

# Labour Focus on Eastern Europe

Peter Gowan

## The Twisted Road to Kosovo

a review  
of European  
affairs

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Labour Focus on  
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**Number 62**

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**Peter Gowan**

## **The Twisted Road to Kosovo**

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## INTRODUCTION: THE YUGOSLAV ANVIL FOR FORGING A NEW EUROPE

When NATO launched its attack on Yugoslavia two sharply opposing views of the significance of this action formed within Europe and across the world. Within part of the NATO zone - especially the Anglo-American part - the bulk of centre and centre-left opinion took the view that NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia marked the start of a new, norm-based order in Europe and more widely around the world. We could call this The *Guardian* view of the war, since that newspaper was one of the most articulate propagators of this view. The *Guardian* line was that NATO was at last taking human rights seriously. Thus the war would be good for Europe's stable, norm-based development, provided, of course, NATO triumphed.

But in other parts of the NATO zone, such as Greece and much of Italy, in most of Eastern Europe and more widely across most of the rest of the world, a diametrically opposite view of the significance of the NATO attack was expressed. NATO's action was seen as precisely marking the end of the long efforts in the 1990s to build a European security structure governed by collectively binding norms and rights rather than by power politics. We could call this the Ukrainian Parliament's view since that body has expressed it most articulately. Ukrainian MPs, though sharply divided between left and right on many issues, united in the face of this NATO attack to pass a resolution for Ukraine to regain nuclear weapons. They explained that Ukraine had been persuaded by the American government to give up its nuclear weapons through President Clinton's insistence that the new European order was not going to be based on power politics but on rights and collectively binding norms: a law-based European order. But the attack on Yugoslavia, for Ukrainian MPs, demonstrated conclusively that these US arguments had been spurious. Hence, the Ukrainian parliament

wanted to regain a nuclear deterrent which would be directed at no particular threat but simply at giving Ukraine a protection of its security and a voice in European affairs.

Many in the West may regard the views of the Ukrainian Parliament as not worth listening to. But this would be wrong for two reasons. First, because Ukraine is now the big strategic stake for the United States in its struggle for mastery in Europe. The current war in the Western Balkans is the prelude to the struggle for control of Ukraine. Those who doubt this should pay attention to the person who has been the mastermind behind the European policy of Albright and Clinton, Zbigniew Brzezinski. As long ago as last year, Brzezinski warned unambiguously that a democratic movement in Ukraine to enter a security pact with Russia would lead the US to try to stage a coup d'état in this, the biggest country in Europe outside Russia. As he put it:

In such a case, when the West would have to choose between a democratic or an independent Ukraine, strategic interests - not democratic considerations - must determine the Western stance.<sup>1</sup>

And NATO's attack on Yugoslavia is making the earth move in Ukraine, sending shock after shock through its population of 50 million people.

This leads us to the second reason why we should take notice of the view of the Ukrainian Parliament. As Brzezinski's words demonstrate, we should listen to Ukraine's MPs because they are correct. The Clinton Administration has launched this Balkan war as part of a European strategy which involves subordinating all norms and norm-enhancing and enforcing structures in Europe to US power and US political goals. In the face of this US drive, some European states have influence over events and some don't. Is there any person in Europe who believes that Ukraine would have had less capacity to influence the shape of the new Europe if it had been a nuclear power? Would a Ukrainian Parliament's obsessive focus on, say, the Council of Europe and its norm-protection activities guarantee that country's security

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1. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Keynote Address on Ukraine in Transition and Western Strategy. Challenges for German and American Foreign Policy", American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at the Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC, 23-24 April 1998, p. 32.

against the will of the likes of Brzezinski and Albright? Surely we should be serious about such matters.

The NATO attack has occurred because, after a decade of manoeuvring and rebuilding its political sway in Europe, the United States government perceived a window of opportunity for a swift assertion of its hegemonic dominance through another Yugoslav war. The window was constructed by a uniquely favourable political configuration in Europe: yet another phase of Russian crisis and decline, and the French state's repositioning of itself between Germany and the United States in a new partnership with Britain, ending the long period where Germany had been positioned between the United States and France. Now France could get out of its bind of having only one tactic in its European policy: trying to pull Germany over to French positions against the US. Instead, it had room for manoeuvre between Germany and the US. It could go against the US on Iraq and swing with it on, say, Yugoslavia. In short, France, instead of Germany, could be the West European pivot in the high politics of Europe. And Chirac would show how to play this game on Kosovo.

And the time was important for the United States in another sense too. Since the 1996 North Atlantic Council in Berlin, the West European states had given up their aspirations to be an independent collective organiser of the European political order, by agreeing that there would be no autonomous West European military instrument or policy-making authority: the US would have a veto. But this was an agreement *only in words*. For the US, West European subordination had to be anchored *in practice*. Yet, in practical politics, the West Europeans were precisely threatening insubordination: threatening to build Europe as a political actor on the world stage through turning the Euro into a global currency challenging the dollar. This was the unambiguous ambition of the new German Finance Minister, Oscar Lafontaine, and there was even discussion with the Japanese government for a two-pronged attack on the dollar's dominance. And, at the same time, West European governments were resisting US sovereignty through NATO over European affairs. No sooner had the US pushed Russia out of any effective voice in European politics through the form of NATO enlargement, than the West Europeans were bringing it back in via demands that NATO military action must have the sanction of a

UN Security Council resolution. The attack on Yugoslavia would, it was hoped, cut through all such resistances to US hegemony, putting the Euro back in its place as a purely domestic European currency and putting the UN Security Council where it belonged as far as both the Senate and the Clinton administration were concerned: on the sidelines in the European theatre.

None of this, of course, means that the Clinton administration is waging a covert battle to destabilise or undermine the West European states. Certainly not. It is offering them a significant place on the bandwagon of globalisation. If German big business - the real capitalist heartland of Europe for the US - will only go along with US hegemony in Europe, it will be able to have a full partnership with the US in conquering the 'emerging markets' of the world. But it must be what the Clinton administration calls a 'strong partnership', in other words, one under US leadership.<sup>2</sup> This is not an unattractive offer to the big capitalist companies which exercise such political sway in the EU at present.

Part II of this issue of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* seeks to explain this power politics background to the NATO attack. But we can also see how the US assertion of hegemonic power is reconfiguring the whole institutional order in Europe during the course of the current war. People working in bodies concerned with strengthening rights and norms feel the heat of the hegemon. NGOs monitoring human rights abuses in Yugoslavia in recent years are discovering that their work has turned out not to be about assisting the peoples of Serbia to achieve a more secure future at all: it has actually been preparatory to a NATO air war against Serbia, a war to destroy the economy, the public utilities, the infrastructures of civil life of the people of that country. For all we know, it could be followed by a NATO blockade like the Anglo-American blockade of Iraq, which has become a weapon of mass destruction against the Iraqi people. All the institutions supposedly designed to establish norms to be applied equally to all in Europe - the

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2. See Clinton's speech of 23 March 1999, the day before he launched the US Air Force against Yugoslavia. He explained there that 'a strong US-European partnership is what this Kosovo thing is all about.' And he explained that this kind of partnership was vital for the whole globalisation drive. This speech is discussed in more detail at the start of Part II of this issue.

OSCE agencies, the agencies for refugees, the Council of Europe, the various UN bodies - have either been turned into agencies effectively subordinated to Washington's will or have been brushed aside like the UN Security Council.

US war leadership also casts a new light upon the European Union. Its institutions have been shown to be a *political* irrelevance, with no say whatever over the conduct of this war. Their role is to be transmission-belt institutions for the economic statecraft linked to the war, oil and other embargoes and the like. The political centre for deciding such matters is not actually the EU at all. It is the North Atlantic Council of NATO and, on that body, Turkey will carry far more clout than the European Commission and European Parliament and half a dozen EU member states combined. On the essentials of European politics, the European Union has turned out to be a bluff.

The European Union does also play an important symbolic role in the conflict. Every now and then, as in the Bosnian war, a European leader or Commissioner says that 'one day you could join the European Union: there is a vision for your future.' Joska Fischer came out with that speech again near the start of the current war, as did Tony Blair, in an interview in *Die Zeit*: "To the democratic states around Serbia, and to a democratic Serbia itself, I want to offer the prospect of becoming a member of the EU, of NATO and thus part of the Alliance".<sup>3</sup> It's an old, endlessly played tune in Eastern Europe. Even in places like Poland and Hungary people are getting rather sick of it. What Fischer will never give us is any dates. But as far as the Western Balkans is concerned, if not Poland and Hungary, the devastation and chaos produced by the war does suggest a definite date: it's the Greek Kalends.

But the war also casts a beam of light on the big West European powers. They are themselves, during this war, simply political voyeurs, peering into the windows of the White House. For that is where the key decisions are being taken as to the continent's destiny. Washington and nobody else will decide the terms of NATO's exit from this war. Tony Blair may be able to catch more of the conversation in the Oval Office through his mobile phone link with Bill and Hilary. On the other hand, the German government's views and interests will count for far more

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3. "Eine Vision für den Balkan", *Die Zeit*, 12 May 1999, p. 3.

among the people in that Oval Office than Tony Blair. But Schröder, Blair and Chirac all wait upon the hegemon's will. We can be sure that British influence will count for less than that of Turkey in the calculus of the Clinton Administration. Britain really has nowhere to hawk its wares apart from the Washington Bazaar. But Germany and France will have a bigger say.

Washington's decisions for Europe will be grounded on its perceptions of the American state's European and global interests. The discussions in the White House on this subject are wide ranging. There will be the China factor and the World Trade Organisation issues, Moscow and how far to push the Russian state, the threatened destabilisation of Ukraine, the impact of the bombing on Serbian politics, the disintegration of Macedonia, the looming war amongst Albanians between the Berisha-Rugova axis and the KLA-Tirana axis, the Greek-Turkish daily confrontations over the Aegean, the squirmings of the West Europeans and so on.

Washington is also demonstrating its ability to reshape the domestic politics of Europe during this war. NATO is transforming the party systems of Western Europe into transmission mechanisms of the United States government's objectives. The general approach of the West European states towards the Kosovo crisis during 1998 was to seek a restabilisation of the situation through a negotiated political settlement in Yugoslavia. The approach of Albright and the US government was to use Kosovo as an occasion for war. Washington manoeuvred with the British and French governments to have its war and has thus turned the whole Social Democratic apparatus in Western Europe into a transmission mechanism for a propaganda campaign on the rightness of NATO power politics: why it is right to kick aside the UN and to support a new European order in which a US-led NATO is the political sovereign. Not only that. The Social Democratic leaders find that they must justify or excuse the destruction of the Serbian economy, the killings of Serbian civilians, the attempt to exterminate the Yugoslav conscript army. So the Social Democratic leaders find themselves using the language of dehumanisation against Serbia in order to justify NATO's practical dehumanisation of Serbian people by killing them. They must explain that it is necessary to slaughter the staff of Serbian TV and destroy the welfare of the Serbian people. So without

a care, they announce that Serbia's political elites are genocidal mass murderers. This is a complete debauchery of public discourse in the service of the hegemon's power politics. It opens the way to atrocious slaughter or murderous blockade of the Serbian population if Washington considers such options desirable.

One final point on the West European institutional impact of the launching of this war should be noted: the tight, practical and political integration of the armed forces and defence ministries of the NATO states under US command. This integration of state military capacities and personnel of the European states has surely been a key objective for the US in this war. NATO's armed forces are being blooded as comrades in arms. The West European general staffs will be open mouthed with admiration for the Pentagon's awesome war machine and will be pressing their governments to persuade the US government to do what it has done for the British: given them at least a taster of a few Tomahawks and some of the other smart weapons systems.

The impact of the war on Russia's role in European politics has taken a form that we are now used to after the experience of the 1990s. Time and again, the USA has made moves to push Russia out of European affairs. They tried that early on in the Bosnian crisis, the whole NATO enlargement project was about that; and the current war was supposed to finally bolt the European door against Russia's central involvement. Yet time and again, Russia has bounced back as the American administration has found that it could not exclude Russia. And this has happened again in the present war as the G8 agreement on terms for ending the war demonstrated Russian influence. Of course, the American bombing of the Chinese Embassy set off a chain of events that pushed the G8 agreement to one side, thus giving the US at least another week of blanket bombing to try to finish the job without Russia. At the time of writing, it is too early to see if that works. But the war once again raises the fundamental issue of whether the peoples and governments of Europe believe their security is enhanced by this US project of trying to push Russia out of the European scene.

There remains the question as to the role of Yugoslavia in the launching of this war. We argue in what follows that its role today is basically the same as it has been throughout the 1990s. With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, Yugoslavia lost its strategic importance for any of

the NATO powers except Turkey, Greece and Italy. But Yugoslavia's descent into collapse gave its people a great European political role because it became the theatre in which the various big powers could try to demonstrate their capacity to take command of European affairs. There was the German attempt at European leadership over Croatian recognition. There was also the excitement in the EC that the 'Hour of Europe' had arrived, as the EC Presidency announced in the summer of 1991: the EC was to take command of the Yugoslav embroglio. The EC Presidency was right: it did take command for about an hour. The United States would not allow it much more. The Bush administration saw to that by pushing for Bosnian independence and a Bosnian war. The EC tried to regain the initiative by brokering various peace deals. But Washington was not having such EC claims to be able to settle anything in Yugoslavia so it sabotaged one peace deal after another. Then, when the time was ripe, the Clinton administration made its big power play in the Yugoslav theatre to assert its European leadership through its Bosnian offensive in 1995 leading to Dayton. Through Dayton, the US bounced back into the heart of European affairs. The current war was to be the final use of the sufferings of the Yugoslav people for great power political goals: the use of aggression against Serbia as the anvil upon which the Clinton administration would forge the instruments of its European political hegemony. With every hammer-blow against the peoples of Serbia, the political structure of Europe would, it was hoped, be reshaped along hegemonic parameters. In this war we are watching to see which breaks first: the political handle on the NATO hammer or the anvil of the political will of the Yugoslav state. That contest is deciding what political order is to be forged for Europe.

In Part I of this issue we examine the ways in which the manoeuvres of the Western powers have impacted on the peoples of Yugoslavia during the 1990s. It is not an edifying story for those who believe that the Western powers are pre-occupied with the rights and welfare of Yugoslavia's peoples.

And it is not a story being given a happy ending by the NATO powers in the current war. What that ending will be in political terms we can have no idea at the time of writing, for two reasons. First, because the NATO powers have astutely avoided producing any clear programme

for Kosovo, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Macedonia etc. They are shrewdly playing such details as the fate of these populations by ear. The second reason is, of course, because the war continues, sending streams of political chain reactions around the planet every day.

But we can be fairly certain about two outcomes of this war. First, that young Kosovar Albanians, Serbs, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Albanians, as well as the dozens of other nationalities in Yugoslavia will try, in large numbers, to get out of the region for the next quarter of a century. They will be right to try. Is there a parent in Europe who would want their child stuck in the Western Balkans after this war for the next 20 years?

The second certainty, is that it will be very difficult for such young people to escape, if the NATO powers have anything to do with the matter. NATO leaders seem to love the phrase about Europe now being 'whole and free'. For Western business and for NATO missiles, the phrase is largely true: they can roam anywhere across the continent acquiring or 'depleting' fixed assets at will. But it is not true for the people of South East and Eastern Europe and after this war it is going to be less true than ever. The only consistent policy of the NATO European powers towards these regions during the 1990s has been a determination to try to stop significant numbers of people from having the freedom to move around Europe as a whole.

Some imagine that the EU will offer the people of the Western Balkans a dramatic new economic deal. This is simply false. The best the Kosovar Albanians could ever hope for is a bit of public works, some temporary anti-poverty relief - the Bosnian got an average of 13 US cents a day on a temporary basis after Dayton - some encouragement for small business and complaints that the destitute peoples of the area are misbehaving themselves so much that the development panacea for the planet under globalisation, Foreign Direct Investment by the Atlantic multinationals, is simply impossible.

A genuinely new deal for South East Europe would involve reversing the entire globalisation programme of the Atlantic powers in that region and reorganising the European division of labour in Europe to give the region an effective insertion in the European economy. That was done for West Germany and Western Europe after the Second World war. But the entire effort of the West European capitalist states in the

1990s has been to keep that kind of operation firmly off the European agenda. Those who believe otherwise are simply out of contact with the reality of West European mercantilism and the Atlantic globalisation drive. The single strong goal of the war for the US as far as the Western Balkans were concerned was to further that drive by destroying the anti-globalisation politics of the Serbian Socialist Party - not to scupper the whole globalisation strategy for Eastern Europe for the sake of Albanians.

The question for Europe after this war is whether it supports what the US administration has achieved during the war: a political order for the continent controlled via NATO in Washington. The war will, of course, be followed by a flurry of activity to obfuscate this reality. There will be the talk of a new inclusive deal for Russia and Ukraine. There will be an outpouring of bombastic rhetoric about a new mighty West European Security and Defence Identity within NATO and the EU as a towering, independent political actor. The new President of the Commission has already started this with talk of a European Army and the Commission being a European government. This is just rhetoric.

The real issues for post-war Europe are two: first, whether the two major East European states, Russia and Ukraine, acquire the same rights over European security issues as, say, Germany and France; second, whether the political and military institutions of US hegemony in Europe are replaced by new institutions to which NATO is subordinated. In short, the future of Europe will be decided by the question whether the hegemonic power structure which the current war was designed to consolidate will be reversed. If not, Europe could be in for a very grim future.

The present exclusion of Russia and Ukraine from integration into the structures of Europe pushes these two countries together. But the US has a strategic interest in stopping that. So it is likely to try to make a grab for Ukraine through a presidentialist coup and pull it into the Western zone. Will the Russian state try to stop that? If so, how? By military means, through a civil war in Ukraine? Or will a US power play just plunge the Russian state into collapse? We don't know the answers to these questions. Perhaps the current deep instabilities in these two Eastern states can persist for some years more without

catastrophic consequences for Europe as a whole. But is it wise to leave Europe's fate in the hands of people like Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright?

If it is not wise, then Europe's current political structure built around US hegemony through NATO's institutional sovereignty must be broken up. Some other over-arching political structure that can keep US power properly balanced and controlled must be constructed. The essential algebra of such a structure would involve France and Germany linking up with Russia and Ukraine and including both. One temporary joint action would be an absolute insistence that from now on NATO be placed firmly under the control of the UN Security Council. But since Germany has no seat there, and Russia and Ukraine are outside NATO, that arrangement depends upon France for its anchorage. That is no secure anchorage at all, as this current war demonstrates. More radical measures need to be examined urgently. Since the US will not agree to the OSCE being given a governing role over NATO and will not agree to a body like the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council being given authority over the NAC, there is only one serious option: to break up the NAC for everything except so-called Article 5 issues - defence of the territory of the NATO states - and for France and Germany to link up to break with US authority and work towards a new security body for Europe. This should be coupled with an urgent campaign to reform the Security Council. It is absurd that the US should have two vetoes there - its own and that of Britain - while Germany has no seat. As the largest country in Europe and a pivotal state in Eurasia, Ukraine should also have a seat and would have a strong claim if it did restore its status as a nuclear power.

But is there really any will within the key West European states to mount a challenge to a US-led Europe for the sake of a more secure Europe (rather than for grabbing a bigger chunk of this or that 'emerging market')? This seems very unlikely. The EU states are capitalist formations, hungry for fresh streams of profits from the new, American-led imperial project of globalisation. This, and the sheer aggressive energy of the US at present, gives these EU states powerful incentives for just bandwaggoning with the Americans in the globalisation gamble. And both Russia and Ukraine have resisted being globalised. Only corrupt clans nested close to their power centres are fully plugged into

the circuits of Atlantic finance capital. So there are powerful incentives for the Western powers to play rough with Russia: give us your oil, your gas, your minerals, all your strategic materials and give our capitals command of your economy, or else. As long as these peculiar gangster clans tied to Western capital keep their grip on the Russian state, the West still has a chance of globalising Russia. But that means a further phase of squeezing the Russian state, weakening it and undermining the health and welfare of its people.

This is the world that the collapse of the Soviet Union has produced. Lasting solutions which can provide Europe with security seem to lie only through a long march to rebuild the strength of the European labour movement and to reconstruct a trans-European left with a commitment to a norm-based future for the continent. That project will surely demand a firm grasp of the current realities. Unfortunately, the bulk of Social Democratic people in Western Europe have lost their grip on reality even to the point of supporting the NATO war. The prospects for European security do not look at all bright. The sufferings of the peoples of the Western Balkans may well be a foretaste of equal sufferings for very many more of the peoples of Eastern Europe, with ugly consequences for the rest of us as well.

## **I. National Rights and International Powers in Yugoslavia's Dismemberment**

Western powers usually legitimise military interventions in terms of a proclaimed commitment to some universalist norm or to some goal embodying such a norm. These declared goals can oscillate, but they are important, because a central element of their foreign policy, particularly when it involves starting a war, is the support of their domestic population. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, the domestic populations like to think of themselves as the guardians and promoters, through their states, of the most civilised, humane, liberal and democratic values in the world. It is true that they have short attention spans and are generally far more ignorant of the world outside their borders than the populations of many other countries. But at least the elected officials of their states can get into some domestic trouble if the declared norms and goals are not remotely implemented or if implementation is carried through with such barbarity that they seem to contradict other, perhaps more basic norms and goals.

So today, the attack on Yugoslavia is justified as aiming to end the repression of the Kosovo Albanians through granting them their human rights. It may be a NATO protectorate, it may be autonomous within Serbia, it may involve partitioning Kosovo, it may even entail an independent Kosovo, it may be built under Rugova's leadership or under the KLA leadership. We simply don't know. These norms are only the latest of a whole series of such principles enunciated by the NATO powers since the start of the Yugoslav crisis in the late 1980s. It would tire the reader's patience if we were to list all the norms and goals proclaimed by these powers since 1989. A recitation of the entire

list would be tiresome and, in any case would tell us little about the real operational goals of the NATO powers in Yugoslavia over the last decade. For they have operated within that theatre not under the governance of this or that universalist norm geared to improving the lot of the peoples of the area, but under the spur of their state political interests and state political goals. These real objectives of the Western states have usually been governed by aims that have had little to do with the human rights of the citizenry. Yugoslavia has, for a long time, been the cockpit of Europe: an arena in which Great Powers have sought to gain political victories in the wider European political arena. At the same time, the operations of the Western powers within the Yugoslav theatre have been a major - some would say, the major - cause of many of the barbarities that have confronted Yugoslav men and women in the past. A balanced judgement of the March 1999 NATO assault on Yugoslavia necessitates a study of the whole tragedy.

### **The Western powers and the collapse of Yugoslavia**

The post-World War Two Yugoslavia was in many respects a model of how to build a multinational state, although, from the start, the incorporation of Kosovo into Serbia was an anomaly.<sup>1</sup> The Federation was constructed against a double background: an inter-war Yugoslavia which had been dominated by an oppressive Serbian ruling class; and a war-time slaughter in which the Nazis made use of the earlier Serbian oppression to use Croatian fascism for barbarous slaughter and also exploited anti-Serb sentiment amongst the Kosovo Albanian - and some elements in the Bosnian Muslim - population to bolster their rule.

The new Yugoslav state's solution to the national question was cemented by some key structural principles: first and foremost a socialised economy and society directed towards social equality and development; secondly a sophisticated constitutional order designed to ensure full rights and equalities for all the main nations and peoples in the country; thirdly a territorial division into republics that would ensure that the previously dominant Serb nation - the largest nation in Yugoslavia - would not again exert dominance over the other Yugoslav

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<sup>1</sup> On the historical background of Kosovo's place in post-war Yugoslav history, see Branka Magas's prescient article under the name of Michelle Lee, 'Kosovo Between Yugoslavia and Albania, *NLR* 140, July-August 1985

nations; both constituent nations and republics were furnished with rights of equal constitutional status; and finally the state was politically anchored in a transnational Yugoslav Communist Party rooted in all the Yugoslav nations.<sup>2</sup> The Communist Party exercised a monopoly of political power but, despite the oligarchic character of the new state, the Communist Party enjoyed wide support within the population as the guarantor of all the other positive elements in the system and as the force which had led a successful resistance against fascism.

Partly to ease Serb sensitivities over the fact that very large parts of the Serbian population were left outside the boundaries of the new Serbian republic, the Communist leadership allocated Kosovo to the Serb republic as an autonomous province. They viewed this as a temporary measure until their goal, shared by the Bulgarian and Albanian Communists, of a Balkan Federation could be established. In such a federation the borders dividing Albanian communities could wither away. But the Stalin-Tito split blocked this possibility.

There was one further structural element in the post-war Yugoslav state's stability: the joint concern of the USSR and the USA to maintain the integrity of Yugoslavia as a neutral state on the frontiers of the super-power confrontation in Europe.

The collapse of this state was the result of both internal and external factors. Assigning comparative weight to the external as against the internal factors in the generalised crisis that shook Yugoslavia in 1990-1991 is a complex matter. But without understanding the roles of the Western powers in helping to produce and channel the crisis, it is difficult to understand the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Yet this Western role has largely been overlooked in Western literature.<sup>3</sup>

## **From debt to crisis**

The fundamental cause of the Yugoslav collapse was an economic crisis. This was then used by social groups in Yugoslavia and in the West to

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2 Though its roots within Kosovo were very weak, in contrast to those of the Albanian Communist party in Albania.

3 The great exceptions among Western authors have been two outstanding works of scholarship and courage. Susan Woodward's *The Balkan Tragedy* (The Brookings Institution, 1995) on which I have drawn heavily in this article; and Catherine Samary: *Yugoslavia Dismembered* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1995)

undermine the collectivised core of the economy and push Yugoslavia towards a capitalist restoration. The economic crisis was the product of disastrous errors by Yugoslav governments in the 1970s, borrowing vast amounts of Western capital in order to fund growth through exports. Western economies then entered recession, blocked Yugoslav exports and created a huge debt problem. The Yugoslav government then accepted the IMF's conditionalities which shifted the burden of the crisis onto the Yugoslav working class. Simultaneously, strong social groups emerged within the Yugoslav Communist Party, allied to Western business, banking and state interests and began pushing towards neoliberalism, to the delight of the US. It was the Reagan administration which, in 1984, had adopted an NSC proposal to push Yugoslavia towards a capitalist restoration.

This, naturally, undermined a central pillar of the state: the socialist link between the Communist Party and the working class. The forms and effects of the break varied in different parts of Yugoslavia. First in Kosovo in 1981, where the links between Yugoslav communism and the population had always been weakest and where the economic crisis was most intense, there was an uprising demanding full republican status for Kosovo. Within the mobilisation there were separatist tendencies, wanting to unite Kosovo with Albania. (At the time, the Kosovo Albanians were constitutionally an autonomous province of the Serbian republic but that status gave them far more extensive rights and power within Yugoslavia than national minorities generally enjoy in West European states). However, in response to the separatist tendencies, the central state began to reassert its power and harshly to repress those deemed to be unreliable.

Then in Serbia, there was an attempt by parts of the intelligentsia to reorganise the link between the Communist Party and the people on a Serbian nationalist anti-Kosovar basis, a movement which the Serbian Communist leader Milosevic ultimately joined and led.<sup>4</sup> It mobilised populist Serbian anti-Albanian chauvinism as a new basis for maintaining popular support for the Communist Party while actually implementing the Reagan administration's 'structural adjustment' programme being processed through the World Bank.

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4 On the evolution of the Serbian intelligentsia, see Branka Magas, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Verso, London, 1993) pages 49 to 76.

In Slovenia, the Communist leadership opposed Milosevic and sought new legitimacy by agitating for greater autonomy, with the obvious ultimate goal of splitting away from Yugoslavia altogether. Thus in Slovenia capitalist restoration would be seen as a means towards Slovenia 'joining Europe'. Similar nationalist trends emerged in Croatia, though largely outside the Communist Party. All these attempts to replace the socialist link between leaders and peoples with new ideologies embraced the symbols and discourses of pre-1945 Yugoslav bourgeois nationalisms. This shift towards pre-war values on the part of former Communist leaders and others building new pro-capitalist parties was not a peculiarly Yugoslav phenomenon: it occurred right across the Soviet Bloc and the rise of such trends was generally welcomed in Western capitals where attempts by parties to maintain socialist links with the working class were seen as the main enemy to be combatted.<sup>5</sup> Western governments had, after all, for years been funding nationalist émigré organisations from all over the region, supporting groups such as the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations and the like.<sup>6</sup>

### **Preparing the carve-up**

This was the situation in 1989 when the Soviet Bloc started to crumble. As it did so the USA withdrew its earlier commitment to the maintenance of the integrity of the Yugoslav state. This shift by the USA signalled the general view in the main Western powers: none of them had a significant stake in Yugoslav unity and all of them were pushing for a rapid switch to capitalism in the region, a switch to capitalism to be brought about through induced economic slumps destroying the collectivist social gains of populations under socialism. The populations were expected to put up with their loss of social rights and economic security because they had the prospect of later 'entering Europe' - a

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5 The starting point for a serious analysis of both Milosevic and Tadjman lies in seeing them as species of wider East European genuses: Milosevic's similarities with Illiescu in Romania and Tadjman's with Antall in Hungary or the Christian Nationals in Poland are obvious. But of course, the contexts in which they operated differed greatly.

