

**Russia and NATO Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:  
Conflicts and Peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo**

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**Introduction**

It has now been well over a decade since Mikhail S. Gorbachev unleashed democratic transition in the former Soviet Union culminating in the collapse of the Berlin Wall and a new epoch in East-West relations. Russia and the West were presented with the opportunity to bring about a transition from a relationship of adversarial confrontation to constructive engagement or even "partnership." In responding to these changing circumstances, in 1990, Dr. Manfred Wornier made the first ever visit by a Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to Moscow, stating that: "I have come to Moscow today with a very simple message: we extend our hand of friendship to you. And I have come with a very direct offer to cooperate with you. The time for confrontation is over. The hostility and mistrust of the past must be buried. We see your country, and all the other countries of the former Warsaw Treaty Organization, no longer as adversaries but as partners..."[1] NATO faced the challenge of forging a new relationship with Russia and other nations of the former Warsaw Pact. In 1994, NATO would launch the *Partnership for Peace* program for developing military-to-military exchanges with Russia and other newly independent nations of the former Soviet Union and East-Central Europe. Under the auspices of *Partnership for Peace*, Russia's military forces would engage in first-ever consultations at multiple levels, joint exercises, training in peacekeeping and other areas and educational exchanges. The initial military-to-military exchanges between Russia and NATO were an impressive symbol of a newly emerging post-Cold War international community and the potential for future cooperation. These early military-to-military professional experiences would establish the foundation for the joint deployments of Russian and NATO peacekeepers in response to the implosion of former Yugoslavia.

While the initial military-to-military exchanges were quite encouraging from the point of view of both Russian officials and military officers and their Western counterparts, serious tensions surfaced early on in the new Russian-NATO relationship. Two issues generated the most difficult strains-- the use of force against Russia's historic Eastern Orthodox Slavic Serb allies in Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999) and NATO's announced intention to expand the Alliance. While Russia had worked with the United States and European nations as a member of the United Nations Security Council and Contact Group and in supporting the implementation of the Dayton Accords ending the war in Bosnia, NATO's decision to resort to the use of airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs in 1995 elicited sharp criticism and strong public reaction from Russia. In addition, NATO's admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and discussion of the possibility of extending invitations for membership to other East-Central European nations, Baltic nations or Ukraine has been consistently and vociferously opposed by Russia's leadership. Opposition to NATO enlargement reaches across Russia's political spectrum to embrace not only communist and extreme nationalist elements, but also more moderate patriots

and the new pro-democratic and reform forces. Anticipating Russia's reaction, George F. Kennan, principle architect of America's post-World War II containment strategy, described the decision to undertake eastward expansion of NATO as the "most fateful error of American policy in the entire post Cold War era." [2]

The new Russian-NATO relationship plunged to the lowest point during NATO's Operation Allied Force air war against Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic in Kosovo during Spring 1999. Russian officials responded to the first full-scale military intervention in the 50 year history of the Alliance by suspending relations with NATO. NATO's representative was asked to leave Moscow immediately and Russia's military liaison representatives were removed from Brussels. Objection to NATO airstrikes in former Yugoslavia generated adamant and even emotional outrage throughout the Russian political-military elite and society. The revision of NATO's *Strategic Concept* to enable NATO to intervene in situations beyond the borders of member nations led Russians to conclude that the Alliance had become an offensive, rather than solely defensive, military organization that could one day threaten the Russian Federation. "Today Serbia/Yugoslavia-Tomorrow Russia" became a popular theme in the media in the inflamed atmosphere in Moscow during the Spring of 1999. While the Yeltsin government was concerned with maintaining valuable bilateral security and economic relations with the United States and NATO in other areas, the Russian President came under increasing pressure, throughout Russia's foreign policy establishment, and especially from nationalist/patriot and former communist forces and the military, to resist the West in responding to the Kosovo war. The Russian State Duma had voted 279 to 34 in April 1999 to demand that the Russian government supply weapons and military advisors to Yugoslavia. While the crisis appeared to be on the verge of resolution with the intercession of Finnish President Marti Ahtisaari and Russia's envoy Victor Chernomyrdin, tensions escalated to near confrontation as Russia's paratroopers that had been serving in the peacekeeping Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia made a bold march to assume control of the Slatina airport in Pristina Kosovo preempting the arrival of NATO forces.

The 78 day Kosovo air campaign in 1999 appeared to dash almost all hope of building the "partnership" relationship between Russia and NATO that had been so often referenced in the official statements of the early 1990s issued from Moscow, Washington and Brussels. [3] The use of military force against Serbs--together with impending NATO enlargement--would rekindle historical Russian suspicions regarding the intentions of the West and prompted Russia's foreign and military-defense communities to reconsider the potential for cooperative engagement with the US/NATO.

Despite the difficulties in the diplomatic/policy relationship, Russia's participation in joint peacekeeping and peace enforcement along side American/NATO forces first in the Implementation Force/Stabilization Force (IFOR/SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and later in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) stand as perhaps the most positive and encouraging feature of the contemporary Russian-NATO relationship. Russia's contributions in SFOR and KFOR involved the largest commitment of peacekeeping forces outside the Russian Federation's bordering "near abroad" or nations of the former Soviet empire. The operational and tactical accomplishments in SFOR and KFOR must be examined in the context of the political/diplomatic Russian-NATO bilateral relationship to evaluate the potential importance of these joint peacekeeping engagements for the broader strategic relationship.

This study will analyze the evolution of the contemporary Russian-NATO relationship focusing especially on joint peacekeeping experiences in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The initial efforts to establish the foundation for military-to-military ties between Russia and NATO and perceptions of the complications created by the announced intention to expand the Alliance will

be set forth. Russian reactions to NATO's response to the conflicts following the implosion of the former Yugoslavia and the Russian-NATO military dispute over Pristina provide the context for the Russian-NATO participation in SFOR and KFOR. The study will examine the SFOR/KFOR experiences in terms of traditional measures for assessing success in peacekeeping and set forth some conclusions concerning these experiences with potential application in future conflict situations. The final section will explore Russian perspectives concerning the lessons of Kosovo and subsequent developments in Russia's official security and defense statements and strategy toward the West. The importance of Russian and NATO experiences in responding to the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, SFOR and KFOR, and further expansion of NATO likely to commence in 2002 will be explored as a new transatlantic European security architecture emerges in the transition from 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The development of the Russian-NATO relationship in the coming years will be critical not only for regional European security, but also arguably, for the capacity of the US/NATO to respond effectively to the challenges of the complex 21<sup>st</sup> century global security environment. Thus, the importance of examining the early post-Cold War Russian-NATO relationship, focusing on the Yugoslav conflict and joint peacekeeping experiences, might yield conclusions of interest in considering future development of a constructive Russian-NATO "partnership."

### **Russia and NATO After the Cold War: Developing Foundations for Military-to-Military Cooperation**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and disintegration of the Warsaw Pact left NATO searching for a new mission. With the demise of the Soviet empire, what would be NATO's *raison d'être*? Some argued that absent the Soviet threat, NATO should simply dissolve. Others argued that NATO must "expand or die." [4] The establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991, coinciding with the break up of the Soviet Union, represented NATO's first response to the changing circumstances. The NACC was open to all NATO members, nations of the former Warsaw Pact, and newly independent nations of the former USSR. It was tasked to serve as a consultative forum to begin to address the security interests of post-Cold War Europe. The NACC's accomplishments were modest, but it did provide a channel for initiating dialogue between foreign and defense ministers previously separated by ideological-military rivalry. In 1993, NATO and the Russian Ministry of Defense would establish terms for cooperation in military training. The introduction of *NATO's 1991 Strategic Concept* signaled the capacity of the Alliance to begin to adjust to the post-Soviet strategic environment. The 1991 *Strategic Concept* established the objective of transforming NATO's mission from concentrating on deterring the Soviet challenge to developing the capacity for rapid response to out-of-area security challenges with a multidirectional and mobile force structure. [5]

Building on the NACC foundation, the launching of *Partnership for Peace (PfP)* at the January 1994 summit in Brussels provided for developing military-to-military contact at the operational and tactical levels between NATO and former Soviet and Warsaw Pact nations for peacekeeping and other joint security missions. The key requirements for membership included (1) preserving democratic control of defense forces; (2) agreeing to ensure the accessibility of national defense planning and budgetary processes to the Alliance; (3) committing to develop the capability to contribute to peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian operations under the authority of the UN and/or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and (4) developing the capacity to carry out military missions more effectively in concert with NATO members. [6] *Partnership for Peace (PfP)*

signaled confirmation of Western consensus that there was still a need for NATO in the post-Cold War era. It also constituted a response to the appeals of aspiring nations of Eastern and Central Europe for the protection of and integration into the West.

The first ties between NATO and former Warsaw Pact nations involved military-to-military meetings and exchanges at all levels, joint exercises and training to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping and other areas and dialogue and educational exchange with officers from the nations of the former Eastern bloc. For example, under the auspices of the *Partnership for Peace (PFP)* program, Russia joined NATO forces in a series of "BALTOPS" exercises in the Baltic Sea beginning in 1994 with the purpose of improving interoperability between NATO and non-NATO members in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. [7] "Cooperative Tide 96," a NATO-sponsored exercise conducted in Houston Texas, involved military officers of eight PFP nations, including Russia, with four officers from NATO countries to introduce them to NATO regional control of merchant shipping doctrine policy and its relationship to peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.[8] In 1998, Russia agreed to send ground troops for the first time to a NATO combat exercise involving a platoon of Russian infantry for "Operation Cooperative Jaguar" held in Denmark.[9]

In terms of Russian-American military-to-military cooperation following the disintegration of the USSR, a *Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation on Defense and Security* matters was approved in 1993 during a visit of Defense Minister Pavel Grachev to Washington. [10] This agreement established the basis for the first exchanges between the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Russian General Staff and lower level officials. Agreements reached between US Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and Russia's Defense Minister Pavel Grachev included promotion of joint exercises and training for peacekeeping forces.

Subsequently, in August 1994, a Russian field grade team visited US Marine Corps base, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, for briefing on Marine corps capabilities.[11] The meeting was held to facilitate military-to-military contacts between USPACOM (United States Pacific Command) and Russian Far East forces. US Marines also participated with Russian Naval Infantry in joint training exercises in Vladivostok Russia as a part of "Cooperation from the Sea 94." [12] Two joint US-Russian ground force training exercises "Peacekeeper 94 and 95" were held in Totskoye, Russia, and Ft. Riley, Kansas, marking the first instance that Russian troops trained on US soil.[13] US Secretary of Defense, William Perry, observing the exercises at Ft. Riley, offered the following description: "I was in awe of the spirit of cooperation that had developed between our soldiers in so short a span of time. But the most remarkable moment was when the Russian military leader (then--Defense Minister Pavel Grachev) traveling with me gathered the Russian soldiers around him for a talk. He told them that what they were doing with the Americans was the basis for creating a peaceful world for their children." [14]

Russian and American participants offered favorable appraisals of these early early ties. For example, a Russian Naval officer involved in the "Cooperation from the Sea" exercises in Vladivostok stated: "It is good to work together like this...Not only for our two countries, but for neighbors as well. Our teamwork sends a positive message around the world..." [15] A US participant, Corporal Dale R. Strunks, stated: "I really didn't know what to expect, but I was impressed. It was the opportunity of a lifetime to see Russian Naval Infantry in their daily routine on their own turf." [16]

The Russian Federation also began to send the first military officers to US professional military education war colleges and to the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen Germany. Not only did Russian officers participate in the curriculum with their US counterparts, but delegations of American officers began to travel to Russia for military-to-military exchanges

and academic discussions as a part of their War College academic experience. Beginning in 1991, a Program for General Officers of the Russian Federation commenced on an annual basis at the Kennedy School at Harvard to provide an opportunity for Russia's general officers to meet with American policy makers and national security experts to discuss issues concerning defense and national security matters.

US Defense Secretary William Perry traveled to Moscow in April 1995 for a meeting with Russia's Defense Minister Pavel Grachev resulting in a statement affirming mutual commitment to continue to develop cooperation in peacekeeping and joint exercises.[17] In 1997, Defense Secretary William Cohen signed an agreement with Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov establishing a working group to explore cooperation on military reform, counterproliferation and theater defense, peacekeeping and military education.[18] Rodionov, marking his first visit to the US after becoming Defense Minister, indicated that Russia's defense leaders were interested in America's experience in rebuilding the military after Vietnam, the methods Americans use to divide responsibility between the military and civilian branches of government and in allocating resources among competing branches of government.[19]

NATO and the United States had a stake in seeing that Russia's ambitious reforms unleashed by Gorbachev, and continued under Yeltsin, were not reversed. The democratization wave engulfing the former Soviet bloc promised a potentially more secure and cooperative Europe reflecting the democratic values that had served to bond the 16 NATO member nations throughout the years of the Cold War. Both NATO and Russia were interested in moving forward with concrete efforts to shift the relationship from adversarial confrontation to partnership, not only in words, but in forming the concrete cooperation that would ensure the end to the East-West divide. These early exchanges would establish the foundation for the joint deployments of Russian and NATO peacekeepers in response to the implosion of former Yugoslavia.

### **Russia and the Problem of NATO Enlargement**

While progress was certainly taking place in initiating cooperation at the military-to-military level, NATO's affirmation of the intention to expand the Alliance to the East at the same time created serious tensions in the Russian-NATO relationship.[20] While Boris Yeltsin had signaled early on in 1993 in Warsaw that the admission of Poland into NATO would not be objectionable, he reversed this position shortly after confronting objections following his return to Moscow.[21] Despite efforts to downplay Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement in the West, the stated intention to expand the Alliance to the East has been received with sustained objections from Russian officials and pro-reform parties, with even stronger opposition being voiced from more conservative and nationalistic military/security and legislative leaders. Post-Soviet Russian political party platforms left, center and right have evolved over the past several years to include unified opposition to NATO enlargement.

