

SOME GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE KOSOVO CONFLICT

By C J Dick

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATO in this conflict may have changed **international law** by:

Arguing that moral considerations override international law

Usurping the role of the UN by deciding when force is justified,

Possibly leading to the overturning of the Helsinki Final Act and further actions.

Implications of a long war

If the war drags on, NATO credibility could be fatally damaged.

The reversal of ethnic cleansing and return of refugees become increasingly problematical.

It may spread to the Sanjak, Vojvodina and Montenegro, and engulf Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It will exacerbate Russian grievances against the West, will be used in Russia's internal power struggle, and may lead to a new authoritarian regime there aiding Belgrade.

Implications of a NATO victory

Even a NATO victory, however defined, will not solve the region's problems; it may lead to increased demands and the breakup of Yugoslavia.

A defeated Serbia will become more embittered and others will attempt to settle old scores.

Therefore substantial peacekeeping forces will be needed for decades. This implies some clawing back of the 'peace dividend'.

Russian paranoia will wonder where NATO will turn next, and rearmament may follow, which is not in Western interests.

Other countries will question the dominant role of the US as world policeman; this may weaken alliance solidarity; some states will feel themselves forced into acquiring weapons of mass destruction in response.

Implications of a NATO defeat

Even limited success may be perceived or presented as failure or defeat.

Milosevic can assure his place in history, and indulge in more ethnic cleansing in other areas.

In defiance of Dayton, Serbia and Republika Srpska could unite; Serbia could revive the partitioning of Bosnia-Herzegovina with Croatia.

Macedonia could become ripe for partition or seizure.

Even if this does not lead to a general Balkan war, countries and other actors which currently see NATO as a source of security will see its prestige and credibility ruined. They may seek changes of their own, will be less disposed to help NATO in future, and NATO will find success even harder next time, if it continues to exist at all. The calculus of advantage and disadvantage of membership will have changed, and some renationalising of security policies is inevitable.

Conclusions

While success brings problems, failure brings catastrophe. Time is not on NATO's side, only success and consequent willingness to accept casualties will restore credibility. A 'Marshall Aid' approach to Albania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia coupled with including the UN and Russia in a settlement will refute claims of a hegemonic agenda.

A feel-good, low cost defence policy is not suited to a NATO that can undertake collective commitments. The more impressive forces are, the less need there will be to use them.

It should not be possible for NATO to appear a tool of, or cover for, US policy; there needs to be a stronger European input, from EU or WEU.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Since the end of the Cold War there have been many hot conflicts in Europe, mostly with ethno-nationalist origins. The roll call (omitting former-Soviet central Asia) includes: Nagorno-Karabakh, a Georgian civil war, Abkhazia, North Ossetia, Chechnya, Transdnestria, the Slovenian and Croatian struggles for independence and the wars over Bosnia. The latest one, over Kosovo, is however, qualitatively different. It has led to the NATO alliance attacking a sovereign, independent state to interfere in its internal affairs without a UN mandate to do so, an action specifically prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations. NATO's leaders argue forcefully that morality is, in this case, a more important consideration than international law: the brutal Serbian ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, the moral equivalent of Hitler's genocidal actions, cannot be tolerated. Had the alliance done so, it would have appeared at best cynical, parochial and even amoral and at worst it would have been written off as irrelevant to the security needs of post-Cold War Europe.

Whether western governments are right or wrong in this contention is a matter of opinion. The consequences of their actions, however, are undeniable.

- NATO has set an important precedent; that pressing moral considerations over-ride international law. The latter is unambiguous, but the former lie in the eyes of the beholder. In

the future, other governments can, and almost certainly will, use the alliance's action to excuse similar interventions in other countries.

