1 *Sergei Medvedev*

Kosovo: a European *fin de siècle*

On a hot day in early June 1999, I was participating in a conference on European security in Berlin. The talk of the day was obviously the war in Kosovo. At the same time, at Unter den Linden, a few blocks away from the conference venue, a messy and joyful event was taking place – the Christopher Street Gay Parade, a prelude to the Berlin Love Parade held a couple of weeks later. As I left the conference hall and joined the crowds at Unter den Linden, it occurred to me that Kosovo and the Love Parade have a great deal in common. They are both carnivals of simulation and narcissism, glowing with flamboyant decadence. A techno-music parade and a military techno parade, a unified Berlin and a disintegrating Yugoslavia, rights of the gay minorities and rights of the Kosovo Albanians, are all signifying Europe at the end of modernity, a trademark European *fin de siècle*.

Kosovo between *Idealpolitik* and *Realpolitik*

Kosovo is the first war in history said to be fought in pursuit of principle, not interest. What is at stake is a radical revision of the moral (and, perhaps subsequently, the legal and institutional) basis of the international system. The Westphalian principle of sovereignty – originally created by monarchs to ensure their position against popular movements, and systematically (mis)used by rulers against their own subjects – is being eroded. In fact, the Weberian principle of the state as possessing a legitimate monopoly on violence seems to be failing. Sovereigns no longer hold this monopoly: it now belongs to the international community. The West has defined basic human rights as universal principles that transcend sovereignty.

In the new normative paradigm of *Idealpolitik*, sovereignty is no longer an ontological given, no longer inviolate. In some cases, it may be restricted (for example, Milosevic's token sovereignty over Kosovo or Saddam Hussein's

over Iraqi skies); in other instances, it is simply revoked. As a result, sovereignty and governance arguably can be made more responsible and accountable, encouraging greater public participation and observance of human rights. (However, the question remains, responsible and accountable to whom? Is it to indigenous constituencies or to the moral authority of the West, which in some cases is external to domestic discourses?)

This seems well and good in theory, but the reality test has turned out to be much more confusing. To put it simply, interests of power have contaminated what looked like an attempt to execute normative *Idealpolitik*. In *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, E.H. Carr criticised the hypocrisy of the application of morality to the anarchy of international relations, and argued that it led to disaster by ignoring the real relations of power.[1] NATO's operation in Kosovo proved to be no different. *Idealpolitik* has been mixed (one could say compromised) with all sorts of traditional interests, strategies and mischief.

Interests at play in the conflict in Kosovo have been numerous and conspicuous. They have ranged from NATO's search for a post-Cold War role to play and for a clear enemy – to President Clinton's determination in his post-Lewinsky phase to show, *urbi et orbi*, that he was, after all, a morally responsible statesman. They have included the United States' wish to reassert its position in transatlantic relations in the wake of the Amsterdam Treaty and the arrival of the EMU; the desire of EU member states to prevent the influx of 1 million Kosovar refugees; the interests of the military industry and the interests of technology.

In the world of postmodern technology, hardware – computers, communication networks and state-of-the-art weapons – acquires a certain agency and generates interests of its own. Anton Chekhov said that if there is a shotgun hanging on the wall in the first act of a play, it is certain to fire in the third act. Likewise, B2 bombers, our civilisation's top guns, need to fly actual missions – and fly they did, taking off from a base in Missouri, refuelling over the Atlantic, bombing targets in Serbia, and returning to Missouri the same evening. As an American pilot declared in an interview, 'The great thing about flying a B2 is that you start in the morning, accomplish a mission, and you're back home in the evening, with your wife, your kids, and a cold beer.' 'Hi Dad!' – welcome to the world of postmodern warfare and computer morality. Never mind the cost-effectiveness of these B2 missions: they were all about media effectiveness and a display of technological supremacy. 'The medium is the message.' The B2 bomber as such is a message. It does not even have to do the dirty job of *dropping* bombs: all it has to do is fly, engaging in a communicative action rather than physical contact with the enemy. A fresh twist to the theme of technology as a relevant actor was added by defence analysts who suggested that some NATO members were using as many guided bombs and missiles containing chips with potential Y2K bugs as possible, rather than have them undergo a costly testing program.