6. Such émigrés from Croatia were to play a significant role within Croatian nationalism in the 1990s.

phase which meant joining the rich club of the EC. This package of policies and conditionalities worked initially in much of East Central Europe, uniting the populations around governments taking the shock therapy road to capitalism. But in two states it produced splits and political fragmentation: Czechoslovakia was one and Yugoslavia was the other.

In the Yugoslav case, the tactic's destructive role took a particularly virulent form for two reasons: first, because of the zeal of Western policy makers in introducing their new paradigm in their first two cases - Yugoslavia and Poland, where the shocks were introduced simultaneously on 1st January 1990 by the same people - Stanley Fischer from the IMF and Geoffrey Sachs as special adviser to the Polish and Yugoslav governments; but there was a second reason as well: some European governments actually wanted the break-up of Yugoslavia, something not true in the case of any other part of East Central Europe at that time. Their pressure thus combined with the general Western drive for capitalism to speed the break-up during 1989-90. On one side were a number of European states eager to gain independence for Slovenia and Croatia; on the other side was the United States, eager to ensure that Yugoslavia paid its debts to Western banks and 'globalised' its political economy through Shock Therapy in order to ensure a regime in the country open for the Western multinationals.

The forces eager to see the break-up of Yugoslavia through independence for Slovenia and Croatia were the Vatican, Austria, Hungary, Germany and, more ambivalently, Italy. Since the mid-1980s, the Vatican and Austria had started an active campaign in East Central and Eastern Europe to rebuild their influence there and by 1989-90 the Vatican was openly championing independence for Slovenia and Croatia. By 1990 Austria's government was equally open. In the words of a study by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Austria had "a remarkably open and sometimes brazen policy aimed at helping Slovenia and Croatia in their efforts to leave the [Yugoslav] Federation."<sup>7</sup> The Austrian media denounced what they called 'Panzer Communism' in Yugoslavia and 'primitive Serbs' while the Austrian government went so far as to include the Slovenian Minister for External Affairs, Dmitri

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7. John Zametica, *The Yugoslav Conflict* (Adelphi Papers, No. 270, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Summer 1992), page 49.

Rupel, in Austria's own delegation to a CSCE meeting in Berlin. Although Austria presented its drive for Slovenian and Croatian independence in terms of 'democracy' and the 'democratic rights' of the Slovenians and Croatians, such concerns were hardly uppermost in the Austrian state, given the fact that for decades Austria had, according to Zemetica,

been striving to assimilate the Slovene minority in the Klagenfurt Basin and the Croats in Burgenland" and "had been flagrantly and consistently brushing aside its obligations towards minorities under the 1955 State Treaty.<sup>8</sup>

The real goal of Austrian policy was to expand Austria's regional influence since it "saw the Yugoslav crisis as an auspicious moment for self-assertion".<sup>9</sup> In the summer of 1991 the EC was finally prompted to warn Austria that if it continued its energetic efforts to break up Yugoslavia it would be excluded from eventual EC membership but even that threat did not stop Austrian efforts.

The Hungarian government of Jozef Antall, elected in the Spring of 1990, adopted a policy very much in line with that of Austria, but with additional Hungarian goals vis a vis Serbia's Voivodina Province. As Zemetica explains, the Hungarian government,

during the Yugoslav crisis, consistently favoured and covertly aided the secessionist struggle of Slovenia and, particularly, Croatia. The Kalashnikov affair of early 1991 revealed that wide sections of Hungary's officialdom were implicated in the illegal and large scale supply of weapons to Croatia.

Hungary was secretly supplying automatic assault rifles to Croatia in late 1990. And in July 1991, at the very height of the crisis between Serbia and Croatia, the Hungarian Prime Minister declared that the

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8. *ibid.* The 1955 State Treaty between Austria, the USSR and the Western powers laid the basis for Soviet withdrawal from Austria in 1955 and established the framework for Austria's sovereignty as a neutral state. On the Treaty, see Sven Allard: *Russia and the Austrian State Treaty* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970)

9. John Zemetica, *The Yugoslav Conflict*, op cit p. 50. Austria seemed to have hopes for rebuilding a kind of 'Habsburg' sphere in Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary.

international treaties designating Hungary's southern borders with Serbia and in particular with Voivodina were treaties made only with Yugoslavia. This, he said, was an 'historical fact' which 'must be kept in view'.<sup>10</sup> And, referring to the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, Antal spelt out just why Hungary was so vigorously supporting Croatia's secession: "We gave Voivodina to Yugoslavia. If there is no more Yugoslavia, then we should get it back."<sup>11</sup>

These manoeuvres by Austria and Hungary to break up Yugoslavia were, of course, then overshadowed by the German government's drive to derecognise Yugoslavia through giving recognition to Slovenia and Croatia. The German government's open championing of Yugoslavia's break-up did not occur until the late Spring of 1991, but long before that both Slovenia and Croatia were getting encouragement from Bonn for their efforts. The German campaign has usually been explained by Kohl's domestic electoral interests. But the weakness of this explanation lies in the fact that it was Foreign Minister Genscher - not a Christian Democrat - who seems to have been the driving force behind the German policy. And there was thus a focused and co-ordinated coalition involving Austria, Germany, Hungary and the Vatican all pushing for the same goal: Yugoslavia's break up.

This campaign was not, of course, supported by the United States. It championed Yugoslav unity as did Britain and France. But for the US unity was not the main thing: its policy was principally governed by its concern to ensure the imposition of Shock Therapy on the country as a whole via the IMF. In 1989 Geoffrey Sachs was in Yugoslavia helping the Federal government under Ante Markovic prepare the IMF/World Bank shock therapy package, which was then introduced in 1990 just at the time when the crucial parliamentary elections were being held in the various republics.

One aspect of Yugoslavia's Shock Therapy programme was both unique within the region and of great political importance in 1989-90. This was the World Bank-organised bankruptcy mechanism. Whereas in the rest of East Central Europe in the early 1990s, governments

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10. *ibid.* Zametica cites the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Newsletter* 398, 9 July 1991.

11. Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy, Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 1995), p. 219.

decided to keep the overwhelming bulk of insolvent enterprises going and postponed the implementation of draconian bankruptcy laws (perhaps aware of the earlier Yugoslav experience), the World Bank programme had a devastating effect in 1989 and 1990 in Yugoslavia.<sup>12</sup>

The bankruptcy law to liquidate state enterprises was enacted in the 1989 Financial Operations Act which required that if an enterprise was insolvent for 30 days running, or for 30 days within a 45 day period, it had to settle with its creditors either by giving them ownership or by being liquidated, in which case workers would be sacked, normally without severance payments. In 1989, according to official sources, 248 firms were declared bankrupt or were liquidated and 89,400 workers were laid off. During the first nine months of 1990 directly following the adoption of the IMF programme, another 889 enterprises with a combined work-force of 525,000 workers suffered the same fate. In other words, in less than two years “the trigger mechanism” (under the Financial Operations Act) had led to the lay off of more than 600,000 workers out of a total industrial workforce of the order of 2.7 million.<sup>13</sup> A further 20% of the work force, or half a million people, were not paid wages during the early months of 1990 as enterprises sought to avoid bankruptcy. The largest concentrations of bankrupt firms and lay-offs were in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo.<sup>14</sup> As Michel Chossudovsky explains in his analysis of this episode:

Real earnings were in a free fall, social programmes had collapsed; with the bankruptcies of industrial enterprises, unemployment had become rampant, creating within the population an atmosphere of social despair and hopelessness.<sup>15</sup>

This was an critical turning point in the Yugoslav tragedy.

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12. It is true that in Hungary a World Bank-inspired bankruptcy mechanism also inflicted needless damage, but on nothing like the Yugoslav scale. Elsewhere, government's chose to pay lip-service to bankruptcy mechanisms during the transition-slump, while in practice maintaining the bulk of their industrial enterprises alive within the state sector.

13. World Bank, *Industrial Restructuring Study, Overview, Issues and Strategy for Restructuring*, Washington DC, June 1991

14. This whole episode is analysed in Michel Chossudovsky, “Dismantling the Former Yugoslavia” (Research Paper, University of Ottawa, April 1996).

15. Ibid.

Markovic in the Spring of 1990 was by far the most popular politician not only in Yugoslavia as a whole but in each of its constituent republics. He should have been able to rally the population for Yugoslavism against the particularist nationalisms of Milosevic in Serbia or Tudjman in Croatia and he should have been able to count on the obedience of the armed forces. He was supported by 83% of the population in Croatia, by 81% in Serbia and by 59% in Slovenia and by 79% in Yugoslavia as a whole.<sup>16</sup> This level of support showed how much of the Yugoslav population remained strongly committed to the state's preservation. But Markovic had coupled his Yugoslavism with the IMF Shock Therapy programme and EC conditionality and it was this which gave the separatists in the North West and the nationalists in Serbia their opening. The appeal of the separatists in Slovenia and Croatia to their electorates involved offering to repudiate the Markovic-IMF austerity and by doing so help their republics prepare to leave Yugoslavia altogether and 'join Europe'. The appeal of Milosevic in Serbia was to the fact that the West was acting against the Serbian people's interests. And these appeals worked. As Susan Woodward explains:

In every republic, beginning with Slovenia and Croatia in the Spring, governments ignored the monetary restrictions of Markovic's stabilisation programme in order to win votes...<sup>17</sup>

After winning elections, they worked hard to break up the country. If Western policy for Yugoslavia had been a Marshall Plan which the federal authorities could have used to rebuild the country's economic and social cohesion the whole story would have been different.

This is not a case of being wise after the event. Western policy makers were very well aware of the issue at the time. In 1989-90, the US government faced an acute trade-off in its Yugoslav policy. The State department was concerned in 1990 about Yugoslav political stability. In 1990 the CIA was warning the Bush administration that

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16. These statistics come from opinion polls published in *Borba* and *Vjesnik* in May and July 1990, cited in Robert Hayden, *The Beginning of the End of Federal Yugoslavia: The Slovenian Amendment Crisis of 1989* (The Carl Becker Papers, No.1001, University of Pittsburgh, December 1992); also cited in Woodward, op. cit., p. 129.

17. Woodward, op. cit., p.129.

Yugoslavia was heading for civil war within 18 months.<sup>18</sup> The dilemma was well brought out by a journalist at a press conference given by Secretary of State Baker on 5 July 1990 in Washington. The journalist asked:

I noticed in the remarks that you made today that were distributed to us, you expressed some concerns about the situation in Yugoslavia. Now, how does conditionality apply to the kind of problem that you have described in Yugoslavia, which is less to do with the central government and more to do with the different republics. It is not clear whether Belgrade could deliver some of the things that you want. How will that be judged?

Baker, normally laconic, replied with some feeling but more evasion:

The question you raised is a very, very good question. There will have to be some serious thought given to the degree to which you look at the republic level as opposed to looking at the central government level. And you are quite right. There are some things in some countries with respect to which the central government can deliver on; and in other countries that cannot be done.<sup>19</sup>

But the US government as a whole opted for the priority of the Shock Therapy programme over Yugoslav cohesion. Thus was the internal dynamic towards the Yugoslav collapse into civil war decisively accelerated. The only European states which did have a strategic interest in the Yugoslav theatre tended to want to break it up.

It would be wrong, of course, to suggest that there were no other, specifically Yugoslav, structural flaws which helped to generate the collapse. Many would argue that the decentralised Market Socialism was a disastrous experiment for a state in Yugoslavia's geopolitical

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18. The CIA report was later leaked. Its contents were explained in the International Herald Tribune 29th November 1990, cited in Zametica, op.cit. p. 58.

19. "Baker Says East Europe Aid for Reform, Not Status Quo." Secretary of State Baker's press briefing following a meeting of the Group of 24, Tracking Number: 145648 Text:TXT404, 3Fm Re (Background for the Houston Economic Summit, US Information Agency, 07/05/90)

situation. The 1974 Constitution, though better for the Kosovar Albanians, gave too much to the republics, crippling the institutional and material power of the Federal government. Tito's authority substituted for this weakness until his death in 1980, after which the state and Communist Party became increasingly paralysed and thrown into crisis. But if the Western powers had been remotely interested in putting the interests of the Yugoslav people first, they had adequate levers to play a decisive role, alongside Yugoslavia's federal government, in maintaining the country's integrity. Instead, the Western powers most interested in Yugoslav developments actually assisted, politically and materially, in bringing about the collapse.

### **Western powers and the framework leading to atrocities**

In 1990-1991, then, Yugoslavia was in the grip of a dynamic towards break-up despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of its population did not favour such a course. A break-up would also violate a cardinal principle of the new post-Cold War state system enshrined in the CSCE and the Treaty of Paris of 1990: that inter-state borders in Europe should not be changed. Instead, internal arrangements within states should be put in place to ensure adequate rights for all groups. But the Western powers were not prepared to enforce such principles in the Yugoslav case because Germany did not want to and the other states did not have any strategic interest in doing so. In the early summer of 1991, James Baker flew into Belgrade for a day to take a look at Yugoslavia's crisis before flying off with the remark: "We have no dog in this fight". Norms not relevant to Western state interests were ditched. In the early summer of 1991 German and Austrian efforts to advance the break-up achieved a triumph by getting the EC to mediate between Slovenia and Croatia and the central Yugoslav authorities. The EC states were eager to enhance their foreign policy role and standing through such mediation. They therefore accepted a role that implied Yugoslavia's destruction: mediation between forces within a state over that state's unity implies a repudiation of the state's sovereign authority.

But break-up might have been possible without great bloodshed if clear criteria could have been established for providing security for all the main groups of people within the Yugoslav space. This was such a vital issue not just because Yugoslavia was a multi-national state in

which different national groups were thoroughly intermixed, but above all because the revival of inter-war and war-time bourgeois nationalisms was the general East European political and ideological correlate of Shock Therapy social transformations. And several of these nationalisms bore symbols which struck fear and panic into the minds of many of Yugoslavia's peoples. Ensuring the practical application of clear and just principles for handling these national questions was literally a life-and-death issue. This was what the Western powers were taking responsibility for once they got involved in 'mediation'. And Western powers were taking responsibility for this cardinal issue because only the Western great powers could give post-Yugoslav entities the rights of states in the inter-state system. And everybody knew that.

The problem here was that the constitutional arrangements, furnishing rights to Yugoslavia's republican territories and its nations and peoples, were arrangements that were premised upon Yugoslavia remaining an integrated state. There were two cardinal structural issues here. The first was a division of the country into republics in such a way that the non-Serb nations would not fear that Yugoslavia would become a Serb-dominated state. To achieve this, as Branka Magas explains, required "winning Serbian acceptance of the new constitutional order which was to divide - more in form than in fact - the Serb nation inside post-revolutionary Yugoslavia."<sup>20</sup> Thus large parts of the Serb population were placed within other republican territories or within autonomous provinces which enjoyed greater autonomy than, say, the Basque country in today's Spain. The Serbs were thus split up between Serbia proper, Croatia, Bosnia, Vojvodina and Kosovo. This was, indeed, a question "more in form than in fact" within an integrated Yugoslavia, but it became, of course, a division more of fact than of form in the context of Yugoslavia's break-up. But Yugoslavia's constitutional principles did provide a key to its resolution for the Constitution gave rights to nations of equal force to the rights of Republics. Thus, under these criteria, the Serb nationals in, say, Croatia, were the subjects of national rights which could not be overridden by the will of the Croatian republic. But how was this issue to be dealt with in a context where the Yugoslav constitution was collapsing?

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20. Branka Magas, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Verso, 1993), p. 34.

The second major issue concerned the major non-Slav nation within Yugoslavia, the Kosovo Albanians. While post-war Yugoslavia divided the Serbs within the state, it divided the Albanians both within the state and between Yugoslavia and Albania. As a result, there were always understandable tendencies within the Albanian communities of Kosovo and Macedonia that would have preferred to unite all Albanians in a single Albanian state. With the break-up of Yugoslavia, for many Yugoslav Albanians that became a realistic possibility. How was (and is) that problem to be dealt with?

### **The Croatian question**

The answers which the Western powers gave to these two cardinal questions contributed very directly to the bloody cycles of butchery in the Yugoslav theatre during the 1990s. In 1991 the Western powers, led by Germany, gave their answer on the question of the Serb population in Croatia. They said Croatia should be entitled to independence on grounds of self-determination and within the boundaries of republican Croatia established within post-war Yugoslavia. Self-determination was established by the fact that a referendum of the Croatian nation had voted for independence. This was a formula for war between the Croatian nationalist government and Croatia's Serb population because it violated the principles for handling the national question established in the post-war Yugoslav constitution: it denied the Serbs in Croatia their sovereign national rights.

Under that constitution the will of a republican majority could not override the equally valid will of a constituent nation. Thus the vote of the Croatian majority for independence could not override the rights of the Serb population which had to be equally respected. The political leaders of the Serbian population in Croatia organised a referendum on whether to remain within an independent Croatia and the result was an overwhelming rejection. According to the Yugoslav principles Croatian independence should have been dependent upon a prior resolution of that conflict of rights and democratic wills.

But the EC states during 1991 ignored this, rejecting the Yugoslav idea that the Serb nation had rights equal to the Croatian republican will. Instead the majority of EC states adopted the view that the Serb population of Croatia should accept their status as a national minority

within an independent Croatia. This approach should, of course, have implied that CSCE principles for protecting minority rights must be guaranteed before Croatian independence was recognised. But the Croatian government rejected the granting of such CSCE rights.

And the German government decided to brush this CSCE principle aside and recognised Croatia without any prior commitment by the Croatian government to adequate minority rights for Croatia's Serbian population. This German position thus involved a double betrayal of Croatia's Serbs: a betrayal of the Yugoslav principles concerning their rights and a betrayal of the CSCE principles concerning their rights. It was bound to drive the Croatian Serb population towards war under the leadership of Serb nationalism. And it led the American mediator Cyrus Vance to call the resulting war 'Genscher's war', referring to the German Foreign Minister. This may be an exaggeration: it was also Tudjman's and Milosevic's. But it was Genscher who made it clear to the Croatian Serbs that they had nobody to depend on for their rights but the force of their own arms and those of Serbia.

As to why the German government took this stand is an issue which remains obscure. The line of German diplomats that it was driven by domestic pressures is not convincing since the *Auswärtiges Amt* [foreign office] led the whole drive. As we shall see, there were other interpretations at the time. But equally important is the question as to why the other EC powers were prepared to accept the German line. The bargaining on this issue reached a climax at an all-night meeting of European Political Co-operation on 15-16 December 1991 in Brussels. At that meeting Chancellor Kohl got the British to support him by offering John Major two big carrots over the Maastricht Treaty: the British opt out on Monetary Union and a British opt out on the Social Charter (rights for workers within the EC). And at the same time Kohl promised that he would not recognise Croatia and Slovenia until they had implemented full minority rights for their minorities (essentially rights for Croatia's Serb minority). But having made that big concession, Kohl then proceeded to renege on it, unilaterally recognising Croatia and Slovenia on 23 December without any minority rights being guaranteed.<sup>21</sup>

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21. For a full account, see Woodward, *The Balkan Tragedy*, p. 184.

The question then is why did the other main Western powers accept this German unilateralism? And the answer is twofold: first, the US did not accept this big German demarche: it finally decided to move on the Yugoslav crisis. As far as the other EC powers were concerned, Yugoslavia was simply not an important strategic issue for them: far more important was the Maastricht Treaty (and, for the British, being able to opt out of central parts of it).

It is also worth stressing that the EC was not only acquiescing in Tudjman's rejection of CSCE principles for the large Serb population in Croatia. It was equally ignoring the right of the Kosovar Albanians to CSCE standards of minority rights within Serbia's province of Kosovo. The reason was simple: no Western state had any stake in that issue.

One group in the West had, in fact, come to grips seriously with what was at stake if appalling inter-communal slaughter was to be avoided in Yugoslavia. This was the Badinter Commission, which had been set up by the EC in August 1991 as an arbitration commission of senior international jurists to tackle basic issues of rights in the context of Yugoslavia's dissolution. At first, during the Croatian/Slovenian crisis, the Badinter Commission took what might be called a German line: when asked by the Serbian government to arbitrate on the issue of Serbia's border to Croatia, the Commission cited a case from a dispute between Mali and Burkino Faso which said that post-colonial boundaries should not be changed. It also rejected the relevance of the will expressed in a referendum of the Serbian population in Croatia against being part of an Independent Croatia. At the same time it opposed recognition of Croatia on the grounds that it was not respecting minority rights. But over Bosnia, the Badinter Commission took a different view, closer to earlier Yugoslav jurisprudence: it said that Bosnian independence should not be accepted unless substantial approval was given to such independence by all three peoples within Bosnia - the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Croatians. Thus, while the EC took an 'historic rights' approach to recognising borders in the Croatian case (and in the Kosovo case) it took an approach of recognising the democratic rights of all national groupings in the Bosnian case. Since the Bosnian Serbs were bitterly against a Bosnian independence which would cut them off from the Serbs of Serbia, Badinter's line implied no

acceptance of Bosnian independence. This was also the German line in January 1992 and it was largely accepted by the European Community. But at this critical juncture, the United States intervened vigorously in the Yugoslav crisis for the first time.

### **US intervention: playing the Bosnian card against an emerging German sphere of influence**

During 1991 the United States's declaratory policy was one of supporting Yugoslav unity. But in reality the US stood back from the Yugoslav crisis, simply watching the chaotic manoeuvrings of the European powers on the issue. The US no longer had any significant national interest in Yugoslavia.<sup>22</sup> But it was pre-occupied by one overriding European policy issue: ensuring that Western Europe remained firmly subordinated to the Atlantic Alliance under US leadership. And this was viewed by the Bush administration as a serious problem as a result of fundamental features of the Soviet collapse. First, NATO - the military cornerstone of the Alliance - had lost its rationale and there were moves in Western Europe (and the USSR) to build a new security order in Europe that would tend to undermine US leadership. Secondly, the new United Germany, liberated from US tutelage, seemed to be building a new political bloc with France through the Maastricht Treaty with its stress on a Common Foreign and Security Policy leading towards 'a common defence'. This seemed to be more than words since Germany and France were in the process of building a joint military corps, the so-called 'Euro-Corps' outside the NATO framework - a move that profoundly disturbed Washington and London. And thirdly, Germany's drive in relation to Yugoslavia seemed to be geared not simply to domestic German constituencies, but to the construction of a German sphere of influence in Central Europe, involving Austria, Hungary,

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22. As it happened, the Bush Administration was staffed at the top by long-time Yugoslav experts: Eagleburger, in charge of European policy, was a former Ambassador and Scowcroft, head of the National Security Council had been in the Belgrade Embassy and had written his Ph.D. on Yugoslavia. Woodward says that one of the reasons for US passivity during 1990-1991 was that both men had had business interests in Yugoslavia and questions were already been raised in the US about the possible influence of these interests on US policy towards the country. See Woodward, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

Croatia and Slovenia and perhaps later drawing in Czechoslovakia and eventually and most crucially Poland. This seemed to be the only explanation for the extraordinary assertive unilateralism of Genscher and Kohl, running roughshod over their EC partners in December 1991 and sending a signal to the whole of Europe that Bonn had become the place where the shape of the new Europe was being decided.

This was not acceptable to the Bush administration. As Eagleburger explained, Germany “was getting out ahead of the US” with its Croatian drive. In other words the US interpretation of Genscher’s drive to break up Yugoslavia was far from being that it was just a sop to Catholic domestic constituencies and the editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In response to this challenge, the US administration decided to take over the political lead in the Yugoslav crisis.

But just as Germany’s various declared universalist norms and goals were in the service of not of the Yugoslav people but of German political influence, so the United States was not, of course, entering the Yugoslav theatre to calm the storms of war and provide new security for Yugoslavia’s terrified peoples. Quite the reverse. The Bush administration was entering the scene to push Germany and the European Union aside but it was going to do so by laying the basis for a new and much more savage Yugoslav war.

Washington’s chosen instrument for taking the lead was that of encouraging the Bosnian government to go for independence and therefore for a Bosnian war. Bosnian independence was opposed by the German government and the EC. They aimed to try to hold the rest of Yugoslavia together. The US administration decided to put a stop to that by launching a drive for Bosnian independence which got underway in January 1992 just as the EC was following Germany’s lead in recognising Croatia and Slovenia.

Germany had turned the internal Yugoslav crisis into its own problem definition: Europe must defend independent Croatia against Serbian/Yugoslav aggression. Now Washington would provide a new problem definition: Europe and the world must defend an Independent Bosnia against Serbian/Yugoslav aggression and, perhaps, if tactically useful, against Croatian aggression as well. Thus did the US enunciate the great norm that would eventually provide it with European

leadership: self-determination for the Bosnian nation and defence of its independence against aggression.

### **Bosnia: A state without a nation**

There was a factual problem with the American line: there was no Bosnian nation in a political sense or in a Yugoslav constitutional sense. There were, instead, three nations in Bosnia, none of which had a majority of the population. As of the 1981 Census Bosnia contained the following main national groups:

Muslims	1,629,000
Serbs	1,320,000
Croatians	758,000
Yugoslavs	326,000
Bosnians	0

It was evident from voting results that the majority of Bosnia's own population was not going to respect the authority of an independent Bosnian state. (The Croatian nationalist leaders had supported Bosnian independence but only to facilitate Bosnia's being carved up). And it was equally obvious that large parts of that population would go to war rather than accept the state. The American government knew this perfectly well. So by pushing the Izetbegovic government to launch a drive for independence, the Bush administration was pushing for war.

As far as the Izetbegovic government was concerned, it had been bitterly opposed to the German drive to grant Croatia independence because it had been sure that this would increase pressures within Bosnia for independence and thus civil war. Izetbegovic had made an emotional plea to Genscher in December to draw back in order to save Bosnia, but to no avail. But after Croatia's recognition and with the US government urging Izetbegovic to go for independence, the Bosnian government must have been given strong political and material commitments by the US government in order to persuade it to launch a course that was certain to produce an atrocious civil war in which both Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs would be sure to gain support from their respective states.

If, at this time, the United States had decided to back the EC and German positions to keep Bosnia within rump Yugoslavia and to shore up its security in that context, the Izetbegovic government would

certainly have refrained from a step which was bound to produce war.

That this was the attitude of the Izetbegovic Government was demonstrated in March 1992 when it reached agreement with the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb leaders under the auspices of the EU at a meeting in Lisbon to establish a confederation within Bosnia based upon three ethnically based cantons. But as the *New York Times* later explained the United States government persuaded Izetbegovic a week later to repudiate the agreement he had made

and choose instead a sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina under his presidency, saying that this was justified by the referendum on 1st March on independence. The problem with that referendum was that although the Bosnian Muslims and Croats overwhelmingly endorsed it, the Bosnian Serbs boycotted it, warning that it was a prelude to Civil War.<sup>23</sup>

If the United States had backed the EC and German positions on Bosnia it would have conceded to Germany game set and match in the European politics of Yugoslavia's crisis. It was this policy of the use of Yugoslav developments for wider US European goals which led the US down a road which required it to trample under foot the Badinter Commission and post-war Yugoslav jurisprudence on national rights: a government representing a minority of Bosnia's population was to be encouraged to ignore the expressed democratic will of Bosnia's other communities - the Bosnian Serbs and Croatians - and attempt to establish a Bosnian state without a Bosnian nation. The politics of this strategy would consist of presenting the Bosnian civil war as aggression by Serbia using the Serb nation in Bosnia as its vicious fifth column. Quite predictably, Serb paramilitary groups, some of them en route to the Krajina, were beginning to wipe out Bosnian Muslim villages. An appalling and vicious war was unfolding among the Bosnians.

The war was a policy success for the US, which took control of events in the Yugoslav theatre and very successfully polarised European politics around those who supported the 'Bosnian nation' versus those who supported a drive for 'Greater Serbia' - a state uniting all Serbs - a drive for ethnic cleansing and barbaric massacres. Decisive in the

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23. *The New York Times*, 17 June 1993.

success of the US operation were precisely the barbaric methods employed by the one wing of the 'Bosnian nation' - the Bosnian Serbs - against the Bosnian Muslims. But also important were the covert supply of weapons to the Bosnian Muslims by the US and the reconciliation between Germany and the USA over wider European policy.

