

BEYOND TRAGEDY: NATO'S INTERVENTION IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

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Tragedy is born from an awareness of existential horror and absurdity.¹ It brings forth the “terrifying aspects of existence,” as Karl Jaspers noted, making us conscious of the “strange and sinister fate” which we cannot escape.² With the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, the horrors and bloodshed that abounded left little doubt in popular perceptions that what was occurring constituted a modern “tragedy.” The narrative offered by analysts and historians has, for the most part, relied on “explanation by emplotment,” a story structured by an overarching conception of the tragic.³ Such explanations have focused on themes of old hatreds and an “excess of memory” that tore the fabric of Yugoslav society to shreds, on diffidence, factional politics, and half-hearted initiatives resulting in Western inertia, or a “clash of civilizations” shaped by larger historical forces dominating the present. No matter how the event has been dissected, an air of fatality and misfortune persists to loom over the wreckage of the Balkans.⁴

Rather than a narrative of tragedy, however, it is tempting to view the Balkan conflict as an anatomy of power and *Realpolitik*. The humanitarian and irenic discourse that surrounded the Yugoslav civil war and provided the context for military intervention nourished a conception of tragedy. Yet moral language proved to be more rhetoric than reality as policy makers constructed a

¹ See: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. by Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956), section VII passim.

² Karl Jaspers, *Tragedy Is Not Enough*, trans. by Herald Reiche, (Hamden: Archon, 1969), 41, 45.

³ See: Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 7-11.

⁴ Examples of such works include: Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Disillusion After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995); Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Paul Ricoeur, “Memory—Forgetting—History,” *Meaning and Representation in History*, Jörn Rüsen, ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Joyce P. Kaufman, *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict, and The Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: The Free Press, 1997).

particular interpretation of the crisis conducive to economic and strategic ends. The convergence of international interests on a small corner of Eastern Europe transcended the ethnic struggles destabilizing the region with the fighting between Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks concealing the global dimensions that came to frame the conflict. Far from promoting peace, intervention exacerbated and even encouraged violence in some instances as the exigencies dictated by *Realpolitik*, *Machtpolitik*, and strategic concerns led to the brutalization of warfare tactics, culminating in the 1995 NATO bombing of Sarajevo. What began as a humanitarian and peacekeeping mission led by the UN quickly became a struggle for influence in the region between NATO, Russia, and terrorist organizations.

European and American politicians played an instrumental role in shaping popular conceptions of the Yugoslav conflict, championing broad ideals in their condemnation of Serb nationalists who stood accused of systematic murder, violations of international law, and genocidal practices in their endeavors to carve out a Greater Serbia. Human rights, democracy, and self-determination became facets of a familiar discourse during the early 1990s that served to undermine the territorial integrity of the Yugoslav state and provide the legal pretext for military action. Idealistic rhetoric and demands for adherence to international law tended, however, to conceal the numerous interests that prompted action on behalf of the European Community [EC] and the US. As US Assistant for National Security Affairs, Anthony Lake, acknowledged in 1993, “Our humanitarian actions nurture the American public’s support for our engagements abroad.”⁵ Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke had a similar assessment, claiming, “in the long run our strategic interests and human rights supported and reinforced each other”⁶ *Realpolitik* asserts a conception of politics as fundamentally amoral; yet it does not reject using moral claims to achieve

⁵ Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” (21 September 1993), in *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches with Commentary*, eds. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Albina Shayevich, and Boris Zlotnikov, (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 25.

⁶ Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 367.

political ends. The extent to which humanitarian and irenic concerns could “reinforce” US interests was based upon the extent to which power could be rationalized and directed against an evil “other.” Ideals imbued with universal attributes came to serve as strategic weapons capable of eroding national sovereignty and justifying force, transforming them into a mechanism through which power could be rationalized and actively asserted.

The relationship between foreign policy and force has been defined explicitly by the realist school that sees power as the primary currency in the defense of national interests and security. The international environment, according to realists, is predicated upon anarchy and self-interest, with the use of force being essential in the promotion of security concerns over other states.⁷ This Hobbesian perspective has played a definitive role in US foreign policy throughout the twentieth century and has been instrumental in shaping predominant conceptions of national interests and security objectives.⁸ While realism provides a valuable framework for policy and ideological analysis, the abstract nature of “national interests” ascribed to realist thinking does not offer a useful criterion for addressing the nature of power in itself.⁹ Indeed, “national interests” make up part of the discourse of power that legitimates the use of force. Realism, in this sense, constitutes an ideological justification of force, not a critique of power’s instrumentality.

Whereas realists tend to equate power with force, a more dynamic understanding of power emphasizes its concern with securing the conditions under which the implementation of control and force cannot be contested. In this analysis, the degree to which power can be exercised effectively is dependent on the degree to which a specific interpretation or knowledge attains authority as the dominant interpretation. “The sense of the real,” Nietzsche states, “is the means of acquiring the

⁷ For an analysis of the realist perspective on power and force, see: Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973).

⁸ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 70-76.

⁹ See: James David Meernik, *The Political Use of Military Force in US Foreign Policy* (Cornwall: Ashgate, 2004), 24-25.

power to shape things according to our wish.”¹⁰ The powerful are capable of structuring the world in which others live and defining the reality others must operate within, actualizing influence and control through the “production of truth.”¹¹ Power is not, however, simply limited to demarcating the interpretive bounds of the real; in its most aggressive form, it actively creates social, economic, and even physical realities.¹² It is not enough to “grasp a certain amount of reality,” according to Nietzsche; one seeks to “become master of it, in order to press it into service.”¹³

The production of knowledge is not reliant on rational argument, and can, at times, stand in opposition to rationality. As Bent Flyvbjerg has noted, “rationality is part of the power of the weak,” since those who must rely on rational argument lack the power to mold reality to their will.¹⁴ In the context of power, rationality functions as a means of arriving at an objective and devising strategies for the implementation and maintenance of domination. Modes of action are distinct from the elaboration, transformation, and organization of power, which is founded upon *rationalization* rather than rationality.¹⁵ Rationality and rationalization can, nevertheless, complement one another in certain instances, delineating the link between prescribed objectives and their justification. Rationalization legitimizes the modes through which power is implemented—whether constituting social and economic pressures, the effects of discourse, or the threat of violence—and is closely tied to the interplay of reality and *Realpolitik*.