The overwhelming interest in waging a war against Serbia, however, has belonged not to a specific agency, or a group, but to a certain power discourse – the post-Cold War dominant moral discourse of the 'West'. Claiming to have norms at its core (for example, NATO as a 'community of values'), this discourse is about expansion and power, much like the Christian white man's discourse that guided Western colonisation for the last 500 years under the banner of morality. After all, any ethical discourse is a discourse of power working by way of exclusion and retribution, by *surveiller et punir* (as per Michel Foucault), and the West's current moral assertiveness is little more than a new guise for a centuries-old tradition.

In seeking to establish itself as a norm for global conduct, the moral discourse of power is rather indiscriminate in respect of specific conflicts, instrumentalising them to its own advantage. In some cases, this discourse supports sovereignty (Kuwait); sometimes it supports human rights (Kosovo); and sometimes it supports neither (Turkish Kurds). The ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, real and terrible as it was, seems not to have been the overwhelming reason for Western intervention, but rather a convenient pretext. There was no contradiction between *Idealpolitik* and *Realpolitik* in Kosovo, as they were both manifestations of the same historical force, the same discourse of power. In Kosovo, it was principle exercised as power, and power disguised as principle.

Kosovo between ethnic cleansing and allied bombing

One of the great paradoxes of the war in Kosovo was that it was not just one campaign but two: there was the ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo and the allied bombing campaign against targets in Kosovo and all over Serbia. At times it seemed that these campaigns were taking place in separate dimensions. This was made particularly evident in daily television news reports. First, there would be a report on the arrival of thousands of new refugees at the Kosovo–Albania (or Macedonia or Montenegro) border. A correspondent in all-weather gear would be positioned before a backdrop reminiscent of scenes from *Schindler's List*: unending columns of refugees slowly walking along railway tracks. This would be followed by a smartly dressed correspondent at NATO headquarters in Brussels, going live to NATO's daily briefing, where an ingratiating and smiling Jamie Shea would provide the numbers of sorties flown and targets hit, and would assure us of the ever-increasing success of the bombing campaign. Sometimes, pictures from Serbian television would be included, showing destroyed bridges, factories and residential quarters, as well as people wandering amid the debris. (In Russia, the images were served in reverse order: first, the destruction in Serbia and then Kosovar refugees.)

It seemed that each campaign was following its own course. Serb troops were completing the ethnic cleansing of towns and villages in Kosovo, and

NATO aircraft were completing the orderly and meticulous destruction of Serbia's infrastructure. NATO was running short of targets and, at times, hitting the same site two or three times; meanwhile, it did almost nothing on the ground to stop the ethnic cleansing. At best, one can say that the two campaigns were carried out relatively independently of each other. At worst, one can argue, as did *The Economist*, that

> this was a war to stop ethnic cleansing, but the main effect was to intensify it. The bombing campaign accelerated the killing – no more than 2,000–3,000 people had died in the province before the bombing began, quite a few at the hands of Kosovar guerrillas – and it accelerated the emptying of the population at large. In humanitarian terms, the Kosovo campaign turned into a disaster.[2]

Indeed, it turned out to be a vicious circle and a self-propelled enterprise: NATO bombs accelerated ethnic cleansing, and the stronger outflow of refugees (escaping not only from Serb atrocities but from NATO bombs) prompted still more bombing. The entire population of Kosovo and civilians in cities all over Serbia became NATO's hostages and bargaining chips in a geopolitical game. Rather than helping the refugees, NATO seemed to be exploiting them in its narcissistic display of military power. In the seventy-nine days of the air campaign, the Alliance failed to pursue larger goals such as toppling Milosevic's regime, installing a new and more just order in the Balkans, or sending a strong message to the rest of the world. Later, as forensic evidence of the genocide in Kosovo was recovered, the news was met with horror in Western capitals, but also with a kind of relief, signalling the provision of retrospective moral justification for the bombing.

