1990s were a time of great flux in Europe's security governance as the debate about NATO's future overlapped with the new Russian Federation's quest to identify its foreign policy priorities. Each of these major debates overlapped with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, an event, or series of events, which provided a proving ground for NATO and Russia. It is worthwhile therefore considering the main outlines of the Russian foreign policy debate at this time before proceeding to examine the NATO-Moscow relationship as played out in the Balkans.

In foreign policy terms, as in much else, it is difficult to exaggerate the enormity of the effect upon Moscow of the end of the Cold War. A few figures may serve to illustrate<sup>16</sup>. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the borders of the Russian Federation encompassed 76% of the area and 60% of the population of the now defunct communist state. These new borders represented a reversion to the borders of almost 350 years ago, prior to the incorporation of Ukraine. With a parallel loss of influence over the former allied countries of Eastern and Central Europe, as well as the former Soviet Republics, Moscow's new boundaries were now more than 1,000 kilometres further to the east, severely limiting, in all senses, its centrality to European security concerns. Moscow also suffered in conventional military terms through the loss of more than half its combat aircraft, tanks and armoured vehicles to the newly created states of the former Soviet Union and its allies. Economically, moreover, the new Russian Federation fared poorly by comparison to its Soviet predecessor<sup>17</sup>.



Against this highly unpromising background the Russian Federation had to arrive at a new sense of its identity, interests and place in the world. The ensuing debate is not easy to characterise definitively, given its fluid and often ad hoc nature, nor is it easy to pin definitive labels on the key protagonists because of their tendency to adopt overlapping positions, or move between differing schools of thought. However, we may identify the main lines of division among Moscow's political elite in their attempt to come to terms with the new and vastly altered world order.

John Berryman has listed the main groupings as Reformers, Centrists and Nationalists<sup>18</sup>. The former were subdivided into liberal westernisers with a pro-Western agenda, and international institutionalists who sought to pursue Russian national (and reformist) interests through membership of regional and international bodies such as the EU. Centrists comprised state realists who, though not anti-western, favoured the single-minded pursuit of Russian national interests, and eurasianists who viewed Russia as a bridge between Europe and Asia and prioritised relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Finally, the Nationalists too had their nuances, whether promoting the alliance of Slavic states (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn), the resurrection of the Soviet Union (Gennadi Zyuganov), or Great Russian imperialism (Vladimir Zhirinovskiy).

The enormous shock to the Russian polity caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union generated a lively debate on how Russia should define and pursue its foreign policy interests. For all their differences, however, the groupings described above had one thing in common – the view that Russia, however diminished, remained a great power and was therefore entitled to have its views fully taken into account<sup>19</sup>. There were very few significant voices in the debate urging acceptance of Russia's drastically reduced circumstances and influence in the foreign policy arena, and no one in Russia seriously questioned Foreign Minister Kozyrev's assertion in 1992 that Russia was doomed to be a great power<sup>20</sup>. Different groupings remained concerned to elevate Russian status whether through relations with the west, institutional membership or creation of new relationships closer to home. With very few exceptions the emphasis

was upon how to persuade others of Russia's great power credentials and continue to benefit from the kudos associated with it.

Within Russia therefore the great power debate was fairly one-sided in the early 1990s, but later commentators reflected the fact that, although the notion of great power status still persisted, other voices were beginning to be heard<sup>21</sup>. Dmitri Trenin, for example, argued that Russia must accept that it was a second rank power which should look to a future as one of Europe's other post-imperial powers such as Britain and France<sup>22</sup>. Pavel Baev also pressed the case for accepting that Russia could no longer be considered a great power<sup>23</sup>, while an American observer went further, arguing that Russia had been in long term decline since the end of the Cold War and had no prospect of recovering great power status<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, it was more likely to be overtaken by China and the European Union in the great power race. This conclusion, however, was not necessarily shared by others in view of Russia's size, nuclear and conventional military might, abundant natural resources, educated workforce and vast scientific, technological and cultural potential<sup>25</sup>.

Notions of Russian greatness premised upon historical precedent, and concurrent ideas of Russia's special spheres of influence in its 'Near Abroad' and elsewhere proved durable. Foreign policy was thus a key area in which the new Russian Federation needed to determine its identity and role. The calamity of the Soviet collapse, the variety of schools of thought regarding Russia's new place in the geopolitical structure, the various domestic agencies involved, and the obvious tension between Russia's drastically reduced circumstances and continuing great power ambitions all combined to produce understandable confusion in the conduct of foreign affairs.

In terms of Russia's relationship with NATO the Russian foreign policy debate is extremely significant. It overlapped with the West's consideration of the future of NATO, creating a highly interesting, if fluid, area of study for those concerned with European security issues. Not least, the idea that a diminished Russia could lay claim to spheres of special interest obliged others to take Russian views more seriously than might otherwise have been the case, at least in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War.

### *Why the Balkans?*

Accepting that the relationship between NATO and Russia is an important one, we are obliged to examine it through an appropriate lens. Given the change and evolution of NATO as an organisation, and the development of Russian foreign policy since 1991, the case can be made that, to a large extent, the two have come together most evidently and significantly in the Balkan context.

Gregory Schulte has provided a detailed discussion of the effect of Bosnia upon the 'new NATO' at the tactical and strategic levels, highlighting how involvement in Bosnia led to a change in NATO's role and political-military posture, and affected in turn the Alliance's relationship with, *inter alia*, Russia<sup>26</sup>. Further, as Michael Andersen has pointed out, the Balkan wars "constitute an important case of post-Cold War European security management – perhaps the most serious test of the so-called 'European security architecture' since the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Russia<sup>27</sup>."

The conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, therefore, while markedly different in many respects, display a certain similarity in terms of the NATO-Russia dynamic. NATO interventionism became a decisive feature of the Balkan wars and obliged Moscow to contend with a growing, changing and increasingly militarily active alliance. The end of the Cold War, far from signalling the demise of NATO, actually provided it with a new rationale for its existence in countering new forms of insecurity in Europe. The former Yugoslavia was also the testing ground for the evolution of Moscow's foreign policy. Events in Bosnia and Kosovo highlighted a pattern of NATO interventionism, Russian foreign policy motivation (a desire for a place at the decision making table), Russian reaction to NATO activities (initial opposition, belated concurrence), and a subsequent attempt to reconcile differences and carry on in a spirit of professed cooperation. Russian interest in the Balkans, based upon strategic, historic and cultural interests, re-emerged with a sharper focus as the former Yugoslavia disintegrated. It did so as part of the wider debate over Russian national interests<sup>28</sup>. Former Yugoslavia therefore provides a clear lens through which to examine the

evolution of the NATO-Russia relationship as each party came to terms with its changing role in European security.

### *Outline of study*

This work will suggest that while much has changed in the institutionalised form of NATO-Russian relations, recent Balkan history suggests that little has changed in attitudinal terms. NATO as an institution is influenced by its constituent members and is not independent of them. It therefore acts in accord with the most influential on any given issue, provided that other NATO members can be persuaded of the merits of a course of action. NATO thinking remains rooted in *realpolitik*, with all that this entails for the pursuit of hard security advantages. Although the Alliance has moved beyond its collective defence of the Cold War years to a more collective security approach, it has not relinquished its collective defence outlook, with consequent implications for its relationship with Russia. The quality of that relationship can be discerned by examining the course of NATO-Russian dealings in Bosnia and Kosovo, the proving ground of immediate post-Cold War European security arrangements.

The first chapter will examine the formal mechanisms of NATO-Russian relations as they have evolved since the 1990s. There has, of course, been change at the institutional level, a natural consequence of the fundamental alterations in European security matters attendant upon the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Those changes bear consideration in terms of how they influence the course of NATO-Russian interaction generally, as well as setting the institutional background to the course of the relationship in the Balkans. The transformation of NATO from a static to an expeditionary force, its adoption of strategic concepts to guide it in that direction, and eastward enlargement of the Alliance, all served to alter NATO radically throughout the course of the 1990s and beyond. These changes necessitated a new approach to engaging with former adversaries, not least Russia, and generated partnership programmes across the field of European defence relationships. The partnership ethos took a particular form in the case of Russia, and I examine the creation of the NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, the Permanent Joint Council, and subsequently the NATO-Russia Council. Moscow's view of the

enlargement debate is also considered, setting some of the background to Kremlin thinking in its dealings with NATO in the former Yugoslavia.

Chapter two focuses on the NATO-Russia relationship in the Balkans more specifically, examining the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and that country's descent into war in Bosnia. The course of the war is outlined, providing the backdrop to a consideration of the varying perspectives between western European and US allies on how to handle events in Bosnia. There was not a straightforward European/US split on the issue, rather a series of fragmented views among the Europeans and the Americans, as the former attempted to address the worsening crisis on adjacent territory. From such unpromising beginnings a NATO line eventually emerged, as the US assumed a more prominent leadership role in the crisis. Russian policy in Bosnia, and the Kremlin's preference for a non-NATO forum to decide upon European security matters, is discussed by way of illustrating Moscow's search for a coherent post-Soviet foreign policy, a search given immediacy by events in the Balkans, and by historical links with the Serbs. Of necessity, NATO and Russian policy came to engage with each other in Bosnia, developing their interaction through the Contact Group, and leading to the relationship of unequals evidenced by the Dayton Agreement which brought the war in Bosnia to an end in late 1995.

That unequal relationship underwent further imbalance a few years later as NATO launched Operation Allied Force in Kosovo to drive Serbian forces from that province. Chapter three examines events there beginning with the rise of Albanian nationalism which provoked Belgrade's armed response and which led to international diplomatic attempts to reach a settlement at Rambouillet. NATO's momentous decision to intervene militarily in Kosovo had significant repercussions for the Alliance itself, for Russian great power pretensions, and for the course of the relationship between the Alliance and Moscow. The inequality between NATO and Russia, evident in the aftermath of Dayton, was exacerbated by the actions of the Alliance and caused a considerable set back to the relationship, including a suspension of institutional contacts, even if this ultimately proved only temporary.

Chapter four offers an examination of NATO-Russian peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo. Having considered the relationship in times of conflict, and the increasingly unequal nature of the partnership, it is instructive to examine post-conflict relationships in Bosnia and Kosovo. The Alliance and Russia, relieved of the immediacy of crisis management inherent in times of conflict, could afford to take a more considered and long-term approach to the problems of their partnership in the relatively benign scenario of effecting peacekeeping. NATO, as a military and political alliance, was afforded an opportunity to relate to Russia on both levels. The picture which emerged, however, suggests that while military cooperation generally proved successful, the political relationship was more troublesome. At the time of writing there is no clear end state for Kosovo. Now that the Russian military presence has gone, the more successful element of NATO-Russian cooperation there has ended and NATO-Russian political differences remain, colouring the overall picture of the quality of the relationship.

In the final chapter I attempt to synthesise the evidence which emerges from the empirical studies, arguing that the course of post-Cold War NATO-Russian relations has been characterized by ad hoc realpolitik on both sides. For NATO, the institutional efforts made in engaging with Russia were never of sufficient importance to override its member states' interventionist interests in Bosnia and, most notably, in Kosovo. For its part, Russia's political leaders, while sensitive to domestic opinion, never lost sight of the fact that their own interests lay in cooperating with NATO, even at times of fundamental disagreement. In summing up the course of NATO-Russian relations the chapter will address three questions: what effect did the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo have upon NATO?; what effect did they have upon Russia?; and finally, what was the significance of the Balkans in the overall context of the NATO-Russian relationship? Having addressed those questions one may offer some tentative thoughts as to future developments.

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<sup>1</sup> George Robertson, (then NATO Secretary-General) *A new quality in the NATO-Russia relationship*, Speech in Moscow, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2001, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011122a.htm>

<sup>2</sup> See Mark A. Smith, *Russia and the EU under Putin* Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper 04/20 (Russian Series) July 2004. For a detailed discussion of the ESDP-Russia issue see Mark Webber "Third Party inclusion in ESDP: Form and Substance – a Case Study of Russia" Paper presented to the International Conference of the European Community Studies Association at Madison, Wisconsin June 2001.

<sup>3</sup> A good illustration of this phenomenon is the formal treaty on peace and friendship between Russia and China. United largely by resentment of overbearing US/NATO influence, the two found common cause, temporarily at least, despite their own considerable differences. See "Partners of Inconvenience", The Economist Jan 20-26th 2001.

<sup>4</sup> For a fuller exploration of Russian efforts to promote multipolarity, including the creation of a de facto alliance with China, see Thomas Ambrosio, *Russia's Quest for Multipolarity: A Response to US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era* European Security Vol 10 No 1 Spring 2001. Ambrosio contends that US Foreign Policy has promoted balancing behaviour on Russia's part.

<sup>5</sup> Alton Frye, *The new NATO and Relations with Russia* Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 23 No 3 2000, p 105 cites examples of developments unfavourable to Moscow, the cumulative effect of which was to create and sustain a defensive outlook in the Kremlin. For the purposes of this study, arguably the most significant of these examples is NATO's Kosovo intervention, discussed in detail in chapter three.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Putin's thinking regarding Moscow's relationship with the west see Mark A. Smith, *Russia and the West*, Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper F78, July 2002. See also Mark A. Smith, *The Russia-USA relationship* Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper 04/12 (Russian Series) May 2004.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Mark Smith, *The Russia-USA relationship*, Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper 04/12 (Russian series), May 2004. Also Oksana Antonenko, *The NATO-Russia Council: Challenges and Opportunities*, paper presented at the Conference on Dual Enlargement and the Baltic States: Security Policy Implications, Tallinn, 11-13 February 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Glenn H Snyder Alliance Politics (Ithaca, New York) Cornell University Press 1997 p192

<sup>9</sup> See Celeste A Wallander, *Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War* International Organization Vol 54(4) pp 705-735 Autumn 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Structural Realism after the Cold War* International Security Vol 25(1) 2000. For an extended discussion of the persistence of NATO see esp pp 18-26.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p20.

<sup>12</sup> John Kornblum, *NATO's Second Half Century – Tasks for an Alliance* NATO On Track For the Twenty First Century Conference Report (The Hague, Netherlands Atlantic Commission 1994) p14: cited in Waltz op cit p20.

<sup>13</sup> Waltz op cit page 25

<sup>14</sup> See James Kitfield, *Will Europe Ruin NATO?* Air Force Magazine (US) October 2000 for an expose of the argument.

<sup>15</sup> Author's discussions at NATO School SHAPE Oberammergau February 2001

<sup>16</sup> See John Berryman, *Russian Foreign Policy: an overview in Russia after the Cold War* (ed Bowker and Ross) Longman 2000, pp 336-337.

<sup>17</sup> Berryman p336

<sup>18</sup> Berryman p338

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed discussion of the great power issue see Hannes Adomeit, *Russia as a 'great power' in world affairs: images and reality* International Affairs 71,1 (1995).

<sup>20</sup> A. Kozyrev "Rossiya obrechnena byt velikoy derzhavoy" Novoe Vremya no 3 Jan 1992. (cited in N. Alexandrova-Arbatova "The Balkans test for Russia" Russia and Europe: the emerging security agenda ed. Baranovsky OUP 1997 p 403).

<sup>21</sup> See for example Edward Lucas "In Search of an Identity" The Economist 21<sup>st</sup> July 2001 p17.

<sup>22</sup> Cited in Lucas ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Pavel Baev *Russia's departure from Empire: Self Assertiveness and a New Retreat* Geopolitics in Post-Wall Europe O. Tunander, P. Baev and V. Einagel eds., Sage, Oslo 1997.

<sup>24</sup> C Dale Walton *The Decline of the Third Rome: Russia's Prospects as a great power* The Journal of Slavic Military Studies Vol 12, No 1, March 1999 pp 51-63.

<sup>25</sup> Berryman op cit page 337.

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<sup>26</sup> Gregory L Schulte *The Former Yugoslavia and the New NATO* Survival Vol 39(1) 1997 pp 19-42. For an exposition of the centrality of the Former Yugoslavia in the development of Russian foreign policy see also Michael Andersen *Russia and the Former Yugoslavia* in M Webber ed. Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation? MacMillan, Basingstoke 2000 pp 179-209.

<sup>27</sup> Andersen *ibid* page 179.

<sup>28</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, *Russia and the Balkans: Old Themes and New Challenges* Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda ed Baranovsky Oxford University Press 1997 pp 392-393.



## Chapter One

### NATO-Russian relations after 1991 - an overview

#### *Introduction*

This chapter examines the history of NATO's post Cold War efforts in engaging its former adversary, Russia, at a time of fundamental change for the Alliance. In so doing it considers NATO's transformation from a collective defence to a collective security organisation whose evolving roles were eventually set out in the Alliance's 1999 Strategic Concept. I explore the major aspects of NATO's transformation, focusing on the enlargement debate and the outreach initiative of Partnership for Peace. The relationship with Russia is set in its institutional context, with an exploration of the mechanisms constructed to facilitate and formalise NATO's engagement with Moscow. Against this background of evolutionary institutional change and development, the course of the relationship has been problematic, as evidenced by periodic disagreements over NATO's transformation and role, and its Balkan operations.

With the Soviet Union long gone, it is perhaps ironic that Russia has continued to demand at least as much attention from NATO policy makers as during the Cold War. In a sense this is not too difficult to rationalise; post-Soviet Russia has entered into formal institutional relations with NATO which can only be meaningful if each side commits to making the arrangements work. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 NATO enjoyed arguably its finest hour. The bipolar world was drawing to a close and there could be no doubt as to which of the protagonists had triumphed<sup>1</sup>. Given the West's evident superiority in the ideological contest, and the swift collapse of Soviet power which followed, it would seem that NATO's remit to provide security for its members had been met in full. With no credible threat to counter or ideological opponent to challenge, the Alliance would appear to have served its purpose and obtained a favourable security position for its member states<sup>2</sup>.

Well over a decade later not only is NATO still in existence, but it has expanded its membership and, as was seen in Kosovo in 1999, its remit for action. The sixteen member alliance of 1991 grew to nineteen with the accession of the Visegrad states of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999, and subsequently to twenty six, following the invitation to membership made to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia at Prague in November 2002<sup>3</sup>. To understand how it is that, so long after the Cold War a defensive alliance has grown in size and mission we must examine NATO's changing role and expansion of membership. These developments illustrate NATO's contemporary posture, and have given rise to the formal institutions through which the Alliance deals with non-NATO countries; they thus colour much of the relationship with Russia, our main field of inquiry.

### *Transforming the Alliance*

The NATO of today, while recognisable from its Cold War origins, has become a very different alliance. It has undergone fundamental changes in its size and role, so enabling it to adapt to its geopolitical environment and, it would argue, giving it continued relevance and import. Taken together, these changes amount to NATO's transformation from an organisation of collective defence to collective security.

This distinction is an important one, highlighting the evolution from territorial defence of member states towards a less static and more outward looking approach to defending members' wider security interests. In practice this change has been characterised by two categories of innovation, identified by David Yost first as cooperation with former opponents and others, and second as the conduct of crisis management and peace support operations<sup>4</sup>. This is not to suggest that NATO has abandoned its traditional role of territorial defence (this has been retained), but the Alliance has evolved, through declaration and action, into an organisation prepared to move beyond its members'

borders to engage former adversaries and to effect peace support operations – roles very different from those undertaken during the Cold War.

Thus in 1992 the Alliance offered to support peacekeeping operations in the Balkans undertaken by the United Nations (UN) and Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE – later the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)). This was followed in 1994 by the creation of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative, a highly significant departure from NATO's previously closed consultations, which had been limited to alliance members only<sup>5</sup>. PfP not only created an institutional forum for NATO-Partner dialogue and consultation. It gave rise to a significant programme of military exercises designed to promote interoperability and cooperation between the Alliance and its partners. The effect of this was to bolster efforts to increase confidence and transparency, not least in the increasingly important field of peacekeeping.

As further indication of its increasing willingness to countenance non-traditional operations, the Alliance devoted considerable efforts to creating the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept, endorsed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) at the Brussels meeting of January 1994<sup>6</sup>. No longer was it necessary to achieve complete consensus among alliance members before acting; under the CJTF those members who were so inclined could now consider acting in concert without requiring the consent of more reluctant allies.

These moves toward a loosening of Article 5<sup>7</sup> ties did not indicate that the Alliance's original purpose of collective defence had been jettisoned. However, it was clear that by countenancing actions outside the boundaries of its member states, by engaging with former adversaries and by conducting operations alongside them, NATO was moving beyond collective defence. It remained committed to this core mission but extended its remit to encompass activities (PfP, peacekeeping etc) where the interests of members were also served by an active outreach to encompass those who might conceivably have posed a threat in the first place. Instead of viewing the world in terms of hostile armed

camps, NATO was trying to move to recognise, if not actually accommodate, the wider concerns of members and others – yet without dismantling the original alliance or its Article 5 commitment. The 1999 Strategic Concept (see below) set out these issues authoritatively as the purposes and tasks of a new NATO.

Some have suggested that this approach demonstrates that NATO has wanted to have it both ways – keen to adapt, evolve and progress in terms of collective security, but reluctant to abandon the ‘collective defence first’ approach of Article 5<sup>8</sup>. Certainly, there is a tension between maintaining the apparatus of an alliance constructed to defend Cold War interests, and using the institutions of that same alliance to promote moves toward a more comprehensive approach to security. As a consequence, NATO has been faced with a presentational problem in its dealings with non-members, particularly Russia. How does the Alliance convince Russia that it is in Russian interests to cooperate with the new NATO, when the old NATO has seemingly not gone away?

Nevertheless, while ‘old’ NATO has not vanished, and remains unequivocal in its commitment to its original Article 5 posture, the Alliance has broken new ground with its emphasis on outreach to non-members, and its central contribution to the peacekeeping tasks which were generated by the bloody collapse of former Yugoslavia. The Balkans proved a testing ground for combining the Alliance’s two new tasks. Peace operations in Bosnia, and subsequently in Kosovo, were conducted by NATO members alongside former adversaries, most notably the Russians, making the former Yugoslavia a central case study for the new NATO’s relations with Russia. It was also central in view of the scale and nature of the missions, enlarged upon in chapter four below.

### *The 1999 Strategic Concept*

In April 1999 the Alliance adopted its new Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit, replacing the immediate post-Cold War Strategic Concept of 1991<sup>9</sup>. The new (1999) Strategic Concept spelled out NATO’s purpose and tasks, strategic perspectives, approach

to security, and guidelines for the Alliance's force structure. It therefore provided the clearest and most authoritative indication of NATO's view of its approach to security as it had evolved throughout the 1990s.

Whereas hitherto the Alliance had been concerned with a largely military approach to security issues, the new Concept reflected the development of a more consensual and political emphasis through cooperation, crisis management and conflict prevention. Washington set out the Alliance's "essential and enduring purpose" of safeguarding the freedom of its members by military and political means. It affirmed Allies' support for the concepts (undefined) of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, their determination to defend one another and to "contribute to peace and stability" in the Euro-Atlantic area<sup>10</sup>.

In pursuit of its essential purpose "as an Alliance...committed to the Washington Treaty and the United Nations Charter"<sup>11</sup>, the strategy outlined three fundamental tasks; security, consultation, and deterrence and defence. In promoting security in the Euro-Atlantic area Alliance tasks were identified as crisis management and partnership. Because the Euro-Atlantic area plays host to other international agencies besides NATO, the Strategic Concept recognised the UN Security Council as having "the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security"<sup>12</sup>, and the significant role played by the OSCE and the EU.

The document also identified a wide variety of possible security threats and challenges. These included large-scale conventional aggression against the Alliance, ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, human rights abuses, the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and "the existence of powerful nuclear forces outside the Alliance". The global context was also catered for: Alliance thinking, the Strategic Concept suggested, must include provision for defence against terrorism, sabotage, organised crime and "the disruption of the flow of vital resources". Other identified threats included the "uncontrolled movement of large numbers of people"<sup>13</sup>. Clearly,

while no attempt was made to specify individual countries such as Russia or specific threat scenarios, NATO thinking was looking beyond its borders to security scenarios which would have a direct or indirect impact upon Alliance members.

Recognising that the European security landscape had altered fundamentally, the new Strategic Concept sought to lay the foundations for a more forward thinking Alliance. Part Three, entitled "The Approach to Security in the Twenty First Century", set out the framework within which NATO would henceforth seek to operate. The major characteristics were: "the preservation of the transatlantic link; the maintenance of Alliance military capabilities sufficient for deterrence and defence and to fulfil the full range of (NATO) missions; the development of the European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance; an overall capability to manage crises successfully; ...continued openness to new members; and the continued pursuit of partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other nations as part of (NATO's) cooperative approach to Euro-Atlantic security...."<sup>14</sup>

Against this broad background of a changing security environment, generic but non-specific threat scenarios, and retention of essential (Article 5) purposes allied to an ambitious outreach programme, the Strategic Concept went on to offer guidelines for NATO's future force structure. The Strategic Concept was an attempt to offer comprehensive overarching guidance to the Alliance, recognising the need of the Alliance to adapt and develop if it is to remain relevant. In short, the Strategic Concept "enables a *transformed* NATO to contribute to the *evolving* security environment" (my italics) and "will govern the Alliance's security and defence policy, its operational concepts, its conventional and nuclear force posture and its collective defence arrangements..."<sup>15</sup>

It is notable that the Strategic Concept moved away from the outdated language of its 1991 predecessor by deleting reference to preserving the strategic balance in Europe. More appropriately, it referred to NATO's contribution to continental peace and security,

thereby avoiding the impression that the Alliance's principal purpose was to guard against a threat from Russia.

The document is significant as a formal marker of the extent to which the Alliance had already been changing prior to 1999. In terms of NATO outlook the Strategic Concept did not mark a new beginning. Rather, it codified the extant position, and NATO's place within the post-Cold War strategic environment. Indeed, by the point of the Strategic Concept's adoption, NATO had already moved well beyond the stasis of the Cold War period. Enlargement had resulted in the admission of the Visegrad states; the PfP programme was active; internal force restructuring studies were well under way; internally, work on the European Security and Defence Identity was proceeding; and the Alliance was involved heavily in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans.

All these activities contributed to the overall tenor of the relationship between NATO and Russia. In order to illustrate the broad contours of this relationship it is worth focusing upon NATO's externally oriented activities of enlargement and PfP as they unfolded in the course of the 1990s.

### *NATO Enlargement*

The history of the decision to enlarge NATO shows that the Alliance went through varying degrees of enthusiasm for the project throughout the course of the 1990s. These ranged from initial resistance to acceptance, via delay and deferment. Along the way different institutional innovations were developed to further the work, and these gave rise to strains not just between NATO and non-NATO participants, but within the Alliance itself<sup>16</sup>.

In the immediate post-Cold War environment there was optimism yet uncertainty in NATO. European security prospects appeared brighter than hitherto, though the reason for NATO's existence was no longer immediately apparent and was therefore a subject of some debate<sup>17</sup>. Nevertheless, only isolated voices in the West were calling for the

enlargement of NATO in the early 1990s, a period in which NATO was struggling to redefine its *raison d'être*. In Eastern Europe the position was somewhat different, with the Visegrad states pressing their claims for NATO membership from as early as 1991. They did so on the grounds that they wished to be relieved of the role of *cordon sanitaire*, seeking the perceived benefits of collective security via NATO, and positing that NATO membership would facilitate the westernisation of East and Central Europe (ECE)<sup>18</sup>.

It is important to understand the profound effect of Russia on the thinking of the central and east Europeans<sup>19</sup>. Russia was still regarded with trepidation, as a power capable of reimposing its will militarily in the region. Consequently the argument was made that only membership of NATO could offer firm guarantees of security to the newly independent countries of eastern and central Europe. When Gorbachev had been at the helm in Moscow in 1990, there was less urgency to this demand. A dying Soviet Union, withdrawing its forces from the region, was not regarded as posing an immediate threat. However, during 1991 the Soviet Union's reversion to force, particularly in Lithuania, and a firmer foreign policy line towards former Warsaw Pact allies, led ECE leaders to seek the reassurance of NATO membership as a safeguard against Russian revanchism.

In this light, disappointment with the outcome of NATO's 1991 Rome summit was to be expected. Instead of tackling the issue of enlargement directly the Summit created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) as a forum for cooperation between NATO and the ex Warsaw Pact nations. At this stage the Alliance was not prepared to expand its membership and further debate was still to be had among the Allies on the benefits of any such move<sup>20</sup>.

That said, given NATO's uncertain future, it was not long before the enlargement of the Alliance began to be discussed in the West as a serious option for reinforcing Europe's security architecture. Although there were other institutions which might conceivably be better placed to accommodate the security needs of the new Europe<sup>21</sup>, NATO began to emerge as the institution of choice in key capitals, notably London and Washington.



Other options were briefly explored. For example, the EU attracted US opposition by having the WEU consider European defence matters, for example at the 1996 inter-governmental conference prior to the Treaty of Amsterdam (the French had favoured a WEU revival also around the time of the Maastricht Treaty). The WEU's agreement on the need for a European security and defence identity was not to Washington's liking initially, but eventually came to be seen as a useful means of undermining the position of NATO's more Euro-centred states, who favoured a strengthened CSCE<sup>22</sup>.

The CSCE was a much more acceptable institution than NATO to the Russians, who sought a pan-European framework for security matters<sup>23</sup>. For a time, it had seemed that the CSCE might provide that framework (it also enjoyed support among some ECE governments and was championed by German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher) but a combination of factors served to undermine the organisation's credibility. Two of NATO's major players, the US and the UK, were lukewarm about the CSCE's ability to act as the appropriate forum, and Germany came to share that view. Russia's profound domestic political and economic problems were a constant preoccupation for the Kremlin, and the break up of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia led to the creation of a vastly extended and unwieldy CSCE. Of crucial importance, however, was the CSCE's evident impotence in the face of the August 1991 coup in Moscow, and subsequently in Yugoslavia's descent into war.

By late 1993 the NATO expansionist argument was gaining currency and was justified in a variety of ways<sup>24</sup>. A combination of reasons, premised on NATO's ability to fill a perceived power vacuum in ECE, thus projecting stability eastward, furthering democratisation and promoting the market economy, persuaded the Clinton administration to commit to enlargement. Other reasons, such as meeting the requests of aspirant nations<sup>25</sup>, and not allowing Russia to have a veto over the Alliance's activities, also came into play. While all played their part, there is evidence to suggest that US domestic political interests were at least as influential in the administration's considerations<sup>26</sup>.

The end of the Cold War saw the re-emergence in the US of the old debate between isolationists and internationalists, with the latter correctly identifying NATO enlargement as an issue on which it could draw support away from the former. An unsophisticated public debate did not necessarily distinguish between the old Soviet Union and the new Russian Federation. Consolidation of the Soviet Union's collapse - and, therefore, a counter to the perceived threat now posed by the Russian Federation - required NATO'S eastward expansion if US foreign policy in Europe was to succeed. Added to this was the influence of ECE lobby groups, encouraged by the prospect of NATO admission, and representing an important ethnic voting constituency<sup>27</sup>.

The enlargement debate was not, of course, confined to Washington. It was equally prominent in Germany, economically the Alliance's strongest European member. The legacy of modern history, allied to the immediacy of Germany's geostrategic position, added a uniquely German flavour to the debate, and Defence Minister Volker R  he gave strong support for early enlargement. Ruhe represented the view that swift action was needed to enlarge NATO and to accept new members. Others, most notably Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, had favoured a more cautious approach linked to EU enlargement, but the R  he view held sway in the end<sup>28</sup>.

With two of NATO's key players in favour of enlargement, the way ahead was emerging clearly. By the time of NATO's Brussels summit of January 1994, therefore, President Clinton was in a position to state publicly that he looked forward to the day when NATO would take in new members who would assume the full responsibilities of Alliance membership<sup>29</sup>. In effect, the decision to enlarge had been taken, and now required the work to implement it.

Before enlargement could take place there remained the question of how to justify it formally. To that end the September 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement* set out seven reasons justifying NATO expansion, centred on notions of strengthening international and

European security through the promotion of democratic reform, civilian control, common defence, shared democratic values and good neighbourly relations<sup>30</sup>. The rationale for increased membership having been set out, NATO formally invited its first round of new members to join at its Madrid summit in July 1997<sup>31</sup>. The invitations to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were issued with a view to these states acceding to full membership in 1999, in time for NATO's fiftieth anniversary. In due course, all three were admitted. The fact that this occurred in the same month as the launch of Operation Allied Force over Kosovo did not go unnoticed in Russia.

### *Partnership for Peace*

Opinion has differed on the value of PfP to European security, with some seeing it as no more than a further enlargement-delaying tactic, and as such a successor to the NACC<sup>32</sup>. However, the Partnership programme differed from the NACC in the important respect of introducing differentiation. NATO concluded bilateral PfP arrangements with individual partner nations. The programme of exercises, exchanges and training activities involved was to be by agreement between NATO and the individual partner concerned, at a mutually acceptable pace.

Seen from another perspective PfP was also an attempt to accommodate Russian concerns, providing a compromise between the enlargement sought by ECE countries, and the effective veto on enlargement sought by Moscow. Born out of the NATO Defence Ministers meeting at Trevemunde in October 1993, PfP provided for aspirant NATO members and others to effect a closer cooperative relationship with the Alliance, but fell short of full membership.

Such an arrangement was always likely to evoke mixed reactions, since it provided a little of something for everyone yet failed to fully satisfy anyone. The flexibility of the arrangement allowed varying claims to be made about its essential nature. It is not difficult to understand the view that PfP represented a somewhat cynical fudge between

meeting the aspirations of the ECE countries and their western advocates, and attempting to reassure the Russians. Yet this very flexibility was a political gain of sorts. Indeed, Yost provides a very positive assessment of PfP and makes a strong case for considering it a highly successful enterprise<sup>33</sup>.

The immediate practical effect of establishing partnership arrangements was to postpone consideration of full membership for those who wanted it, while failing to reassure those opposed to enlargement. PfP was so open to differing interpretations that Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev could attempt to portray it as a Russian success in so far as it had the potential to obviate any further expansion of NATO<sup>34</sup>. While this was a valiant effort to portray his policies as successful, Kozyrev could not hope to convince Russian sceptics who regarded acceptance of PfP as accepting a junior status, particularly after the NATO bombing of Serb positions in Gorazde in April 1994<sup>35</sup>. Partnership or not, NATO was not Moscow's agency of choice for the construction of an effective European security regime; at this juncture, the CSCE remained the Kremlin's preferred option<sup>36</sup>.