Assessed within a context where reality bends to power’s design, the Yugoslav conflict becomes an anatomical sketch of power in action. Politically-motivated interpretations of the event laid the ground work for intervention, as principles and ideals functioned as factors in the

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. by Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1968), 272.

¹¹ Foucault, “Questions of Method,” in *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Robinow and Nikolas Rose, eds. (New York: The New Press, 2003), 252.

¹² Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice*, trans. by Steven Sampson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 226-27.

¹³ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 267.

¹⁴ Flyvbjerg, 37.

¹⁵ Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” Robinow, 141.

delegitimization of national sovereignty and the rationalization of military force. Concerns shrouded in ethical and idealistic language became instruments in justifying the pursuit of economic and strategic interests determined by *Realpolitik*, underscoring notions of modern-day “barbarism” and victimization which constructed a vision of contemporary tragedy.

FROM “ETHNIC CONFLICT” TO “ETHNIC CLEANSING”

In 1991, newspapers and the media reported on the “civil war” and “ethnic conflict” that was unfolding in Yugoslavia.¹⁶ Within a year, however, the tone of the media had profoundly shifted. “Civil war” had become replaced with “war of aggression,” while “ethnic conflict” was now construed as Serb “genocide.”¹⁷ These latter descriptive terms corresponded with the international recognition of the various Balkan republics seeking independence from the Serb-dominated Yugoslav state. Unlike the more neutral language of “civil war” and “ethnic conflict,” the new terminology implied the need for urgent action, conjuring up images of Hitlerite aggression and the Holocaust. Prominent Jewish spokespeople, including author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, expressed outrage over the atrocities being committed in Yugoslavia, claiming that the international community had a moral obligation to intervene in the conflict.¹⁸ Images of Serb “concentration camps” packed with emaciated Bosnian refugees began appearing on every Western news program in 1992, inspiring indignation and calls for international efforts to halt the brutality.¹⁹

¹⁶ For instance, see: John Tagliabue, “Yugoslavia Fails to Oust Militias,” *New York Times* 27 June 1991, sec. A, 1; David Binder, “U.S. Voices Regret on Yugoslav Crisis,” *New York Times* 27 June 1991, sec. A, 10; Chuck Sudetic, “New Fighting Erupts as Yugoslav Leaders Confer,” *New York Times* 23 July 1991, sec. A, 3; “Chiefs At Odds Over EC, Croatia,” *Christian Science Monitor* 30 August 1991, 4.

¹⁷ Slaven Letica, “Labeling Theory and the Wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovia,” in *The Conceit of Innocence: Losing the Conscience of the West in the War Against Bosnia*, Stepan G. Meštrović, ed. (College Station: Texas A and M University Press, 1997), 143-146.

¹⁸ See: Elie Wiesel, “Mark of Cain: War’s Madness Rages on in the Balkans and Our ‘Culture’ Continues to Let It Happen,” *The Record* (Ontario), 26 October 1992, A9; Thomas A. Tanner, “A Lesson Unlearned in Yugoslavia? As Whispers of Genocide Grow Louder, Global Action Has Been Scant,” *The Boston Globe*, 9 August 1992, city edition, 69.

¹⁹ In her execration of Serb ethnic cleansing, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called on NATO to carry out “direct strikes” to halt such brutality. See: Thatcher, “Stop the Excuses. Help Bosnia Now,” *New York Times*, 6 August 1992, sec. A, 23. After investigating rumors of “death camps” and mass executions in Bosnia, however, US

The rhetoric adopted by pundits, activists, and statesmen evinced a prevailing anti-Serb attitude that became a staple of Western political discourse throughout the 1990s. During efforts to gain support for the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Christian Democratic Union [CDU] worked vigorously to cast Serbia and militant Serbs in Bosnia and the Krajina as impediments to peace.²⁰ The Dutch Foreign Minister, Hans van den Broek, had a different interpretation of the circumstances, claiming, “All sides seem to be guilty of the cease-fire violations. If there is no political will for peace in Yugoslavia, there is no substitute through outside action.”²¹ Yet European opinion fell in line with German estimations following the EC’s recognition of the Balkan republics in January 1992. François Mitterand’s statement that November was ironically telling when he remarked, “Serbia is now the aggressor, even if the origin of the conflict is more remote.”²²

Through the remarks and accusations of European and American politicians, the subject “Serb” came to be equated with the horrors of Nazism, while Bosniaks and Croats were cast as victims of Nazi-style aggression.²³ Speaking on CNN in August 1993, Senator Joseph Biden painted a demoralizing image of Serbs as “illiterates, degenerates, baby killers and rapists.”²⁴ Serbian atrocities represented, according to Margaret Thatcher, “the barbarities of Hitler’s and Stalin’s policies toward other nations.”²⁵ Appearing on *Meet the Press* in August 1995, Richard Holbrooke

Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger reported that no proof of systematic killing could be substantiated, claiming, “I think it’s best to say the evidence is unpleasant conditions.” See: David Binder, “U.S. Finds No Proof of Mass Killing at Serb Camps,” *New York Times*, 23 August 1992, sec. 1, 18.

²⁰ John Tagliabue, “Kohl Threatens Serbia Over Cease-Fire Violations,” *New York Times*, 8 August 1991, sec. A, 8.

²¹ Alan Riding, “Europeans Retreat on a Peace Force for Croatia,” *New York Times*, 20 September 1991, sec. A, 6.

²² Quoted in Sonia Lucarelli, *Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia: A Political Failure in Search of a Scholarly Explanation* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 34.

²³ See: Milan Brdar, “Humanitarian Intervention and the (De)Nazification Thesis as a Functional Simulacrum,” in Aleksander Jokic, ed., *Lessons of Kosovo: The Dangers of Humanitarian Intervention* (Ontario: Broad View, 2004), 153-169.