The first war in history said to be fought on moral grounds has been tainted by hypocrisy. It is hard to reconcile self-appointed 'normative politics' with the embracing of an ally like the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), an organisation with a well-documented history of terrorism, drug trafficking and ethnic cleansing. It is difficult to reconcile it with the use of cluster bombs that proved to be 'surgical' in the most direct sense of the word, that is, resulting in amputations. Likewise, it is hard to reconcile calls to abolish the death penalty (as the Council of Europe has urged of its member states) with the killing and punishing of innocent civilians for crimes committed by their leaders, which in effect was Europe's stance during the course of NATO's attacks. Even if one admits that the war in Kosovo had moral foundations, it was the morality of an action movie and a computer game, the morality of Western messianism and of 'chasing monsters' (Milosevic as the Fidel Castro of Europe), the Manichean morality of good–evil, inside–outside, us–them.

It is the binary mapping of the conflict in Kosovo (in which, for instance, an ambiguous force like the KLA fell into the 'us' category as Western journalists glorified these guerrillas on their mountain trails, while Russia, identified as a 'Serb ally', was relegated to the 'them' camp) that leads one

to suggest that Europe was not simply looking to establish morality and justice, but rather to institute its own identity represented as morality. It was not that some pre-established European norms have compelled Europe to intervene in Kosovo, but the converse: the intervention in Kosovo was a means by which Europe could re-invent itself and imagine itself as a moral fortress. Europe needed Kosovo for the construction of its own identity and for the consolidation of the European project on a higher moral ground.

Kosovo between (East)-modernity[3] and postmodernity

To be fair, there was hesitation and confusion in Europe in reaction to the bombing. There was a certain degree of objectivity and balance in media reporting, and some astonishment at 'what we are doing'. But there was no audible protest. As cluster bombs were being dropped on the residential quarters of Serbian cities and 'collateral damage' was tolerated, Europe asserted its new identity. This was accompanied by a stunning 'silence of the lambs', the peace movements, the anti-war generation of the 1960s and 1970s, and of former NATO critics like the German Greens[4] who hastily developed their version of the concept of a 'just war'. It looked as if Europe had re-discovered atavisms of modernity, with essentialist narratives of identity, security, heroic politics and outright militarism. Wasn't it all about modernity, the war in Kosovo?

At first glance, it seems that 'Kosovo' was an outburst of modernity. Modern history was returning with a vengeance, in particular the Balkan history, with its post-Ottoman, post-Habsburg and post-Tito potential for conflict. The shadow of Kosovo Pole[5] suddenly loomed large over Europe, along with a number of other unresolved territorial disputes, unsettled borders and ethnic rivalries in East-Central and South-Eastern Europe. The conflict over Kosovo demonstrated that the east had not yet completed the tasks of modernity, that is, forming nation states, and defining borders. In the age of globalisation and European integration, it has turned out that pockets of violent modern nationhood still exist.

Indeed, the Balkans are often interpreted as the reserve of the archaic, reminding one of Jean Baudrillard's piece about a Stone Age tribe discovered in Papua New Guinea. As the story goes, the international community decides to completely isolate the tribe in order to 'preserve' its unique biosphere and to simulate the undiscovered. Likewise, the West could theoretically preserve the 'unique multi-cultural environment of the Balkans' as a UNESCO Heritage Site, a Jurassic Park of ethnic strife and territorial disputes.