- NATO has usurped the role of the UN and other international bodies such as the OSCE and taken upon itself the responsibility for deciding where, when and in what circumstances aggressive military action is justified. This will confirm the prejudice which exists in some countries that the alliance is an aggressive, hegemonic organization. This fear will complicate international relations in ways that are, as yet, unclear; but it will not be helpful.
- NATO war aims may change as the conflict drags on, emotions heighten and positions harden. NATO might insist on full independence for Kosovo, or on union with Albania, thus overturning the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Other developments could, for instance, raise the questions of the status of the Sanjak and/or Vojvodina (see below) and lead to NATO trying to impose a settlement of these issues on Yugoslavia. The alliance may attempt to overthrow President Milosevic and bring to book both him and others accused by it of war crimes. Such further extensions of the NATO action in the name of a higher morality would be further breaches of international law and would compound the fears of other states.

IMPLICATIONS OF A LONG WAR

The wars of Yugoslav succession have already brought NATO within measurable distance of disintegration through disunity: had the Bosnian war not been brought to termination in 1995 by the Dayton agreement (however unsatisfactory and temporary that may be), there would surely have been a trans-Atlantic rift and probably an intra-European one as well. If the current war drags on, the credibility of NATO, already damaged by its apparent inability or reluctance to impose its will on Yugoslavia, could be fatally damaged. Alliance cohesion could be destroyed as lukewarm governments withdraw support and increasingly adverse public opinion in other countries pressures their leaders to follow suit. Prolongation, with the inevitable intensification of doubts that it must bring, can only make things worse, perhaps thwarting any eventual attempt to introduce a potentially more decisive strategy. Moreover, the war is already costing both NATO and non-NATO Balkan countries dear in economic, and in some cases social, terms, undermining their resolution to continue support.

NATO leaders repeatedly stress that the reversal of ethnic cleansing and the return of Kosovar refugees to their homes under armed protection are essential preconditions for peace. The longer the struggle lasts, however, the more problematical these may become, even if the alliance holds together. Both moral imperatives and practical considerations make it increasingly difficult to retain huge and growing numbers of refugees *sine die* in the region with Europe's poorest countries playing more or less reluctant hosts. Yet if they are removed to places of greater safety where they can be looked after properly, the difficulty of persuading them to return grows with time, *vide* the problems with those from Bosnia. Moreover, Albania, Macedonia (not to mention Montenegro) are far from stable havens, either for the refugees or

for the provision of a concentration area for a NATO ground forces' build-up in the event that the alliance decides that aerial bombardment alone will not bring Serbia to heel and that a ground intervention is therefore necessary. The longer the conflict, the more the likelihood that these countries will become destabilized.

The conflict may spread to other parts of Yugoslavia, either as a result of President Milosevic's policy decisions or because other oppressed minorities rebel.

- **The Sanjak**, the region which straddles the border of Montenegro and Serbia, had a Muslim population amounting to 45% of the total according to the 1991 census: Muslims were in a majority in five of its 11 communes. The flight of Bosniaks, and now Kosovars, has increased the Muslim population. The Bosniak Party of Democratic Action is strong in the Sanjak, especially in the Serb part, and both it and the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina would like the Sanjak to join the latter. Tension between Muslims and Serbs, who see the war as a struggle for the defence of Orthodoxy against militant Islam, is rising. The region could easily be drawn into the conflict.
- **Vojvodina**, the most northerly province of Serbia, has been another troubled area since its autonomy was rescinded in 1989 (at the same time as Kosovo's). Once a majority there, the Hungarian population had declined to 17% by the census of 1991: its proportion has declined further as a result of emigration and Serb immigration during the wars of Yugoslav succession. Both the Hungarians and the smaller Croat population are oppressed minorities who may well seek outside help (especially now that Hungary is in NATO) or who may become victims of further ethnic cleansing in the province.
- **Montenegro**, Serbia's junior partner in the Yugoslav Federation, is strategically important to Serbia as it provides that country with its only direct access to the sea. It is also a divided country. In 1991, 61.7% of the population declared itself Montenegrin and 9.3% said they were Serbs. The former group is split between those who favour independence and those who believe in a greater Serbia. President Milosevic has continually interfered in Montenegrin politics, even using Serbian economic muscle to apply pressure, in order to further the unionist cause. To complicate matters, 14.6% were Muslims and 6.6% Albanian. Refugees from the Bosnian war (in which Montenegrin support for the Serbs was lukewarm) swelled the ranks of the Muslims and, as of mid April 1999, the country's 41000 Albanians had been augmented by at least 36700 Kosovars. Thus, Montenegro's stability is fragile. Milosevic is likely to use the current conflict to try to topple the Montenegrin nationalist government of Milo Djukanovic and install a loyal supporter of himself.