²⁴ Quoted in Marjorie Cohn, “The Myth of Humanitarian Intervention in Kosovo,” in *ibid.*, 122.

²⁵ Thatcher, “Stop the Excuses. Help Bosnia Now,” sec. A, 23.

described the execution of 7,000 Bosniak Muslims at Srebrenica as “a crime against humanity of the sort that we have rarely seen in Europe, and not since the days of Himmler and Stalin.”²⁶

The dual emphasis on Nazi-style atrocities and explicit Serb culpability belied the often ambiguous realities of ethnic warfare. Croat and Bosniak victimization was not as clearly defined as some made it appear. The Croatian government of Franjo Tuđman openly acknowledged that it authorized violence against Serb civilians in the Krajina. “In some cases they dynamite homes with families inside,” claimed Zvonimir Cicak, head of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. “Whole families were killed. Many were wounded.”²⁷ Meeting with a reporter from the *Toronto Star*, Nasir Oric, leader of a Bosniak resistance movement, played video tapes of his military manoeuvres against Bosnian Serbs. “We launched those guys to the moon,” he boasted while showing footage of a bombing raid carried out on a house.²⁸ In spite of such actualities, however, media pundits and politicians continued to express moral outrage over the atrocities and crimes against humanity committed by Serb nationalists against Croat and Bosniak victims.

“There are no moral phenomena,” Nietzsche claims; “there is only a moral interpretation of these phenomena.”²⁹ It is, however, essential to question who is doing the interpreting and in what context these interpretations are constructed. In 1993, James Harff, the director of the Ruder & Finn public relations firm, freely admitted that his company had been hired by the republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to demonize the Serbs and draw the support of Jewish organizations by equating the Serbs with Nazis in the public imagination. “We are professionals. We had a job to do and we did it,” Harff stated. “We are not paid to be moral.”³⁰

²⁶ Holbrooke, 90.

²⁷ David Binder, “Croatia Forced Thousands from Homes, Rights Group Says,” *New York Times*, 8 December 1993. Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic acknowledged the destruction of 7,000 houses belonging to civilians.

²⁸ Bill Schiller, “Fearsome Muslim Warlord Eludes Bosnian Serb Forces,” *The Toronto Star*, 16 July 1995.

²⁹ Nietzsche, “Critique of the Highest Values Hitherto,” *The Will to Power*, 149.

³⁰ Quoted in Brdar, “Humanitarian Intervention and the (De)Natzification Thesis,” fn 171.

Media campaigns and political discourse operated as strategic weapons that alienated and Nazified the Serbs. As Harff confessed, such perceptions were cleverly manipulated for political ends. Power is the ability to define reality, and the discourse of Serb cruelty which underscored Croat and Bosnian victimization came to shape the Yugoslav conflict within the framework of humanitarian crisis and moral obligation. These conceptions were further substantiated by politicians and policy makers, most notably the German CDU, which mounted an influential campaign in 1991 to garner support for the recognition of the break-away Yugoslav republics. To achieve its objectives, the CDU recognized that actions were just as important as words. German public opinion polls in July 1991 revealed little enthusiasm for recognizing the republics,³¹ while Britain and France supported the preservation of a unified Yugoslavia.³² Lord Carrington, the chairman conducting peace negotiations on behalf of the EC, rebuffed German overtures for immediate recognition, warning it would only serve to “torpedo” ongoing peace proposals.³³ The CDU’s efforts would not only have to appeal to moral sensibilities, but would also have to deal with the issue of Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity.

Following reunification in 1989, German politicians and magnates desiring to capitalize on longstanding economic and cultural ties to Eastern Europe invested considerable sums of money in the former Communist states. As one journalist commented, “With the intimate knowledge and personal contacts built up by German business through historic tradition and decades of Ostpolitik, Germany is the chief contributor of modern industrial technology and the major Western trading partner of every European country in what was once the Soviet Empire.”³⁴ By 1992, Germany stood as the single largest trading partner of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia with

³¹ Lucarelli, 137.

³² Alan Riding, “Europeans Warn of Yugoslav Split,” *New York Times*, 26 June 1991, sec. A, 7

³³ Quoted in Lucarelli, 128.

³⁴ Tom Redburn, “Germany Blazes an Industrial Trail East,” *International Herald Tribune*, 5 March 1993, online archives, <<http://www.iht.com/articles/1993/03/05/inve.php>>, accessed on 12 December 2006

companies such as Hoechst, Opel, Siemens, and Volkswagen consolidating markets and exporting needed industrial goods.³⁵ A window of opportunity presented itself to Germany as post-Communist countries struggled to develop market economies and acquire capital, holding the promise of an economic sphere of influence on the European periphery.³⁶ It was not mere speculation when Ulrich Ramm, the chief economist for the Frankfurt Commerzbank, claimed in 1993 that “Eastern Europe is Germany’s new frontier.”³⁷

With the CDU controlling the government and seeking to bolster economic ties to the east, the Balkans came to occupy a central role in Bonn’s foreign policy as Yugoslavia slid into violent civil war. Crucial to the agenda of Kohl and the CDU was the issue of Slovenia and Croatia, the two Yugoslav states holding more than half of all German investments in the Balkans.³⁸ Fearing that the conflict in Yugoslavia could have financial repercussions on German markets, the Bonn government moved to recognize the independence of its chief Balkan trading partners with the intention of stabilizing the region by internationalizing the conflict and providing grounds for UN intervention.³⁹ As one Serb would later accuse, “Slovenia and Croatia are just tools in Germany’s hands.”⁴⁰

³⁵ Stephen Kinzer, “Germans in Warning on Yugoslav Economy,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1991, sec. A, 10.

³⁶ Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 403.

³⁷ Redburn, “Germany Blazes an Industrial Trail East,” online archives, <<http://www.iht.com/articles/1993/03/05/inve.php>>, accessed on 12 December 2006.