In a conversation with the author in April 1999, former Soviet President, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, offered the reminder that he had a "gentlemen's agreement" with Bush administration officials and subsequent assurances that removal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and German unification would not be followed by NATO expansion.[22] Following the announced intention to enlarge NATO, Gorbachev has repeatedly expressed concern regarding the emerging European/global security architecture and NATO's intentions:

Instead of prioritizing the creation of European structures, creating a security council for the CSCE, its own peacekeeping

force etc., and subsequently looking into the possibility of using NATO structures in that context, the factors are being inverted and NATO, which was created for purposes of the Cold War, is being extended, quite apart from everything else. Is this merely an error? I fear something more serious, a prolongation of the old logic of supremacy that the West is continuing to impose.[23]

In 1994, Russia's President, Boris N. Yeltsin warned of a "Cold Peace" falling over Europe. Yeltsin stated:

NATO was created in Cold War times. Today, it is trying not without difficulty to find its place in Europe. It is important that this search would not create new divisions...We believe that plans of expanding NATO are contrary to this logic. Why sow the seeds of distrust? [24]

Russia's former Ambassador, Yuli M. Vorontsov, made quite clear writing in *The Washington Post* in 1998:

...Russia's attitude toward NATO enlargement has been and remains unequivocally negative...

Naturally we do not expect a NATO attack now. But NATO is a military alliance, and its military machine is getting closer to the boundaries of Russia...Whether we want it or not, we shall be obliged to react to these developments if the process goes on.

Few people take account of the psychological factor—the historic memory of Russians. It was from the West that real threat continuously came to Russia, bringing to our people immeasurable losses and destruction.[25]

In a discussion with the author concerning NATO enlargement, long time specialist on American-Russian relations, Dr. Henry Trofimienko, stated: "How many compromises has our nation made in foreign and security policy since Gorbachev introduced reforms? And how many compromises has your country made in response? Not one. And now NATO will expand..." [26] Former member of the General Staff and analyst of the Institute of USA and Canada Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Valentin V. Larionov, while suggesting that Russia must "search for forms of partnership with members of the NATO alliance," at the same time warned that "the history of relations among nations of Europe provides no basis to anticipate a long post-Cold War period and predicts a new division of Europe." [27] Larionov concludes the point: "Is it not valid to assert that NATO's plan for eastward expansion causing tensions with Russia points to the beginning of a new division of Europe?" [28]

The proposed expansion of NATO prompted the first serious reassessment within the Russian foreign policy and defense establishments concerning security challenges that might be anticipated from NATO and United States. During a visit to NATO headquarters in late 1996, former Defense Minister Igor N. Rodionov discussed Russia's perceptions of the consequences of NATO enlargement for altering the geostrategic military balance in Europe. Rodionov opened the exchange stating: "When Mikhail Gorbachev made his decision to withdraw Soviet forces from Eastern Europe, the West verbally guaranteed never to expand the North Atlantic Alliance toward the East...Soviet troops are gone from Europe, whereas clearly we are discussing the issue of NATO expansion right up to Russia's borders." [29]

Some of the adverse results cited by Rodionov and others speaking in behalf of the Russian military and defense establishment included significantly reducing Russia's early warning time available for anti-

ballistic missile systems; providing NATO with the option of carrying out a surprise air strike on Kursk, Bryansk and Smolensk; hemming in Russia's Baltic fleet as a result of NATO assuming control of Poland's strategic Baltic ports; and that NATO's tactical nuclear weapons could be deployed in the "new territories" for combat use leaving Russia "completely exposed to nuclear attack." [30]

In response to NATO's stated intention to enlarge, Russian military and defense planners have suggested that "adequate countermeasures" might be necessary. [31] Rodionov, for example, stated that the "logic is quite simple. NATO expansion deprives Russia of the ability to defend herself with existing anti-missile and anti-aircraft systems. The only remaining defense option in the event of an irreconcilable conflict of interests between NATO and Russia is to plan for a crippling first strike." [32] In Spring 1997, Russia staged military exercises in a simulation involving hypothetical invading NATO, Lithuanian and Polish military forces, with counterattacks using nuclear weapons. [33]

While Russians were willing participants in PFP, NATO enlargement has been interpreted by many Russians as rejection by the West or even as an effort by the West to take advantage of Russia's present turmoil and weakness. This had led to discussions within Russian foreign and military/security policy circles concerning the formation of counter alliances among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Potentially more threatening in the long-term are Chinese and Russian overtures for cooperation in security matters. Russia's concern with NATO enlargement contributed to prompting Boris Yelstin to sign a joint declaration in 1997 with China's President Jiang Zemin obviously directed toward the United States calling for a "multipolar" world community where no country should "seek hegemony." [34]

In May 1997, the *NATO-Russia Founding Act* was signed establishing a Permanent Joint Council (PJC) as a part of the agreement. [35] The *NATO-Russia Founding Act* was intended to serve as recognition of the importance of the NATO-Russian relationship and to provide for routine consultations and to manage mutual security interests. Section IV of the agreement reiterated a prior December 1996 statement indicating that there would be "no intention, no plan and no reason" to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of the new members. [36] The Permanent Joint Council (PJC) was to be chaired jointly by the Secretary General of NATO, with rotational representation of one of the NATO member states and a representative of Russia, creating a forum for ongoing dialogue and consultation on security issues between NATO and Russia. [37] The PJC also established provisions for meetings at the level of foreign and defense ministers, ambassadors and military chiefs of staff and liaison officers. [38]

While it was hoped that the agreement might assuage Moscow's concerns regarding expansion, differences in interpretation failed to put to rest central issues of contention. Although the agreement indicated that Moscow was to be "consulted on all security issues affecting its interests," another section in the agreement stated that such consultation confers no authority and would not enable Russia to veto NATO decisions. [39] From the point of view of NATO officials, Russia would have a "voice" in deliberations, but certainly no "veto" authority. President Yeltsin, however, contended that the agreement would give Moscow a decisive voice in inter-NATO councils. [40]

It is only reasonable to anticipate that any major power would grow apprehensive about a security alliance moving closer to its borders. Given NATO's original mission, one could not expect Russians to believe that they should view enlargement as "...the West taking a step toward Russia, not against it" as some have suggested. [41] In fact, as the assessments suggest, Russian may believe that willingness to offer trust in working with Western nations

may not have been adequately reciprocated. From their perspective, concrete strategic concessions, pursuing large scale political, market and societal reforms and offering genuine expressions of openness to the West should not have been matched by expansion of an alliance that had so long served the sole mission of countering the Soviet threat.

Statements by Western officials put forth in support of NATO enlargement such as suggesting that one "should not dismiss the possibility that Russia could return to the patterns of the past..." do not set well in a society that has recently experienced vast territorial losses, societal dislocation and material and human sacrifice all in the pursuit of Western-oriented reforms.[42] Even for those Russian democrats who could accept the argument that NATO enlargement presents no security challenge to Russia, expansion has undermined their influence in Russia's post-Soviet political configuration lending support to those who have used NATO's expansion to serve as validation of the worst intentions on the part of the West. Developments in establishing the first military-to-military ties between the new Russia and NATO combined with the initiative to enlarge the Alliance would set the stage for the first major challenge for the Russia-NATO post-Cold War relationship in confronting the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

### **Russia and the Conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo**

The wars of secession in former Yugoslavia presented the first major test for the post-Cold War Russian-NATO relationship. For NATO member nations, the implosion of former Yugoslavia threatened to destabilize the Balkan region. The exodus of refugees to neighboring nations following the outbreak of conflicts raised concerns that growing ethnic divisions could exacerbate tensions elsewhere in Europe. Reports of forced relocation and mass killings taking place in former Yugoslavia confronted the nations of Europe and the United States with a humanitarian crisis that would become increasingly difficult to ignore. NATO possessed sufficient force capability with the long-standing political ties among member states to hold together a coalition for orchestrating military intervention in the former Yugoslavia.

Following the immediate collapse of the USSR, Russia, at least initially, did not present a challenge to Western interests outside the territory of the former Soviet Union. Developments in the Middle East, Korea, Africa--the regions of traditional Soviet activism--evolved without significant Russian participation during the period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Russian government was consumed with sorting through the political and economic chaos ensuing after the disintegration of the USSR. Russian policy toward the former Yugoslavia became the first exception. Despite initial reluctance in responding to the Serbo-Croatian conflict in 1992, Russians became increasingly involved in the Yugoslav quagmire throughout the past decade, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and then more recently in Kosovo. While the official Russian position had been more neutral in responding to the Serbian-Croatian war in 1992, by the time war broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, the Russian position had become decisively independent.

Moscow's policy toward the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo was driven by a confluence of variables leading to a posture that at times actually supported the efforts of the United States and NATO, but also evinced marked divergence with US/NATO strategy. Russia had worked with the United States and European nations as a member of UN Security Council and Contact Group and in supporting the implementation of the Dayton Accords ending the Bosnian war in 1995. While joining in US/European diplomatic efforts, Russia also pursued independent initiatives and opposed the use of military force to force Serb compliance. NATO's decision to resort to the use of airstrikes in



Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999 elicited sharp criticism and even outright condemnation from Russian officials.

It was not so much that Russian officials were willing to keep company with the "pariah states" of the world community by rendering support to Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic as some Western analysts have suggested.[43] In fact, Russia had joined the West in the Contact Group, the UN and other pronouncements criticizing the policies of both Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic. Russians opposed NATO's unilateral decision to employ military force as an instrument for attempting to settle what they viewed as a civil war involving historic Serb allies taking place within the territory of a sovereign nation state. As reiterated time and again throughout the series of Yugoslav conflicts, Russia's Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, reaffirmed in April 1999 with regard to the Kosovo conflict: "Russia's position is correct. There can be no military solution to the problem..."[44] Defense expert and Duma member, Dr. Alexei G. Arbatov, expressed the widely shared perspective that: "To try to resolve a humanitarian problem as the West is trying to do is tantamount to an attempt to put out a fire by fuel. The aim is to stop the conflict. Russia must seek a cessation of hostilities and resumption of the Kosovo peace talks through the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations." [45]

The *new thinking* foreign policy strategy introduced by Gorbachev placed a high priority on breaking the barriers of confrontation with the West. Gorbachev's notion of the "common European home" viewed forging constructive ties with Europe as a priority. The *Atlantist* school of thought, popular in the first years of the Yeltsin era, reflected the perspective of Andrei Kozyrev and other pro-Western reform minded Russians who believed that Russia's future was best served by embracing Western values and deepening security and economic integration with Western nations. In formulating Russia's foreign policy choices, Yeltsin and his colleagues, attempting to implement a reform project for rapid transition to a market economy, assigned considerable weight to Russia's potential cooperation with the European Union, G-7 (G-8) and in securing loans and economic investment from the US/West. Thus, the possibility of jeopardizing bilateral ties with the United States and nations of Europe that might result in adverse consequences in terms of security and perhaps especially economic cooperation always factored in formulating Russia's responses to the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts.

The crisis in former Yugoslavia was the first major conflict outside the territory of the former Soviet Union where Russia assumed a highly visible and active presence. The question is why Russia's response would have diverged at all with the US and other Western nations, potentially derailing existing or future development of advantageous ties in other bilateral areas.

In approaching the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Russia's posture is in part explained by concerns with regional and world status following the collapse of the Soviet empire. Though Russia remained a superpower like its predecessor, at least in terms of nuclear capacity and vast physical size and resources, Russians find it difficult to come to terms with diminished capacity for regional and global influence in the midst of profound economic and societal dislocation. Russians throughout the government, defense and security establishments believe that Western leaders have failed to adequately take account of their sensibilities regarding Russia's traditional role in global and European affairs. For example, colleagues in Moscow express dismay that Western nations would be committed to rendering assistance to Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians while at the same time ignoring the interests and objections of Russia, still a major European power. Commenting on the conflict in former Yugoslavia in 1994, Russian President Boris Yeltsin made clear that "Certain people are trying to decide Bosnian questions without

Russia's participation. We will not allow this to happen." [46] Suggestions on the part of some US officials that Russian objections to airstrikes were "irrelevant" aggravated Moscow's defense and security elite citing Russia's traditional role in the Balkans and proximity to the region as factors that should have made their interest obvious. The continued sense of "great power status" implied that Russians could not stand on the sidelines among the concert of external powers seeking to influence the Yugoslav crisis. Thus, Russians were prompted to pursue an ambitious role among European powers in responding to the Yugoslav conflicts and to complain often of Western offenses in failing to take account of their historical and contemporary importance in European security issues.

At the same time that Russia was experiencing the national psychological struggle of coming to terms with its post-Soviet international status, NATO's expansion and NATO's military response in former Yugoslavia compounded Russia's apprehensions regarding the regional strategic configuration following the collapse of the USSR. While not directly bordering the Russian Federation, Russians possess historic geostrategic interests in the Balkan region. From Moscow's perspective, developments in the Balkans are certainly critical to the political and strategic balance in Europe. Operation Allied Force, marking the first military intervention in the history of the Alliance, confirmed the worst suspicions concerning NATO's intentions for many Russians. Moscow reacted to the commencement of the air campaign in March 1999 with the immediate expulsion of the NATO information representative from Moscow and closing the NATO Information Office that had been established in Russia. Russia suspended participation in the PJC and removed military liaison representatives from NATO in Brussels. The April 1999 revision of NATO's Strategic Concept to enable the Alliance to intervene in out-of-area situations or in ethnic conflicts beyond the borders of member nations such as in Kosovo heightened insecurities about Moscow's ability to counter the Alliance. Russians were concerned that this new strategic focus would establish the basis for the possibility of future intervention in Russia's bordering "near abroad" or even in Russian territory. There were also questions raised about the capacity to protect Russia's diaspora in the event of subjugation by majority groups in neighboring nations in face of perceived increasing NATO assertiveness.