Russia's delayed entry into PfP in 1994 was a mark of its displeasure at NATO's decision to enlarge<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, there was very little that Moscow could have done about the Alliance's determination to expand its activities, whether by enlargement or PfP. Faced with the consequences of its own diplomatic weakness on the subject, it was as much as the Yeltsin regime could do to manipulate PfP to its own ends. The Russia-NATO protocol, attached to the PfP Framework Agreement which Kozyrev signed in June 1994, made specific reference to Russia's status as a major power and thus represented diplomatic recognition of Russia's uniqueness and centrality to the continent's security structures<sup>38</sup>. From Russia's viewpoint, membership of PfP also held out the prospect of obtaining a voice in NATO decision-making, a prospect which was doomed to disappointment. Russia continued to cite PfP and the attached protocol as giving it a voice in NATO. By contrast, NATO was categorical in its position that Russia had not been afforded any form of influence or veto over Alliance decision-making<sup>39</sup>.

The enlargement-delaying tactic - if that is what it was - of PfP could not be seen as entirely successful. By accepting evolutionary enlargement, PfP added pressure to the overall momentum for enlargement, which in turn hastened the process of identifying the qualifying criteria and effecting the necessary institutional expansion, in turn outlined in the 1995 Study on Enlargement<sup>40</sup>.

Partnership, however portrayed in Moscow and the West, was not what the ECE countries had in mind in lobbying NATO for membership. Poland and the Czech Republic in particular were loud in their criticism of the half way house that was PfP. Ever mindful of the potential threat to their new found status posed by Russia, they continued to keep up the pressure for admission to the Alliance, and their case appeared strengthened by events in Chechnya in 1994. Russia's military intervention in Chechnya caused many to fear for the course of the Yeltsin regime. This added impetus to the movement for inclusion of the Visegrad states in an expanded NATO, a movement which had been gathering momentum in the United States as the Clinton administration explored ways of meeting ECE security demands.

The Russians made clear their displeasure by, initially, refusing to sign their bi-lateral Partnership arrangement with the Alliance, then engaging in a diplomatic and propaganda offensive designed to counter the arguments advanced in favour of NATO enlargement. Leading political and military figures spoke out against NATO's proposed course of action. Foreign Minister Kozyrev, Defence Minister Grachev and others sounded dire warnings about the inadvisability of NATO enlargement, but to no avail<sup>41</sup>. Indeed, for Kozyrev, NATO enlargement proved the end of the road. He was replaced in 1996 as Foreign Minister by Yevgeny Primakov, with the express purpose of shoring up Russia's international and security interests. Grachev's successor at the Defence Ministry, Igor Rodionov, also joined the criticism of NATO, again to no effect. NATO did, however, attempt to reassure the Russians by affirming that it had no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of any of its new member states. This

was made public following the December 1996 meeting of the NAC though it had no perceptible effect on those elements in Moscow opposed to NATO enlargement. Notwithstanding the Alliance's attempted stroking of ruffled feathers via its "three no's" formula, a timetable for enlargement was agreed by July 1997.

### *The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security*

Despite Moscow's constant engagement with the West under Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev, enlargement was seen in the Kremlin as creating a new division in Europe which would effectively isolate Russia politically and economically. It was also opposed on the grounds that it represented a betrayal of the understanding of the 1990 2+4 agreement on German unification. The Russian view was that the West had undertaken not to expand the NATO alliance beyond East Berlin (East Germany excepted). Finally, Kozyrev's policy of engagement with the West was undermined by domestic political opponents, for whom NATO expansion provided justification to attack the policy. As a consequence of enlargement the West in general, and NATO in particular, were not trusted in Russia.

Nevertheless, Moscow was faced with the reality that there was very little it could do to influence the course of events. In such circumstances the prudent approach seemed to be to accept the direction of NATO activities and attempt to influence it in Moscow's favour<sup>42</sup>. The logic of this thinking dictated that a more conciliatory approach to NATO was required in the Kremlin, whatever the public pronouncements, and in early 1997 Yeltsin faced up to that reality by entering into negotiations, conducted by Primakov and NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, designed to formalise and regulate Russia's relationship with the Alliance.

As a result, in May of that year the two parties signed the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security<sup>43</sup>. As with PfP, so with the Founding Act. Each party to it got something of what it desired from the relationship, and each could portray it in a positive light for the benefit of a domestic audience, or other observers<sup>44</sup>. NATO

reiterated its position on the non-deployment of military assets in new member states (though with the significant caveat that it retained the right to deploy in the event of future crisis or aggression). In return, Russia effectively conceded the inevitability of the Alliance's determination to enlarge, but could portray the Act, and its creation of a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC), as putting it on an equal one-to-one footing with the Alliance. The PJC, furthermore, was to be the main forum for NATO-Russian consultation, and resolution of disagreements. There was now an agreed method of communication and consultation between the parties, which represented progress for Moscow since it held out the prospect of influencing Alliance decision making.

In reality, however, the Founding Act and PJC did not allow for Russian interference or a veto in NATO internal deliberations. Although the Founding Act created a forum for communication, and stipulated clearly broad areas of interest which could be discussed it was never interpreted by NATO as constituting the bilateral relationship to which the Kremlin aspired. NATO retained a political cohesion, then presented a united front to its Russian interlocutors on any given issue. This format became known as "sixteen (subsequently nineteen) plus one". Russia had accepted the inevitability of enlargement in return for a more permanent and high profile presence at NATO, but with no more tangible diplomatic gains than that.

The NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 marked a further effort on NATO's part to establish some kind of meaningful institutional basis for its relationship with Russia, though the parties differed in their interpretation of the Act's application. Light, White and Lowenhardt, outlining the findings of their fieldwork in Russia and Ukraine on the expansion of NATO and the EU<sup>45</sup>, noted the fundamental divergence of interpretation of the Founding Act between NATO and Russia, the former regarding it as giving Russia a voice in, but not a veto over, NATO business, the latter as obliging NATO to consult Moscow via the PJC. Recognition of this fundamental divergence is echoed in discussions with NATO political staffs<sup>46</sup>. The Act's recognition of the PJC as "the principal venue of consultation between NATO and Russia in times of crisis" proved

meaningless, as far as Moscow was concerned, when the Kosovo crisis emerged. NATO's view, of course, was that while the PJC may be the principal venue for consultation it was not an exclusive venue. To all intents and purposes, therefore, the PfP and the Founding Act were a sop to Russian sensibilities. The real issue had been decided in favour of NATO enlargement, NATO exclusivity in its decision-making, and institutional arrangements to provide a public show of accommodating Russian wishes. That, at least, is how it came to look from Moscow.

This, however, was not always the case. While some opinion formers in Moscow remained at best sceptical, others saw the Founding Act, for example, as an opportunity for Russia to establish a meaningful partnership with NATO on the basis of equality. Piontkovsky and Tsygichko<sup>47</sup> offered an optimistic assessment of the prospects for the relationship as follows: "...the Founding Act offers great opportunities for Russia to build an equal partnership with NATO in all areas..." - particularly by focusing upon "common economic corporate interests" which would raise the relationship to a new and mutually beneficial level. Perhaps the key word here is "equal", conveying as it does the sense of a one-to-one relationship with all that this entails in terms of the relative status of the interlocutors. Contrast this with the NATO interpretation, and we may - with hindsight - begin to appreciate the extent of Russian disappointment. That the Founding Act and the PJC did not live up to Russian expectations makes Russian disappointment more understandable but no less deeply felt<sup>48</sup>. Nevertheless, in the two year period between the Founding Act and the Kosovo campaign it was still possible for commentators to speak of equal partnership and Russian influence upon NATO<sup>49</sup>.

#### *Towards a "new quality" of relationship*

The scope of this study, which concludes with the attempts to institutionalise a "new quality" to NATO-Russian relations in the forum of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) of 2002, constrains fuller consideration of the second round of NATO enlargement, concluded in May 2004. The significant events of the empirical studies of the



relationship in Bosnia and Kosovo took place against the background of the initial enlargement debate, and subsequent accession to NATO membership of the Visegrad states. Nevertheless, NATO's continued commitment to enlargement after 1999<sup>50</sup> remained a major irritant in relations with Moscow right up to the Prague Summit of 2002, at which Alliance membership was offered to seven more new members<sup>51</sup>. Relations were already strained after the first round of enlargement in 1999, and over Balkan issues. In this regard, Kosovo marked a turning point (see chapter three). NATO's assumption of intervention rights in Kosovo, contrary to the strongly expressed wishes of Moscow, was the proof positive that the Alliance, and by extension the US, considered itself the only authoritative voice in security matters<sup>52</sup>. The PJC had not been convened to discuss the crisis prior to the launch of Operation Allied Force. Not even the UN was in a position to thwart unilateral action by NATO. Further, the complete disregard for Moscow's views in an area that it regarded as a zone of special influence (given its affinities with Orthodox Serbia), removed the last fiction that the Kremlin's opinion was of any account when it came to deciding NATO's course of action. So much for Partnership for Peace, PJC, and the Founding Act, in Russian eyes at least<sup>53</sup>.

It is not difficult to see why, after Kosovo, Moscow had no confidence in the existing Alliance, notwithstanding talk of Russia one day joining it. Yeltsin's successor President Putin caused something of a stir when, shortly before the 2000 Presidential elections, he spoke of the possibility of Russia becoming a member of NATO<sup>54</sup>. The idea was not new<sup>55</sup> but, unsure how to react, NATO reverted to making the right noises of welcome while ruling out the near term prospect of Russian entry into the Alliance. Putin subsequently affected a shift in his original position and 'normality' was restored<sup>56</sup>, though press discussion of the possibility of Russia joining the Alliance continued to resurface occasionally<sup>57</sup>.

Following the events of September 2001, popularly referred to as '9/11', Putin travelled some diplomatic distance in assisting the US to respond to the outrages<sup>58</sup>. Leaving aside the rationale for this new diplomatic course, discussed in chapter four, Putin's overtures

to the US and the West in general did much to foster a more benign environment for the conduct of NATO-Russian relations, so badly damaged by Operation Allied Force. In an atmosphere of improving cooperation and rapprochement, both sides set to work to create a new institutional framework for the conduct of their relations, a framework which could go beyond the discredited PJC and give the relationship at least a new appearance, if not necessarily any greater substance. The result was the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), ratified and inaugurated at the Rome Summit of May 2002.

The need to distance the new forum from its predecessor ensured that there would be transparent differences in its establishment and functioning. The tri-partite chairmanship of the PJC became a single chair, a position filled by the NATO Secretary General. This ostensibly put Russia on an equal footing with all the other Alliance members, transforming the previous 'nineteen plus one' arrangement into 'at twenty'. As noted above, under the former system the Allies agreed their unified position in advance of any meetings with the Russians. Now, in theory at least, all subjects for consideration were amenable to open debate among the twenty participants on an equal basis, and decisions subject to consensus. This arrangement enabled Moscow to claim a diplomatic advance in its dealings with the Alliance. Post-PJC equality had been recognised, issues affecting the Alliance and Russia were open to debate at the NRC, and decisions and action could only proceed on the basis of consensus. However, there remained a mechanism (known as retrieval) whereby any one of the NRC participants could effect the withdrawal of an item from the agenda, and the NAC reserved the right to discuss any issue in its own forum, untroubled by the prospect of a Russian veto.

Perhaps the real significance of the NRC lies not so much in the substance of its debates as in the symbolism of its creation in the first place. It represented a move away from the bitterness generated in Moscow by the Alliance's actions in Kosovo. It afforded a hitherto lacking equality – procedurally, at least – to the Russians. It also marked a considerable improvement in relations in the post-9/11 atmosphere, a form of recognition of Russian support of the West as the US began to turn its attention more towards the

Middle East at the expense of South East Europe. As the NRC was coming into being and improving matters between the Alliance and Moscow, international attention was shifting away from the Balkans. NATO was preparing for its historic Prague Summit of November 2002, the US was becoming preoccupied with Iraq, and Moscow was in the process of reducing its troop levels in the Balkans. NATO-Russian relations beyond the creation of the NRC would therefore have a considerably reduced Balkan focus, being more concerned with issues such as counter-terrorism, crisis management, WMD and non-proliferation matters. Fourteen months after the creation of the NRC the last Russian troops left the Balkans.

### *Conclusion*

The 1990s proved a volatile decade for NATO and for the new Russian Federation. Indeed, the ramifications of the fundamental changes wrought to both are still working themselves out as each attempts to adjust to establishing its role in the dramatically reordered post-9/11 world. NATO sought and found a new rationale for its existence after the Cold War. No longer a defensive Article 5 alliance, it enlarged its mission and membership, establishing itself as the leading international organisation in European security affairs. The Alliance moved beyond, but did not abandon, its collective defence posture. The 1999 Strategic Concept recognised and formalised NATO's transformation, and provided guidance on the near term direction of the Alliance. The decision to pursue outreach initiatives to accommodate former adversaries also entailed offers of partnership with Russia in various institutional fora. However, NATO saw fit to act unilaterally where it chose, and operations in Bosnia and Kosovo bore witness to Alliance unilateralism. The true worth - or perhaps lack of worth - of partnership arrangements became a cause of grave concern for Moscow, whose consistent opposition to enlargement proved fruitless.

The survival, adaptation and persistence of NATO obliged Moscow to react and to deal with the reality of western power. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, reactivity was

characteristic of the relationship in the Balkans where NATO actions often drew Russian criticism, then subsequent reconciliation. Russian preferences for a pan-European security framework constructed around the OSCE were to no avail in countering NATO's pre-eminence throughout the 1990s and beyond. Attempts to institutionalise NATO-Russian engagement, whether through PFP, the Founding Act, or the PJC, were never entirely satisfactory. Overshadowing all this was the process of enlargement to which Moscow was never reconciled, yet never able to counter. Consequently, Russian attitudes to NATO fluctuated between suspicion, cautious cooperation, and outright hostility, the latter most openly after the launch of Operation Allied Force over Kosovo in March 1999. Subsequent efforts to put relations on a new footing in the NATO-Russia Council did at least go some way to mending fences after the war in Kosovo, though whether one may speak of a new quality in the relationship is more open to debate, and is discussed in later chapters.

The formal institutionalising of NATO-Russian relations since 1991 provides the wider background against which to view the post-Cold War relationship in action. This is best illustrated by reference to activities in the Balkans. If the 1999 Strategic Concept formalised the Alliance's new mission and posture, it is worth noting that the changes had already been evident for several years in Bosnia where SFOR was putting the Concept's words into effect on the ground. Operation Allied Force was also in the process of demonstrating in practical terms what the Strategic Concept meant for NATO forces. Each of these operations had considerable significance for Moscow in shaping its relationship with a politically and militarily powerful NATO which continued to expand eastward. The strains which characterised the institutional relations between NATO and Russia were perhaps less evident on the ground in the Balkans, where IFOR/SFOR and KFOR operations demonstrated the parties' ability to cooperate effectively at the tactical level, but could not disguise the unevenness of relations at the higher political level (see chapter four). The former Yugoslavia thus became the testing ground for the practical evolution of the new NATO, the evolving foreign policy of the Russian Federation, and

the ability of the Alliance and Moscow to work together in arguably the most difficult and dangerous circumstances in Europe since 1945.

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<sup>1</sup> The collapse of eastern European communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union even appeared to some to present strong evidence for the thesis that western-style liberal democracy represented “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution”. See Francis Fukuyama, The End Of History and the Last Man Hamish Hamilton, London, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> E Pond, The Rebirth of Europe, Brookings Institution Washington 1999 pp 55-60.

<sup>3</sup> Prague Summit Declaration, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002, at [www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm).

<sup>4</sup> David Yost NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security Washington 1998. See esp pp 5-9 for a discussion of the conceptual distinction between collective security and collective defence.

<sup>5</sup> Partnership for Peace: Framework Document at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940110b.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940110b.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm)). For a fuller treatment of the significance of CJTF in assisting NATO “to survive its post-Cold War existential dilemma” see Nora Bansahel, Separable but not separate forces: NATO’s development of the Combined Joint Task Force European Security Vol 8 No 2 Summer 1999, pp 52-72.

<sup>7</sup> Article 5 of the Treaty of Washington (or North Atlantic Treaty), 4<sup>th</sup> April 1949, obliged NATO members to provide for mutual defence of their home territories in the event of an attack on any one of them. See [www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty](http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty).

<sup>8</sup> Richard H Solomon’s foreword to Yost, see p xii.

<sup>9</sup> NATO Strategic Concept at [www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b911108a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b911108a.htm)

<sup>10</sup> NATO Strategic Concept Part 1 para 6.

<sup>11</sup> NATO Strategic Concept Part 1 para 10

<sup>12</sup> NATO Strategic Concept Part 2 paras 15-17

<sup>13</sup> NATO Strategic Concept Part 2 paras 20-24

<sup>14</sup> NATO Strategic Concept Part 3 para 26

<sup>15</sup> NATO Strategic Concept Part 5 para 65

<sup>16</sup> See Stuart Croft, John Redmond, G. Wynn Rees and Mark Webber, The Enlargement of Europe, Manchester University Press 1999, chapter 2. The authors trace the narrative history of NATO enlargement alongside the enlargement of other key European institutions, and provide conceptual analysis of the NATO debate. They conclude that “in many ways the critical problem at the centre of the debate over NATO enlargement has been....Russia”.

<sup>17</sup> NATO’s Secretary-General set out an early defence of the continued need for the Alliance, rehearsing many of the cogent arguments in the debate over the future of NATO. See Manfred Wörner, The Atlantic Alliance in the new era NATO Review Vol 39 No 1 February 1991, pp 3-8.

<sup>18</sup> Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Mark Webber (ed) Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation? MacMillan, London, 2000 pp 46-65.

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller treatment of the influence of Russia on the security thinking of eastern European states see László Valki, Russia and the security of East-Central Europe European Security Vol 5 No 3 Autumn 1996, pp 448-469.

<sup>20</sup> Otto Pick, Reassuring Eastern Europe NATO Review Vol 40 No 2 April 1992 pp 27-31.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of Europe’s security architecture - what he terms security governance - throughout the 1990s, see Mark Webber’s A Tale of A Decade: European Security Governance and Russia, European Security Vol 9 (2) 2000, pp 31-60.

<sup>22</sup> Michael McGwire, NATO Expansion and European Security Brassey’s Defence Yearbook 1997 pp 6-21.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Andrei Kozzyrev, The New Russia and the Atlantic Alliance NATO Review No 1 February 1993 pp 3-6.

<sup>24</sup> David Yost, NATO Transformed pp 100-131.

- <sup>25</sup> Calls for Eastern European partnership with or admission to NATO were regularly voiced by senior political leaders from newly independent states – see the following articles from NATO Review: Audrius Butkevicius, *The Baltic Region in Post-Cold War Europe* (Vol 41 No 1 February 1993, pp 7-11); Boyko Noev, *More Optimism for the Balkans* (Vol 41 No 2 April 1993, pp 10-14); Hanna Suchocka, *Poland's European Perspective* (Vol 41 No 3 June 1993, pp 3-6); Teodor Melescanu, *Security in Central Europe: A Positive-Sum Game* (Vol 41 No 5 October 1993, pp 12-18); Michal Kovác, *Slovakia and the Partnership for Peace* (Vol 42 No 1 February 1994, pp 15-18); Jaromír Novotný, *The Czech Republic: An Active Partner with NATO* (Vol 42 No 3 June 1994, pp 12-15); Piotr Kolodziejczyk, *Poland – a future NATO ally* (Vol 42 No 5 October 1994, pp 7-10); Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, *Building Poland's Security: Membership of NATO a key objective* (Vol 44 No 3 May 1996, pp 3-7); Ignac Golob, *Preparing for membership: Slovenia's expanding ties to NATO* (Vol 44 No 6 November 1996, pp 24-25).
- <sup>26</sup> See J M Goldgeiger Not Whether but When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO, Brookings Institute Washington 1999.
- <sup>27</sup> Alton Frye, *The New NATO and Relations with Russia* Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 23 (3) 2000, p 94.
- <sup>28</sup> A Hyde-Price Germany and European Order: Enlarging NATO and the EU Manchester University Press 2000 pp 149-50.
- <sup>29</sup> John Palmer, "Clinton tells Russia to avoid isolation" The Guardian 10<sup>th</sup> January 1994.
- <sup>30</sup> See esp Chapter One of the NATO Study On Enlargement for the purposes and principles of enlargement, at [www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9501](http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9501). Also Yost pp 103-104.
- <sup>31</sup> Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation, Madrid 8<sup>th</sup> July 1997 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm)).
- <sup>32</sup> Yost p 98.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid* pp 98-100.
- <sup>34</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, *Russia and NATO: A Partnership for a United and Peaceful Europe* NATO Review Vol 42 No 4 August 1994, pp 3-6.
- <sup>35</sup> Manki Ponomarev, *I NATO, kazhetsya, nachinaet uchitsya* Krasnaya Zvezda 15<sup>th</sup> July 1994.
- <sup>36</sup> Aleksandr Gol'ts, *Budushchee Evropi: NATO ili CSCE?* Krasnaya Zvezda 26<sup>th</sup> November 1994; Andrei Kozyrev, *Russia and NATO* op cit. For a detailed treatment of Russia's view of the CSCE/OSCE see D Lynch *Russia and the OSCE* in M Webber (ed) Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation? MacMillan, London 2000, pp 99-124.
- <sup>37</sup> Mikhail Pogoreli, *Dvoinoi podkhod Rossiyu ne ustraivaet* Krasnaya Zvezda 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1994.
- <sup>38</sup> M Mihalisko *European-Russian Security and NATO's Partnership for Peace* RFE/RL Research Report Vol 3(33) 1994.
- <sup>39</sup> Author's meetings at SHAPE September 2000
- <sup>40</sup> For a detailed exposition of this point see Croft, Redmond, Wynn Rees and Webber, The Enlargement of Europe pp 33-34.
- <sup>41</sup> George Brock, "NATO plan irks Russia" The Times 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1994; Andrew Marshall, "Russia frets over plan to expand alliance" The Independent 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1994; Hella Pick, "Russian plan on defence isolates U.S." The Guardian 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1994; "Moscow Centre" The Guardian 19<sup>th</sup> March 1996.
- <sup>42</sup> S Parrish, *Trying to Bargain over NATO Enlargement* Transition 29<sup>th</sup> November 1996.
- <sup>43</sup> *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, Paris, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1997*, at [www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/fndact-a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/fndact-a.htm).
- <sup>44</sup> K H Kamp *The NATO-Russia Founding Act: Trojan Horse or Milestone of Reconciliation?* Aussenpolitik no 4 1997.
- <sup>45</sup> See M. Light, S. White, and J. Lowenhardt *A Wider Europe: The View from Moscow and Kiev* International Affairs 76 January 2000, pp 77-88.
- <sup>46</sup> Author's meetings at SHAPE September 2000.
- <sup>47</sup> Andrei Piontkovsky and Vitaly Tsygichko *Russia and NATO after Paris and Madrid: A Perspective from Moscow* Contemporary Security Policy Vol 19 No 2 August 1998 pp 121-125.
- <sup>48</sup> See F. Carr and P. Flenley, *NATO and the Russian Federation in the New Europe: The Founding Act on Mutual Relations* Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics Vol 15(2) 1999, pp 70-88.
- <sup>49</sup> "Henry Kissinger was not far from the truth when he warned that Russia has already gained a larger status in NATO than any candidates for membership or hopefuls" Piontkovsky and Tsygichko, op cit p 121.

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<sup>50</sup> Ian Traynor, "Bush projects NATO to Russian border" The Guardian 16<sup>th</sup> June 2001: Judy Dempsey, "NATO growth will go ahead, like it or not, Russia is told" Financial Times 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2001.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of the NATO process of enlarging to incorporate the second wave of post-Communist member states see Timothy Edmunds, *NATO and its new members* Survival vol 45 no 3 Autumn 2003 pp 145-166.

<sup>52</sup> Light, White and Lowenhardt, op cit p 81, make the point that in Russia, NATO and the United States are widely seen as synonymous "with far less blame for the attack on Serbia attaching to European NATO members".

<sup>53</sup> See for example Boris Kazantsev, *Obvious Bias to the Use of Force* International Affairs (Moscow) Vol 45 (4) 1999.

<sup>54</sup> Vladimir Kozin *The Kremlin and NATO: Prospects for Interaction* International Affairs (Moscow) Vol 46 (3) 2000 pp 12-20. Kozin has argued the case for greater engagement between NATO and Russia, but perhaps has given too much weight to the significance of the role of the Secretary General, who works on behalf of the NAC, not vice versa.

<sup>55</sup> Coral Bell, *Why an expanded NATO must include Russia* Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 17 No 8 December 1994, pp 27-41.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Amelia Gentleman, "Replace NATO by pan-European pact, Putin says" The Guardian 19<sup>th</sup> July 2001.

<sup>57</sup> The question of Russian membership of NATO was being asked prior to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, though the events of that day gave impetus to the issue. See Fareed Zakaria, *Could Russia join the West?* Newsweek 25<sup>th</sup> June 2001: Arnaud de Borchgrave, *Room for Russia in NATO?* The Washington Times 18<sup>th</sup> July 2001: a number of articles in The Guardian, including Ian Black, "Russian resolution: Putin is winning western accolades" 5<sup>th</sup> October 2001: Simon Tisdall, "How the future was Shanghaied" 26<sup>th</sup> October 2001: Oliver Burkeman and Julian Borger, "The Winners: Spoils of War" 31<sup>st</sup> October 2001: Matthew Engel, "Bush tells Putin he will slash warheads" 14<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

<sup>58</sup> For an overview of NATO-Russian relations after 9/11 see Robert E. Hunter, *NATO-Russian relations after 11 September* in Shireen Hunter (ed) Strategic Developments in Eurasia After 11 September Frank Cass, London 2004, pp 28-54.

## **Chapter Two**

### **NATO, Russia and Civil War in Bosnia 1991-1995**

#### *Introduction*

Among the most profound consequences of the end of the Cold War was the disintegration in the early 1990s of the former Yugoslavia. In a number of its constituent republics including Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, nationalism based upon ethnicity began to emerge as the dominant political ideology, in opposition to the formerly tightly controlled and centralised Belgrade regime. The position of Serbia, the pre-eminent Yugoslav republic, was somewhat ambivalent as the demise of Yugoslavia inevitably detracted from its leading position, but paved the way for the Serb nationalism which replaced it. A relatively bloodless secession in Slovenia in 1991-92 first of all, followed by a much bloodier campaign for Croatian independence, indicated the end of Yugoslavia as was. When Bosnia-Herzegovina in turn attempted to secede, the response from Belgrade resulted in a downward spiral into vicious and bloody ethnic strife which eventually led to widespread international involvement in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Ineffectual UN efforts<sup>1</sup> to maintain peace were eventually superseded by NATO intervention and by late 1995 the Dayton Accord provided a NATO-monitored peace settlement for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

NATO's intervention in the former Yugoslavia was significant for being the first major out-of-area operation in which the Alliance participated. Bosnia showed the Alliance in a new light, as deployable peacekeeper beyond its own borders. As such it proved a key factor in shaping the posture of the new, post-Cold War NATO. The history of the Alliance's efforts to keep the peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina illustrated the difficult, and at times strained, relationship between the Allies and Russia throughout the early 1990s. It demonstrated that from a promising beginning, with a general coincidence of western and Russian views - an apparent partnership of equals - the relationship deteriorated, by the



signing of the Dayton Accord at the end of 1995, to a more obviously senior-junior partnership<sup>2</sup>.

In arriving at an understanding of the Alliance's relationship with Russia in Bosnia, a number of separate yet related strands need to be drawn together. I will begin by tracing the outline of Yugoslavia's collapse in the early 1990s, examining the country's descent into conflict. The long and bloody route to eventual NATO involvement was a tortuous one, and the war in Bosnia requires significant exposition in setting the backdrop to the Alliance's actions. In turn, I attempt to identify NATO policy in Bosnia (in so far as one can speak of such a thing, implying as it does a systematic, consistent and coherent Alliance approach) by considering some of the differing perspectives within NATO. Yugoslavia's disintegration exposed significant differences of outlook within the North Atlantic Alliance, and its members' failure to come to terms with Europe's worst security crisis since the Second World War. It also demonstrated vividly the fact that NATO is not a monolith but a disparate organisation requiring consensus to function successfully. This leads into a consideration of Alliance policy overall, as NATO's leading nations all shared an interest in and desire to work through international cooperative bodies, so obliging them to acknowledge, inter alia, the Russian position. In particular, I focus on the NATO position on Bosnia as evidenced by its public pronouncements, in attempting to identify the Alliance's expectations of Russia in Bosnia.

This chapter goes on to focus on the Russian position on the war in Bosnia. In considering Moscow's outlook, I examine debates surrounding the formulation of the new Russian Federation's foreign policy. The successor state to the Soviet Union groped its way towards a more or less coherent line in the Balkans which would enable it to portray itself as a leading diplomatic and military player, yet retain a working partnership with the West. Russian foreign policy underwent a painful evolution in the Bosnian context, as cooperation with the West gave way to a more assertive yet less influential line. Finally, I discuss the effect of the war in Bosnia upon NATO itself, and on its impact upon the Alliance's relationship with Russia.

## **The collapse of Yugoslavia**

To begin with, it is worth describing the disintegration of Yugoslavia, so placing in context the Alliance's dealings with Moscow in the Balkans<sup>3</sup>. By the summer of 1991 Yugoslavia's constituent republics were taking steps to secede, though there is a case for acknowledging that secession was not driven solely from the periphery, but also from the Belgrade centre as part of a wider Greater Serbia project<sup>4</sup>. In June of that year Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. The Yugoslav National Army's (JNA's) attempts to maintain control over Slovenian border stations were unsuccessful and the Yugoslav Federal Presidency ordered the army to withdraw within three months, marking de facto recognition of Slovenian independence. JNA attention then focused upon Croatia where armed conflict was increasingly bitter. As the war dragged on through the summer, pressure increased for the international community to take some action to prevent complete disintegration and all out civil war in Yugoslavia. One week later the UN Security Council passed Resolution 713<sup>5</sup> imposing an arms embargo on all the former Yugoslav entities. This was followed by an EU decision to send monitors to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### *International Recognition of Secessionist States*

By the end of 1991 Vukovar had fallen to the JNA after an 80-day siege but more significantly in the long term, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1991 Germany recognised Slovenia and Croatia as independent states, the recognition to be effective from 15<sup>th</sup> January 1992<sup>6</sup>. Germany's actions precipitated widespread recognition of the new republics by the EU and 15 other states, including the US, in January 1992. Two months later the UN passed Resolution 743<sup>7</sup> establishing a peacekeeping force in Croatia, and deployed its 14,000 strong United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to separate the Croatian and Krajina Serb forces. The force included a Russian contingent<sup>8</sup> though Russian cooperation with the west in the Balkans was not universally well received at home<sup>9</sup>.

However, it was in Bosnia that the situation deteriorated most severely. The Bosnian Serbs declared their independence from Sarajevo and established the Republika Srpska, which reacted violently to the February 1992 Bosnian referendum vote in favour of independence from Belgrade<sup>10</sup>. Heavy fighting now broke out as the Serbs moved to partition Bosnia and the siege of Sarajevo began. Serbia and Montenegro now proclaimed a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, declaring it the successor state to Yugoslavia. Within a month it was the object of UN economic sanctions imposed under Security Council Resolution 757<sup>11</sup>.

### *Increasing International Involvement*

As Serb-led ethnic cleansing got under way in May 1992, Bosnia became the scene of some of the bloodiest atrocities in Europe since the end of the Second World War. The UN's best efforts were not proving effective in putting an end to the bloodshed, but the organisation persisted, in cooperation with the EU. At this stage NATO had not yet become actively involved in operations in Bosnia, although, significantly, the June 1992 Ministerial Summit in Oslo<sup>12</sup> had taken the decision to offer troops and equipment for peacekeeping operations beyond the borders of its member states, so highlighting a willingness to move 'out of area'.

Between August and December 1992 the UN and EU stepped up their attempts to end the increasingly bitter struggle. The Security Council passed a series of resolutions to facilitate the delivery of relief supplies, effect access to detention camps, establish a commission of experts to examine evidence of war crimes, establish a no-fly zone over Bosnia, initiate naval interdiction of ships attempting to evade sanctions, and send 760 observers to Macedonia<sup>13</sup>. UNPROFOR's humanitarian mission was extended to all of Bosnia. The Vance-Owen negotiations, a UN/EU collaborative venture, got under way in Geneva in September 1992, but broke down in January 1993. NATO was beginning to take a more prominent role in the situation, agreeing in October 1992 to send 100

personnel to the UN headquarters in Bosnia<sup>14</sup>, and a month later providing naval forces to patrol in the Adriatic to enforce UN sanctions. This operation, which eventually came to be known as Sharp Guard, was conducted alongside WEU naval forces.

### *NATO Becomes More Involved*

As the war in Yugoslavia dragged on through 1993 the pattern of UN diplomatic activity, alongside increasing NATO involvement, was repeated. Against the backdrop of the on-off-on Vance-Owen negotiations, now supported by the Clinton administration in Washington, the UN continued to issue Security Council resolutions in response to the escalation of the war in the Balkans. An international war crimes tribunal was set up<sup>15</sup>, the UNPROFOR mandate in Croatia extended<sup>16</sup> and, in March 1993, the enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia was authorised<sup>17</sup>. As war broke out in April 1993 between Croat and Bosnian Muslim forces, NATO began air operations to enforce the UN's no-fly zone. Among the more noteworthy UN Security Council resolutions issued were the stiffening of sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, and the creation of safe areas among the Muslim enclaves of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Srebrenica, Bihac and Gorazde<sup>18</sup>.

NATO meanwhile authorised planning for a peacekeeping force of some 60,000 troops in Bosnia in support of UN efforts, and in June 1993 offered air power support to protect UNPROFOR<sup>19</sup>. In the same month US willingness to countenance greater involvement in the Balkans was stepped up as Washington announced its readiness to send a small force to Macedonia, an action immediately sanctioned by the UN under resolution 842<sup>20</sup>. The Security Council also authorised the provision of air assets to provide armed protection for its declared safe areas<sup>21</sup>, and two months later, in August 1993, it announced that NATO was ready to carry out air strikes at the request of the (UN) Secretary General, to support UNPROFOR.

It wasn't long before NATO air support was invoked when, in February 1994, the UN Secretary General called upon the Alliance to be prepared to launch attacks against

Bosnian-Serb artillery positions around Sarajevo. NATO's willingness to employ air power was not at all to Russia's liking<sup>22</sup>. The call for NATO to be ready to launch air attacks came in the wake of a mortar attack upon Sarajevo market place and led to the EU calling for the demilitarisation of the city and its administration by the UN. The Serbs complied with the NATO ultimatum to withdraw from their positions within ten days, but shortly afterwards four Serb aircraft were shot down by NATO US aircraft for entering the no-fly zone.