³⁸ The political and economic orientation of Croatia was a decisive factor in both German and US support for the republic. In 1990, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman made overtures to Europe and America following the collapse of the Eastern European Communist states, avowing his desire to bring forth economic reforms in the Croatian Republic that would establish a “free-market system, with plurality of ownership.” Following the electoral victory of his Croatian Democratic Union party, Tuđman issued a direct challenge to the Serb-dominated Communist government of the Yugoslav Federation in an article printed in the *New York Times*. “It is we, the Croatian people,” he wrote, “who have risked our lives to put forward a democratic party and to vote our conscience. And it is we who continue to risk our lives in defiance of totalitarian communism.” That August, a US senatorial delegation traveled to Yugoslavia and stated America’s intention of providing financial aid to “facilitate greater democratization and free market economics.” When conflict broke out in 1991, a senatorial body advised President George Bush that the “vital interests of the democratic government of Croatia” should not be jeopardized in the process of peace negotiations. See: Klas Bergman, “Democratic Croatia Seeks Yugoslav Confederation,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 July 1990, 4; Franjo Tuđman [sic], “All We Croatsians Want is Democracy,” *New York Times*, 30 June 1990, sec. 1, 23; Foreign Desk, “Statement of U.S. Senate Delegation on Visit to Yugoslavia,” *U.S. Newswire*, 31 August 1990; National and Foreign Desks, “President Bush Welcomes President of Croatia,” *U.S. Newswire*, 27 September 1990.

³⁹ Lucarelli, 139; Kaufman, 75-76. Chapter VII of the UN Charter outlines the prerogative of the UN to determine the existence of any threat to international peace and the measures required for resolution, including the use of force. See: <<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter7.htm>>, accessed on 13 November, 2006. Internationalizing the conflict

Seeking to build international support for its platform, the CDU undertook an ambitious campaign to emphasize the brutality of the Serbs and the plight of the oppressed Slovenes and Croats seeking the right of national self-determination.⁴¹ “If we Germans think everything in Europe can stay just as it was,” the chairman of the CDU, Volker Rühle, stated in a radio address, “if we accept the status quo and do not recognize the right of self determination in Slovenia and Croatia, then we have no moral or political credibility.”⁴² In public speeches, Chancellor Kohl repeatedly stressed Serb intransigence to cooperation, claiming their hope of carving out a Greater Serbia was obstructing a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Desiring to strike a powerful chord with the German public, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher reinforced popular perceptions of Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, comparing him to Adolf Hitler.⁴³

Building support at home, Kohl still had to contend with his other European partners. In the autumn of 1991, he applied diplomatic pressure on the EC, making it clear that Germany would not accept a passive stance and, if necessary, was willing to extend recognition to the two republics unilaterally.⁴⁴ The threat of a German *Alleingang* which would jeopardize a common European front coupled with fears of unrestrained German expansion eastward provoked France and Britain to accept the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in January 1992, followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina in March. With legitimacy conferred upon the various Balkan republics, the Yugoslav civil war was transformed into an international affair with Serb attempts to forge a Greater Serbia now

by recognizing the independence of the Balkan republics was essential to intervention since territorial integrity is protected in Article Two of the UN Charter: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” See: <<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>>, accessed on 13 November 2006.

⁴⁰ Chuck Sudetic, “Serbs Denounce Breakup of Yugoslavia,” *New York Times*, 17 January 1992, sec. A, 3. Serb propaganda during the war often accused Germany of desiring to establish a “Fourth Reich” stretching from the Rhein to the Adriatic. Such accusations appear, however, grossly exaggerated.

⁴¹ Kaufman, 75-76; Christopher Bluth, *German and the Future of European Security* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 88-90.

⁴² Stephen Kinzer, “Kohl Threatens to End German Aid to Yugoslavia,” *New York Times*, 2 July 1991, sec. A, 8.

⁴³ Lucarelli, 139.

⁴⁴ Stephen Kinzer, “Europe, Backing Germany, Accept Yugoslav Breakup,” *New York Times*, 16 January 1992, Sec. A, 10.

constituting a violation of internationally recognized borders.⁴⁵ The UN Security Council approved the creation of a Protection Force that would be deployed to Croatia and Bosnia to carry out peacekeeping operations and humanitarian efforts by “all necessary means.”⁴⁶ With the UN and EC now obliged to take an active role in the Yugoslav crisis and public opinion growing increasingly hostile toward the Serbs, Chancellor Kohl could rightly consider his efforts “a great triumph of German foreign policy.”⁴⁷

In many ways, German initiatives set the parameters for the Balkan conflict. Kohl and the CDU had successfully promoted national interests by internationalizing the Yugoslav civil war. Moral appeals underscoring Serb brutality and the right of national self-determination had rationalized a reformulated *Ostpolitik* and led to the invalidation of Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity. German officials consciously took an active role in shaping these circumstances, with Serb aggression now construed not only as modern barbarism, but as defiance to international authority.

Objecting to EC recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in 1992, the Serbian politician Mihajlo Marković claimed that Europe’s actions were “neither democratic nor *rational*.”⁴⁸ Rationality is, as Flyvbjerg claims, the instrument of the weak. Those with power need not depend on rational argument, since power is used to mold reality and, consequently, the context of rationality. Media campaigns rife with anti-Serb sentiments had successfully constructed an identity for the Serbs as modern-day Nazis.⁴⁹ The coercive measures employed by Germany—most importantly the threat

⁴⁵ In her defense of Bosnia in August 1992, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher execrated Serb belligerence against “the legal and internationally recognized government of the Bosnian republic.” See: Margaret Thatcher, “Stop the Excuses. Help Bosnia Now,” *New York Times*, 6 August 1992, sec. A, 23. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher similarly denounced the actions of the Serbs which challenged “the principle that internationally recognized borders should not be altered by force.” Quoted in: Marshall Freeman Harris, “Clinton’s ‘European’ Bosnia Policies,” in Meštrović, 241.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Lucarelli, 37.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁸ Sudetic, “Serbia Denounces Breakup of Yugoslavia,” *New York Times*, 17 January 1992, sec. A, 3, emphasis added.