The conflict could also spread to engulf three of Yugoslavia's neighbours, either spontaneously or as a result of provocations engineered by the regime in Belgrade.

- **Albania** has been all but a failed state since the civil war which followed the pyramid scandal of 1997. The writ of its government hardly runs outside Tirana. There is enmity between the southern, largely Christian Tosks (and the country's approximately 1.8% Greeks) and the northern, largely Muslim Ghegs. The latter have traditionally favoured the acquisition of Kosovo (though enthusiasm has been on the wane recently). By mid April 1999, 274,000 embittered Kosovars had fled to Albania – the equivalent of 13% of Albania's population: more are flooding in as ethnic cleansing proceeds in Kosovo. The refugee crisis will cripple the country's ability to rebuild its economy and will further undermine social stability. Another civil war is a distinct possibility, and one that might be welcomed by President Milosevic. Perhaps Serbian military forays into the country have as much to do with this as with attacking the KLA's bases.
- **Macedonia** is almost as fragile as Albania. In 1994, 66.4% of its people were Macedonian, at least 23.1% were Albanian (the latter claim the figure to be nearer 30%), 3.9% were Turkish and another 1.2% were Muslim. Facing hostility from Greece, which went as far as economic sanctions, the possibility of an attempted take-over by Bulgaria, which regards the Macedonians as Bulgarians, and the possible restoration of "South Serbia" by Milosevic, Macedonia's future looked bleak when it seceded from Yugoslavia in 1991. To the surprise of many, this poor country managed (with the help of the UNPREDEP monitoring force) to avoid being dragged into the wars of Yugoslav succession and to avoid a Slav-Albanian conflict. However, merely as of mid April 1999, 120,000 or so Kosovars had added 25% to the Albanian population. As well as with Albania itself, these refugees, of whom there will be many more to come, could well do for Macedonia what the Palestinian exiles did for Lebanon. Milosevic can be expected to try to bring this about if NATO persists in its attacks, especially if the alliance decides to use Macedonia as a launch pad for an invasion of Kosovo.
- The Republic of **Bosnia-Herzegovina** is not so much a failed state as one which is yet to be created, save on paper. None of the three main constituent nationalities, but particularly the Serbs, is content with the Dayton settlement and only international agreement and SFOR keeps it together. Here are deeply troubled waters in which Milosevic could fish to cause difficulties for NATO.

Russia already nurses a long list of grievances against the West, which is perceived as trying to keep Russia down and remake the world while she is weak. Western misdeeds, in Russian eyes, include: failing sufficiently to aid Russia's ailing economy while at the same time trying to force inappropriate

reform medicine down Russian throats and turning the country into an economic colony, a source of cheap raw materials and a market for dumping; stealing Russian markets and attempting to block her sales of arms and nuclear technology; inciting CIS states, especially Ukraine, against Russia; trying to limit Russian influence in the Trans –caucasus and central Asia with a view to controlling energy resources and transit routes; encouraging Balts and others to repress Russian minorities; establishing political and military hegemony through the expansion of NATO and the crushing of such Russian friends as Iraq and now Serbia. The last of these complaints is being given added force by the illegal allied air attack and the mounting threat of a ground invasion.