The sharing of the common Eastern Orthodox Slavic ethnic/religious identity with Serbs also factored significantly in Russian posture.[47] As historian and former Soviet Army officer Victor Gobarev characterized the relationship in a recent article: "Russian-Yugoslav (Serb and Montenegrin) ties represent an historic, 1,500 year-long alliance that began with the first joint military campaigns of the Eastern and Southern Slavs long before the year 1000. The alliance endured the 500 years when the Turks oppressed the Serbs and Montenegrins, a period when Russia represented the only hope of liberation for their fellow Orthodox Slavic brothers." [48] The memories of the Second World War establishes another basis of common association as Russians still recall Serb resistance to the Croatian Ustashe allied with Nazi Germany. Anniversaries of the October 1944 liberation of Belgrade by the joint operation of the Soviet and Yugoslav armies have been solemnly celebrated in the 1990s, a practice which has become much less important in Eastern Europe since 1989.

Allen Lynch and Reneo Lukic have argued that claims of a "special Russian-Serbian relationship of solidarity" have been exaggerated. [49] They pointed to the facts that no Serbian or Russian state existed from 1918-1991 and to conflicts between Stalin and Tito to support their assertion. However, for many Russians today, history began long before this century. The conversion of Russians and Serbs to Eastern Orthodox Christianity established an association spanning centuries preceding communist rule. Panslavism, developed in Russia by Nicholas Danilevsky and Rostislav Fadeyev, involved the

application of Slavophil philosophy to foreign affairs calling for the extension of a kingdom to unite Orthodox Christian Slavs under a single empire. [50] While the "solidarity" between Russians and Serbs may be based more on sentimental ties and myth than concrete assistance rendered by Russians to Serbs, the sharing of the cultural-religious affinities is important for understanding Russia's perception and response to the implosion of Yugoslavia.

There were repeated Serbian appeals to Russia for support as Yugoslavia disintegrated into war. Among many examples, in 1994, Patriarch of Moscow Alexsiy II and Patriarch of Serbia Pavel signed a joint communique emphasizing Russian-Serbian solidarity and called for an immediate end to the armed conflict in Bosnia and peace talks among all warring sides. The spokesman for Patriarch Pavel, Bishop of Bach Iriney, made the following appeal for Russian support: "Russia ought to play the part not only of peace mediator in the Balkans, but also a kind of defender of the Serbs. As the Germans defend the Croats, and the Americans the Moslems, so the Russians must defend the Serbs." [51]

Serbian attitudes regarding Russian intervention in East-Central Europe differ significantly from other nations of the region. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, fearing resurgent Russian nationalism, wish to distance themselves from Russia and thus see admission into NATO and other Western structures as a means for doing so. The fact that Russian assistance was actively solicited by Serbs reaffirmed for the Russians recognition of their continued importance in Europe and was thus well received by many politicians, diplomats and the military.

Charles Jelavich argued in *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism* that Russian national interests, as opposed to Orthodox Slavic kinship, would prevail in determining Moscow's policy in the Balkans. [52] He also suggested that in certain instances while the Russian public would have gladly supported "Orthodox brothers" in the Balkans, the Russian government was not free to act in accordance with public will because of strategic considerations. In fact, in responding to the contemporary wars of secession in former Yugoslavia during the past decade, the prospects for adversely influencing political relations and economic ties with the United States and other Western countries, did lead to significant compromise on the part of the Russians. In the end, the Russian government did not provide advanced anti-aircraft systems and other forms of military support to Bosnian Serbs and Belgrade. Moscow ultimately pressured Slobodan Milosevic to retreat from Kosovo, thereby enabling NATO to avoid a ground war that could have involved substantial human and material losses. Still, this should not imply that these long-standing religious and ethnic ties were inconsequential in the Russian reaction to the crisis in former Yugoslavia.

Traditional Russian-Serb ties explain the impassioned response NATO airstrikes evoked in Russia. Professor Marshall I. Goldman of the Davis Center at Harvard University offers the observation that it is difficult for "most of us in the West to appreciate why the Russians are so dedicated to the Serbs," resulting from factors such as "long-standing protective feelings," "...sense of Slavic identity" and Russia's support for "Orthodox Christian Serbs in their effort to gain freedom from the Ottoman Empire." [53] Goldman recounts a conversation with a Russian friend during the Kosovo war noting that after expressing his "disapproval of the Serbs," his friend defended them "fiercely" and "with anger" said that "You can't understand, it is a genetic problem. You are not a Slav." [54] The presence of Russian Orthodox priests at departure ceremonies for deliveries of humanitarian aid during the Kosovo war illustrates the symbolism of such ties. There were evening television broadcasts during the Spring 1999 war between Moscow and Belgrade involving emotional pledges of support for peoples of common cultural heritage. The

public demonstration triggered in response to US/NATO airstrikes in Bosnia in 1995 and the sustained daily protests and pelting of the American Embassy in Moscow during the Kosovo air campaign is to a great extent explained by the close affinity Russians have with Serbs. Absent the Serb religious-ethnic tie, even given Russia's opposition to NATO's unilateral use of force against a sovereign European nation, one might still have expected that there would not have been such intense interest, inflamed emotions or activism on the part of Russian leadership and society in responding to the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts.

It is difficult to define precisely the extent of Russian opposition to airstrikes in Kosovo. Public opinion polls at the time had indicated that some 90% of Muscovites opposed NATO action in Kosovo unifying an otherwise divided political spectrum. I was teaching at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Spring 1999 Kosovo conflict. The university students in my course on Russian-American relations were unanimous in opposing the airstrikes, but differed with respect to preferences concerning Russia's response. Approximately half my students argued that Russia should assist the Serbs even in the event that there were serious military or economic consequences, while others argued that Russia's current economic problems and need for assistance from the West made it difficult if not impossible for Russia to intercede in behalf of Serbs. The *Voice of Russia* collected interviews with Russians on the streets of Moscow providing typical perspectives in March 1999 shortly after the initiation of Operation Allied Force. [55] According to the *Voice of Russia* report, one Muscovite replied: "If they drop bombs in Kosovo, they could do the same to us. We should help Yugoslavia, perhaps even with arms." Another respondent stated: "This is of course terrible, especially for us, for Russia. Some help should be given. America takes too much upon itself, telling everyone else what they should do."

Some discounted Russia's opposition as insignificant suggesting that while Russians may have expressed dissatisfaction with the bombings, they were not prepared to support rendering assistance to the Serbs. While recognition on the part of Russian citizens that providing support to Serbs may not have been possible given Russia's current domestic problems, or that the risks in terms of Western responses would be too great, still the NATO air campaign would make a significant and lasting impact in Russian perceptions of the Alliance and its intentions.

Russia's official, media and public perceptions of the war differed fundamentally from the characterizations of the war in former Yugoslavia in Western nations. In the United States, the overwhelming majority of blame in policy statements and media coverage was assigned to the Serbs. The US media placed emphasis on Serb atrocities against Kosovar Albanians hardly mentioning Kosovo's original Serb population that have been forced from their homes more recently in face of Albanian retaliatory attacks. The Russian media tended to give much greater emphasis to covering the plight of Serb victims and casualties of the conflict. Russian policymakers and media analysts tended to downplay the importance of humanitarian atrocities against Croatians, Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians. During the Spring 1999 air campaign, the US media made little mention of the well documented criminal associations and activities of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

Russians often called for a more balanced appraisal of the conflicts. For example, commenting on Bosnia in 1994, Russia's Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, stated: "...it was not reasonable to mark everyone as good and bad guys as in a Western. It is not a Western but an ethnically colored civil war with no right, no wrong, no angels, no devils..." [56] Director of the Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies/Russian Academy of Sciences and member of the President's Security Council, Dr. Vladimir K. Volkov, described the

wars in former Yugoslavia as resulting from "the struggle of ethnocratic clans, created in the years of communist rule for power, territory and property" rather than describing the origins in terms such as the "quest for Greater Serbia" and other common Western academic explanations assigning the impulse for the conflict to Serbs. [57] In referring specifically to Bosnia, he notes that the "Muslim nation was built by the communist regime" and that the "Croat-Serb confrontation and the slogans of establishment of an Islamic state in Bosnia led to explosion in that peaceful region." [58] Volkov cites interference on the part of Western nations prompting separatism (Slovenia, Croatia) and giving an "anti-Serbian" slant to the crisis.[59] From the perspective of many in Moscow, what for the US and NATO nations were "victims" of humanitarian catastrophe, were for many Russians considered to be "separatist" and "terrorist" forces instigated by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

Samuel Huntington's argument that the post-Cold War era would usher in a period in world history in which cultural identification, based on shared nationality, religion, language and customs, transcending nation-state, economic and ideological allegiances does seem to hold some credence for understanding Russia's posture toward former Yugoslavia. [60] The resurgent prominence of the Russian Orthodox Church and ancient Slavic Orthodox symbolism in contemporary Russia are evidence of the importance of nationalist religio-ethnic identity in defining the character of post-communist Russia. For Huntington, the Russians and Serbs of the Orthodox civilization would naturally unite when facing challenges from the Islamic world, or perhaps the West. Many Russians view these conflicts in "civilizational" terms with Orthodox Christian Slav Russians and Serbs confronting Muslim Chechen, Bosnian and Albanian "separatists" or "terrorists" following the break up of nation states resulting in considerable territorial losses for both Russians and Serbs. The coincidence of these cultural based conflicts strengthens Russian identification with Serbs.

In reacting to the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, the Yeltsin government was increasingly torn by the interest in maintaining a constructive relationship with the United States and the West, while simultaneously pressured by the more decisively pro-Serbian or anti-Western nationalist/patriot and communist forces in the government, defense establishment and society. While Yeltsin and those surrounding him had placed a high priority on working to be "team players" with the West, beginning with the airstrikes in Bosnia and reaching extreme levels during the NATO air campaign in Kosovo, Yeltsin would encounter ever greater demands for resisting the West.

The first evident disagreement between the executive and parliament occurred in May 1992 when Russia failed to exercise its veto power in the UN Security Council to oppose sanctions against Serbia for supporting Serbian combatants fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. [61] Forces in the parliament, under the leadership of Yevgenniy Ambartsumov, charged that the action violated the traditional tie Russia had to "Slavic" Serbs. Ambartsumov had been one of the leading experts on Yugoslavia at the Institute of International and Economic Political Studies. He was vigorously supported by a former institute colleague who also became a prominent member of Parliament, the Constitutional Commission Secretary Oleg Rumyantsev. It is noteworthy that both of them were not from the "red-brown" (communist-nationalist) coalition, but belonged to the democratic faction, and had been well known for their liberal pro-Western views and ties to dissidents during the Brezhnev era.

In 1994, the Duma adopted the resolution calling for the lifting of sanctions against Serbia and expressed support for Bosnian Serbs. Viktor Sheinis, who led an investigative parliamentary delegation to the former

Yugoslavia in 1994 representing the democratic/reformist Yabloko faction, described the UN sanctions against Serbia as "unfair and one sided." [62] In September 1995, a delegation of Russian legislative representatives went to the Balkans and returned demanding that Russia supply arms to the Serbs and that Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev be fired for succumbing to Western demands in Bosnia. [63] Representatives of the communist party, more extreme nationalists and other anti-Western forces in Russia's parliament condemned the Russian Foreign Ministry for "caving in to UN pressure." In response to NATO airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs in 1995, some Russian legislative officials offered to act as "human shields" in support of Serbs. [64]

In 1998, Russian Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev threatened that the Duma would initiate a rupture of the NATO-Russian Founding Act in the event that force was used in attempting to resolve the situation in Kosovo. [65] Selznev argued that the "precedent whereby NATO inflicts a blow on a sovereign nation state without consultation with the UN Security Council must be prevented..." [66] Further, he added that nations of Europe must demonstrate "greater interest in learning to tackle problems without the United States' active interference." [67] Selznev again called for using the OSCE as the preferred mechanism for resolving the crisis. Russian lawmakers characterized the Kosovo air campaign as "NATO bombardment" resulting in "genocide" against the Serbs. Russian lawmakers pushed for a Russia-Belarus-Serbia alliance, based on shared Slavic Eastern Orthodox ties and geopolitical interests as a response to the perceived threat from Western nations. The State Duma voted 279 to 34 in April 1999 to demand that the Russian government supply weapons and military advisors to Yugoslavia. [68] Yeltsin's spokesman, Dmitriy Yakushkin, responded that arms shipments would lead to a "slow drawing of Russian into war" and "inevitable escalation of conflict with unpredictable consequences." [69] Yeltsin affirmed that our "fundamental position is not to get sucked into a big ground war and not to deliver arms..." [70] Yeltsin confirmed that Russia would "take the moral high ground" employing diplomatic means, rather than military force, as the preferred option for responding to the crisis. Yeltsin's dispatch of Viktor Chernomyrdin to negotiate a settlement to the Kosovo crisis met with staunch objection in the Duma with many believing that the Russian envoy had simply served the US and NATO's interests.