This action was NATO's first combat mission, indicating the Alliance's willingness to use force and highlighting its capabilities<sup>23</sup>. More was to follow when, in April 1994, US aircraft bombed Bosnian Serb positions around Gorazde, a declared safe area. This led to a short term increase of diplomatic and military tensions, with the Russians complaining that they were not consulted<sup>24</sup> and the Bosnian Serbs detaining UN and NGO staffs. However, fighting in the Gorazde area subsided, and a UN-brokered cease-fire came into being.

The use of NATO air power had given the clearest indication to date that the UN could call upon effective military means in support of its diplomatic initiatives<sup>25</sup>. However, the Bosnian Serb response to attacks by NATO was unpredictable, and ran the risk of inflaming an already very dangerous situation. At Gorazde in April 1994, for example, the Serbs had taken hostages in response to NATO bombing of their positions, and threatened to shoot down NATO aircraft. A similar situation developed at the Serb-controlled Udbina airfield in Croatia, where 300 UN troops were taken hostage in retaliation for NATO strikes against Serb positions which were being used to launch attacks on another of the safe areas, Bihac<sup>26</sup>. Air strikes were clearly a risky strategy, though the fact that they were now an option for serious consideration for the UN served to underline the credibility of the military capability which NATO could lend.

### *Diplomatic Progress*

Although 1994 had seen a grave deterioration in the Balkan wars and the gradually increasing involvement of NATO, it had not been an entirely gloomy year diplomatically. In March a US brokered deal, the Washington Agreement, had put an end to hostilities between Bosnian Croats and Muslims, establishing the Croat-Muslim Federation in Bosnia<sup>27</sup>. A few weeks later a ceasefire agreement was reached between the Croatian government and the Krajina Serbs. Signed in the Russian Embassy at Zagreb, it was implemented in April 1994, in the same month as the ceasefire at Gorazde<sup>28</sup>.

These hopeful signs were repeated at the beginning of 1995 when in January a four-month cease fire between the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs came into effect. The agreement had been brokered by former US President Jimmy Carter, but expired amid low level fighting in May. Meanwhile, the Croatian army launched attacks to take control of the Zagreb-Belgrade main link road across UN lines in the UN's Sector West. Krajina Serbs responded by shelling Zagreb and other cities but the Croatian attack pressed on, siezing virtually all strategic points within the UN Sector West, and enabling Croatian President Tudjman to declare victory.

### *Safe Areas?*

By May 1995 NATO and the Bosnian Serbs found themselves once again in direct confrontation, with the Alliance launching air strikes against Serb positions near Pale in response to Serb removal of heavy weapons from a UN depot. The Serb response was bloody and included shelling of UN safe areas, taking UN personnel hostage and killing 68 people in Tuzla. Sarajevo remained under siege by the Serbs despite exploratory missions by the Bosnian government to lift the siege. Serb armour also advanced upon the safe area of Srebrenica and, in one of the bloodiest actions of the war, overran the Muslim enclave there killing an estimated 7,000 Muslims in July 1995. The UN defences around the city had proven entirely inadequate, and the conflict went into downward spiral as Bosnian Muslims siezed UN weapons to defend themselves against anticipated Serb attack. Zepa became the scene of heavy fighting between Bosnian Muslims and

Serbs. Krajina Serb leader Martić, Bosnian Serb army commander General Mladić, and Bosnian Serb President Karadžić were all indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague<sup>29</sup>, and the US Senate voted to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government.

Through patient negotiation and agreement between NATO and the UN, more refined procedures for implementing close air support were devised. However, they remained of somewhat limited value since dual authorisation, by its very nature, did not facilitate immediate response to contraventions of the 20 kilometre exclusion zone around Sarajevo. Further, UN forces were inadequate for effective monitoring of the exclusion zone at ground level, undermining the deterrent effect of airstrikes and jeopardising the continued security of the safe areas. The events of July 1995 when the Bosnian Serbs overran Srebrenica made it clear that UNPROFOR was not in a position to guarantee the security of the remaining safe areas<sup>30</sup>. Notwithstanding the clumsy dual authorisation system, therefore, greater reliance upon NATO air power now became more evident. This was exemplified by the launch of Operation Deliberate Force, a sustained month-long bombing campaign of Bosnian Serb positions around Sarajevo in response to their shelling of the city<sup>31</sup>. Carried out in accordance with Security Council Resolution 836, Deliberate Force was militarily successful in compelling the Serbs to withdraw their heavy weaponry from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo, reopening road and air access to the city, and paving the way for a formal peace process. The NATO air campaign continued throughout September in tandem with diplomatic manoeuvres, in which the Contact Group representatives met the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and the former Yugoslavia and agreed upon the basic principles for peace negotiations, eventually resulting in the Dayton Accord in November 1995, discussed in chapter four.

In essence the parties acknowledged that Bosnia would consist of a Bosnia-Herzegovina entity, or Federation, of Muslims and Croats, and a Serb entity. Each would have its own constitution and be self governing within its own borders, with joint national institutions to be created at the state level. Fifty one percent of the territory would be apportioned to

the Federation, the remainder to the nascent Republika Srpska. The Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs signed a cease fire agreement on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1995, and UN peacekeepers reopened the roads to Sarajevo for humanitarian convoys, ending the three year siege of the city. Meanwhile, Greece and the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia (FYROM) reached an agreement to normalise their own relationship as the Balkans began to settle into an uneasy peace, the details of which remained to be finalised at the Dayton talks in Ohio.

### **NATO perspectives on Bosnia**

As noted in the Introduction chapter, it is essential to bear in mind the diverse nature and interests of NATO's membership. One is not dealing here with a unitary and monolithic structure, but a diverse and consensual one. While ultimately acting in accordance with consensus, the Alliance had first of all to achieve that consensus, an activity which, in the absence of the unifying Cold War threat from the east, was always going to be somewhat problematic for a disparate organization in search of a new role. In the early 1990s Bosnia provided NATO with a rigorous test of its post-Cold War cohesion and relevance. It struggled to pass that test, a struggle which can best be understood by reference to the differing outlooks of the major NATO capitals in their handling of the war.

As a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council and a long time advocate of the military potential of the WEU, it is not surprising that France regarded these as its institutions of choice for dealing with the security problems of the Balkans. France's 1967 withdrawal from NATO's military structure, and the latter's susceptibility to US influence, meant that Paris sought to promote the involvement of international bodies other than NATO, most notably the UN and the WEU<sup>32</sup>.

Experience on the ground, however, gradually persuaded the French of the value of adapting NATO procedures and practices<sup>33</sup>. As the European nation with the most sizeable contribution of troops to the Balkans, France had military credibility and a



recognised stake in the debate on the way ahead. Paris became a leading advocate of air strikes as the war continued, notwithstanding the British view that air strikes would jeopardize the safety of troops committed to the theatre of operations.

NATO also came to be recognized by the French as the only practical expression of effective military force, despite Paris' initial preference for the WEU. The latter body excluded the Americans by definition, yet its lack of a capable military structure compelled France to acknowledge that the WEU could not provide an independent European security capability. Rather, the compromise position was to seek to develop the WEU as a European pillar of NATO, consistent with the French aim of establishing a distinctly European (and therefore French-, rather than US-influenced) approach to Bosnia.

At the strategic level Paris continued to espouse a UN line as a member of the Security Council. At the practical level its membership of the Contact Group gave it the opportunity to bring its influence to bear directly on the major international participants. Not least, the experience of the French military in Bosnia inclined the country's decision makers ever closer to NATO, and therefore to the US, in pursuit of a more interventionist stance. France, a member of NATO though not of its military structure, came to the view that only through the Alliance could there be effective international intervention in Bosnia.

Although all the major governments of Europe were susceptible to the opinions of their electorate, the German government proved particularly so. Reunification being still very fresh in public consciousness, the wars in Yugoslavia came to be viewed in Germany as struggles for the proper self-determination of independent nations held back by the former communist regime in Belgrade. In the public mind there was a parallel to be drawn between the recent German experience of post-Cold War unification and the case for independence put by Slovenia and Croatia.

Bonn thus began to take a more robust stand in seeking recognition for Slovenia and Croatia<sup>34</sup>. One week after the European Council agreement of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1991 to invite applications from the former Yugoslav republics for recognition of their independence, Germany effectively broke ranks with its EC allies and announced that it would establish diplomatic ties with Slovenia and Croatia on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1992. In so doing, it exposed the myth of a common European foreign policy, and precipitated widespread recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, signalling international diplomatic acknowledgement of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.

Diplomatic success for Bonn came at a price. By pre-empting the agreed EC position on recognition, and so destroying any credibility attaching to a common foreign and security policy, Germany had angered its EC allies. The strength of their reaction also needs to be understood in light of fears of a unified Germany's potential for revanchism. The war in Bosnia posed serious questions for the foreign policy of the new Germany. To what extent should it seek to exert its autonomy in the foreign policy arena? How should the Kohl government deal with the pressure of domestic public opinion and its support for self-determination in the Former Yugoslavia? Above all, how should Germany reconcile the apparently conflicting courses of EC common foreign policy and German public opinion? In the event, Bonn chose to acknowledge the views of the German electorate by forcing the pace of recognition, weathering the storm of EC disapproval, and seeking subsequent harmony with its European and US allies through international diplomatic cooperation, including contributing militarily and politically to the NATO effort.

The United Kingdom was prominent in the international efforts to address Bosnia's problems in the diplomatic and military spheres. Its troop contribution was second only to that of France, a fact which enabled the British to claim a certain moral authority in debates on how the international community should respond to the crisis. However, the UK record on Bosnia attracted criticism for its caution and allegedly pro-Serbian stance<sup>35</sup>.

London justified its caution by reference to its troop commitments to UNPROFOR, and the perceived adverse impact upon its forces should there be greater interventionism from the international community<sup>36</sup>. Given the US preference for air strikes rather than putting its own forces on the ground, the UK was in no hurry to commit greater numbers of troops to intervene in what it saw as an intractable ethnic war<sup>37</sup>. In practice, British caution was a brake on concerted international action, and considerably angered its allies, as well as Alija Izetbegovic's government in Sarajevo<sup>38</sup>.

The UK placed great faith in the advice of its commanders in the field, particularly General Rose, Commander of UNPROFOR forces in Bosnia<sup>39</sup>, who was eventually instrumental in persuading the UK to countenance limited air strikes as a way of reinforcing diplomatic pressure. This had the wider effect of helping to reconcile the UK and US positions, and restoring some equilibrium to their damaged relationship, though Britain remained highly sceptical about becoming embroiled in Bosnia as long as the US continued to refuse to commit its own troops to the Balkans. It would take more than air strikes to reconcile the British and US positions, albeit the British government gradually came to accept that, like it or not, lift and strike would probably happen if the US was set on it<sup>40</sup>.

In Washington the post-Cold War order meant that the US need not necessarily adopt its traditional leadership role in European security matters. Consequently, at the beginning of the war in Bosnia the US was quite content to regard the issue as a European one, and to leave matters to the EC. In part this course was prompted by a desire not to be seen as the world's trouble-shooter, or perhaps more accurately as the newest form of imperialism. Washington's reticence was also largely determined by its desire not to become embroiled in a potentially endless military and diplomatic commitment. US foreign policy makers also recognized the centrality of engaging with Russia in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet Union's implosion<sup>41</sup>. Enlightened self-interest in Washington dictated a Russian engagement if the US were to safeguard its own global

hegemony, control the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and promote market capitalism and Western liberal democracy in the successor states of the Soviet Union.

American reticence in Yugoslavia also flowed from its analysis of the situation in Bosnia as part intractable ethnic strife, part querulous secessionism, and part Serbian aggression<sup>42</sup>. It thus combined elements of the outlook of all its major European allies, but over time the Clinton administration came to focus upon Serbian aggression as the main cause of the war. Lift and strike was not popular with the British or, initially, the French, and the effective killing off of the EC/UN Vance Owen Peace Plan (VOPP) created further dissension, signalling clearly that the US wished to avoid troop commitments. Nevertheless there is evidence that the US opted for clandestine methods to effect "lift" even if it fell short of a public commitment to its preferred policy direction<sup>43</sup>.

US reluctance to provide military weight and diplomatic leadership left the field open to the Europeans, whose analyses differed and who could not produce a policy consistent with the aspirations of CFSP. When the Americans finally decided to assume a more direct leadership role via the negotiations of Richard Holbrooke, the relatively swift conclusions reached at Dayton simply underlined the fact that previous US reticence had served to prolong Bosnia's agony. The transatlantic relationship had therefore suffered, as had the opportunity to continue to engage Russia in cooperative ventures on conflict resolution.

The four major NATO players, therefore, approached Bosnia from differing, if occasionally overlapping, perspectives. Their Bosnian policies were at variance and, from time to time, in direct confrontation. The initial onus of leadership lay with the Europeans who, despite the claims advanced for CFSP, proved unable to subjugate national interests to common European ones. All, however, did operate largely through international agencies, even when they accorded priority to different agencies at different times (for example, the early French preference for WEU involvement). As the single

most powerful diplomatic and military nation the US eventually overcame its reluctance to provide Western leadership, and adopted an interventionist stance through the efforts of the Holbrooke negotiating team and the Dayton process. Again, however, the US was keen to play an internationalist role rather than a unilateral one. Reflecting on the inability of the Europeans to cooperate effectively in Bosnia, and the reluctance and tardiness of US involvement, Holbrooke observed in his memoir on Dayton that “the Yugoslav crisis should have been handled by NATO”<sup>44</sup>. The medium for providing an effective internationalist approach to security in Bosnia was, as Holbrooke commented in retrospect, the North Atlantic Alliance.

Bearing in mind the caveat that NATO capitals were not always in harmony, we may yet speak of a NATO position on Bosnia, at least by the end of the war in 1995. The course of events indicated that, from a downward spiral of vicious fighting, progress was made eventually, but only when NATO’s European members acceded to American diplomatic and political leadership, and employed NATO to effect their agreed will. Yet there were signs that NATO involvement in Bosnia predated the ability of national capitals to agree on unified courses of action, albeit the Alliance only became truly effective in the latter stages of the war.

As violence in Bosnia dragged on there was a noticeable hardening of language in NATO declarations on the former Yugoslavia. The Alliance’s Rome ministerial summit in November 1991 reflected the fact that member nations were “deeply concerned” by the Yugoslav crisis, and expressed NATO support for the efforts of the EC, CSCE and UN in their attempts to resolve the crisis. There was condemnation of the use of force generally, and a reminder to all warring parties of their accountability under international law<sup>45</sup>. The Alliance’s November 1991 Strategic Concept<sup>46</sup> anticipated circumstances in which the threat to NATO members might arise from instability and armed conflicts in neighbouring countries, predisposing the Alliance to take a direct interest in situations such as that in Yugoslavia. In June 1992 NATO declared itself willing to support CSCE-led peacekeeping operations, given the instability abroad in various parts of the Euro-

Atlantic region<sup>47</sup>. Six months later the same principle was applied to UN-led operations<sup>48</sup>. By now the language was considerably harder and more direct, NATO being “profoundly disturbed” by the “serious threat to international peace, security and stability” posed by the situation in Yugoslavia<sup>49</sup>. There was forthright condemnation of Serb atrocities and a clear allocation of blame to Belgrade and the Bosnian Serbs.

Even prior to this NATO was already using Bosnia as an indication of its intent in relations with Russia, and as a harbinger of its ability to act as a peacemaker, while simultaneously flagging up the possibility of NATO enlargement to come. Secretary-General Manfred Woerner gave an interview to the Russian press, setting the tone for relations with Russia in Bosnia in the wider context of the Alliance’s plans for its own development and expansion<sup>50</sup>. By describing NATO as a political, as much as a military, organisation Woerner may have been attempting to assuage Russian fears regarding NATO’s potential eastward enlargement. He nevertheless made it clear that NATO troops could be made available for UN or CSCE peacekeeping missions if requested, a matter of potential concern to Moscow in its near-abroad. However, Woerner pointed out that for NATO, Russia was regarded as a partner and not an enemy, subject to continued reform and cooperation. NATO’s Defence Planning Committee had recognised “the risks to European security and stability posed by the growth of regional conflicts involving ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes”<sup>51</sup>. It also concluded that “the most acute crisis is the war in the former Yugoslavia”. This, taken together with Woerner’s message, tended to the conclusion that NATO wanted from Moscow a cooperative approach to the crisis in Bosnia and that Russia was not in a position to oppose the Alliance in the Balkans, or in the wider NATO-Russian context.

In June 1993, in a detailed statement addressing the theme of regional conflicts generally, NATO continued its condemnation of the Serbs as the chief perpetrators of atrocities in the Balkans<sup>52</sup>. The Alliance declared its willingness to use airpower in support of UNPROFOR safe areas, welcomed the peace proposals based upon the Vance-Owen principles, and pointed out the interdependence in the security of all European states. In a

further hardening of resolve two months later, NATO announced its decision to prepare for airstrikes against Bosnian Serb positions<sup>53</sup>, and in December 1993 NATO's Foreign Ministerial summit issued a final communiqué expressing support for, inter alia, ongoing EU-based peace initiatives in Bosnia, and President Yeltsin's programme for political and economic reform<sup>54</sup>.

The North Atlantic Council's clearly expressed determination to protect the UN-declared safe areas<sup>55</sup> was to no avail in preventing the Bosnian Serbs from attacking them, and by May 1995 the Alliance was again condemning the Serbs and urging international cooperation via the Contact Group, Russia included<sup>56</sup>. NATO's consistent condemnation of the Serbs and calls for international action combined to reinforce Russia's diplomatic potential, as the only major player with strong historical links to the Serbs. Given these links Moscow's best chance of exercising influence lay in its ability as a favoured interlocutor to prevail upon the Serbs to stop the war.

NATO's relationship with Russia in Bosnia was, of course, played out against the broader background of NATO-Russian relations generally. That background was coloured by two prominent considerations, one each on either side of the relationship: periodic Western fears of Russian revanchism, and Russian fears of NATO enlargement<sup>57</sup>. An enlarging NATO, promoting its partnership programmes, wanted Russia alongside. Foreign Minister Kozyrev's signing up to Partnership for Peace in June 1994 was welcomed by the Alliance, which recognised Russia's "unique and important contributions...commensurate with its weight and responsibility as a major European, international and nuclear power"<sup>58</sup>. A year later Kozyrev, commenting on the signing of the individual NATO-Russian partnership programme, took the opportunity to stress Moscow's opposition to NATO enlargement, and the need for a greater political rather than military emphasis in NATO<sup>59</sup>. Just as Russia wanted partnership to include reforms in NATO, so the Alliance regarded reform in Russia as essential to cooperation<sup>60</sup>. Each, however, recognised a need for cooperation in establishing an effective security partnership.

NATO expectations of Russia in Bosnia were therefore a good test case of the respective parties' ability to engage in practical cooperation<sup>61</sup>, and an indication of their ability to cooperate beyond the immediate conflict into the future<sup>62</sup>. Bosnia was also a tough testing ground for the formulation of foreign policy in post-Soviet Moscow.

### **The search for a Russian foreign policy**

Despite their policy differences, the Western desire to operate through international bodies entailed the necessity of paying attention to Russia and its views. Moscow had long standing historical and kinship links in the Balkans and, like the major NATO countries, was in the process of adapting to the new world order. If the former Yugoslavia was proving difficult for the West it was no less, and arguably considerably more, of a problem for Russia, which had long established historical ties in the Balkans. Russia enjoyed religious and cultural links with the Balkan Slavs, links which were strengthened during the late nineteenth century as the Ottoman Empire unravelled and pan-Slavism gained greater prominence in Russian thinking<sup>63</sup>. Although the influence of pan-Slavism has from time to time been exaggerated, usually for domestic reasons in Russia, it helps to explain the occasional Russian pre-disposition to adopt a pro-Serbian stance in Bosnia. However, Russian strategic interests and diplomatic self-interest in the Balkans formed a long standing phenomenon and continued to be the chief influence in Moscow's involvement in Bosnia.

At a time when the Russian Federation was only beginning to emerge from the collapse of the Soviet Union as the latter's de facto successor state, it found itself having to deal with seemingly insoluble Balkan problems, which in turn cast a harsh light upon Moscow's search for a foreign policy of its own in the region. For the Russians there were uncomfortable parallels between the dissolution of Yugoslavia and that of the Soviet Union as each former Communist federation was dissolving along ethno-national lines, though not everyone accepted the parallel<sup>64</sup>. The formulation and conduct of Russian



foreign policy generally was being determined to a large extent by domestic political debate over the future direction which the new Russian Federation should take<sup>65</sup>.

In broad terms the debate revolved around whether Russia should seek closer ties with the West (the Atlanticist school) or whether greater emphasis should be given to Russian uniqueness, based upon its Slavic roots and kinships (the Slavophile and Eurasianist schools). These were already historically well-established positions in Russia<sup>66</sup>, but the newness of the post-Soviet, Yeltsin-led Russian Federation and the volatility of the Balkans now gave them an immediacy and import which required early and pragmatic translation into foreign policy. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's pro-Western views did not, for example, sit easily with those of Yevgeny Ambartsumov, Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on International and Foreign Economic Relations<sup>67</sup>. In turn, Russian policy came to be played out in the former Yugoslavia sometimes alongside, sometimes in opposition to, the Western position as Moscow sought to balance its desire for an independent policy with the realpolitik imperative of cooperating with the West and NATO<sup>68</sup>.

Russia's conditional cooperation with the West did not, however, prevent NATO from bombing Serb positions. Moscow's objections to NATO bombing may be viewed not just in the military and political context of the Bosnian conflict, but in the wider context of Russian opposition to giving NATO any support for peacekeeping or military activities closer to Russia's own borders. Against that background, any diplomatic or military action in Bosnia which ran contrary to Moscow's wishes could be read as a diminution of Russian status and influence. Unsurprisingly, therefore, NATO attacks upon Bosnian Serbs drew critical comment in Russia<sup>69</sup>.

Consequently Russian policy in Bosnia was obliged to steer a course designed to maintain the country's international prestige and status as a great power, while as far as possible countering NATO's predominance. As one observer put it "to avoid marginalisation and to prevent NATO dominance have consistently been Russian priorities"<sup>70</sup>. In pursuing

these priorities Moscow veered from cooperation with the West, via independent diplomatic initiatives to, ultimately, a declining influence as disparate Western views gradually merged under US leadership to produce the NATO line which facilitated the Dayton Accord.

*Russia, The United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*

From the outset Moscow did not view NATO as the primary agency for dealing with the emerging crisis in the Balkans. The United Nations, and more specifically in the European context, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later the OSCE) were the institutions of Russian choice in addressing post Cold War security issues, not least because Russia had an interest in keeping NATO at arm's length when it came to peacekeeping in the near abroad<sup>71</sup>.

Russian preference for the UN is readily understood in the context of that organisation's status and authority as an internationally recognised body concerned with conflict resolution. As a Permanent Member of the UN's Security Council Russia was guaranteed a prominent and influential voice in all debates, and possessed the powerful diplomatic veto on proposals not to its liking. In the cooperative spirit of the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian President Boris Yeltsin used his address to the UN Security Council Summit to describe Russia and the West as allies<sup>72</sup>.

Consequently Moscow supported the deployment of UNPROFOR in Croatia, the implementation of sanctions against Belgrade, and the extension of the UNPROFOR mandate to Bosnia in the early years of the Yugoslav wars. These years, under the stewardship of Andrei Kozyrev as Foreign Minister, were the high water mark of Russian cooperation with the West in the Balkans as Moscow sought to make its foreign policy operate through its favoured international institutions.

Russian participation in the peacekeeping efforts of UNPROFOR marked something of a departure, being the first occasion on which Russian troops had made a large scale contribution to UN peacekeeping, in contrast to their Soviet predecessors. A large contribution of troops was also offered in support of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP)<sup>73</sup> and Moscow also supported the commitment to cooperative solutions enshrined in the Washington Declaration, as well as the work of the five-nation Contact Group. All such efforts were part of the Russian need to be involved in international decision-making as part of Moscow's continued claim to great power status. This course, however, did not escape domestic criticism among those who viewed it as an unsatisfactory upholding of Russia's independent interests<sup>74</sup>.

Turning to the OSCE, there were several reasons why this body was attractive to Moscow as the institutional focal point for European security issues<sup>75</sup>. The organization had a widespread membership extending well beyond the NATO core, it espoused a comprehensive approach to security as opposed to traditional 'hard' security concerns, and it operated on the basis of consensual decision making<sup>76</sup>. As a result it offered to Russia a forum in which it could have, potentially, a significant voice in European security, and it also provided an effective counter to NATO preeminence. Of concern to us here, Russia's view of the OSCE, therefore, was closely linked to its wider relationship with NATO<sup>77</sup>. The perceived threat of NATO enlargement and the possibility that the Alliance could adopt a peacekeeping role within the borders of the former Soviet Union, led Moscow to give a greater priority to OSCE prerogatives.

Based upon the domestic struggle to determine the course and conduct of Russian foreign policy, and the pace of external events shaping Europe's security landscape, Russian attitudes to the OSCE evolved continually throughout the 1990s. Consistently to the fore, however, was the desire to maximise Russian security interests by operating through a forum that was not NATO-centric and could accommodate wider concerns than those of the Western alliance. This position was also consistent with the longer term trend in Russia's Balkan policy approach, away from an all-embracing cooperation with the west

towards a more assertive and distinctly Russian line, though still maintaining contact with the West via a recognised international forum. Russian attachment to the CSCE/OSCE persisted when relations with the West deteriorated. This was exemplified by Kozyrev's own writings, in which he cited the work of the Contact Group as an example of what could be achieved through a collective security system based upon the OSCE<sup>78</sup>.

Only as events unfolded in former Yugoslavia, and NATO involvement there increased, did Russia gradually come to terms with the necessity of engaging seriously with the Alliance while simultaneously attempting to establish its own distinctive role. Russian historical interests, great power aspirations and permanent seat on the UN Security Council combined to give it a certain standing in the Balkans region. The logic of Russia's self-perception as a great power ultimately compelled Moscow to seek as far as possible - an important caveat - an independent line in the former Yugoslavia. As we have seen, there was sufficient convergence of views among the foreign policy elite on the basic principle of Russia's claim to great power status to enable policy makers to employ that unifying theme. However, a cool appraisal of the reality of Russia's diplomatic and military capabilities tended to militate against simple wilfulness, generating a creative tension between the desire to pursue an independent line and the necessity of maintaining good diplomatic relations with the West. In this respect, the Serbian connection is important.

### *Russia and The Serbs*

One of the most noteworthy aspects of Russian involvement in Bosnia was its relationship with the Serbs, that is the Belgrade government, and the Bosnian Serbs. Some have identified a parallel between the post-Soviet Russian Federation and post-Yugoslav Serbia in terms of their centrality to the Former Soviet Union and Former Yugoslavia respectively<sup>79</sup>. Upon the collapse of the old systems Russians and Serbs came to be blamed for all the failings of the previous regimes, setting them in opposition to their former fellow citizens of different ethnicities. This in turn helped to foster

Russian and Serb grievance and resentment, at the popular if not necessarily the official level. Consequently, it was possible to speak of a certain level of Russian and Serb solidarity in the post-Cold War order.

Furthermore, a pro-Serbian line held attractions for Moscow as one avenue of approach to the war in Bosnia which would clearly serve to distinguish between the Russian and NATO positions, while still maintaining an overall orientation toward conditional cooperation. The difficulty with this approach, however, was its potential to isolate Russia when events became NATO-driven and detrimental to the Bosnian Serbs. For example, NATO bombing of Bosnian Serb positions illustrated Moscow's vulnerability to being marginalized by those with whom it sought critical cooperation, and being resented by those whose interests it purported to espouse<sup>80</sup>. Nevertheless, there were still some in the Duma who promoted the notion of Pan Slavism and the duty incumbent upon Moscow to aid its ethnic brethren, the Serbs<sup>81</sup>. Russian governmental support for the Serbs would also have the advantage of playing well among elements of the Kremlin's more vocal right wing domestic critics. Unsurprisingly in these circumstances, Moscow did periodically adopt a sympathetic approach to Serbian and FRY interests, most notably on the issue of international sanctions.

In the early part of 1992 Russia was unwilling to countenance sanctions against the FRY, preferring to pursue the diplomatic path and arguing that punitive measures were likely to be counterproductive in the effort win Serb cooperation. Eventually, however, Moscow changed its course and voted in favour of sanctions in accordance with UNSCRs 757 and 787, effectively an acknowledgement of its own diplomatic isolation and Serbian intransigence. Even then it continued to regard sanctions as a blunt instrument, arguing that the rescinding of sanctions should be effected as reward for continued moderation of Serb conduct. Further, Moscow maintained that sanctions should be applied even-handedly against all parties where appropriate, for example in response to Croatian aggression in Bosnia and Krajina.

The Russians were also concerned to prevent any lifting of the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims on the grounds that any increase in the availability of weaponry was bound to lead to an escalation of the violence. On this, Russia was not alone; its abstention on the UN Security Council vote on this issue in June 1993, together with that of Britain and France, defeated a US-proposed removal of the ban. While the Kremlin's position on this appears unobjectionable, Moscow was not solely concerned with preventing an escalation of the war, acknowledging that lifting the embargo would have altered the balance of force to the detriment of the Bosnian Serbs<sup>82</sup>.

If an occasionally pro-Serbian stance distinguished the Russian position from that of most of the other concerned countries (with the possible exception of the UK, which in practice led to accusations of a Serbian bias<sup>83</sup>), so too did Moscow's views on NATO military intervention and, in particular, the use of air strikes<sup>84</sup>. As NATO prepared to employ force against the Serbs in 1994 to implement UN resolutions establishing and defending safe areas, Moscow was faced with a diplomatic dilemma. Opposed to NATO air strikes against the Serbs, it had already voted in favour of the relevant Security Council resolutions under which air strikes were now being authorised (though Moscow did dispute the legitimacy of the mandates in this respect). Matters came to a head when in February 1994 NATO issued an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs to stop shelling Sarajevo and to withdraw their heavy artillery from the surrounding area. Moscow's diplomatic hand was forced and was played cleverly, given the very restricted room for manoeuvre<sup>85</sup>.

Initially the Russians argued that air strikes were not a sound military option since they risked provoking a continued campaign of violence from the Bosnian Serbs. They also risked the lives of Russian UN peacekeepers in Sarajevo, as well as unquantifiable civilian casualties. Further, Moscow queried the validity of the UN Secretary General's action in requesting armed NATO intervention, arguing that any decision to employ force should be a matter for referral to the UN Security Council, in which Russia held a veto<sup>86</sup>. The military and procedural approaches were unsuccessful, forcing the Kremlin to devise a direct diplomatic approach to the Serbs. Yeltsin offered a further contingent of Russian

UN peacekeepers for operations in Sarajevo, and wrote to the Serbian and Bosnian Serb political leadership (President Slobodan Milosevic and Radovan Karadzic respectively) requesting the withdrawal of Serbian weapons from around Sarajevo. In the event this was successful, allowing the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw without appearing to acknowledge NATO's ultimatum, and giving Moscow a notable diplomatic coup at the expense of the Alliance.

On the face of it, cultivating the Serbs and engaging in a critical fashion with NATO would appear to have been a vindication of the Slavophile tradition in Russian foreign policy thinking. It is tempting to read into the sympathy for Belgrade and the Bosnian Serbs echoes of the Slavic kinship tradition, but in fact Foreign Minister Kozyrev recognised at the time that a simple pro-Serb (and by extension anti-NATO) position would be self defeating for Russia, with its own large Muslim population<sup>87</sup>.

Notwithstanding the occasional upsurge in populist pan-Slavist sentiment, the influence of its proponents was limited in Bosnia. It is true that from time to time Moscow evinced pro-Serbian sympathies at the official level, though one may attribute this as much to Russian desires to establish independent diplomatic credentials as to any genuinely held belief in pan-Slavism. It is also true that Russian volunteers fought alongside their Serbian brethren<sup>88</sup>, and that press and parliament occasionally gave vent to pro-Serbian views. However, among the Russian public at large Serbian sympathies were not especially strong.

Indeed, there was something of a myth about the strength of Russian-Serbian kinship, the Russians being ultimately more concerned to preserve their place at the diplomatic top table, if necessary by dropping any pro-Serbian position which threatened them with isolation and loss of status. Russian abstention in the Security Council vote on the arms embargo in June 1993 was symbolically significant. Russia also supported, albeit reluctantly, the February 1994 ultimatum to the Serbs to face air strikes if they did not withdraw from around Sarajevo. There was no protest from Moscow when US aircraft

shot down four Serb jets for entering the no-fly zone in March 1994, and in November of that year the Kremlin supported NATO attacks on Serb aircraft operating out of Udbina airfield. Indeed, Yeltsin and his senior colleagues were quite open in their lack of sympathy to the Serbs, issuing stern public warnings to them to adhere to the will of the international community, whether by subscribing to the VOPP or adhering to agreed courses of action, as at Gorazde<sup>89</sup>.

Consequently, the desire for great power diplomatic autonomy, as evidenced by shows of support for the Serb position, was always tempered by willingness to concede where the consequences of not doing so would be exposure of Russian weakness and isolation, with subsequent loss of international prestige. Moscow had to tread very carefully if it was not to lay itself open to charges of empty rhetoric and posturing. Its displays of independence did not disguise the fact that its interests did not diverge significantly from those of the West<sup>90</sup>.

### **Conclusion - Impact of Bosnia upon NATO and its relations with Russia**

The crowded years of 1991 to 1995 witnessed the collapse of the former Yugoslavia and posed the most immediate threat to security in Europe since the end of the Second World War. The collapse of Yugoslavia confronted the West and Russia with the question of what was to be done to check the violence of the Balkans. In answering that question NATO chose to reinvent itself as an expeditionary organisation prepared to operate politically and militarily outside the borders of its member states, and to accept the consequences in terms of its relationship with Russia. The latter, opposed in principle to any extension of NATO influence and committed to defining its own role in the new world order, performed the tricky balancing act of adopting an autonomous line where possible, while mindful of the need to court Western opinion in order to avoid diplomatic isolation and irrelevance.