But of course, there were other consequences of the US's playing of the Bosnian card, two in particular: first, the biggest nation in the Yugoslav arena, the Serbs, were having their national rights trampled underfoot by the Western powers insofar as US policy was successful. This meant that they would rally to Milosevic's Serbian government as their protector (and it also meant that Western liberal democratic politics could hardly triumph in a Serbia whose people were being victimised by Western liberal democratic states). But the second consequence was that Yugoslavia's fourth biggest nation, the Kosovo and Macedonia Albanians with their national aspirations to freedom and unity, were also to be ignored by the Western powers, though they were simultaneously powerfully damaged by America's Bosnia policy: for they were trapped in the mercy of a Serb nation, enraged by Western disregard for their national rights and swinging over to nationalist extremists; left within a Serbian republic frozen in a nationalist authoritarianism, with 600,000 ethnically cleansed Serb refugees, refugees cleansed by NATO-led forces in the Bosnian war. Without the context, it is hard to believe that Milosevic could have won the Serbian elections in 1993 and 1996. That in itself would not have solved the problems facing the Kosovo Albanians. But it would have opened a path towards a peaceful resolution of many of their problems.

### **Cat and mice - and fox - over Bosnia**

During 1992 and 1993, the United States appeared to be uninvolved in the Bosnian war, appeared to be still ready to let the West Europeans lead with their Vance-Owen mission and with their British, French and other troops under UN mandate. Thus, the media-surface of the political side of the war seemed to be a cat and mouse game between the EC plus Vance-Owen playing cat and the leaders of the various sides in the war playing mice. Vance-Owen would one moment seem to catch the

mice and get them to agree a peace-deal, but the next moment one of the mice would escape, the deal would collapse and the EC would have to start again.

But to understand what was really taking place, we must bring the actual US tactics into the picture. The US was making sure that the Izetbegovic government had sufficient resources to carry on the war (by breaking, along with other states, the arms embargo) but at the same time it was using the continuance of the Bosnian war to ram home a clear political message to Western Europe. At this time, the French and Germans were attempting to build the EU and WEU independent of the US-led NATO. The Bush and Clinton governments were bitterly opposed to this. But they were going to oppose it not just in words but through the Yugoslav facts.

Paul Gebhard, Director for Policy Planning in the Pentagon, explains the position at this time. The West Europeans were trying to develop 'a European Security and Defence Identity in the WEU outside NATO. US criticism of European institutions, however, can only be credible if European policies are unsuccessful.'<sup>24</sup> And he goes on to point out that the key European policy was the UN/EC Vance-Owen plan for Bosnia. He goes on:

The EC claimed the lead in setting Western policy at the start of the Yugoslav crisis...The Europeans may have thought that Vance's participation as the US representative was sufficient to commit the US to whatever policy developed. By having a former Secretary of State on the team, they may have expected to bring the US into the negotiations without having to work with officials in Washington. This approach reflects a desire in European capitals for 'Europe' to set the political agenda without official US participation on issues of European security.

Gebhard goes on to describe the trip of Vance and Owen to Washington in February 1993 to try to persuade the US of their plan.

Vance and Owen argued that the deal.....was the best that could

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24. Paul R. S. Gebhard, "The United States and European Security", Adelphi Paper 286 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, February, 1994) Subsequent quotations of Gebhard are taken from this same source.

be crafted (implying that US participation would not have produced a better deal for the Muslims)...Without its participation, the Clinton administration was not committed politically to the plan.....

This is an understatement on Gebhard's part: the Clinton administration was committed politically against the plan because it was an independent EU plan. And by quietly undermining the plan it successfully undermined West European attempts at independent European leadership. As Gebhard explains:

Because of the situation in Bosnia, the EC was unable to set the agenda for European security without the full participation of the United States....The political influence and military power of the US remain essential to security arrangements in Europe.

In short, the interests of the peoples of Bosnia simply didn't figure. Much more important geopolitical interests were at stake for the Clinton administration than bringing the war to an end.

### **New German-American partnership and the road to Dayton**

As the Bosnian war continued through 1993 and 1994, the rivalry and mutual suspicions between Germany and the United States over various broad European issues gave way to a new unity around a new political programme for Europe and the Atlantic Alliance. One vital step to this was the Uruguay Round Agreement - embracing a common vision not just for 'trade' in the usual sense of that word, but actually for the expansion of Atlantic capitalism across the world through the strategy of 'globalising' national political economies. But another absolutely crucial step was the Brussels North Atlantic Council meeting of January 1994. This meeting took two fundamental decisions: first, to expand NATO eastwards into Poland; and second, the adoption of the twin, seemingly purely technical-military concepts of "Combined Joint Task Forces" and of "separable but not separate" European military capabilities.

These decisions, essentially taken by the USA and Germany, marked the big policy shift on the reorganisation of European international politics after the end of the Cold War. To understand their

significance we must look at the broader debates and political battles between the Western powers over the shape of the post-Cold War European order. This debate can be divided analytically into its political side and its military side.

## **The political concept for Europe**

The collapse of the Soviet Bloc had re-opened the question of how to structure and channel power politics across Europe. There were three big ideas in the early 1990s and two of them were absolutely unacceptable to the USA:

*Option 1.* A pan-European collective security system, embracing Russia and the USA as well as all the other states of Europe, in an institutionalised framework - a much strengthened and streamlined OSCE - that would be norm-based: clear rules which all should enforce and which would lead all to gang-up on any state that breached them.

*Option 2:* A two-pillar power structure involving the EU and WEU in Western Europe and Russia and the CIS in the East. NATO would fade into the background as an ultimate guarantor of its members security, while the WEU/EU would expand into East Central Europe, something Russia could have lived with.

*Option 3:* NATO under American leadership would take command of European politics. The OSCE would survive in a minor technical role; the WEU/EU would not be allowed to have a policy-making authority and a command structure autonomous from US supervision through NATO; and NATO would expand East but would exclude Russia. So Europe would be re-polarised further East between a US-dominated Western Europe and a weakened Russia. Germany would be expected to discuss Eastern issues first with the US and its Western partners rather than having the option of discussing with Russia before bargaining with its Western partners.

Options 1 and 2 would have undermined the American power position in Europe. But during the early 1990s there was resistance to Option 3 not only from the Russians but also from many European states. But it became a vital issue for the US to get this option into reality. The great problem with Option 3, however, was that it would necessarily exclude Russia. American leadership through NATO could only be possible insofar as Russia was not a member of NATO. If Russia

was in NATO it would not be possible for the United States to brigade the West and central European states into a common policy on this or that policy issue affecting the space around NATO. American leadership through NATO precisely required Russian exclusion. Only Options 1 and 2 therefore gave Russia a central place in European international politics. But the decision to expand NATO Eastwards into Poland was in essence a decision to go for Option 3 - American leadership.

During the early 1990s the US has been pushing forward its very delicate campaign to turn NATO as an institution into the dominant pan-European politico-military force. The first step in this diplomatic effort had been launched at the Rome meeting of the North Atlantic Council in November 1991: this created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) to develop consultative links with the entire former Soviet Bloc region. It could be explained as an attempt to reassure the former Bloc at a time when the USSR was collapsing. Russia (with a strongly pro-Western government in 1992) participated in NACC. The next and really crucial step in the campaign was taken at the January 1994 NATO summit. This decided to expand NATO's membership Eastwards and, to prepare the way, it established a new mechanism, the so-called Partnership for Peace (P4P). At the time, some saw the P4P as a possible alternative to NATO enlargement, but for the US it was a stepping stone to such enlargement.

Yugoslavia may, at first sight, seem to have little to do with these security debates among the Western powers. But what was going on was not just a 'debate': it was a political battle over the political shape of Europe in the future. And such battles between the Western powers are fought not only in words but also *by deeds and by creating facts*. And in this context Yugoslavia was a central arena for winning arguments by deeds and by creating facts.

Thus, if the EU had successfully handled the Yugoslav crisis in 1990-91, that would have given a great boost to Option 2 above. The fact that during the Bosnian war the United States found that it could not do without political help from the Russians meant the formation of the Contact Group and implied an inclusive collective security approach to European affairs - Option 1.

But with an agreement between Germany and the United States on making NATO the central pillar of the new European system and on

expanding NATO Eastwards, the way was open for putting that German-American approach into practice in the Yugoslav theatre. Success there would then feed back onto the wider European political field with the actual expansion of NATO into Poland. The P4P scheme legitimised practical political and military cooperation between NATO and ex-Yugoslav states, enabling joint security and military planning. US military co-operation with both Macedonia and Albania could now be legitimated under the P4P umbrella.

By 1994 Germany was coming round to the idea that the notion of an autonomous West European instrument was impossible: it had to be a US-led NATO instrument. The January 1994 Brussels Summit decisions on “Combined Joint Task Forces” and of “separable but not separate” European military capabilities were essentially decisions to kill off the idea of building the WEU as an autonomous military-political power bloc. Instead the WEU would become simply another hat which the European NATO members could use for operations that the US approved of but did not wish to become involved in. The Combined Joint Task Forces concept essentially brought French forces and the Euro-corps with the NATO framework and the principle of separable but not separate meant that there would be no separate European policy planning or command structure: only NATO, one and indivisible. Thus the French concept of the early 1990s of an autonomous (from the USA) European Defence Identity was dead. The language of the European Security and Defence Identity was retained, but only as a notion of the West Europeans doing more within NATO, under US supervision. And again, the Yugoslav theatre could be the anvil on which the new joint task forces could be forged.

### **The Yugoslav road to the new NATO**

During 1994 and 1995 these shifts on the new role of NATO politically and militarily in the New Europe fed back into the Bosnian conflict. There were, at first, acute tensions between the US and the British and French because the US wanted to demonstrate its enormous air power with strikes against the Bosnian Serbs but that threatened the safety of the British and French troops on the ground. The tensions reached the point where some thought NATO might even split on the issue as the British even threatened such a split. But during 1995 an effective set of

tactics emerged.

First, the US adopted the German approach to wrapping up the Bosnian war by building a coalition of Bosnia's Muslims and Bosnia's Croats in conjunction with an alliance between the Bosnian Government and the Croatian government against the Bosnian Serbs. This was a great success against the Serbs, ethnically cleansing them from both Croatian territory and parts of Bosnian territory.

Secondly, NATO could swing into action vigorously 'out of area' with British and French forces as well as US air power and the Croatian and Bosnian Muslim forces driving the Bosnian Serbs back into defeat. And the whole operation under US leadership was crowned with a European political triumph for the US in the form of the Dayton Agreement. And the US tried to argue that the key to victory had been their air strikes, showing how central the US was to 'European security' as a result.

The fact that Dayton did not produce a politically genuine Bosnian state was, from a US point of view, a mere detail, wrapped up in too much complexity for European electorates to notice such detail. The US has taken command of Yugoslav affairs and of the high politics of Europe through the reorganisation of NATO and the new German-American partnership.

### **The US approach to the new Balkan backlash.**

To understand the US decision to launch war against Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999 we must understand how events have 'progressed' in both the Balkan theatre and in the broader regional European context since Dayton. The big change in the Balkan region was the Albanian explosion leading to the collapse of an effective Albanian state, which still continues, and the destabilisation of both Serbia and Macedonia by the arrival of the KLA, itself in large part a product of the Albanian blow-out.

The real politics of Dayton did not involve creating a viable Bosnian state: it involved a NATO Protectorate in Bosnia - in effect a NATO dictatorship - which would survive politically through keeping the two main states in the area, Croatia and Serbia, in line. The Croatian government has not actually stayed in line, since it has integrated the Bosnian Croat population into Croatia. But the Milosevic regime did

keep in line, though it could not keep the Bosnian Serbs themselves in line because their majority has viewed Milosevic as a traitor to the Serb nation by agreeing to Dayton. What US policy did not wish to contemplate, however, was a Greater Albania, since this would upset the applecart in Macedonia, Bulgaria and possibly between Greece and Turkey. But paradoxically the blow-out of the Albanian state in 1996-97 has opened the door to the possibility of a greater Albania.

The Sali Berisha government of Albania up to 1996 was a corrupt dictatorship which rigged elections and imprisoned the leader of the opposition, but he served American policy well because he sealed off the border between Albania and Yugoslavia and gave no encouragement to the national aspirations of the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. (Berisha seems actually to have been a find of British intelligence and as a result the British were very reluctant to see him overthrown).

But with the popular uprising that overthrew Berisha, the Albanian state was completely shattered, its security forces melted and their arms were seized by the population - some 750,000 Kalashnikovs were privatised amongst other things. Despite Italian military intervention, the new Socialist government of Nano, just out of Berisha's jail, could not impose order on Albania's territory and could not seal the borders with Macedonia and Kosovo. This gave an opening to the Kosovo Liberation Army, an organisation whose leaders had once admired Enver Hoxha but now opened itself to all those who rejected the reformist and pacifist stance of Ibrahim Rugova, the moderate Albanian leader. The KLA offensive gained a very receptive response both in Kosovo and in Macedonia where the national aspirations of the Albanians had long been repressed, especially, of course, in Kosovo. The KLA offensive in Kosovo got under way in February 1998 and was very effective, killing large numbers of Serbian officials and security personnel across the province.

## **Dealing with the KLA**

This presented the NATO powers with a series of acute dilemmas. On one side, there was the European interest in preserving state stability for all the states of the region. This was an interest mainly governed, for the West Europeans by a fear of refugee waves when states collapse. But there was also a US interest in state stability, deriving from Dayton.

Dayton was not proving a success. And the US administration was under pressure to fix a date for its withdrawal from its Bosnian commitments. These state stability concerns pointed towards one clear policy direction: rely on Milosevic, who, unlike Tadjman, was sticking to Dayton, to restabilise the borders of Albania and Macedonia by putting the KLA to flight.

If the Western powers opted to do nothing and let events in the Western Balkans take their course, the result could be Macedonia's collapse into civil war, possible Bulgarian involvement, more bloody confrontations in Albania and the danger of a Greater Albania, upsetting the balances between Greece and Turkey. As the *Economist* put it in June, 1998:

The West's biggest worry is that the war will spread to Kosovo's two neighbours, Albania and Macedonia. The separatists use both countries (and Montenegro) as havens and as conduits for arms.<sup>25</sup>

NATO's posture was, therefore, from early 1998 to back Milosevic. The signal for the Yugoslav government to launch its counter-insurgency war against the KLA uprising was given by the United States special envoy to the region, Ambassador Gelbard. The BBC correspondent in Belgrade reported that Gelbard flew in to brand the KLA as 'a terrorist organisation'.

"I know a terrorist when I see one and these men are terrorists," he said... At the time, the KLA was believed to number just several hundred armed men. Mr. Gelbard's words were interpreted in the Yugoslav capital, Belgrade, as a green light for a security forces operation against the KLA and the special police conducted two raids in the Benitsar region in March.

It is important to remember in this context that for the US government in the 1990s, the official designation of a group as a terrorist organisation has large and precise policy consequences for all the agencies of the entire US state. It is therefore not something that a senior US official does lightly. It is a major policy decision with a powerful

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25. *Economist* Leader: 'Milosevic again in Kosovo: The Struggle to contain ex-Yugoslavia's fighting is far from over,' the *Economist*, 6 June 1998.

message to all relevant interested parties, not least, in this case, the Yugoslav and Serbian governments. And this was the political posture of NATO throughout much of 1998.

But was it also the policy? This is much less clear. There is no doubt that it was the policy of the West European states right up through Christmas 1998. They wanted a negotiated solution between the Kosovo Albanian leadership and the Serbian government in the context of a cease-fire between the government and the KLA. They condemned any atrocities by either side and, right through from October 1998 into January 1999, EU General Council statements tended to present the KLA as the major obstacle to a cease-fire and as the main violator of UN resolution 1199 of September 1998, prompting retaliatory action by the Serbian security forces.

But the great enigma is what the US policy during 1998 actually was. This puzzle focuses on the behaviour of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. It is inconceivable that Gelbard could have designated the KLA a terrorist organisation without her approval. The Yugoslav theatre was high on the State Department policy agenda, after all, with very large US troop deployments in the area. Yet as soon as the Serbian government responded to the Gelbard signal, Albright pounced. On 7 March 1998, just after and in response to the Serbian security force operation in the Benitsar region of Kosovo, she declared:

We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia.<sup>26</sup>

Two days later she reserved the right for the US to take unilateral action against the Serbian government, saying, 'We know what we need to know to believe we are seeing ethnic cleansing all over again.'<sup>27</sup> She then swung into action with emergency meetings in London and Bonn and success in gaining some rather minor sanctions on Yugoslavia, along with a denial of visas to Serbian officials involved in any way

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26. Steven Erlanger, 'Albright Warns Serbs on Kosovo Violence', *New York Times*, 8 March 1998, p. A6.

27. Anne Swardson, 'West, Russia Agree on Sanctions for Belgrade', *Washington Post*, 10 March 1998, p. A13.

with the action in Kosovo. But

not satisfied with the Contact Group's sanctions package, the United States left the door open to military intervention. When asked about that possibility, Robert Gelbard, Clinton's special envoy to the Balkans, told a Congressional hearing.... 'we aren't ruling anything out'.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, Albright got the North Atlantic Council to declare that:

NATO and the international community have a legitimate interest in developments in Kosovo.... because of their impact on the stability of the whole region.<sup>29</sup>

This Albright drive is on the face of it utterly at odds with the Gelbard signal. Robert Gelbard's discourse was the language of war against the KLA, Albright's was that of preparing for war against Milosevic. If Gelbard was so utterly at odds with Albright's line as he seems to have been he would have been swiftly fired. But he was not. So Gelbard and Albright must have been playing two different instruments in counter-point in a single score.

There are two obvious possible scores. The first is that Gelbard had the melody line and Albright was just giving a contrasting backing. In other words, during most of 1998, the operational US policy was to back the Serbian government against the KLA while pretending to do the opposite. Thus Albright's anti-Milosevic, bomb-threatening rhetoric was simply a cover for public consumption, and a necessary one, given the orgy of vilification of Milosevic promoted by the US administration during the Bosnian war and given the fact that the key US partners in the region, such as the Bosnian Muslim leadership in Bosnia and US-funded Serbian opposition groups, would not welcome too friendly a relationship between the US and Milosevic. A further argument for this interpretation is the fact that NATO's line as well as the official line of

28. Philip Shenon, 'US says it might consider attacking Serbs' *New York Times*, 13 March 1998, p. A1.

29. Colin Soloway, 'Serbia attacks Ethnic Albanians' *Washington Post*, 6 March 1998, p. A1

the EU and of the Contact Group (which included Russia) during 1998 was at the least broadly neutral between the Serbian authorities and the KLA, but tended toward the side of the former.<sup>30</sup>

But there is a second possible score at work in US policy during 1998, one which gives Albright the melody line: in other words, from February 1998, the US was actually manoeuvring for a war against Serbia, using the KLA insurgency and the Serbian counter-insurgency as the occasion for an Air War. And the evidence for this interpretation of events is the much more persuasive one. First of all, the *Washington Post* in late March argued this strongly. It cited unnamed Clinton administration sources to the effect that Washington's actual policy had been to prepare diplomatically for an attack on Yugoslavia right from the start back in February 1998. In reported on 23 March, the eve of the launching of the air war that, 'The diplomacy that led up to yesterday's final warning was designed and built in Washington.' And it went on:

Some critics have seen a lack of resolve in the successive warnings Washington has issued since [February, 1998]. But what critics see as vacillation is described by policy makers in Washington as orchestration of international backing for military force, much as they said they accomplished in Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

What the *Washington Post* is suggesting here is not that the US policy was to unilaterally attack Serbia. It is saying that the US policy was to get the whole of NATO into a position where NATO would attack Yugoslavia. Thus, the US would be engaging in a series of political offensives within NATO to try to drag its allies into a collective war against Yugoslavia. And the *Post's* reference to US tactics vis a vis Iraq in 1990 is also thought-provoking. It suggests the Clinton administration used the same entrapment tactic towards the Yugoslav government that the Bush administration used against Saddam Hussein in 1990.

In the summer of 1990, the US Ambassador to Iraq, in her meeting with Saddam Hussein at the height of his crisis with Kuwait,

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30. In an earlier version of this text, published in *New Left Review*, I subscribed to this interpretation of US policy during the period from March to October 1998.

31. Barton Gellman, 'Allies See No Credible Alternative', *Washington Post*, 23 March 1999, p. A12.

knowing that Iraqi troops were massing at the Kuwaiti border, had informed him that the US has no vital interest at stake in his quarrel with Kuwait, regarded Iraq as a bulwark in the region and regarded the dispute as purely a matter between Iraq and Kuwait. This was a signal for Saddam Hussein to take Kuwait. The possible explanation for Gelbard's signal to the Serbian authorities is that US diplomacy was setting a similar trap for the Yugoslav state: encouraging it to launch an all-out Turkish or Colombian-style - or in the classic examples, the British Malayan operation in the 1950s or the American Vietnam operations in the 1960s - counter-insurgency operation against villagers and clans supporting the KLA. Once the counter-insurgency was underway, the US had the factual basis for pushing the West European powers towards launching a war.

This interpretive framework makes sense of a number of otherwise puzzling features of NATO's Kosovo politics during 1998. First, there was the big push by Washington for NATO air-strikes in June 1998, by which time NATO military planning for an attack on Yugoslavia was completed.

In that month, White House spokesperson Mike McCurry asserted that Yugoslavia

must immediately withdraw security units involved in civilian repression, without linkage to...the 'stopping of terrorist activity.'<sup>32</sup>

In parallel, Pentagon spokesperson Kenneth Bacon said:

We don't think that there should be any linkage between an immediate withdrawal of forces by the Yugoslavs on the one hand, and stopping terrorist activities, on the other. There ought to be complete withdrawal of military forces so that negotiations can begin.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, Washington was insisting that before any cease-fire or negotiations on a Kosovo peace settlement, the Serbian authorities must withdraw all their forces for Kosovo, handing over the territory to

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32. Steven Erlanger, 'Serb's Promises are just first Step, US says', *New York Times*, 17 June 1998, p. A6.

33. *ibid.*

the KLA. Thus, the US was effectively insisting that Yugoslavia either hand over Kosovo to the KLA or face NATO bombing. As Gary Dempsey explains, the US was demanding that Serbian government

effectively hand over one of its territories to an insurgency movement.....This...led many ethnic Albanians to further conclude that the Clinton administration - despite its official statements to the contrary - backed their goal of independence.... Although US policy was officially opposed to independence for Kosovo, Washington would not allow Belgrade to forcibly resist it.<sup>34</sup>

Thus as early as June, 1998, Washington was sending absolutely clear signals to the KLA to step up its insurgency against the Serbian government, and seeking to use Serb security forces counter-moves as a pretext for an air war against Serbia. But it had to be, politically, a NATO air war even though factually the US Air Force would be doing it. The European NATO powers resisted. So Albright had to pull back.

During the summer of 1998, while the West European and Russian positions continued to block Albright's NATO bombing option, the Serbian government carried on its counter-insurgency and in September, the US administration attempted to get a UN Resolution that could serve as the pretext for an air war. The result, Security Council Resolution 1199, was anything but adequate from Albright's point of view. The resolution required the following: a cease fire by both sides; peace talks between the Serbian Government and unnamed Kosovo Albanian leaders for an internal settlement whose nature is not specified; the Serbian security forces were called upon to end all military action against civilians while at the same time the resolution demanded of the Kosovo side that 'the Kosovo Albanian leadership condemn all terrorist action and emphasises that all elements in the Kosovo Albanian community should pursue their goals by peaceful means only'; the resolution further called for the international monitors to be able to carry out their work in Kosovo and it demanded efforts by the Yugoslav

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34. Gary T Dempsey, 'Washington's Kosovo Policy: Consequences and Contradictions' *Policy Analysis*, No. 321, 8 October 1998.

35. UN Security Council Resolution 1199 (1998), adopted by the Security Council at its 393rd meeting on 23 September 1998.

authorities to take adequate humanitarian measures for the civilian population over winter.<sup>35</sup>

Yet although this resolution could not be used to legitimate a military attack on Serbia, Madeleine Albright did use it for her rhetoric of threats of NATO attack. In early October she declared at a press conference before a Contact Group meeting that she would bomb Serbia if it didn't comply with Resolution 1199.<sup>36</sup> She also threatened to bomb Serbia because the winter was approaching and Kosovar refugees coming out of Kosovo could be exposed to terrible hardships in the Albanian mountains.

Thus, time after time during the spring, summer and autumn of 1998, Albright combined vitriolic language directed against the Yugoslav government with repeated threats of NATO bombing. This is a curious style of diplomacy. One result was that every time the Yugoslav government agreed to anything from the Contact Group, Albright would claim that it was backing down because of her rhetoric about bombing - an absurd claim, since the Yugoslav government would know very well the state of opinion in the Contact Group at that time. And whatever the Yugoslav government resisted could give Albright ammunition for increasing the volume of her rhetoric and to claim that 'this time' NATO should not be bluffing. She also adopted the tactic of holding press conferences just before going into Contact Group meetings and using such occasions to demand that the NATO powers stop pussy-footing around with Milosevic and show some backbone. In short, she appeared to be trying to create, through her own constant bombing threats, a mounting credibility crisis for NATO, along the lines of, 'If we don't do it this time, NATO will be a laughing stock'.

When, on 13 October, Richard Holbrooke brokered an agreement with Milosevic under which the Serbian and Yugoslav forces in Kosovo would be scaled down and there would be a cease fire monitored by a large force of OSCE monitors, Milosevic stipulated that the Contact Group must ensure the cease-fire on the KLA side. Albright hailed this as a triumph for her threats of aggression against Serbia. This was an important turning point, because the American government managed

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36. Madeleine Albright Press Conference, 8 October 1998, London, UK. As released by the Office of the Spokesman, US Dept of State.

to get control of the leadership of the OSCE monitoring force. And it placed it under the command of William Walker, a key organiser of the Contra terrorist war against Nicaragua in the 1980s and US Ambassador to El Salvador, presiding over the mass slaughter in that country during the Reagan administration.

Walker's first act was to make sure that the OSCE monitors did not move swiftly into Kosovo to monitor the cease fire launched on 13 October. He held them back for over a month, while the KLA used the breathing space of the cease fire and reduction of Serbian forces to redouble their military efforts in the province. Thus, the Serbian government has, in effect been tricked by Albright. And there were signs, at this time, of tensions between Albright and Holbrooke. When the OSCE monitors did arrive on the scene, we may presume that Walker proceeded to do what he was good at, namely, the art of US backing for Contra-style operations against target states. A study of his activities in Kosovo in late 1998 has yet to be published. But we would be stretching tendentiousness beyond the point of decency to imagine that he was pre-occupied mainly with OSCE-style norms.

In late October, Albright set in motion a new tactic that would prove an effective instrument for manoeuvring the West European NATO members into war. The West Europeans seem to have been pressing Albright that what was needed was a peace conference which would bring the two sides together to reach a settlement - a kind of Dayton for Kosovo. Albright has subsequently revealed that she had been opposed to this: had wanted to go straight for the jugular of the Serbian state with the US Air Force. But in late October she swung round to the conference idea because she won the right to draft the text of the draft agreement to be put to such a conference. She got Christopher Hill to draw up the draft and he completed his work in early December. When the draft became available to the Serbian government, they were outraged.

The reason was simple: the Rambouillet text was not for negotiations between the various Kosovar Albanian groups and the Serbian government. Its essence was an ultimatum from NATO to Serbia that Belgrade must, in effect, allow NATO to establish a protectorate over Kosovo for three years or face a bombing campaign. The document did not, of course, use these words. It spoke of a NATO-led military

‘compliance force’ to supervise the transformation of the situation in Kosovo while it remained juridically a province of Serbia. But in political-military fact, NATO would hold the power over Kosovo. Once she had lined NATO’s key European members behind the Rambouillet draft, she had her NATO war in the bag.

The Rambouillet peace conference was not actually a peace negotiation at all. The US administration absolutely refused to let the Serbian government meet and negotiate with the Kosovar Albanian groups. And at the same time, Albright made assurance doubly sure by introducing a new stipulation into the text: Appendix B, which gave NATO’s ‘compliance force’ the right to roam freely across the whole of Yugoslavia! In other words, Kosovo could become not just a NATO protectorate but the bridgehead and base for a war against the entire Serb state. And to complete the picture, the entire Rambouillet conference was packed to make it seem that the US administration had little to do with proceedings. It was chaired jointly by the British and French governments. The British were not a problem, of course. The question was: could the French government decide to repudiate the results of a conference that it was supposedly leading?

Once the war was underway, various West European leaders like Robin Cook have tried to explain their complete reversal of their 1998 policy on the Kosovo problem by claiming that the behaviour of the Serbian security forces during the winter of 1998 forced them to reconsider their whole approach and opt for a war against a sovereign state without even UN authority. But the evidence of Cook’s own statements and of those of the EU General Affairs Council of EU foreign ministers suggests that this is simply a falsehood. Thus, for example, at their General Affairs Council on 8 December 1998, Cook and the other foreign ministers of the EU assessed the situation in Kosovo. The report of the meeting in the *Agence Europe Bulletin* of the following day stated:

At the close of its debate on the situation in the Western Balkans, the General Affairs Council mainly expressed concern for the recent ‘intensification of military action’ in Kosovo, noting that ‘increased activity by the KLA has prompted an increased

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37. *Agence Europe*, No.7559, 9 December 1998, p. 4.

presence of Serbian security forces in the region.’<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the EU saw the KLA as the driving force undermining the possibility of a cease fire and a compromise solution. They were simply on a different line from Albright. And they continued to be right through January.