⁴⁹ For perceptions of the Serbs before the media campaigns of 1991-1992, see: Henry Kamm, “In One Yugoslav Province, Serbs Fear the Ethnic Albanians,” *New York Times*, 28 April 1986; David Binder, “In Yugoslavia, Rising Ethnic Strife Brings Fears of Worse Civil Conflict,” *New York Times*, 1 November 1987; Jackson Diehl, “Protests Oust Leaders of Yugoslav Province,” *Washington Post*, 7 October 1988.

of *Alleingang*—to secure EC compliance with Bonn’s foreign policy resulted in the dissolution of the Yugoslav state and the birth of three independent republics. As the dynamics of power came to shape the realities of the Balkan crisis—whether by imposing identities, redefining national boundaries, or construing intervention within a humanitarian and irenic framework—the logic of rationalization trumped appeals to rationality.

PROVIDING THE MEANS TO KILL AND HEAL

In September 1993, Anthony Lake, chief advisor to the president on the Yugoslav crisis, gave a speech at Johns Hopkins University, urging, “The conflict in Bosnia deserves American engagement: it is a vast humanitarian tragedy; it is driven by ethnic barbarism; [and] it stemmed from aggression against an independent state”⁵⁰ Over a year after the launching of the joint UN-EC humanitarian intervention, tragedy, barbarism, and aggression persisted to make up the standard lexicon of the Balkan war, with horrific accounts of rape, slaughter, and systematic execution drawing NATO into the war and eliciting concerns from US officials.

American politicians had become part of the growing anti-Serb chorus in 1992, expressing sympathy for the victimized Croats and Bosniaks following the effective media campaigns. “[We] clearly have a humanitarian interest in helping to prevent . . . the continuing slaughter of innocents in Bosnia,” President Bill Clinton affirmed in 1994.⁵¹ Various officials in the Clinton administration began to publicly remark on America’s global role in helping to resolve international crisis and foster democratic principles abroad, seeking to garner support for US participation in the abortive UN-EC peacekeeping mission. Anthony Lake was not reticent when it came to articulating America’s place in the new world order: “Rather than throw our hands up in despair at the complexities of the post-

⁵⁰ Rubenstein, 25.

⁵¹ Douglas Jehl, “Conflict in the Balkans; Clinton Outlines U.S. Interest in Bosnia Air Strike,” *New York Times*, 10 February 1994, sec. A, 14.

cold-war era . . . we are helping to create a world where tolerance, freedom and democracy prevail.”⁵²

“Americans are idealists,” claims Robert Kagan. “. . . But they have no experience of promoting ideals successfully without power.”⁵³ Idealism and power do share a reciprocal relationship within the purview of American foreign policy, with presumptions of moral authority based upon the maintenance of American global leadership and, therefore, the defense of US interests. Because policy makers believe that American ideals can flourish only in a world which they actively shape, power becomes an objective in itself rather than merely a means to an end. Moreover, since the use of force often undermines the principles that it claims to uphold—such as the preservation of peace, humanitarian concerns, or adherence to international law—the dual concepts of idealism and *Machtpolitik* are reconciled within a Machiavellian framework which consequently employs moral and legal principles to rationalize the use of force.

The escalation of violence which accompanied humanitarian and peace efforts in the Balkans illuminated the antagonism between ideals and interests. Between 1991 and 1995, the Yugoslav civil war mushroomed into a conflict of global proportions stretching from Washington to Tehran. As the Balkans became the locus of international power rivalries, strategic interests and security concerns came to necessitate deeper US engagement. As Clinton told congressional leaders, “our contribution to resolving the Bosnian conflict will be proportionate to our interests—no more and no less.”⁵⁴ American interests in the post-Cold War era, whether predicated on security concerns or hegemonic aims, came to eclipse humanitarian and peace initiatives and subordinated them to the realities of *Machtpolitik* on the battlefield.

⁵² Jason DeParle, “The Man Inside Bill Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” *New York Times*, 20 August 2005, sec. 6, 33.

⁵³ Kagan, 95.

⁵⁴ Jehl, sec. A, 14.

The Yugoslav crisis erupted at a moment when US policy makers were re-orienting America's global strategies. The Defense Planning Guidance memo drawn up by the Pentagon in February 1992 outlined the broad objectives of American defense policy in the post-Soviet world. While citing the need to secure American access to international oil reserves and thwart nuclear proliferation, the memo also addressed the necessity of "detering potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role," amounting to a clear declaration of American hegemony.⁵⁵

The post-Soviet world entailed a redefinition of NATO. NATO had served as a collective security alliance during the years of the Cold War to protect Western Europe from Soviet encroachment, buttressing American transatlantic supremacy. It was, according to Richard Holbrooke, "the Atlantic institution that mattered most, the one in which the United States was the core member."⁵⁶ With the collapse of the Eastern communist regimes in 1989, US policy makers sought to transform NATO from a defense alliance into a proactive military institution which could promote neo-liberal reforms in struggling democracies and advance American security interests abroad.⁵⁷ In the view of Madeleine Albright, the democratizing function NATO served was nothing new, and indeed constituted a fundamental aspect of NATO's *raison d'être*. "It brought the former fascist nations, first Italy, then Germany, then Spain, back into the families of European

⁵⁵ See: "Excerpts From Pentagon's Plan: 'Prevent The Re-Emergence of a New Rival,'" *New York Times* (8 March 1992); "Pentagon's New World View," *The Washington Post*, 24 May 1992, sec. A, 23. The memo was leaked to the press shortly after circulating through the Pentagon, much to the chagrin of the US government. Officials denied that the opinions in the "draft" reflected US policy, although it had been sent to Colin Powell, and all four military chiefs of staff. While Pentagon spokesmen Peter Williams disavowed the memo in public, he affirmed that "its basic thrust mirrors the public statements and testimony of Defense Secretary Dick Cheney." See: Patrick E. Tyler, "Senior U.S. Officials Assail Lone-Superpower Policy," *New York Times*, 11 March 1992, sec. A, 6.