- From the outset, the war has been used as a weapon in the internal power struggle in Russia. Hostility to the West in general and NATO in particular is growing amongst opinion formers and the public at large, strengthening the reds and the browns (communists and nationalists). Even many pro-western liberals are not merely on the defensive but actually disillusioned. A prolongation of the conflict could help to bring about illiberal political change in Russia. The harmful consequences of a red-brown accession to power would probably be great, yet such a government could possibly mobilize popular support for a stronger defence policy and reassertion of Russia's great power status and use it as an excuse for economic stagnation and a mask for its corruption and incompetence. President Milosevic pulled off the same trick in Serbia.
- Such a new regime in Moscow could give useful diplomatic support to Belgrade, even, perhaps, to the extent of going along with the notion of the proposed slavic union of Russia, Belarus and Yugoslavia. It could offer military help in the form of intelligence, the provision of weapons and perhaps of "volunteers", especially to operate sophisticated hardware. These developments could weaken NATO resolve, would complicate alliance decision-making and actions and would reinforce Milosevic's position and determination to ride out the storm.
- The longer the crisis continues, the more long-lasting and difficult to repair will be the damage done to NATO-Russian cooperation in particular and western-Russian relations in general.

While Russian (and Belorussian) negative reactions were to be expected, western governments may have been surprised by the almost equally hostile reaction of Ukraine. Here, too, popular anti-NATO feelings may well intensify if the war drags on. This may in turn make it more difficult for the government to continue its difficult balancing act between Russia and the West, with a perceptible bias towards the latter.

IMPLICATIONS OF A NATO VICTORY

In considering this topic, one is hampered by uncertainty as to what NATO will consider as victory and how far the alliance will be prepared to go to achieve it. The working assumption made here is that NATO will be happy to settle for and able to impose something only somewhat harsher than the

Rambouillet terms – say the return of Kosovar refugees of all stripes to a province that is made into a UN protectorate and garrisoned by blue-helmeted troops. It may well be that the longer the war lasts, the greater will be the temptation to make demands well beyond those proposed in France. The more draconian those terms are, the more serious will be the possible negative results that are outlined below. But that there will inevitably be a negative fall-out from victory cannot be in doubt: the trick will be to minimize the adverse consequences.

Strained to breaking point by defeat, with Serb power and prestige fatally impaired, Yugoslavia could break up. Kosovo, or most of it, would certainly be *de jure* or at least *de facto* detached from Serbia, either as a protectorate (of the UN, the OSCE or NATO?), as an independent state of dubious viability or as a new province of Albania. Montenegro might seize independence. Croatia might be tempted to seize the strategically significant Prevlaka peninsula (currently a UN protectorate). The Sanjak might seek union with Bosnia, a move which would be opposed by the Croats in the Federation and possibly by Croatia itself. While it is unlikely that Vojvodina would be awarded to Hungary it might possibly be partitioned or, more likely, be made into a protectorate like Kosovo. The consequences of a such a complete or partial disintegration of Yugoslavia would probably be as follows.

- Serbia, reduced to its 1913 boundaries, would become an even more embittered anti-western power perceived as a revanchist threat by its neighbours. It could become a haven for and sponsor of terrorists.
- Ethno-nationalist problems would persist, even if they did not worsen as various peoples sought to settle scores with the once dominant Serbs. The national and religious groups in the region are too intermingled and the competing historical and legal claims (not to mention memories) are too numerous for the defeat of Serbia to settle anything much.
- Consequently, there would be a requirement for substantial peacekeeping forces to be stationed in the area if further conflict was to be prevented. These would be needed for decades rather than years if peace were to be transformed from a mere absence of fighting into something more positive. It is, however, possible that a major "Marshall Plan" style economic aid package would hasten progress towards real peace. Would the western taxpayer be willing to pay this price?