Several factors contributed to escalating pressure from parliamentarians on the President. First, Russians became disillusioned by the fact that the United States and other Western powers had not demonstrated the willingness to provide large scale aid to compliment the abundant advice offered to "support" their reforms. The failure to meet early expectations concerning financial assistance coupled with the severe dislocation and hardship suffered by the economic reforms, created increasing aggravation and animosity toward the West. The involvement of the US government and academic advisors in backing radical reformers came to be perceived by many Russians as contributing to the economic disaster culminating in the August 1998 financial collapse. This perceived "meddling" in Russia's society led to disenchantment and surging anti-Americanism/anti-Westernism. As the US/NATO stepped up the use of military force in dealing with Yugoslavia, Russians increasingly identified with Serbs as victims of Western "interference." While the wars in former Yugoslavia intensified, the new Russian imperialists and nationalists had coalesced, defined their agendas and were gaining increasing prominence in the domestic political arena. Yeltsin would surely stand to lose political ground in appearing to bow to Western pressure.

Tensions between the executive branch of the government and military reached the highest level during the Kosovo conflict. Statements came from military officials, both retired and active, reflecting dissatisfaction with either the unwillingness or inability of the President to respond adequately to what was a perceived as a challenge to Russia's interests. The Russian

Defense Ministry's Head of International Military Cooperation, Colonel General Leonid Ivashov characterized NATO's action in Kosovo as "open aggression" against a "sovereign state" and had raised the possibility of providing military assistance to Belgrade. [71] Retired Army General and Governor of the Krasnoyarsk region, Alexander Lebed, noted in an interview published in *Der Spiegel* in April 1999 regarding the Yugoslav situation that the relationship between Russia and the United States "has long since ceased being a partnership. It is the relationship of master and dog..."[72] Lebed argued that Russians "should announce to the entire world" that they would "provide military and technical aid to Yugoslavia" in order to "unite our nation and regain our self respect." [73] An article published in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, at the outset of the Kosovo crisis, indicated that commander of the Far East Military District (and actually a former Presidential hopeful), Victor Chechevatov, sent a letter to Boris Yeltsin stating that:

At the time of the severe trials which have befallen the Slav peoples of Yugoslavia as a result of NATO's armed aggression, I consider it my duty to state my readiness to head up any formation--of volunteers or of regular Russian Army units--to provide them with military assistance. There is no sense today in minimizing what is happening in the world and an urgent need exists to admit that World War III is erupting and extending to newer and newer regions, as in 1934-1941. The bombing of Yugoslavia could be a rehearsal resulting in similar strikes in the not too distant future on Russia.[74]

The differences expressed between the executive and military resulted in strong admonitions aired in public. For example, Alexander Voloshin, the Kremlin chief of staff, issued a statement in the midst of the Spring Kosovo crisis warning that top military officers making comments that are not consistent with Yeltsin's position would be "dismissed immediately." [75] The desire on the part of the military to pursue a more forceful posture toward Western nations would become visibly evident in Russia's unexpected march to Pristina in June 1999.

### **Russia's Bold March to Pristina**

The Kosovo conflict reached a point of potential NATO-Russian confrontation over the movement of Russian forces from Bosnia into Pristina Kosovo to occupy the Slatina airport preempting the planned arrival of KFOR. The Russian military was, without question, outraged by NATO military action in Kosovo and NATO's resolve in setting the terms for the peacekeeping intervention in Kosovo. As Victor Gobarev put it: "...the surprise march by the mechanized column to Pristina airport...underscored the disenchantment of the Russian military with what they perceive as NATO aggressiveness, offensiveness as opposed to defensiveness, outright bullying, and arrogance toward Russia." [76]

There has been a great deal of speculation about how the decision was made to move the Russian paratroopers from Bosnia on June 11-12, 1999. Contrary to the suggestions of some analysts, the Russian paratroopers in Bosnia, knowing full well the consequences of such action, would never have made the decision to move forces to Pristina, violating the terms of SFOR, without orders from their superiors. Given the tensions between the military and President, others have suggested that the military leadership might have made the decision without consulting President Yeltsin. Russia's Foreign Minister initially claimed to have no knowledge of the troop movement and, as tensions mounted with NATO, offered assurances to US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that the Russian force of some 200 personnel en route from Bosnia would not continue into Kosovo. The fact that Russia's Foreign

Minister Ivanov referred to the arrival of the force in Kosovo as a "mistake" left serious questions about where decisions were being made on the Russian side.[77]

Evidently the march to Pristina involved marked assertiveness on the part of the Defense Ministry, circumventing the Foreign Ministry all together. According to the detailed personal account of former Supreme Allied Commander, General Wesley K. Clark, his source in Moscow indicated that the signals provided from Russia's Foreign Ministry were "decidedly softer" than that of the military.[78 ] In fact, General Ivashov had said just prior to the movement of forces from Bosnia that "We are not going to beg the United States to give us a specific sector in Kosovo...we will work out with Yugoslavia what sector we control." [79] Ivashov had been talking in terms of Russia deploying some 10,000 troops, far greater than some 3,600 Russian peacekeepers eventually sent to form a part of KFOR in Kosovo.[80]

In an interview published in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* shortly after the seizure of the Slatina airport in June 1999, General Ivashov implied that President Yeltsin approved the movement of paratroopers.[81] Ivashov stated that "this is a president's decision" and Yeltsin made the decision on the basis of "briefings by Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs." [82] Victor Gobarev supports Ivashov's claim that the President had approved the seizure of the airport, offering a logical explanation for Yeltsin's decision:

He was certainly informed about the plan, which was clearly an initiative of the Russian high military command, he approved it, and then stepped aside to wait and see whether it would succeed. Once it was clear that the measure had succeeded, Yeltsin stepped forward amid the confusion and claimed full responsibility for the decision...Had the adventure failed, Yeltsin would have quickly identified scapegoats among the Russian military.[83]

Gobarev's argument is consistent with the fact that Yeltsin rewarded the officer who led the march to Pristina, Viktor Zavarzin, with a promotion to three star general.

Why would Yeltsin have approved the move to Pristina? Yeltsin would be afforded considerable credit in the world community for the contributions of his envoy, Viktor Chernomyrdin, in bringing about the cessation of conflict. However, this would not have constituted much of a diplomatic victory at home where the former Prime Minister enjoyed little popularity and was criticized widely for sacrificing Russian and Serbian interests in negotiating with the West. In terms of domestic consumption, Yeltsin stood to benefit by this bold assertion toward NATO. The largely symbolic seizure of the airport by the "Heroes of Pristina" was received with jubilation at home. Yeltsin, already in the midst of impeachment pressures, had suffered further erosion of his popularity as a result of perceptions that, as time and again in the past, in dealing with Kosovo, the Russian President had made too many compromises with the West. In addition, Yeltsin had frequently displayed an erratic style and did seem to take delight in springing surprises from time to time. But was Yeltsin ready to risk military confrontation with NATO in Kosovo if it came to it? The President and his military advisors could not have been at all certain that NATO would not attempt to block Russian occupation of the airport. Surely there would be even more damage to Yeltsin's reputation in the event that Russia was visibly forced to retreat.

It is clear that Russians took great pleasure in preempting NATO's move to Kosovo and in demonstrating to a wide international audience instantaneously via televised broadcast that Russia was still a major player not to be discounted. Russia's NTV reported that the unexpected deployment of forces in Kosovo ahead of NATO implied that "Russia stole from NATO the



victory in the Kosovo conflict..."[84] The giant of the East, possessing a long history of involvement in the geopolitical developments and wars of Europe, had made quite clear that it was by no means prepared to comply with NATO's plans so easily. But still this bold display of "bravado" certainly involved some risks in leaving Western leaders unprepared for such a move. In this regard, the entire episode may have had less to do with rational calculation and everything to do with Russians reacting as a result of mounting resentment.

If the President did approve the action, whatever his motives, the fact that Russia's Foreign Minister and NATO were not provided with reliable advance notice concerning Russia's intentions heightened uncertainty and risk. US Navy officer Derek Reveron recalls the day a fax came into Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) from the Russians indicating that they had "...arrived in Pristina." [85] After receiving assurances a few hours before from US Secretary of State Albright that Russia's Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov had "promised" her that "Russians would not cross into Kosovo prematurely," General Wesley K. Clark indicated that he received a call from his special assistant to inform him that the Russians were in fact in Pristina.[86] Clark recalls that he immediately contacted NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. He recounts his conversation: "Javier, have you seen the TV? The Russians are in Pristina..."[87]

Subsequently, Clark had in fact issued an order to block the runways at Pristina with an Apache force to prevent the Russians from receiving additional reinforcements or taking control of a sector in Northern Kosovo.[88] Clark's account indicates that this order was rejected by UK Army Lt. General Michael Jackson, Commander of the Allied Command Rapid Reaction Force, who, according to Clark, offered the following reply: "Sir, I'm not starting World War III for you..." [89] According to Clark, subsequent phone calls resulted in affirmation of Jackson's position by British Defense Minister, Charles Gurthie. General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, evidently agreed in confirming with Clark by phone that "...we didn't want a confrontation." [90] Clark provides his rationale:

I didn't want to face the issue of shooting down Russian transport aircraft if they forced their way through NATO airspace. If they were able to land a large force, then we would be in the position of having to contain them, which could force a confrontation where the odds were less favorable to us. [91]

Clark's testimony also underscores the importance of the "surprise" and "risk" factors in leaving a traditionally defensive alliance unprepared for rapid securing of political backing in member countries and agreement on an appropriate response for such a development. Clark explains some of the factors that had prevented NATO from getting a force to the Slatina airport prior to or to meet the Russians:

There were too many unresolved issues. There had been no detailed back-brief, and no rehearsal. The air and ground elements hadn't worked together before. The logistics were uncertain. My commanders were full of doubts and reservations. I couldn't recommend a plan like this until my commanders and I could review the plan and believe in it.[92]

For Russians, the fact that they were not assigned a separate sector in Kosovo along with the Americans, British, French, Germans and Italians represented only more confirmation that NATO was not offering due respect for Russia and the Russian military. The Russians had initially put forward a plan that would have given them control of the North-East portion of Kosovo, an area originally with a majority Serb population and valuable mineral

resources.

However, the possibility of a separate sector for Russia in Kosovo was evidently ruled out. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, had been firm in stating this would "amount to partition of the province." [93] US Army Colonel Greg Kaufman, former Director of the Balkan Task Force, OSD/Pentagon, indicated that assigning a separate sector to Russia was "never a possibility." [94] Kaufman suggested that it was anticipated that Russians would have likely encountered difficulties with local Albanians in managing their sector and there were also concerns that such an arrangement could have resulted in partition of Kosovo. [95] Kaufman also pointed out that it was not widely publicized that Russian troops arrived at the Pristina airport without sufficient supplies to sustain their 200 personnel--the obvious implication being that one would question the capacity of the cash strapped Russian economy to maintain a major deployment of forces in Kosovo. [96] Kaufman said that this was a "NATO operation" and NATO would "set the terms of engagement" and that "there was never any question about that..." [97] Clark made his view clear: "NATO command and control is required...If we give the Russians any possibility of an independent sector, no matter how small we say it is initially, we've lost the principle of NATO command and control." [98] Clark noted that:

I had closely observed the double standard the Russians had applied while working for us in the Bosnia mission. They took care of the Serbs, passing them information, tipping them off to any of our operations, and generally doing their best to look after their "fellow Slavs" while keeping up the full pretense of cooperation with us. And in Bosnia we hadn't given them their own sector. If they had their own sector in Kosovo, they would run it as a separate mission, and Kosovo would be effectively partitioned. [99]

What appeared as Russia's "success" rapidly turned about as Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary supported NATO's requests to deny Russia access to their airspace thereby blocking the Russians from flying in reinforcements. Ultimately, the decisions regarding Kosovo's future and the arrangement for the deployment of peacekeepers would be finalized at the political level. Moscow would eventually concede to participate in KFOR without actually controlling any single sector. By late June, Yeltsin was in Cologne for the meeting of the Group of Eight commenting with respect to Yugoslavia that "We need to make up after our fight." [100] At this meeting, Russia achieved permanent status as a full member of both the political and economic circle of the G-8. It was announced that the grouping of the world's wealthiest seven nations plus Russia would no longer be referred to as the G-7, but from now on as the G-8. [101] Yeltsin also received assurances that the IMF would be pressed to release \$4.5 billion of Western aid that had been blocked after Russian financial markets had collapsed in August 1998 and discussions took place concerning Soviet-era debt relief. [102] Russian officials signed an agreement with their American counterparts in Cologne limiting the deployment of Russian troops in Kosovo to 3,600 and removing their demand for a separate sector establishing a more limited role for Russia in the peacekeeping operation.

### **Russia and NATO Peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo**

While Russia and NATO had experienced serious strains at the political diplomatic level in responding to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, military-to-military cooperation in peacekeeping in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo constitute overall a quite positive aspect of the relationship. The prior

military-to-military exchanges and joint exercises under the auspices of the *Partnership for Peace* program made it much easier to establish the interoperability and working relationships necessary for functioning effectively in these difficult situations.[103] Even in Kosovo, while Russia's military leadership was not at all satisfied with the final agreement denying Russia a sector, reports of those who were involved indicate that Russian and NATO forces were able to work well together. The international composition of the NATO and partner nation forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo would correspond with the diversity of the population of former Yugoslavia contributing to the efforts to gain the trust and willingness of the local inhabitants to cooperate with the peacekeepers. The presence of Russians as a part of the peacekeeping missions contributed to legitimizing the settlement and foreign presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo and would prove valuable for engendering some confidence among local Serbs who were not so willing to accept NATO presence in the immediate aftermath of the airstrikes.