Having moved beyond its own borders to act in support of the UN, having exercised force and refined its rules of engagement to enable it to demonstrate clearly the continued military muscle behind UN diplomacy, NATO became ever more deeply involved in Bosnia. We may understand the apparent inconsistency of Russian foreign policy behaviour in Bosnia by recognising that Moscow was pulled in two directions simultaneously, torn between the need to continue to assert its autonomy and the imperative of its own weakness when faced with growing Western intervention. As a result, Russian diplomacy vacillated - by turns cooperative with the west, sympathetic towards FRY and the Bosnian Serbs, and opposed to NATO military operations. These characteristics were not confined to any strict chronological sequence. Rather, they emerged in a more ad hoc fashion in reaction to unfolding events as perceived by Russia, and Moscow's need to engage with the problems of Bosnia and the actions of NATO.

If there was a logic to Russian foreign policy it was aimed at boosting Russia's standing, checking the power of NATO, yet avoiding a diplomatic break with the West. The Bosnian Serb withdrawal from around Sarajevo in February 1994 marked the high point of Russian diplomatic influence<sup>91</sup> but, despite some subsequent achievements (persuading the Serbs to lift the blockade of Tuzla airport in March 1994, and to accept a ceasefire in the Krajina) Moscow was unable to maintain any form of momentum to build upon this success. Instead, contrary to its fundamental priorities, Russia was to find itself increasingly marginalised in Bosnia by the emerging prominence of NATO, culminating in the Dayton settlement at the end of 1995. Ironically Moscow's finest diplomatic hour in Bosnia succeeded only in giving impetus to greater US-led NATO intervention.

As NATO's star waxed with the launch of Operation Deliberate Force against Bosnian Serb positions in August 1995, Russia's influence waned. US diplomacy, led by President Clinton's special envoy Richard Holbrooke, was forcing the pace in Bosnia backed by the application of NATO's military force. It was Holbrooke and his team which drove the diplomatic agenda in Bosnia in the late summer and autumn of 1995 and which culminated in the signing of the Dayton Accord in November of that year, bringing

the war in Bosnia to a close. It was largely at the instigation of the West, especially the USA, and backed by NATO's military and political will, that a peace settlement was reached at Dayton, though it suited NATO and Russia to inflate the part played by Moscow.

Overall the Bosnian experience illustrated the differences among NATO allies, and especially the inability of the Europeans to harmonise their foreign and security policies. In turn, this state of affairs served to highlight the continued need for US leadership of the Alliance, in effect a recognition that nothing had changed in this regard since the end of the Cold War. If NATO was required to act, US diplomatic leadership and military capability were the catalysts for successful action. Bosnia did, however, generate significant change and innovation for NATO, largely by justifying its continued existence, and by providing the rationale for NATO to move from its traditional defensive posture to a more interventionist role. In so doing, NATO had to engage with Moscow's views, which moved from Gorbachevian new thinking and Western cooperation to, by 1995, a more openly self-assertive, if less influential, approach.

Bosnia tested NATO's cohesion and its ability to continue to cooperate with Russia. While NATO may claim ultimately to have passed the cohesion test, it is more difficult to justify that claim with regard to cooperation with Russia. Nevertheless, one may speak of the survival, if not the flourishing, of a working relationship. While never reconciled fully to NATO intervention in the Balkans, Moscow came to engage more fully with its erstwhile enemy alliance, and did so successfully enough to lead, in due course, to a more formal institutionalising of the relationship through the PJC. Even as the resolution of the fighting in Bosnia demonstrated a declining Russian influence, ceded to a US-led NATO, Russia was kept on board in concluding Dayton and implementing its provisions in Bosnia.

The NATO allies came to face up to the lack of European unity in foreign policy, the diplomatic and military primacy of Washington, and the futility of courting the Yeltsin

regime in Moscow. The latter's very weakness, however, obliged NATO to bolster Moscow's position to sustain the portrayal of an international community united in dealing with the horror of Bosnia. Peace there was sustained only by the presence of large numbers of NATO-led troops. In terms of reimposing a tolerable level of security NATO intervention had eventually proven effective. A NATO interventionist template had thus been created in the Balkans – a clear indication of the senior-junior nature of the Alliance's relationship with Russia.

<sup>1</sup> For a critique of the UN's efforts see David Rieff, *The Institution That Saw No Evil* The New Republic 12<sup>th</sup> February 1996 – cited in the Bosnian Institute's Bosnia Report February-March 1996 ([www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/febmar96/evil](http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/febmar96/evil).)

<sup>2</sup> Michael Andersen, *Russia and the Former Yugoslavia*, Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation?, ed M Webber, MacMillan 2000, p 193.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the narrative describing the collapse of Yugoslavia in these sections is derived from private notes based upon internal NATO briefing materials and regular discussions at NATO's Southern Region HQ in Naples. These briefings and discussions were conducted largely, though not exclusively, during my tenure as a Staff Officer to the Political Adviser in NATO's Southern Region between May 2000 and March 2002, when interlocutors, military and civilian, agreed to speak on a non-attributable basis.

<sup>4</sup> Rusmir Mahmutcehajic, *The Road to War, The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995*, Branka Magas and Ivo Zanic eds., London 2001, pp 141-143.

<sup>5</sup> [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1991/713e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1991/713e).

<sup>6</sup> "Bonn gives lead on Croats" The Guardian 24<sup>th</sup> December 1991.

<sup>7</sup> [www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r743e](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r743e).

<sup>8</sup> A. Oliyik, "Peredovoi otryad Rossiskikh 'golubvik kasok' otbivayet v Yugoslavyyu" Krasnaya Zvezda 13<sup>th</sup> March 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Eduard Volodin, "An experiment for Russia" Sovetskaya Rossiya 4<sup>th</sup> August 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Yigal Chazan, "Bosnia starts to draw battle lines" The Guardian 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1992.

<sup>11</sup> [www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r757e](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r757e).

<sup>12</sup> [www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c920604a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c920604a).

<sup>13</sup> Specifically, resolutions 780, 781, 787, and 795. For details see [www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r780e](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r780e).

[www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r781e](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r781e).

[www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r787e](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r787e).

[www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r795e](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1992/s92r795e).

<sup>14</sup> [www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c921021a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c921021a).

<sup>15</sup> [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/808e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/808e).

<sup>16</sup> [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/815e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/815e).

<sup>17</sup> [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/816e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/816e).

<sup>18</sup> Resolutions 820 and 824. For details see [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/820e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/820e).and [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/824e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/824e).

<sup>19</sup> NATO Ministerial Communiqué 11<sup>th</sup> June 1993, issued at the NACC Foreign Ministers meeting in Athens.

<sup>20</sup> [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/842e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/842e).

<sup>21</sup> [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/836e](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1993/836e).

<sup>22</sup> An account of British Prime Minister John Major's official visit to Russia in February 1994 gives particular attention to Russian objections to the possibility of NATO airstrikes. See Mikhail Pogorelyy, "Partnersky dialog Rossii i Britanii" Krasnaya Zvezda 16<sup>th</sup> February 1994.

<sup>23</sup> The significance of this action should not be underestimated. One commentator even goes so far as to describe it as having redeemed NATO's credibility in former Yugoslavia. See Stephanie Anderson, *EU, NATO and CSCE responses to the Yugoslav Crisis: Testing Europe's New Security Architecture*, European Security Vol 4 Summer 1995, p 349.

<sup>24</sup> Mikhail Karpov, "NATO aviation completes its act of retribution in the Balkans" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 12<sup>th</sup> April 1994.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed discussion of the application of air power in Bosnia see Tim Ripley, Air War Bosnia: UN and NATO Airpower Shrewsbury 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Ripley, *ibid*, pp 70-71

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<sup>27</sup> Ian Traynor, Ian Black and Yigal Chazan, "Croats and Muslims meet to put flesh on bones of Federation Pact" The Guardian 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Mikhail Karpov and Sergei Gryzunov, "At the second attempt" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 31<sup>st</sup> March 1994. As well as describing the signing of the ceasefire, the article has an interview with Yeltsin's special envoy Vitaly Churkin.

<sup>29</sup> The indictments are detailed at [www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/mar-ii950725e\\_and](http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/mar-ii950725e_and) and [www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/kar-ii950724e](http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/kar-ii950724e), respectively.

<sup>30</sup> The massacre at Srebrenica – where a lightly armed and ill-trained Dutch contingent of fewer than 200 was charged with protecting some 30,000 Muslims – would return to haunt the west later. In April 2002 a report by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation laid the blame for failure to protect the Srebrenica safe area at the door of the Dutch government. Prime Minister Wim Kok and his Cabinet resigned en masse. See Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, "Betrayal by Dutch troops lead to killing of 7,000 Muslims" Daily Telegraph 11<sup>th</sup> April 2002; also, Ian Bickerton, "Failure in Srebrenica" Financial Times 11<sup>th</sup> April 2002; and Andrew Osborn and Paul Brown, "Dutch Cabinet resigns over Srebrenica Massacre" Guardian Unlimited 17<sup>th</sup> April 2002

<sup>31</sup> NATO Press Release (95) 79 dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 1995 *Statement by the Secretary-General* ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1995/p95-079.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1995/p95-079.htm))

<sup>32</sup> James Gow, Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War London 1997 pp 158-166.

<sup>33</sup> See James Gow "The Policy Making Aspects of Peacekeeping, Intervention and Humanitarian Aid" Report of the Franco-British Council Meeting, London 11 February 1994 (cited in Gow, Triumph of the Lack of Will p 159). This view is echoed in my discussions with Bosnian-experienced senior French officers seconded to NATO, who independently confirmed the view that French military isolation from the NATO structure was detrimental to France's military planning processes.

<sup>34</sup> Anna Tomforde, "Washington and Bonn clash over German plan to recognise breakaway Yugoslav republics" The Guardian 6<sup>th</sup> December 1991; John Palmer, "German plan to recognise Croatia puts EC in turmoil" The Guardian 16<sup>th</sup> December 1991.

<sup>35</sup> Brendan Simms, Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia Penguin, London 2001.

<sup>36</sup> This tack is given short shrift by Simms, with frequent disparaging references to the "men on the ground" and the flawed advice which he regards them as having provided to London. Unfinest Hour pp 173-222.

<sup>37</sup> See David Owen, Balkan Odyssey Victor Gollancz, London 1995. As the EC/EU negotiator working alongside the UN's Cyrus Vance, Owen had access to all the major participants, but particularly the British, given his own political background. He summarises Major's and Hurd's views as being reluctant to commit more British troops without a similar US commitment (see Chap 3 pp 102-103).

<sup>38</sup> Simms, Unfinest Hour chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>39</sup> Simms, Unfinest Hour chapter 5. The author provides a scathing assessment of Rose's tenure. For an insider's view and a more sympathetic appraisal of the UNPROFOR Commander, see the memoir of the British Liaison Officer, Milos Stankovic, Trusted Mole: A Soldier's Journey Into Bosnia's Heart of Darkness HarperCollins, London 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Douglas Hurd's speech to the Annual Diplomatic Banquet, quoted in Arms Control and Disarmament Quarterly Review No 34 July 1994 pp 49-50 – cited in Gow, Triumph of the Lack of Will p220.

<sup>41</sup> See Michael Cox, From the Cold War to Strategic Partnership? US-Russian relations since the end of the USSR in Russia After the Cold War Bowker and Ross (eds), pp 258-279.

<sup>42</sup> Gow, Triumph of the Lack of Will p 207

<sup>43</sup> Richard J Aldrich, "America used Islamists to Arm the Bosnian Muslims" The Guardian 22 April 2002; also Richard Norton-Taylor comment in the same edition. See also Simms, Triumph of the Lack of will p 121-122.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Holbrooke, To End A War New York 1998, p 28.

<sup>45</sup> The Situation in Yugoslavia, statement by the Heads of State and Government, North Atlantic Council meeting in Rome, 1-8 November 1991 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911108](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911108)).

<sup>46</sup> The Alliance's Strategic Concept agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Rome 8<sup>th</sup> November 1991 ([www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b911108a](http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b911108a)).

- <sup>47</sup> Final Communiqué from the NAC Ministerial meeting, Oslo, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1992 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c920604a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c920604a)).
- <sup>48</sup> Final Communiqué of the Defence Planning Committee, NATO HQ Brussels 11<sup>th</sup> December 1992 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c921211a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c921211a)).
- <sup>49</sup> Statement on Former Yugoslavia, issued by the North Atlantic Council, NATO HQ Brussels, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1992.
- <sup>50</sup> NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner's interview with Aleksy Pushkov, carried in Moskovskie Novosti 11<sup>th</sup> October 1992.
- <sup>51</sup> Note 53, above.
- <sup>52</sup> Press Communiqué M-NACC-1(93)39, statement by the NACC Foreign Ministers, Athens, 11<sup>th</sup> June 1993 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c930611a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c930611a)).
- <sup>53</sup> Press statement by the Secretary-General, Brussels, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1993 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c930802a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c930802a)).
- <sup>54</sup> Press Communiqué M-NAC-2(93)70, Brussels, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1993 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c931202a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c931202a)).
- <sup>55</sup> Decisions on the Protection of Safe Areas, NAC Communiqué, Brussels, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1994 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940422b](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940422b)).
- <sup>56</sup> Statement on the situation in the Former Yugoslavia, issued by the NAC Ministerial session, Noordwijk, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1995 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c950530a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c950530a)).
- <sup>57</sup> See David Yost, NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security, Washington 1998, pp 82-88 and 121-151.
- <sup>58</sup> Summary of the conclusion to discussions between the NAC and the Foreign Minister of Russia, Andrei Kozyrev, Brussels 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1994 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940622a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940622a)).
- <sup>59</sup> Statement by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of the Russian Federation, NATO Council Noordwijk, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1995 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c950531b](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c950531b)).
- <sup>60</sup> Communiqué from NAC Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1994 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c941201a](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c941201a)).
- <sup>61</sup> See for example Mikhail Karpov and Dmitry Gornostayev, "The west requests Russia to do all it can so that NATO will not have to fulfil its ultimatum" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 19<sup>th</sup> February 1994.
- <sup>62</sup> See Press Communiqué M-NAC-2 (95)118, final communiqué of the NAC, Brussels, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1995, para 4 re cooperation with Russia.
- <sup>63</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee Russia and the Balkans: Old Themes and New Challenges Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda Baranovsky (ed), SIPRI Oxford 1997 pp 389-390.
- <sup>64</sup> "The CIS allowed us to avoid the bloody break up of the Union", Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's interview with G V Marsov in Nezavisimaya Gazeta 8<sup>th</sup> December 1992.
- <sup>65</sup> For a detailed discussion of the foreign policy debate see Margot Light Foreign Policy Thinking in Malcolm, Pravda, Allison, Light (eds) Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy RIIA Oxford 1996. See also Hannes Adomeit pp 35-68 Russia as a 'Great Power' in World Affairs: Images and Reality International Affairs 71,1 (1995).
- <sup>66</sup> For a discussion of the emergence of the Slavophile and Westernising traditions in the debates of the nineteenth century Russian intelligentsia see David Saunders Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform 1801-1881 pp 148-167, Longman London 1992.
- <sup>67</sup> Yevgeny Ambartsumov, "Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Rapprochement?" Moskovskie Novosti 28<sup>th</sup> February 1993 (also note 86 below).
- <sup>68</sup> For a discussion on the early formulation of Russian Federation foreign policy and the key players involved see D Ryurikov and M Migranyan, "Yeltsin's Line: who makes foreign policy and how is it made?" Moskovskie Novosti 20<sup>th</sup> June 1993. Also, Dmitry Pogorzhel'sky, "Vitaly Churkin: Russian and NATO never had any conflicts" Segodnya 25<sup>th</sup> April 1995, in which Churkin discusses the wider context of NATO-Russian relations and Moscow's need to cooperate with the alliance (also note 97 below).
- <sup>69</sup> Predictably, Krasnaya Zvezda was particularly critical - for example Elena Guskova, "NATO nachinaet voinu na Balkanakh" Krasnaya Zvezda 1<sup>st</sup> September 1995; Aleksandr Oliynik, "Khorvatskaya 'Burya' provodilas' po amerikanskim planom" Krasnaya Zvezda 12<sup>th</sup> September 1995; Vadim Markushin and Aleksandr Oliynik, "Memorandum o 'mirotvorchestvo': sdelka za spinoi Rossii" Krasnaya Zvezda 15<sup>th</sup>

September 1995: Aleksandr Gol'ts, "Moskovskoe echo Natovskikh bombezhek" Krasnaya Zvezda 16<sup>th</sup> September 1995. See also Aleksey Pushkov, "A deserved place on the periphery" Moskovskiy Novosti 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1995; Sergey Solodovnik, "Peacekeeping with a supply from the air" Moskovskiy Novosti 17<sup>th</sup> September 1995.

<sup>70</sup> Andersen, *Russia and the Former Yugoslavia* op cit p185.

<sup>71</sup> With the June 1992 declaration of the CSCE, subsequently the OSCE, as a regional organisation of the UN, the former was able to call upon NATO, WEU and other forces to effect peacekeeping settlements in Europe. However, Russia wanted international recognition of her role and status in the territories of the Former Soviet Union. See A Zagorskiy "Who will regulate the conflicts?" Moskovskiy Novosti 30<sup>th</sup> May 1993.

<sup>72</sup> "Yeltsin calls for global protection", The Guardian 1<sup>st</sup> February 1992.

<sup>73</sup> "Zayavlenie MID RF" Krasnaya Zvezda 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1993.

<sup>74</sup> Y. Popov, "The Diplomacy of Cynicism" Sovetskaya Rossiya 8<sup>th</sup> May 1993, in which the author takes the Russian Foreign Ministry to task for cooperating with the west to pressurise the Bosnian Serbs into accepting the Vance-Owen plan.

<sup>75</sup> For a full treatment of Russia and its relations with the OSCE see Dov Lynch *Russia and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe* in Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation? (ed. Webber) MacMillan. See esp pp 99-100 on why the OSCE was traditionally preferred by the Soviet Union/Russia, standing as it did in contrast to NATO.

<sup>76</sup> See for example, the 1993 Helsinki Declaration of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly ([www.osce.org/pa/annual\\_session/helsinki](http://www.osce.org/pa/annual_session/helsinki))

<sup>77</sup> "The creation of a formal special relationship between Russia and NATO in the Permanent Joint Council in 1997... led Russia to abandon its most ambitious plans regarding the OSCE. However, Russian-NATO ties remain significantly linked with Russian policy toward the OSCE and its desire to maintain an effective balance between 'mutually reinforcing institutions' in Europe." Lynch, *Russia and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe* op cit, pp 103-104.

<sup>78</sup> Andrei Kozyrev *Partnership or Cold Peace?* Foreign Policy Summer 1995

<sup>79</sup> For a comparison of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union see V. Bondarev, "So like Russia, thank god Russia isn't" Kuranty 8<sup>th</sup> August 1995. Also, N. Alexandrova-Arbatova *The Balkans test for Russia* in Baranovsky (ed) Russia and Europe op cit p 409. See also Malcolm, Pravda, Allison, Light (eds) Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy p 215.

<sup>80</sup> Dmitry Sabot, "Russia between NATO and the Serbs" Moskovskiy Novosti 28<sup>th</sup> May 1995.

<sup>81</sup> Criticism of the executive came from such influential figures as Yevgeny Ambartsumov, Chairman of the Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as from more predictable nationalist sources such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The spectrum of critical opinion highlights the vibrant nature of the domestic debate on approaches to foreign policy, and the concern to exert parliamentary pressure in the new Russian Federation's policy making process. See for example Ivan Rodin, "The Yugoslav war stirs up the Russian Duma" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1994; Vladimir Katin and others, "NATO is for a forcible resolution of the Bosnian conflict, Moscow is for a political resolution" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 11<sup>th</sup> February 1994; Aleksandr Gol'ts, "Bosiinskii uzel i politika Moskvi" Krasnaya Zvezda 12<sup>th</sup> February 1994.

<sup>82</sup> RFE/RL Newsbriefs, 16-19 August 1994.

<sup>83</sup> Gow, Triumph of the Lack of Will op cit pp 174-182. Gow, like Simms, argues that the British approach to the crisis in Bosnia was characterised by stasis and an inability to break the cycle of violence, resulting in an ineffective holding operation by the UN, ie an approach of pusillanimous realism.

<sup>84</sup> Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev articulated this standpoint, arguing the case for NATO consulting fully and on an equal footing with Moscow, rather than simply advocating unilaterally the use of force against the Bosnian Serbs. See "NATO's ultimatum was the worst of all possible solutions to the Bosnian crisis" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1994.

<sup>85</sup> Sergei Sidirov, "Ugroza avaiudarov NATO ustranena blagodarya reshitel'nim deistviyam Rossii" Krasnaya Zvezda 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1994.

<sup>86</sup> Mark Webber, The International Politics of Russia and the Successor States, Manchester University Press 1996 p 262.

<sup>87</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1992.

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<sup>88</sup> I Nekrasov, "*In Bosnia we are defending Russia*" Moskovskiye Novosti 28<sup>th</sup> February 1993.

<sup>89</sup> See Simms Unfinest Hour op cit p 84.

<sup>90</sup> Dmitri Pogorzhel'skiy, "*Vitaly Churkin: Russia and NATO never had any conflicts*" Segodnya, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1995 (also note 73 above)

<sup>91</sup> Vladimir Katin, "*Europe looks at Russia in a new way*" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 25<sup>th</sup> February 1994.



## Chapter Three

### NATO makes the rules: The Bombing of Kosovo 1999

#### *Introduction*

The conflict in Bosnia demonstrated that the NATO-Russian relationship, while not one of equals was nevertheless significant for both parties. Yet if Bosnia placed what proved to be a bearable strain on NATO's dealings with Russia, events in the province of Kosovo were to test matters even more severely.

With its largely Albanian population the province of Kosovo sat uncomfortably within the federal republic of Serbia, and had for many years sought recognition of its own internal autonomy, and its differences from the rest of Yugoslavia. In 1974 Tito acknowledged Kosovo's distinct status as an autonomous province, though not a distinct federal republic, of the Yugoslav federation. The breakup of Yugoslavia gave impetus to the Kosovar Albanians' desire to achieve independence. At a time when other federal republics were pursuing their own independence from Belgrade, there was clearly an opportunity to press the Kosovar Albanians' case, but the province lacked the status of a federal republic such as Croatia or Slovenia, and so wider recognition of its claims to independence<sup>1</sup>. It was a constituent province of the federal republic of Serbia, which was embroiled in its own struggle to establish a Greater Serbia, and which cleaved to Kosovo as a place of historical significance for all Serbs<sup>2</sup>. Whatever the views of the majority of Kosovo's population, Belgrade was not going to accommodate any form of Kosovan secessionism.

While world attention was focused on Bosnia there was no movement to resolve the stalemate in Kosovo. Disappointingly for the Kosovar Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, the Dayton Accords failed to address the Kosovo question, and stalemate persisted. The ensuing armed and political struggles in the province succeeded in internationalising the problem, and once again brought NATO and Russian focus back to the Balkans. This

time, however, the pace of events and the desire not to repeat the failures of Bosnia generated a fast moving and often tense diplomatic atmosphere, with potentially grave consequences for the relationship.

This chapter will consider the background to the war in Kosovo, examining the views of the Kosovar Albanians and their resort to armed insurrection. It will consider the Serb response, the events leading to international attempts to broker a peace deal at Rambouillet and, subsequently, to the NATO decision to launch Operation Allied Force (the bombing of Kosovo) in March 1999. It will cover the significance of that intervention in terms of its implications for international law, its impact upon NATO itself, and the reaction from Moscow. The course and outcome of the operation will be considered, and the chapter will analyse specifically the effect of Operation Allied Force upon NATO's relationship with Moscow.

By examining the background to, and unfolding of, the conflict in Kosovo, the course of NATO-Russian relations may be observed in its post-Bosnian phase. The conflict in Kosovo, and NATO and Russian responses to it, served to illustrate the growing gap between Russia's great power assertions and its ability to exert real influence on the course of events in the former Yugoslavia. By contrast, Operation Allied Force also demonstrated the willingness and ability of a US-led NATO to flex its military muscle, whether or not sanctioned by the UN. The conflict over Kosovo, by illustrating the Alliance's preparedness and ability to wage war, and Russia's inability to prevent it, further exacerbated the inequality of the NATO-Russian relationship. This inequality would colour the outlook of Moscow as it sought to promote its own role in peacemaking and peacekeeping, and as NATO for its own reasons sought to portray partnership and cooperation with Russia in the Balkans as perhaps more significant than in fact it was. The rifts which had characterised NATO-Russian dealings over Bosnia were thus widened and deepened by Kosovo.

### **The Yugoslav Context**

### *Kosovo seeks independence*

Yugoslavia's collapse led to the pursuit of independence by its constituent republics in the federation. In terms of a desire for independence from Belgrade the position of Kosovo was no different to that of Croatia or Slovenia. In legal terms, however, the position differed significantly in that the latter were fully fledged and internationally recognised republics of the former federation, entitled to pursue their autonomy upon the disintegration of that federation. Kosovo enjoyed no such international recognition, its status as an internal province being subordinate to that of a republic and, as such, ineligible for international acknowledgement as an independent state<sup>3</sup>. What made this position worse was Kosovo's position within the former Yugoslav republic of Serbia at a time when the Milosevic leadership in Belgrade was seeking to promote the cause of a Greater Serbia throughout parts of the former Yugoslavia.

The tension between the Kosovar Albanian desire for self-determination, and the international community's upholding of the principle of territorial integrity, was compounded by the issue of ethnicity. The Albanian roots of Kosovo's population had long marked the province as different to the rest of Yugoslavia, and had won for it a special provincial autonomous status under Tito in 1974. That autonomy perished with the collapse of Yugoslavia, notwithstanding the efforts of Ibrahim Rugova and his Kosovo Democratic Alliance (KDA) party to preserve, and even enhance it, via their September 1990 proclamation of the sovereign republic of Kosovo<sup>4</sup>. Within weeks of the proclamation, the Serbian assembly in Belgrade had passed a new constitution for the Serbian republic, in the process formally abolishing Kosovo's provincial autonomy.

In response the Kosovar Albanians adopted a strategy of peaceful resistance to Serbia. Under the leadership of Rugova, parallel governmental structures were established<sup>5</sup>. Kosovo's Albanian population took responsibility for the provision of its own education and administration of daily life, and withdrew cooperation from the Serbian authorities. For a few years this strange form of governance, paralleling the structures across the border in Albania, coexisted with the official Serbian regime, and offered the hope that

Kosovo's problems might be internationalised without resort to violence. However, the heavy responsibility of bringing peace to Bosnia precluded the issue of Kosovo from consideration at Dayton and, for some Kosovar Albanians, suggested international indifference to their cause. This in turn propelled a move away from peaceful resistance towards armed insurrection.

To begin with, armed attacks were light and sporadic. Rugova still held sway over many Kosovar Albanians, and the Kosovo Liberation Army's (KLA) resources were extremely limited. In due course, however, the collapse of Albania in 1997 led to a situation of lawlessness which included the ransacking of state run arsenals. Much of the weaponry which was looted from Albania subsequently turned up in Kosovo, reinforcing the hand of the KLA in its preparations for an armed campaign against the Serbs. This, allied to support from the local population, and the failure of Dayton to reward Kosovar Albanian peaceful resistance, paved the way for a more sustained campaign of violence waged by the KLA, and the subsequent brutal reaction by the Milosevic regime in Belgrade.

### *Belgrade responds*

The historic significance of Kosovo for the Serbs cannot be overstated<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the expulsion of Serbs from Croatia in 1995 was still fresh in the Serb nationalist consciousness, together with a determination never to suffer the experience again. Compounding this was Serb antipathy to Kosovo's Albanians, perceived as having driven out many Kosovan Serbs during the years of Kosovo's provincial autonomy in the 1970s and 1980s. Demography, however, was decisively on the side of the Kosovar Albanians, giving Belgrade a headache as to how to retain the province within the Republic of Serbia, yet keep the Kosovar Albanians' secessionist ambitions under control. In the longer term, there was no getting around the issue of population numbers. Kosovar Serbs were not only heavily outnumbered by Kosovar Albanians, there was even a Serbian school of thought which argued for relinquishing Kosovo to preserve a long term Serb majority in the Republic of Serbia itself<sup>7</sup>.

The KLA uprising of 1998-99 brought this dilemma firmly to the forefront of Belgrade's thinking, and resulted in a forceful anti-insurgency campaign against the rebels. In 1998 the Milosevic regime concentrated its efforts on crushing the KLA, a strategy which entailed displacement of much of the Kosovar Albanian population, without whose succour a successful guerrilla campaign would be much more difficult. Yet throughout 1998-99, up until NATO intervention was all but inevitable, Milosevic appears not to have given full rein to mass expulsions of Kosovar Albanians, presumably in an effort to avoid western intervention<sup>8</sup>. In October 1998, for example, he agreed to a ceasefire which limited the numbers of Serbian forces deployable within Kosovo, and agreed to receive two thousand OSCE monitors, considerable concessions for a sovereign state<sup>9</sup>. Further, the considerable upsurge in mass expulsion of Kosovar Albanians after the launch of NATO's air attacks in March 1999 (see below) would appear to indicate that previous expulsions had been more targeted and less widespread. Within a few months, however, the Racak massacre of January 1999 brought the October ceasefire to an end and led to the Rambouillet conference of February 1999.

#### *Rambouillet and the Road to War*

Rambouillet was the brainchild of the Contact Group and afforded a brief breathing space for all concerned to attempt to avoid further bloodshed. Unsurprisingly, given the membership of the Contact Group, NATO fully supported its efforts to bring about an end to hostilities<sup>10</sup>. In February 1999 the initial negotiations, as far as the Serbian side was concerned, were conducted under the threat of NATO intervention, a situation which Belgrade was determined to avoid even if it meant partial restoration of Kosovar autonomy within Serbia, albeit with safeguards for the Kosovar Serb population<sup>11</sup>. The proposed Interim Agreement was, in any case, rejected by the KLA since it did not hold out the prospect of secession in due course.

Under US pressure, however, the KLA accepted the Interim Agreement at the second time of asking when the negotiations reconvened in mid-March. On this occasion, however, a military annex to the Agreement, granting NATO unimpeded access to

facilities and territory in Serbia, rendered the arrangements unacceptable to the Serbs and made NATO intervention all but inevitable.

Milosevic was now faced with the prospect of war against NATO as well as the conduct of his current campaign against the KLA. The imminence of the former accelerated the prosecution of the latter. Within weeks a violent campaign of expulsion of Kosovar Albanians had driven many hundreds of thousands across the borders into Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Ironically, the 'success' of Milosevic's plan to redress the demographic balance reinforced NATO's will to act against Serbia, and cemented much of Western public opinion behind NATO. The scene was set for a historic military intervention by the Alliance.

### **Operation Allied Force**

NATO's decision to launch Operation Allied Force in March 1999 had profound significance for post Cold War European security well beyond the resolution of the immediate conflict in Kosovo. Any consideration of the impact of that decision must necessarily address the immediate conflict; however, we also need to consider to some degree its wider implications in order to comprehend its full significance for the Alliance itself, and for its relationship with Russia. As we saw in the previous chapter, NATO-Russia relations had demonstrated a form of critical cooperation over Bosnia (exemplified as we shall see in the following chapter over the Dayton Accords). The war in Kosovo and NATO's military intervention presented a case of sharp and unambiguous disagreement between Moscow and the Alliance.

In a very real sense Operation Allied Force marked the nadir of NATO-Russian relations, and thus merits examination in detail. Because the intervention occurred within a particular international context and set important international precedents it is necessary to consider NATO's action in Kosovo in broad terms before examining the specific impact upon relations with Russia. Hence, this section will consider briefly the impact of Operation Allied Force on the prosecution of the Serb campaign against the Kosovar

Albanians. It will then trace the course of the NATO air campaign launched against Serb forces, and in particular the claims advanced on behalf of air power, central to an understanding of why the Alliance acted as it did. This will be followed by a brief consideration of the impact of intervention upon contemporary understanding of international law in this field. In turn, I will consider the effect of Operation Allied Force upon the Alliance itself, before examining in more detail the impact upon its relationship with Russia in the context of, effectively, the new rules of the international game.

### *NATO Intervention*

In the approach to, and immediately after, intervention in Kosovo the West made it plain that chief among the reasons for intervention was the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe<sup>12</sup>. Others have argued that NATO's very intervention provoked a humanitarian catastrophe, claiming that the bombing campaign accelerated the expulsions carried out by Milosevic's troops in Kosovo<sup>13</sup>. Certainly, it is clear that the campaign of forced expulsion of Kosovar Albanians was stepped up in the run up to the initial NATO bombardment<sup>14</sup>.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that initially limited expulsions were expanded in the light of the anticipated intervention, and that the drive to effect ethnic rebalancing (from a Serbian perspective) received impetus from an imminent NATO attack. However, that is not to say that the step up was not already planned as part of Milosevic's anti-KLA strategy. On this basis it is possible to argue the case either way, i.e. that NATO intervention was justified to suppress a campaign of brutal ethnic expulsions already under way or, conversely, that NATO intervention was the catalyst which turned a limited anti-terrorist expulsion programme into a forced mass exodus. The more immediate problem for Belgrade was no longer how to justify its actions – since the West had already made up its mind to intervene – but how to protect its forces from attack as NATO launched Operation Allied Force, relying upon its air power to effect the will of the Alliance.

### *Operation Allied Force and Air Power*

NATO undertook a military campaign based exclusively on the use of air power to achieve its objectives in Kosovo. This was perceived as the least risk strategy by Western leaders. This was an important consideration in maintaining domestic political support among the Alliance's leading member/contributor nations, and in turn helped to reinforce NATO solidarity in prosecuting the campaign. One of the major effects of achieving and maintaining this solidarity was, of course, to deny Milosevic the prospect of facing a divided and undermined enemy.

If the initial attraction of air power lay in its potential to achieve political-military goals at minimum risk, the course of the air war did not necessarily run as smoothly as had been hoped for. In practice, it was characterised by initial optimism, limited effect upon the enemy, gradual escalation and, finally, a strategic campaign against Serbia proper, as opposed to a tactical one against Belgrade's fielded forces in Kosovo. Only when the bombs were falling on Serbia did Milosevic finally relent and seek terms, though his decision may have been influenced just as much by his diplomatic abandonment by Russia as by the effects of the bombing campaign.