On the other hand, the West, too, seems to have relapsed into modernity, making use of war and power politics, and waving national flags. British defence analysts on Sky News would jealously count the number of attack

sorties flown by the Royal Air Force during the air campaign. As Maja
Zehfuss mentions in chapter 6, the German press would proudly report that
the German Tornadoes 'were flying in pole position'.

It would be too simplistic, however, to read the war in Kosovo as a
sudden recurrence of modernity, nationalism and military security in late
twentieth-century Europe. To begin with, Serbian, Albanian and other
nationalisms are staged in a postmodern setting; that is, this is nationalism
as a response to globalisation, integration and the emergence of transnational
diasporas. Each of the nationalist movements in the region is surprisingly
global, positioning itself in relation to the 'West', that is, the EU, NATO
and the United States, but also in respect of Russia (as occasionally does
Serbia). Ethnic leaders are vying for the West's attention, and their strategies
are addressed to the 'international community' as well as to their direct
opponents and domestic constituencies. That is to say, someone like Milosevic
is hardly an archaic nationalist, obsessed with ethnicity, and intent on defying
the West. On the contrary, he has proved to be a rather pragmatic politician,
playing the strategy of a regulated conflict with the West, indeed using the
West for the purpose of consolidating his own power. Provoking NATO's
attack may have been Milosevic's strategic miscalculation, yet there is no
denying that he had been playing with the global community as much as with
Serbs' archaic instincts. Likewise, appeals to the world and international PR
have become a major activity for the KLA and the Kosovar leaders.

Second, the war in Kosovo has marked a major infringement on the
modern principle of sovereignty as the ultimate legitimate monopoly on
violence. Milosevic was a classic sovereign: until the November 2000 revolu-
tion in Belgrade he was legitimate (elected), and he used various forms of
violence against his Serbian and Albanian subjects. It was precisely this
monopoly that was being challenged by the 'international community'. In
addition, the West was repeatedly questioning the sovereign political choice
of the Serbian nation, refusing aid to Serbia while Milosevic was in office. In
a sense, one can call this limitation of sovereignty a 'humanitarian Monroe
doctrine' (or a 'Brezhnev doctrine').

It is interesting, however, that the war in Kosovo has also infringed on
the sovereignty of Western nations. It subjected their alleged 'national
interests' to supranational purposes (NATO's search for action and leader-
ship, preserving the transatlantic relationship and also attempting to shape
Europe's security and defence identity and common foreign and security
policy, etc.) and to transnational technologies. The leading actors in the war
were not states (with the possible exception of the US, the last surviving
nation state), but institutions. The story of the war in Kosovo has taken
place not in the *realpolitisches* field of traditional state interests, but in the
highly virtual institutional field of 'European security'.

Third, this simulated field features a new concept of agency that roughly
corresponds to what the poststructuralist literary critics, following Roland

Barthes, call 'the death of the author'. The story of Kosovo had no author: it was written by impersonal forces like 'Europe', or the 'West', or the 'community of values', or the 'new world order'. Discourses have no face or personality, and war in Kosovo has been written by a collective body of the West, emerging in an electrified field of symbolic exchange and simulation. A remarkable thing about the war in Kosovo was that it materialised 'out of the thin air' of late modernity. It has had no author or mastermind behind it (even though interests have been involved), and NATO was no more than an instrument, an executor, a performer. In this way, the war in Kosovo has resembled Russia's war in Chechnya, especially its first episode in 1994–96. It was not known who made the decision and gave orders to start it, while the roles of President Yeltsin, the Security Council and the Ministry of Defence still remain unclear.[6]

The missing agency concept represented in the conflict in Kosovo goes some way in explaining NATO's spectacular planning failures and the general *ad hoc* and *ad libitum* mode of operation. When, early in the air campaign, it became clear that NATO had failed to deflect Milosevic from his course of ethnic cleansing, it seemed that the Allies had no plan whatsoever except to continue bombing with reckless abandon, as though driven by Napoleon's motto *On s'engage et puis on voit*. Given the improvisational nature of the bombing, and alarmed at the evident inefficacy of air strikes, NATO began to look for alternative mechanisms of conflict management and/or retrospective justification of its own action. It looked to the players it should have involved from the outset: the OSCE, the United Nations, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (the Hague Tribunal), and finally the EU and Russia.