It is to be hoped that a NATO victory and the redefinition of international law that the alliance would in consequence have wrought would make Europe at least a safer place. Would-be aggressive dictators would have learned the lesson that they cannot with impunity attack other states or seriously maltreat their own people. However, for this lesson to be effective, NATO would have to build up and maintain such strong armed forces that its capacity to both keep the peace in areas for which it had accepted responsibility and to intervene elsewhere could not be in doubt. This implies some clawing back of the "peace dividend". Will western taxpayers be prepared to assume the burden of their countries becoming Europe's policemen? Even if they are, it should not be assumed that the political will shown in this war and the

capability to fight the next will automatically translate into effective deterrence. Leaders change and potential aggressors may, in future, calculate that the new ones will lack the political will of their predecessors. Moreover, dissatisfied ethnic groups will also draw conclusions from the Kosovo war. Rejecting Rugova's policy of passive resistance to Serb rule, the KLA embarked on war. The result of its resort to arms and the excessive Serbian response, captured on television, has been NATO intervention. Other disgruntled minorities will surely follow in its footsteps in the hope of the same result. NATO success in the present war could thus make future conflict more and not less likely.

A NATO victory is unlikely to be welcomed in Russia. Quite apart from the humiliation of seeing a friendly state defeated and being unable to influence the outcome, many Russians will see the war, like NATO enlargement, as confirmation that the alliance is an aggressive, predatory grouping. Having established its grip on the Balkans, whither will it turn its attention next? The Transcaucasus? Central Asia? Perhaps Russia itself, to dismember the country in the name of justice for the Chechens and other non-Russian (and Muslim) peoples? Why else has NATO sought unilaterally, in defiance of Russian wishes, to change the principles of international law as embedded in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act? Russian paranoia, never far below the surface, is quite capable of misconstruing western motivation and seeing every move as a threat. Pro-western liberals will lose support and become less vocal. Communists and nationalists will grow in strength and confidence. At best, the war will do no more than delay progress towards meaningful democracy and a properly functioning market economy in Russia and prevent the resumption of NATO-Russian cooperation, or at least limit its scope and practical value. At worst, a NATO victory could help towards the restoration of an authoritarian regime in Moscow and/or an attempt by the Russian government to strengthen its security through the traditional means of increasing Russian military power. However understandable, a major Russian attempt to rearm would probably be economically disastrous. The burden of excessive military expenditure could even lead to the break of the federation, just as it helped to bring about the collapse of the USSR. Great and possibly prolonged instability in such a massive, nuclear armed, country would not be in the West's political or security interests.

It is not only Russia, and, for that matter, the other Slav republics of the fSU, that would dislike the consequences of a US-NATO triumph in the Balkans. The alliance's sidelining of the UN and the OSCE and arrogation to itself of the role of Europe's policeman, the sole arbiter of right and wrong, will, perhaps paradoxically, result in further questioning of the alliance's place in, and US dominance of, the security architecture of Europe. Already, even some friends of the USA have reservations about that country's high-handed approach to some problems of international relations. Such actions as the bombing of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan in defiance of international law and with no clear justification and attempts to impose American trade policies on the rest of the world in relation to states like Cuba and Iran arouse fears about the arrogance of power. In countries such as France, where anti-Americanism is already quite strong, fears that the USA is using NATO to pursue its own political and military interests are likely to be intensified by victory over the Serbs. This sentiment could threaten alliance solidarity in future and create problems for both it in general and the USA in particular in

the wider world. It would certainly strengthen the antipathy of Russia and probably other states to any further NATO widening.

If the perception grows that the USA has hegemonic ambitions, especially if NATO is seen as its willing tool, some states which rightly or wrongly see themselves as possible victims of intervention will seek asymmetric responses to the use against them of overwhelming conventional military power. Aware of extreme American sensitivity to even small casualties, a trait increasingly shared by some of its allies, they may seek to acquire (or accelerate development of) weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means. Fear, however ill founded, is the enemy of non-proliferation regimes, and weapons for deterrence can also be used for waging armed conflict.