The end to the East-West confrontation created the necessary international circumstances for Russia's cooperation in multinational peacekeeping efforts with Western nations. Following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the removal of barriers to deepening security cooperation with non-Soviet bloc nations, the official military and foreign policy documents of the Russian Federation assigned importance to peacekeeping. Prior to the early 1990s, peacekeeping had been a relatively insignificant aspect Russia's international activities. More recently, in spite of severe budgetary constraints, the Russian Federation still allocated personnel and equipment to supporting peacekeeping operations in the CIS and for UN and multinational forces. In 1995, Russia established a law setting forth the provisions for the allocation of civilian and military personnel for participation in peacekeeping.[104] Russia established a "special contingent" for peacekeeping within the Armed Forces in 1996.[105]

While the numbers and size of peacekeeping operations did increase in the 1990s, most of Soviet/Russian involvement took place in conflicts on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Figures as of 1998 indicated that the largest representation of Russian peacekeeping forces were deployed in Georgia and Abkhazia (11,000), Tajikistan (8,000), Armenia (4,000) and in the Moldova-Transdnister region (2,500).[106] Commitments beyond the territory of the former Soviet Union were significantly more modest such as Angola (135), Western Sahara (25), Iraq-Kuwait (10) and so forth.[107] The peacekeeping contingents in Bosnia and Kosovo are the exceptions in representing the largest commitment of forces outside Russia's bordering "near abroad" or nations of the former Soviet empire. The peacekeeping deployments in support of implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia-Herzegovina and UN Resolution 1244 and the Military Technical Agreement concluded between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for Kosovo not only provided the first tests for Russia and NATO to cooperate at the operational and tactical levels, but also created the opportunity for nations that had been adversaries for several decades during the Cold War to establish trust through actually working jointly in the daunting task of attempting to secure peace in these war ravaged areas where local grievances and resentments had hardly subsided.

Sustaining these costly peacekeeping operations given Russia's cash strapped economy and increasing commitments in Chechnya would be difficult. Russia provided carefully selected experienced volunteer soldiers and officers for the peacekeeping forces in former Yugoslavia. The disciplined airborne volunteer forces deployed to former Yugoslavia should be clearly distinguished from the younger inexperienced conscripts that the Russians have sent to the war zones in recent years in Chechnya and Dagestan. The pay incentives were better than other assignments with reports ranging from \$300-\$1000 a month, far more significant than the typical monthly salaries.[108] Russians and the

Russian media sources often aired complaints about conceding to a diminished peacekeeping force in Kosovo. At the same time, media coverage during that time had also indicated that a considerable portion of the public did not believe that Russia should devote resources to support the deployment of peacekeepers to Kosovo. Nevertheless, a total of 158 Senators of the Federation Council voted in favor of Russian participation in KFOR, with three abstentions and no votes against participation.[109] Some lawmakers did raise objections, however, that Russian commanders would serve in "junior" capacities to NATO commanders.[110]

Moscow's agreement to participate in the multinational peacekeeping missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo derived from several considerations. First, the peacekeeping presence would provide a symbolic reminder of Russia's continued importance in Europe, the international community and of its interests in the Balkan region. Russia's peacekeeping presence was viewed as one means of guaranteeing participation in defining the terms for eventual resolution of these conflicts. It was important that Russia, viewed by many in the world community as a waning world power, provide a credible and effective military presence in this European conflict zone that had been the focus of so much attention throughout the world community. Initially, at the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement, Russia was especially interested in demonstrating willingness to move beyond the divisions of the Cold War to cooperate in new areas with the West. Finally, the traditional ties with Serbs meant that Russians were not only a valuable asset in securing Serb cooperation in achieving diplomatic settlement but that they also had an interest in ensuring that Serbs would not be victims of retaliation and considerable human and material losses following the cessation of hostilities.

Russia's peacekeeping deployments to the former Yugoslavia actually began shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union with participation in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in 1992 in Croatia. Beginning in 1996, Russian forces were deployed to work with NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia presently contributes some 1,200 of the 20,000 peacekeepers in the Stabilization Force (SFOR) (successor to the original Implementation Force IFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and maintains some 3,000- 3,600 soldiers of the some 40,000 forces deployed in the Kosovo Force (KFOR).[111] In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Russian brigade was based in the US sector, Multinational Division North which includes a border area between the predominantly Croat and Muslim Federation and the predominantly Serb populated Respublik Srpska.[112] The Russian brigade headquarters was established in Ugljevik near Tuzla. In Kosovo, the Russians are deployed in the US-led Multinational Brigade East, in the French-led Multinational Brigade North and the German-led Multinational Brigade South. The Helsinki Agreement also established that both NATO and Russia would share responsibility in managing the air field operations at the airport in Pristina.

As a condition of participation, Russians would not concede to putting their forces under NATO command. The command arrangement worked out with the Russians differs from all other non-NATO participants in the multinational forces.[113] In an agreement between US Secretary of Defense William Perry and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, Russian peacekeepers in Bosnia would receive their orders through a Russian General based at SHAPE, and would be under the tactical control of the US General for routine daily operations. The Russian General would work with SACEUR and SHAPE in managing strategic and operational issues pertaining to Russia's participation in SFOR. In Kosovo, as in Bosnia, Russian liaison representatives at SHAPE would coordinate issues pertaining to Russian participation in KFOR. It was agreed that the Russian battalion commander would approve orders along with the respective NATO commanders working with the Russians in the respective US-MND East, French-MND North and German-MND South. Bilateral planning meetings between the Russian Head of Delegation at SHAPE and SACEUR distinguish the consultative process

with Russia from other non-NATO nations participating in SFOR and KFOR. While this command arrangement is unprecedented and unique, evidently it has not hindered successful cooperation at the tactical level.

Russian and NATO peacekeepers participating in both SFOR and KFOR were tasked with creating a safe and secure environment for local inhabitants and the conditions for restoration of elected civilian government in multiethnic nations that would enable the ultimate removal of NATO and NATO partner nations. Toward these objectives, the peacekeepers performed a multitude of tasks. NATO and NATO partner forces collaborated in assisting in the implementation of the peace agreements; monitoring and enforcing ceasefires; confiscating weapons from both sides in accordance with the mandates of the peace agreements; patrolling; guarding sites and checkpoints; clearing mines; delivering aid; offering medical support; providing security during elections and so forth.

In terms of evaluating the capacity of NATO and Russian peacekeepers to work together effectively, with few exceptions, and by most accounts, reports have been quite favorable. Though not without certain strategic and operational challenges in coordinating decisions and planning, accounts indicate that the Russian and NATO forces functioned quite well in the day to day tactical level tasks of peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

Major General (Ret.) William L. Nash, former US commander of the multinational force in Bosnia charged with enforcing the Dayton settlement, describes several factors contributing to success with the Russians:

The partnership worked because 1) our nations had common strategic objectives 2) we were professional soldiers fulfilling our nations' mission 3) after fifty years of studying each other, we were very knowledgeable about each other; and 4) frankly, we did not get too much help from Washington or Moscow. Our leaders gave us a job to do, and for the most part, left us alone to do it...[114]

In terms of strategic priorities, Nash notes that US forces viewed the Bosnian operation as an opportunity to demonstrate the "potential of US-Russian strategic cooperation." [115] Nash said that as for American forces under his command, he made clear his concern for the well being of Russian peacekeepers. Such rapport would certainly contribute to establishing respect and working relationships in these first joint engagements. [116] Nash praised the contributions of Russian forces in Bosnia describing the Russians as "very professional" and "equivalent to any NATO nation and better than other partner nations." [117]

Reports indicate that joint participation in peacekeeping provided an opportunity for former strategic adversaries to become increasingly familiar with one another on both professional and personal levels. US Army officer Tom Wilhelm writes about his experience working with the Russians in Bosnia. Wilhelm describes the Russian officers in Bosnia as "superb" and offered the point that: "This environment helps create professional bonds between myself and the Russians, and, by way of example, it establishes a level of expected professionalism from the factions." [118] Col. Stanislav Grebenyuv, chief surgeon for the Russian Separate Airborne Brigade at the Russian headquarters in Bosnia-Herzegovina, noted that: "Some of us go to the American Field Hospital in Tuzla Eagle Base weekly, and we visit other medical detachments in the division on a regular basis. It is very interesting to see how other nations do things. Serving with SFOR is an excellent opportunity for us to meet other doctors with whom we can discuss clinical and other medical cases..." [119] Lt. Kyle Stelma who served in Bosnia in 1996 and 1998 offered the following description: "...in the number of interactions I had with the Russian

soldiers I personally had a great time. They were as at ease with us as they we were with any other nationality. All of them spoke a little English and we usually had a Russian linguist with us, and so we all took advantage of the opportunity to get to know the Army we had only read about." [120] Sgt. Christopher Fillipelli noted that they had celebrated a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with the Russian soldiers in Bosnia: "It was great to share our customs with them, once they understood the meaning..." [121]

Because of the strong opposition to the NATO air war in Kosovo, Russian objections to terms for the deployment of peacekeepers, the unexpected development at the Slatina airport, the climate between Moscow, Washington and Brussels was more strained at the outset of the Kosovo peacekeeping deployments. The grudging participation of Russia's military leadership was especially evident at the operational level where issues of control in planning and coordination would periodically arise. However, as in Bosnia, tactical level cooperation was evidently excellent. In discussing Russian work with NATO forces in Kosovo, Col. Greg Kaufman, Director of the Balkan Task Force OSD-Pentagon, notes that as "soldiers on the ground...in terms of day to day joint patrolling etc... we have a very good working relationship... there is a professional understanding that transcends national lines..." [122] Similarly, Russian Major Alexander Koshelnik describes interaction in the American sector in Kosovo as follows: "We work with each other as soldiers must. There are no contradictions between us, and there cannot be...The military are not interested in politics. What we are interested in is to accomplish the tasks set forth for the peacekeeping operation." [123]

The peacekeepers did confront certain command, tactical and linguistic challenges. For example, US peacekeepers note that the Russian top-down command structure (not unlike other former Warsaw Pact nations) provided less flexibility in responding to changing local conditions than would have been the case in the US chain of command arrangement. [124] Captain Vincent H. Torres, who served in both IFOR and SFOR and worked with the Russian brigade, noted that there were clear differences in terms of training, communication, and methods for distributing information, but that once these obstacles were surmounted, tactical level cooperation was "smooth." [125] While American peacekeepers report that many Russian peacekeepers had basic knowledge of English or they were often accompanied by linguists in joint tasks, language was a barrier at times. Sgt. Fillipelli recounts dealing with the communication issue: "While trying to convey my concern over area security to a Russian lieutenant, we used rocks and sticks to draw on the ground to create our defensive scheme. From our design, the soldiers implemented our security measures." [126]

Accounts indicate that language, cultural affinity and prior Russian experience in peacekeeping in the conflict zones of their neighboring newly independent countries often made the Russians an asset in dealing with local authorities and citizens in carrying out the practical tasks in former Yugoslavia. For example, one incident in Bosnia in June 2000 involved a request to destroy a grenade found in the garden a few meters from the home of locals in Sredna Trnova near the Russian headquarters in Ugljevik. It was reported that the fact that the Russians could understand and be understood by the locals helped considerably in resolving this problem and other such routine incidents. [127] Wilhelm also reflects on the importance of the "personal tones" in the Russian style of dealing with locals representing the "harsh reality of their own near-border conflicts"... and proving "very effective with regard to getting the factions (Serb and Muslim) to meet each demilitarization milestone in turn." [128]

A source of major concern was whether Russian peacekeepers would be able to function as impartial professionals given Russian perspectives concerning the conflict and traditional Russian-Serb ties. In a meeting with the author

in Moscow in July 1999, Lt. General Nikolai N. Zlenko, Deputy Chief of International Military Cooperation, Ministry of Defense, affirmed that the commitment to approach the task in Kosovo without bias toward either side would be essential for the success of the peacekeeping effort and that this must be among the highest priorities.[129] In fact, several Americans with knowledge of working with Russians in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo offer assessments that differ with Clark's claim of Russian partiality toward the Serbs in Bosnia and his similar concerns for Kosovo.

Major General Nash indicated that while the Bosnian Muslims did periodically create difficulties for the Russians, the Russians displayed a professional "even-handed approach." [130] Kaufman shares Nash's favorable assessment on this issue and suggested that any instances of bias would be exceptions. According to Kaufman, reports of favoritism among locals may have more to do with common language, customs and familiarity than deliberate inconsistency or lack of professional interaction on the part of Russians toward all different groups in former Yugoslavia.[131] Among many instances that might be cited, both Russians and Americans were put to the test early on in an incident in the Eastern sector of Kosovo in Kamenica in August 1999 when they encountered both local Albanians and Serbs attempting to block a road. Reports indicated that American and Russian peacekeepers consulted on diffusing the situation while local inhabitants, both Serb and Albanian, accused the Americans and Russians in KFOR of ethnic bias. [132] Reports indicate that Russian checkpoints have come under fire by local Albanians in Kosovo.[133] KFOR commander, US Brigadier General John Craddock, working with the Russians in Kosovo, offered the following point:

There appears to be a significant disinformation campaign against the Russian unit. There is a preconceived Albanian notion that the Russians will favor the Serbs...We have not seen it. They have shown restraint and control (in confrontations with ethnic Albanians). [134]

As the KFOR mission proceeded with the participation of Russian forces, there have still been ongoing protestations from the highest levels of the Russia military concerning 1) the terms of their participation in KFOR; and 2) the treatment of Serb inhabitants of Kosovo. For example, just prior to a meeting with NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson in October 2000, Russia's Minister of Defense Marshall Igor Sergeev made the following comment to journalists: "We cannot understand NATO's logic which, on the one hand, makes statements about the importance of Russia's participation in the Multi-National Forces for Kosovo (KFOR), but on the other, is trying to reject Russia's planning in the peacekeeping operations..."[135] Sergeev also charged that the Albanians were "committing the same crimes against Kosovar Serbs that Milosevic had committed against them justifying the use of NATO military force against Serbia." [136] General Ivashov has issued repeated calls for KFOR to take a tougher stand against anti-Serb retaliation. Following the bombing of a bus of Serb civilians in February 2001, in calling for KFOR to respond to Albanian assaults against Kosovo's Serb population, Ivashov stated that: "Further delay to this process and the vagueness of KFOR's actions only encourages the separatists..."[137]

If the Russian-NATO peacekeeping missions, SFOR and KFOR, are to be assessed in terms of the capacity of former adversaries to cooperate, then these instances must be deemed a success. In terms of traditional measures for assessing the performance of peacekeepers in conflict zones such as restraint in the use of force, even handed treatment of local inhabitants, and professional conduct, then again, with few exceptions, these joint peacekeeping engagements have been successful.