⁵⁶ Holbrooke, 28.

⁵⁷ Vassilis K. Fouskas, *Zones of Conflict: US Foreign Policy in the Balkans and the Greater Middle East* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 42-43.

democracies.”⁵⁸ Inclusive within this mission, however, was the determination to promote certain values which were conducive to American interests and security.

Pentagon officials stressed the need to maintain the Alliance in a post-Cold War world, worrying about “the emergence of a European-only security arrangement which would undermine NATO” and jeopardize American hegemony.⁵⁹ Expanding the reach of NATO was essential to the maintenance of America’s global leadership and had been discussed by policy makers as early as 1990, prior to the collapse of the USSR.⁶⁰ Significant to the aim of NATO enlargement was America’s ambivalent relations with a post-Soviet Russia, a nation with weak democratic traditions whose intentions as a prevailing regional power in Eurasia remained ambiguous at best. “NATO enlargement advanced US interests in dealing with one of the country’s foremost strategic challenges,” former member of the US National Security Council, Daniel Benjamin, claimed in 2000 after NATO membership had been extended to Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic: “coping with a post-Communist Russia whose trajectory remains in question.”⁶¹

Doubts over Russian intention were influential in shaping American objectives in Yugoslavia. Historically, Serbia’s Slavic national identity as well as economic and political orientation had served to buttress Russian influence in the Balkan region. Moscow’s pro-Serbian

⁵⁸ Quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute for Peace Press, 1998), 70.

⁵⁹ Quoted in “Excerpts From Pentagon’s Plan: ‘Prevent The Re-Emergence of a New Rival,’” *New York Times*. In the wake of the Cold War, France and Germany both aspired to establish a strong European defense force that would be tied to the process of integrating the former communist states into the European Community and creating a geo-strategic Continental axis. See: Jacques Attali, “A Continental Architecture,” in Perry Anderson and Peter Gowan, eds., *The Question of Europe* (London: Verso, 1997), 345-56.

⁶⁰ Philip Zelikow, “NATO Expansion Wasn’t Ruled Out,” *International Herald Tribune*, 10 August 1995, online archives, <<http://www.ihf.com/articles/1995/08/10/edzelt.php>>, accessed on 17 November 2006. For an analysis of the contentious debates surrounding the issue of European defense strategy, see: Brian C. Rathburn, *Partisan Interventions: European Party Politics and Peace Enforcement in the Balkans* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). For a detailed study on the transformation of NATO from a defense alliance into a proactive military institution, see: Yost, *NATO Transformed*. It was suggested that were America to remain indifferent to Eastern Europe, the possibility of Russo-German “collision or collusion” could threatened American defense interests in the region. Henry Kissinger warned that “American abdication would produce a political earthquake threatening vital American interests.” See: Congress, Senate, Committee of Foreign Relations, *The Debate on NATO Enlargement: Hearing Before the Committee of Foreign Relations*, 105th Congress, 1st session, 2, 9, 22, 28, 30 October, 5 November, 1997 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1998), 184.

⁶¹ Quoted in Fouskas, 49.

policies, founded upon longstanding Russian security and economic interests, were maintained throughout the 1990s in spite of certain tensions.⁶² Seeking to infiltrate and shape the regions which had once lain behind the Iron Curtain, US policy makers could not ignore the internal tensions mounting in Yugoslavia as the country slid into civil war.⁶³ As early as 1992, a senior State Department official acknowledged that ousting Slobodan Milošević, head of the reformed Serbian Communist Party, was a policy goal of the Bush administration.⁶⁴ Washington provided Milošević's political opponents with financial and logistical resources in the hopes of "democratizing" the country, including the funding of media outlets like the independent Studio-B and TV-Politika. Support would continue throughout the decade, with broadcasting equipment and suitcases full of money crossing the Serbian border via Eastern Europe.⁶⁵ Lauding American efforts in 1999, Senator Gordon Smith would state pointedly, "Milosevic [sic] must get this message: his days in power are over."⁶⁶

Yet misgivings over Russian influence in the Balkans constituted only a secondary concern for the US. The discovery of international aid channeled to Bosniak Muslims and Alija Izetbegovic, leader of the quasi-fundamentalist Muslim Party of Democratic Action, provided greater cause for alarm in Washington. In 1993, the Clinton administration was informed that Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia were among the chief contributors to the Bosnian war effort, with mortars, surface-to-

⁶² Janus Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism* (Westport: Praeger, 2004), 170-73.

⁶³ The disintegration of the USSR not only permitted the US to expand its influence through Eastern Europe, but also gave it a free hand to deepen its involvement in the Middle East. According to Jacob Heilbrunn and Michael Lind, "we should view the Balkans as the western frontier of America's rapidly expanding sphere of influence in the Middle East." See: Heilbrunn and Lind, "The Third American Empire," *New York Times*, 2 January 1996, sec. A, 15.

⁶⁴ David Binder, "U.S. is Backing Serbian President's Internal Foes," *New York Times*, 19 November 1992, sec. A, 11.

⁶⁵ Steven Erlanger, "Milosevic, Trailing in Polls, Rails Against NATO," *New York Times*, 20 September 2000, sec. A, 3.