Indeed, the Chernomyrdin–Ahtisaari mission virtually saved NATO, which by late May 1999 seemed hopelessly stuck in the Kosovo quagmire, unable to stop bombing, on the one hand, and unwilling to employ ground forces, on the other. Had a political solution not been mediated in early June 1999, it is hard to imagine the further course of events, especially given that the Allies, according to some reports, could have run short of munitions within the next month. The West's impersonal war machine had to turn for help to personal-style politics from the European peripheries (Finland and Russia); a marginal discourse was needed to save the grand narrative of the new world order.

Fourth, on the subject of de-personalised actors, one cannot fail to notice the immense role played by the mass media in the war in Kosovo. Just as in the Gulf War, this conflict was produced, fought and consummated in the field of televised images; that is, it was virtualised and simulated to a high degree. (Compare this with Jean Baudrillard's provocative statement that 'the Gulf War did not take place';[7] see also Andreas Behnke's and Iver Neumann's chapters in this volume). In a darkly ironic coincidence, shortly before the start of the air campaign, the movie *Wag the Dog* was released,

featuring some imaginary – simulated – 'Albanians'. The media is the tail wagging the dog of world politics, or rather the media has become *the* dog, waiting, in Pavlovian spasms, for more food, like Kuwait or Kosovo or Chechnya, that it can digest and communicate in a politically relevant and melodramatic manner.

The mass media in question are total and global. Reports may be biased and distorted, but media as such do not belong to either side in the conflict. (For example, in 1994–96, the Russian media sided almost entirely with the Chechens, angering the Russian generals.) In arguing that Serb TV should be exempt from bombing, CNN was much more likely driven by hunger for information than by humanitarian concerns or professional solidarity.

Indeed, the media dominated the war in Kosovo. B-52 bombers joined the dissident Belgrade radio B92 as mass media devices. State-of-the-art military technology has become a department of the mass media. An analogy can be made with today's top racing cars that carry on-board cameras, and rather than mere racing their function becomes *showing* the race. (In this sense, it is preferable that a car sometimes crashes, providing a unique view from the cockpit, to be replayed in slow motion). By the same token, today's bombs and missiles with inbuilt cameras are designed to destroy but also to *show*, allowing the viewers to savour the entertaining process of destruction. The purpose of the guided missile that hit the bridge in Novi Sad was primarily communicative, in other words, it was (a) 'to send a message' to Milosevic and the world and (b) to televise the final approach of the missile to the target, followed by an eloquent blackout. The bombing of the Novi Sad bridge turned into a media spectacle, drawing hundreds of millions of viewers worldwide. Maybe in the future broadcasting companies will sponsor missiles and bombs with on-board cameras as they now sponsor Formula 1 cars.[8]

Since most contemporary wars are positioned in a global context, the art of 'sending messages' (not only to the enemy but to the world at large) plays an ever-increasing role in the conduct of war, sometimes eclipsing operational efficiency. In earlier times, it was mostly military parades that functioned as PR, but now war itself, like NATO's operation in Kosovo, can be turned into a PR campaign. Apparently, one of the reasons for starting the bombing in late March 1999 was the illusion of an easy victory – a victory that would fit nicely with the festivities surrounding NATO's fiftieth anniversary in April of that year. Witness Javier Solana's repeated pronouncements that the campaign would be over by the time of the Washington summit – NATO's birthday present to itself.