Peacekeeping missions have also been evaluated in the literature on the basis of the extent to which the stated mission was accomplished. Of course, it is not the professional military leadership and peacekeepers that set forth the objectives of their mission, but rather the political/diplomatic leadership, and certainly not always fully taking into account the judgments of the military professionals. If the peacekeeping missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are to be judged in terms of accomplishing the objectives of creating a safe environment for local inhabitants and the conditions for the eventual exit of peacekeepers, then the record is more mixed. The Dayton agreement and UN Resolution 1244 and other agreements set the terms of the cessation of conflict in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The UN and NATO have provided the administrative and security support for enforcing these agreements. Citizens of Sarajevo and other cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina are no longer residing in war zones. A large portion of the huge exodus of Albanian refugees returned to Kosovo. Among the few statistical reports available, figures from the American sector-MNB East based in Gnjilane for the period July-December 1999 indicated that instances of crime and murder had decreased from over 80 incidents per month to only 15.[138]

However, local inhabitants in Bosnia-Herzegovina today fear that if the peacekeepers leave (now six years into the SFOR presence) fighting would resume. The area remains effectively divided in two states including the Bosnian-Croat Federation and the almost entirely Serb populated, Republik Srpska. Each state maintains its own army, police and legislative organs. The Dayton Agreement stipulated that a democratic multiethnic nation would be created in Bosnia, but nationalist tensions remain along with considerable resistance to such integration. For example, most recently, in March 2001, the nationalists of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) made a bid for the creation of an independent Croatian state in the Bosnian-Croat Federation.[139] It was reported that some 7,000 soldiers of the Croat contingent of the federation army left their barracks in support of the nationalist separatist movement.[140] In April 2001, Serb protestors prevented the transfer of a disputed Sarajevo suburb to the Muslim-Croat Federation.[141] In May 2001, Bosnian Serb nationalist protestors assaulted UN staff members in Trebinje to disrupt a ceremony commemorating the destruction of a Muslim mosque in the war of 1992-1995.[142] Many of those displaced by the war have yet to return and those returning overwhelming reside in areas where their respective ethnic group composes the majority.[143]

KFOR has encountered considerable difficulty in protecting local inhabitants in Kosovo. To a certain extent, the task for the peacekeepers might have been made easier in Bosnia-Herzegovina than in Kosovo given that the terms of settlement established for interim broad territorial divisions between warring groups (the Bosnian-Croat Federation and Republik Srpska), whereas in Kosovo, Western nations had resisted any suggestion of partition or initially even creating safe havens or zones for the different ethnic groups. There are still daily reports of harassment, killings and desecration of religious sites in Kosovo against Albanians and Serbs and other minority groups. Reports indicate that only 60,000-100,000 of the original Serb population of 200,000 remain in Kosovo, many having fled as a result of the threat of Albanian retaliation.[144] KFOR encountered difficulty in obtaining compliance of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in disarming in accordance with the terms of the peace settlement. While the KLA no longer exists, the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), Liberation Army of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja (UCPBM), National Liberation Army (NLA) and (UCK) continued to operate in Kosovo and Macedonia.[145] Reports allege that KLA successor organizations have engaged in periodic intimidation of locals, violation of terms for maintaining peace and illegal activities. During his July 2001 visit to Kosovo, US President George Bush sought to distance the US from the KPC by



announcing that five of the group's top level leaders would no longer be permitted to enter the United States.[146]

Further, while one of the stated strategic rationales for US participation in the air war against Belgrade was to contain the spread of conflict beyond former Yugoslavia's borders, the Albanian National Liberation Army UCK has launched a separatist struggle in neighboring Macedonia threatening to plunge the country into yet another Balkan religio-ethnic war. The UCK, possessing combatants with former experience in the KLA, is promulgating an armed struggle to bring about concessions from the Slav-dominant government. While NATO has pledged to provide a force of 3,500 to disarm insurgents, NATO would deploy to carry out the task only after the rival sides had agreed to a peace settlement.

The fact is that the objective of establishing multiethnic democratic governance in the immediate aftermath of these conflicts set forth by the architects of the peace settlements was not realistic. Those who figured prominently in establishing the conditions for the settlement of the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia, Richard Holbrooke and others, insisted that nothing less than a single multiethnic nation must be established. However desirable this goal is from a US or Western European frame of reference, ethnic enmity in former Yugoslavia has not subsided.[147] For Kosovo, the terms of the peace settlement mandated that Kosovo would remain a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. No one should have anticipated that the Kosovar Albanians, having suffered such loss as a result of the actions of Milosevic, would have been willing to accept an arrangement that would have them remain tied to the Milosevic regime. The recent success of the Serb pro-democracy opposition coalition in ousting Milosevic for moderate Serb nationalist Vojislav Kostunica certainly enhanced the prospects for maintaining unity among the entities remaining in the FRY-Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. However, Kostunica has discouraged Kosovo's Serbs from participating in the scheduled November 2001 elections until certain conditions are satisfied including 1) concrete improvement in basic safety for Kosovo's Serb population; 2) the return of displaced Serbs; and 3) investigations of missing Serb civilians and soldiers.[148] In addition, the transition from Milosevic to Kostunica has heightened anxiety among Kosovar Albanians who view Kostunica's victory as diminishing the potential for ultimately enlisting support for political independence from the FRY.

SFOR and KFOR were expected to facilitate the creation of the conditions for ethnic groups, bitterly divided by brutal secessionist conflicts, to coexist and to somehow establish functionally democratically elected multiethnic governance ultimately leading to the removal of the military presence. Professor John Mearsheimer has rightly noted that "History records no instance where ethnic groups have agreed to share power in a democracy after a large-scale civil war..."[149] Mearsheimer argued that while not desirable, the "best alternative" would be a "three way partition of Bosnia." [150] The societies envisioned by Clinton era officials for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo will be well in the future, many years beyond the tragedies of these recent wars. The will to work toward the creation of a diverse ethnically integrated society must exist on the part of the local population. Also, both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo will require long term commitments of Western financial support to rebuild from the devastation of these wars and to generate economic growth and development. For the United States, eventually, there is likely to be pressure for reevaluation of these commitments as the issue of the exit plan is revisited and questions arise concerning the distribution of resources in the Balkans among other vital regional areas that could vie for even greater US attention in the future—for example, the Persian Gulf or the Taiwan Strait. The fact is that the peacekeeping presence is likely to be necessitated over a long term in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. At most, the peacekeepers might serve the valuable function of preventing the recurrence of full-scale

wars and providing safe havens or zones where local ethnic groups might be protected in their homes, their work and daily life from the bitter animosities that will continue to plague Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo for many years to come.

SFOR and KFOR, however, form an important dimension in the broader Russian-NATO relationship. The fact that these first major engagements in joint peacekeeping between Russia and NATO were successful helped to lessen strains during extremely tense periods in the relationship. While SFOR and KFOR taken alone are not likely to result in bringing about major shifts in broader Russian-NATO strategic level priorities, these experiences are encouraging and do contribute to breaking down the barriers of the past. Over time, such cooperation should contribute to building the trust and familiarity that would be necessary for developing a constructive relationship, or even "partnership."

### **Russia's Postmortem Assessments and the Aftermath of the Kosovo Crisis**

The 78 day Kosovo air war made a profound impression on foreign policy circles in post-Soviet Russia. Officials and analysts closely tied to Russia's foreign and security policy structures have offered extensive commentary and thorough evaluations concerning the "уроки Косово кризиса" (lessons of the Kosovo crisis). The perceived significance of the Kosovo experience as constituting a major transitional turning point is confirmed by repeated references in the postmortem assessments--"...relations will never be the same as before March 24, 1999..."; "...the world after 1999 will never be what it was immediately after the end of the Cold War..."; and "...it will hardly be possible to restore Europe and the world to the status quo that existed before March 23, 1999."

The post-Soviet Russian foreign policy arena resounds with rich and frank debate. As in any democratic society, there is no "Russian view." However, one might identify several major themes/conclusions that emerge repeatedly as core points throughout the substantive assessments in Russia of the Kosovo experience. In fact, lengthy discussions in Moscow, during and in the aftermath of the air war in Spring 1999, with many individuals associated in various capacities with Russia's foreign and defense communities and review of relevant literature would yield several major "lessons" of the Kosovo experience for Russians. It should be emphasized that the lessons set forth below emerged in discussions and writings of officials and prominent specialists who have been committed to democratization and receptive to working constructively with the United States and Europe.

- The United States, or the United States and NATO, threaten to forge a unipolar world order based on US or US/NATO dominance
- NATO would no longer function as a *defensive*, but rather as an *offensive* alliance structure
- The post-Cold War international order would not be governed by consistent adherence to international legal or moral standards
- The use of military force, rather than diplomacy, would remain the ultimate (and even preferred) means for the United States and NATO in resolving differences in the world community
- The West largely discounted Russia in dealing with the crisis in Yugoslavia as a result of Russia's diminished "power" or military force

- Efforts by Russia and the West to develop "partnership" lack substance

Russians frequently point to the Kosovo air war as signaling a major shift in the power configuration in the international system. After Kosovo, and taking into account NATO enlargement, Russians increasingly began to perceive the US or US/NATO as constituting a "bloc" seeking to exercise unipolar global and regional dominance. In a discussion held among specialists of the Institute of USA and Canada Studies/RAS in June 1999 devoted to the analyzing the implications of the Kosovo experience for the United States-Russian relationship, Dr. Anatoly I. Utkin, Chief of the Foreign Policy Department and Advisor to the Foreign Policy Committee of the Duma, describes the Kosovo experience as a "landmark" in which "never before" had "NATO been such a cohesive bloc on a global scale." [151] Utkin continues noting that Russia "abandoned its ally" and that in "international relations, governments orient themselves based on a trusted partner, which forms a center of gravity in a region" and "...as a result of the course plotted by Russia, it did not act as a center" in responding to the conflict in Yugoslavia. [152] Dr. Victor A. Kremenyuk, Deputy Director, notes that: "On the one hand, the course toward European integration has been set in motion; on the other we see the strengthening of NATO structures and the consolidation of the alliance's positions..." and this "creates in Europe a world in which Russia has no part." [153] In confronting this perceived challenge for the United States or the United States/NATO to establish hegemony in the newly emerging post-Cold War international order, Russians began to increasingly question whether their future would belong with the West or Asia or another variant. Russian officials and analysts emphasized the importance of diversification of international ties as one means of offsetting the preponderance of US or US/NATO influence in the world community.

Second, the postmortem assessments emphasize that Operation Allied Force demonstrated that there would no longer be any question concerning whether the Alliance would restrict activity to defensive objectives. While repeated assurances from NATO that the Alliance would serve solely defensive purposes had helped in gaining reluctant acquiescence for the first phase of NATO enlargement (Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary), NATO's response in Kosovo called these prior pledges into question. While acknowledging that there "...is no question that the policies and actions of President Milosevic toward the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia deserve condemnation and a response from the international community," at the same time, former Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev makes the point in his recent book that: "... events in the spring of 1999 showed that NATO, for the time being, is following a quite different course. The war it unleashed against Yugoslavia in March 1999 means, first of all, that this alliance, which was established as a *defensive organization* for the protection of its members, according to the treaty signed in Washington in 1949, has gone over to offensive operations beyond the bounds set by the founding treaty." [154] Russians note that the announcement of NATO's new *Strategic Concept* at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary taking the Alliance beyond the scope of its original collective defense function posed the threat of future intervention in other out-of-area conflicts. The Kosovo air war prompted serious discussions within Russia's foreign policy and military circles devoted to assessing the range of options available in the event of similar NATO intervention in neighboring regional conflict zones or even on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Third, Russians, over and over, note that Operation Allied Force was undertaken without the approval of the UN Security Council and cite the "intervention" of the US/NATO in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation state as constituting a violation of basic standards of international law or acceptable conduct. In writing about the lessons of the Balkan crisis, Victor

A. Kremenyuk concludes that: "...the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of governments was subject to erosion. No matter how repulsive the actions of the Yugoslav government toward the Albanian population in Kosovo may have appeared, this was still an internal affair of Yugoslavia and no more." [155] Russian analysts and media commentaries often point to double standards in US/NATO selection of instances for intervention. Dr. Sergey A. Rogov, Director of the Institute of USA and Canada Studies, for example, argued that "...the United States did not launch missile attacks against Israel for evicting the Palestinians or against Turkey for crushing the Kurds." [156]

In addition, evaluations also fault the United States and NATO use of military force, rather than fully exhausting diplomatic channels, as another way in which moral standards were compromised. According to Kremenyuk, NATO action in Kosovo would "throw the world back to times when neither laws nor right-but force-reigned in international affairs." [157] Kremenyuk states that with "attacking Yugoslavia and conducting an air war against it, the USA announced, in the first place, that it occupies a unique position in international affairs, in which its application of force against other countries is regulated solely by its interests and considerations, and by nothing more..." [158] Further, Kremenyuk contends that "...another principle of international relations was destroyed ...the obligation to use only political and diplomatic means to resolve conflicts, an obligation that grows from the understanding of the danger of the use of modern destructive arms." [159] The argument is often advanced in Russian foreign policy circles that the West was too willing to abort the diplomatic effort at Rambouillet and prior diplomatic opportunities to opt for a military response. Russians widely contend that the West failed in marginalizing Russia from the diplomatic process early on when they might have been able to assist in averting the need for the use of force.