In the event, the hoped-for short air war lasted seventy-eight days and tested NATO cohesion to the full, with debate among Allies between proponents of ground warfare intervention (UK), those favouring limited use of air strikes (France), and those with a largely neutral stance on the use of force in order to keep in check their domestic constituencies<sup>15</sup>. To arrive at a better understanding of the evolution of NATO thinking during Operation Allied Force, it is worth giving some consideration to the debate on the success or otherwise of air power, given its central role in the Kosovo campaign and its subsequent impact upon relations with Moscow.

Use of air power was the option of choice for western politicians based upon their inclination to view it as offering least risk to their own forces, and most political acceptance among their electorates<sup>16</sup>. Against this background, any assessment of the



success or otherwise of air power needs to address the political aims of the campaign, and the military ones. In so doing, one must start from an appreciation of what air power is, since any judgement of its achievements can only be arrived at in the context of its capabilities.

Something of an academic industry has grown up around air power, and while this is not the place to explore the study of the subject, a working hypothesis is necessary. All research into air power represents a variation on the theme that it is concerned with the application of military force from the 'platform' of the air (and, increasingly, from space). Technological advances offer the possibility of so-called surgical strikes i.e. generating limited collateral damage, through the use of precision-guided munitions. Consequently, air power is an attractive option to those, mindful of the need to maintain political support and cohesion, seeking to minimise non-combatant casualties. Air power is thus an effective military instrument in conjunction with land and sea power, as circumstances dictate. It can also provide an effective military instrument in support of political ends *if applied correctly under appropriate circumstances*. Its inappropriate military use, however, based solely on its attractiveness to policy makers, makes it a blunt instrument for obtaining political ends<sup>17</sup>.

Air power's proponents claim that it can win a military conflict outright, and indeed cite Kosovo as a case in point<sup>18</sup>. While it may be possible to speak of a successful military campaign (with the significant qualification that the Serb forces, though hampered, remained largely intact), it is not possible to regard the air war as having safeguarded the Kosovar Albanians, thousands of whom were killed or driven out during the course of Operation Allied Force. Since this was the chief political reason advanced for going to war, failure to meet that objective undermines the claims advanced on behalf of air power's ability to meet political needs. However, by its very nature, air power alone was not a suitable means of protecting hundreds of thousands of people on the ground. NATO's reluctance to complement air power with a force of ground troops effectively limited Operation Allied Force to tightly proscribed high altitude bombing of, initially, politically insignificant targets, in the name of risk aversion and domestic political

expedience. Claims that air power alone won the day are greatly exaggerated<sup>19</sup>, though the cautious conduct of the air campaign contributed significantly to the cohesion of the Allies in facing down Belgrade.

Given the recent horrors of Bosnia and the pressure on western governments to respond to Serbian actions it is not difficult to appreciate the attractions of an air campaign. Such a course courted the danger of a breach in relations with Moscow but this was seen as an acceptable risk given the broader context. To have taken account of Russian views would have obliged NATO governments to engage in a necessarily protracted diplomatic process, by definition inimical to decisive action. Air power appeared to offer a swift and effective solution, albeit at the expense of political relations with Moscow. It therefore became a factor in deciding NATO to opt for the military rather than the political route, a decision which in itself is indicative of the relative value placed upon the relationship by NATO, when viewed in the context of the Balkans. In short, NATO placed strategic considerations over Kosovo ahead of diplomatic considerations relating to Russia.

#### *Operation Allied Force, Intervention and International Law*

At the height of NATO's campaign against Yugoslavia, British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a robust case for the justification of interventionism in international affairs<sup>20</sup>. Yet beyond the outcome of the immediate campaign, the war in Kosovo proved deeply controversial with regard to the legal ambiguity surrounding Operation Allied Force, and its implications for the future conduct of international relations. Indeed, it is fair to say that it set new parameters within which to play the international game; it is also fair to say that NATO's intervention in Kosovo gave rise to a veritable publishing industry on the ramifications of the intervention for international law<sup>21</sup>.

It should be noted at the outset that we are concerned here not with questions of morality and international law per se, but with the ramifications of Allied Force in these areas, given their centrality to the NATO-Russian relationship. This section will consider the significance of Allied Force in pushing accepted boundaries, and the consequences in

terms of international law, contending that these were highly significant in altering the posture of NATO and, consequently, the character of the Alliance's relationship with Russia<sup>22</sup>.

The debate surrounding the moral and legal soundness of Operation Allied Force can be understood in the context of the widely accepted (in the west) Augustinian principles of war – the 'just war' construct, the roots of which are traceable to St Augustin of Hippo<sup>23</sup>. In examining whether NATO acted in accordance with the accepted precepts of a just war, it is necessary to consider whether the Alliance was justified in going to war (*jus ad bellum*, understood as just cause) in the first place, and how it conducted the subsequent campaign (*jus in bello*, understood as just conduct)<sup>24</sup>. The latter revolved around the prosecution of the air campaign: we are concerned here, therefore, with the former, and in particular with addressing the question of legality. For the Alliance to show just cause it would have to address three fundamental questions: was the decision to go to war supportable as preventing a greater evil?; were all other options short of war exhausted?; and was the decision to go to war a lawful one?.

NATO's stated intent in going to war was to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe<sup>25</sup>, an aim which it judged worthy of intervention in a sovereign state in order to prevent the greater evil of the killing of thousands of Kosovar Albanians by the Serbs. On the face of it, the aim of humanitarian intervention would appear justifiable, indeed laudable, especially given the horrific recent experience of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Croatia. Against a background of ongoing killings and expulsions of Kosovar Albanians by the Milosevic regime, the west's bruising political experience of very recent Balkan conflicts, and the reaction of public opinion among NATO members, there was a growing sense that, this time, something must be done<sup>26</sup>.

If, as the Bosnian experience would appear to have demonstrated, Belgrade was not prepared to accommodate the opinion of the international community short of the threat of force; if, as the failure of Rambouillet showed, the Balkans was set to witness further bloodshed as Milosevic intensified his campaign against the Kosovar Albanians; if, as

western contemporary debate would appear to indicate, NATO domestic opinion was in favour of using force to intervene to prevent another bout of ethnic cleansing; if all the above, there was a strong case to be made for intervention on humanitarian grounds to stop the killing and forced expulsions of Kosovo's majority ethnic grouping. Unlike the situation in the early 1990s, there was also a greater willingness among the Clinton and Blair governments to contemplate intervention<sup>27</sup>, though the former was openly opposed to the use of ground forces.

In such circumstances NATO was faced with the difficult decision of how to put a stop to the campaign of killings and expulsions of Kosovar Albanians. In the emerging situation in Kosovo some NATO governments, most notably the Americans and the British, were so persuaded by the moral case for intervention that they were prepared to accept the consequences for the Alliance's relationship with Moscow. The morality of the ends seemed clear enough, since it seemed that only by the lesser evil of force could the greater evil of ethnic cleansing, if not genocide, be stopped. Further, following the breakdown of the second round of the Rambouillet talks, it can be argued in the bright light of recent Balkan history that all other options short of force had been exhausted. In resorting to military intervention, therefore, it can be argued that two of the three requirements of just cause had been met. The question of legality is more ambiguous.

This chapter is not directly concerned with the question of whether international law informs international practice, or vice versa. One may observe upon their inter-relationship, and the fact that law is not an immutable code of conduct but can evolve from precedent, practice and emergent custom<sup>28</sup>. Here I am concerned only to highlight the question of legality of intervention in Kosovo in so far as it illustrates a significant development in the character of NATO, and the impact of that development upon the Alliance's relationship with Russia.

Any moral and political imperative to act militarily in Kosovo was at odds with the legal norm, enshrined in the UN Charter of recognising the inviolability of state sovereignty<sup>29</sup>. NATO allies were not entirely at ease with, or in agreement on, the legal basis for

military intervention<sup>30</sup>. The debate on the legality of military intervention turned, and still turns, on the incompatibility of international law's recognition of the inviolability of sovereign states (save in well-defined exceptional circumstances) as enshrined in the UN Charter, and the ad hoc and emergent body of international humanitarian law, which imposes obligations on states with regard to the treatment of minorities<sup>31</sup>.

Ideally, the legally recognised authority for any military action in Kosovo ought to come from the UN Security Council, and indeed NATO justified its intervention by reference to UNSCR 1199<sup>32</sup>. Nevertheless, this was a less than convincing legal basis for military action, as Russia had specifically stated that the resolution did not mandate the use of force, whatever interpretation was placed upon it subsequently by NATO<sup>33</sup>.

Notwithstanding misgivings and shades of emphasis among member states, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana based the threat of military intervention on a combination of factors including Belgrade's failure to comply with Resolution 1199, the need to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, and the dangers posed to regional peace if the situation in Kosovo went unchecked<sup>34</sup>. Given the continual emphasis upon compliance with UNSCRs it is clear that NATO was sensitive to the need to be perceived as acting with the legitimacy conferred by UN resolutions.

Solana subsequently reiterated the NATO position, now backed by UNSCR 1244 in regard to the deployment of KFOR, in an article published in the *NATO Review*<sup>35</sup>. By now the NATO action, still justified "in pursuit of a single objective: to reverse the Belgrade regime's horrific policy of ethnic cleansing", was being couched in terms of the need to act in defence of values, principally those of relieving humanitarian suffering. By implication, defence of values had assumed a greater significance than defence of territorial integrity, a position underlined by the reference to Kosovo's widening the NATO zone of stability. Solana's reference to values echoed Tony Blair's speech in Chicago on this theme<sup>36</sup>. The Alliance's willingness to act militarily in the absence of specific UN authority, combined with justification of its actions as being in defence of values beyond its traditional role of territorial defence, signalled a significant

development of its post-Cold War role. Indeed, it has been argued that it had now become in part a humanitarian agency<sup>37</sup>.

The debate on the legality of the Kosovo intervention, however, remains a matter of interpretation of the competing priority to be afforded in the international law versus human rights debate. Kosovo provided a stark reminder that the former had not evolved sufficiently to be able to accommodate what the West saw as the requirements of the latter, and so to be able to codify practices and procedures acceptable equally to NATO and Russia. From a legal perspective, the task is not to be able to justify NATO intervention as some kind of exception to the rule; rather, it is to establish a position in which the UN Charter and its promotion of the primacy of state sovereignty are compatible with the humanitarian obligations of states.

Nevertheless, any decision to override the accepted international norm of state sovereignty was indeed a heavy one to take, replete with significance for the conduct of future international relations, not least with the Russians who regarded Serbia as an area of Russian strategic significance. As it turned out, Russian reaction to Operation Allied Force was predictably fierce at the levels of officialdom and public opinion.

### **Russia and Operation Allied Force**

NATO's bombing of Kosovo provoked widespread outrage in Russia across a range of political opinions. Even those pro-Western elements of Moscow's foreign policy elite found themselves divided, with some being critical of Operation Allied Force and warning of its dangerous precedent for the future conduct of international affairs<sup>38</sup>. Those less inclined to take a sympathetic view of Western policy had no difficulty in stating their case in even more forceful terms. The range of reactions, from sympathy for the West to Russian military intervention on behalf of the Serbs, is considered below.

I begin with a brief outline consideration of the effect of NATO's operation upon the wider Russian foreign policy community of commentators, and on Russian public

opinion, all of which interacted to feed the debate on how Moscow should proceed in its dealings with NATO during and after Operation Allied Force. I then examine the bases on which Russian policy had been constructed under Foreign and later Prime Minister Primakov, and the consequent deep shock to the official foreign policy community, before proceeding to an examination of the Russian government's constraints in reacting to Allied Force. The course charted by Yeltsin's Special Envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin is considered, together with an assessment of the peace agreement which put an end to the war. Finally, I examine the immediate post war aftermath, and Moscow's concerns for the future conduct of European security affairs born out of the experience of Operation Allied Force.

### *Allied Force and the Wider Russian Foreign Policy Community*

Writing one year after Operation Allied Force, Boris Yeltsin made clear the depth of resentment felt in Russia during the NATO bombing campaign, to the extent that he considered that there was a real danger of a new Cold War breaking out<sup>39</sup>. The Russian President provided a succinct summary of the official Kremlin view of NATO's action in Kosovo, citing the collapse of the rules of international conduct epitomised by the UN (the issue of legality), conflating the US and NATO, emphasising the centrality of diplomacy (and Russia's vital role therein), disparaging NATO's adopted role of world policeman, criticising President Clinton's lack of understanding of the Russian-Serb relationship, and Prime Minister Blair's parroting of the Clinton line. Even allowing for the element of self-justification, Yeltsin accurately summarised the main fears of many Russians that an existing world order, whose rules were widely understood and in which Russia had a significant influence, was being dismantled. In its place was the prospect of a new, arbitrary, Western-dominated system which threatened Moscow with exclusion. Whatever their shades of political difference, this was a position around which most Russians could unite.

One particularly lucid account of the various schools of foreign policy thought in Russia identified five main positions, or world outlooks, ranging from pro-Western liberals to

ultra nationalist Russian expansionists<sup>40</sup>. Between these poles of opinion lay a variety of views, each of which was deeply affected by NATO's attack upon Yugoslavia, and there was no shortage of comment across the political spectrum in the approach to, and immediate aftermath of, Allied Force. The widespread nature of the public debate, allied to the outrage caused by NATO's actions, indicates clearly that Operation Allied Force was not simply a foreign policy issue for the Kremlin, but a domestic one as well<sup>41</sup>. Yeltsin's administration needed to pay careful attention to non-governmental opinion in its approach to resolving the Kosovo crisis, and that opinion was, with the exception of some pro-Western liberals, wholly opposed to the actions of NATO and the West.

Among those of differing foreign policy outlook there emerged a degree of consensus in reaction to Allied Force. In the first place, the NATO action was seen as a highly dangerous precedent for the conduct of security affairs (the legality issue again). The lack of mandate from the UN, where Russia wielded influence, brought home the dangers for Russia inherent in bypassing the Security Council. By implication, Russia's status as an influential actor in European security, much less its great power ambition, was diminished. Finally, the timing of the launch of Operation Allied Force, so soon after the admission of new members to the Atlantic alliance, was a matter of great concern. Fears that NATO enlargement of its membership was the precursor to NATO geopolitical expansionism appeared to be given credence. In turn, this could be interpreted as a threat to Russia's own security, if not checked in some way. Little wonder that the Kremlin was under pressure to express strong opposition to NATO's actions in Kosovo.

### *Official Reaction*

Boris Yeltsin's government appeared to be caught on the hop by the launch of Operation Allied Force, if the reaction of Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov is anything to go by. En route to Washington for meetings on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1999, he ordered his aircraft to return to Moscow in protest against the commencement of hostilities, signalling grave Russian displeasure at the turn of events. The diplomatic drama involved was reflected



in official communiqués, and set the tone for much of Moscow's message for the duration of Allied Force<sup>42</sup>.

Russia's dilemma was the now familiar one of wishing to act as a great power, drawing a distinctly Russian line, and exercising diplomatic and political influence in the Balkans – all from a position of military weakness, domestic political pressure and economic dependence upon the west. If Russia's future diplomatic status was to carry any weight, Moscow could not afford to be sidelined, therefore any engagement in Kosovo had to be tempered by considerations of realpolitik towards the NATO allies. As in Bosnia only a few years earlier, so now in Kosovo – Russia was forced to tread very carefully in reconciling its diplomatic ambition with its constrained resources.

In European security terms, Russian foreign policy had (as noted in Chapter two) been based upon promotion of the OSCE as the prime mover in the continent's security decision making. This approach was complemented by Moscow's view of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) as a partnership of equals in which matters were debated and joint decisions taken. Sitting above these arrangements was the UN Security Council in which Russia held a permanent seat. UN primacy in security matters was an article of faith for Moscow, given its sway in the Security Council. In launching Operation Allied Force NATO bypassed the UN, OSCE and the PJC, shattering any illusion that Russia possessed a guaranteed strong voice in European security decision making. As a demonstration of where that decision making power, if not authority, lay, the bombing of Kosovo was clear and unambiguous. The shock to the Russian system was enormous. Its foreign policy conduct, including containment of what it perceived as NATO ambition as part of preserving and promoting its own great power credentials, had been exposed as a complete failure. The Alliance, by contrast, was demonstrably the prime mover in European security issues. Indeed, to add insult to injury, in the midst of Operation Allied Force NATO unveiled its new Strategic Concept – and this too became a focus of Russian criticism.

The strategy of wide-ranging engagement of key European security institutions in the mid 1990s had been pursued by the then Foreign Minister, subsequently Prime Minister, Yevgeny Primakov. In particular Primakov had pursued a relationship with NATO with a view to exercising Russian influence in the Alliance through the 1997 Founding Act and the PJC. The declaration of Operation Allied Force, therefore, rode roughshod over Russian foreign policy strategy and forced Moscow into a rapid rethink of its approach to the Kosovo crisis. Primakov himself became an early casualty of the war, his responsibilities for the Balkans passing to Yeltsin's Special Envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin, prior to his (Primakov's) dismissal in April 1999.

Within days of the launch of Allied Force Russia stopped all contact with NATO under the terms of the Founding Act, withheld its cooperation in the PJC, the next scheduled meeting of which, in April 1999, was cancelled, and recalled its military representative to NATO. In addition, Moscow refused to attend NATO's Washington Summit, and refused to participate in the PfP programme<sup>43</sup>. As signals of diplomatic displeasure, these actions could hardly have been clearer. Perhaps predictably, the rhetoric from the Ministry of Defence was bullish, though in practice the measures taken were fairly restrained. Calls for greater military readiness, and threats to withdraw the Russian military battalion from SFOR, contrasted with the comparatively mild measure of despatching a reconnaissance vessel to the Adriatic.

Indeed, the Russian leadership, battered by a storm of outrage from all domestic quarters, retained a clear sense of its limitations. Yeltsin recognised the importance to Moscow of not risking isolation from the West<sup>44</sup>. His initial statement of 24<sup>th</sup> March had also declared Russia's willingness for close cooperation with the Contact Group, recognising diplomacy as the way ahead. This theme became more prominent in later official statements<sup>45</sup>. Consequently, the Russians did not withdraw from SFOR or from negotiations on CFE treaty matters.

Moscow's attempts to mediate in the Kosovo crisis were constrained by the tension between the desire to play the Great Power game, distancing itself from NATO, and the

necessity of avoiding diplomatic isolation. Keen to uphold the inviolability of Serbian sovereignty, Russia could not afford its position to be confused with support for Milosevic's tactics in Kosovo. Independent Russian initiatives came to nothing, forcing a closer diplomatic liaison with the West to bring about an end to the conflict<sup>46</sup>. In effect, Russian diplomacy underwent a rapprochement with the West at the official level, notwithstanding the variety and strength of feeling of domestic opinion on Kosovo.

When it came to handling the Kosovo issue, the constraints of strong domestic criticism, economic dependence on the West and the IMF, and military stagnation did not augur well for Chernomyrdin's chances of success. These constraints were compounded by an inherent diplomatic paralysis on Kosovo within the Russian foreign ministry, and indeed, one well placed insider has gone so far as to describe Russia's policy on Kosovo in the 1990s as "a sustained fiasco"<sup>47</sup>. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the Chernomyrdin's efforts were only blessed with success in so far as he approximated NATO positions in negotiations.

Having been unsuccessful with independent initiatives, Moscow began to make some progress in its mediation via the G8 grouping which, in May, agreed at Foreign Minister level on a set of principles for resolution of the conflict<sup>48</sup>. In brief, the Foreign Ministers called for an immediate end to violence; the withdrawal of Yugoslavian army, police and paramilitary forces from Kosovo; the creation of a UN-sponsored interim government; and the deployment of international security forces to maintain peace in the province.

On the face of it, there was little to disagree about in these broad principles. Nevertheless, they masked NATO-Russian differences of emphasis or opinion on what, precisely, was required to meet the principles. For example, the boundaries beyond which Yugoslav forces should withdraw, the composition of any international military presence, and the roles of the OSCE and EU in any provisional administration were all sources of disagreement between NATO and the Russians. Nevertheless, the basis of a sufficiently robust rapprochement had been established, enabling Chernomyrdin to engage in more meaningful mediation with Belgrade, though his initial visits there met

with little success. Indeed, given his engagement with Finnish President Marti Ahtisaari and US deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, representing the EU and US respectively, the role of Yeltsin's Special Envoy began to be viewed critically at home as being little more than a messenger of the West<sup>49</sup>.

This led to a period of disillusion in Russia since, for all Chernomyrdin's efforts, there did not appear to be any end in sight to NATO's bombing campaign. Despite the outrage and rhetoric, little of substance had emerged from Moscow to demonstrate its displeasure with the Alliance, or to provide practical assistance to Yugoslavia. While this situation persisted, and in the absence of any breakthrough, Russian diplomatic engagement ran the risk of being tainted with the NATO brush, and regarded as complicit in the West's attack upon Yugoslavia. Aware of this growing disillusion, and anxious to put some distance between the Russian and NATO positions, in late May Chernomyrdin had threatened to withdraw from negotiations should NATO continue its bombing campaign. However, he did not need to carry out the threat as, a few days later, the diplomatic breakthrough came.

### *An End to the War*

By 3 June the efforts of Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari bore fruit in the form of a peace plan accepted by the Yugoslav parliament<sup>50</sup>. The outline of the plan represented something of a compromise from a Russian point of view, with Moscow accepting a NATO-led security presence in Kosovo, including US and British forces, albeit under a UN mandate provided by Security Council Resolution 1244<sup>51</sup>. The new force would be known as KFOR (Kosovo Force), analogous to the SFOR (Stabilisation Force) operation in Bosnia. The Russians also acquiesced in the NATO demand that the air campaign would cease only when withdrawal of Yugoslav forces was demonstrably taking place. Belgrade began withdrawing its forces on 10<sup>th</sup> June, the same day that the UN passed Resolution 1244, and the bombing was halted. However, Chernomyrdin did score some plus points by promoting successfully the authority of the UN in any post-conflict arrangements, together with agreement that Kosovo must remain an integral part of

Serbia, and that the KLA must be disarmed and disbanded. Yugoslav sovereignty was not negotiable as the price of Serbian withdrawal.

In prevailing upon Milosevic to accept the peace plan, Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari were, in effect, peddling a western line<sup>52</sup>. There was little substantial difference between the plan and the G8 proposals of early May, or indeed the subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 1244. There had been no meeting of minds between Milosevic and NATO; rather, Chernomyrdin had managed to impress upon Belgrade that Russia was no longer prepared to ride to Yugoslavia's rescue. Russia's involvement in the diplomatic peace process was thus characterised by an essentially hard headed pragmatism on the part of the Yeltsin administration. Notwithstanding the rhetoric denouncing the actions of NATO and the calls for a firmer diplomatic or military response from some quarters, Chernomyrdin's, and by extension Yeltsin's, practical contribution to pacifying Kosovo was to align Moscow with the West, and to prevail upon Milosevic to recognise the hopelessness of his position. Without his Russian mentor, and the opportunity to exploit the differences between NATO and Moscow, Milosevic was no longer in a position to continue to defy NATO. The outcome was a peace settlement which favoured NATO, yet managed to preserve a viable if unequal relationship between Russia and the Alliance.

As with Dayton, the Kosovan settlement and the subsequent UNSCR 1244 once again demonstrated a senior-junior partnership in terms of the NATO-Russian relationship. It represented a compromise for Moscow in the interests of preserving its relationship with the West. To the dissatisfaction of one influential commentator in particular<sup>53</sup> Yeltsin had to concede that the peacekeeping force in Kosovo would have a substantial NATO participation, including US and British forces, and would be permitted to arrest suspected Serbian war criminals. This, and more vexed issues such as the unfulfilled Russian desire for its own military sector in north east Kosovo, and Russian insistence on having an independent chain of command in peacekeeping operations, are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. For our purposes here, the settlement of hostilities in Kosovo once again highlighted the unequal nature of the NATO-Russian partnership.

## **Impact of Kosovo on NATO and Russia**

Kosovo demonstrated that the Alliance, albeit with its own internal dissent, was prepared to bypass the accepted international processes of obtaining UN or regional (OSCE) authority to legitimise military action in pursuit of its aims. Whether driven by the neo-imperialist motives ascribed by some critics<sup>54</sup>, fear of repeating Western ineffectiveness over Bosnia, pursuit of the Milosevic regime, a search for a new collective security role for the Alliance, or straightforward humanitarian concerns, NATO was ultimately willing to use force to halt Belgrade's campaign against the Kosovar Albanians. The seventy eight day air campaign did not inflict a great deal of damage upon Serbian forces, but the switch to bombing Serb infrastructure targets did eventually create the circumstances in which Milosevic was persuaded to seek peace.

NATO's score card for Operation Allied Force is, therefore, a mixed one. The Alliance's critics point out that the campaign, lacking in UN or OSCE approval, was illegitimate, ineffective against enemy force, precipitated even more violence against the Kosovar Albanians (so creating the humanitarian disaster it had purported to avoid), and almost brought about the collapse of Alliance unity. Further, it highlighted the poverty of Europe's military contribution to the Alliance, and in turn, NATO's dependence upon US military capabilities. American aversion to the use of ground troops, the so-called 'body bag syndrome', limited NATO to the strategy of air power in isolation, so prolonging the bombing campaign by emboldening Milosevic's resistance.

In its defence NATO can point to the fact that, domestic politics notwithstanding, Alliance unity held up. The Serbs were forced to comply with NATO's demand for a military withdrawal from Kosovo, whose Albanian population largely began to return to their homes now that the pogroms by Serb forces had been stopped. A large NATO peacekeeping force was now put in place in the province working alongside a much smaller Russian force, the latter having been denied its own zone. A subsequent UNSCR was successfully obtained to authorise the peacekeeping operation and regularise the basis upon which NATO and Russia would henceforth cooperate in Kosovo.

For Moscow the picture was rather different. Significant, if unwelcome, lessons were drawn from the Kosovo experience, chiefly along the lines that power overrides principle. NATO's willingness to bypass the UN Security Council, the OSCE and the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council, betokened an aggressive organisation threatening the creation of a new unipolar world order. This new order would be run on rules determined by US/NATO interests, and not in accordance with internationally recognised precepts. NATO had abandoned its original defensive *raison d'être* and embraced an aggressive posture in which diplomacy could swiftly give way to force. In these circumstances the NATO-Russian partnership was seen as being of no value whatsoever. One very significant consequence of this view was that Moscow could safely be ignored by the west because of Russia's economic and military (and consequently, diplomatic) weakness<sup>55</sup>. A particularly elegant yet trenchant critique was penned by the Deputy Chairman of the Duma's Committee on Defence<sup>56</sup>; describing Russia's role in Kosovo as "humiliating", he drew direct lessons from it in criticism of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia, and in justification of Moscow's recently commenced second campaign in Chechnya. Writing in March 2000, the author concluded that "the seeds of misunderstanding and total hostility sown in Kosovo are growing into huge problems in US-Russian relations" – and, by extension, in NATO-Russian relations.

If Russian views could be dismissed so lightly by the West, it was incumbent on the Russian leadership to take some form of action to rectify the situation, or at least to signal its displeasure. In January 2000 Russia published its new National Security Concept, an updating of the 1997 version, which in tone and content reflected a significant hardening of official attitudes since Kosovo<sup>57</sup>. It would be simplistic to regard the Kosovo experience as the sole catalyst for the revised National Security Concept. Other changes had occurred rendering an update necessary - NATO enlargement; the collapse of the Russian economy in August 1998; Russia's renewed intervention in Chechnya; and the accession of Vladimir Putin to the Presidency were all significant developments since the publication of the 1997 document<sup>58</sup>. Nevertheless, Kosovo generated a greater degree of emphasis upon the perceived external threats to Russia's security.

The new National Security Concept was soon followed by the publication in April 2000 of a new Military Doctrine, and two months later a new Foreign Policy Doctrine<sup>59</sup>. These were major policy developments, all within a short space of time, and although not everyone subscribed to the view that the publications were Russia's natural reaction to events in Kosovo<sup>60</sup> there can be little doubt that NATO's actions had a strong influence on these documents. It is noteworthy, for example, that the National Security Concept 2000 and the Military Doctrine 2000 each reflect a lowering of the Russian nuclear threshold compared to their earlier iterations, as a consequence of greater emphasis upon perceived external threats. Such grave considerations reflected the view that, if Bosnia had already demonstrated an unequal relationship with NATO, Kosovo had been even more traumatic for Moscow.

#### **Conclusion – NATO-Russian relations after Kosovo**

The conflict in Kosovo demonstrated that the diplomatic, political and security agendas in the Balkans were being set by NATO. This activity extended to reinterpreting – some would say rewriting - the rules of the international game, to the detriment of Russia's position, and consequently deepened the divisions in NATO-Russian relations. This chapter began with a reference to the bearable strain which the conflict in Bosnia had placed upon the relationship. In concluding, one may observe that after the conflict in Kosovo the relationship survived but was subject to even greater strain than before.

It may be that the increased pressure on NATO-Russian relations was in part the result of the cumulative effect of disagreements over Bosnia, and then Kosovo. It is just as likely, however, that the deterioration in relations can be directly attributed to the qualitatively different actions of NATO in Kosovo. For the first time the Alliance went to war, not in defence of a member state or in prosecution of a UN resolution, but for what it perceived as humanitarian reasons. It was assisted in doing so by its new members from the former Warsaw Pact. From Moscow's point of view, an enlarged NATO willing to bypass the



UN and undertake an arbitrary attack on a sovereign state, was a set of circumstances replete with troubling implications for Russian security.

The consequences for NATO-Russian relations were therefore profound. Virtually all shades of Russian foreign policy opinion were united in rejecting NATO's rationale for its actions. Such a consensus among Russia's foreign policy elite was beyond even the Kremlin's best efforts to bring about. NATO bombing of Kosovo, however, was a salutary reminder to all in Russia of the country's diplomatic weakness and, for the Yeltsin government, of the need to approximate the NATO line if it wished to avoid isolation and helplessness.

Given Russia's inability to influence the course of events in Kosovo, it lost all faith in the formal mechanisms for engaging with NATO. The PJC without Russian involvement could hardly be considered a functioning forum, though it lingered in decline for a couple of years before being replaced by the NATO-Russia Council, discussed in the next chapter, itself given emphasis by events beyond the Balkans.

If there was to be progress in the NATO-Russian relationship, especially in the Balkans, there was now a great deal of fence mending to be done - and done from a position of greater strength and recognition, as far as Russia was concerned. As in Bosnia, so in Kosovo; peacekeeping would now be a significant factor for both parties in seeking to rebalance their future relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of the significance of Kosovo's international status in terms of its aspiration to independence see Roland Rich, *Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*, European Journal of International Law Vol 4 No 1 1993, pp 36-66.

<sup>2</sup> An astute politician, Slobodan Milosevic was able to harness the historic and religious significance of Kosovo for his own ends in his famous speech at Kosovo Polje in 1987. He played successfully upon the fears of his Kosovan Serb audience to promote his own standing as a Serb leader in waiting. See Ian Traynor, "Conman of the Balkans", The Guardian, 1 June 1992. See also Tim Judah, The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia, Yale University Press 2000. p 162.

<sup>3</sup> Rich, *Recognition of States* op cit.

<sup>4</sup> The Republic of Kosova was declared on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1990. On 7<sup>th</sup> September of that year its parliament assembled in Kacanik and adopted a constitutional declaration defining the Republic as a sovereign state within the former Yugoslav Federation.

<sup>5</sup> Yigal Chazan, "Kosovo puts faith in latter-day Gandhi", The Guardian, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1992.

<sup>6</sup> See inter alia Peter Ferdinand, "Serbs haunted by grim history: The ghosts of foreign occupation and genocide are shaping the future", The Guardian, 4<sup>th</sup> July 1991. Also Helena Smith, "Serb grip tightens on 'holy' Kosovo", The Guardian, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Aleksandr Despic, head of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, risked the unpopularity of his fellow Serbs by proposing such an argument in June 1997. Cited in Harry Papatotiriou, *The Kosovo War: Kosovar Insurrection, Serbian Retribution and NATO Intervention*, The Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 25 No 1 March 2002, pp 39-62.

<sup>8</sup> Papatotiriou *The Kosovo War* op cit, esp pp 47-49.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Didusenko, "Fire is quenched but ruins smoulder", New Times, 1st November 1998. Also, Richard Norton-Taylor, "What are the key features of the deal?", The Guardian, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Statement to the Press (Press Release (99)11) by NATO Secretary General Dr Javier Solana dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 1999, available on [www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-011e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-011e.htm). Also, Statement by the North Atlantic Council on Kosovo (Press Release (99)12) dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 1999, available on [www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-012e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-012e.htm).

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed and largely favourable eye-witness account of the Rambouillet negotiations see Marc Weller, *The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo*, International Affairs Vol 75 No 2 1999 pp 211-251.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, a series of NATO Press releases, and speeches by Secretary General Dr. Javier Solana, including: Statement by the NATO Secretary General on behalf of the North Atlantic Council dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-020e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-020e.htm)); Statement by the Secretary General of NATO on the outcome of the Rambouillet talks, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-021e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-021e.htm)); Press Statement by Dr Javier Solana, Secretary General of NATO, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-040e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-040e.htm)); Political and Military Objectives of NATO Action with Regard to the Crisis in Kosovo, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-043e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-043e.htm)); Press Statement by the NATO Secretary General following the commencement of air operations, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-041e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-041e.htm)); Press Statement by the NATO Secretary General dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-042e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-042e.htm)); see also *US and NATO Objectives and Interests in Kosovo*, US State Department Fact Sheet dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999, available on [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/fs\\_990326\\_ksvobjectives.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/fs_990326_ksvobjectives.html).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, *A Perfect Failure: NATO's war against Yugoslavia*, Foreign Affairs Vol 78 No 5 September/October 1999 pp 2-8; Ivo H Daalder and Michael E O'Hanlon, *Unlearning the lessons of Kosovo*, Foreign Policy Fall 1999 pp 128-139.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel McGrory "Bosnia terror chief directs Kosovo killers", The Times 29<sup>th</sup> March 1999; Owen Boycott "War in Europe: Arkan prepares Tigers for the fray" The Guardian 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999; Jonathan Steele "War in Europe; 'Never come back'; the terror at a border crossing" The Guardian 29<sup>th</sup> March 1999.

<sup>15</sup> For a critical analysis of NATO's air campaign, including a highlighting of the debates among senior military and political leaders, see William M Arkin *Operation Allied Force: "The Most Precise Application of Air Power in History"* in Andrew J Bacevich and Eliot A Cohen (eds) *War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age* Columbia University Press New York 2001, pp 1-37.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the political implications of the employment of air power, see Timothy Garden, *The Politics of Air Power* in NATO's Nations 1/2003 pp 191-195.