What likened NATO's air strikes to a PR campaign was the goal of zero casualties among the Allies, a figure which was quite normal for a parade (unless an unfortunate onlooker falls under a tank), but not in a war. This obsession with safety revealed a paradoxical aspect of the postmodern mind. On the one hand, Western man is ready, indeed willing, to wage wars, releasing his archaic instincts. But, on the other hand, his willingness to

sacrifice himself has been irretrievably lost through forces of hedonism, consumerism and atheistic humanism. That was the main problem of the war in Kosovo, a campaign that the West wanted to fight wearing gloves. (Or, as a feminist critic of US power like Cynthia Weber might have suggested, wearing a condom.)[9] The reluctance to endanger 'our boys' culminated in an outspoken story about Apache helicopters. The twenty-four battlefield helicopters were heralded as ultimate weapons able to hunt down Serb tanks in Kosovo. It took a month to prepare their arrival, then they were flown into Albania with much pomp, but they never got off the ground for fear that they would have to fly too low, becoming vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire. The Apaches stood idle while the Serbs were completing the ethnic cleansing.

Kosovo was a truly postmodern war, an Oscar-winning action movie, a new 3D computer game where one could employ emotion and skill, and even be morally rewarded for defeating the evil – without risking one's life. However, there was blood behind the screens. There is a story by Jorge Luis Borges in which two kings play chess on a hilltop; at the bottom of the hill, two armies are fighting in accordance with the moves on the chessboard. One king gains the upper hand, and so does one of the armies. As the winning player declares checkmate, the other falls dead.

Postmodernism is an entertaining game on a computer screen, or on the chessboard, but, to our sheer confusion, there happen to be real people somewhere underneath. The more virtual a game becomes for 'us', the harder it turns out for 'them'. The safer an American pilot's flight in the high-tech skies over Kosovo, the bloodier is the mess on the ground (both from bombs and ethnic cleansing). The bigger the speculative flows on global financial markets, trading in virtuality, the more bitter are conditions for the 'real' economy in the Third World. Calls for curing the injustices brought on by global interdependence, such as making NATO answerable to the UN, or imposing the 1 per cent 'Tobin tax'[10] on global speculative transactions (see chapter 5, by Heikki Patomäki), will hardly change the fundamentally post-moral nature of the new world order.

Russia between *derzhavnost'* and the dollar

The war in Kosovo can be seen as the playing out of the competition between the two most publicised essays on international affairs of the last decade, Francis Fukuyama's *End of History* and Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. The prize in the contest was Russia. Had Russia chosen to join its Slavic/Orthodox brethren in Serbia in defying the West, Huntington would have prevailed. Had Russia, on the contrary, acquiesced with the military power, moral arguments and, most importantly, economic instruments of the West, the title would have gone to Fukuyama.

In the first round, it seemed that Huntington was pulling ahead. The reaction in Russia to the start of the NATO air campaign was overwhelming and unanimous. Deep political divisions and partisanship were put aside in the protest against NATO and the show of solidarity with the Serbs. The West had given Russia eloquent and powerful evidence of the fact that she had lost the Cold War. In fact, the bombing helped to consolidate Russia's political elite and a large part of the population in the anti-Western camp, playing directly into the hands of the communists and the nationalists.[11]

Psychologically, there was a meaningful difference between this situation and Russia's former geopolitical losses. Withdrawal from Eastern Europe and the reunification of Germany were seen as a unilateral gesture of goodwill on Russia's part – were they not? NATO's expansion, for all its alleged strategic damage for Russia, was nevertheless negotiated with Moscow, and received Russia's reluctant consent (crowned by the Russia–NATO Founding Act). But here, for the first time in the post-Cold War decade, something had been accomplished without any regard for Russia.