Russians also concluded as a result of the Kosovo experience that the capacity of any nation in the current world system to influence developments would be based on possessing sufficient power or military force. Russia's "weakness" implied that it would not be able to achieve its objectives in a world community where force prevails. Russians overwhelmingly talked in terms of Kosovo representing a "humiliating" defeat or that the United States and NATO failed to demonstrate adequate respect for Russia's views and interests in responding to the crisis. Dr. Alexei G. Arbatov, writing on the lessons of the Kosovo experience, offers the unambiguous conclusion that: "...Russia viewed NATO's military action as a final humiliation and a "spit in the face." NATO's attack, more than ever before, demonstrated a Western arrogance of power and willingness to ignore Russia's interests..." [160] Deputy Director of the Carnegie Center in Moscow, Dr. Dmitri Trenin, writes with respect to Kosovo that: "The use of force without the express sanction of the United Nation's Security Council resolution dramatically devalued not only the Russian veto right but also the former superpower's actual international weight. Moscow was shown to be impotent to prevent a major international military operation in an area, which it traditionally regards as crucial to its entire position in Europe." [161] The Yugoslav crisis made it painfully obvious to Russians that current domestic economic malaise, need for continued economic support and opportunity from the West, and deterioration of Russia's military force placed serious limitation on options in forming a response to the situation.

Andrei P. Tsygankov has documented the resurgence of the traditional "realist" power politics paradigm in Russian intellectual and policy circles in the 1990s. [162] According to Tsygankov, the "international institutionalist" school, prominent during the Gorbachev era, that had emphasized the importance of building international cooperation and ties with the West was increasingly losing influence to a Russian variant of "realism."

Traditional "realist" assumptions that security would result from a balance of power rather than international cooperation and that the major objective for nation states should be acquiring power rather than fostering cooperative efforts were becoming more accepted when many believed that Russia had simply "sold out" vital interests in offering repeated concessions to the West. NATO's air campaign in Kosovo provided further confirmation that the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world community could be more correctly understood through the prism of the traditional realist positions rather than the perhaps morally praiseworthy, but idealistic, "international institutionalist" paradigm.

The impact of Kosovo in thwarting Russia's hopes for a different type of international order resounds throughout the postmortem evaluations. For example, Senior Analyst of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Dr. Nadezhda K. Arbatova, writing in *MEiMO* in 2000, makes the point that:

One of the main lessons that the majority of the political elite learned was this: no one will take you into account if you're weak. And, in actuality, it doesn't matter whether your weakness is the result of attempts to adapt to a new situation in the world and to observe generally held rules of the game, or, in other words, attempts to become better. No one in the West loved the USSR. But the latter elicited fear, and hardly anyone would have simply ignored Moscow's position. This lesson, which the leading democratic nations have taught Russia, was one of the hardest [lessons] of the last few years. (emphasis added) [163]

Anatoly I. Utkin argued that Kosovo would "end ten years of naivete in dealing with the United States and the West." [164] According to Alexei Arbatov, the Kosovo air war "marked the end of the post-Cold War phase of international affairs—a period of world history that Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev had initiated some 10 years earlier..." a system that "...was allegedly based on an enhanced role for the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)...It assumed strict conformity with the UN Charter; compliance with international law; respect for existing agreements between Russia and the West (especially the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997), and a partnership between Russia and NATO..."[165]

For Russians, Kosovo demonstrated that a nation will be taken seriously in the world community to the extent that it possesses sufficient power to command respect. Russians concluded that they must focus long-term to restoring their power status and that despite current economic difficulties, the Russian Federation would have to direct attention toward enhancing its military/defense capacity. Further, not only would Russia have to prepare for the possibility of future confrontation with NATO, but Russians would also conclude that many countries, intimidated by NATO's overwhelming and sophisticated display of force against a small country, would be prompted to enhance defense capabilities for a future US/NATO intervention. Thus, Russians anticipated that the Kosovo crisis would only prompt nations in a position of strategic inferiority throughout the world community to redouble their efforts to acquire sophisticated weaponry.

Finally, Russians concluded that all the discussion of "partnership" [and even "friendship" between Yeltsin and Clinton in the official pronouncements of the early 1990s] with the West had little meaning when interests diverged. Russians argued that the NATO-Russian Founding Act had little, if any, substance. Arbatova reflects the perception that has become ever more widely held in Moscow concluding that the agreements to establish cooperation with NATO amounted to not much more than "an unending number of unilateral concessions by Russia on the most important external political issues." [166] During the Kosovo campaign and the immediate aftermath,

Russians either entirely dismissed any thought of building "partnership" with the West or expressed much greater skepticism about the potential for such a relationship. Kremenjuk, for example, concludes that:

...the world after 1999 will never be what it was immediately after the end of the Cold War: the reconciliation of former foes, hopes for partnership, democratization of international affairs, growth of cooperation, marginalization of conflicts...

And so, when NATO planes began bombing Yugoslavia, the first thing to be bombed was the world; it became irrevocably a thing of the past, like yet another unrealizable dream of mankind. [167]

Some went so far as to suggest that events of Spring 1999 made clear that the United States would represent a potential enemy for the Russian Federation.

More than a decade earlier, Soviet citizens began to turn with great expectations toward the democratic western nations as the introduction of Gorbachev's reforms marked an end to decades of rule in a closed society legitimized by fear. For many Russians, the US/NATO air war in Kosovo delivered a major blow that deflated those high expectations and brought about a far more sobering assessment concerning the potential for an improved 21<sup>st</sup> century international system after the Cold War, Russia's role in the world community following the collapse of the USSR, Western values and the potential for Russia's integration with the West.

The obvious question is to what extent these "lessons" influenced Russia's international posture or priorities. While there had been growing tension with the West as a result of NATO enlargement, management of the Bosnian conflict, and Western intervention in Russia's economy, the US/NATO response to the crisis in Kosovo was perhaps the single most significant factor is leading to a reorientation of Russia's post-Soviet foreign and security posture. Russia's official foreign and security pronouncements and actions would evince a marked turn toward establishing greater independence from the West and reflect a less optimistic assessment of Western intentions and challenges.

Russia's official security/foreign policy concepts and military doctrine provide the vision concerning Russia's place in the world community, description of major features of the contemporary international system, perceptions of internal and external threats and international and defense priorities. Russia's new *National Security Concept* (January 2000), *Foreign Policy Concept* (June 2000) and *Military Doctrine* (April 2000), documents issued in the immediate aftermath of the Kosovo war, will provide the general guidance and framework for national foreign and security policy for the next several years. These official documents incorporated significant changes reflecting the assessments that took place in Moscow's foreign/military defense establishment in conjunction with the Kosovo crisis.

The *National Security Concept* (January 2000) explicitly mentions that one "trend" emerging after the "bipolar confrontation era" includes the "attempt to create a structure of international relations based on the domination of developed Western countries, under US leadership, providing for unilateral solutions of major issues in world politics, above all with the use of military force, in violation of fundamental standards of international law." [168] The prior 1997 *National Security Concept* placed greater emphasis on the internal, rather than external, threats to security noting that "...the danger of direct aggression against the Russian Federation had diminished" and that the "prerequisites for the demilitarization of the international system had been created." [169] In contrast, the *National Security Concept* issued in 2000 states that the "level and scope of military threats is growing." In this context, this most recent document explicitly states that "NATO's

transition to the practice of using military force outside its zone of responsibility and without UN Security Council sanction could destabilize the entire global strategic situation." The document states that "...some states have stepped up their efforts to weaken Russia's position in the political, economic and other spheres" and that the "attempts to ignore the interests of Russia when tackling major problems of international relations, including conflict situations, can undermine international security and stability and slow down the ongoing positive changes in international relations."

Russia's first *Foreign Policy Concept* of 1993, drafted under the leadership of Andrei Kozyrev, was decidedly pro-Western stating that Russia and the West possess "common understanding of the main values of world civilization and common interests with regard to key issues of the global situation." [170] In contrast, the *Foreign Policy Concept* signed by President Putin in June 2000 states that "...new challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia are emerging in the international sphere. There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States." [171] The new concept states that "The strategy of unilateral action can destabilize the international situation...The use of power methods bypassing international legal mechanisms cannot remove the deep inter-ethnic and other contradictions that underlie conflicts, and can only undermine the foundations of law and order..." The document contains the point that efforts to introduce concepts as "humanitarian intervention" and "limited sovereignty" in order to "justify unilateral power actions bypassing the UN Security Council are not acceptable." The 2000 concept no longer assigned relations with the United States as "one of the highest priorities of Russia" as in the 1993 concept, but rather noted that Russia "is prepared to overcome considerable latter-day difficulties in relations with the United States." The document refers to "serious" and "fundamental differences" with the United States and explicitly indicates that "the intensity of cooperation" with NATO would depend on compliance with the terms of the Founding Act to include "primarily those concerning the non-use or threat of force, and non-deployment of conventional armed forces groups, nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles in the territories of new members."

A modification was introduced concerning the use of nuclear weapons in the *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation* issued in January 2000. Russia's 1993 military doctrine restricted the use of nuclear weapons "except in the case of an armed attack... by any state connected by an alliance agreement with a state that does possess nuclear weapons" or in response to "joint actions by such a state with a state possessing nuclear weapons in carrying out or in support of any invasion or attack upon the Russian Federation..." [172] This would leave open the option of reliance on the nuclear option in the event that Russia's deteriorating conventional force would not be sufficient for repelling an attack. The *Military Doctrine* of 2000 broadens the circumstances for the first use of nuclear weapons to include responding to "aggression utilizing conventional weapons" in situations deemed "critical to the national security of the Russian Federation." [173] The change is also reflected in the 1997 and 2000 *National Security Concepts*. While the 1997 document restricts the use of nuclear weapons to threats against "the very existence of the Russian Federation," the 2000 document lowers the threshold to cases in which "all other means" of "repelling armed aggression" have "proven ineffective." These alterations reflect the realization of Russia's declining conventional capability vis-à-vis the United States and NATO and the enhanced threat perception resulting from the drawing of NATO closer to Russia's borders and the demonstrated collective resolve of the alliance to employ advanced weaponry in pursuit of international objectives made clearly evident in Kosovo.

The enhanced strategic threat perception after Kosovo was reflected

almost immediately with the holding of the "West 99" exercises, June 21-26, 1999. [174] "West 99," the largest simulation to take place since the Soviet era, involved preparation for a hypothetical NATO attack. The exercises involved air, land and sea maneuvers and cooperation with Belarussian troops in countering a simulated assault from the West. While Russian military officials said that "West 99" should not be "perceived as a show of muscle to NATO," they did acknowledge that the "events in Yugoslavia were taken into account" and the simulation involved a high precision air attack [as in Operation Allied Force] from the West against Russia and one of its allies such as Belarus. [175]

Despite Russia's difficult economic condition, Alexei Arbatov reported that the Kosovo air campaign triggered discussion regarding the necessity for increasing Russia's defense expenditures (from 2.8% to 3.5%). [176] Arbatov and other Russian analysts indicate that after Kosovo, Russians would consider the need for enhancing existing conventional and tactical nuclear capacity to deter such threats against the Russian Federation. Russian analysts also report that a priority was assigned to deploying additional air defense systems. [177] Victor Gobarev offers the following point concerning Russia's air defense forces (PVO Strany): "...PVO and other forces are concentrating their training on shooting down cruise missiles of the type that NATO forces used extensively in Yugoslavia..." [178] President Vladimir Putin has emphasized the need for restoring Russia's military-defense complex. While the intention may exist, Russia's economic difficulties will certainly continue to place severe limitations on resources to finance military reform, increasing research and development, deployment of new systems and restoring adequate compensation and training for the Armed Forces.

For the Russians, the air war against Yugoslavia removed a major moral impediment contributing to the necessary conditions to launch the second war in Chechnya in September 1999. From their point of view, if the United States and its NATO allies were ready to use force to achieve ends, then so would Russia. The priority placed on efforts in the US/NATO air war in Kosovo to limit both military and civilian casualties by employing the most modern weaponry in a precision guided surgical air campaign cannot be compared to the indiscriminate bombing and shelling resulting in substantial military and civilian casualties characterizing the Chechen war 1999-present. But for Russians, Chechnya is more legitimate because it involves what is perceived as countering "terrorist" or "separatist" forces on Russia's soil, not unilateral intervention in the internal affairs of another nation state. Another consequence of Kosovo is surely that the appeals of the United States and their NATO allies in Europe will carry less moral weight in influencing Russia's behavior at home and in the wider world community.

After Kosovo, Russians, more than ever, desired a leader who could restore prestige in the world community and who was capable of demonstrating resolve in resisting Western pressures. Vladimir Putin's forceful posture in the Chechen situation contributed considerably to gaining public support for his Presidency. The political survival of Russia's President hinges in important ways on continued displays of independence from the West.

Since his electoral victory in 2000, President Putin has pursued a very active foreign policy agenda, making personal trips to several nations of the CIS, Asia, and the Western hemisphere during his first years as President. Under his leadership, Russia has fostered closer ties with China, India and Iran and rekindled relations with former Soviet allies considered "rogue" states by the United States, including Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Cuba. Putin has emphasized that reinvigoration of ties with former Soviet allies would be based this time not on ideological affinity, but rather for pragmatic purposes, serving Russia's economic and diplomatic interests.