The full details of how the US government dragged the West European states into the current air war against Yugoslavia have yet to emerge. The Rambouillet tactic was very clever. Albright’s long campaign to build up through her own rhetoric a mounting credibility crisis for NATO was also effective. In addition, the decision-making rules of the North Atlantic Council, NATO’s supreme policy making institution are not quite what they seem. On the face of it, NAC decisions are supposed to be by ‘consensus’. This sounds like unanimity, but it is not. Instead, it is supposed to sound like ‘No one against’. But this is also not right as Albright explained at a press conference, when asked about German and Italian resistance to a NATO war. She indicated that NAC procedures could bounce such opponents into support for war, with this convoluted statement:

I would also say, in terms of the use of force, while there may not - all the members of the Contact Group may not agree on that, as I said this morning, if it is necessary to use force I believe that NATO - well, first of all, they are increasingly - their own procedure is now one that shows that they are prepared to act; and those that do not agree would not have a veto over the action.<sup>38</sup>

This is a rather important issue for both those who have already been killed by NATO bombing and for those who risk being killed in future NATO wars. It seems that only the US has a veto in the NAC. Other states have a voice that depends upon their political power: joint opposition by France and Germany could, we assume, stop a NATO attack ‘out of area’. But opposition by, say, Italy and Greece could not stop such an attack. They could refrain from direct military participation by their own forces, but should not publicly oppose NATO in the event

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38. Madeleine Albright Press Conference statement, 8 October 1998, London. As released by the office of the Spokesman, US Dept of State.

that the US led some of the key European states into action.

We know that the UK and France were brought on board and, as we will argue in Part II, the St. Malo Declaration in early December 1998 was probably a key stepping stone in the French re-alignment with London and Washington. We also know that the German Finance Minister, Oscar Lafontaine, opposed the war and resigned from the government over the issue, while Schröder was prepared to go along with the possibility of war by early March 1999. But we do not know why. Obviously the German defence ministry and the Bundeswehr leaders were keen to show German public opinion the German army in action at last for the first time since the Second World War, and the German state is keen to move towards Germany becoming a military power with the capacity to project power abroad in order that West European military leadership is not left in the hands of the British and the French. But the details of the German involvement after many months of resisting such a NATO attack remains obscure. The absolutely crucial 'detail' here is why both the German and French governments were prepared to abandon their position that an attack on Yugoslavia, like any other NATO action out of area, should have the backing of the UN Security Council. Of course, such backing could hardly be granted by the UNSC, since the NATO attack involved aggression against a sovereign state and thus drove an armoured division through the defences of the UN Charter. But that makes it all the more interesting to know why Germany and France capitulated.

With such backing from Western governments, Russia remained the only obstacle. And without a search for backing from the Security Council, Russia was no obstacle at all, unless it was prepared to threaten tactical nuclear weapons. Of course, the attack tore gaping holes through the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 in at least five places. But that Founding Act had and has no legal status whatever. It is just a piece of paper for domestic Russian consumption to pretend that Russia is actually involved in European security decision making with NATO. In reality the so-called Permanent Joint Council of NATO and Russia is expressly banned by the US Senate from playing any role beyond an

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39. See the Senate Resolution ratifying NATO's enlargement and laying down US policy on the Russia-NATO Founding Act. ([www/regions/eur/un](http://www/regions/eur/un))

informative one vis a vis Russia.<sup>39</sup> Thus Russia could be brushed aside.

Thus, for 14 months Madeleine Albright led a US diplomacy for a war against Yugoslavia. To achieve this end, she needed to inflame the conflict between the KLA and the Serbian state and she did so, with signal after signal to the KLA that the US bomber command was on its way to help, signals which also told the Serbian and Yugoslav state to raise its efforts against the KLA and its sympathisers in Kosovo to fever pitch while preparing the whole state for NATO aggression. The NATO aggression against Serbia on 24 March then, by definition, roused the passions of all sides to murderous, all out violence.

The big question is why? Of course, the US administration was programmatically hostile to the continuance of the political regime in Serbia. People assume this hostility derives from the alleged involvement of the Yugoslav government in atrocities during the Bosnian civil war (repackaged in Washington propaganda, of course, as an attack by the Serbian state on Bosnia). But this does not seem to be the basis of Washington's programmatic hostility. After all, the US government sought to encourage the leadership of the Yugoslav military to overthrow the elected government of Serbia, and the leadership of the Yugoslav military with whom Washington sought an alliance were numbers one and two on Washington's so-called war crimes suspect list. Washington's programmatic hostility was directed, then, not at the Yugoslav military but at Milosevic and the Serbian Socialist Party. They had stood out throughout the 1990s as a force opposed to the globalisation of the Serbian economy.

But this was, in our judgement, not a sufficient reason for the NATO attack. We will examine in Part II the wider European political motives for Washington to want a NATO war in the Balkans in 1999.

## **Conclusion.**

There is a powerful impulse within the electorates of the NATO states for their states to give a lead to the world and really help the less fortunate overwhelming majority of humanity to improve their lives and strengthen their security and welfare. But we must bear in mind two unfortunate facts: first, that the NATO states have been and are hell bent on exacerbating the inequalities of power and wealth in the world, in destroying all challenges to their overwhelming military and economic

power and in subordinating almost all other considerations to these goals; second, the NATO states are finding it extraordinarily easy to manipulate their domestic electorates into believing that these states are indeed leading the world's population towards a more just and humane future when in reality they are doing no such thing.

The fate of Yugoslavia in the 1990s has been a classic case of this general story. NATO electorates thought their states were trying to help in Yugoslavia, even if they were not 'doing enough'. In reality these states are not about helping the Yugoslav people: they are about helping themselves alone, if necessary by plunging the Yugoslav people into barbaric wars. There are occasions when advanced capitalist countries will help the populations of other states. But these occasions are rare, namely when the welfare of the populations of these other states is a vital weapon in a struggle against another powerful enemy. This applied to US policy towards Western Europe when it was threatened by Communist triumph in the early post-war years. But the welfare of the people of Yugoslavia has been irrelevant to the NATO powers in the 1990s because these powers have faced no effective enemies whatever.

The Bosnian war produced terrible atrocities, reminiscent of the atrocities perpetrated in the Spanish Civil War, in Ireland in the 1920s by the Black and Tans, by the Wehrmacht and Einsatzgruppen on the Eastern front in the second world war, by the Americans in Vietnam or by the Turkish security forces in Eastern Turkey today. These atrocities were not perpetrated only by the Bosnian Serbs, but theirs were the most visible cases. No doubt more such atrocities have been perpetrated in Kosovo by the Serbian security forces who are, at the time of writing, being targeted for extermination by the NATO powers.

It is surely right that institutions should be built that can put a stop to such atrocities and can punish their perpetrators. But we face an acute dilemma when we confront this task because we know enough about the dynamics of politics to be able to identify not only the perpetrators of atrocities, but the international actors who helped and help create the conditions in which such perpetrators arise. And in the Yugoslav case, the Western powers, by their deliberate acts of commission and omission played a central role in creating the conditions in which barbaric acts were bound to flourish.

Yugoslavia was a case where policy makers in Western powers were given ample warning by their intelligence services as to the dynamics being unleashed and the core executives of these Western states took steps that exacerbated the tendencies towards barbarism. These states were simply not governed by an ethic of responsibility for the human consequences of their power plays. And it is surely the case that many of the perpetrators of atrocious acts committed them in response to Hobbesian circumstances created by the great powers.

There is something deeply disturbing about a system of Western power politics which can casually and costlessly make a major contribution to plunging Yugoslavia into turmoil and wars, can then use these wars to further their geopolitical ends and then seek to make political capital out of War Crimes Court judgements of perpetrators of atrocities in whose rise the Western powers have played such a large part.

And we should not forget the broader picture into which the power plays of the Western powers must be situated: the systematic use of economic statecraft in Eastern Europe since 1989 to impose political economies on the region geared overwhelmingly to a single goal: maximising economic advantage for West European and American capital in the region. This economic statecraft had shattered social structures not only in Yugoslavia but in most of the Former Soviet Union and in much of the rest of the Balkans. In many cases it has shattered political systems as well. The Albanian blow-out and the Bulgarian economic collapse of the mid-1990s are just two examples of this. What gives this economic statecraft an especially sinister aspect is the fact that such economic emiseration actually furthers the geopolitical goals of the United States in Europe. The current attack on Yugoslavia would not be taking place if it was not for the current extreme weakness of Russia with its economy shattered. And the entire rationale offered for the need to have a NATO licence to strike into East Central and Eastern Europe lies in the existence of shattered societies and states and economies in whose shattering the Western states have played such an absolutely central role.

A Western policy which put the human security of the people of East Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe first would involve a new Marshall Plan for the entire region involving a development-

oriented framework for the region. But that would involve scrapping the whole mercantilist and imperial economic programme of the EU and the IMF/World Bank towards the region. There is not the slightest sign of a preparedness of the Western powers to change course on these issues. Instead, the successful extermination of the Yugoslav conscripts in Kosovo will, no doubt be followed by 'aid' for gangster mafias of the kind which flourish in the aftermath of any devastating war, as is evident in NATO's Bosnian protectorate today.

The story of Western involvement in the region is obscured by a poisonous Western imperial propaganda which turns reality on its head. This propaganda says that the Balkans cause the West no end of trouble because of the appalling characters who live there. The reality is that the Western powers have caused the Balkan peoples no end of suffering because they use the region today, as yesterday, as a theatre for their European power-politics manoeuvres.

## II. The Euro-Atlantic Origins of NATO's Attack on Yugoslavia

### 1. Introduction

It is largely taken for granted inside the main NATO states that the Clinton administration was driven to launch the NATO air war against Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999 mainly as a result of its perceptions of developments within the Western Balkans. Yet there has been one dissenting voice on the Clinton administration's main motive for war. It is President Clinton's. Some may regard him as an unreliable witness. But this article will argue in support of Bill Clinton's public view as to what he was up to when launching the war.

Clinton explained his motive quite bluntly in his speech of 23 March, the day before he unleashed the US Air Force. He explained that the attack was needed mainly because of its wide Euro-Atlantic political effects. As the *Washington Post* reported, Clinton explained 'that a strong U.S.-European partnership "is what this Kosovo thing is all about".'<sup>1</sup> So he didn't just say that the war was mainly about the political relationship between Europe and the US rather than Kosovo's Albanians or Yugoslavia's government. He said it was all about the US relationship with Western Europe.

And Clinton made a second important point about Washington's motives for the war. He explained in the same speech why a 'strong partnership' between the US and Europe was vital for the US:

If we 're going to have a strong economic relationship [with the

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1. Charles Babbington and Helen Dewar, "Clinton Pleads for Support", *Washington Post*, 24 March 1999, p. A1.

world, PG] that includes our ability to sell around the world, Europe has got to be a key.<sup>2</sup>

## **The decision for war**

Understanding a state leadership's motives for launching a war is a guide to its war aims and thus to understanding and judging the whole operation. But the leadership's public words are not always a good guide to its real intentions. And secondly, state leaderships are not unitary. In the US there is a whole array of actors with different concerns, often concerns in tension or conflict with each other. We must probe, as far as we can, into that Federal policy-making system to see who was for what and why. That should tell us more about war motive and aims.

A first guide is the Clinton speech. What, one wonders, could Clinton's words mean. *The Sunday Times* correspondent reporting the speech simply could not understand it. Noting that it did not seem to have been scripted by Clinton's media advisers, the correspondent considered that the President was off message. This is, at first sight a contradiction in terms, how can the President of the United States, the creator of the message, be off message? But this contradiction remains intriguing. Could it be that the President was simply transmitting the message from the wrong set of advisers: he was telling us what the executive bureaucracy was telling him instead of what the media management professionals would have told him to say?

This possibility is re-enforced by another curious, even unique feature of the Washington war decision. Neither US public opinion nor its Congressional representatives in either House were pressing for war. There was no significant push from that direction on Clinton. Not only was US public opinion not prepared politically for the war: the leaders of US public opinion had not been politically prepared either. In that 23 March speech President Clinton felt bound to ask the American people to get out their family atlases and look up Kosovo since, as he said, large numbers of them would never have heard of it. The whole thing was new to them. And as the BBC's Alistair Cook explained in his Letter from America programme on Sunday 18 April, this war was

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2. For this part of his speech of 23 March see Andrew Sullivan, "Clinton's War Strategy is Hit and Hope", *Sunday Times*, 28 March 1999, p. 28.

unique in US history, at least since Roosevelt's time, in one central respect: in neither house of Congress was there any pro-war political leadership when the war was launched. Public opinion in the USA was, in other words, out of it at the start.

The drive for war came from within the federal executive. The Pentagon is a very important and powerful player in that bureaucracy. It is the guardian of US geostrategic interests. So if the Pentagon had been the lead force for war we could conclude that US strategic interests in the Western Balkans, South East Europe more generally or perhaps in relation to Russia were engaged: Kosovo was important for US national strategy in the east.

Yet according to the *Washington Post*, the Pentagon had been against the war. The *Post* reported:

In the weeks before NATO launched its air campaign against Yugoslavia, U.S. military chiefs expressed deep reservations about the Clinton administration's approach to Kosovo and warned that bombing alone likely would not achieve its political aims, according to sources familiar with their thinking. The Pentagon's senior four-star officers, meeting in closed-door sessions in the Pentagon's secure "tank" room, argued that the administration should use more economic sanctions and other non-military levers to compel Belgrade to make peace in the rebellious Serbian province before resorting to air strikes. They also complained about what they saw as the lack of a long-term vision for the Balkans and questioned whether U.S. national interests there were strong enough to merit a military confrontation. "I don't think anybody felt like there had been a compelling argument made that all of this was in our national interest," said one senior officer knowledgeable about the deliberations.

Thus, they feared US interests in the Balkan theatre could actually be damaged by the war. But they also warned Clinton that his war plan would not work militarily:

Privately, even the staunchest advocates of air power among the four-star commanders doubted that air strikes alone could do much to budge Milosevic in the near term. They noted the

challenges of sending planes against widely dispersed ground forces that were carrying out door-to-door terror. They spoke about the difficulty of hitting Yugoslav troops and equipment without striking Albanian refugees mixed among them.

They knew it would be a long air war and “They fret that the American public was not adequately prepared to accept a prolonged air operation.”<sup>3</sup>

But the group within the executive which had evidently and vociferously been for the bombing of Yugoslavia were the political strategists in the State Department, led by Madeleine Albright and her deputy, Strobe Talbott. All agree on that.

So we can reach a first set of conclusions about war motive. Realists in International Relations theory typically lay great emphasis on one type of motive for Great Powers to launch wars: the drive for geostrategic objectives, gaining control over space. Yet the guardians of such objectives in the Pentagon were against the war decision, because no significant objectives of this sort were at stake. Secondly, liberal theorists lay stress on the liberal democratic internal characteristics of a power like the US and would suggest that domestic public opinion has a big role. Yet in this case such a factor was far from important. It was the political side of the bureaucracy that led this war.

As the *Post* again explained, Washington had been preparing diplomatically for this attack on Yugoslavia since February 1998:

Some critics have seen a lack of resolve in the successive warnings Washington has issued since [February, 1998]. But what critics see as vacillation is described by policymakers in Washington as orchestration of international backing for military force, much as they said they accomplished in Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

This is a very important statement. The drive for the Yugoslavian war was being led by the State Department strategists. It was a drive to bring the West Europeans into line for war, lasting for over a year. “The

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3. Bradley Graham, “Joint Chiefs Doubted Air Strategy”, *Washington Post*, 5 April 1999, p. A1.

4. Barton Gellman, “Allies See No Credible Alternative”, *Washington Post*, 23 March 1999, p. A12.

diplomacy that led up to yesterday's final warning was designed and built in Washington.”<sup>5</sup>

The key final steps were: first to get the West Europeans to agree that if there was no deal struck between the two sides at the Rambouillet conference, there would be war, whatever the Russians and UN said. Secondly, to insert into the draft agreement (written by Hill from the State Department) a clause for a NATO-led force creating effectively a NATO Protectorate in Kosovo, a demand the US government knew Milosevic could not accept. Then at Rambouillet, just to be sure, the US insisted that these NATO forces would have the right to roam anywhere in Yugoslavia. And at the same time, the US would not allow negotiations between the Serbian government, which wanted them, and the Kosovar Albanians to take place, presumably for fear of some other kind of agreement emerging between the two sides. As the *Post* explained, the US government “wrote up a model agreement between them and demanded that both sides sign before they had ever even laid eyes on one another.”<sup>6</sup> So the US drove, over 14 months, for a war that it knew was in tension with US interests in the Balkans .

### **The form of the planned military attack**

Those who imagine that the war was mainly about saving the lives of the Kosovo civilians should do so only after checking on the tactics chosen for the military campaign. The *Washington Post* reported that CIA officials had been running over the scenarios as war started for no less than 14 months, looking at all the streams of chain reactions to the bombing, considering every scenario. They predicted the obvious: that the Serbian army would sweep into Kosovo to shore up its defences, clearing villages near the border, causing streams of refugees, etc.

The Pentagon has acknowledged that the first bombing raids were very light ones, in contrast to the approach taken on Iraq. This gave the Serbian authorities time to consolidate their positions within Kosovo. NATO sources have claimed that they started the bombing after the Serbs has already started to pour troops and security forces into Kosovo. This is true, but it is crucially economical with the truth. Because it omits to explain that President Clinton had publicly warned the Serb

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5. & 6. *ibid.*

authorities that the war was now to start in an unusual public declaration before the Serbian armed forces poured into the province. The Serbian moves began on the Sunday 21 March, after President Clinton had announced on Friday 19 March, in unambiguous terms, that the war would start. As the *Post* reported:

Clinton declared Friday that “the threshold has been crossed” for bombing, a comment described by one U.S. official as “enormously significant.” But by one accounting, Milosevic crossed the threshold more than a year ago.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, if we are to believe later NATO suggestions that the Serbian government was planning genocide and the driving out of the whole Albanian population, we arrive at a curious conclusion: the US government was planning a form of attack that would allow such a ‘genocide’: in effect, telling the Serbian authorities to get moving, running a week of very light bombing and then continuing with what was bound to be, according to not only the Joint Chiefs but also Secretary of Defence Cohen, a very long bombing campaign. The *Washington Post* reported: “Aides say Cohen never counted on the operation being over quickly.”<sup>8</sup> And Cohen has been proved right. Six weeks into the campaign of bombing, Serbian military and security forces are still free to act as they please in Kosovo.

It is therefore just as well that the Serbian government was not planning genocide in Kosovo. If they had been planning that kind of response to NATO aggression, NATO’s plan of campaign would have helped them, by removing the OSCE monitors, warning the Serbian authorities of the strikes in advance, striking lightly for at least a week and refusing to engage in low strikes with apaches, harriers etc. against forces on the ground.

At the start of the attack on Yugoslavia, of course, Albright put it about that she was convinced that far from the Serbian authorities wanting genocide, they would want to hand over Kosovo to NATO after some token bombing. This was the pre-war spin, just as the genocide was the wartime spin (from some leaders like Tony Blair). But we know

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7. *ibid.*

8. Bradley Graham, “Cohen Wrestles with Mission Risks”, *Washington Post*, 11 April 1999, p. A24.

that before the war started, the Pentagon leadership was indicating that the notion of a quick Milosevic capitulation was rubbish. The *Washington Post* reported Cohen aides as saying that

he did not subscribe to what one defence official called the “Milosevic-is-just-a-bully theory” that was prevalent among some in the administration and that held the Yugoslav leader would retreat promptly once subjected to NATO air strikes.<sup>9</sup>

Thus we can conclude that whatever else the military campaign was designed to achieve, it was not designed to stop the Serbian government from doing pretty much what they liked to the population of Kosovo. It was simply not in any sense, therefore, governed by humanitarian motives. Those who say it was must advance some evidence that it was.

### **The puzzle about motive**

The state department and National Security Council political strategists who planned this war are far from being stupid or sloppy. These people are very bright conceptual thinkers. They plan meticulously for all the angles. They know the ABC of what happens when a super-power launches a local war anywhere: it sets off streams of chain reactions across the entire globe. They plan in detail for all the possible chain reactions in the main fields affected: the local war zone itself, in this case the Western Balkans; the chains of shock waves that would run through Eastern Europe, especially Russia and Ukraine; and the chain reactions, cleavages, swings in the elites and masses in the NATO zone itself. Their task is to seek to articulate the planning of these shock waves in such a way as to maximise the gains of objectives in each theatre of chain reactions. Any war is bound to produce some negative consequences for superpower in at least one theatre. The trick is to try to contain or absorb these while maximising success in the strategically key sector for the super-power. So what was the strategically key sector where they hoped for chain reactions that would amount to a US triumph.

On the eve of the war, there was much talk about the fact that the key issue was NATO’s credibility. On 23 March, the *Washington Post*

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9. *ibid.*

reported that it was “the humiliation of NATO and of the United States, NATO’s creator and main component” that was the key factor leading to war. But credibility with whom? The *Post* went on:

Inaction “could involve a major cost in credibility, particularly at this time as we approach the NATO summit in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary,” said a European diplomat. National security adviser Samuel R. “Sandy” Berger, speaking Sunday, listed among the principal purposes of bombing “to demonstrate that NATO is serious.”<sup>10</sup>

On this reading, the war was launched because otherwise NATO would lose political credibility. Yet this is not itself a very credible view, for the simple reason that Albright and her assistants like Strobe Talbott had been working hard for months to turn the issue of Kosovo into an issue of NATO credibility. They were preparing the West Europeans, many of whom were against Albright’s bellicose line, for a situation where the US administration had made so many unambiguous threats of bombing that they would have to bomb. So a NATO credibility crisis was not the cause of the war, it was part of the US campaign for war.

But the *Washington Post* reports a somewhat different motive: not NATO credibility but US credibility within the Atlantic Alliance as its boss. According to the *Post* this was the argument that swung the joint chiefs behind the war: they embraced “the administration’s view that U.S. leadership in NATO had to be preserved.”

This is a very interesting statement. It suggests that the central concern of the US administration in launching the war was something to do with the power of the US within the Atlantic Alliance, in other words its power over its West and Central European Allies. This links up with Clinton’s public statements on 23 March which we quoted at the start of this article. We thus support both President Clinton and the Joint Chiefs of staff on the big cognitive issue: what on earth prompted the US to launch this atrocious stream of chain reactions in the Western Balkans.

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10. Barton Gellman, “Allies See No Credible Alternative”, *Washington Post*, 23 March 1999, p. A12.

We will argue that the origins of this war lie right back in the crisis within the Atlantic world produced by the Soviet Bloc collapse; that the war was to be the culmination of a 10-year US campaign to rebuild its hegemony over the European powers, a hegemony whose political basis crumbled with the Berlin Wall. That the US had been making steady progress in this restorationist drive in Europe, but with the rise of the Euro, time was running out. However, it was able to engineer a shift in French policy and a campaign for yet another Balkan war as a means of clinching a decisive victory in this campaign to restore its European hegemony.

A sub-theme of our argument will be that this whole story cannot be understood through the optics of either mainstream realist or liberal International Relations (IR) theory. Nor are the fashionable, heterodox notions that non-state actors, NGOs and the like or some new 'international civil society' are occupying centre stage. Instead we must understand the behaviour of the Western powers as capitalist powers with expansionist drives focused on creating the political and social preconditions for expanded accumulation on the part of their national capitals. Thus the US drive for restored hegemony in Europe is not just a struggle for power for power's sake: it is a struggle to retain the global dominance of American capitalism. In this whole story, the peoples of former Yugoslavia on all sides of the conflicts there are small but immensely valuable pawns in the wider political strategies of the Great Powers, especially the USA in the struggle to get control over the forms of capitalist expansion.

To understand this story we need to be aware of the various political feedback effects of the military statecraft of great powers. By waging a local war against a 'rogue' state, a super-power can gain valuable political feedback on its relationship with allied powers. Or again, by identifying a potential challenge to state A from actor B and by applying its military power effectively against actor B, the superpower can change its relationship with state A in desirable directions. The end political result of the military operation can be for the superpower to be able to brigade state A more firmly under the superpower leadership. A classic example of this type of political brigading effect on a grand scale can be seen in the construction of NATO in the early 1950s. Electorates in Western Europe came to perceive the existence of a Soviet

military threat to themselves. The US then supplied military services to Western Europe to tackle this threat. As a result, Western Europe fell in behind US political leadership in world politics. And with that leadership in place, the US could exert great influence over the internal political and economic arrangements within the region.

We will not examine here the global political-economy strategy of the Clinton administration<sup>11</sup> but will concentrate on the meaning of Clinton's phrase about building US hegemonic leadership in Western Europe. Washington's campaign to achieve this during the 1990s has been focused upon one central task: transforming NATO, transforming its role in European affairs, and blocking West European attempts to build political forms which would deny the US hegemonic leadership. This exploration will take us into the internal politics of the Western alliance.

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11. We have examined this elsewhere in some detail. See Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble* (Verso, 1999).

## 2. Explaining Intra-NATO Policies

Some matters are too difficult and sensitive to be discussed frankly in front of the children. One such, in the West, is open and frank discussion and theorising of how the NATO powers engage in political conflict and compromise amongst themselves and what the substance of these conflicts and deals is about.

During the Cold War it was considered very bad form for NATO governments to air and explain their differences openly and frankly in public and political conflicts within the Atlantic alliance were generally conducted behind the backs of electorates, so to speak behind closed doors. Only attentive communities of policy experts outside government with the time and resources for meticulous detective work could follow the ebb and flow of political conflict and compromise between the Western powers. They would do so through careful analysis of the codes used in communiqués and in the public speeches of leaders. This was the science of what might be described as Atlanticology, a type of research akin to its eastern equivalent - Kremlinology. And those seeking a really successful career in this field would often find themselves having to relinquish their independence of analysis in order to acquire the inside information they craved.

Even worse form would have been to disclose the bottom-line concerns of the NATO states in their intra-NATO political processes. These concerns were as much about the various state's national capitalist strategies, strategies for assuring the political conditions for dynamic capital accumulation not only within Europe but more widely. For all these states military, political and economic dimensions of national strategies were seamless webs, or ought to be. But for public consumption, the substance of intra-NATO politics was supposed to be about one thing only: how to cope with the Soviet threat to protect the shared values of the Western liberal democracies.

As for attempts to theorise the forms, dynamics and sources of such intra-NATO political conflict, there was very little in the

mainstream literature. The dominant schools of thought in academic International relations in the West, Cold War realism and Cold War liberalism, offered no adequate framework for explaining such conflict. Instead, they tended, in different ways, to explain it away.

Realism and liberalism explained intra-NATO politics overwhelmingly in terms of responses to a Soviet threat which would tend to suppress political differences between the NATO powers, reducing them largely to technical-managerial issues. For realists, the Western states were unified by the strategic power balance: Western Europe and the US unified in an alliance for power political reasons to counter-balance the power of the Soviet Union. Disagreements within NATO would be accommodated and suppressed because of collective power interests. For liberal IR, the unity derived more from the internal political characteristics of the (most of) NATO states: their liberal democratic orders and values (and, for some, their open, market economies and liberal international economic frameworks). Because of these characteristics, the NATO states united against the Communist totalitarian threat to their values. If the USSR had been a liberal democracy, there would or need have been no NATO and no Cold War.

One might have thought that with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, there would have been the swift development of new theorisations of West-West relations. After all, both realism and liberalism in their Cold War forms would have predicted the collapse of the Western Alliance: realism because the collapse of the Soviet super-power would lead to a rebalancing against the United States; liberalism because without a threat to the states with liberal values from any totalitarian/dictatorial enemy, there would be no need for any such military-political alliance: peace, liberal democracy and harmony would reign supreme. Thus, at the very least there would be a puzzle for those working in these frameworks as to what on earth was going on as NATO showed no sign of disappearing.

Some NATO leaders have, of course, tried to claim that NATO has turned from being a military-political defender of states with liberal values into a liberal norm-based collective security regime itself. Yet in the run-up to all three of Europe's wars in the 1990s - the Croatian war, the Bosnian war and the current war against Yugoslavia - the NATO powers have flagrantly violated basic international norms: in the Croatian case by recognising Croatia in the face of its government's refusal to

grant CSCE rights to its Serbian minority; in the Bosnian case by proclaiming that there was a Bosnian nation when there was not: there were four self-identifying main nations in Bosnia: the largest minority was the Bosnian Muslims, then the Serbs close behind numerically, then the Croatians and then the Yugoslavs. Both Yugoslav constitutional principle and the EC's international commission of Jurists agreed that in such a republic all the constituent nations must in their majority each approve a secession from Yugoslavia. But the US proclaimed a 'Bosnian nation's right to self-determination and to a unitary state, producing a civil war. And now NATO flouts a cornerstone of the UN Charter and the international legal order - one state does not launch aggression against another sovereign state - and kicks aside the international constitutional role of the Security Council. Whatever else NATO is, the claim that it is a norm-based collective security organisation will not do.