This was a revelation. The taboo of openly talking about Russia's defeat was lifted, with some profound psychotherapeutic effects. What followed was a two-week carnival of national ambition. It was a ritual exorcism, complete with spontaneous mass demonstrations at the US Embassy in Moscow, the sign-up of volunteers for combat in Serbia, threats of supplying arms to Milosevic and of re-targeting Russia's nuclear missiles, and a sharp increase in the domestic role of the military. This emotional outburst proved once again, as did the 1993 and 1995 parliamentary elections, that post-Cold War post-traumatic syndrome runs deep in the national consciousness. However, once the taboo subject of Russia's defeat was raised, resentment and aggression were reified in a symbolic verbal manner (popular demonstrations, declarations in the State Duma, etc.), and, thus, somewhat mitigated and healed.

Indeed, the steam of the Russian nationalist engine all went into the whistle. By mid-April 1999, nationalist fever had diminished. Admitting to the impossibility of opposing the West or halting NATO's bombing, Russia took on a rather sensible wait-and-see position, criticising NATO's action, while gradually resuming cooperation with the West along financial lines.

Meanwhile, important domestic shifts were taking place. Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov's heavy-handed mediation in the conflict in Kosovo gave way to the more flexible and Western-minded efforts of former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. Later, Primakov's fall from grace was confirmed as President Yeltsin sacked his communist-dominated government and Sergei Stepashin was appointed as Primakov's replacement. The shaping of the new government and its economic programme was closely coordinated with international financial institutions.

Consequently, large-scale cooperation between Russia and these institutions resumed for the first time since the financial crisis of August 1998.

Finally, President Yeltsin emerged out of the political shadow, scoring two major victories over the communist Duma: first, he defeated attempts to impeach him; second, he succeeded in having his selection for the office of prime minister, Sergei Stepashin, approved at the first attempt. The economy, thought moribund, started showing signs of revival: the rouble was strengthening, and the stock market was recovering from the shock of August 1998. Suddenly, against all odds, Russia embarked upon a 'liberal spring'.

In other words, just as Russia's political system had managed to absorb the internal shock of the August 1998 financial crisis, so it handled the external impact of the 1999 Kosovo crisis fairly well. Moreover, there had been no long-term political repercussions on the domestic scene. The consequences for Russian foreign and security policy, however, were less salubrious. Generally, in the last seven to eight years, ever since the Andrei Kozyrev line based on liberal internationalism and the abandoning of 'national interests' faded away, Russian foreign policy has oscillated between minimalist cooperation with the West and damage limitation. The Kosovo crisis once again sent Russian foreign policy into a damage limitation mode, undermining mutual trust and the fragile mechanisms of cooperation with NATO. The West's war in Kosovo unravelled the political and psychological achievement of the 1997 Paris Declaration and the NATO–Russia Founding Act. From appeasing Russia the West turned to sidelining Russia – a policy that was consistent with Russia's dwindling economic and diplomatic power, but one that sounded hardly encouraging to the country's elite.

Apart from dealing a blow to national pride, the Kosovo crisis showed that Russia remained vitally dependent on the new world order's economic environment, as represented by IMF loans, Western markets for Russian oil and gas, and a vested interest on the part of the country's elite and an increasing number of ordinary citizens in economic and political openness. Several polls conducted by Russian newspapers among anti-NATO demonstrators near the US embassy in Moscow showed that people were ready to burn American flags, but would never agree to give up the free circulation of US dollars, or the opportunity to travel to the West. Respondents also did not seem willing to support higher military outlays in the Russian budget.

The 1999 war in Kosovo was of symbolic significance to Russia. Like the August 1998 financial crash in Russia, induced by a crisis in the emerging markets and a fall in world oil prices, it clearly showed the limited role of the Russian State with regard to transnational impacts, be it NATO or the global financial markets. The 1998 crisis highlighted Russia's economic dependence, just as the 1999 Kosovo war showed Russia's geopolitical predicament. Or, put otherwise, the 1998 crisis demonstrated that Russia is irresistibly drawn into the world of geo-economics, and 'Kosovo' illustrated that Russia is invariably ejected from the world of geopolitics. Taken together, these developments mapped Russia's major drift from geopolitics to geo-economics, a move which is obviously far from complete but has

already progressed far enough to keep Russia anchored in a cooperative framework at the margin of Western institutions and to guarantee against a radical revision of Russia's foreign and security policy.[12]

The crisis in Kosovo has thus had a dual effect on Russia. It created some immediate damage to Russia's relationship with the West. A more important fact, however, was that Russia proved not to be inclined to neo-imperialist temptations, and remained unlikely to slide into isolationism and confrontation with the West even under the most adverse circumstances. Russia was disturbed but not displaced. An ailing giant had been certainly irritated, but did not care to move.