Russia and China signed a Russo-Chinese Treaty in 2001 involving a ten year commitment and elevating Russian-Chinese strategic cooperation. While making quite clear that the agreement was not directed against the United States or the West, the treaty expressed the commitment of the Russian and Chinese leadership to the "multipolar" world order and expressed opposition to the proposed US national missile defense system, affirming the 1972 ABM Treaty as the "cornerstone of strategic stability." [179] Putin displayed Russia's assertiveness in obtaining an agreement on missile deployment with North Korea, initiating attempts to broker a peace settlement in the Middle East and offering to serve as intermediary between Milosevic and Kostunica in the disputed presidential elections in FRY in 2000. He has indicated the intention to continue to step up arms sales and/or military cooperation with a number of countries, including China, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and North Korea, as one means of generating revenues to fuel Russia's economy.

Dr. Alexander Konovalov, President of the Strategic Assessment Institute (SAI) in Moscow, suggests the sort of thinking and sentiment behind this orientation at a press conference devoted to discussion of the future of Russia's foreign policy held in January 2001: "There will be little interest in what America is going to say about Russia's activities in the foreign arena... It can be said that the transactions with Iran have been restored, the transactions to sell arms. Our desire will not be to do something pleasant for the United States, but to pursue our national interest as our leadership understands it." (emphasis added) [180] In evaluating the recent Russo-Chinese Treaty, Dr. Alexander Lukin, writing in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, notes that the treaty was precipitated by "certain negative trends" in the international community, mentioning among these factors a tendency to "reduce the role of the UN Security Council," "interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nation states under humanitarian pretexts" and "NATO enlargement." [181]

All of the above said, Vladimir Putin is a realist with a pragmatic approach to international policy. As he made quite clear in his annual address to the Federal Assembly in April 2001, Russia's foreign policy should be built on "pragmatism" and "economic efficiency." [182] Putin has stated that Russians must clearly understand Russia's national interests and "fight for them."

Vladimir Putin confronts the task of bringing the Russian Federation out of the collapse of societal order and economic decay that characterized the Yeltsin era. On the one hand, his strategy involves strengthening the state apparatus and central control throughout the republic regions, reassertion of the Federal Security forces, reigning in Russia's criminal associations and placing greater restriction on the media. At the same time, while some of these measures restricting freedoms are cause for concern, Putin has also been committed to improving Russia's economic performance, continuation of market reforms and enhancing the investment climate. Putin understands that ties with the West and Western economic and security structures can aid his central aim of economic restoration and improving the material well being of Russia's society.

### **Russia and NATO Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The visit of NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson to Moscow in February 2000 marked the beginning of the restoration of the Russian-NATO relationship after Kosovo. Consultations between Russia and NATO in the Permanent Joint Council had resumed in July 1999 after the earlier suspension in March, but only for the purpose of collaboration on issues pertaining to SFOR and KFOR. NATO's Secretary General met with President Vladimir Putin and a joint statement was issued for reestablishing dialogue through the PJC "on a

wide range of security issues..." [183] While in Moscow, the Secretary General opened a NATO Information Office at the Belgian Embassy and engaged in public informational interviews responding to a range of questions contributing to developing better understanding of NATO's objectives and intentions.[184] At the conclusion of the sessions in Moscow, Robertson stated that "I think we've moved from the permafrost into slightly softer ground." [185] Putin expressed interest in developing a "closer relationship with NATO," though indicating that the "events of the past year still complicated the relationship." [186]

With respect to the United States, many were predicting a sharp turn for the worse in the Russian-American relationship following the transition from the Yeltsin-Clinton era. The Putin-Bush era had a difficult beginning with mutual spy expulsions reminiscent of the Cold War era and serious differences on missile defense and other issues. However, the two new Presidents appear to have established a good personal rapport at their first summit in Ljubljana in June 2001. George Bush affirmed that Russia was "no longer an enemy" and expressed desire to build a new relationship suited to the post-Cold War era. While the provision of US aid for Russia had become an issue of contention in the 2000 presidential election, Bush did express interest at Ljubljana in supporting the Russian President in his colossal challenge of continuing to develop a market economy.

While little has been achieved thus far in terms of concrete advances in strategic or economic cooperation, it is not at all clear that Bush and Putin will be less successful in the Russian-American bilateral relationship than their predecessors. After all, while the Clinton Administration supported providing financial assistance to Yeltsin, funds were mismanaged and little was realized for Russian society. Russians were left with resentment about US "meddling" in their internal affairs, rather than appreciation for any US aid rendered. In addition, the Bush administration, including Secretary of State Colin Powell and others, would have been more discriminating than their predecessors in committing US forces and perhaps more realistic in fully appreciating the limitations of the application of military force in regional conflicts as in former Yugoslavia. For those forecasting a deterioration in the Russian-American relationship as a result of the presidential transition, it is important to note that the Bush administration inherits two issues that had been fully supported, if not initiated, by the Clinton team (Holbrooke, Albright et. al.)--the commitment to NATO enlargement and the use of military force against Russia's traditional Serbian allies in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Russia and NATO have reached a critical juncture at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first decade of the post-Soviet Russian-US/NATO relationship has witnessed important successes, as well as serious strains. *Partnership for Peace* provided for opening military-to-military communication and cooperation between erstwhile enemies. Given the past history, the fact that Russian, American and European military professionals were able to cooperate in SFOR and KFOR under difficult circumstances is no small accomplishment to the credit of the military leadership and forces of both Russia and NATO. SFOR and KFOR enabled Russia and NATO to maintain cooperation on one level and some degree of communication through periods of otherwise extreme strain in the newly emerging relationship. Such military-to-military joint missions, over time, are precisely what is required to build the trust, respect, dialogue and professional ties necessary for developing a productive Russian-NATO relationship. While the success in SFOR and KFOR tend to be overshadowed by conflicts in the broader relationship, it is also true that these military-to-military accomplishments cannot shape the strategic priorities of Russia and NATO.

Yugoslavia made quite evident that for all the hopes of "partnership" and "friendship," Russia and the United States and its NATO allies have unique

geopolitical, historical and cultural interests and traditions that can, at times, lead to sharp differences in perspectives and objectives. Russia and NATO will have to sort through differences on a number of issues in the near future including the continued disputes concerning missile defense, weapons proliferation and conflicts in the Balkans and Chechnya that remain far from resolution.

The most immediate, and most problematic issue, for the restoration and advancement of the Russian-NATO relationship is continued expansion of the Alliance. While Russians ultimately had to cope with the first round of enlargement, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, admission of the second tier, likely to commence at the Prague meeting in 2002 and to include at least one Baltic nation, will lead to yet another round of conflict between Russia and NATO. Putin has reiterated the warning consistently put forth by the Russian officials over the past several years stating that the "expansion of NATO behind the former Soviet borders would create a completely new situation for Russia and Europe. It would have extremely serious consequences for the whole security system of the continent." [187]

In March 2000, Vladimir Putin surprised audiences in the West and at home when he responded to a question posed concerning whether Russia might join NATO, replying "Why Not?" Putin has stated that he is open to "more profound integration with NATO," and that while not ruling out Russia's membership in NATO, this would be conditional on taking Russia's views into account as "an equal partner." [188] Putin responded to a question concerning Russian membership in NATO at the June summit by reading from a declassified document sent to NATO in 1954 proposing Soviet participation in the Alliance which he indicated was subsequently rejected. [189]

Several academics have written in support of expanding NATO to include Russia. The recent statement by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder that "the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council can't be the last word between NATO and Russia..." raising the notion of Russia eventually joining the Alliance has generated a great deal of discussion in the Western and Russian press. Enlarging NATO to include Russia at this juncture would be fraught with both political and practical difficulties. Would Russia be prepared to concede to the defense transparency that would be required for membership in the Alliance? Would Russia be willing to participate in NATO as a co-equal with 19 + other members, possessing one vote, not a veto, on matters of vital security interest? Would NATO be prepared to extend the Article V guarantee for defense of Russia's vast and volatile border areas, not only through Europe, but also through Asia? How would China react to Russia's membership in NATO? How would Russia's membership be financed?

While neither Russia or NATO may be prepared for Russian membership at this juncture, it is also certain that NATO cannot continue to draw closer to Russia while excluding Russia's membership. If NATO enlargement is aimed to stabilize East-Central Europe, then the objective is not accomplished by destabilizing NATO's relationship with Russia. Russia's vast size, nuclear arsenal, resources and geopolitical location implies that the development of NATO's relationship with Russia will be every bit as significant to future regional and global security as stability and continued Western-oriented reform among the several small newly independent nations of East-Central Europe and the former Soviet empire. The Yugoslav conflicts of the past decade made quite clear that Russia's support will be vital in managing security issues in Europe. To alienate Russia with further expansion of NATO invites resurrection of the East-West divide.

Traditional legitimate historical apprehensions concerning Russian and Soviet expansionism or prejudicial *Russophobic* negative imagery should not prevent Western nations from responding to the opportunity presented for

building a relationship with Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century commensurate with all that has changed in the nation since the unleashing of *perestroika* and *new thinking* more than a decade ago.[190] US/NATO nations could realize a self fulfilling prophecy in approaching post-Soviet Russia: allowing Russia's authoritarian, expansionist and anti-Western traditions of the past to shape current images of Russia, to prepare for resurgent threat from the East and thereby foster the creation of such a reality. A substantive US/NATO-Russian "partnership" is still possible, even after Kosovo, because such a relationship serves the interests of both Russia and the US/NATO.

The initiative to enlarge NATO was premature. The argument that NATO must "expand or die" put forth by Zbigniew Brzezinski and others is simply not convincing. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO emerged as the most powerful security alliance in the contemporary world community. As the international system began the transition from the era of bipolar confrontation, NATO had a vital role to fill as a long-standing alliance among nations that shared a history of cooperation and common values. The alliance provides a foundation for ongoing political contacts and consultation that can serve both regional, and even wider, global security matters in the future. Prior to announcing the decision to enlarge, NATO had already demonstrated that it was capable of developing new missions suited to the realities of the post-Cold War environment as in changes introduced in the 1991 *Strategic Concept*. The Yugoslav case illustrated the difficulty in maintaining consensus among allies to enable the Alliance to respond to rapidly changing circumstances absent the unifying Soviet threat. Further expansion will only compound the difficulties in ensuring cohesion. NATO's engagement with PfP nations to work together in peacekeeping and to set the foundation for cooperation in other security areas were promising. Eventually, over time, after building extensive ties and cooperation via PfP, NATO might enlarge, but not to the exclusion of Russia.

US and NATO interests would be best served by suspending further expansion for the next several years. NATO might elevate and invigorate *Partnership for Peace* to expand military-to-military exchanges and to continue engaging Russians in dialogue through the PJC on a range of security issues and practical cooperative security endeavors. Dmitri Trenin, writing recently in the *NATO Review*, has suggested several areas of common interest for developing Russian-NATO security cooperation (international terrorism, weapons proliferation etc.) that should be encouraged.[191] President Bush could initiate a meaningful departure from the policy of his predecessor, fulfilling the assurances offered during his father's administration, pressing for either suspension or postponement of further NATO expansion for the next several years.[192] This would constitute a major first step in constructing a genuinely post-Cold War policy toward the Russian Federation.

Alternatively, if NATO enlargement is to proceed, then Russia must not be excluded. Given Putin's recent statements, NATO is likely to be in the awkward position of having to 1) either ignore or reject Putin's indirect overtures or 2) confront the challenge of Russia's admission and making it work. Many officials and academic experts seem to believe that it should be sufficient to simply stipulate that membership is open to Russia, and to all nations that meet the criteria of the Membership Action Plan (MAP). Russia's President, propelled to power largely because of confidence that he might restore the nation's stature and influence in the world community, is not likely to be served by joining with NATO aspirants of traditionally far less influence in the world community, Lithuania, Romania, Albania and others, to subject Russia to assessment of suitability for membership in the "exclusive Western club." Even if Russia's future with NATO did proceed on this track, disputes would almost certainly ensue regarding Russia's fulfillment of the MAP requirements. Russians can raise legitimate questions about NATO's relaxation of standards in some instances, such as Turkey's record on the

treatment of minorities, while other nations might be held to more rigid scrutiny. Standards concerning democracy, civilian control of the military and treatment of minorities will raise all sorts cultural and situational interpretations and definitions. One can easily foresee that being subjected to such a process, would likely result, as in the Yugoslav matter, in another major instance of Russians interpreting the West as offending or diminishing them.

The future of the Russian-US/NATO relationship will also be influenced by Russia's success with the G-8, European Union, US and European investment and trade, debt restructuring and other financial matters. Economic cooperation offered by Western nations can form a significant dimension of working through some of the difficult security issues that will inevitably emerge between Russia and the West. There is no question that Russia's society will continue to face enormous obstacles in the next decade in moving beyond the legacy of the dysfunctional Soviet command economy. Russia cannot afford to attempt to compete with the West in a new arms race. The threat is not from a resurgent superpower matching US/NATO defense spending and force capacity, but from a potentially insulted and beleaguered nation that could still create all sorts of security problems for Western nations. Fortunately, the situation at Pristina was resolved with no serious consequences (as a result of the judgment of Gen. Michael Jackson and others), but this incident makes clear that Russia could be driven to lash out in ways that might not be predictable, or even manageable, for Western nations. A 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe, enjoying NATO security guarantees, as a community of prosperous nations, with Russia not realizing improvements in security and living standards commensurate with other former Warsaw pact and newly independent post-Soviet nations, will not bode well for ensuring European or global security.

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