IMPLICATIONS OF A NATO DEFEAT

The previous section suggests that even a NATO victory could have its downside. War, as so many politicians have discovered in the past, may not only fail to solve old problems but may exacerbate some others and create new ones. However, for those who regard NATO as essentially a force for good, the implications of failure are immeasurably worse.

Defeat, in the context of the Kosovo struggle, is even more difficult to define than victory. Plainly, an alliance acceptance of the *de facto* Serb retention of an ethnically cleansed Kosovo would come into this category. But what of some compromise deal, dressed up in impressive-sounding verbiage? Defeat, in this case, would (like beauty) be very much in the eye of the beholder. What to some countries and/or leaders would appear to be a sensible, even reasonable, settlement could be interpreted by others as a climb-down by the alliance. What matters, therefore, are each actor's perceptions and the subsequent decisions taken on the basis of them. As so often happens, a compromise may create the conditions for misinterpretations which may sow or nurture the seeds of future conflicts.

The most immediate effects of a perceived failure of NATO to impose its will on Serbia would probably be felt in former-Yugoslavia and the Balkans generally. A victorious President Milosevic would be more securely in power than ever. He would be able to eliminate his political enemies and rivals in Serbia and Montenegro. He might well feel secure enough, both from internal opposition and external threat, to go on to realize the dream of a greater, purer Serbia and thus assure his place as a great hero in the history books of his country.

- Pursuing the aim of an ethnically pure country, Milosevic could extend ethnic cleansing to other parts of his domain, eliminating once and for all the weakness that diversity has historically carried in its wake. To a man prepared to expel or kill upwards of 1.6 million Albanian Kosovars, the removal of another 700000 or so Hungarians, Croats and Muslims would not be an inconceivable project.
- In defiance of the Dayton agreement, Serbia and Republika Srpska could unite. Milosevic, knowing how little love is lost between Croats and Bosniaks, could even revive the project of partitioning Bosnia-

Hercegovina between Serbia and Croatia, thus removing the prospect of a Muslim state in their midst which is offensive to both.

- Milosevic could turn his attention to Macedonia. Already destabilized by an influx of Kosovars and the perceived failure of NATO, Macedonia could quickly become a failed state ripe for partition between its neighbours or even for outright seizure.

Any of the above attempts at territorial expansion could, as has been widely discussed, lead to a more general Balkan war involving Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and Turkey – and perhaps others. Such a war would surely destroy a NATO already weakened by failure.

Failure over Kosovo even if it did not lead (at least immediately) to the collapse of security in the Balkan region, let alone to a regional war, would obviously have far reaching implications for NATO and for Europe. The alliance's shift from being a collective defence organization to one devoted to wider collective security, enforcing internationally acceptable standards of behaviour, would be called into question. The damage done to NATO's prestige and credibility would mean the end of an era where the mere threat of its apparently awesome and unrivalled power would be enough to compel obedience to its wishes. Several consequences could follow from this psychological change.

- PfP partners and would-be members, who currently see NATO as a source of security, stability and an aid towards democratization and prosperity, may well lose enthusiasm for the project. Several states, members, non-members and aspirants alike, may feel less incentive to behave well towards their citizens or their neighbours.
- States and/or non-state actors which wish to change the *status quo*, either internally or in respect of borders, might be emboldened to resort to force to do so. This would compel the alliance either to abandon its pretensions or to become involved in further struggles in circumstances immeasurably less favorable than those prevailing over Kosovo. Having stumbled at the Kosovo hurdle, the alliance would find it difficult, requiring much more effort, to clear a subsequent, and higher, one. Moreover, future crises would perhaps be unlikely to come singly. With limited political will and limited forces involved in one area, the alliance would be ill-placed to face up to a near-simultaneous challenge in another. In international affairs, one actor's difficulty often means another's opportunity. There are several potentially revisionist states in Europe.
- Non-member states may be less disposed to help NATO in future crises, for instance by providing overflight rights or basing facilities or by cooperating with sanctions regimes. For that matter, even members who perceive themselves to be in a vulnerable position might prove unhelpful too.
- Worst of all, NATO failure in the Kosovo or some follow-on crisis could spell the end of the alliance, save perhaps as a formal shell with no real substance. Being a member of a collective security organization can often involve the acceptance of real risks and sacrifices for causes in which narrow, national interests are not involved or are