<sup>17</sup> See Martin Aguera, *Air Power Paradox: NATO's Misuse of Military Force in Kosovo, and its Consequences*, Small Wars and Insurgencies Vol 12 No 3 Autumn 2001 pp 115-128. Aguera argues that military planners should be given the flexibility to employ air power in accordance with a perceived best practice of targeting the enemy's leadership. This was not the case in Kosovo (hence the 'misuse' of the title), where the tactical targets of fielded forces yielded little success for NATO. Only when strategic targets in Serbia proper came under attack did the campaign make headway.

<sup>18</sup> See for example Andrew L Stigler, *A Clear Victory for Air Power: NATO's Empty Threat to Invade Kosovo*, International Security Vol 27 No 3 Winter 2002/03 pp 124-157. See also Rebecca Grant "Wesley Clark's War" (US) Air Force Magazine September 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Eyal "The Mighty Bomber: Milosevic's defeat does not mean bombing should now be used against every dictator" The Guardian 5<sup>th</sup> June 1999. See also Mandelbaum, and Daalder and O'Hanlon op cit..

<sup>20</sup> *Doctrine of the International Community*, Speech by Prime Minister Blair to the Economic Club of Chicago, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1999. Available at [www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/politics/blair.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/politics/blair.htm).

<sup>21</sup> For just a flavour of this see inter alia Bruno Simma "NATO, The UN and the Use of Force: Legal Aspects" in European Journal of International Law Vol 10 No 1 1999; Mary Ellen O'Connell "The UN, NATO and International Law after Kosovo", Human Rights Quarterly Vol 22 (2000); Catherine Guicherd "International Law and the War in Kosovo" Survival Vol 41 No 2 Summer 1999 pp 19-34; Michael J Glennon "The New Interventionism: The Search for a Just International Law" Foreign Affairs May/June 1999 pp 2-7.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Tarcisio Gazzini "NATO Coercive Military Activities in the Yugoslav Crisis (1992-1999)" European Journal of International Law Vol 12 No 3 2001 pp 391-435. Gazzini argues that Yugoslavia took NATO well beyond its originally envisaged boundaries for activity, and into legally uncharted waters, which in turn necessitates a re-examination of the Alliance's function as a regional security institution.

<sup>23</sup> For a fuller treatment of the just war thesis and its current applicability see F.F. Amroliwala, *Open Fire or Under Fire? The Validity of Augustinian Principles of War in the Twenty First Century*, Seaford House Papers 2001 pp 5-19. Also, Brian Orend "Crisis in Kosovo: A Just Use of Force?" Politics (1999) 19(3) pp 125-130; Dino Kritsiotis "The Kosovo Crisis and NATO's Application of Force Against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" International and Comparative Law Quarterly Vol 49 No 2 April 2000 pp 330-359.

<sup>24</sup> For detailed discussion of the issue of morality in NATO's Kosovo campaign see Alberto R. Coll, *Kosovo and the Moral Burdens of Power* in Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen (eds), War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age, Columbia University Press, New York 2001, pp 124-154.

<sup>25</sup> Cf press statements by NATO Secretary General Dr Javier Solana on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 1999 (see note 12 above).

<sup>26</sup> A series of articles in the Independent newspaper gives a flavour of the emerging sense of crisis and of the western perception for the need for intervention. See Rupert Cornwell "The puppet-master of the Balkans is running out of strings to pull: If the West wants peace in regions of ethnic hatred it must be prepared to intervene" Independent 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998; Andrew Gumbel "Survivors of Serb massacre refuse to bury their dead" Independent 10<sup>th</sup> March 1998; Fergal Keane "Western Leaders stand aside as evil rises in the heart of Europe; In Bosnia we knew of the horrors but acted too late. In Kosovo we know but refuse to act at all" Independent 12<sup>th</sup> September 1998; Stephen Glover "British bombers must NOT go in" Independent 6<sup>th</sup> October 1998; editorial comment "The time has come to show that NATO's threats aren't empty" Independent 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Tony Blair "Our responsibilities do not end at the Channel" Independent 14<sup>th</sup> February 1999.

<sup>28</sup> See John H Currie "NATO's Humanitarian Intervention In Kosovo: Making or Breaking International Law?" Atlantic Council of Canada Paper (2/99). Currie's argument that NATO's Kosovo intervention set a clear precedent for future interventionism, with or without UN Security Council sanction, would appear to have been supported by events in Iraq in early 2003; see for example Neil Clark "How the battle lines were drawn: WMDs haven't turned up; in 1999 there was no genocide in Kosovo" The Spectator 14<sup>th</sup> June

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2003; also, Kate Hudson "A pattern of aggression. Iraq was not the first illegal US-led attack on a sovereign state in recent times. The precedent was set in 1999 in Yugoslavia" The Guardian 14<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Specifically, Article 2 of the UN Charter stipulates the centrality of the sovereign equality of all its members, and obliges members not to interfere in the sovereign affairs of other members (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>).

<sup>30</sup> For a brief resume of the shades of opinion see Guicherd pp 26-28.

<sup>31</sup> See Guicherd pp 20-23, for examples of exceptional circumstances, such as torture, which could be cited to justify overriding the principle of sovereignty.

<sup>32</sup> "On the situation in Kosovo (FRY)" available at [www.un.org/Docs/scres/1998.scres98.htm](http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1998.scres98.htm)

<sup>33</sup> S/RES/1199 (1998) dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1998, for the full text of UNSCR 1199.

<sup>34</sup> Statement to the Press by the Secretary General following decision on the ACTORD dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 1998 ([www.nat.int/docu/speech/1998/s981013a.htm](http://www.nat.int/docu/speech/1998/s981013a.htm)); Press Points by Secretary General Dr Javier Solana dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 1998 ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981015a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981015a.htm)); Statement by the NATO Spokesman on the NAC of 16 October 1998 ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981016a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981016a.htm)); Statement to the Press by NATO Secretary General Dr Javier Solana dated 27<sup>th</sup> October 1998 ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981027a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981027a.htm)); Statement on Kosovo from the Meeting of the NAC in Foreign Ministers Session dated 8<sup>th</sup> December 1998 ([www.nato.int/docu/pt/1998/p98-143e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pt/1998/p98-143e.htm)).

<sup>35</sup> Javier Solana "A defining moment for NATO: The Washington Summit and the Kosovo Crisis" NATO Review Vol 47 No 2 Summer 1999 ([www.nato.int/docu/review/1999/9902-01.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1999/9902-01.htm)).

<sup>36</sup> See Blair's Chicago speech (note 22 above). See also Javier Solana's press statement of 12<sup>th</sup> April 1999 "La Crise du Kosovo constitue une étape décisive dans la définition de notre vision d'une nouvelle Europe au sein de laquelle les droits de l'homme, les valeurs démocratiques et l'état de droit prévaudront" ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/1999/s990412a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1999/s990412a.htm)).

<sup>37</sup> Jef Huysmans, *Shape-shifting NATO; humanitarian action and the Kosovo refugee crisis*, Review of International Studies (2002) 28, pp 599-618

<sup>38</sup> For a composite flavour of the range of initial Russian reactions to the outbreak of hostilities see "Russia reacts to War in Yugoslavia" Johnson's Russia List ([www.cdi.org/russia.johnson/3236.html](http://www.cdi.org/russia.johnson/3236.html)); also, "NATO puts out fire with gasoline" Grigoriy Yavlinsky quoted by ITAR-TASS, cited in Johnson's Russia List ([www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/3112.html](http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/3112.html)).

<sup>39</sup> Extract from Yeltsin's memoirs Midnight Diaries, quoted in The Times, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *The Final Triumph of the Pax Americana? Western Intervention in Yugoslavia and Russia's Debate on the Post-Cold War Order*, Communist and Post Communist Studies, Vol 34 (2001) pp 133-156

<sup>41</sup> A few examples may suffice to give a flavour of the debate. See Diplomaticheskii Vestnik nos 4,5, and 6 (April, May and June 1999). See also a series of articles from Nezavisimaya Gazeta 25<sup>th</sup> March 1999, in which commentators highlight NATO's bypassing of the UN, and Russia's priorities for response. These include Dmitry Kosirev "Blok NATO privel Evropu k voine"; Vitaly Tretyakov "Imperativi dlya Rossii"; Nikolai Ulyanov "Strana podderzhal Primakova"; Igor Maximychev "Kto silnyee, tot i prav?". For a military assessment of the initial NATO attacks, and their negative effect on Russia's relationship with NATO see Sergei Sokut "Burya v Evrope nachalas" and Vadim Solovyev "Operatsiya 'Soyuznicheskaya Sila' perechekivaet rezultati sotrudnichestva Rossiya-NATO", both in Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999. Further discussion of the attack on Yugoslavia and public reaction at home and abroad, together with Russian policy options, is carried in Nezavisimaya Gazeta 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999. See especially Dmitry Gornostaev and Sergei Sokut "Chyornyy den Evrope"; Vitaly Tretyakov "V ozhidanii raskola"; Nikolai Ulyanov "Protest Rossiya narastaet"; Aleksei Pushkov "Otvrashchenye"; Yevgenii Nesterov "Reaktsiya v CNG v tselom negativnaya". For an example of the articulation of the fear that NATO's attack on Yugoslavia could presage an attack on Russia itself see Vitaly Denisov "Zavtra v pitsse mozhet okazivaetsya i mi" Krasnaya Zvezda 30<sup>th</sup> March 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Diplomaticheskii Vestnik no 4 April 1999 carries a full archive of all official Russian Foreign Ministry pronouncements on the situation in Yugoslavia (to date) following the launch of Operation Allied Force. See especially Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's joint press conferences of 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March, alongside senior Russian military officials, and Ivanov's statement to the Duma of 27<sup>th</sup> March. All statements from

the Foreign Ministry were presented in the form of a daily diary of events pertaining to Yugoslavia, and published under the general title of "Aggressiya NATO protiv Yugoslavii", an indicative title reproduced in subsequent monthly editions of the journal. Duma support for Yeltsin's government was readily forthcoming (Ivan Rodin "Pravitelstvo poluchilo podderzhku Dumi" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 30<sup>th</sup> March 1999).

<sup>43</sup> Diplomaticheskii Vestnik no 4 April 1999, especially Yeltsin's declaration of 24<sup>th</sup> March *Zayavlenie Prezidenta Rossiskoi Federatsii*.

<sup>44</sup> See Vestnik Voennoi Informatsii No 4 April 1999 for a series of official articles on the subject, including Yeltsin's speech to the joint session of the Federal Council on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1999.

<sup>45</sup> Diplomaticheskii Vestnik no 4 April 1999.

<sup>46</sup> British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's interview with the BBC in Bonn is indicative of the mutual benefit of a Russian-western rapprochement. See "G8 proposals on Kosovo: a breakthrough with Russia", dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1999, available at [www.fco.gov.uk/servlet](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet).

<sup>47</sup> For a hard hitting critique of Russia's diplomatic drift when it came to Kosovo see Oleg Levitin, *Inside Moscow's Kosovo Muddle*, Survival, Vol 42, no 1 Spring 2000 pp 130-140.

<sup>48</sup> "Text of the Principles for a Settlement of the Kosovo Crisis Agreed by the G8 Foreign Ministers, Bonn, Germany 6<sup>th</sup> May 1999" available at [www.fco.gov.uk/servlet](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet).

<sup>49</sup> Maksim Yusin *Missiya Chernomyrdina pod ugrozou* Izvestiya 4<sup>th</sup> June 1999.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Walker and Ian Traynor "Peace is within our grasp" The Guardian 4<sup>th</sup> June 1999.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 adopted by the Security Council at its 4011<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1999 (S/RES/1244 (1999))

<sup>52</sup> Genrikh Trofimenko *SshchA; Groznaya rabota* Zavtra 25<sup>th</sup> June 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Vladimir Lukin, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma, made his views known in the press. See "NATO i Rossiya poslye Kosovo" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 9<sup>th</sup> June 1999, and "Shto budyet poslye Kosovo" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 8<sup>th</sup> June 1999. He maintained his criticism of the Yeltsin line in "Chechnya, Corruption, Kosovo, NATO, and other problems" International Affairs 1st November 1999.

<sup>54</sup> See Tariq Ali "Springtime for NATO" New Left Review No 234 May 1999 pp 62-72. Also P. Gowan "The NATO Powers and the Balkan Tragedy" New Left Review No 234 May 1999 pp 83-105.

<sup>55</sup> For variations on these themes see Aleksandr Lukin, *NATO i Rossiya posle Kosovo*, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 9 June 1999 (note 53 above); Russian MFA statement carried in the Survey of World Broadcasts, SWB SU/3559, B9, 12 June 1999; Ekaterina Stepanova, *Explaining Russia's Dissent on Kosovo*, Carnegie Moscow Centre, March 1999, PONARS Memo No 57.

<sup>56</sup> Alexei G Arbatov, *The Kosovo Crisis: The End of the Post-Cold War Era*, Occasional Paper for the Atlantic Council of the United States, March 2000.

<sup>57</sup> For an analysis of the 1997 and 2000 versions of the National Security Concept see Jakob M Godzimirski, *Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis*, European Security, Vol 9 No 4 Winter 2000, pp 73-91.

<sup>58</sup> Godzimirski, p 78.

<sup>59</sup> See "O Kontseptsii natsionalnoi bezopastnosti rossiskoi federatsii" Rossiskaya Gazeta 18<sup>th</sup> January 2000; "Voyennaya doktrina rossiskoi federatsii" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2000; "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" International Affairs No 5 September 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Irina Isakova, *The Kosovo Air Campaign's Impact on Russian Military Thinking*, RUSI Journal August 2000, pp 53-57. Rather than an official political reaction embodied in the documents, Isakova detects "a growing and significant influence of military and strategy analysts on foreign and defence policies in Russia" p 53.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Peacekeeping ...and Moving On**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will examine the NATO-Russian relationship as played out in the post-conflict Balkans by considering the history of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. The operations themselves were politically conceived, that is to say, based upon political direction from, inter alia, the United Nations, the North Atlantic Council and the Kremlin. They were then carried out militarily, being put into effect by NATO, allied and Russian armed forces. As such, the formation and functioning of the Implementation Force (IFOR), succeeded in turn by the Stabilisation Force (SFOR), in Bosnia, and of Kosovo Force (KFOR) illustrated the workings of the NATO-Russian relationship at the political (strategic) and military (tactical) levels. The course of peacekeeping would reveal that these two levels were not always in harmony. In general terms we may point to the fact that while military cooperation in the Balkans, though never trouble-free, achieved a laudable level of success, the same could not be said of the political relationship, which proved much more troubled. Balkan peacekeeping, therefore, provides a concrete example of the progress of the post-conflict NATO-Russian relationship against the background of a real opportunity for demonstrable cooperation in shaping European security.

Peacekeeping, whether seen from a political or military perspective, did not take place exclusively of the wider NATO-Russian relationship, with its focus shifting from time to time to NATO enlargement, Alliance reform, or Russian great power aspirations. Also, as peacekeeping came to replace crisis resolution in Bosnia and Kosovo, as each settled into a peacekeeping norm, and as events elsewhere, not least in the Middle East, came to absorb more of the world's attention, the emphasis on the Balkan dimension to NATO-Russian relations gradually receded. NATO HQ Brussels and Moscow would each come to give greater attention to the US-declared post-September 11<sup>th</sup> 'war on terror', with

President Putin taking the path of greater rapprochement with the West. However, the IFOR/SFOR and KFOR experiences informed the wider relationship, and contributed significantly to each party's efforts to stabilise post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo. Consequently, an examination of NATO-Russian cooperation in the sphere of Balkan peacekeeping is needed to gauge the progress of their attempts to give practical expression to proclaimed partnership aspirations.

For NATO and Russia, peacekeeping in Bosnia provided a demonstration of the validity of the Dayton settlement. Successful implementation of the provisions of Dayton would enable NATO and Russia each to portray itself as a credible force for good in post-Cold War European security. For an Alliance reinventing itself, and a fading great power clinging to its former status, there was a mutually reinforcing interest in cooperating to effect the provisions of the settlement, whatever their differences of outlook.

## **Post-Conflict Bosnia**

### *The Road to Dayton - Resumé*

After several bloody years in Bosnia, with western European states seemingly unable to bring the violence to an end, the United States began to take a more prominent role in seeking a settlement in late 1995. That summer had witnessed a pattern of Serb aggression attracting limited NATO retaliation, as for example when the latter bombed Bosnian Serb ammunition compounds in May, in response to Serb shelling of the UN safe area of Sarajevo described in chapter two. In turn, the Serbs took UN peacekeepers hostage, obliging NATO to desist and exposing Western peace efforts to ridicule. The message seemed to be that the Bosnian Serbs were free to frustrate the will of the United Nations on the ground, even when it was backed by selective NATO airpower strikes.

A two-pronged approach was needed to counter this stalemate and to reinforce the ability, of the UN to effect its mandate. In the first place, the British put forward an initiative to deploy a NATO Rapid Reaction Force, putting well-armed troops into Bosnia to protect

the lightly armed UN peacekeepers<sup>1</sup>. This drew initial Russian criticism, but Foreign Minister Kozyrev subsequently took a more conciliatory line, indicating that Russia might even send troops to support the UN peacekeepers<sup>2</sup>. The second prong to counter Serb aggression was to step up the NATO bombing campaign, an approach which took a little longer to establish but was given impetus in July and August 1995 by the Serbs' overrunning of Srebrenica and Zepa, and the shelling of Sarajevo market place. NATO's commencement and maintenance of an intensive bombing campaign against Serb targets outraged Moscow, which accused the Alliance of partisanship in Yugoslavia, but from a marginalized position now that the US and NATO were making the diplomatic running<sup>3</sup>.

Nevertheless, there was now concerted pressure on the Serbs to call a halt to the military campaign. With US special envoy Richard Holbrooke leading the diplomatic search for a settlement in Bosnia, Russia had effectively been sidelined in the months leading up to the Dayton peace process<sup>4</sup>. Its influence as a trusted interlocutor with the Serbs had been diminished to the point where only the West's desire not to humiliate the Kremlin gave Moscow a role to play at Dayton<sup>5</sup>. For all Yeltsin's denunciations of NATO intervention in Yugoslavia, there was little or nothing Moscow could contribute to ending the stalemate other than to cooperate with NATO and American efforts, a situation which enraged nationalist Russian commentators, some of whom called for Foreign Minister Kozyrev to be sacked<sup>6</sup>.

This imbalance set the tone for Dayton in terms of the relative influence of the participating parties. It was Holbrooke and the US which led the way in negotiating the terms of the settlement and thus paved the way for subsequent peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. Nevertheless, it suited the West to play up the Russian contribution to achieving a peace settlement. This would give the settlement the appearance of a truly pan-European approval, in turn obliging the Serbs to recognise that there was no mileage in attempting to split Russia from the West in order to prolong the negotiations or dispute the terms of the agreement. Naturally, it was also in Moscow's interests to promote the Russian contribution to achieving a settlement in Bosnia, presenting Dayton as attributable to the work of the Contact Group, rather than US-backed NATO pressure<sup>7</sup>.



From the outset, therefore, Russian participation in the Dayton process, and subsequent post-Dayton peacekeeping, was susceptible to an ambivalence of interpretation, whether at the strategic or tactical level. At the strategic level Moscow's input at Dayton could be viewed as a significant contribution to the international will to establish and maintain peace in Bosnia (the official Western and Russian line), or as the price Moscow was prepared to pay to maintain its relationship with NATO and the West, thereby ensuring its continued participation in European security decision making (the more critical internal Russian view). At the tactical level, Russian participation in subsequent peacekeeping could be viewed as a practical demonstration of its continued capability in an area of strategic interest, or as a token gesture of military willingness to translate political will into a security presence on the ground, regardless of how effective that presence might prove. Whichever interpretation is placed upon the Russian contribution at Dayton, the agreement reached there would determine the framework for subsequent peacekeeping activities in Bosnia, laying the ground rules for NATO and Russian participation, and the backdrop to the next stage of their relationship in the Balkans.

In his detailed account of the November 1995 negotiations US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke records the fact that the Contact Group (US, UK, France, Germany and Russia) and the EU were all represented at the process<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, it is clear from Holbrooke's memoir that the process was driven by Washington, that the EU representative Carl Bildt did not speak for all members of the EU, and that major European players such as the UK and France reserved the right to adopt national as opposed to European positions<sup>9</sup>. It is equally clear that, notwithstanding Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's presence, Moscow contributed little to the negotiations; indeed, Holbrooke describes having seen only one Russian-produced paper in the course of three weeks of intense negotiations, and that an ultimately futile amendment to the military annex. Ivanov's subsequent diffident performance at the final initialling ceremony, at which he reserved the Russian position on the detail of the military annex, adds to the impression that Dayton was not universally well received by all the signatories to it.

Even allowing for a certain partisanship in Holbrooke's account, therefore, it is difficult to make the case for a significant Russian contribution to the final settlement at Dayton.

The final formal signing of the agreement took place in Paris on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1995 with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin deputising for President Yeltsin, the latter subject to one of his regular health scares. Nevertheless, in a December 1995 communiqué from NATO HQ, reference was made to the acceptance of NATO's role in Bosnia by all parties to the Dayton agreement<sup>10</sup>. The launch of Operation Joint Endeavour to keep the peace in Bosnia attracted support from a number of nations, but Russia was singled out for particular mention, with Moscow's participation being described as "especially significant". It was evidently in the interests of NATO and the Kremlin to give public prominence to Russia's role in resolving the Bosnian war, and in maintaining the peace.

### *The Dayton Accord*

The settlement signed at Dayton had the effect of formalising the end of hostilities in Bosnia though a ceasefire had already come into being in the previous month. Tellingly, there were no Russian representatives at the signing of the ceasefire, an indication of Moscow's loss of influence on the procedure. However, NATO and Russia, for entirely different reasons, were minded to play up Russia's contribution<sup>11</sup>. Yeltsin needed to maintain the increasingly implausible line that Russian influence had been a major factor in achieving peace in the Balkans, so cleaving to the great power autonomy of action that Moscow believed was its due. NATO sought to support him in his domestic travails and to portray the Dayton settlement as enjoying widespread international support.

The US also had reason to accommodate the Russians since they saw Russian involvement in IFOR as helping to "lubricate the NATO-Russia track"<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, at their meeting at Hyde Park on the River Hudson in October 1995 President Clinton was able to prevail upon President Yeltsin to commit two battalions of Russian troops to IFOR. In return, though reluctantly, Clinton agreed to ask Bosnian President Izetbegovic and his Croatian counterpart Tudjman to attend a pre-Dayton summit in Moscow, a

meeting which Kozyrev had already trailed in the Contact Group purely for the purpose of enhancing Moscow's status<sup>13</sup>. In the event the showcase Moscow summit did not take place because of Yeltsin's illness.

Dayton recognised Bosnia as a sovereign state divided into two entities, the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska. Partly as a gesture in the direction of Russian concerns about NATO, oversight of the Accord's clauses on political and humanitarian measures was delegated to the OSCE. However, speaking at the ceremony to initial the Accord on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1995, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ivanov made clear that Russia would "reserve its position in regard to the military and arms control annexes"<sup>14</sup>. At the subsequent Press Conference Ivanov reiterated Russian concerns about the military proposals and pressed for the lifting of sanctions in the Balkans, despite the interjection of EU Peace Envoy Carl Bildt who sought to change the subject, then play up the significance of the Russian contribution<sup>15</sup>.

#### *IFOR and Russian Participation*

While the Dayton negotiations were being conducted in November 1995, the details of Russian participation in subsequent peacekeeping operations were also being decided. There were, on the face of it, potentially mutually exclusive NATO and Russian considerations to be balanced, and the outcome of the discussions would therefore be indicative of the two parties' ability to cooperate successfully in post-war Bosnia. Moscow sought an independence of command for its troops, whom the Kremlin was not prepared to place under NATO authority. To do so would have had the effect of publicly acknowledging Moscow's junior partner status in all subsequent arrangements, and Russia's reduced international standing. It would also, de facto, sanction an increased NATO involvement in an area of strategic influence for Russia in 'Eastern' Europe. That in turn, would have had the effect of undermining Russian opposition to the ongoing debate on NATO's eastward enlargement.

For its part, NATO wanted Russian participation in any peacekeeping operation as a warrant of full international support for Dayton, and as a signal to the Serbs that there was no possibility of dividing the Contact Group. A united international front would reinforce the message that there would be no Russian patronage for any one party to the conflict. At the same time, Russian involvement raised the question of the functioning of the operational chain of command. NATO had no wish to compromise the effectiveness of its peacekeeping operations, which it regarded as best effected through a recognised and unified chain of command.

The outcome represented a compromise. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1995 NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR), General George Joulwan, in his national role as a senior US general, signed an agreement in Brussels with Russian Colonel General Leontii Shevtsov. This appointed Shevtsov, the SHAPE-based senior officer commanding Russian forces in Bosnia, as deputy to the US's General Joulwan, the man with overall responsibility for peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, so allowing Moscow to portray its participation under an American general as an equal partner to NATO. Given Joulwan's NATO responsibility for, inter alia, command of IFOR, the face-saving compromise was not difficult to see through. Unsurprisingly, it attracted criticism from some commentators in Russia, who were unimpressed by the disingenuous, not to say tortuous, arrangements for preserving Russian independence of command<sup>16</sup>.

Nevertheless, a framework for peace in Bosnia was created at Dayton, and the form of Russian participation was worked out following the signing of the Brussels agreement between Joulwan and Shevtsov<sup>17</sup>. Russia was now in a position to take its place alongside NATO forces in Bosnia and begin making a practical contribution to day to day peacekeeping operations. Despite domestic criticism of Russia's subordinate role in the negotiations, and the hollowness of its independence of command, Yeltsin was able to get Federation Council approval to deploy the first Russian troops in January 1996. Russian troops on the ground were to be the outward tactical representation of Moscow's self proclaimed continued international status, and continued Russian engagement in effecting the Dayton provisions would need to take Russian interests into account<sup>18</sup>.

It may be observed from the outset that the cooperation of Russian and NATO peacekeeping troops came to be highly regarded on each side, aided to some degree by previous cooperation on exercises under the Partnership for Peace regime<sup>19</sup>. The Russian mission got off to an inauspicious start, however, when the senior Russian commander in theatre, Major-General Staskov, was sacked for making personal contact with Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic, who had been indicted for war crimes. NATO's immediate displeasure saw Staskov swiftly replaced and the peacekeeping operation began to settle into an effective and productive cooperation at the tactical level. This offered opportunities to broaden and deepen the NATO-Russian relationship in a practical and internationally demonstrable manner, opportunities recognised by some Russian commentators<sup>20</sup>. By May 1996 Javier Solana, NATO's Secretary General, was in a position to address the Russian Council on Foreign and Security Policy in Moscow, and to pay handsome tribute to the professionalism and cooperation of Russian forces in Bosnia<sup>21</sup>.

However, military to military cooperation, though desirable and largely effective, was not the whole story in Bosnia in the early post-Dayton months. One influential Russian commentator acknowledged the significance of IFOR-level cooperation between NATO and Russia, and regarded it as a benchmark of the prospects for development of the wider NATO-Russian relationship<sup>22</sup>. His concerns for the future, however, centred on the unacceptability to Russia of NATO enlargement, which in his view would ultimately render futile the successful cooperative efforts under way in IFOR.

Notwithstanding the encouraging tactical level cooperation, in early 1996 there was indeed cause for concern over divergence of NATO and Russian views at the political level in Bosnia<sup>23</sup>. Significant issues of difference included a diplomatic spat over removing the UN diplomatic sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs; wrangling over the arrest of a number of Serbian officers and their subsequent despatch to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY); and disagreement on how to treat the indicted Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. Related to the

latter was Moscow's view that the ICTY was biased against the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs. NATO's perceived anti-Serb bias was a cause for concern in Russia and found expression in the national press, serving to fuel criticism overall of the subordinate role of Moscow in its peacekeeping dealings with NATO<sup>24</sup>. Russia also found itself at loggerheads with the West over whether and when to train and equip the security forces of the newly created Croat-Muslim federation, though Russian objections proved futile. Thus, in terms of the NATO-Russian relationship a pattern of generally encouraging military-tactical cooperation, contrasting with political-strategic differences, had begun to emerge in post-war Bosnia. Consequently there was only limited cause for optimism in the overall context of the development of wider NATO-Russian relations into the future.

The official line in NATO and in Russia remained, however, one of optimism. Great hopes for the future of the relationship were vested in IFOR and, subsequently, in SFOR. The IFOR mandate was extended in a modified form to create SFOR at the end of 1996, but the principles of continued Russian-NATO cooperation remained the same. Official comment from each side remarked favourably upon the progress of the relationship in Bosnia, and its significance as a practical demonstration of NATO's and Russia's ability to cooperate<sup>25</sup>.

It is noticeable, however, that the optimism expressed in articles and speeches by Russian commentators was carefully couched in terms of maintaining the status quo in the relationship, or downplaying NATO in favour of other security bodies such as the OSCE<sup>26</sup>. While NATO commentators were ready to emphasise the fact that cooperation in Bosnia demonstrated that Russia had nothing to fear from the Alliance, the Russians were keen to stress that NATO expansion could destabilise the relationship, undoing the good work of IFOR/SFOR and setting back the cause of European security. While acknowledging the importance of military cooperation in Bosnia, the Russians also played up the significance of the OSCE as a counterbalance to NATO<sup>27</sup>. Indeed, not everyone in Moscow regarded Bosnian peacekeeping as a model for cooperation in European security matters, arguing that NATO-led peacekeeping in the particular situation of the Balkans could not provide a template for pan-European security<sup>28</sup>.

For all the rhetoric about partnership and cooperation, given greater emphasis by the May 1997 signing of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, progress in Bosnia remained subordinate to a more fragmented political relationship. Bosnia continued to trouble the Russian leadership, which did not feel comfortable at the political level with the direction of the peacekeeping operation<sup>29</sup>. Nevertheless, viewed in purely military-to-military cooperation terms, IFOR and SFOR were good examples of a successful NATO-Russian cooperative venture<sup>30</sup>. Convolved command and control arrangements permitted each side to portray the mission as being in accord with its own wishes. NATO got the operational control it wanted. Russia got a politically significant, if numerically less so, military presence to bolster its international status if not its actual influence. Troops integrated effectively on the ground in performing the wide variety of peace implementation tasks generated by Dayton. The Russian presence made the Dayton settlement more acceptable to the Serb and Bosnian Serb communities, and while ethnic tensions were never far from resurfacing Bosnia settled into an absence of full conflict, and attempted to resume normality.

## **Post-Conflict Kosovo**

### *Operation Allied Force and Aftermath*

While Bosnia's uneasy peace held, and notwithstanding their differences of emphasis, NATO and Russia continued to provide troops to police the settlement and gradually turned their attentions to their wider relationship, most notably the signing of the Founding Act in May 1997. Although formalising the relationship and widening the opportunities for partnership between the Alliance and Moscow, the issues of NATO enlargement and Kosovo worried the Kremlin. The Yeltsin government was not in a strong position to influence matters, not least because of growing support for enlargement in Washington, and active lobbying by the states of Eastern Europe. NATO's admission of the Visegrad Three of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic in 1999 came to appear particularly ominous for Russia, coinciding as it did with the launch of Operation

Allied Force, and appearing to vindicate those Russian commentators who feared enlargement as simply an anti-Russian manoeuvre.

Those fears were compounded by the Visegrad countries' decision to provide assistance to NATO at the outbreak of the conflict. The fundamental shock to Moscow of NATO's conduct over Kosovo far exceeded any previous policy disagreements with the West during the Bosnian War. Kosovo was indeed a seismic event in post-Cold War NATO-Russian relations, and its reverberations were not confined to the duration of the Kosovan conflict itself. Such was the depth of resentment in Russia that its participation in post-conflict peacekeeping in Kosovo was of a qualitatively different order to that in Bosnia.

### *Peacekeeping in Kosovo*

As the situation deteriorated in Kosovo during 1998, NATO and Russian peacekeepers continued to work together successfully in Bosnia, with Moscow agreeing to extend the presence of Russian troops there<sup>31</sup>. This contrasted sharply with the deep divisions between the Alliance and Russia over the looming crisis in Kosovo. Notwithstanding the gains from joint peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, it was becoming clear that such were their differences over Kosovo that any subsequent cooperation between NATO and Russia would likely prove very difficult to arrange. This view was clearly articulated in the very earliest days of Operation Allied Force, and set the tone for post-conflict cooperation in peacekeeping in Kosovo<sup>32</sup>.

As has been observed, Kosovo and Operation Allied Force had a profound impact upon NATO-Russian relations. It is difficult to exaggerate the depth of resentment felt in Russia at the level of public opinion and among some commentators, albeit Yeltsin's government alternated between outraged denunciation of NATO and cooperation with the Alliance (see chapter three). Although the Bosnian conflict had been salutary for Moscow in reminding it of its decline in influence over European security matters, there was at least the opportunity to participate in decision-making via the Contact Group and other forums. Dayton too had given Russia a place at the decision-making table, and the



subsequent IFOR and SFOR missions had facilitated the portrayal of Russia as a significant actor. The special status afforded by the NATO-Russia Founding Act had appeared to indicate that partnership was genuine and had a promising future. However, for many in Russia, Operation Allied Force, following hard on the heels of the enlargement of the Alliance, was proof positive that NATO was not to be trusted. It is little wonder then that the Russian contribution to peacekeeping in post-conflict Kosovo suffered something of a hangover from Operation Allied Force and got off to a less promising start than the mission in Bosnia.

### *KFOR and Russian Participation*

One difference between the post-conflict situations in Bosnia and Kosovo was that the former was ended on the basis of an internationally agreed treaty, however imperfect, in the Dayton Accords. Peace in Kosovo, however, was reached only when, with Russian envoy Chernomyrdin's significant assistance, it was borne in upon Milosevic that he had no option but to accept NATO's terms. Those terms were essentially the same as the plan devised by the G8 gathering in May 1999, refined by Chernomyrdin and Ahitsaari in Helsinki, and subsequently by UNSCR 1244, the internationally recognised expression of the settlement and related peacekeeping activities. Russian acquiescence in the settlement for Kosovo meant that Moscow's contribution to post-conflict peacekeeping was premised on terms which had not been proposed in Moscow and were not to the liking of the Russian military authorities<sup>33</sup>.