⁶⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, European Affairs Subcommittee of Foreign Relations, *The Prospects for Democracy in Yugoslavia: Hearing Before the European Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, 106th Congress, 1st session, 29 July 1999 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 2. Russia's desire to maintain influence in the Balkans compelled Moscow to funnel covert economic and military aid to the Serbs during the war, violating the UN arms embargo. Serb secessionists and the Yugoslav People's Army received \$300 million worth of T-55 tanks and anti-aircraft missiles in 1993, fueling the Serbian war machine. Yugoslav air forces were further outfitted with long-range surface-to-air missiles and various rockets systems, while Russian military personnel provided training for Serb special forces and enlisted Russian mercenaries in the war effort. See: Bugajski, 191-92; Huntington, 284.

air rockets, rifles, and jeeps flooding into Bosnia labeled as “humanitarian aid.”⁶⁷ The knowledge that Iran was sending Republican Guards to organize extremist guerilla units in Bosnia prompted one US official to warn that “The Iranians see this as a way to get at the soft underbelly of Europe.”⁶⁸ Startled by the growing influence of rival Islamic powers across the border, Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin cautioned in late 1992 that if the West failed to take an active role in the conflict, Turkey would find it “difficult” to restrain other Muslim states from participating in the conflict.⁶⁹

Middle Eastern states were not, however, the only benefactors of the Bosniaks. Radical mujahideen leaders had begun to arrive in Bosnia by early 1992, calling upon the international Islamic community to support their Bosniak brethren against the infidel.⁷⁰ Many of these Islamic jihadis—such as Abu Abdel Aziz and Abu Sulaiman al-Makki—had come from Afghanistan and had connections with international terrorist organizations, most explicitly al-Qaeda. Abu Abdel Aziz had met personally with senior members of al-Qaeda in Zagreb in early 1992, stating his primary goal was “to establish a base for operations in Europe against al Qaeda’s true enemy, the United States.”⁷¹ By the end of 1992, al-Qaeda had set up recruitment camps in the Balkans and was actively training Islamic military brigades, turning Bosnia into a potential base for international jihad. These activities were funded by an extensive network of Islamic philanthropic organizations,⁷² all of which were ostensibly sending humanitarian aid to the Bosniak Muslims.⁷³

⁶⁷ See: David Binder, “Slovenia Reports A Weapons Cache,” *New York Times*, 14 October 1993, sec. A, 14.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Huntington, 287.

⁶⁹ John K. Cooley, “Just Say ‘No’ to Modern-Day Crusades in the Balkans,” *International Herald Tribune*, 21 October 1992, online archives, <http://www.ihf.com/articles/1992/10/21/edco_3.php>, accessed on 17 November 2006.

⁷⁰ See: Chuck Sudetic, “Muslims From Abroad Join in War Against Serbs,” *New York Times* (14 November 1992).

⁷¹ Quoted in Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 19.

⁷² Including *Hay’at al-Ighatha al-Islamiyya al-‘Alamiyya* [IIRO] and the Benevolence International Foundation [BIF], both of which had bases in the United States and both of which were singled out as conduits for terrorist aid by the US government following the September 11 attacks.

⁷³ Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe*, 15-30, 36-42.

The need to combat the rise of Islamic influence on the European periphery was urgent. Clinton refused, however, to send US ground troops into the Balkans, fearing that the situation could become another Vietnam. “We don’t want our people in there basically in a shooting gallery,” he insisted.⁷⁴ Commenting on the Bosnian situation in 1993, Richard Holbrooke offered a promising alternative. Warning that “these shipments [from Islamic countries] will continue—and they will increase,” he advised allowing a “covert arms supply to the Bosnian Muslims, *so that Bosnia’s outside support no longer comes from the Islamic nations.*”⁷⁵ Just over a year later, Holbrooke was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, becoming the chief US policy maker for the Balkans.

According to Dutch intelligence files, America actively supported the Bosnian army alongside Iran and other Middle Eastern powers, flouting the UN arms embargo in an attempt to contain and control radical Islamic influences in the region.⁷⁶ The Pentagon contracted the Virginia-based Military Professional Resources International, a mercenary firm headed by retired US military officers, to train the Croatian army and later the Kosovo Liberation Army.⁷⁷ Germany contributed its share of aid to Croatia, consisting of Mig-21 fighter jets and technicians to assist in logistics.⁷⁸ “Muslim and Christian powers outside the Balkans have begun to bang the drums and peal the bells for sectarian warfare in the Balkans,” claimed one reporter in 1992. “Worse, they are mixing arms and munitions with their relief shipments, providing the means to kill along with the means to heal.”⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Quoted in Yost, 197.

⁷⁵ Holbrooke, 51-52, italics in original.

⁷⁶ Richard J. Aldrich, “America Used Islamists to Arm the Bosnian Muslims,” *The Guardian* (London), 22 April 2002, 16. Also see: Roger Cohen, “Retired U.S. General to Aid Muslim-Croat Federation,” *New York Times*, 24 January 1995, sec. A, 3.

⁷⁷ Majorie Cohn, “The Myth of Humanitarian Intervention in Kosovo,” in Jokic, *Lessons of Kosovo*, fn 144. Also see: P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁷⁸ Huntington, 282-83.

⁷⁹ Cooley, “Just Say ‘No’ to Modern-Day Crusades in the Balkans,” *International Herald Tribune*, online archives, <http://www.iht.com/articles/1992/10/21/edco_3.php>, accessed on 17 November 2006.

As the Croatian and Bosnian fronts intensified, the necessities of national security and power politics came to play a decisive role in shaping the character of humanitarian efforts. Providing the means to both “heal” and “kill,” the intentions of humanitarian assistance remain questionable. Governments concealed their role in promoting regional violence, representing politically-motivated ends as humanitarian in nature. Sponsoring violence was not solely a practice of Milošević, whose aid to Serb secessionists in the Krajina and Bosnia was denounced by the US and the UN as an obstacle to peace. The international community played a crucial part in the perpetuation and escalation of violence as the Balkan conflict progressed.

Viewing the situation on the ground as a war zone, US and NATO officials placed a strong emphasis on strategic gains over humanitarian considerations. Comparing Bosnia to the Gulf War, one NATO commander commented on the shift in focus from “saving civilian lives to curbing aggression by Belgrade in its bid to carve out a Greater Serbia.”⁸⁰ Meeting with Croatian officials in 1995, Richard Holbrooke articulated his hope that a Croatian offensive against the Serbs in the Krajina that August could consolidate territorial gains to serve as bargaining chips when peace negotiations resumed. Conscious of the “abuse of Serb civilians” and the “brutal treatment of Serbs that followed most Croatian military successes,” he nevertheless encouraged Croatian Defense Minister Gojka Susak to proceed with the attack.⁸¹ As Holbrooke anticipated, the Croats showed no mercy, driving more than 200,000 Serbs from their homes and farms.⁸²

The failure of the Bosnian army to achieve a decisive victory over the Serbs and the escalation of violence in the spring of 1995 resulted in the NATO-conducted Operation Deliberate Force, an intensive air and land assault against Serb strongholds in and around Sarajevo that drove

⁸⁰ Joseph Fitchett, “Western Strategists See Bosnia as a War Zone, Not a Charity Case,” *International Herald Tribune*, 22 December 1992, online archives, <<http://www.iht.com/articles/1992/12/22/opti.php>>, accessed on 18 November 2006.