Yet, on the whole both realism and liberalism have managed to evade such issues, while much of the new theories in academic IR have taken our eyes off this ball altogether by suggesting that IR should spend less time focusing on the drives of powerful states and should devote its attention to other matters. One great interest in this context is 'non-state actors' such as multinational companies and NGOs; another is international or global institutions with the supposed emergence of a global post-state system embracing both new institutions and even a new international 'civil society'. States, on this reading, are increasingly passe. Yet search though we may, for such new trends, they do not seem to help us with explaining the intra-NATO background to this war. The war is generating great streams of chain reactions, both in the Western Balkans, across Eastern Europe and also across the NATO world. The political life of hundreds of millions of people is being thrown into a turmoil of new potential patterns and cleavages. And this is being done through the decisions of the NATO states. While non-state actors, such as Communist Parties or anti-colonial movements were certainly important in the Cold War, and while one is involved in the current conflict - the KLA - they do not seem to be driving the politics of NATO in taking the war decision. (Unless one thinks that NATO is fighting the war either for or against the KLA, both of which seem to be untenable propositions.) We must therefore search for some other framework for explaining the politics of NATO, of, in other words,

what President Clinton calls the US-European Partnership.

The continued existence of the NATO alliance throughout the 1990s suggests that it has all along been held together by something other than an enemy threat to security or values or power balancing. In other words, NATO has not been what the realists or liberals have thought it was about. When we find out what the alliance may actually have been about we may gain an answer to the mystery of the real Western background to the NATO military campaign in the Western Balkans..

We can posit four constitutive elements in the Western Alliance missed by both realism and liberalism in much of the Western variants of these literatures:

- 1). Shared (capitalist) interests.
- 2). Tensions within from conflicting capitalist interests.
- 3). US hegemonic dominance and bandwaggoning.
- 4). The cardinal political management principle: Not in Front of the Children: closed politics plus the US's hegemonic privilege of leading by fait accompli when necessary.

All four of these elements were at the centre of the Atlantic Alliance from the start, but they were easy to miss during the Cold War itself because both realism and liberalism seemed to provide adequate cognitive frameworks for understanding what NATO was about.

1) *Shared (capitalist) interests.*

A close look at NATO's formation would demonstrate that the domestic fear of Communism in Western Europe amongst capitalist classes seriously weakened by collaboration during the war was the biggest demand-pull on the continent first for British then for US help through the formation of an alliance (first the British-led Western Union, then US-led NATO). NATO then provided a framework for the revival and re-integration of German capitalism and the strongly American-inspired formation first of the European Coal and Steel Community and then the European Economic Community built a new anchor for German revival within a West European and Atlantic economic division of labour. All these arrangements drew the West European and American capitalist classes together both in a common project of domestic management of social and political conflict and in shared arrangements for securing common international interests in tackling a whole range of opponents,

especially non-state actors in the disintegrating European empires, in common capitalist expansion and, of course, in both exerting pressure on the Soviet Bloc while maintaining basic European stability .

2) *Tensions within from conflicting capitalist interests.*

There were, nevertheless, right from the start of NATO and the West European integration process, always tensions and conflicts within the alliance, and some of these became very intense. In the early years these were often connected to battles in the imperial field between West European powers and the US: Suez was a prime example, as was Algeria for the French as well as a whole range of other such issues. There were also tensions on the German question and intense tensions at times over US dollar policy, oil price manoeuvres etc. And perhaps the most sensitive issue in the late 1970s, an issue that would appear again at the end of the 1980s, was the issue of Germany's and, more generally, Western Europe's relations with Eastern Europe. The United States, and the British and French worried that German capitalism might, in the context of the economic turbulence that began in the early 1970s, re-orient its accumulation strategy eastwards, using European détente for that purpose. This period also witnessed what was known as conflicts over industrial policy or conflicts of 'interdependence', conflicts which eased only through the European turn towards neo-liberalism in the early 1980s.

Such tensions over capital accumulation strategies were also combined with battles over political and military issues. De Gaulle's attempts to build a West European Bloc under French leadership as a way of constructing what he might have called, a la Clinton, a 'strong Franco-German partnership' was one such political power battle. The long political struggle between Britain and the Franco-German axis in Western Europe was another. And of course there was a third political cleavage which became prominent on occasions: that between 'Europe' and the USA.

In all these conflicts within the NATO Alliance, all sides commonly used, for public consumption, the Soviet card. But this Soviet card was above all an ace in the hand of the United States. It could shift the whole European agenda back and forth by altering the state of relations with the USSR. And one of the main ways in which it could

engage in this political game derived from its overwhelming military capacity and military leadership of the alliance. To take one example: by deploying Pershing missiles in Germany, the US was able to break the Soviet-German détente and pull Germany firmly back under its political leadership in the early 1980s. But it also had other cards to assume its hegemony in Western Europe: its dollar dominance in the world economy, its effective control over world energy supplies, its capacity to play off its allies against each other - these were some of its main cards amongst many others.

3) *A political system which, at its height, gave the US hegemonic sovereignty.*

At the same time NATO was from the start the institutionalisation of US political dominance over the West European states. Much discussion of this US hegemony misses the specific political form that this dominance took and imagines that US dominance was anchored only in its preponderance of quantitative power resources - economic and military above all. Yet the hegemony acquired a political form which we could even describe as quasi-political sovereignty, when US dominance was at its zenith.

In liberal thought, sovereignty is usually defined in legal terms and it involves the notion of a highest legal authority to act, untrammelled by any other legal authority. But the German theorist, Carl Schmitt, furnished a non-liberal (indeed an anti-liberal) concept of politics which provided a political concept of sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> And Schmitt's thought was a powerful influence of some of the main intellectual organisers of American post-war foreign policy thinking, such as Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger. When we deploy his concepts of politics and political sovereignty we can gain insight into the form of political power exercised by the US over the territory of the NATO alliance. His concept of politics was that of friend-enemy relations. Political action thus

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1. Carl Schmitt, who died in 1982, was the leading Nazi jurist in the period 1933-36 and thereafter played a central intellectual role in theorising German hegemony in war-time Europe. The cognitive use of some of his analytical concepts does not, of course, make one a Nazi. For a survey of Schmitt's thought see Peter Gowan, "The Return of Carl Schmitt", *Debate*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1994.

consists of developing the capacity to decide, for a given community, who their friends are (and thus who *they* are) and who their enemies are (and thus also who *they* are). Using this concept of politics, we could say that the politics of NATOLand in the Cold War were those of a liberal capitalist anti-Communist political community shaped by and under US leadership. Armed with this concrete friend-enemy politics, successive US administrations could maintain their political leadership over Western Europe.

But Schmitt also, from this definition of politics, offered a political definition of sovereignty, explaining that the sovereign is he who can decide the state of emergency. Thus, for the US to have sovereign hegemony over Western Europe, it would have to be able to impose a state of emergency upon the region if it wished: it would have to, in other words, be able to call the political community to order and discipline under its undivided leadership and untrammelled by restriction.

Time and time again, in the Cold War, the US demonstrated this ability to declare a state of emergency in Europe. It did so over the Berlin Blockade, it chose not to do so over the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It chose to do so using the Soviet deployment of SS20s, using the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and using the declaration of marshal law in Poland. It imposed a spectacular state of emergency over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990-1991. Herein lies one of the secrets of US hegemonic leadership. It did not require the US to alter the *juridical sovereignties* of the states under its political command. Indeed, maintaining such juridical sovereignties strengthened US command capacities. The juridical empire approach of the West European powers in the 19th and first half of the 20th century were replaced by a radically new concept of imperial hegemony.

Through this political form, buttressed by the Soviet threat and the huge power resources of the USA, Washington effectively controlled the basic foreign policy orientations of the West European states and was able to secure the interests of US capitalism within Western Europe through this dominance. In these ways, the US could negatively control the international orientations of West European capitalisms, ensuring that their international strategies for capital accumulation did not impinge upon central US goals in this field. And it could ensure that US capital

had favourable opportunities for growth in Western Europe. There were often occasions when one or some of the West European states felt threatened or seriously disadvantaged by US decisions and policies. But they would tend not to respond by breaking with NATO and entering a confrontation with the USA which could be very dangerous. So they coped with US threats mainly by bandwaggoning - rolling with the punches, adapting to whatever new drive from Washington and attempting to find opportunities for themselves within the new direction of US policy.<sup>2</sup>

4) *“Not in front of the children”*: the bifurcated “citizens” and institutions of the NATO political system

One of the most important constitutive elements in the whole NATO-EC ensemble was the establishment of a closed state-elite collective political system for resolving intra-capitalist conflicts behind the backs of electorates. Within NATO this mechanism was the structure of committees centred on the North Atlantic Council and the core executives of member states. The personnel of these bodies, along with a periphery of networks of policy intellectuals, ‘sound’ journalists and business-linked think tanks constituted the ‘active citizens’ of the NATO polity. We should also include the central institutions and central personnel within the EC: first the Council of Ministers (i.e. the same core executives of states) and, from the early 1970s, the European Council, as well as the political sides of the Council Secretariat and key personnel from the most important directorates of the Commission. All states entered into a basic understanding that they would restrict their political battles to these institutional structures wherever possible, maintaining the secrecy of the deliberations of these committees and not trying to rouse electorates across the alliance for their point of view against those of other states. The only state to which this did not necessarily apply was the United States. As the hegemonic leader, it was entitled to launch public campaigns for its policy objectives within the electorates of the alliance.

By thus placing a diaphragm between the Alliance and EC elite

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2. On bandwaggoning, see S. M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press, 1987)

political systems and domestic democratic systems a number of very important gains could be made: the leaders of states defeated in the political process would not be humiliated publicly and could therefore accept defeat more easily; realpolitik and power-political goals and tactics could remain out of public view and thus electorates could imagine that harmony within the Alliance was the rule and the alliance was united solidly by ‘shared values’. And finally, the real, overwhelming dominance of the US over its European allies could be concealed behind a facade of democratic consensus among equals, and even of what looked like West European collective political autonomy in the EC.

To understand the intra-NATO politics of the West we must always bear in mind this institutional and personnel bifurcation. When any one actor in intra-NATO politics acts politically, that actor is always addressing two audiences in two utterly different arenas: one is the elite audience in the closed elite arena. The other is the mass audience in the mass, open political arena. Handling this bifurcation discursively requires the use of linguistic codes. As any member of the elites of East Central Europe will explain, one of their urgent tasks after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc was to learn Western languages. Not so much English as the language of NATOland elite communication. To take a simple example, what does the word ‘Partner’ mean for the elite citizens of NATOland?

But just as it is a mistake to fail to notice the centrality of the elite citizenship in the politics of NATOland - they are the political subjects in the system - it is equally a mistake to fail to recognise the importance of the second class mass citizenship: the electoral public opinion base. They were a powerful *lever* that could be used by groups of elite citizens against each other. This lever could be exercised through instilling certain political values within the mass which could serve long-term national strategy. Then, through linking together an elite objective with the mass values, powerful political leverage could be generated against other elite groups’s positions on that objective. To take a simple example, the Reaganite turn in the second Cold War was extremely effective in redisciplining West European elites. But it was largely ineffective at the mass level in Western Europe, generating war fears and peace movements. With the arrival of Gorbachev to Soviet

leadership, certain elite groups in Western Europe in the late 1980s were able to link their distinctive political objectives vis a vis West European-USSR relations with this mass peace and anti-Reagan sentiment in Western Europe. Bereft of the mass politics lever for operations in Western Europe, the Bush administration found itself constrained in the tactics it could employ in Europe in 1989. Gorbachev's peace offensive was combining with moves by West European elites and mass peace sentiment to beach the US.

There remains, of course, the issue of where the Soviet Bloc threat fitted in. For Western Europe's main states, there were a number of discrete threats or problems that were coded as 'the Soviet threat'. One was a domestic threat from Communist Parties in some states, such as Italy and France; another was the big German problem of the division of Germany by the USA and the USSR in the late 1940s; and a third was the threat that US-Soviet global rivalry could plunge Europe into a devastating regional war.

If this was indeed the nature of the Soviet threat for Western Europe, then we are led towards the conclusion that much of what the NATO powers seemed to be pre-occupied with during the latter part of the Cold War was not what they were really pre-occupied with at all. The NATO powers seemed to be pre-occupied, overwhelmingly, with technical-military force issues of a defensive kind: how many war-heads do we need, what kinds of missiles, tanks etc. etc. to meet the Soviet threat? But in reality this constant military deployment debate was about politics more than defensive warfare: placing Cruise and Pershing missiles in Germany would have political effects: they would threaten the USSR and thus break the Soviet-German détente of the 1970s; and they would thus pull Germany more firmly under US leadership. Putting modernised Lance missiles into West Germany in the Spring of 1989, as Mrs Thatcher tried vainly to insist upon, would threaten the GDR and pull its population away from any dynamic towards German unity, remaining instead tied in to the Soviet alliance (which the Kohl government would not tolerate and thus insisted upon rejecting) and so on. The campaign for this, evidently designed to put a brake on the very dynamic German-Soviet detente, was first waged by Bush and Thatcher. But Bush retreated at the NAC that spring. The German government wouldn't budge, so Thatcher was defeated.)

But the collapse of the Soviet Bloc had the effect of destroying this entire West European political framework. And the entire shape of European politics and economics in the 1990s has been shaped by the battles amongst the main NATO powers over how to reshape the political framework in Western Europe after it was shattered by the Soviet Bloc collapse.

And this series of political battles over the political reshaping of Europe has proceeded in the same way as the West-West political battles of the Cold War period. The actual political conflicts have taken place very largely behind the backs of the electorates of Europe within the largely closed contexts of the NAC, the European Council of the EU and bilateral exchanges. The political coinage of the political interactions has been above all military/security moves: plans for changing the roles, capacities and decision making authorities of military or potential military organisations, such as NATO, the WEU, and the EU or of security organisations such as the CSCE/OSCE. The political battles have been waged on a number of levels: through debates and coalition-building within the Western institutions; but also through practical steps, attempted *fait accomplis* by the various key players - Germany, France and the United States. And throughout the 1990s, one very important zone in which various powers, especially the USA, have made big moves in this political conflict has been in the Yugoslav theatre. Military moves by the USA there have had a major impact upon the political battles within the West.

### 3. NATOLand Programmes and Power Politics after the Collapse

A superficial view of the collapse of 1989-91 would be that Western Europe remained untouched. Both the key institutions, NATO and the EC remained in place. Yet their political structure was shattered and the future of their political economy was thrown into question by the radical transformation of Western Europe's geopolitical and geo-economic context. The geopolitical context was transformed because the Soviet Union/Russia was no longer a threat or an enemy or even an opponent. Cold War NATO, the chief instrument of US hegemony was redundant as were the services supplied by the US in exchange for its leadership - US military power. The USSR/Russia was therefore becoming an included, legitimate player in West European politics and hence transforming all the equations of that NATOLand political system.

No less important was the transformed geo-economic context. The East was opening for Western business to flood in, transforming the conditions for Western capital accumulation in the whole of Europe. The West-facing, East-West European division of labour, institutionally anchored in the EC, faced a major challenge. Would its whole institutional form be battered down in capital's eastward stampede and through East Central Europe's beating against the doors of the EC trade regime, single market and accession procedures?

Thus the Soviet Bloc collapse placed two questions before the Western powers:

- 1) An absolutely fundamental inter-linked challenge to the main Western powers: what was their new accumulation strategy cum geopolitical strategy for the whole of Europe going to be? And, in answering that question, the main Western powers had to answer a second:
- 2) What new institutional forms for political-military arrangements and for political-economy arrangements for all Europe would they advance in line with and in pursuit of their answers to the first question?

If no answers were given to these two questions then two spontaneous dynamics would be unleashed upon NATO and the EU. First NATO would become a society for reminiscences of the good old

days of the Cold War since it was established for territorial defence of its members against attack and for nothing more. But now there was no territorial threat to its members from anywhere for the foreseeable future, except for mutual threats from two members of the alliance, Greece and Turkey. Thus the West Europeans could produce NATO's effective death simply by insisting it should remain the same in terms of its formal constitution and military posture. As a result it would give the US no political leverage whatever over the political orientations of the West European states since its military services were redundant.

The second spontaneous dynamic would be for the West European states and business classes to start moving off in all different directions, especially to make national political and economic gains in the East, thus pulling apart both NATO and the EC, neither of which had the institutional or political frameworks for preventing that: the EC had no joint foreign policy and no federal government; NATO could stop the scramble East only when such a ban could be justified by an enemy threat. This problem of a scramble eastwards would be most inescapable in the case of Germany, whose expansion in that direction would take place quite spontaneously unless it was consciously reined in by itself or by others.

All the stories of the 1990s, in the whole of Europe, have been little more than sub-plots or spin-offs of one big central plot: the manoeuvres of the Western powers in the battles over the answers to these two questions outlined above. What has happened throughout East Central and Eastern Europe, from the collapse of Yugoslavia through the various post-Yugoslavia wars, to the Katastroikas in Russia and Ukraine, to the blow-out in Albania and crises and impoverishments in other parts of East Central Europe - none of these events can be understood unless they are situated in a context shaped above all by the power struggles in the West and the various solutions to them. The peoples of East Central and Eastern Europe have been the big losers both from these struggles and from the ways in which the Western powers have sought to manage or resolve them.

Some today seem to take different views. They believe that the reshaping of European politics and economics has been and is being achieved by leaders of small Balkan states such as Slobodan Milosevic. This is simply not serious. Others believe that Europe has been 'whole

and free' as US leaders like to say, since 1989, a world of peace, harmony and interstate equality occasionally interrupted by explosions in the Balkans. Yet this is precisely what has not been happening. The wholeness of Europe was already disappearing by 1991 and the division of Europe has been deepening ever since as the direct consequence of the power struggles in the West and of the ways in which various Western powers are attempting to resolve these power struggles. The current NATO war against Yugoslavia is not the latest and most obviously dramatic of the steps along that path of division. Much of public opinion in Europe is blind to these power struggles in the West precisely because of the closed, elite character of the discursive side of these Western battles. Public opinion thus views developments such as the current NATO campaign against Yugoslavia in a cognitive political void. Hence their common sense idea that the war is only about NATO military-technical issues, the fate of the Yugoslav government and the fate of Yugoslavia's peoples - the Kosovo Albanians, the Serbs, the Hungarians and Muslims of Serbia and the Montenegrins and the populations of Macedonia and Albania.

To make sense of the main features of the post-Cold War political battles over Europe's future, it is important to appreciate that some states have been more important than others in this series of political dances. Only four states have been capable of fighting for programmes for the whole of Europe: the United States, Germany, France and Russia. No other state had a structural role in any of the possible projects: Britain, for example, could play the role of a partial spoiler of some projects, but only at great potential cost to itself. It was not integral to any of the possible projects. And Russia faded, partly because it swallowed some economic medicine urged on its leaders by American economic specialists which turned out to be both narcotic and highly toxic for Russian power. All other states have had to attach themselves to programmes generated by these pivotal states. And none of these pivotal states have been able to gain victory for their own programme alone: they have had to forge alliances for victory. And each set of alliances brings forth, of course, countervailing pressures from the other key players.

The political dances have progressed through the main players making small demarches in efforts to make small advances. Sometimes

they make moves forward by seizing on shifts on the part of other states; sometimes by seizing on opportunities on the ground, using events say, in the Western Balkans as an arena for making a large move in the European political theatre.

The whole game is very complicated in reality, because states are not, in this game, fully unitary actors: the German defence ministry, for example, under Volker Ruhe, was used as a valuable ally by the US administration to drag a reluctant German Auswärtiges Amt and Chancellery behind a key US move - NATO enlargement into Poland. The French military have been desperately eager to be re-integrated into the NATO command, while the Quai D'Orsay has been much less so. Similarly the British MOD has been a bigger fan of US political strategy in Europe, on the whole, than the Foreign Office. And so on. But for the sake of simplicity we will tend to discuss the main players as if they were unitary actors.

A further complication lies in the fact that each of the programme-capable states has to advance a programme which embraces a very wide field, basically the following: how to organise the politics and economics of three zones: EU Europe, Eastern Europe and EU-American Partnership.

The three basic programmes were, very schematically: one Europe, West European-Russian balance (with two main variants of both path and form) or American hegemony with Russian exclusion. We will look at each of these projects in turn. But before we do so, we must understand the deep issues of what we might call the geopolitics of accumulation for all the key Western players: the US, Germany and France. Only through a grasp of these deep structure issues can we gain an appreciation of the specifics of the three programmes.

### **Key issues of the geopolitics of accumulation for the three key Western states**

It is important to bear in mind that the USA, France and Germany all have accumulation strategies that involve their reach across the world. And this world is mainly under the sway of the USA. This means that the European states must not push their battles with the USA too far for fear of been seriously damaged by the USA in the global theatre. Such damage could be done not only through Washington's use of

military-generated political influence against European interests, but also through its use of economic statecraft - exploiting the global dominance of the dollar and US leadership of the IMF/WB or indeed the role of its huge financial market and dominant financial services operators. This panoply set limits to West European ambitions, while it lacks a Euro acting not only as a 'domestic' European currency but as a global challenger to the dollar backed by united political and military power.

And especially once Clinton had become president, it became very clear that the US administration was making the rebuilding of US global capitalist ascendancy in the international political economy its dominant, governing priority.

This emphasis in its global strategy in the 1990s derived only partly from an awareness in US elites that their operations in the Cold War had diverted their attention from tackling new competitive threats from other capitalist centres: not only Japan and Western Europe, but also East and South East Asia. This defensive concern was combined with a new offensive concept, forged by the Reagan Administration - the concept of 'globalisation': this involves using political leverage - not only military-political statecraft but especially economic statecraft - to radically transform the political economies of the rest of the world so that they 'converge' with the needs of US capitalism. Such convergence requires removing the right of states to control the free movement into and out of their territories of financial flows, financial service companies, and all kinds of other multinational enterprises; it also involves re-engineering their domestic institutions to facilitate profit-making by Atlantic capital within their territory.

This new imperial drive into the South, initiated in the Reagan years, required the US to establish a political alliance with European Union capitalisms in order to pursue this campaign effectively through the multilateral organisations: especially through the GATT/WTO but also through the OECD and the IMF/WB, the operations of the Bank for International Settlements and so on. Yet at the same time, these West European capitalisms had many particular interests which conflicted with US interests in expansion into the South. To deal with this problem, the US had to plan a campaign to pressurise the EU states to re-engineer their EU political economy in ways that would

achieve a convergence of the EU with the US programme for global capitalist expansion. This was a vital US interest. But, with the Soviet Bloc collapse, finding ways to exert pressure on Western Europe for these purposes was extremely difficult since the use of US hegemonic leadership of Western Europe through NATO was disappearing.

And here was Washington's first big European problem at the end of the Cold war. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc was destroying the US's hegemonic political leadership over its European allies. The leverage it had enjoyed over its allies internal political economies in return for its supply of military/security services was withering. Samuel Huntington has explained how US tactics had worked during the Cold War:

“Western Europe, Latin America, East Asia, and much of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa fell within what was euphemistically referred to as ‘the Free World’, and what was, in fact, a security zone. The governments within this zone found it in their interest: a) to accept an explicit or implicit guarantee by Washington of the independence of their country and, in some cases, the authority of the government; b) to permit access to their country to a variety of US governmental and non-governmental organisations pursuing goals which those organisations considered important.... The great bulk of the countries of Europe and the Third World .... found the advantages of transnational access to outweigh the costs of attempting to stop it.<sup>1</sup>

And as David Rothkopf has added, in the post-war years

Pax Americana came with an implicit price tag to nations that accepted the US security umbrella. If a country depended on the United States for security protection, it dealt with the United States on trade and commercial matters.<sup>2</sup>

The efficacy of the tactic depended upon two conditions: first,

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1. Samuel P. Huntington, “Transnational Organisations in World Politics”, *World Politics*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1973) p. 344.

2. David J. Rothkopf, “Beyond Manic Mercantilism”, Council on Foreign Relations.

the ability of the US to persuade the local dominant social groups that they faced an external threat; and secondly, the US's ability to persuade these same groups that the US and only the US had the resources to cope with the threat and the will to do so. The distinctive US organisational model of the giant corporation could thus enter foreign labour and product markets, spreading first to Canada then to Western Europe (facilitated by the EC's rules and development) and then on to other parts of the world. In this way, rather than in the primitive militarist conceptions of realist theory, military power played a central role in post-war capitalist power politics.

In addition, the Soviet Bloc collapse was accompanied by a new sense among European elites that they could build a strong European political entity through an EU resting on a social democratic-christian democratic, social liberal identity. In other words European political construction would be carried out under a banner which implicitly challenged the whole American capitalist social model. This was a tendency expressed by Delors but also by Kohl and indeed by French elites. Only the leaders of British capitalism (supported to a great degree by the Dutch) were on message with the US line. Yet within the capitalist classes of Western Europe there was potentially a powerful social constituency that could be mobilised for a domestic social transformation of the EU towards the American social model. The heartland of this domestic EU constituency lay in Germany. Provided the leaders of the German capitalist business systems could be diverted from a main orientation of expansion eastwards into Russia, the US could offer them the possibility of a partnership with US business at a global level, opening opportunities for them in the UK and in the US and in other parts of the American-led world. But the price would be transforming their own domestic social model in the direction of the US model. This would be a very attractive offer not only for German capital but for all the most dynamic European multinationals ready and eager for a race to capture markets all over the world and to position themselves strongly in the American market. But Germany was the key.

Thus, the US strategy for Europe would combine the drive to rebuild US leadership over Europe, through the campaign to re-organise NATO, with a parallel campaign to re-organise the political economy of the EU. This strategy has emerged ever more clearly since the Clinton

administration arrived in power in 1993. A full analysis of the campaign would have to track both its prongs: not only the political battles over the military-political reorganisation of NATO and European security; but also the battles over the re-organisation of the EU and its domestic political economy. Tackling the latter would take us into US diplomacy over Maastricht, the Uruguay Round, the formation of alliances between big US and European capital through the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue, the switch of the biggest of German banks and businesses towards American alliances, the growing strength of a radical neo-liberal coalition within the European financial sectors, central banks and parts of the EU European Commission.

The atmosphere in the United States when Clinton came into power was one suffused with a sense of great historical drama, a sense that the United States was facing a great world-historical Either/Or. There was the awareness of America's gigantic power in the military field and in the monetary-financial regime; on the other hand, there was the challenge of East Asia and uncertainty about Europe. There was the sense that the United States was about to give birth to an entirely new set of global growth motors through the new information industries and a feeling that these could play the role of the motor car as a huge pathway to revived international accumulation which the US could hope to dominate; yet, after very large investments in this sector, its supposed transformative potential for US productivity has simply not materialised. And, finally, there was the triumph over the Soviet Bloc and the international left; and yet, paradoxically, that collapse posed a major question-mark over the means that the US could use for exerting political influence in the world and consolidating that influence through institutions similar to the security zones of the Cold War.

Tremendous American intellectual energy was being devoted, therefore, to these strategic issues as Clinton came into office. As one policy intellectual put it, "essentially, we have to erect a whole new conceptual basis for foreign policy after the Cold War".<sup>3</sup> Others equated the tasks facing Clinton to those that faced Truman in 1945: Clinton,

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3. Will Marshall, head of the Progressive Policy Institute, in the *Washington Post*, 21 Dec 1992.

said one writer, is ‘present at the creation’ of a new epoch in world affairs and ‘the next half century hangs in the balance’.<sup>4</sup>

The Clinton team itself was not, of course, going to spell out publicly how it conceptualised its strategic problem and its strategy and tactics for tackling it. The signs had to be read more indirectly, for example, through Clinton’s appointments and institutional arrangements as well as through its policy statements and initiatives.

Clinton’s top foreign policy appointments, like Warren Christopher (State), Anthony Lake (National Security), Madeleine Albright (UN), Lloyd Bensten (Treasury) were conventional, rather passive figures with links back to the Carter days.<sup>5</sup> Many observers wondered why Clinton had received a reputation for external activism when he made such personnel appointments.<sup>6</sup> But this perception was itself the product of old thinking, whereby foreign policy meant what the Secretary of State or the NSC chief or the Secretary of Defence did. It ignored the instruments of economic statecraft, yet these were the instruments which Clinton placed in the hands of the dynamic activists.

The new team brought in to wield the levers of economic statecraft were a distinctive group: Robert Rubin, Ron Brown, Mickey Kantor, Laura Tyson, Larry Summers, Jeff Garten, Ira Magaziner and Robert Reich (as well as Vice President Al Gore) had distinctive general approaches to the defence of American power:<sup>7</sup> For them, it was about ‘the economy, stupid’. And they believed that strengthening American capitalism was above all to be tackled through international political action. In line with this was their belief in the importance, even the centrality, of state political action in economic affairs: a conviction that the success of a national capitalism was ‘path dependent’ and the path

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4. Roger Morris, “A New Foreign Policy for a New Era”, *New York Times*, 9th December, 1992.