As in Bosnia, so now in Kosovo: an arrangement was arrived at which nominally granted independence of command to Russian troops in Kosovo as part of KFOR, and Russian forces began arriving in Kosovo in July 1999<sup>34</sup>. Once again NATO was insisting on a single chain of command<sup>35</sup>. Consultative arrangements with NATO at tactical and strategic level were agreed, and Russia once again had a unique status among the non-NATO nations in KFOR. None of this, however, could disguise the fact that NATO had denied Russia its demand for its own military sector of responsibility in Kosovo, its

troops being dispersed among the French, German and US sectors. The short-lived 'triumph' of the dash to Pristina<sup>36</sup> also ended in a face-saving compromise with Russian troops having to be re-supplied with basic necessities by British forces at Pristina<sup>37</sup>. Thus, in summary, Russian participation in KFOR was undertaken to maintain Russian interest in portraying itself as a major player in European security decision-making, but the terms of its participation were, effectively, NATO's terms, thinly camouflaged by the shuttle diplomacy of Chernomyrdin.

One of the consequences of Russia's dissatisfaction and perceived junior partner status began to emerge in a divergence of thinking between NATO and Russia regarding the interpretation of the terms of the settlement. The absence of a detailed peace treaty such as Dayton provided scope for ambiguity and interpretation, a situation of concern to NATO since it permitted Russia to adopt contrary views to the Alliance regarding the provisions of UNSCR 1244, the Helsinki Agreements and the functioning of KFOR<sup>38</sup>. One Russian commentator noted the satisfactory nature of NATO-Russian military cooperation in Kosovo set against the backdrop of political disagreement<sup>39</sup>. Specifically he singled out the issue of the demilitarisation of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA); the extent to which the KLA might be permitted to participate in future security structures in Kosovo; the possible return of the Yugoslav Army to Kosovo; and the lack of border controls on the Kosovo-Albanian border, permitting the smuggling of arms into the province.

The fate of the KLA was a particularly contentious issue for Russia, keen to see it disbanded rather than transformed into a kind of internal paramilitary security force. On this issue as on others there was little or no common ground with NATO or the UN<sup>40</sup>. Indeed, so fraught was the relationship between Russia and the West that Russian defence minister Sergeyev's visit to Belgrade in December 1999 even gave rise to speculation that Moscow would withdraw from peacekeeping in Kosovo in protest at the perceived failings of KFOR<sup>41</sup>. While withdrawal did not come about, Sergeyev's visit did generate closer military cooperation between Moscow and Belgrade<sup>42</sup>.

Having signalled its irritation, Moscow continued to participate in peacekeeping, albeit by continuing to question the validity of the NATO-led process at all levels. At the operational level, NATO's Operation Plan (OPLAN) 10413 detailed the rules of engagement for its peacekeeping forces. It too became the subject of correspondence between Moscow and Brussels at senior political level as Russia sought to create elbow-room for its participation in Kosovo<sup>43</sup>. This divergence of interpretation translated into changes in the complexion of Russian liaison at SHAPE. After September 1999 NATO observers noted a break in the arrangements for SFOR liaison compared to those for KFOR. Instead of the former providing a model for the latter, NATO sources noted significant differences in the reduced decision-making authority of the KFOR Senior Russian representative, as well as variations in the KFOR delegation reporting line to Moscow. Other variations included a greater emphasis on employing liaison officers who did not have a professional military background, and a perceived change of emphasis in the focus of Russian liaison efforts from tactical level cooperation in SFOR to more Foreign Ministry directed policy objectives on joint decision-making in KFOR.

The overall tenor of these changes in KFOR liaison at SHAPE suggested that Russian participation, while analogous to that in IFOR/SFOR, had in fact a more overtly political emphasis than hitherto. Russia's KFOR liaison at SHAPE was coloured by the wider issue of its relationship with the newly-enlarged Alliance, with whom it had believed itself to have a unique partnership arrangement based upon the 1997 Founding Act. Operation Allied Force had engendered considerable resentment in Russian circles and caused a great deal of soul searching regarding Russia's relationship with NATO<sup>44</sup>. It is not entirely surprising therefore to note a new edge to Russian representation at SHAPE, nor to record that peacekeeping cooperation in Kosovo, while successful at the tactical level, did not operate so smoothly at the political-strategic level to begin with<sup>45</sup>.

Resumption of Russian participation in the PJC occurred against this background and was thus characterised by a degree of wariness and, once again, a divergence from NATO on fundamental interpretations regarding the role of the PJC. Whereas NATO interpreted Moscow's participation as recognising the legitimacy of the Alliance's role in European

security, Moscow continued to regard the PJC as a mechanism for influencing or even vetoing NATO decision-making. As perceived at SHAPE<sup>46</sup>, Russian diplomacy centred on a variety of issues including influencing internal NATO decision-making; elevating the PJC's status in Europe's security architecture to convey the impression of Russian influence over Alliance decisions regarding Eastern Europe (Russia's perceived sphere of influence); promoting the role of the PJC as the mechanism for peacekeeping cooperation outwith NATO's PfP programme; and attempting to transform NATO-led military activities into "joint" activities, playing up the Russian contribution.

For NATO the implications of the Russian approach to the PJC, and its colouring of peacekeeping cooperation in Kosovo, were several. In the aftermath of Operation Allied Force, the Alliance needed to take stock of its approach to the overall relationship with Moscow. Almost a year and a half after the end of the war in Kosovo NATO still lacked a strategy for progressing its relationship with Russia. Without such direction NATO would continue to be reactive to Russian input instead of guiding the relationship in a direction favourable to itself<sup>47</sup>. Owing to the deficiencies of the PJC, NATO was limited in its capacity to act as the best mechanism for engaging Russia at the political level; it could still provide a lead in promoting Russian military reform, however. In the absence of a truly strategic plan for its relationship with Moscow, the best chance for genuine progress appeared to lie in military to military cooperation at the tactical level, based upon getting things right in KFOR. For NATO, therefore, peacekeeping was the primary means of progressing the relationship.

In early 2000 there were a couple of hopeful signs that NATO and Russia might begin to overcome their post-Allied Force difficulties. In February Lord George Robertson, the Secretary-General to the Alliance, visited Moscow and spoke reassuringly about the relationship. This was followed a month later by the first meeting of the PJC since the launch of NATO's air campaign in Kosovo twelve months earlier. Opinion in Moscow, however, remained sceptical, with the Russians still keen to point out KFOR's failings including criticisms levelled by the UN police contingent<sup>48</sup> and refusing to increase their troop contribution. As the first anniversary of the launch of Operation Allied Force

approached the press still carried ample evidence of the persistence of Russian resentment, carrying articles critical of the war and subsequent peacekeeping operations<sup>49</sup>. The rift over Kosovo was a grim portent for future NATO-Russian cooperation and Robertson attempted to redress the balance in press interviews<sup>50</sup>.

He also saw fit to publish a slim document outlining KFOR's progress to date<sup>51</sup>. The document provides an optimistic assessment of KFOR's mission and achievements, but is probably as notable for its retrospective on the background to the Kosovo crisis and its justification of NATO's actions. The Alliance's relationship with Russia is not mentioned specifically. However, Russia's major criticisms of NATO's conduct in launching Operation Allied Force are all addressed, including the legality of the action, the conduct of the air campaign and the (NATO-perceived) need to act out of humanitarian concern. References to the work of NATO in addressing issues such as demilitarisation of the KLA and protection of Serb minorities, also reflect a concern to deal with Russian-fuelled criticisms. While there is no suggestion that Robertson was concerned to respond directly to continued Russian anxieties regarding Kosovo, it is possible to read his assessment as aimed at assuaging Russian concern, as much as to record NATO efforts and progress to date, not least because of a lack of a similar document regarding IFOR/SFOR.

This difficult period for NATO-Russian relations would never quite be fully overcome even though both sides had settled into an effective level of military cooperation, differences of political direction notwithstanding. Politically, only gradual rapprochement was proving possible and would become the order of the day<sup>52</sup>. Throughout 2000, therefore, differences of outlook persisted over the KLA, treatment of attacks on Serbs, and interpretations of UNSCR 1244. Above all of this loomed the unresolved issue of Kosovo's future status. Nevertheless, in late 2000 NATO and Russia could find some common cause for optimism in the election in Belgrade of Vojislav Kostunica as the successor to Milosevic. For NATO, Kostunica's election marked the end of the Milosevic era, while for Russia the new President's opposition to a Pax Americana was welcome<sup>53</sup>. The election of Kostunica was the occasion for reassessing

the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, with commentators examining Russia's role there and drawing cautiously optimistic conclusions about Russian interests, and the significance of the Russian contribution in keeping the peace<sup>54</sup>. NATO too took heart from peacekeeping cooperation albeit Secretary General Robertson's optimism was based more upon the Bosnian experience than that of Kosovo<sup>55</sup>.

In February 2001 NATO's Office of Information and Press issued a facts and figures brief, giving details of the number and disposition of SFOR and KFOR contingents, and their Russian components<sup>56</sup>. Already, from the figures cited, it can be seen that the Alliance and Moscow regarded the situation in the Balkans as improving, so requiring fewer troops on the ground in each mission. SFOR numbers had been reduced from an original (IFOR) contingent of 60,000, including 1,600 Russian airborne troops, to approximately 20,000, of which 1,200 were Russians. In KFOR the contingent now numbered 40,000 including approximately 3,000 Russian troops, down from its originally envisaged maximum strength of approximately 50,000 inclusive of 3,600 Russians. This phased and commensurate reduction in the number of troops contributed by NATO and Russia would become a feature of the overall peacekeeping missions over the next few years.

The Office of Press and Information brief, a less personalised document than Robertson's earlier assessment of the situation in Kosovo, was nevertheless an openly optimistic account of the relationship between NATO and Russia in both peacekeeping missions. It portrayed an active, harmonious and successful cooperation between the parties, to the benefit of the populations of Bosnia and Kosovo. It highlighted the special status of Russian peacekeepers in terms of their unique relationship with NATO, and the "additional dimension" which they brought to peacekeeping, given their "linguistic, cultural and religious affinities". Further, the peacekeeping partnership on the ground would provide the Russians with an opportunity to witness NATO in action, so demonstrating the transparency of the Alliance and forming the basis for future military to military cooperation. Clearly, NATO was emphasising the furtherance of its relationship with Russia at the military tactical level. This would appear to be consistent

with downplaying expectations at the political level, as per SHAPE's recognition of its own limitations and lack of a strategic plan for the relationship<sup>57</sup>. SFOR and KFOR were indeed proving successful at the level of military cooperation, and continued to provide at least some cause for optimism in the relationship.

On the Russian side too some had been arguing for greater rapprochement in the wider NATO-Russian relationship based upon a mutuality of interests including peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans<sup>58</sup>. Others acknowledged the "positive" experience of Russian and NATO military cooperation in SFOR and KFOR, but recognised that there needed to be caution as well as optimism in assessing the prospects for future rapprochement<sup>59</sup>. This cautious optimism for the future was based upon recognising the shortcomings of the main NATO-Russian consultative mechanism, the PJC. In particular, optimism had to be tempered because NATO and Russia differed fundamentally in their perceptions of the PJC's purpose. NATO members, regarding the Alliance as the military guarantor of European security, saw the PJC as of central importance in effecting its relationship with Russia. Moscow, on the other hand, recognising that the PJC did not give it any veto over NATO decision-making, regarded it as one of a number of forums, such as the OSCE and the UN, within which it could articulate its views. Russia had, however, much greater influence in these latter bodies, hence the PJC was a subordinate and often unsatisfactory medium for the Kremlin. Nevertheless, Balkan peacekeeping offered a concrete example of how the relationship could be furthered successfully at a lower level, informing the atmosphere of debate at the political level as to how to take NATO-Russian relations beyond the unsatisfactory workings of the PJC.

Notwithstanding peacekeeping's potential as the basis for future cooperation, the wounds inflicted by NATO's Kosovo campaign were always going to take a long time to heal. The second anniversary of the launch of Operation Allied Force demonstrated that there remained a high level of concern in Moscow regarding NATO's actions as the potential harbinger of disaster for Russia itself<sup>60</sup>. The relative successes of peacekeeping were held up to critical scrutiny with NATO once again accused of ethnic segregation in

Kosovo<sup>61</sup>. Milosevic's extradition to the International Court of Justice at the Hague also gave rise to Russian criticism of NATO as a divisive and partisan peacekeeping force<sup>62</sup>.

As for the functioning of the peacekeeping operations themselves, steady incremental successes throughout 2001 enabled the operational commander of SFOR and KFOR to provide a sober yet upbeat assessment of the situation by March 2002<sup>63</sup>. Acknowledging the limitations of SFOR's and KFOR's ability to ameliorate the effects of such recent ethnic brutality in Bosnia and Kosovo, Admiral Greg Johnson, Commander-in-Chief of NATO's Southern Region, nevertheless noted a steady return of refugees, apprehension of suspected war criminals, reduction in the incidence of ethnic violence and reduction in crime rates generally. He also stressed that NATO-led peacekeeping could not, of itself, effect "nation-building", nor was that the peacekeepers' task. Instead, he recognised the need for non-NATO agencies, not least the civil population of Bosnia and Kosovo, to cooperate to that end.

As for the peacekeepers themselves, there was once again a reduction in troop numbers, reflecting the sense among contributing nations that SFOR and KFOR were working sufficiently successfully, and the Balkans was settling into, if not fully restored peace, then an acceptable absence of open conflict. By March 2002, three years after the launch of Operation Allied Force, SFOR's total strength was 18,000 troops while that of KFOR was 37,000. These figures reflected a commensurate reduction in the Russian contingent, which continued to reduce in numbers in the summer of that year and into the next<sup>64</sup>.

#### **.... And Moving On**

By the time of Johnson's assessment the world had witnessed the attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 (9/11) in the USA, an event which had profound significance for the subsequent conduct of foreign policy in the US and elsewhere. Among the many ramifications of 9/11 was the impetus given to NATO and Russia to improve their relationship. While military-tactical cooperation in SFOR and KFOR was generally accepted as a success, at the level of political strategy Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov



could still speak critically of NATO-led operations in Kosovo in July 2001, condemning the province as a hotbed of terrorism and organised crime<sup>65</sup>. After 9/11, however, greater rapprochement became evident, and there were calls for a new partnership as each side began to focus more clearly on how to cultivate their strategic relationship<sup>66</sup>.

With the immediate crises in Bosnia and Kosovo now long past, and with peacekeeping – on the ground, if not at the level of policy - seen as generally effective, the focal point of NATO-Russian relations gradually became less and less Balkan-oriented. Each party had to consider the wider aspects of the relationship, including NATO enlargement, and fundamental divergence regarding the PJC, under the shadow cast by 9/11. As a result there was a concerted effort on the part of NATO and Russian officials to make progress on a new partnership based upon perceived mutuality of interests which had been given impetus by the shared fear of terrorism. One consequence of this was a gradual, almost imperceptible, turning of attention away from the 1990s Balkan wars and peacekeeping activities, as NATO and Russia sought to face up to what would confront them in the wake of 9/11, and the changes in security threats and the conduct of international relations wrought by those attacks.

Even prior to 9/11 there had been indications of NATO-Russian rapprochement<sup>67</sup>. Putin, even while espousing the standard Kremlin line denying any need for NATO, conceded that it was here to stay and might even include Russia<sup>68</sup>. Immediately after 9/11 others argued, somewhat presciently, for the West to cultivate Russia for, inter alia, its peacekeeping capabilities in Kosovo should the US withdraw its forces in the event of commitments in the Muslim world<sup>69</sup>. Putin now began repositioning Moscow and set about improving Russia's cooperation with, and standing among, the NATO allies, a bold move given the relatively brief passage of time since the Kosovo campaign<sup>70</sup>. US troops were granted access to former Soviet basing facilities, and the Russian satellite base in Cuba, widely understood to be used for espionage purposes, was closed down. Putin visited Berlin, Brussels and the US to reinforce his European security credentials and to press home the message of his support for Washington's war on terror.

On the whole, the Kremlin's new line was regarded as a positive development in the West<sup>71</sup>. Putin's motives were variously attributed – economic, geopolitical (justifying Russian conduct in Chechnya), fear of the rise of Islam and its implications for Russia, a desire to improve Russia's international standing<sup>72</sup>. In any event, Russia's western orientation swiftly generated moves to improve its relationship with NATO<sup>73</sup> despite some initial caution in Brussels<sup>74</sup>.

Given the swiftness of Putin's post-9/11 overtures to the West, there was an understandable reserve in the reaction of some commentators when assessing its motivation and sustainability<sup>75</sup>. Nevertheless, NATO-Russian momentum had been generated and the new prevailing mood was well summed up by NATO Secretary General George Robertson in January 2002<sup>76</sup>. Targeting a Russian audience he stressed the seminal nature of the changes brought about by the attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September, and the immediacy of the common threat of terrorism. The effect of the threat, according to Robertson, was to overshadow the differences between NATO and Russia over Bosnia and Kosovo – where, in his view, much had been achieved by NATO-Russian partnership – and to generate an urgent need for a new and deeper cooperation. Robertson also offered a sop to Russian sensibilities by choosing his words carefully when discussing Chechnya. The message was simple enough – that which divided NATO and Russia was of less consequence than that which united them, namely the threat posed by (undefined) terrorism.

Robertson's overtures were carefully calculated, but also made clear that enlargement of the Alliance would proceed, though it would not pose any threat to Russia. This second wave of NATO enlargement in only five years might have been expected to generate considerable official resistance from the Kremlin but Putin appears to have recognised the *realpolitik* involved<sup>77</sup>. In any event, a new post-9/11 mood of rapprochement was abroad, and officials worked hard on both sides throughout the spring of 2002 to enable the creation of the new NATO-Russian Council in May of that year, marking, perhaps optimistically, "a new quality" in the relationship<sup>78</sup>.

Against this background of increasing political cooperation, the peacekeeping missions in SFOR and KFOR continued throughout 2001 and 2002. Already, prior to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, there were financial pressures on the Russian garrison, which was proving costly to maintain<sup>79</sup>. Reductions in troop numbers were not solely attributable to a favourable perception of the security situation in theatre, nor were financial constraints limited to the Russians, with the British also feeling the pinch<sup>80</sup>. The theme of troop reductions continued throughout 2002 and 2003, reflecting a combination of financial pressures, improving security and waning interest in the Balkans as events elsewhere, most notably in Afghanistan and the Middle East, began to dominate the attention of policy makers.

By April 2003, in a move already foreshadowed in the Russian press<sup>81</sup>, Moscow's Chief of the General Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, was announcing plans for the complete withdrawal of Russian forces from the Balkans. The move was justified by the General Staff on the basis that the Russian military had achieved all its objectives in Bosnia and in Kosovo, and that the operations were no longer affordable, though some questioned the validity of the financial arguments<sup>82</sup>. Further, the withdrawal of troops signified not just a military manoeuvre but a political and diplomatic relinquishing of interest in the Balkans on the part of Russia, a de facto recognition of its inability to compete with NATO, and a loss of Russian influence in the region.

By the summer of 2003 Russia's long-standing commitment to peacekeeping in the Balkans throughout the 1990s had become an expensive over-investment, whose returns in terms of political leverage were not worth the outlay. In July the last of the Russian contingent in KFOR departed from Kosovo<sup>83</sup>, signalling a demotion in the significance of the Balkans for the political leadership in Moscow. For the Kremlin, the Balkans had ceased to be a priority, and its attention was turning to the Middle East as well as Russia's own near abroad. Nevertheless, the military to military cooperation between NATO and Russian peacekeepers was recognised and applauded as the Russians prepared to withdraw. It drew generous tribute from the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General James Jones, who noted that the success of the peacekeeping

missions at the tactical level, and expressed the hope that continued joint training would enable NATO and Russia to build upon the SFOR and KFOR experience<sup>84</sup>.

In the post-9/11 world Bosnia and Kosovo became less of a priority for the US and NATO also. With Iraq absorbing vast resources of manpower, equipment and money the US military in particular was keen to withdraw from the Balkans, albeit by late 2003 the number of US troops there was very small – some 1,500 in Bosnia and 2,000 in Kosovo – compared to the height of the Balkan crises<sup>85</sup>. Given the political centrality of the US to NATO's Balkan operations, any American withdrawal would necessitate a drastic reduction or withdrawal on the part of NATO, in turn begging the question of an exit strategy for the Alliance to enable it to withdraw in good order. The EU peacekeeping mission in Macedonia offered an indication of European intention and capability, and in January 2003 the EU offered to provide the deployed HQ for SFOR in Bosnia<sup>86</sup>. At the time of writing NATO staffs are engaged in exploring the mechanisms by which a transfer of NATO peacekeeping responsibilities in Bosnia may be transferred to the EU<sup>87</sup>, though without any significant Russian involvement. The hour of Europe may have been a long time coming in the Balkans but by summer 2004 it appeared to be getting closer as a US-led NATO and Russia signalled that their priorities throughout the 1990s had moved on.

- <sup>1</sup> The Guardian, Home page 5<sup>th</sup> June 1995.
- <sup>2</sup> Aleksandr Shal'nyev "Rossiskii soldati, vozmozhno, prisoyedinyayatsa k silam bistrovo reagirovanie v Bosnia, skazal ministr Kozyrev" Izvestiya 8<sup>th</sup> June 1995.
- <sup>3</sup> Maksim Yusin "Moskva kritikuyet i NATO i serbov, no ne v silakh realno povlyat na sobitiya v Bosnia" Izvestiya 1<sup>st</sup> September 1995.
- <sup>4</sup> Elena Guskova "NATO nachinaet voynu na Balkanakh" Krasnaya Zvezda 1<sup>st</sup> September 1995: Aleksandr Gol'ts "Moskovskoye echo natovskikh bombezhok" Krasnaya Zvezda 16<sup>th</sup> September 1995.
- <sup>5</sup> For a summary of NATO and Russian mutual interests in promoting the role of Russia see Michael Andersen, *Russia and the Former Yugoslavia* in M. Webber (ed) Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation? MacMillan Press 2000 pp 193-194.
- <sup>6</sup> David Hearst "Quixotic Kozyrev in Crisis" The Guardian 12<sup>th</sup> September 1995.
- <sup>7</sup> A.S. Botyanovskii, *The Bosnian Knot* International Affairs January 1996. An official of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Botyanovskii produced an account of the course and resolution of the Bosnian conflict notable for its attributing the end of the war to the efforts of the Contact Group and other named international groupings – NATO is specifically excluded.
- <sup>8</sup> R Holbrooke To End A War Random House, New York 1999.
- <sup>9</sup> On this latter point see Holbrooke op cit p 242.
- <sup>10</sup> Statement on Bosnia-Herzegovina, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1995 ([www.nato.int/docu/review/1996/9601-5.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1996/9601-5.htm))
- <sup>11</sup> Andersen, op cit, p 193.
- <sup>12</sup> US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, quoted in Holbrooke, p 212.
- <sup>13</sup> Holbrooke pp 212-213 and 209.
- <sup>14</sup> Holbrooke p 311.
- <sup>15</sup> For his comments on the Russian contribution at Dayton see Carl Bildt Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia London 1998, p 129.
- <sup>16</sup> Vladimir Nadein "Operatsiya 'Figovi list'" Izvestiya 11<sup>th</sup> November 1995.
- <sup>17</sup> Aleksandr Pel'ts "Rossiya budet uchastvovat' v mirotvorcheskoi operatsii v Bosnia. Naravne c NATO..." Krasnaya Zvezda 30<sup>th</sup> November 1995.
- <sup>18</sup> "Backing Boris: The west must keep its nerve on Russia" The Guardian 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1996.
- <sup>19</sup> See Sharyl Cross *Russia and NATO toward the Twenty First Century: Conflicts and Peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo* NATO-EAPC Research Fellowship Report, August 2001, pp 18-24. Available at [www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/f99-01.htm](http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/f99-01.htm).
- <sup>20</sup> Aleksandr Gol'ts "Mirotvorcheskaya operatsiya v Bosnia - shans dlya sotrudnichestva" Krasnaya Zvezda 25<sup>th</sup> January 1996: Dmitri Trenin "Daite voennim shans!" Krasnaya Zvezda 6<sup>th</sup> February 1996.
- <sup>21</sup> The highlights of Solana's speech are available at [www.nato.int/docu/review/1996/9603-d.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1996/9603-d.htm).
- <sup>22</sup> Dmitri Trenin *Avoiding a new confrontation with NATO* NATO Review vol 44 No 3 May 1996 pp 17-20. Trenin's article is an articulate plea for a freeze on NATO enlargement, citing cooperation in Bosnia as evidence of the possibility of practical NATO-Russian cooperation, but fearing the potential destabilising effects of enlargement.
- <sup>23</sup> See Scott Parrish *Russia's Marginal Role, Transition* 12 July 1996 pp 23-24.
- <sup>24</sup> Dmitri Gomostayev "Prestuplenie protiv serbov v Bosnia i Khorvatii nosyat massovi kharakter" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 29<sup>th</sup> February 1996.
- <sup>25</sup> See inter alia a series of articles in the NATO Review e.g. Leontiy P Shevtsov, *Russian-NATO military cooperation in Bosnia: A basis for the future?* Vol 45 No 2 March 1997 pp 17-21: Ulrich Brandenburg, *NATO and Russia: A natural partnership* Vol 45 No 4 July-August 1997 pp 17-21: Javier Solana, *NATO-Russia relations: On track* Vol 45 No 6 November-December 1997 p 3: Igor Sergeyev, *We are not adversaries, we are partners* Vol 46 No1 Spring 1998 pp 15-18: Klaus-Peter Klaiber, *The NATO-Russia relationship a year after Paris* Vol 46 No 3 Autumn 1998 pp 16-19.
- <sup>26</sup> In addition to Shevtsov and Sergeyev op cit, see Professor Lt Gen I Ivashov, *On NATO's Eastward Expansion* Military Thought 1<sup>st</sup> September 1996.
- <sup>27</sup> Shevtsov and Sergeyev op cit. Also Dmitri Gornostaev "Vsye voennie v NATO govoryat, shto nyet neobkhodimosti rasshireniya alliansa", Nezavisimaya Gazeta 26<sup>th</sup> February 1997 (an interview in which Colonel General Shevtsov claims that NATO's military sees no need to enlarge the alliance).
- <sup>28</sup> Yuri Baturin "Bosniiskii opit NATO ne podkhodit dlya obespecheniya obshcheevropeiskoi bezopastnosti" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 28<sup>th</sup> November 1996.
- <sup>29</sup> Boris Vinogradov "V NATO Rossiya poka chuvstvuyet sebya neuyutno" Izvestia 4<sup>th</sup> December 1997.

<sup>30</sup> For a more detailed assessment of the workings of NATO-Russian cooperation in IFOR and SFOR, see Cross op cit pp 18-26.

<sup>31</sup> Vitaly Denisov "Mirotvortsii Rossii ostayutsa na Balkanakh" Krasnaya Zvezda 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1998. Also, "Zdyes' mi edini. Kak mirotvortsii" Krasnaya Zvezda 5<sup>th</sup> January 1999 (interview with Russian and American peacekeeper representatives).

<sup>32</sup> Vadim Solovyev "Operatsia 'Soyuznicheskaya Sila' perecherkivaet rezultati sotrudnichestvo Rossiya-NATO" Nezavisimaya Voennoye Obozreniye 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999. Boris Volkonski "Igor Ivanov: Epokha Rambouillet perecherknuta" Kommersant Daily 27<sup>th</sup> March 1999 (interview with Igor Ivanov).

<sup>33</sup> Yuri Golotyuk, "Balkanskiy krisis opasen dlya vashevo inashevo zdorovya" Izvestiya 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1999: Igor Korotchenko, "Rezkie zayavleniya Minoboroni RF" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1999.

<sup>34</sup> The principles and arrangements for Russian peacekeeping, in so far as they had been agreed internally and with NATO, were summarised and outlined in a special Kosovo-focused edition of Vestnik Voennoi Informatsii in July 1999. Russian troops began entering the province in numbers throughout that month – see Vladimir Georgiyev, "Nachat vkhod nashikh voisk v Kosovo" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 7<sup>th</sup> July 1999.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with the Chairman of the NATO Military Planning Committee, Admiral Guido Venturoni, in the Russian press. See Vadim Solovyev, "Mirotvorcheskiye voiska v Kosovo dolzhni imet' edinoe komandovanie" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1999.

<sup>36</sup> The so-called 'dash' for Pristina was the subject of considerable debate over who gave the authority for Russian peacekeepers to race from Bosnia in June 1999, so pipping NATO forces to Pristina airport. It is believed that Yeltsin personally gave his approval for this unusual and risky operation – see Igor Korotchenko and Vladimir Mukhin "'Dobro' na perebrosku Rossiiskikh voennikh v Kosovo dal Boris Yeltsin" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 16<sup>th</sup> June 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Interview in May 2000 in Naples with the senior RAF officer present at Pristina airport in 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Notes from an address to NATO staff officers at Naples, May 2000. NATO thinking at the time reflected serious concerns that at the political level Russia was seeking to revise the terms of the Helsinki Agreement, and working to return the Yugoslav Army to Kosovo as soon as possible. Russian liaison officials at SHAPE were also promoting the view that UNSCR 1244 did not restrict peacekeeping to NATO-led forces but allowed for a Russian-led peacekeeping force as well.

<sup>39</sup> V Kozin Kremlin and NATO; prospects for Interaction International Affairs May 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Dmitri Gornostaev, "Sud'ba OAK reshaetsa v Moskve" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 16<sup>th</sup> September 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Ekaterina Glebova, "Moskva mozhnet svernut' mirotvorcheskuyu missiyu v Kosovo" Izvestiya 25<sup>th</sup> December 1999: Oleg Falichev, "Rossiya ne namerena bit' statistom na Balkanakh" Krasnaya Zvezda 28<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Igor Korotchenko, "Moskva i Belgrad ukreplyaut voennoe sotrudnichestvo" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 28<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

<sup>43</sup> Author's discussions with senior NATO political advisers at SHAPE, September 2000.

<sup>44</sup> The implications for Russia, and consequent Russian reaction, are well captured in an essay by Viktor Gobarev, which analyses the immediate post-Kosovo strategic planning undertaken in Moscow. Though necessarily speculative in part (because of timing), Gobarev identifies the main security concerns posed by NATO for Russia, and predicts the outcome of the review of Russian defence and security doctrines. See Viktor Gobarev, *Russian-NATO relations after Kosovo: Strategic Implications*, The Journal of Slavic Military Studies Vol 12 No 3 September 1999 pp 1-17.

<sup>45</sup> Author's meetings at SHAPE, September 2000.

<sup>46</sup> Author's meetings at SHAPE, September 2000.

<sup>47</sup> This absence of a strategic plan for the end product of the relationship is echoed in Martin A. Smith, *A Bumpy Road to an Unknown Destination: NATO-Russian Relations 1991-2002*, European Security Vol 11 No 4 2002 pp 74-75. However, Smith charges that neither party had a strategic plan, across the course of their post-Cold War relationship. NATO observers in September 2000 were of the opinion that the Russians did indeed have a strategy aimed at influencing, or reducing the effectiveness of, alliance decision-making. This dictated the actions and reactions of the Alliance, so highlighting NATO's own strategic shortcomings.

<sup>48</sup> Yuri Pankov, "KFOR ne spravlyayutsa so svoimi zadachami" Krasnaya Zvezda 8<sup>th</sup> February 2000. Also Kseniya Fokina, "Politsiya OON obvinyaet Kushnera v podvorstve boevikam" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 17<sup>th</sup> March 2000.