⁸¹ Holbrooke, 166

⁸² Carlotta Gall and Marlise Simons, “Croatia in Turmoil After Agreeing to Send 2 to Tribunal,” *New York Times*, 9 July 2001, sec. A, 3.

the warring parties into submission. During the air strikes, *The Economist* cynically observed that “Bill Clinton seems to have decided, rather suddenly, that the Bosnian war should be settled before next year’s American presidential election.”⁸³ In November, Clinton gave a speech at the White House to encourage support for the Dayton Peace Accords, a treaty brokered by NATO which authorized the deployment of 20,000 US troops to Bosnia, establishing a permanent American presence in the Balkans.⁸⁴ Recounting the gruesome details of rape, Serb ethnic cleansing, and concentration camps which had now come to an end, Clinton affirmed that America had “worked with our European allies in search of peace,” defending the just principles of democracy, human rights, and national self-determination.⁸⁵

The conflict between ideals and interests was played out on the Balkan battlefields, as strategic concerns and *Machtpolitik* came to determine American actions. The “search for peace” acclaimed by Clinton entailed destructive measures incompatible with humanitarian intentions or crisis-resolution objectives.⁸⁶ While ideals may not have guided policy initiatives, they did play an instrumental role in rationalizing the use of force. As Anthony Lake maintained in 1993, “we should not oppose using our military forces for humanitarian purposes.”⁸⁷ In the final assessment, however, these two concepts appeared to be inverted.

BOSNIA REVISITED

In 1999, Bill Clinton defended the “just and necessary” bombing of Yugoslavia being carried out by NATO, claiming “when ethnic conflict turns into ethnic cleansing, where we can make a difference we must try” This time the victims of the “murder and expulsion” ordered by

⁸³ Quoted in Kaufman, 121.

⁸⁴ After the 1999 humanitarian intervention against Serbia, the US would build Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, the largest military base constructed since the Vietnam War and described by Senator Joseph Biden as “sprawling.”

⁸⁵ Clinton, “The Dayton Accords: Imposing Peace for Bosnia,” 27 November 1995, Rubinstein, 175.

⁸⁶ For a defense of American interventionism and “low intensity” military engagements, see: Max Boot, *The Savages Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

⁸⁷ Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” Rubinstein, 25.

Milošević were the ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo. While the “brutal methods” employed by Serb nationalists against Kosovars were indeed “familiar,” so too was the rhetoric used by the president which underscored the humanitarian intent of NATO’s current military campaign.⁸⁸ In spite of the similarities drawn between Bosnia and Kosovo, however, there remained one important distinction: the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo was being carried out without a UN Security Council mandate against a sovereign state and was, therefore, a violation of international law.

NATO’s campaign in 1999 was a resolute declaration that humanitarian concerns could supercede the limitations posed by international law. This assertion was, strictly speaking, nothing new, since violations of international law had occurred during the Yugoslav conflict of the early 1990s under the pretext of humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts. As David Rieff has claimed, “when the Kosovo crisis came to a boil once more in 1998, the NATO powers were fully prepared to fight the *Bosnian* war against the Serbs.”⁸⁹ In the politics of a post-Soviet era, human rights and irenic objectives constitute a language of power, one effectively used by the Clinton Administration and NATO during the Balkan intervention. Whereas ideology once provided the rationale underpinning the use of force,⁹⁰ the end of the Cold War has required new strategies of rationalization in the defense of national and global interests. Shrouded in a discourse of moral authority, the dynamics of power have the potential to demarcate the bounds of the real, creating belligerents and war criminals, victims of ethnic barbarism, and causes carried out in the name of international peace and human rights.

This mode of power in global politics possesses strong implications for the future of the post-Cold War world, calling into question the sovereignty of the nation-state and the universality of

⁸⁸ William Jefferson Clinton, “A Just and Necessary War,” *New York Times*, 23 May 1999, sec. 4, 17.

⁸⁹ David Rieff, “Milošević in Retrospect,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 82, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 12, Italics in original.

⁹⁰ See: Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (Boston: South End, 1989), 21-28, 181-84.

international law. As the course of events during the Yugoslav conflict illustrated, sovereignty is conditioned by power and cannot be taken as a *fait accompli*. Extending recognition to the break-away republics in 1992, the EC and US effectively nullified the sovereignty of the Yugoslav state. The principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity were, however, used to condemn Serb aggression against the internationally recognized Balkan governments and establish a legal pretext for military intervention. In 1999, “humanitarian” motives jettisoned the issue of sovereignty and international law altogether. Power produces its own rationality, one which is protean and constantly shaped by given circumstances.⁹¹ Within this framework, the nation state becomes subjective, its existential security speculative despite the guarantees provided by the legal norms of the international community.

To persist in considering Yugoslavia a modern-day “tragedy” is misleading. Tragedy illuminates the horrific aspects of existence, as Karl Jaspers has claimed. It delineates man’s struggle against implacable forces, rendering him the victim of an inescapable and brutal fate.⁹² Humanitarian causes need a conception of the tragic if they are to mobilize wide-spread support and justify political ends because it crystallizes the notion of insufferable horror and helplessness endured by the innocent. In this appeal to conscience the mechanisms of power are constantly at play, producing a reality conducive to the designs of those ostensibly armed with the legitimacy of moral authority.

⁹¹ Flyvbjerg, 36.

⁹² Jaspers, 44-45.