5. Aspen in Defence had a more activist, radical agenda.

6. See, for example, Anthony Hartley: “The Clinton Approach: Idealism and Prudence”, *The World Today*, February, 1993.

7. Of this list one partial dissident was Robert Reich: he shared a belief in state action in international economics and his concern for labour standards and protection could be usefully instrumentalised in economic diplomacy over trade issues. But he lacked some of the America-First-in-Everything zeal of the others and dropped out of the administration eventually.

could be built of institutions fashioned by states. And there should not be barren counter-positions of national states and market forces: they should work together, help each other, whether in technology, trade or finance. They were not classical national protectionists, but they were also not free traders. The term used to describe the school of thought represented by this team was ‘globalists’, promoters of a kind of global neo-mercantilism. The new concept was that competition among states was shifting from the domain of political-military resources and relations to the field of control of sophisticated technologies and the domination of markets.<sup>8</sup> The nature of the new game was also given a name: ‘geoeconomics’. Lloyd Bensten may have been of a different generation and of a different background from the others, but he also shared a ‘globalist’ view.

The outlook of this new team was expressed in books like Laura Tyson’s *Who’s Bashing Whom* and by a host of other such works by those within or close to the administration.<sup>9</sup> The outlook was often expressed most bluntly by Clinton’s new US Trade Representative, Mickey Kantor, who openly argued for a new kind of American Open Door strategy to ensure that the 21st Century will be the ‘New American Century’. As he put it:

The days of the Cold War, when we sometimes looked the other way when our trading partners failed to live up to their obligations, are over. National security and our national economic security cannot be separated .... No more something for nothing, no more free riders.<sup>10</sup>

Kantor’s linkage of external economic objectives and US

8. Gioia Marini and Jan Rood: ‘Maintaining Global Dominance: the United States as a European and Asian Power.’ in Marianne van Leeuwen and Auke Venema (eds.), *Selective Engagement. American Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Century* (Netherlands Atlantic Commission, The Hague, 1996)

9. See Laura D’Andrea Tyson, *Who’s Bashing Whom: Trade Conflict in High-Technology Industries* (Institute for International Economics, Washington DC, 1992); Ira Magaziner and Mark Patinkin, *The Silent War: Inside the Global Business Battles Shaping America’s Future* (Vintage Books, 1990); Jeffrey E. Garten, *A Cold peace: America, Japan, Germany and the Struggle for Supremacy* (New York Times Books, 1992)

10. USIS, 23 Feb 1996: “Kantor says US to Fight Farm Trade Barriers.”

National Security was reflected in Clinton's remoulding of institutions in the core executive: just after Clinton's inauguration he created a National Economic Council within the White House alongside the National Security Council. The choice of name was designed to indicate that the new body would acquire the kind of nodal role in US global strategy which the NSC had played during the Cold War. At the same time, Congress instructed the Commerce Department to set up the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC) to co-ordinate 19 US govt agencies in the area of commercial policy. Instructive also was the fact that the head of the National Economic Council was to be a very experienced hedge fund speculator, Robert Rubin, former senior partner in Goldman Sachs, the hedge fund masquerading as an investment bank.<sup>11</sup> This gave the Clinton team prime links with Wall Street.

The way that the Clinton Administration defined its approach has been summed up by someone who was initially part of it, David Rothkopf. He has characterised the Clinton administration's new international strategy as one of "Manic Mercantilism".<sup>12</sup> Stanley Hoffman makes a similar point, noting the new US activism in world economic affairs under the Clinton administration and its drive to open borders to US goods, capital and services.<sup>13</sup>

In this article we will not track the US strategy at the level of the European political economy. Nor will we examine US economic statecraft. We will concentrate on the political-military side of US strategy in Europe. With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the Bush administration had still hoped that the United States role as controller of security zones and wielder of enormous military resources could remain a potent instrument for strengthening the position of American capitalism vis a vis its economic rivals. His great efforts to ensure that a united Germany remained in NATO were followed by his war against Iraq, one of whose main goals was to show the rest of the capital world that it had to treat the interests of US capitalism with respect. But this was a false dawn. With the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, the US's

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11. Rubin later was to become Treasury Secretary - his current position.

12. David J. Rothkopf: 'Beyond Manic Mercantilism', Council on Foreign Relations, 1998.

13. Stanley Hoffman, Martin Wight Memorial Lecture, LSE, June 1998.

ability to make political use of its extraordinary military superiority was bound to diminish.

But this was not Washington's only problem with Western Europe, even if it was an urgent one in the 1990s. There was a more long-term and deeply worrying problem, both geopolitical and linked to the global pattern of future capital accumulation: the possibility of a West European-Russian link up. One-Europe political ideas precisely expressed such a link up. West-European-Russian-balance ideas could at any time be a prelude to such a link up. The geopolitical and accumulation consequences of this for US global dominance could be awesome: in the colourful language of geopoliticians, nothing less than the American loss of the planet's Eurasian heartland! And think of the potential for capital accumulation by yoking together the human and material resources of Western Europe and the former Soviet Union.

We will not survey here the debates within the US policy community on how to tackle these problems.<sup>14</sup> But two central conclusions were drawn for US strategic goals in Europe. The first was that the US had to find a way of regaining its role as gate-keeper between Western Europe and Russia, able to control the flow of relations through the gate between Berlin and Moscow. And the second was that the US should not allow the emergence of a single West European political will to emerge, autonomous from Washington. Instead, it has to find a way to rebuild US political leadership above whatever integration went on in Western Europe. US tactics in Europe had to be geared to these two political goals.

The Bush administration quickly realised that an entirely new NATO was the key to tackling both these basic challenges. NATO needed an entirely new role, new members, new military instruments. The only things that should not be new in NATO would be US leadership and the subordination of West European policy-making, command structures and military-political initiatives to US leadership. But how to achieve this? What mix of tactics could achieve this strategic goal? That was the policy problem.

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14. For a survey of the debates see the following important article: James Petras and Steve Vieux, 'Bosnia and the revival of US Hegemony, *New Left Review*, No. 218.

For Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Bloc broad an embarrassment of riches. While the USSR survived there seemed to German leaders the real possibility of moving straight to One Europe, on one condition: that France and Germany worked together for that goal and the US did not get too much in the way. But if One Europe was an optimal solution it was not a necessary bottom line for Germany in the early 1990s. The base of German capitalism was Western Europe. The security of that base depended upon the Franco-German partnership, anchored institutionally in the European Union. In the general expansion of German capitalism that base and its security anchorage must not be sacrificed: it must be strengthened. This was the cornerstone for Chancellor Kohl.

The second element that had to be added to that cornerstone was to secure Germany's new Eastern flank states: above all Poland, what became the Czech Republic and Hungary. Germany's own security and vital interests require that they are anchored firmly. That meant fitting their emerging capitalisms into the pattern of Germany's own economic expansion and being ready to commit itself to the security of these states externally as well as internally. But there were lots of different frameworks for doing this: their eventual entry into the EU, plus bilateral guarantees from Germany or guarantees from the WEU or guarantees from NATO or co-operative guarantees involving both Russia and Germany. Nevertheless, their friendly anchorage was a bottom-line issue for Germany.

A third element for the new Germany was to ensure adequate security frameworks for expanded capital accumulation, both eastwards and into the US-led global sphere. How this expansion of accumulation was articulated geographically would depend upon both political and economic developments. It would certainly proceed across the whole of East Central and Eastern Europe, but the relationship with the USSR/Russia would depend on unforeseeable developments. As far as the USA was concerned, Germany had every reason to keep the USA calm and contented while Germany built up its strength through working its way through the huge meal offered to its capitals by the Soviet collapse. On the other hand, precisely because all could see what potentially huge gains Germany had made, there were risks of Germany facing a rough ride from the USA and even some of its West European partners.

Thus no German government would wish to fall back under US dominance; rather it would wish to develop a strong, homogeneous West European political force and will, centred on Germany with France as its 'strong partner'.

France was placed in a very difficult situation, in terms of its own power strategy, by the Soviet Bloc collapse. Its accumulation strategy had been entirely centred on the EU, with France as a junior capitalism to Germany but still able to be a political equal and to pretend to political leadership because of its nuclear weapons during the Cold War. On these bases its whole tactical structure was that of France as the Europeanist alternative to Yankee-led Atlanticism: its hostility to US neo-liberal civilisational models, its hostility to US hegemonism, to the NATO integrated command, and to US imperialistic wars in the South etc. With the Soviet Bloc collapse, all this suited Germany fine, but did it still suit France also? Under Mitterrand, France's orientation concentrated on locking Germany into its West Europeanist partnership and sought also a Franco-German joint international political will and line. But Chirac would search for other ways out of a posture which now, with Germany's new strength, made French claims on West European leadership look less like a posture than posturing.

### **The three programmes on offer for Europe**

Against this background we can examine the three programmatic projects for Europe that have been promoted during the 1990s.

#### *1) One Europe*

This option has been consistently advocated by the USSR from 1986 and by Russia throughout the 1990s, insofar as its leaders were not busy with other things. It was, however, only very briefly entertained by the two key West European powers, Germany and France, between 1989 and 1991. The United States was resolutely hostile to it.

The basic concept involves a pan-European political/security system that included Russia as well as all the other East European states and a pan-European economic system that involved replacing the EU division of labour with a new pan-European one offering the ex-Soviet Bloc states a developmentally effective framework. Since the EU was constructed from the start on the principle of breaking West

Germany from economic linkages with the East and on excluding the East European economies, it would eventually have to be reorganised to make One Europe work economically. Mitterrand and the Deutsche Bank had two ways of solving that problem: basically, keeping the Comecon region together as a regional economic unit for a whole transition period as its redevelopment took place. (For Mitterrand this had the key advantages of ending pressure for an overhaul of the EU regime. Eventually, though, the two regional economies of Europe would grow together into one.)

The big loser from One Europe would be the United States, since it would lose political hegemony over Western Europe and would lose control of a new and potentially very dynamic capital accumulation process harmonising the West European economy and the Russian economy - a frightening prospect for American capitalism if it were to develop in the long term.

In 1989-90 the German government was very interested in this One Europe project and so was the Mitterrand administration in France. The plan of Herrhausen, Chair of the Deutsche Bank and very close to Kohl in the autumn of 1989, embodied the concept: he argued for a collaborative effort between the EC and the USSR to revive the economies of East Central Europe. The initial concept of Jacques Attali and Mitterrand for the EBRD, along with the concept of a European Confederation from the Atlantic to the Urals, outlined on 31 December 1989 embodied the same idea. The difference was that Herrhausen's plan implied leadership on the economic front by the big three German private banks (Deutsche, Dresdner and Commerz) while Attali's public bank, the EBRD, could be under his (French) leadership. Another aspect of the One Europe project was demonstrated in the support in Germany in 1990 for making the CSCE the central collective security framework for the whole of Europe. Both Kohl and Mitterrand were interested in Gorbachev's proposals for a unified Germany to be neutral and outside NATO and even to a revamping of the entire European security apparatus once the Cold War was over.<sup>15</sup> This Kohl-Mitterrand approach towards building a One Europe project with Russia at least on the economic

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15. See S. Brown, *The Faces of Power: United States Foreign Policy From Truman to Clinton* (Columbia University Press, 1994).

front was still evident at the end of 1990, with their joint support for a free trade agreement between the EC and the USSR, which they persuaded the European Council to adopt in December 1990.

The One Europe project failed for a number of reasons: first, because of adamant and vigorous US hostility; secondly, because of the lack of strong unity between France and Germany in advancing the project; and thirdly, because the Gorbachev leadership was itself, despite its rhetoric of a Single European Home, unclear as to whether it feared a united Germany to be point of wanting a strong US role in Europe. The Soviet leadership also made serious blunders in its external economic policies towards the Comecon region at the time, while the vigorous US (via-the IMF) efforts to break up Comecon won support in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in East Central Europe: the Bush administration persuaded these states that it would ensure that they quickly gained entry to the EU if they broke up Comecon and took the Shock Therapy treatment. When the USSR itself collapsed, an effective powerful Eastern partner for France and Germany in this project disappeared also.

But there were two other very important reasons for the failure of the One Europe programme in the early 1990s. First, its economic programme implied a social democratic-style development strategy for the East, which clashed with the whole American paradigm of neo-liberalism and globalisation, a paradigm which was attracting great support amongst the leaders of big capital in Western Europe. The Bush administration, desperate to impose US capitalism-friendly political economies everywhere in the East, moved successful to impose its regime goals on the Eastern economies. To counter that would have needed a big German push, using large German credit capacity, and that was not forthcoming. And the US ideas quickly gained influence amongst all the West European governments, under American and British influence, not least because they were the cheapest (for the West) way of getting capitalism over there quickly.

And there was another basic reason for the programme's failure: the lack of a strong political energy which linked institution-building with the capacity to generate strong popular support. Only this could effectively resist US hostility. The energy was offered by Mitterrand's grand vision of a pan-European Confederation. This did initially inspire

support from Vaclav Havel, but not from either Bonn or Moscow. So it collapsed. Genscher offered a strong peace-making rhetoric which echoed Gorbachev's stirring vision, but neither of them could concretise their visions in a definite institutional form that they could jointly achieve. The one they attempted, a qualitatively strengthened CSCE which could marginalise NATO required too much co-operations from the rest of the European states and hence was an easy target for American diplomacy. As the Soviet Union reeled into terminal crisis in the summer of 1991, Genscher veered off into championing Croatia, a move that looked like a message to the whole of Central and Eastern Europe to turn to Germany alone if they wanted a helping hand with any problems.

A One Europe project could still be revived, but it currently lacks support from any of the major powers, apart from a much weakened Russia.

2) *EU-Russian balance, with Western Europe expanding into East Central Europe.*

The second option has been that of turning the EC into a fully-fledged political entity which expands its influence over East Central Europe while giving Russia a sphere of influence in the CIS. The central idea here is that American hegemony in the West is replaced by a solid West European political entity under whose influence East Central Europe falls. The West European entity would be lead by France and Germany. Russia would be acknowledged as having its sphere of influence and leadership over the CIS, if necessary including an independent Ukraine, and Russia would not find a West European entity's expanding influence a threat to Russian security.

This project has had two variants of end-state and two paths to victory. The two end-states have been either the German conception of turning the EU into a more or less fully-fledged state or the French conception of turning the EU into a solid political bloc or alliance of states. In either case, NATO would eventually fade into the background, as would US hegemonic ambitions. The project has also involved two different paths to the end-state, paths that are not mutually exclusive. The first path is via the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU that would eventually include a common defence policy and a common defence. The second path is via monetary union and

subsequent spill-overs into a solid political entity, buttressing the Euro. Both the CFS path and the Euro-path could produce either the German Federal Europe or the French political bloc.

Without going into the whole very complex story of the pursuit of this broad option, we can briefly mention the main aspects of it for the three zones: EU Europe, Eastern Europe and the West European-US Partnership. As far as EU Europe is concerned, both the Euro path and the CFS path were put forward by Kohl and Mitterrand from the spring of 1990 onwards. The Euro was Mitterrand's key price that he demanded from Kohl in exchange for French support for German unification. Kohl agreed and fought the opponents of monetary union in Germany successfully. Everybody understood that this was not simply an economic project but a political project as well. And the Euro can only be sustained economically if it is built on solidly united political foundations. Money is a politically created and sustained phenomenon.

The battle for a political entity linked to the monetary union project of Maastricht had to take the path of a genuinely united foreign policy and there is no such foreign policy unity without a military unity to match it. Therefore, in April 1990, Kohl and Mitterrand agreed to combine the EC's Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on Economic and Monetary Union with a second IGC on Political Union that would put a common foreign and defence policy at its core.

They already had a basis of Franco-German co-operation to build on. The Elysee Treaty of 1963 had made provision for defence co-operation between France and Germany and in January 1988 the two countries had established a Joint Defence and Security Council and created a 4,000 strong Franco-German brigade. In the early 1990s, ministerial, military and defence-industrial relations were strengthened.

At the same time, they had a useful, wider instrument for building up a political bloc which excluded the Americans - the Western European Union. France had taken the initiative to revive the WEU in 1984, persuading its members to support the so-called Rome Declaration of 27 October of that year. Alarm on the part of the West European states, including the UK, over the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Reykjavik in 1987 had led to the WEU platform of European security interests being issued by the Hague WEU summit in October 1987. The Hague Platform had declared: "We are convinced that the

construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence.” And it set the goal of a ‘more cohesive European defence identity’.<sup>16</sup>

In December 1990 Kohl and Mitterrand wrote to their European Council colleagues suggesting the WEU be placed at the centre of the debate on European security institutions. This letter was met with a ‘stern demarche’ from Washington, resulting in a statement from the German and French Foreign Ministers to the effect that the WEU should be subordinated to NATO.<sup>17</sup> But this did not halt Franco-German efforts. In February 1991, Franco-German proposals for the IGC on political union again called for the elevation of the WEU at the expense of NATO. Then, in October 1991, the French and German governments shocked the British and American governments with their announcement of a plan to create a Eurocorps. As Paul Cornish explains, this was ‘widely seen as an unabashed attempt to undermine NATO’.<sup>18</sup> The Maastricht Treaty followed through with a successful Franco-German insistence that there would be a CFS for the EU which would eventually lead to a common defence policy and a common defence.

Here, then, were the elements of a full scale challenge to US hegemony in Western Europe. The West European states were to have an autonomous foreign, security and defence policy making set of institutions which could take authoritative decisions quite independently of the US. Secondly, with the creation of Eurocorps, this autonomous West European Bloc or state would have its own autonomous military instrument - the Eurocorps, to which Belgium and Spain were soon also to contribute. And the whole operation would be geared to projecting military power outside the EU and NATO areas, engaging in the so-called Petersburg tasks as laid down at the WEU meeting at the St. Petersburg hotel outside Bonn in June 1992. These power projection roles included crisis management, peace keeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian interventions. And to cap it all, the WEU could itself expand its influence eastwards, absorbing new associate members and

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16. See *Western European Union: The Reactivation of WEU: Statements and Communiqués, 1984-1987* (London, WEU, 1988)

17. See H. De Santis, ‘The Graying of NATO’, in B. Roberts (ed.), *US Security in an Uncertain Era* (MIT Press, 1993)

18. Paul Cornish, *Partnership in Crisis*, page 49.

members as its spread its political influences eastwards in ways that would not be perceived by Russian leaders as a threat to its authority. Here was a full-scale alternative organisation of political power in Western Europe to the concept of US hegemony.

This second option actually implied a very different project for East Central Europe from that of One Europe. It in practice involved EU mercantilism plus 'insulationism'.<sup>19</sup> The EU would use its trade regime as a lever for gaining the economic expansionist interests of Western big capital in the economies of the East. This lever consisted, essentially, of making access to the EU markets for Eastern countries - something they all desperately needed - dependent upon their opening their political economies for entry by Western capital with the ultimate aim of harmonising their market rules with those of the EU. Their economic development needs were to be subordinated to this mercantilist goal. In addition, they were offered a vague promise that some of them may eventually be incorporated within the EU as, over decades, they competed with each other to see who could do more than the others in demonstrating 100 per cent compliance with every possible EU desire. This political-economic strategy was combined with political 'insulationism'. This concept means a rejection of active political intervention in the East to solve the problems of the East. Instead political policy towards the East would be confined to ensuring that Western Europe was insulated from the consequences of state instability, state failure, civil war or inter-state conflict in the East. A central problem requiring Western insulation in this context was the threat of great movements of refugees as well as economic migrants from the East. Anglo-French military involvement in Yugoslavia through UNPROFOR was essentially about that: 'humanitarian aid' in the war zone to ensure that the civilian population did not leave the war theatre. Italian military intervention in Albania in 1997 was about the same thing: staunching the flood of humanity out of Albania westwards by rebuilding an Albanian state. Within this general framework, a partial exception to insulationism has been Germany's concern to build a protective buffer on its eastern flank by drawing Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary

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19. The concept of 'insulationism' is developed in Paul d'Anieri and Brian Schmedeler, "European Security after the Cold War: The Policy of Insulationism", *European Security*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1993.

(as well as Slovenia, eventually) under its wing and ensuring that these states were stable, viable entities anchored to the West. But this differentiation was essentially a concomitant of the insulationist policy, rather than a promise that lots of other countries in the region would also be drawn into the Western sphere (although West European propaganda suggested that all would eventually make it to safety on the Western shore.) The wider security balance would be assured by a co-operative, spheres-of-influence approach giving Russia great scope in the East.

As far as the West European-US partnership was concerned, the Franco-German project implied a replacement of US hegemony with a 'two pillar alliance' which would be a partnership of equals. The politics and economics of Western Europe and East Central Europe would be under German-French-led West European control. Western Europe would have the capacity for autonomous policy making and for autonomous action in the political and military fields. It would shape Western Europe's economic relationship with the East. And the US would have to accept Western Europe as a large, international player in world politics and economics.

This was not, of course, remotely acceptable to either the Bush or the Clinton administrations. From the very beginning in 1989, they have sought to reorganise post-Cold war Europe in order to maintain in new ways the political hegemony which they had enjoyed in Western Europe during the Cold War

### *3) The New Programme for US Hegemony*

The third option - US Hegemony - has been centred on one single clearly defined goal: to bring Europe back under US leadership through the transformation and new ascendancy of NATO in the whole of Europe. To understand this programme, we must start by recognising that apart from the name and the leadership, the new NATO was going to be radically different from the Cold War NATO. The programme for this new NATO contained the following main planks:

a) NATO as gate-keeper for the US between Russia and Western Europe (especially Germany). This is the fundamental meaning of the NATO enlargement into Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. It is

important to see why. In the first place, it blocks the possibility of a unilateral German influence stretching across Poland and the rest of Germany's Eastern flank because the USA is in Poland and Poland becomes a political base of the US via NATO. But secondly, the form of Poland's integration into NATO serves another crucial purpose. Poland could have joined without integration into the NATO integrated command: joining would just have involved Poland getting the NATO security guarantee. But secondly, the USA insisted on its right to have bases in Poland and station nuclear weapons there if needed. This was a bottom-line issue for the Clinton government. It also deeply angers Russian elites because it drove a US armoured division through the spirit of the Treaty of Paris of 1990 which settled the external aspects of German unification. These had specified that there should be no foreign bases on nuclear weapons in the former GDR territory. Now the US was reserving the right to bring these right up to the Soviet border. Why? Why should the US risk such Russian wrath for this goal?

There are two answers, one political and one military. The political one is that this provides the USA with its role as political gate-keeper between Russia and Germany. Above all it enables the US to make moves to freeze Russian-German relations if they get too friendly. All that needs to be done is to pick a quarrel with Russia, say over its internal treatment of some group or other or over its operations in the Near Abroad. Then the US can move forces into Poland, polarising West European opinion behind it and that should be enough to put a stop to any hopes of a new Rapallo.

But there is a military purpose in this aspect of Poland's accession as well. That is to be able to threaten to project power eastwards to ensure that Ukraine does not fall back under Russian sway, through, for example, entering a security pact with Russia which would result in Russian troops on Ukraine's Western borders, changing the entire strategic balance in Central Europe. The Brzezinski Circle which has been so central an influence on the US thinking on NATO enlargement (along with Rand specialists like Larrabee) is deeply committed to pulling Ukraine under NATO's wing. This would provide a solid US-led corridor of Poland and Ukraine between Germany and Russia while transforming the strategic situation in the Black Sea and thus the Caucasus and the Caspian.

There is also the question whether NATO should enlarge further into Central and South East Europe, corralling Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, and even Bulgaria along, eventually with Albania, Croatia and part of Bosnia. Such matters are, of course, high on the agenda now.

Thus, enlargement is about Russian exclusion from the institutions of European politics. This is not because the US wants a confrontation now with Russia or even Russian hostility. Why should it? It just wants to be gate-keeper and Russian hostility today was the price that might have to be paid.

But the question here was whether the West European states, above all Germany, would also consider that Russian exclusion and hostility was a price worth paying in order to insure that the US could play gate-keeper across a new European divide.

b) NATO must be refashioned to play an entirely new aggressive military role 'out of area'. The US slogan for NATO as a military organisation in the 1990s has been 'out of area or out of business'. In the elegant words of Francois Heisbourg back in 1992:

In a world without the canonical Soviet menace, ambitions rather than threats may well have become of overriding importance in determining the future of the Atlantic relationship.<sup>20</sup>

This drawing of NATO into ambitious external military action is a vital goal for the US in its political drive to regain political leadership of Western Europe. To understand why we must remember how the US gained hegemony in Western Europe after the war. It did so by helping to create circumstances facing Western Europe which would make West European states demand something that only the US had: the services of its strategic war machine. But when the Soviet Bloc collapsed, that strategic nuclear asset was redundant because NATO West European territory faced no strategic threat. This then created the problem that 'out of area' could solve. The US had to find a way of persuading Western

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20. Francois Heisbourg, 'The European-US Alliance: Valedictory Reflections on Continental Drift in the Post Cold War Era.' *International Affairs* (London), Vol.68, 4, 1992.

Europe again that it needed some military services that only the USA could offer because it needed to do some aggressive ‘out of area jobs’. As it happened, the US was rapidly coming up with some new military services: these are the US Air Force with its tomahawks, its smart weapons, along with a whole assortment of other services. These services are not for sale: on the contrary, they are to remain exclusive US property. If the West European’s had them, no US political leadership. We can sum up the US offer by paraphrasing Kipling: you (West Europeans) need casualty-free weapons.

‘But we have got  
The Tomahawk  
And you have not!’<sup>21</sup>

The US has had lots of other things, apart from Tomahawks and its whole Air Force panoply. It has got its own (not NATO) huge logical base in Western Europe. It has got the vital battle-field intelligence systems; and it has got the vital heavy lift capacity while the West Europeans have no heavy military transport planes of their own.

Here, then, were the services on offer for a new Strong Partnership going ‘out of area’. The idea was immediately enough to gain an extremely sympathetic ear in certain elite constituencies in Western Europe. First there were the military establishments of the main West European states. In the early 1990s they had their backs against the wall as they stood eye-ball to eyeball facing finance ministries slashing at their budgetary underbellies with lethal knives. Washington gave them a weapon to fight back with - the slogan: ‘We must be protected and revived because you need us to go ‘out of area’. So there was one ally, along with the whole NATO bureaucracy.

But then Washington had another ally in the form of none other than the West European finance ministries! It could say to them: “Frankly, we do have to go ‘out of area’. You’re military brass are not just greedy, they are right. But we understand that you have a big problem. You have your EMS to protect (against Wall Street) and then your Convergence Criteria by slashing budgets and cutting borrowing. Yet building up your own West European out of area strike force will

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21. Kipling quipped of the British victory in the Zulu war: “We had got the Gatling Gun and they had not’.

cost you a budgetary fortune. So maybe we can help. Drop this extravagant notion of your own autonomous West European (WEU or EU or whatever) strike force, and use the USAF instead. All you need to do is stick with US leadership in NATO. We'll supply the Tomahawks, logistics, battle field intelligence, bombers, whatever."

And then there was a third potential ally in the form of the two West European states predisposed to use militarism for political advantage within the Western alliance: France and the UK. The fact that both these states were long geared to military adventure for political gain gave them a great lead on Germany in this field, saturated as it was by pacifism. So they would be predisposed towards a few 'out of area' projects.

There was only one problem: how to convince the West Europeans of the vital necessity to strike aggressively 'out of area', in the first instance, in the eastern hinterland of the EU? This was the great problem with the strategy. It was a twofold problem: how to find convincing arguments for the two tiers of West European citizens: the elite audiences centred in the core executives had to be convinced; and the mass audience also had to be given a line that could rouse their support.

The elite audience was the big problem for advancing the US strategy for its revived hegemony. The problem can be simply put: for Germany, going back to US hegemony was not acceptable. Neither was it acceptable for France. They wanted their autonomous capacity to act as a West European political bloc, without invigilation by the USA. And at the same time, they wanted the capacity to decouple their West European political base from Anglo-American adventures all over the world.