even adversely affected. Countries may accept this for the greater good and because they too might need help sometime. A NATO which fails (and it cannot live on its past successes – it is as good as its last crisis) might change the calculus of advantage and disadvantage of membership for many of its members. Some countries, even if remaining formal members, may well re-nationalize their security policies and respond selectively to crises. This would render impossible the timely, united and appropriate response that is essential to success.

CONCLUSIONS

While success in Kosovo will bring its own problems in train, failure will bring catastrophe. Europe must not be returned to the state it was in during the thirties, when isolationism in the USA and the failure of the League of Nations led to a situation where states followed their narrow national interests and the strong could prey on the weak. Having crossed its Rubicon in Kosovo, whether advisedly or not, NATO must see the adventure through to a successful conclusion. Even greater things are at stake than the fate of the Kosovars. Moreover, it must do so quickly. Time is not on the side of the alliance. A decisive strategy, politically as well as militarily, must be adopted immediately, even at the risk of allied casualties: indeed, only by being seen to be willing to suffer will NATO restore its shaken credibility.

Carrots as well as sticks should be used to achieve alliance aims. Generous offers of money should be made, not only to rebuild Kosovo and sort out some of Macedonia's and Albania's problems but also to repair the damage done in Yugoslavia. Such a "Marshall Aid" approach, coupled with a willingness to internationalize the settlement of the Kosovo problem, involving Russia and the UN, would give the lie to suggestions that the USA and NATO are pursuing a hegemonic agenda rather than a disinterested goal of collective security.

Member states of NATO must also learn lessons from the episode. The end of the Cold War removed the relatively small threat (so long as NATO kept up its guard) of a great, catastrophic hot war, but it simultaneously increased greatly the likelihood of lesser intra- and even inter-state wars (equally catastrophic for those caught up in them). There is no "new World order" that is, as it were, self enforcing. To be successful, collective security requires expense and effort – and sometimes blood. Following the end of the Cold War, the governments of NATO gleefully declared peace dividends. Their assumption was that strong armed forces would no longer be required. There would be no need to prepare for an Article V commitment. Aerial and maritime coercion might be needed from time to time, with ground forces being reduced to a peacekeeping and perhaps minor coercive role. This feel-good, low cost defence policy is not suited to a collective security organization in a World containing well-armed Saddam Husseins and Slobodan Milosevics. Collective security does not come cheaply if resources are provided that match implied commitments. NATO needs strong ground forces, including significant ready and rapidly deployable elements, if it is to take on a pan-European role rather than act as a cosy club which ignores developments outside its walls. Fortunately, the more impressive they are

and the greater the apparent readiness to use them for good, the less likelihood there is of a need to use them.

It should not be possible for NATO to be seen as simply a tool of, or legal cover for, American policy. As long as US forces form the overwhelming preponderance of any NATO force, this jibe, with all its unfortunate political consequences, can be made. Moreover, American voters are unlikely to tolerate indefinitely the main burden of collective security in Europe. There needs to be a strong European pillar helping to hold up NATO. Whether this comes from an invigorated WEU or a military arm of the EU, as part of a common foreign and security policy, it is urgently required not merely in the name of burden sharing but so that Europeans can be seen to take seriously their responsibilities for European security. Who knows, it may even prove cheaper in the long run than the costs of belated and ineffective reactions to crises and paying the subsequent social and economic costs of reconstruction.

The Conflict Studies Research Centre

Directorate General Development and Doctrine
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
Camberley Telephone : (44) 1276 412346
Surrey Or 412375
GU15 4PQ Fax : (44) 1276 686880
England E-mail: csrc.dgd&d@gtnet.gov.uk