- <sup>49</sup> Yuri Pankov, "Kosovo: Polni proval mirotvorcheskoi missii OON" Krasnaya Zvezda 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2000 (interview with Boris Milosevich, brother of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, and Yugoslav ambassador to Moscow – his critique is therefore unsurprising): Also, Nezavisimaya Gazeta DipKur'er 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2000, various articles including Dmitri Gornostaev, *Za mir neborolsya niko?*: Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, "Kosovski krizis: god spustya": Sheryl Cross and R L di Nardo, "Mozhet li Amerika obyavit' o svoei pobede v Kosovo?". See also Maksim Yusin, "Voina mifov" Izvestiya 24<sup>th</sup> March 2000, and Krasnaya Zvezda "Opasni pretsedent dlya mezhdunarodnoi bezopastnosti" (interview with Russian Defence Minister Marshal Sergeyev).
- <sup>50</sup> Vadim Solovyev, "Mozhno li bilo sdelat' luchshe?" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000 (interview with NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson).
- <sup>51</sup> Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, *Kosovo One Year On: Achievement and Challenge* 21<sup>st</sup> March 2000, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/repo2000/index.htm>
- <sup>52</sup> Igor Korotchenko, "Sotrudnichestvo budet poetapnim" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 14<sup>th</sup> June 2000.
- <sup>53</sup> Voislav Koshtunitsa, "Serbi i zapad. Novi President Jugoslavia protiv Pax Americana" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 13<sup>th</sup> October 2000.
- <sup>54</sup> Vladimir Mukhin, "Kosovo: bol'she goda bez voini. Yesli iz kraya uidut Rossiskie mirotvortsi, tam ne ostanaetsa iSerbov" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 18<sup>th</sup> November 2000. Aleksandr Karasev, *Russia in Yugoslavia: Mission Accomplished* International Affairs January 2001.
- <sup>55</sup> George Robertson, "Mirotvorcheskie usiliya na Balkanakh prinosyat svoi plodi" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2000.
- <sup>56</sup> *NATO and Russia: Partners in Peacekeeping*, NATO Office of Information and Press, Brussels, February 2001.
- <sup>57</sup> Author's meetings at SHAPE, September 2000.
- <sup>58</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Russia-NATO relations: Time to pick up the pieces*, NATO Review Vol 48, No 1, Spring-Summer 2000.
- <sup>59</sup> Andrei Zagovskii, *Great Expectations* NATO Review Vol 49 No 1 Spring 2001 pp 24-27.
- <sup>60</sup> Sergei Antyushin and Nikolai Baranov (interview with Russian Defence Minister Marshal Sergeyev), "Eta bilo agresiya" Krasnaya Zvezda 24<sup>th</sup> March 2001.
- <sup>61</sup> Maksim Shevchenko, "NATO sozdala na Balkanakh rezhim ethnicheskoi segregatsii" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 31<sup>st</sup> March 2001.
- <sup>62</sup> Sergei Grizunov, "Kovo possoril arrest Miloshevicha?" Moskovskie Novosti 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2001: Aleksandr Kuranov, "Slobodan Miloshevich kak kozel otpushcheniya" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 30<sup>th</sup> June 2001: Dmitri Babich, "Torzhestvo prava ili destabilizatsiya?" Moskovskie Novosti 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2001.
- <sup>63</sup> Gregory Johnson, *The Balkans: Prospects and Challenges One Year Later* NATO's Nations and Partners for Peace 1/2002 pp 110-114. Admiral Johnson was Commander-in-Chief of NATO's Allied Forces South, (AFSOUTH) based in Naples. Headquarters AFSOUTH assumed operational command of the SFOR and KFOR missions in January 2001, hence the title of the article written in spring 2002. For publication in a military in-house journal, Johnson's article is refreshingly candid and measured.
- <sup>64</sup> Vadim Solovyev and Marina Marchenko, "Russkie soldati uzhaiyut iz Jugoslavii" Nezavisimaya Gazeta 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2003.
- <sup>65</sup> Speech delivered by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov at the first Russian International Studies Association Convention, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2001, published as *The formation of new Russian foreign policy completed* International Affairs July 2001.
- <sup>66</sup> Willem Matser *Towards a New Strategic Partnership* NATO Review Vol 49 No 4 Winter 2001.
- <sup>67</sup> Fareed Zakaria, "Could Russia Join the West?" Newsweek 25<sup>th</sup> June 2001.
- <sup>68</sup> Amelia Gentleman, "Replace NATO by pan-European pact, Putin says" The Guardian 19<sup>th</sup> July 2001.
- <sup>69</sup> Anatol Lieven, "Russia and realpolitik" Financial Times 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001.
- <sup>70</sup> Robert Cottrell and Quentin Peel, "A Stealth Fighter" Financial Times 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> October 2001. Also, Ian Black, "Russia hints at rethink on NATO", The Guardian 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001.
- <sup>71</sup> "Putin's big opportunity" Jane's Intelligence Digest 19<sup>th</sup> October 2001. Also, Vlad Sobell, "Russia turns west" The World Today November 2001.
- <sup>72</sup> Andrew Nagorski, "America's new friend?" Newsweek 19<sup>th</sup> November 2001 pp 40-43.
- <sup>73</sup> Alexander Nicoll, "Blair seeks closer NATO ties with the Kremlin" Financial Times 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November 2001. Also, Ian Black, "NATO pledges to reward Putin" The Guardian 24<sup>th</sup> November 2001.
- <sup>74</sup> Luke Hill, "NATO fails to warm to Putin" Jane's Defence Weekly 7<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

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- <sup>75</sup> See, for example, Oksana Antonenko, *Putin's Gamble Survival* Vol 43 No 4 Winter 2001-02 pp 49-60; Robert Cottrell, "Putin Policy Shift is bold but risky" *Financial Times Survey* 15<sup>th</sup> April 2002; Pavel Baev, *Putin's Western Choice: Too Good to be True?* *European Security* Vol 12 No 1 Spring 2003 pp 1-16.
- <sup>76</sup> George Robertson, *A New Quality in the NATO-Russia Relationship* *International Affairs* January 2002.
- <sup>77</sup> See Dmitri Trenin *Silence of the Bear* *NATO Review* Spring 2002.
- <sup>78</sup> *NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality*, Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b020528e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b020528e.htm)
- <sup>79</sup> Vladimir Mukhin, "Putin pitaetsya povtorit' politiku de Gullya" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 14<sup>th</sup> July 2001.
- <sup>80</sup> Michael Smith *Army must cut Kosovo garrison to save money* *Daily Telegraph* 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2002.
- <sup>81</sup> See Solovyev and Marchenko, op cit.
- <sup>82</sup> Oxford Analytica, *Russia-Balkans: Peacekeepers pull-out* 25<sup>th</sup> April 2003.
- <sup>83</sup> *Last of ten military trains with Russian peacekeepers leaves Kosovo* *ITAR-TASS World Service* 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2003.
- <sup>84</sup> James L. Jones, "Mirotvorchestvo: dostizhenniya i novie zadachi" *Krasnaya Zvezda* 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2003.
- <sup>85</sup> Peter Spiegel, "Pentagon urged to pull out of the Balkans" *Financial Times* 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003.
- <sup>86</sup> Luke Hill, *US and NATO may pull out from Bosnia next year*, *Janes Defence Weekly* 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003
- <sup>87</sup> Author's meeting in London with NATO officials 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.



## Conclusion

The Balkan wars commanded the attention of all concerned with European security in the 1990s. From the early years of the decade when a divided West failed to deal adequately with the violence of Bosnia, through to the bombing of Kosovo in 1999, NATO and Russia found themselves increasingly involved in what was happening in South East Europe. Gradually, however, as peacekeeping settled into becoming the norm, and as the US, NATO's leading player, began to focus its attention away from the Balkans, the situation there receded from public view in the west and in Russia. A number of related questions, however, are worth considering.

This is a NATO-centric work, and as such is concerned to assess, *inter alia*, what effect the Alliance's involvement in Bosnia and in Kosovo had upon NATO. Equally, however, we need to consider the effect of the Balkan wars upon Russia and the NATO-Russian relationship. In addressing all of these questions, it will be necessary to consider a brief resumé of the salient points emerging from earlier chapters in order to identify key themes. Having drawn these strands together one may offer some tentative thoughts on the future.

### *Retrospect – the Balkan wars and NATO*

Considering first the effect of the Balkans upon NATO it is a truism, none the less true for that, to observe that the NATO which first intervened in Bosnia is not the same organisation, politically or militarily, which has emerged from that intervention. The disintegration of Yugoslavia posed arguably the greatest threat to European security since the end of the Second World War, and so provided the Alliance with an opportunity to adapt, operate and demonstrate its continued relevance to European security. The immediate post-Cold War obituaries for NATO proved premature, though the rationale for its continued existence still exercised many in the West in the ensuing years, especially after the 9/11 attacks in the United States<sup>1</sup>.

Suffice it to say that the former Yugoslavia was the catalyst for NATO to demonstrate its worth in the post-Cold War period. It did this by reforming in order to operate beyond its traditional Article 5 borders, initially in Bosnia<sup>2</sup>. NATO's case was helped by contrasting it with the impotence associated with earlier UN efforts in Bosnia, and by the failure of west European governments to deal with the rise in violence and ethnic strife. Germany's breaking ranks to recognise the emergent Slovenian and Croatian governments was but the most spectacular example of the EU's inability to make common cause to deal effectively with the grave security threat knocking at its own front door. As an indication of a common approach to security and defence matters, Bosnia was not hopeful.

The situation there did, however, enable NATO to emerge as the security institution capable of providing, under US leadership, effective military capability and western political cohesion in the Balkans. In one sense, while we may speak of a major NATO contribution to rescuing the situation in Bosnia, we may also speak of Bosnia rescuing NATO. The Alliance emerged as an enhanced force, providing the forum for Allied (and here it is tempting to read US) military and diplomatic power to be brought to bear, whether in the form of airstrikes against Serb positions, or cajoling participants around the table at Dayton. The bitter violence of the early years of the war in Bosnia exposed the inability of Europe's leaders to submerge their differences. In turn, this made subsequent US leadership appear necessary and effective, the main vehicle for it being NATO. The Alliance also provided the means for European states to regroup, consolidate and re-emerge to greater effect in peacekeeping, once the war had been ended. If European *peacemaking* had been ineffective in Bosnia, *peacekeeping* proved much more successful, and restored some credibility to the notion of a European security and defence identity within the Alliance.

Events in Kosovo took matters a considerable step further. Almost certainly fuelled in part by western public opinion's desire not to repeat the horrific experiences of Bosnia, NATO in effect sidelined the UN in its determination to deal with the crisis in the province. Retrospective UN sanctioning of NATO's actions cannot disguise the fact that

it was the Alliance which set the diplomatic and military pace. The ramifications of Operation Allied Force for international law are still being worked out, and it has been seen as a precedent for Western intervention in Iraq<sup>3</sup>. NATO demonstrated that it was now in the business of making as well as enforcing the rules, at a time and place of its own choosing. That said, there was not unanimity among NATO allies, especially when it came to the vexed issue of using ground troops, and the longer the air campaign wore on the greater the danger that NATO unity would evaporate. In the event, however, NATO cohesion held despite the misgivings of some members. Once again, Operation Allied Force reinforced the message that NATO was still very much indebted to US leadership and military capabilities.

The cumulative effect of the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo was that NATO emerged from its existential soul searching as very much the pre-eminent security organisation on the continent of Europe, even more so than the UN, with whom its relationship had proven somewhat ambiguous following the Alliance's decision to launch Operation Allied Force in the absence of UN approval. NATO interventionism helped shape the Balkans, just as in turn the Balkans helped shape NATO. Crucially, NATO's security pre-eminence was not welcome in Moscow, where there was a clear preference for the OSCE as the leading pan-European security institution.

#### *Retrospect – the Balkan wars and Russia*

If the Balkan wars had a significant impact upon NATO, they had no less an effect in Moscow. The cataclysmic shock to the Russian political system caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union generated the most profound rethink of Moscow's place and role in European security. The ensuing debate gave voice to a number of schools of thought, and variations on the theme of Russia's place in the new world order<sup>4</sup>. On one thing, however, there was general agreement – despite its reduced circumstances, Russia remained a major power in European security.

A major power, confronted with the greatest test of post-Cold War security in Europe, could not but become involved. Russia, however reduced from its Soviet pomp, had no real choice but to engage with what was happening in the Balkans, and with the leading players in the drama. To have done otherwise would have been a public acknowledgement of Moscow's reduced influence in the world, and given the lie to major power status. Apart from that, there were strategic, historic, religious and ethnic reasons tending to Russian involvement in south east Europe, making the Kremlin a key player in its own right, even if not a first team regular.

With Andrei Kozyrev at the foreign policy helm, Moscow initially set a largely pro-Western course in the emerging Balkan crises, though this was not universally popular at home. Yeltsin's government enjoyed a brief but splendid moment of diplomatic triumph in February 1994, when Russia prevailed upon the Serbs to withdraw from positions around Sarajevo, so preventing an escalation of the war involving NATO. Apart from that, however, Bosnia presaged an inexorable decline in Russian influence, a decline underlined by the process and outcome of the Dayton negotiations. At best, Russia achieved a junior partner status with the West, a fact ironically emphasised by the West's transparent efforts to play up Moscow's contribution, and by the latter's persistent attempts to credit anyone and everyone but NATO with achieving peace in Bosnia<sup>5</sup>.

The survival and persistence of the NATO-Russian relationship after Dayton is attributable to a mutuality of interest, nourished by the success of peacekeeping operations. In presenting the Dayton settlement as the outcome of widespread international agreement, Russian involvement was important to the NATO allies. For its part, Russia needed to be seen to be on the winning side after Dayton if it was to be able to sustain its claims of great power influence and status. Accordingly, peacekeeping cooperation after the Bosnian war became a test of NATO-Russian cohesion and goodwill, and proved on the whole a successful venture at the military operational level, political differences notwithstanding. For a few brief years in the mid nineteen-nineties there was a realistic prospect that the obvious senior-junior imbalance in NATO-Russian

relations could at least be evened out at the operational level, with consequent benefits for the relationship. Then came Operation Allied Force in 1999.

NATO military actions in Kosovo proved a burden too heavy for Russia to sustain, and caused a serious rupture in relations. The outcry in Russia caused by the NATO attacks gave ammunition to the government's critics who had accused the Yeltsin regime of being too much in thrall to the West<sup>6</sup>. The Kremlin found itself hemmed in by the realities of having to deal with NATO and its untrammelled ability to act as it saw fit, as well as the pressure of public opinion and domestic criticism, outraged by Russia's demonstrable impotence. Even then, however, with a clear breach of relations having taken place, Yeltsin's government did not succumb to the demands of its most vehemently anti-Western critics. Instead, it preferred to adopt a line of formal diplomatic criticism while keeping open channels to the west in recognition of its own inability to influence events decisively. The pattern of Bosnia was repeated over Kosovo; attempts to establish an independent Russian line gradually evolved into grudging rapprochement with the West. Grudging rapprochement in turn gave way to the conduct of peacekeeping operations, demonstrating that at the operational level NATO and Russia were capable of successful cooperation. Similarities aside, it should be noted that, for the Kremlin, the experience of Kosovo was much more humbling than that of Bosnia.

In sum, the Balkans wars provided a huge shock to Moscow and demonstrated the grave difficulties which Russia had in striving to make good its claims to being a great power. The relationship with NATO was seen to be unequal in the light of Dayton, and Operation Allied Force cast an even harsher light on it. Ultimately, however, the relationship survived, though at some cost to Russian pride and status, as a weakened Moscow accepted the need to continue to engage with a greatly strengthened NATO.

#### *Retrospect – NATO, Russia and the Balkans*

Turning to the effect of the Balkan wars upon the NATO-Russian relationship generally, it is clear that after the Cold War both parties had to move to a new, non-adversarial

basis. Posing the greatest immediate threat to European security, former Yugoslavia naturally became the forum for new relations to emerge. NATO and Russia recognised that, when it came to the Balkans, each had to deal with the other though for somewhat different reasons. As discussed, Russia needed to continue to act as a great power in the region, obliging it to engage with the Alliance which wanted Russian involvement but on NATO's terms. The Balkans helped to mould a newer, larger and stronger NATO, with greatly increased leverage in its dealings with Russia partly through its own new-found purpose as articulated by the Strategic Concept of 1999, and partly through Moscow's demonstrable loss of standing.

It is beyond the scope of this study to speculate how the NATO-Russian relationship might have evolved in the absence of the Balkan wars, given that NATO was already debating its own future and Moscow was coming to terms with its loss of Soviet empire. Each had difficult questions to address regarding its own identity, purpose and place in the aftermath of the Cold War. It seems reasonable, however, to suggest that, by engaging the best efforts of both protagonists at one time and in one place, the Balkans provided each with a high degree of immediacy in addressing their own questions and doubts. The disintegration of Yugoslavia commanded the attention of NATO and Russia for different reasons, in the process focusing and forging their relationship. The immediacy of crisis management exposed fundamental differences in outlook between the two, whereas dealing with post-crisis peacekeeping revealed an ability to cooperate at one (operational) level in spite of any differences at a political level.

The picture to emerge, therefore, is a mixed one. On the one hand, there can be little doubt that a senior-junior partnership resulted from the course of events in Bosnia and Kosovo. An enlarged NATO and a reduced Moscow eventually found their level of cooperation, if not necessarily agreement, on modalities of operating in the Balkans. Superficially, NATO would appear to have "won" the contest to prevail over Russian influence in the Balkans. Nevertheless, it is not the complete picture.

The Alliance has enlarged as an organisation, and expanded its remit for action as evidenced initially in Bosnia and Kosovo, and subsequently in the US-declared war on terror. It would certainly appear stronger and more confident than in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War. However, the experience of Bosnia and of Kosovo demonstrated that while NATO appeared strong enough to cope with any external threat, it could not conceal the fact that it had internal differences. European Allies failed to seize the initiative in Bosnia, consequently highlighting the centrality of US leadership to NATO, and by extension to NATO's relations with Russia. The effectiveness of the European pillar of the transatlantic security alliance was called into question by events in Bosnia. It was further interrogated by NATO's actions in Kosovo, given the overwhelming reliance upon US military capability in that conflict. Indeed, NATO's protracted and consensual decision making processes, even in time of war in Kosovo, caused some US frustration, the lesson seeming to be that unilateral action or coalitions of the willing were preferable to relying upon NATO Allies. In itself this may be nothing remarkable, but it does represent a fissure in the Alliance, and the potential for a longer term weakening of its cohesion, an indirect result of the Kosovo action.

The wider significance of events in the Balkans has been concisely summarised by Aleksei Fenenko as the revival of the war factor in modern Europe, the internationalising of internal conflicts, and the rise of a NATO-centric European security system<sup>7</sup>. The revival of the war factor in modern Europe is seen as a direct result of the existence of a unipolar international system. In the earlier multi-polar system such a dangerous state of affairs would have been impossible. However, the involvement of the world's great powers in the ethno-nationalist mix of the Balkans, and the evolution of NATO doctrine to include intervention outside its traditional area of operations (initially with, but subsequently without UN sanction) could only cause Moscow to regard the Alliance as "disrupting the European balance".

In practical terms disruption of the European balance manifested itself most significantly in NATO's decision to launch an attack on Kosovo. This internationalising of what had been an internal conflict in effect signalled the end of the concept of internal sovereignty,

and was replete with significance for the future conduct of international relations. Not least, a NATO-centric European security system in which the US held the whip hand could, potentially, threaten Russia itself now that there was a precedent for overriding the previously sacrosanct concept of internal sovereignty. As a non-NATO member Russia could not afford to be sanguine about NATO-driven security agendas.

Finally, Fenenko posits the view that the reason for the emergence of NATO as the Balkans' and Europe's leading security player was the failure of European governments to establish a workable transnational approach to security. Instead, as the leading states failed to agree on how to handle the Balkans, the old nineteenth century 'spheres of influence' concept re-emerged. This diplomatic regression was compounded by the ineffectiveness of international organisations, primarily the UN, in bringing about peace and stability. NATO, dominated by Washington, became the sole arbiter of policy in matters of European security.

The upshot of the above was that the Balkans had given an enlarging NATO the opportunity, training and experience it needed to claim primacy in all matters affecting security in Europe. Little wonder, then, that Moscow had cause to feel increasingly isolated and vulnerable to the Alliance's eastward march, Western reassurances notwithstanding<sup>8</sup>. After the Balkan experience the Kremlin had even greater incentive to engage with the West.

Although these views were outlined prior to the attacks of 9/11 in the US, Fenenko reviewed his comments as having stood the test of time, there being no fundamental changes to the significance of the Balkan factor brought about by 9/11. The rationale behind Russia's pro-Western, and particularly pro-US, diplomatic offensive after that date is open to debate, and many have commented<sup>9</sup>. The obligation to engage, so central to NATO-Russian relations in the Balkans, came to characterise Moscow's dealings in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Nevertheless, Mark Smith is surely correct in identifying Russian cooperation with the West as stemming from Moscow's weakness as much as



from any strength of conviction in such a course of action, a mirror image of the approach in the Balkans<sup>10</sup>.

If Putin hoped by cooperating to somehow stem the tide of NATO enlargement he was to be disappointed, the Alliance confirming its decision to admit seven new members at the Prague Summit in November 2002. To some extent the battle over enlargement had already been lost by Russia after the admission of the Visegrad Three in 1999 and their contribution to NATO's war efforts in Operation Allied Force. Although the Baltic states particularly were a source of concern for Moscow, the enlargement momentum had already been generated throughout the 1990s, and Russia knew it. A certain resignation characterised the Russian attitude to further enlargement<sup>11</sup>. By the Prague Summit of 2002 when the latest round of NATO expansion was formalised, enlargement and the Balkans were already on their way to being yesterday's debates, as NATO and Russia were increasingly turning their attention to the Middle East and the war on terror.

#### *Prospect – Cooperation and Uncertainty*

As Iraq began to command greater diplomatic attention, European divisions were once again exposed, as over Bosnia. So too was a transatlantic divide between the USA, UK and their allies from 'new Europe' on the one hand, and 'old Europe' (France, Germany and Russia) on the other<sup>12</sup>. Peacekeeping in the Balkans began to assume a lesser priority for NATO and the US, the latter needing to bolster its troop numbers for the prosecution of its war on terror in Afghanistan and, subsequently, in Iraq. Over a decade later than first envisaged, the hour of Europe was again at hand as the EU, with responsibility for peacekeeping duties in Macedonia, prepared to take over security responsibilities from NATO in Bosnia, a task currently generating huge staff efforts in NATO and in the EU<sup>13</sup>.

While Europe may now be taking greater responsibility for Balkan security – some might say not before time – the US has appeared to be motivated by other concerns. If it is true that NATO itself has changed it is no less true that its leading player has also changed fundamentally in its willingness to contemplate action, diplomatic and military, where it

perceives itself to be threatened<sup>14</sup>. The administration of George W Bush demonstrated its readiness to employ the full might of the world's only superpower when it launched wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

It has been observed that this is only the beginning of an ongoing revolution in US foreign policy, the consequences of which may yet be to undermine NATO, as Washington continues to regard its European allies as less than committed<sup>15</sup>. The (European) Alliance's struggle to find sufficient troops and equipment to operate in Afghanistan<sup>16</sup> does little to bolster its credibility in the US. This theme of divergence among the transatlantic allies finds its most articulate expression in Robert Kagan's writing<sup>17</sup>. Ominously for the future of NATO, Kagan argues that when it comes to foreign policy practice and the exercise of power, the differences between the US and Europe are not temporary but fundamental and longstanding. Indeed, he asserts that "it is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world", a sentiment which echoes over Iraq, but which also has strong resonances in the handling of the Bosnian and Kosovo crises. If Kagan's assertion is correct, only US diplomatic and military leadership – power – was capable of galvanising NATO allies into line in the Balkans. That experience, however, particularly after Kosovo, revealed the huge capability imbalance between the US and Europe and created an aversion in Washington to being shackled by the European preference for consensual process. To the US the lesson to emerge was that when American power had decided upon action, it could not afford to continue to shoulder the burden of supporting recalcitrant Europeans. The longer term consequences for NATO cohesion are, therefore, problematic.

As NATO cedes more of its Balkan security commitments to the EU, a welcome interlocutor for the Russians<sup>18</sup>, it is difficult to identify a significant increase in European defence capabilities, notwithstanding the efforts of France and the UK from the St Malo declaration onwards. Taken in conjunction with Washington's increasing tendency to favour unilateralism where it considers it necessary<sup>19</sup>, Europe's continued underperformance in the field of defence expenditure and capability creates a potential problem in the Balkans context. Europe may be up to the task of peacekeeping,

especially if Moscow is constructively engaged, so depriving partisan Serb interests of a potential diplomatic sponsor. However, if the security situation were to deteriorate in Bosnia, where the Dayton settlement is showing its age, would the EU be capable of handling a descent into violence? Many of the same European governments which are struggling to fulfil their NATO commitments in Afghanistan will be involved in providing forces for EU commitments in the Balkans. This may be manageable while the provisions of the Dayton settlement hold good. However, the long-term future of the settlement has been questioned<sup>20</sup>, and any attempt to improve upon it is likely to infuriate the Bosnian Serbs, and possibly Belgrade as well. It is not inconceivable that, should the worst happen, the EU could find itself calling once more upon NATO – for which read US - assistance in dealing with any resurgence in violence. In such circumstances a cooperative and constructively engaged Russia would be a very useful diplomatic ally for the West.

Meanwhile in Kosovo there remains considerable potential for serious unrest, as the inter-ethnic rioting and killings of March 2004 demonstrated<sup>21</sup>. The province's final status remains unresolved, a situation which, the longer it persists, is likely to strain the patience of the Kosovar Albanians and their political leadership<sup>22</sup>. Any resolution of Kosovo's status will necessarily involve Belgrade and possibly Tirana. The former has already set its face against independence for the province's Albanian population. As a result there is stalemate and drift, with no apparent favourable outcome. The potential for a resumption of violent conflict has been noted, a conflict which would not necessarily be confined to Kosovo itself<sup>23</sup>. Once again, it is possible that NATO may find itself embroiled in a violent conflict in Kosovo, but at a time when the US and Russia have given clear signals in the form of troop withdrawals that their interests have moved on. NATO and Russia need to engage constructively via the NATO-Russia Council in monitoring security in Kosovo. In the absence of a lasting settlement there, they will at least wish to ensure no deterioration the security situation.

The NATO-Russia Council is of course concerned with wider NATO-Russian relations and not solely with Balkan affairs<sup>24</sup>. However, the Council does devote much of its time

to security issues, be they WMD, terrorism or failed states, and in terms of concrete achievements, a constructive contribution to lasting solutions in Bosnia and Kosovo would represent a major diplomatic triumph for the protagonists. Meanwhile, the Council continues to represent a workable forum for wider consultation and engagement of the parties.

Most recently, opening a NATO-Russia Council conference on the role of the military in combating terrorism<sup>25</sup>, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer welcomed Russian offers of assistance to NATO in its ISAF mission in Afghanistan<sup>26</sup>. He made much of the Alliance's common cause with Russia in the war on terror, reminding all parties that "terrorism threatens all of us". His words echo the views of Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, who identified the two key turning points in international relations since the end of the Cold War as, first, NATO attacking Kosovo and, second, the war on terror<sup>27</sup>. Ivanov saw scope for US-Russian cooperation in a spirit of multipolarity, by which he meant multilateral cooperation within an internationally legitimised (ie UN) framework. Clearly this is a difficult balance to achieve where one of the parties' key members has a predilection for unilateral action. While a unilateral instinct can pose a problem for the long term health of the NATO-Russia Council, it also creates an incentive to make the forum work effectively, as a demonstrably successful countervailing factor.

As NATO has enlarged, potentially diluting the cohesion of its membership, and as US disenchantment with its allies' inability or unwillingness to take decisive action increases, the cracks in the transatlantic structure may become more visible. Paradoxically, however, this potential for US go-it-alone disharmony in NATO can also work in the Alliance's favour. America's predisposition to act unilaterally could in fact redound to NATO's benefit by making the Alliance, as opposed to the US, a more attractive partner to Russia in terms of engaging Washington and the West via NATO. For its part, Russia can recognise the value of continuing to engage with the West, albeit from its relatively weak position. It should be noted, however, that the balance is not entirely unfavourable to Moscow, which does have some cards of its own to play.

If we consider the most pressing security challenges which the Alliance seeks to address, they include terrorism, arms proliferation, regional instability, and trafficking in drugs and people. Russia's geography, history, intelligence capabilities and regional influence make it an essential partner for NATO in those undertakings<sup>28</sup>. This opens up opportunities for further cooperation, even to the point of perhaps basing NATO military personnel in the Russian Federation as part of joint NATO-Russian structures designed to further common goals in combating terrorism and arms proliferation<sup>29</sup>. Such an idea might be considered fanciful or overly optimistic, but it is the case that NATO-Russian relations have travelled a long, if occasionally very bumpy, road since 1991. There is no inherently good reason why the relationship might not yet take such a significant step, a truly new quality in NATO-Russian relations, contingent upon the continued rapprochement of Russia and the West in the post-9/11 world. The details would take considerable work, but the Balkan peacekeeping experience shows that both parties are capable of a high degree of successful cooperation at the appropriate level.

Of course it is possible that a great deal could yet disrupt the slow progress wrought by the NATO-Russia Council. Russia remains engaged in the Council, claiming parity with all other participants, and promoting the line that there are no pre-cooked positions, only open discussion. That could change should Moscow find its initiatives stalled sufficiently often to throw aside the veil of 'at 27'. Dependent upon how US forces conduct themselves in the Caucasus, Moscow might also come to regard the American presence there as inimical to its own national interests. NATO cohesion may yet come unstuck as US patience with some of its European allies wears thin. Alternatively, a bloated NATO may succumb to organisational inertia as it attempts to integrate its newest members. Caught between the pressures of NATO's out-of-area commitments and Europe's fledgling autonomous commitments, the European allies may overreach themselves. Finally, the absence of final and lasting settlements in Bosnia and Kosovo may well give rise to renewed violence and war.

Nevertheless, with the NATO-Russia Council espousing common cause, NATO determined to continue to demonstrate its post-9/11 relevance, and Russia keen to remain engaged (albeit through the necessity of mitigating its own weakness), there is surely scope for a more fruitful partnership. As well as calls for setting up joint NATO-Russian military establishments on Russian soil there are also voices recognising the wider common interest of NATO and Russia, and advocating an even deeper partnership in terms of cooperative structures to tackle terrorism and organised crime in Central Asia and the Caucasus<sup>30</sup>. It is noteworthy that those advocating this kind of cooperation cite the successful experience of NATO-Russian cooperation in Bosnia and Kosovo as the basis for believing that such bold moves can work. The Balkan wars of the 1990s demonstrated that NATO and Russia had, have and most likely will continue to have their significant differences, but that they can remain engaged and have a proven ability to cooperate even under the most difficult of circumstances. In uncertain times, as NATO and Russia focus their attention on a wide thematic and geographic agenda well beyond south east Europe, that at least provides some cause for optimism.

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<sup>1</sup> For just a flavour of the post-9/11 debate see Anthony Forster and William Wallace, *What is NATO for? Survival* Vol 43 No 4 Winter 2001-2002 pp 107-122; Judy Dempsey, "An Alliance in search of a role" *Financial Times* 10<sup>th</sup> April 2002; Alan L Isenberg, *Last Chance: A roadmap for NATO revitalization Orbis* Fall 2002 pp 641-659; Rebecca Johnson and Micah Zenko, *All dressed up and no place to go Parameters* Winter 2002-2003 pp 48-63; Michael Rühle, *NATO after Prague: learning the lessons of 9/11 Parameters* Summer 2003 pp 89-97; Paul Cornish, *NATO: the practice and politics of transformation International Affairs* Vol 80 No 1 pp 63-74.

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed assessment of how Bosnia has affected the Alliance is provided by George Schulte, "Bringing peace to Bosnia and change to the Alliance" *NATO Review* Vol 45 No. 2 March 1997 pp 22-25.

<sup>3</sup> See John H Currie "NATO's Humanitarian Intervention In Kosovo: Making or Breaking International Law?" *Atlantic Council of Canada Paper* (2/99). Neil Clark "How the battle lines were drawn: WMDs haven't turned up; in 1999 there was no genocide in Kosovo" *The Spectator* 14<sup>th</sup> June 2003; also, Kate Hudson "A pattern of aggression. Iraq was not the first illegal US-led attack on a sovereign state in recent times. The precedent was set in 1999 in Yugoslavia" *The Guardian* 14<sup>th</sup> August 2003, all op cit chapter three.

<sup>4</sup> A review of Russian thinking and debate in the post-Soviet field of international relations is contained in Alexander Sergunin, *Discussions of international relations in post-Communism Russia Communist and Post-Communist Studies* Vol 37 No 1 March 2004 pp 19-35.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter four, notes 5 and 7.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter three, note 43, details official and public reaction in Russia.

<sup>7</sup> Aleksei Fenenko, *Balkanski faktor ivoenno-politicheskaya bezopasnost' Evropi Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* No 2 1<sup>st</sup> February 2002 pp 51-66.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Black, "US says Russia need not fear bigger NATO" *The Guardian* 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2004.

<sup>9</sup> For a survey of Russian attitudes to the US-Russian relationship see Mark A Smith, *The Russia-USA Relationship Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper 04/12 (Russian Series)*, May 2004. See also, inter alia, Robert E Hunter, *NATO-Russia Relations after 11 September*, in Shireen Hunter (ed) *Strategic Developments in Eurasia after 11 September*, esp pp 40-41; also, chapter four, notes 88 and 91.

<sup>10</sup> Mark A Smith, *The Russia-USA relationship* op cit

<sup>11</sup> Sergei Yastrzhembsky, "Ne nado boyatsa 'Bolshevo NATO': rasshirenie alliansa sozdaet slozhnost' v pervuyu ochered emy samomy" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 13<sup>th</sup> January 2003; Andrei Kelin, *Spokoinoi negativnoe otnoshenie k rasshireniyu NATO* *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* No 12 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 pp 10-22.

<sup>12</sup> The phraseology is that of US Secretary of State for Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, in 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Author's meetings with NATO international staffs in Naples, May 2004 and with British EU staffs in Brussels, July 2004.

<sup>14</sup> This is not, as might be supposed, an exclusively post-9/11 phenomenon, as a unilateralist/militarist tendency in George W Bush's administration had already been discerned. See William Pfaff, *Bush team's military focus is skewing US foreign policy International Herald Tribune* 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Irwin Stelzer, "Wake up! America is dreaming of a new order" *The Times* 19<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

<sup>16</sup> BBC Radio 4, Today programme, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the new world order* London 2004 (revised edition).

<sup>18</sup> For a detailed discussion of Moscow's attitude, and attraction, towards the EU see Mark A Smith, *Russia and the EU under Putin Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper 04/20 (Russian Series)* July 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Stelzer op cit. Also Simon Tisdall, "Diplomacy sidelined as US targets Iran", *The Guardian* 10<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Ivanko, *Dayton brought peace. It's time for justice Bosnia Report*, Series 37-38 January-March 2004; David Harland, *What has not happened in Bosnia Bosnia Report* Series 37-38 January-March 2004. For a very different realpolitik rationale as to why Dayton should be revisited see William Pfaff, "Time to concede defeat in Bosnia-Herzegovina" *International Herald Tribune* 10<sup>th</sup> October 2002.

<sup>21</sup> An analysis of the significance of the March 2004 disturbances is provided by James Pettifer, *Kosovo, March 2004: the endgame begins Conflict Studies Research Centre Paper 04/04 (Balkan Series)* April 2004.

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<sup>22</sup> Helena Smith, "Angry Kosovars call on 'colonial' UN occupying force to leave" Observer 19th October 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Misha Glenny, "Analysis: The forgotten land" The Guardian 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2004.

<sup>24</sup> See Oksana Antonenko, *The NATO-Russia Council: Challenges and Opportunities*, Paper presented at Tallinn to a conference on dual enlargement and the Baltic States, 11-13 February 2004,

<sup>25</sup> The military's role in the fight against terrorism is a theme which predates the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council. Then Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson opened the first conference on the subject at the NATO Defence College in Rome, 3-4 February 2002. Ironically, in view of the Russian military's reported opposition to Putin's pro-western rapprochement – see *The reaction of the military establishment to President Vladimir Putin's new foreign and security policy* Oxford Analytica 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002 – the military's role in combating terrorism has since become a staple of the NATO-Russia Council.

<sup>26</sup> Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's keynote address to the NATO-Russian Council conference on the role of the military in combating terrorism, Norfolk, Virginia, USA, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2004. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040405a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040405a.htm)

<sup>27</sup> Cited in Mark A Smith, *Igor Ivanov on Iraq and the Struggle for a New World Order*, Conflict Studies Research Centre Occasional Brief No 102 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Fritch, *Building hope on experience* NATO Review Autumn 2003.

<sup>29</sup> A thoughtful, if optimistic (or ahead of its time?), proposal for just such a venture is outlined in Peter Zwack, *A NATO-Russia Contingency Command Parameters* Spring 2004 pp 89-103.

<sup>30</sup> Ian Bremmer and Nikolas Gvosdev, "Why not really make Russia a partner?" International Herald Tribune 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2004.



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<sup>1</sup> (i) Due to changes over time in the frequency of publication, the designation of identifying NATO Review issues varies slightly. (ii) Where page numbers are not shown, the article has been accessed online (see websites). (iii) International Affairs is not to be confused with International Affairs (Moscow); the latter is a Russian-based English language journal.

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