But for US strategists there were ways around this elite problem. One key resource was the fact that the West European elites were not unified at all as a single, institutionalised political will. So one could strike bargains with key elite groups in key states for joint political-military demarches under US leadership. This could present the other elite groups in the other main West European states with a big dilemma: join the US-led thrust even though it was potentially dangerous for

Strategy	Politics	Economics	Central Powers	East Europe's Tasks
One Europe	Collective security including Russia, building of pan-European framework to which the EU would be subordinated	Geared to macro-economic growth and a new division of labour which gave Eastern Europe a reasonable share of the action	Germany leading France, Russia	Democratic development and rapid economic development in a permissive environment
EU/Russia	2 balanced centres: the EU and Russia in harmony	subordinating the East European economies to the dominant capitals in Western Europe through denying/granting access to the EU market	France and Germany leading the EU in combination with Russian leadership in the former USSR	US Europe first, East Central Europe fend for itself. If it wishes but offered the prospect of trying, in near impossible conditions, to make its societies acceptable for eventual EU membership
US Hegemony	a split Europe with the West excluding Russia and extending its military political (as well as economic) sway over the space between the EU and the Russian border	'Globalization' of economies and neo-liberalism	The US as hegemon with Germany and France 'bandwaggoning	Do what they are told and strengthen internal discipline within their states

your own interests, or stay neutral or even oppose? Then there was a second key resource: the West European mass audience, the children. If the US and its elite partners in Europe could use their political power media power to rouse the children on a fundamental basis, that could create major difficulties for the key elite groups in the key state(s) trying to steer clear of the thrust. Threaten that elite with a media-political mass pressure from below and you could drag them into line. Once that was done the other recalcitrant West European states lower down the hierarchy could be dragged, kicking and screaming perhaps, into the common thrust. (The three programmatic projects discussed here are summarised in the table on the previous page.)

## 4. Key Phases of the American Campaign

We will very briefly sketch the main phases of the US campaign to rebuild its hegemonic leadership in Europe, noting the counter-moves by other actors at each stage.

### **Phase 1: Washington on its back foot in Europe**

From 1989, the Bush administration was fully alert to the dangers facing the US in its supposed European moment of Cold War triumph. It found itself in many ways on the political back foot vis a vis its West European ‘allies’ in the crisis. Bush was quick to see the need for NATO to enlarge quickly by admitting Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in order that NATO “should be at the heart of the new European system” He also was clear that NATO should resist attempts to restructure its political leadership or Europeanist attempts to set up new institutions not integrated into NATO.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was Kohl who was setting the agenda and the pace from October 1989 through the summer of 1990, producing one *fait accompli* after another in a politically brilliant offensive to make the Anschluss with the GDR unstoppable. It culminated in the summer of 1990 dramatic public agreement with Gorbachev on all the outstanding issues in a meeting in Stavropol. The *Economist* announced it was Stavropol! Bush was able to insist that the unified Germany remain in NATO, but he could not even get the German government to agree to NATO hosting the treaty conference on unification: Germany and the USSR insisted on the CSCE. And keeping Germany in NATO was not much good if NATO itself was becoming redundant. In December 1989, Bush’s Secretary of State, Baker, made a high profile speech at the Aspen Institute in Berlin, saying NATO must change and become a more political organisation. Mitterrand was reported as saying

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1. See S. Brown: *The Faces of Power: United States Foreign Policy From Truman to Clinton* (Columbia University Press, 1994)

contemptuously that he knew what Baker meant: the US would try to claim the right to interfere in everything in Europe. As for Bush being able to propose a NATO enlargement, that was unthinkable at that time.

Bush's Gulf War spectacular was a bold, aggressive effort to pull the French and Germans firmly back under US leadership, but it was a one-off: both states quickly got back to their European businesses. That business was about four main matters. First, responding to American efforts, begun in earnest in March 1991, to prepare for NATO 'out of area' action with a NATO March 1991 decision to build a multinational rapid reaction force. Second, to prepare jointly for a breakthrough at the Maastricht IGC, with the UK isolated on its own on EMU (though with quiet support, no doubt from the USA) and with a joint Italian-British opposition (also quietly but no doubt very vigorously backed by Washington). Thirdly, to maintain the momentum of the WEU's revival by moving towards defining a fairly clear set of 'out of area' military roles for the organisation. And fourthly, taking up, from the early summer, through the EC, a big political challenge: managing the Yugoslav crisis. These tasks were tackled in the context of a more strident than ever French call for the West European states to unite for independence in security and defence affairs.<sup>2</sup>

On all four of these issues of the second half of 1991, French and German political fire power was impressive. In October 1991 they shook the Anglo-Saxons to the core with their sudden unexpected announcement of their joint decision to establish a full army corps for power projection outside the NATO framework: the Eurocorps. Secondly, while giving Britain an opt out from EMU, they pushed it through Maastricht; at the same time they got the lion's share of the Maastricht Treaty's language on the CFSP and not only defence policy but also defence. Thirdly, The WEU reached agreement of its new external roles in the so-called Petersberg Declaration (from a hotel of that name outside Bonn) in June 1992. And on the fourth issue, Yugoslavia, Germany achieved a stunning victory in an extraordinarily vigorous thrust for EC recognition of Croatian independence.

But that victory turned out to be pyrrhic. For Genscher and Kohl

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2. See A. Menon, "From Independence to Co-operation: France, NATO and European Security", *International Affairs* (London) vol 71, No.1, January 1995.

had shocked their EU allies with this ruthless drive for what looked like its Croatian client state. Washington had an opening to strike back. And it did so, like Germany, by using the Yugoslav theatre for Europe-wide political assertion.

## **Phase 2: The start of Washington's European fight-back, 1992-93**

At the start of 1992, the Bush administration began a set of moves that would place the US back at the centre of the European action. First, and of great strategic political importance, it had secured its own man in the leadership of the new Russia, Boris Yeltsin. This former politburo Communist, driven by vengeful hostility to Gorbachev and blind lust for power, swung wildly over to a catastrophic drive for Washington's programme for Russia of bandit capitalism. Over the next years he made every move that Washington could have wished for to plunge Russia from one crisis to another on a slide into Katastroika which entirely transformed the possibilities for a US comeback towards European leadership. Simultaneously he combined increasingly ludicrous bombast with a readiness to play along with Washington's European game-plan.

Against this Russian background, the US began its promotion of NATO's come-back with an expansion of NATO's influence eastwards through a charm offensive, launched first as a reassurance campaign to the USSR in its final death agony. This was the most that Kohl would agree to as far as NATO was concerned. But it was a clever move. Announced in November 1991, the initiative was called the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (the NACC) and it began work in December 1991 just as the USSR disappeared. It invited all the successor states into a structured dialogue with NATO, thus institutionalising NATO links right across the former Soviet Union, though only at the level of political dialogue.<sup>3</sup> Russia, like almost all other former Soviet republics, joined.

But the most powerful lever for future US advance was meanwhile being set in place in Bosnia. In December-January 1991-92, the Bush administration persuaded the Izetbegovic government to

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3. In May 1997 the NACC was renamed as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) offering a deeper level of political co-operation.

go for independence despite the fact that both governments knew that this step would lead to civil war. In March 1992 Izetbegovic, who had desperately pleaded with Genscher not to recognise Croatia, since he knew that this would lead to increased pressure in Bosnia for independence and war, drew back. He reached an EC-brokered agreement with the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats for a confederation. The US again urged him to go for independence and war and he agreed, rejecting the agreement one week after he had made it. He did so evidently because the US must have offered him substantial, perhaps open-ended commitments. US policy makers were well aware of the lethal fiction on which their drive for Bosnian self-determination and unitary independence was based: the fiction that there was a Bosnian nation when in reality Bosnia contained four main political nations, none of which subordinated their nationhood to a Bosnian identity: the Yugoslav Muslim nation, the Serbs of Bosnia, the Croatians of Bosnia and the Yugoslavs of Bosnia.<sup>4</sup> This American move gave Washington leadership of a new phase of terrible warfare in the Western Balkans, enabling it to polarise European politics allegedly between those supporting Bosnian self-determination and those allegedly supporting an imperial Serb aggression for a Serbian mini-empire.

During 1992 and 1993, the US's Bosnian operation remained fairly low-profile. Britain and France had sent troops into the area under UN auspices and there were continuing mediation efforts conducted by an Anglo-American partnership of David Owen and Cyrus Vance. But in 1994 the US approach would shift both politically and militarily in a new pattern of European alliances.

A sign of the coming turn began to emerge in 1993, coming significantly from the defence bureaucracies of Western Europe. The first and most important sign of a new US ally emerged in the form of the German Defence Minister, Volker Ruhe, who surprised the whole of Europe by emerging as a stalking horse for an absolutely central plank of the US political strategy: NATO enlargement into the Visegrad

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4. On this crucial episode which places a very large share of responsibility for the Bosnian atrocities that followed upon the big power politics of the Bush administration, see Peter Gowan, 'The Western Powers and the Yugoslav Tragedy', *New Left Review*, April-May, 1999. See also Susan Woodward, *The Balkan Tragedy* (The Brookings Institution, 1995)

countries. And Ruhe launched this campaign in the teeth of evident hostility from the Auswärtiges Amt and from the Chancellery. Then in the autumn of 1993 the chiefs of the French and German General Staffs agreed to place the Euro-corps under the direct command of NATO's SACEUR (Supreme Allied Command Europe). A path was opening to major US advance.

### **Phase 3: Washington on the European political offensive**

At the January 1994 Brussels North Atlantic Council (NAC), the Clinton administration achieved three major break-throughs. First, it gained agreement in principle for NATO to prepare to enlarge into Poland and the whole Visegrad area. This did not by any means indicate that enlargement was secure - the French, British and parts of the German state were extremely dubious about the plan, to put it mildly. But it was still a huge advance for Washington.

Secondly, this NAC launched the Partnership for Peace (P4P). This achieved two very important things: first, it legitimated a move from purely political dialogue between NATO and Eastern states to direct military co-operation; secondly, it gave NATO the right to decide which states it would approve for P4P and to decide also what kind of co-operative military actions it would engage in. Some at the time saw P4P - Chancellor Kohl's idea - as an alternative to enlargement. But in practice it was a valuable path towards it, as well as a path to deepening military links with the strategically pivotal Ukraine.

Thirdly, the Brussels NAC marked a major defeat for projects to construct multinational military instruments under commands not integrated into NATO. It did so by declaring the new mantra that all forces of NATO member states should be 'separable but not separate' from NATO. This was a major defeat for those in France and Germany who had hoped for an autonomous WEU.

These steps opened the road towards a new US-German political linkage that was to come to fruition in the Bosnian war over the next two years and which, in the process, was almost to lead to France and Britain walking out of NATO. The confrontation between the US and the French and British governments came to a head in November 1994. A campaign in the US for a more aggressive US policy in the Bosnian war won a Congressional victory around the slogan of 'lift and strike' -

lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims and strike with air power against the Bosnian Serbs. In response, the Clinton administration declared that it would no longer enforce the UN arms embargo on the Bosnian government. But this was not the important thing (since France and Britain knew perfectly well that the US was covertly flouting the embargo anyway). The cause of the clash lay in the fact that US air strikes would make French and British UNPROFOR troops vulnerable to Bosnian Serb attack (since they could be supposed to be guiding the air strikes from the ground). But the conflict with Washington went deeper than that because Washington's major European propaganda offensive projecting the Bosnian civil war as Serb aggression against a united Bosnian nation was threatening to cast the French and British states as appeasers of, if not collaborators with, the hated Serbian who had supposedly masterminded the atrocities in Bosnia - Slobodan Milosevic.

Washington drew back and compromised, but did so in a way that established a joint US-German approach to the war: a military alliance with Tudjman's Croatia, the transformation of French and British military strength, a re-enforcement of the Bosnian Muslim army and then an all out assault on the Bosnian Serb forces. The whole campaign produce a victory and it also enabled the US both to show off its air power and to claim (falsely) that US air power had been responsible for victory. The result was Dayton which involved splitting Bosnia into two 'entities' and placing the Bosnian Muslims in a political embrace with Tudjman's Croatia.

But the result was widely seen as the US government had hoped: a military triumph for the US, with the Clinton administration giving leadership to the whole of Europe. In late 1995, for the first time since 1989, Washington seemed the master of the European political agenda.

In two respects, the triumph was far less impressive than it looked. The US had created an expensive and largely non-viable mess in the Western Balkans without producing just or even stable solutions to any of the real human problems there. And, secondly, even the Dayton stitch-up had only been possible thanks to Washington's having to call Russia into the heart of Europe's major political problem and to institutionalise Russian involvement in the Contact Group. But the impact in Western Europe was what counted.

### **Phase 4: Compromise Europe: 1996-1999**

It is possible to see a compromise programme, around which the three key Western powers could work, as emerging in 1996-97. The compromise sought to reconcile the different projects of the different powers in the following ways:

1) The Clinton administration got its NATO enlargement into Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary in a form that could potentially give it a gate-keeper role between Russia and Germany. The key here was Washington's successful insistence that it reserved the right to establish US bases and/or nuclear weapons on Polish soil. Through this, it had at least the possibility of generating a state of emergency in Russian-German relations.

2) The Clinton administration also gained agreement that all NATO members forces and all their decisions about the use of force should be under NATO and therefore US control. This decision was achieved at the Berlin NAC in July 1996, where it was agreed that the WEU would be banned from undertaking any military actions without unanimous approval by the NAC. The bringing of all NATO members' forces under NATO control had been achieved earlier: in 1993, in relation to the Eurocorps, and in the January 1994 NAC, in relation to the WEU, with the formula of all such forces being 'separable but not separate' from NATO.

3) The Clinton administration also gained agreement in principle to NATO 'out of area' military strikes for so-called Petersberg tasks in NATO's eastern periphery.

4) In exchange for French approval of these concessions, the Berlin NAC agreed to the establishment of a so-called European Security and Defence Identity within NATO, and, along with that, France was given effective entry into NATO structures without formally renouncing its independence. While the actual substance of ESDI seemed extremely limited, two important issues need to be borne in mind: the West

European states were not actually interested in ‘projecting’ their power all over the place in the East: on the contrary, their main thrust continued to be insulationism. What they wanted was to maintain the right to build the basis for what could, in the future, become an effective and perhaps autonomous West European strike force. Secondly, the new arrangements at last gave France a very effective framework for political manoeuvre within the Western alliance: it need no longer be locked into the single choice of building with Germany against the US or alternatively standing in isolation. It could now move between Europeanist initiatives with Germany, and French-American and or French-British initiatives independent of Germany.

This, then was the basis of the compromise in the West. It sustained a framework for developments in East Central and Eastern Europe which unfolded from the early 1990s, which embodied a socio-economic division of the continent which we will briefly survey.

### **East Central and Eastern Europe under the compromise**

Under the compromise, the dynamics of East Central and Eastern European politics during the 1990s have been governed largely by Programme 2: West European-centred mercantilism plus insulationism. The internal economic programmes for East European states promoted both by Programme 2 and by Programme 3 (Europe under US hegemony) differed less in substance than in emphasis. The US was concerned to promote its radical neo-liberal model along, of course, with the interests of its own particular key business sectors. The EU was less concerned with promoting the radical neo-liberal ideological model and more concerned with the variant of market organisation embodied in its Single Market regime, plus its trade policy interests in the region and of course, its own particular key business sectors as defined by its various member states. To achieve their political-economy goals both the West Europeans and the US sought to act swiftly in the 1989-92 period to take maximum advantage of both Soviet disorientation, the disorganisation and fragmentation of the Comecon region’s economy, and the ‘honeymoon’ disorientation and fluidity within the states of the region. Hence the urgency of the demand for Shock Therapy and the refusal to normalise trade relations unless governments swiftly plunged their societies into the vortex of ‘systemic

transformation’.

These overlapping economic programmes 2 and 3 have, of course been a fundamental factor in the shaping of the states of East Central and Eastern Europe. They have had to impose sudden falls in the living standards of the bulk of their populations, including sweeping loss of legal entitlements to pensions and other social benefits, while unleashing a chaotic scramble for control over economic assets on the part of aspiring new capitalists in conditions where huge swathes of industry were thrown into insolvency by the collapse of regional payments systems and trade links. While achieving all these things, they had to surrender their ability to manage freely most of the linkages between their economies and the world market; they had to open their trade regimes, immediately end their control over their current accounts through making their currencies immediately convertible, had to throw open their economic assets to Western companies and found the Western states using conditionalities to prevent them developing national strategies for restructuring their industries.

As a result, the functions of these states during the 1990s were overwhelmingly reduced towards one goal: imposing their authority and control over their domestic populations. The functions which West European states have for bolstering their legitimacy - above all their welfare functions - were not available in the East. They had basically two instruments: the electoral one, which gave populations the satisfaction of throwing out whatever government was in office, and the political argument that all the hardship which the population faced would be rewarded by eventual entry ‘into Europe’, an argument whose force weakened to negligible proportions the further east or south east states were from the EU’s borders. In the name of ‘democracy’ the democratic will of the populations was not to be allowed to influence public policy. The result was to place the cohesion of states and of social and economic life under enormous strains. Only Option 1, a genuine programme for re-unification of the continent in economic, social and political life would have ensured a framework for the building of secure, legitimate social and political orders.

Instead the 1990s has seen the shattering of the economic and social tissues of very many of the countries of Eastern Europe, the rise of gangster capitalism, very grave social and political pathologies and

damaged or even wrecked states. Informed and dispassionate observers, in the West as well as the East, and at all points in the political spectrum should and, in many cases, do recognise and acknowledge the West's responsibility for much of this state of affairs. The most catastrophic state collapses - those in Yugoslavia and in Albania, in both of which the Western powers were deeply implicated - are only the most spectacular cases. The recent disorders in Romania can be explained largely by desperate and reckless attempts by the Romanian government to win entry into the first wave of prospective entrants to NATO and the EU by implementing disastrously unrealistic domestic shocks.

But from the angle of the West European powers, the policy has been extremely cost effective. They have been earning substantial profits from expanding trade, investment, out sourcing and, in the case of Britain, fortunes from East European investment of flight capital in the City of London. (In the case of Russia alone, such flight capital has been running at \$20bn a year or more).

But the problem of shattered social systems and damaged states has another effect as well. It can lead to extreme intra-state tensions leading towards state breakdowns. This at first seemed to produce new opportunities for the EU states. In 1991 the EU's officialdom and many of the leaders of its member states were thrilled at the prospect of taking a lead in the management of Yugoslavia's disintegration. At the same time, the instability in the Western Balkans seemed to offer a role for the EU's main powers involved with the use of military power to enhance political influence: Britain and France. But the EU's chaotic internal rivalries and power plays in its mediation attempts over Yugoslavia's crisis in the second half of 1991 had the effect only of exacerbating the conflict over Croatian secession. And the decision of the US to intervene and take the lead on the Bosnian war placed the British and French states' military forces on the ground in mortal danger. They were incapable of maintaining their own manoeuvrist lines in the Bosnian war against US opposition. That was the end of collective EU efforts to project its military power autonomously in the East. When the Italian government decided to try to manage the blow-out in Albania in 1997, the British and French governments wanted no part of it. There was, by then, no stomach for purely West European collective power projection in the East.

All these issues about strategy towards the East have largely bypassed West European public opinion. It has believed what it was told: that Europe was now whole and free. That the West was generously aiding Eastern Europe with large hand-outs. That unfortunately a lot of nasty politicians had appeared in various East European countries, trouble-makers, anti-democrats etc. And that these characters probably emerged because of the uncivilised cultures revealed in the region when the lid of Communism blew off. If they were sensible they would set up a market, stop being mafias and get on with it.

Such ignorance of the real West-East dynamics on the part of Western public opinion was, however, perfectly understandable. The real operational Western policy was one of those matters too sensitive and difficult to discuss frankly in front of the children.

## 5. From Compromise to Kosovo

### **Washington's frustrations with the compromise**

There were critical weaknesses still in this compromise from the point of view of the Clinton administration's strategy professionals. The first of these lay in the fact that the continental West European states were not giving NATO full political ascendancy over European political affairs: they were agreeing to the form - the enlargement, excluding Russia, plus the licence to strike out of area - but not the substance: a NATO free hand without a Russian say. This was because the continentals were insisting that NATO could only act under UN Security Council authority. This was maddening from three points of view: first, it was legally correct, thus putting US unilateralism in the wrong. Secondly, it enabled Russia to be brought right back into the heart of European affairs by the back door of the UN Security Council because of the Russian veto. Thus, thirdly, if the French or the Germans wanted to throw sand into the electronics of the US Tomahawks, all they had to do was give the Russians a ring and ask them to do the business of putting their foot down at the Security Council. The dreaded Moscow-Berlin axis could still be in play.

This led straight on to a second problem. The basic value of the struggle to rebuild US leadership over Western Europe lay, for the US, not just in showing how it could pull off Daytons or lead from the (casualty free) military front with its Tomahawks. The point was for West Europeans to feel so dependent upon such US leadership through military-services-rendered that they would bend to US demands for sweeping deals in the political economy field. Europe's subordination was needed as a subordinate ally for rebuilding the dominance of US capitalism in the European and global political economy. Yet Western Europe was becalmed and threatless, feeling no urgent need for the services of the US Air Force.

One possible way out would be to present Europe with a major crisis outside the European theatre, a crisis requiring massive fire power in the interests of the security of European capital accumulation. Another possibility would be a sharp repolarisation of European political life. But one way or another, under the compromise of 1996-1999, the US was still a very long way from regaining hegemonic sovereignty.

Finally, the compromises of the Berlin 1996 and the Madrid 1997 NACs still left open the possibility of a West European build-up towards an independent, unified political will which could eventually define its own political community and sovereignty around the regionalist political idea of Europe as a distinctive socio-economic and political and cultural community (the friend-basis) pitted against enemies of its own choosing and especially being able to define whom it regarded as neutral in the wider world. Even if the business and political elites of Europe have talked in the 1990s of belonging to a so-called Euro-Atlantic Community, none of the ordinary mass citizens, the children, has even heard of such a thing, far less thought that it was there identity.

Not only was the path to this potential outcome not blocked. Western Europe was actually marching down it through the drive to monetary union and the Euro. The Euro would have the tendency to become a world currency, challenging the dollar. Its path towards world currency would run through East Central and Eastern Europe. As these states linked up to the Euro and the ECB, US invigilation of these economies through the IMF would tend to crumble. And the necessity for currencies to be underpinned by politico-military power would naturally tend to produce a dynamic towards both a fully fledged federal EU and a genuinely common foreign, security and military policy either as the EU state itself or as a solid political bloc.

These developments would have the effect of the US losing its hegemonic influence over developments within the political economy of Euroland. The US would also tend to lose its influence in East Central Europe. And even more important, Euroland could become the initiator of a whole new, expanding centre of international capital accumulation, undermining the enormous political leverage open to the US through dollar dominance.

Of course, if one believes that, provided there is an open world economy with secure market rules, there can be complete harmony

between the main capitalist powers over matters of economics, then disagreements about the role of the Euro and the dollar or about trade policy, investment policy and the like are just small technical details. But this vision does not remotely capture the way in which the Clinton administration looks at such questions. For it, US global accumulation required and requires US political hegemony over Western Europe and its eastward orientation.

### **The potential threat to the dollar from the Euro**

The gravity of the potential threat from the Euro to the entire political position of the United States is both great and entirely ignored in all discussion of the current war. The entire globalisation process has, all agree, been centred in the gigantic rise of US centred financial markets and financial operators. This rise to world power of US-centred financial operations has been intimately bound up with Dollar dominance. We have described the resulting Dollar-Wall Street regime at length elsewhere and we will not rehearse that analysis here.<sup>1</sup> We will simply assert that the mutually re-enforcing Wall Street financial forces and US-Treasury orchestrated dollar dances have produced a gigantic political weapon for taking a can opener to one political economy after another around the world, systematically producing financial blow-outs in two thirds of IMF member states since 1980 and thus bringing in the IMF's engineers to globalise and subordinate state's internal arrangements to the interests of mainly US capitalism.

This was the lever which produced the collapse of the various rival development models to the Reaganite globalisation paradigm: the import-substitution model in Latin America crashed in the early 1980s. Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia were also trapped at that time, thus being consequently dragged towards the crisis of 1989 and all that followed. And the East Asian economies were the latest to fall to the twin yo-yos of a sharp switch by the US Treasury in Dollar-Yen exchange rates followed by the whip-lash of the financial yo-yo: first the flood in of hot money and then the stampede out.

If the managers of the Euro were to make a drive to turn it into a global challenger to the dollar, that would produce and be re-enforced

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1. See Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble* (Verso, 1999)

by a huge growth of Euroland's role as a rival global financial centre. The result could be a catastrophic fall not only in the role of the dollar and Wall Street, but in the US economy and in the political leverage of the US government.

Maastricht was carefully crafted, no doubt under some US diplomatic pressure, to provide no effective institutional answer to who would control the Euro's behaviour on international currency markets. And until the election of the Social Democratic government in Germany there was silence about this issue from EU leaders.

There was also silence from Washington. Or rather there were statements of qualified support for the Euro. This silence/support on such a cardinal political issue is absolutely fascinating. We will return to it. But we will only make one more point on this matter at this stage: there is nothing automatic about the Euro becoming a global challenger to the dollar. It is to a degree a matter of political choice. What is 'automatic' about any currency is that it must be anchored to a strong, firm political/ military base. This is usually the state, anchoring its own currency. But it does not have to be. One powerful state can politically anchor the currency of another state.

### **A way forward through the French turn and the British response**

Yet the compromise of 1996-97 did open the possibility of a new approach for the Clinton administration in its path towards hegemony. It did so thanks to the turn in France policy, embodied in the compromise. France could now integrate increasingly with NATO and thus had the possibility of a new orientation, less dependent upon its purely Europeanist links with Germany. France could, if it wished, tilt policy towards joint ventures with the British and the Americans.

It didn't do so over Iraq. On the contrary, it swung the other way, towards Russia (undoubtedly with tacit German support). Yet in the autumn of 1998, the French government did begin a tilt towards the Anglo-American camp. This shift came as a result of a major new offer to the French government from the Blair government in Britain. The offer was, at first sight, an astonishing one. Blair was declaring that Britain was ready to support a defence role for the European Union. The French seized upon this offer and the result was the so-called St.

Malo Declaration of December 1998. To understand this, we must look briefly at the evolution of British policy in the great game of reconstructing the political shape of Europe in the 1990s.

Throughout the battles of the 1990s, the British strongly and tirelessly supported the American orientation for rebuilt hegemony in Europe, except for one nasty hiccup in the Bosnian war when the British and the French together had to threaten the break-up of NATO to stop the US putting their troops on the ground in Bosnia at risk through US air strikes.

But otherwise Britain's role in support of the US was to play spoiler of all efforts to create a cohesive West European political entity. So the British led the campaign against the Euro and led the campaign against the Franco-German efforts in the foreign policy and defence field. Britain waged a vigorous campaign against the Eurocorps, against the WEU having any autonomous command structure or forces or policy making authority: all such things had to be firmly integrated into NATO. Britain also waged war against the EU having any defence role and against German efforts to have a properly integrated EU system of foreign and security policy making - involving for example, qualified majority voting.

But by 1997 most of these campaigns on the foreign policy and defence front had been won, while the result for the UK was less influence than ever on European politics: the French and the Germans saw the UK as nothing but trouble and dealt directly with the Americans. And, most cruelly, the US saw that Britain's valiant efforts on Washington's behalf left Britain with very little influence and thus Washington should deal directly with the powers with clout: France and Germany. Worst of all, there was one campaign that the British lost hopelessly: that was their campaign against the Euro.

Against this background, Blair made his turn. The British had used the WEU as a way of blocking an independent West European entity centred on the EU. It at the same time had not been intrinsically interested in the WEU at all. So once NATO control over policy-making authority, command structures and forces had been achieved, why should London continue to oppose an EU defence role? The only reason would be German efforts to put the EU defence role into the EU state-building process of integration. But the French opposed that as much as the

British. Thus, why not try to form a joint position with the French, scuppering the WEU, talking up an EU defence role, but keeping it firmly subordinated to NATO and out of state building in the EU? That was the St. Malo offer to the French and it worked. Britain and France together leading Germany in the defence field in co-operation with the United States and drawing in the EU without allowing EU-statist integration.

For Blair and the British state this seemed like a watershed in the whole dismal story of British marginalisation in the European politics of the 1990s. Through the link with France, Britain could really play a leading role in an absolutely central issue of EU politics - foreign and military policy. This could in turn transform the entire problem of getting Britain into the Euro, both by showing EU states that Britain was playing a big role with the French and by showing the same thing to British elites and electorates. No less important, its link with the French would greatly enhance British influence in Washington on European politics for the first time since the Berlin Wall came down. What was needed, from a British point of view, was an issue on which to demonstrate its new role. Somebody must have mentioned: how about Kosovo?

For the French state, the Anglo-French link gave France unparalleled room for political manoeuvre in European affairs. France could use it to 'put Germany in its place', but it could also swing away from it over to a German link on a Europeanist tack. And France could hope that it would thus be the pivot of European international politics: the Germans, the British and even the Americans would in future be wooing France for whatever demarche they wanted to launch. With France against it, Germany could assert its European will only at the risk of appearing to want to Germanise Europe; with France against it, the US could not pull Europe behind its schemes. And without France Britain would be, as before, nothing in European affairs.

But one central question remains: what has been the big European pay-off which the Clinton administration has been hoping to gain from the Yugoslav war.

### **The Clinton administration's specific political objectives in launching the war**

To understand the US approach to this issue, we can look at some of the

speeches of key US officials to elite audiences in Europe in the run-up to the attack on Yugoslavia. Valuable insight is gained in particular from the speech by Strobe Talbott to the German Foreign Policy Society in Munich in February.<sup>2</sup> The speech linked together four issues: the general US goals in Europe; the arrival of the Euro; the approach of the US to NATO and Kosovo. We will examine this speech at length, but draw upon other speeches of the same sort by other officials to fill out details absent from Talbott's speech.

First, Talbott explained the general US approach. He made three points. First that

in the 21st century, as in the 20th, the well-being of the United States will depend in large measure on what happens in Europe. In other words, the Euro-Atlantic community is indivisible, and the security link across the ocean is unbreakable.

In other words, it is an absolutely vital US interest to create an indivisible and unbreakable Euro-Atlantic Community. But Talbott also indicates that this Euro-Atlantic Community does not yet exist. He indicates this by saying that he sees "a strong Europe as essential to the foundation of a strong Atlantic community". So for him 'Europe' should be judged as a means to the goal of his projected 'Euro-Atlantic Community'. It is not stand-alone.

Talbott's second point about the fundamental US approach is that

the United States recognises and welcomes that "Europe" [Talbott's quotes] is redefining itself; it is not a static phenomenon; it is evolving - in its institutions, in its degree of integration, and in its very identity.

This is not a banality. This means that the US wants Europe's institutions and its very identity to change. If Europeans think they have their identity and basic institutions already established, they are

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2. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Remarks to the German Society for Foreign Policy, Bonn, February 4, 1999 (USIA, "Euro-Atlantic Partnership - Talbott Remarks to German Society for Foreign Policy, 2/4/99")

wrong.

Talbott spelt out the same theme in more detail in a second speech in London in early March. He declared:

... most Americans recognise that the phenomenon of “Europe” is not static. Rather, it is organic. In the nature and composition of its institutions, even in its geographical scope, Europe is constantly reinventing itself; it is, in the vocabulary of Euro-speak, both deepening and broadening. As Americans watch the evolution of Europe, we have our own hopes, and sometimes our own apprehensions, about where the process will lead. We want to see Europe define its identity and pursue its interests in a way that not only preserves, but strengthens, the ties that bind your security to ours, and, of course, ours to yours.<sup>3</sup>

We can gain further insight from Talbott’s assistant, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Marc Grossman. In a speech in Washington in February, he explained his views on how the European Union should be changed as part of the construction of the Euro-Atlantic Community:

Let me first start with what I don’t think. And this is very important, I know, to members of the European Union. But I want to just be really clear about this. We do not believe that the European Union is a transatlantic institution. It’s not. It’s a European institution....But there is a very large transatlantic component to the relationship between the United States and European Union.<sup>4</sup>

So the Clinton administration does not want to turn the EU into a TU, a transatlantic union. Then Grossman slips into an interesting

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3. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott “A New NATO for a New Era” NATO at 50 Conference, The Royal United Services Institute, London, 10 March 1999. (USIA)

4. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Marc Grossman, Remarks on the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 10 February 1999 (USIA, Euro-Atlantic Partnership - Grossman Remarks at CSIS, 2/10/99)

tautology. He says there is a very large transatlantic component in something. We expect him to say the EU. But he doesn't. Instead he comes out with an absurdity: there is a very large transatlantic component in the transatlantic relationship! But he clears this idiocy up in his very next sentence which reads as follows: "So I don't *make the mistake of saying* that we ought to make this into a transatlantic institution." (my emphasis) That clarifies matters: it is a mistake to *say* you want to turn the European union into a transatlantic institution. But it is *not* a mistake *to want to do just that*.

Now at last we are beginning to understand the next concept of Clinton's "Strong European-US Partnership".

We can now return to Talbott's speech. His third general theme is that Germany must, for the US, be the key to establishing the transatlantic community and the reorganised European Union. Then he swiftly moves on to this next big theme: the Euro. Naturally he supports the Euro. But what is fascinating is why he thinks the Euro is a good thing. He quotes the US Ambassador to Germany on this in the following passage:

For us, the standard of success is simple: we want to see Europe define and pursue its safety, its prosperity, its integration and its identity in a way that not only preserves, but that strengthens, the ties that bind North America to Europe. The U.S. government's bottom line on EMU is simple and positive. Ambassador Kornblum stated it clearly in a recent speech: "We Americans are well served when Europe is vibrant economically and is opening its markets and strengthening its connections with the global economy. Europe will prosper from an economic and monetary union that supports these ends - and if Europe prospers, this will help prosperity in the United States."

So Talbott supports the Euro first, insofar as it makes the West European economy vibrant. But we know that the US Treasury considers the Euro will not do that - it will tend towards the opposite; second, insofar as the Euro helps to open European markets, but the Euro has nothing whatever to do with that as Talbott well knows; thirdly insofar as it strengthens the connection with the global economy, but what does that mean? It seems to mean strengthening the EU-US economic

relationship 'in a way that not only preserves, but that strengthens, the ties that bind North America to Europe'. Yet insofar as the Euro becomes a world currency, it does no such thing. It challenges the dollar and threatens a big struggle between Western Europe and the United States.

But the main thing, says Talbott, that he likes about the Euro is the way the Europeans have introduced it. He singles out four features:

First, the plan is ambitious; it is a venture worthy, in its essence and in its scale, of the opportunities at hand. Second, the Euro is based on the premise that common interests and common challenges require common solutions - that is, collective and cooperative action. Third,..... [it] has required each of those national leaderships to make hard political choices.... and to engage in hard political work, especially in marshalling support from their constituencies. Fourth, the Euro will have to prove itself in concrete ways; it must make sense, not just in theory, but in practice.

And Talbott likes these four features of the Euro so much that he is determined to apply them to his approach to NATO!

In these four features, your introduction of the Euro has a lot in common with the work we must do together in the transformation of NATO.

So Talbott moves straight from the Euro to the US response via NATO. The US would respond to the Euro also in an ambitious way on a big scale and using the opportunities at hand - Kosovo. It would demand on this collective and co-operative action. West European leaders would have to make hard political choices on Kosovo, especially to marshal their domestic constituencies. And NATO will prove to be under US hegemony not just in theory but in practice.

Talbott then rounds off his speech on Kosovo by waxing lyrical over how the US has managed to draw the EU and the OSCE into very valuable subordinate operational elements in the US campaign build up towards a solution to the Kosovo issue.

Let us add two further points about US goals in this war. One of the consequences of the attack on Yugoslavia has been that the US has been able to use its P4P military collaboration links with all the states

in the region as the basis for massively deepening its security relationship with these states. When we add to that the new East Central European members of NATO, we discover that in this war it is the US which has suddenly reappeared as the key military-political partner of the entire European space between the EU and Russia. This is a stunning political transformation. The EU states and especially Germany had, only yesterday, enjoyed a steady rise to dominant influence in the entire region. At one fell swoop, the US can hope to transform that. And all this was made possible in the first instance by P4P. No wonder that Grossman tells us,

I must say that I agree completely with General Scowcroft that I think that PFP has been one of the single, most successful programs that anybody has run over the last large numbers of years.”<sup>5</sup>

We must appreciate what this means. The US now links itself with the inner sanctums of the region’s core executives. Such inner sancta deal with the really fundamental issues of state orientation, such as their core external military-political and monetary financial linkages with a big power. If the Euro is to develop as an international currency it will march down that road through expanding into East Central and Eastern Europe. Or it would have done. But will the new hegemonic partner of these states now approve of that?

The other final question we must consider is what plan the Clinton administration has for turning the EU into a transatlantic body. Here Grossman is interesting. One can infer from his remarks that he is proposing to introduce a new organising principle into the EU by small steps that link the new principle with the lives of EU citizens in a few areas:

We need, I think, to think about this relationship as one of the keys to the U.S.-European relationship of the future. And one of the most interesting things about it is the direct impact on the lives of our citizens, jobs, trafficking in women and children. The kinds of things that Europe and the United States can do

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5. Grossman, *ibid.*

together. These are very important points, whether we're working together, as I say, to stop trafficking in women and children or dealing with Korean nuclear reactors; or stopping the drug trade in the Caribbean. These are important things to people's publics, and I think that would be a very important part of this relationship in the 21st century.<sup>6</sup>

Thus we can expect that after the Yugoslav war is over there will be a new campaign over trafficking in women and children.<sup>7</sup>

With these goals, then, the NATO-centred Anglo-French link provided the Clinton administration with the basis for advancing its drive for consolidated hegemonic leadership. That required the US to be able to use its fantastic air power in the European theatre and it could not politically do that on its own. With the Anglo-French buttress, it could drag the rest of the EU into supporting the use of American air power. Simultaneously, it could send a signal to the world that the new Euro was actually just a regional currency under US political hegemony. And over the longer term the US retained its political manoeuvrability: tomorrow, in the millennium round of trade negotiations, it could lead with the (chastened) German government as its key European partner. And it could even have the option of the Russian card at some stage in the future, a card which it could play against any West European monkey-business.

Here, then, was the origin of the Yugoslav war coalition. No sooner was the ink dry on the St. Malo Declaration than EU-NATO official links were established. Madeleine Albright had drawn up her draft agreement for a Rambouillet conference in such a way that she would give Milosevic an offer he could not accept. The German government was side-stepped by making France and Britain the co-chairs of the Rambouillet conference and these two governments were lined up to go for war without UN Security Council authority - a major

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6. *ibid.*

7. An intriguing sign that Anthony Giddens is acquiring a taste for high politics was the fact that in his question and answer session in his so-called Reith Lecture in Washington on April 23rd, he highlighted this issue of children as a field where state sovereignty ought to be dispensed with by the Atlantic powers.

shift in the entire attitude of the French government towards the international system.

We will not discuss the actual conduct of the war. The Clinton administration could play the war by ear for three possible types of war, depending on how the war events went: a gesture war, a show-casing war or a war for hegemonic leadership. The gesture war is what we are told was intended: that it was to be a seven day war to show that the US air force can be cheered on by 19 NATO states to bring Serbia to its knees as a dazzling backdrop to the Washington NAC at the end of April, a summit designed to really constitutionally anchor the new NATO. Secondly, it could be a showcasing war, to demonstrate to every state on earth just how much casualty free destruction the US Air Force is capable of. As for a war for US hegemony, that is something altogether more serious and meaty. That is the full Monty and it seems to be the one which the US has been driving for. It is ready, if necessary, for a deep friend-enemy split along the river Bug, a Russian riposte to the NATO drive, its rebuttal followed by a military victory in the Western Balkans leading to long-term confrontation there together with a new Cold War with Russia. The latter could start with the struggle for Ukraine, a really dramatic contest.

We shall see.

## Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



## 6. Conclusion

We will restrict our conclusions to four issues. Some thoughts on NATO's way of approaching the legitimization problem in launching the war; some reflections on alternative IR approaches to explaining the NATO attack; some thoughts on the likely outcome of the US programme for Europe under its hegemonic leadership. And finally some thoughts on normative questions raised in this text.

### The legitimization problem

The question as to what role human rights play in this war for NATO is an important and interesting one. It takes us into two important areas. The first is a problem that NATO leaders have grappled with throughout the 1990s: how to legitimate NATO's turn to 'out of area' aggressive action? Legitimation is needed for *the mass audience* in the NATO countries: the elite citizens of NATOLand can grasp intuitively what 'out of area' aggression is good for - ensuring a disciplined international accumulation process centred on their multinationals, with the disciplines being imposed on populations by their states in line with Atlantic political economy and regime requirements. But the mass audience even in NATOLand itself could find such 'out of area' strikes disturbing. After all, where is the direct pay-off for them when they are not threatened themselves by an enemy that could invade them? This is the first problem.

The second area is how much domestic *rational-intellectual legitimization* matters? And this question leads to two others: first, can the mass audience of NATOLand not be information-managed rather than having to be provided with solidly based-means-ends rational explanation? And the second is whether, if large parts of the mass audience cannot be managed, it really matters?

We will look first at the NATO search for rational legitimations for the mass citizenship. The problem here can be stated as follows: for the mass citizens NATO, as an out of area strike force, has to be legitimised as being somehow *necessary: both worth paying for and worthy of paying for*. The old Cold War NATO could be legitimise as necessary via the supposed Soviet threat to mass citizens of the West. But as Paul Cornish has pointed out, the new NATO will have to be legitimated as “an internally rationalised ‘alliance of choice’ rather than as an externally rationalised ‘alliance of necessity’”.<sup>8</sup> But one way round this problem is to remember the bifurcated citizenship: an alliance of *pragmatic choice* for the elite citizens can be rationalised as some kind of *necessity* for the mass citizens. For example, a *moral necessity* (*imperative*) or a *civilisational necessity*.

And here, Cornish explains, Huntington was very appealing with his concept of ‘a clash of civilisations’. His idea found “a ready audience in NATO, and among Western military audiences more generally...” This is intriguing since on the face of it, Huntington’s analysis is rubbish and has been torn to shreds by lots of scholars, particularly because he says that civilisations are starting to fight each other when we can all see that states do it, not civilisations. And also because he posits civilisations like, say, the Moslem world, as being politically unified. But such criticisms entirely miss Huntington’s point - they are a mass citizen reading of Huntington which assumes his idea is cognitive - a statement about the facts.

But NATO chiefs understood Huntington’s elite code language: he writing was not cognitive at all, it was a normative programme for solving the problem the elite had with mass legitimation of the new NATO. Huntington was saying, let’s mobilise the mass citizens behind the new NATO’s military operations by mobilising them *for a civilisational war*. That was the point.

It was unfortunately a point that NATO’s Secretary General did not fully grasp in a sophisticated enough way in the mid-1990s. Obviously thrilled by Huntington, in early 1995 Willy Claes announced that “Muslim fundamentalism is now as big a threat to the alliance as Communism once was.” This was foolishly crude. NATO, after all, has only fought two wars, both in the 1990s and both in the name of Muslim nations which must surely have a few fundamentalists in their midst

just as all religions do: the Bosnian Muslims and the Kosovar mainly Muslim Albanians.

But Cornish adds: “Nevertheless, Huntington’s thesis has remained a respected point of reference in Western military circles...”<sup>1</sup> So we can see, in the current military campaign against Yugoslavia.

Claes had missed Huntington’s three key real points: first, you must convince the mass citizens of NATO land that values fundamental to their civilisation are under attack and only NATO can do something about it; but second, and more subtly, you must suggest that the source of this attack lies in an alien culture, an alien civilisation. The key thing here is mass suggestion, not Claes idiotically attacking a whole religious movement head on. And Huntington is then offering the elite audience a third programmatic goal, namely, through a series of NATO operations to generate in NATOland a growing conviction that there is indeed a civilisational divide which is becoming a Friend-Enemy divide in potentiality or actuality.

The current NATO military operation on Yugoslavia is precisely an experiment in this kind of operation: first there is the fundamental challenge to fundamental civilisational values: there is genocide, ethnic cleansing, rape, atrocities. Furthermore, as Blair explained, this is happening on what he called ‘Europe’s door step’: notice, not in Europe, but right on the doorsteps of our own home. Europe is our home because it is our civilisation.

Why is Serbia on Europe’s door-step and not in Europe? Because what is going on there is not just ‘Milosevic’ it is the Serbs. This is the suggestion. It has to be, because NATO has to bomb the Serb people - that is what US air power is all about - and this must be legitimised. So they are different. We care about the Kosovar Albanians because we see their suffering faces or dead bodies on the TV. But NATO can brush aside criticisms of killings of Serbs on a train or wherever because they are different, alien, Orthodox and Balkan, and of a different culture.

And the war is also producing the Huntington dialectic: We see Russia outraged, Russians outraged. Why do they not support our

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1. Paul Cornish, *Partnership in Crisis. The US, Europe and the Fall and Rise of NATO*, Chatham House Papers, Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London, 1997) p 9.

civilisational values? We see them on TV at their orthodox churches, we hear their intellectuals talking of war. Why? Because of their civilisational link with their Serbian orthodox South Slav brothers, of course. So we sense a new division opening up in Europe, a civilisational-political split being generated by the NATO war. Thus does Huntington's advice to NATO elites for mass citizen legitimation turn itself into a brilliant piece of positivist prediction of the emerging facts for Huntington's mass citizen academic audience.

Let us be clear, though. This is subtle work. One cannot go around like Claes denouncing other cultures, Slav/orthodox or Muslim. One must leave that up to the *Sun* and the *Mirror*. No, we are above all that, we stand for universalist cosmopolitan values. It is just that over there in the east the most energetic forces don't: they are Slavophile or Muslim or whatever fundamentalists. They must be brought to their senses by humane bombing. This is a *fundamental necessity*, a moral and civilisational imperative.

The whole approach fits very well with Carl Schmitt's 1920s and 1930s concepts of politics as friend-enemy relations and of political sovereignty. It is thus not very new. Indeed, it was the basic approach to mass legitimation used by Germany's government in the second world war. People so easily forget how Germany's government rallied people across Europe behind German leadership in the great European coalition of states against the Soviet Union. That was legitimated essentially culturally, civilisationally - to preserve European civilisation from Asiatic barbarism and, of course, Judeo-Bolshevism. It was a civilisational war for European culture but with a universalist veneer as well - wiping all the Communists and Jews from the face of the entire planet. It is of course true that there was a strong race theory underlying the friend-enemy cultural division. But the effort at fundamentalist mass mobilisation for the values of a culture was basically the same technique. It worked well politically then and it works well now.

We are **not** of course suggesting that current NATO elite's *real* goals are for a civilisational war. They are about rational, pragmatic goals such as political frameworks for maximising state's power and its capital class's accumulation potential. Hitler was different: he really believed in all this nonsense about civilisational wars, even if his erudite advisers like Carl Schmitt did not. He was after genocide. The NATO

leaders are of course not. The fact remains, though, that the legitimation technique can now as then *successfully legitimate* wholesale mass killings of hundreds of thousands and even millions. Anglo-American use of the blockade as a weapon of mass destruction, killing over a million Iraqis, mainly women and children, according to UNICEF, is proceeding smoothly at the time of writing; its legitimation is thoroughly anchored in the British and American mass citizenry.

### **Alternative theories of what has generated the attack on Yugoslavia**

Many analysis are offering an alternative real explanation for the current Yugoslav war. Some are West Balkan-specific. A realist version of this approach would suggest that some, at least, of the NATO states had a strategic stake in Serbia/Kosovo leading them to push for war. Yet there is no evidence of this. None of the NATO powers except Italy, Greece, Turkey and Hungary have strategic state interests in the Western Balkans. And of these four, only one - Turkey - is an enthusiast for this war. Both Greece and Italy have had to be bounced and dragged into the NATO campaign and even if some on the Hungarian right still hanker after annexing Voivodina from Yugoslavia, the bulk of Hungarian elite opinion is in reality in a state of shock over this war and must feel that Hungarian security is being seriously undermined by it. And it would be ludicrous to suggest that Turkey has led its 19 allies single-handed into a Balkan adventure. Indeed, as far as the US and the main West European powers are concerned, their one major strategic interest in the area is to prevent a war between Greece and Turkey, while the NATO Yugoslav campaign is producing extreme military tension between these two powers as the air forces of both are buzzing each other daily in the Eastern Aegean.

Another possible realist explanation is that the leading NATO powers are perhaps engaged in a new battle for *spheres of influence* in South Eastern Europe with Russia, perhaps sparked by the arrival of Primakov to power, leading NATO to fear a military alliance between Serbia and Russia in the Balkans. Yet there is no evidence whatever for that and if there had been such a risk, Washington would surely have leaked the information out by now. Russia was instead working with NATO in the Contact Group right up to the moment when the war was

launched. And apart from Serbia all the other states of South East Europe were in NATO's hands for the asking, queuing up to join the alliance. In the context of NATO's enlargement decision, Russia's President Yeltsin had declared his intention to form of military alliance with Bulgaria but that turned out to be empty bombast and, in any event, a combination of the IMF and financial instability had removed Bulgaria's Socialist government and produced a new pro-American government there as in Romania. Both states are furnishing NATO with military facilities during the war.

It is just possible that the USA is interested in anchoring its own political dominance over South East Europe via this war. It could do so via turning war-time co-operation into agreements to establish US bases in various parts of Central and South East Europe. The political function of such bases would be to stake out the countries concerned as within an American rather than a West European sphere of influence. But, as yet, we have not seen much evidence of such an intention.

Again, NATO can hardly be said to have significant imperial economic and political objectives in the Western Balkans. There are the potentially valuable mines in northern Kosovo and no doubt the bombing of all the industrial plants, infrastructure and bridges in Serbia is whetting appetites among transatlantic construction companies and multinationals for profitable post-war business. But it is surely absurd to argue that this has prompted the NATO action. Western capital has far easier ways of transferring ownership of such assets into their own hands than launching a war. As for the idea of taking over the Western Balkans with a collective or US set of protectorate colonies, that is absolutely the very last thing that the US and its allies could wish for, although they are being dragged into it by mistake in this war.

Liberal theories of the war as being driven by domestic public opinion in the NATO states rather than by statist power interests cannot be taken seriously since causality so obviously went the other way around: the currently strong mass citizen political will around 'human rights' has not shaped the will of its state: exactly the reverse. The mass-citizen will has been *formed by the NATO states*. A dispassionate research on US politics on the eve of the war shows that public opinion was out of it. Hence Clinton's call the day before it started for people to find out where Kosovo was. Hence too the absence of Congressional

pro-war leaderships.

In short, we return to where we began, with President Clinton on 23 March: A 'strong European US partnership' is what this Kosovo thing is *all about*. We just have to learn how to understand the language of all that to see what he means.

### **The US European programme: internally Oakshott, but led by Carl Schmitt**

The Clinton administration programme for the EU entails turning it into an Oakshottian 'civil association' in which the governance mechanism has nothing to do with democratic will formation of any kind. The EU is united by no common, collective enterprise whatever. It is simply a framework for regulating capitalist accumulation. These features are already strongly evident within the EU. But large political forces in Europe have hoped that the EU is in a continuing process of integration towards a fully fledged democratic federal state. The US programme freezes the EU as it is, indeed it pushes it further down the Oakshottian path.

This, however, does not mean that the EU will lack a political sovereign. It will most certainly have a fully fledged sovereign: a Schmittian sovereign in the form of a US-led NATO constantly defining and redefining the friend-enemy relations of the EU community - in reality a particular kind of transatlantic community. At one moment the friend-enemy identity of the EU community will be 'human rights versus Milosevic', at another it will be 'children's rights versus whoever', and so on and so on. The EU, thus, in its external orientation will not at all be an Oakshottian Civil Association. It will be a Schmittian enterprise state. The sovereign will be the US in shifting combinations with Germany at one point and France-UK at other points. The result could be a very enterprising EU community indeed, striking with military power all over the place, deep into the Persian Gulf of even the Far East, not to speak of Eastern Europe and Africa.

The Atlantic community will be a peculiar one because it will only exist in the EU, not in the US. The US community will be a fully fledged national community which will not remotely feel itself to be tied to EU-Europe.

This is a very attractive programme for large parts of big capital

within the EU. With the political cap on the EU being supplied by the US rather than by either political federalism or by a West European political bloc, the only powerful policy input into the EU commission black box will come from big capital.

The leaders of European social democracy seem ready to go along with it. Only Oscar Lafontaine stood out. The fact that he did so is important. But will he be prepared to rally parts of the base of European social democracy for another vision and programme? We do not know.

### **Normative issues**

The European left is faced by two big normative issues by the imperial manoeuvrings described in this article: a defensive one and a positive one.

We have to admit that the Anglo-American imperial leaders have, for the moment, snatched a banner from the Left: the banner of human rights. They have done so by means of a simple trick: making us forget that human rights in practice require a material basis if they are actually to exist - they require a viable economic development model; a state capable of asserting its authority positively, through demonstrating its capacity to deliver a better life to the majority of its population; a state capable of feeling itself in a secure enough international environment to relax authoritarian tendencies and military budgets. Yet these are precisely the preconditions for human rights which the new imperialism of globalisation is destroying. We have entered the era of a globalisation which produces states under strain in the south, damaged states, states in crisis, states exploding, states convulsing into civil war. Political forces in states trying to hold the show on the road in the interests of their domestic capitals turn to whatever they can lay their hands on to shore up state authority: often scape-goating minorities works for a while. Then the Atlantic imperial centres can decide who to strike at, who not, depending on geo-economic and geo-political interests or upon the necessities thrown up by the byzantine power struggles within the imperial bloc. At this point, human rights mobilisation for war takes place.

Globalisation imperialism is systematically destroying the basis for human rights. That has been the whole tragic story of the peoples of Yugoslavia. It must be stopped.

But that raises the second normative issue: how can the left move forward to stop it? The starting point is those on the left who have taken a stand in principle against this war. That rules out the leaders of Social democracy but not at all their members. But those parties on the left which have opposed the war, the PDS, Izquierda Unida and Refundazione Comunista and others, could form an alliance for a new start. So could Oscar Lafontaine, if he were to come forward with a positive programme.

That programme in Europe would have to break not only with the American plan for Europe but with the quasi-alternative plan of the current EU leaders outside the Anglo-American camp. It should be a programme for a United Europe, the whole of Europe including Russia and Ukraine. It should be a socialist developmental programme that opposes neo-liberalism, the mercantilism of the EU and the new international globalisation imperialism of the increasingly unified Atlantic imperialism we now see attacking Yugoslavia. It would be a programme not only for Human Rights but for the Causes of Human Rights. It is a tall order, a long struggle. But this war marks the start. It is a new, fundamental dividing line.

### **A real solution in the Western Balkans**

A solution to the plight of the various Albanian and Slav communities in the region also requires an entirely new political framework of a regional kind which breaks with the Western powers' drive in the region in the 1990s which has, in effect, fragmented the populations into small, and often largely non-viable statelets. Bosnia survives only as a paper state which is in reality a NATO protectorate. Macedonia survives through US determination to prevent the Albanian minority there from either separating or gaining a federal state structure. A separate Kosovo would have to be a NATO protectorate, not least to prevent a KLA government from achieving the goal of a Greater Albania. The Serbian population is divided into the Srbska Republika 'entity' and in what will be a defeated and embattled Serbia. Montenegro's future is at risk. And every one of these statelets must devote desperately meagre resources to large military budgets while most of their populations cling to nationalist leaderships in the hope of some minimal safety. The only genuine winner among the states in the Yugoslav theatre (apart from

Slovenia, which has escaped the scene) is Croatia, thanks to its great power support. Yet Tudjman's triumphs have only increased his appetite for new conquests, in particular a slice of Bosnia which he has already, de facto, swallowed.<sup>2</sup>

The search for a new regional political framework which can provide all the Albanian and the Slav communities with a new unity and security must involve a new programme for Balkan confederation or federation. And such a new project can come only from social and political movements among the peoples of the region. Before the current NATO aggression against the region's largest nation it was still perhaps conceivable that the Western powers could have gained sufficient trust to have had a semblance of being a 'pouvoir neutre' that might encourage such an endogenous popular movement for reconciliation and partial re-unification. Now that is impossible in the short or even medium term. Any such endogenous movement of reconciliation will now have to repudiate this NATO aggression to have any credibility.

Some may imagine that the NATO powers may actually take responsibility for the lives of the people of the region and may itself engineer a new politics and a new start. But this is to completely misunderstand the basic premise of the whole operation of the Western powers in the Yugoslav theatre since the late 1980s. That premise is that not a single one of the NATO powers has a vital state interest in ex-Yugoslavia. For the European Union their only vital interest is containment of conflict, above all containment of refugee movements. The US does not even have that stake in the region's future. Taking responsibility and re-engineering for a secure and better future means creating a year zero and a 10 year occupation of the region as was done by the US in Germany from 1945 to 1955. It would mean occupying Serbia and turning the whole region into a protectorate and starting from scratch. This is a utopian dream. The only reason the US was prepared to send any ground troops to the region for this Kosovo operation was because the EU states refused to put troops into Kosovo, without US troops present, for fear that the US would turn such troops into hostages by engaging in one of its bombing orgies. Of course, the

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2. Brooke Unger has made this point forcefully. See his "The Balkans: The Two Culprits", *The Economist*, 24 January 1998

NATO powers will need to put on a show of 'doing something' for the region in the aftermath of the conflict for the sake of domestic opinion management. But their entire record and inner nature dictates that 'doing something' will amount to nothing significant in the medium-term.

But a NATO 'victory' in this war should achieve the Clinton administration's central objective in waging the war: the winning of Western Europe's political systems over to US leadership of the new, aggressive NATO. After all, the political elites of all the main parties of Western Europe now find themselves justifying, day in and day out, the vital necessity and enormous human value of the new NATO: Western Europe is being won to the idea that attacking damaged sovereign states is good, shattering their military forces, infrastructures and economies is good, ignoring the UN Charter and the checks built into the UN Security Council structure is good; marginalising and excluding a currently weak Russia is good; humiliating and ignoring the interests of the largest nation in former Yugoslavia, the Serbs, is vital. And we Europeans could never have achieved all these things without the generous leadership of the United States.