Other added value appeared in the field of information and international PR. The geopolitical accident in Kosovo suddenly put Russia in the lime-light. A lonely Russian reconnaissance boat travelling (at a top speed of 12 knots) into the Adriatic; Viktor Chernomyrdin's shuttle diplomacy; the Russian paratroopers' surprise spurt to Pristina airport ahead of NATO troops as KFOR was entering Kosovo in June 1999 – all of these made international headlines. Russia suddenly became 'interesting'.

After the West's initial neglect, all of a sudden the West began looking for ways to involve Russia in crisis management. Semi-isolated, Russia unexpectedly started winning points on the diplomatic front. The crisis in Kosovo created a common information field, a common context within which the dialogue with the West resumed. Indeed, one can see similarities with the debates on NATO's expansion, which also gave Russia a voice and a place at the negotiating table of European security for a good four years (1993–97). Both NATO's expansion and the war in Kosovo gave Russia an interface with the West, providing a forum where Russia could claim its national interests, which otherwise would not even be heard. In both cases, Russia seemed to have come out a loser, but these perceived losses have raised the level of global awareness about Russia, its problems and its residual strengths. One is reminded of a daily ritual phrase, a magical incantation, repeated by US and NATO leaders: 'Our goal is to keep Russia involved.' In the world ruled by mass media, it is perceptions and images that count, not the actual territorial/strategic gains or losses. In both cases, Russia's role (often hypothetical and imagined) was emphasised by the global media, evoking distant memories of its lost glory, and this partly compensated for perceived geopolitical damages.

So what was the outcome of the Huntington–Fukuyama duel? In general, Huntington's argument was not fully relevant in Kosovo, where one could see a clash of ambitions and a collision of destructive policies rather than a genuine clash of civilisations. Everyone, including NATO and the Serbs, Russia and China, played by the rules of the global civilisation. National positions seemed to make little difference. 'Kosovo' has demonstrated that Russia is drifting away from the good old world of 'grand chessboards'. After withdrawal from Afghanistan and NATO's expansion, after Chechnya

and Kosovo, any talk of Russia's 'national interests' and 'grand strategies' serve mainly to make newspaper headlines and to increase the heartbeat of the realist die-hards, rather than to position Russia in the twenty-first century. Russia is being 'seduced' (in the Baudrillardian sense) rather than coerced into the global civilisation, just as are its neighbour, China, and much of the Arab world. The new world order (NWO) is a hegemony working mostly by means of seduction, promoting brands like NATO, Boeing, CNN, democracy, IMF, human rights, the Euro, Marlboro, etc. Above all, coercive actions like the one in Kosovo are needed to enhance brand recognition.

Fukuyama did not score a clear-cut victory in Kosovo either. His light-hearted neo-liberal utopia had been devised with a good deal of irony, but in Kosovo the NWO arrived in an unseemly and sinister manner. This was not the history ending 'with a whimper', but rather the re-writing of history with all its pitfalls, enmities and blood.

Behold, the new world order cometh

In 1970, the Polish director Andrzej Wajda made a film titled *Landscape After the Battle*, which won him wide international acclaim. It is a love story set in a concentration camp in Poland in late 1944, abandoned by the German troops and taken over by the allies. It begins on a euphoric note, showing prisoners in their striped robes pouring out of the barracks into the fresh snow. However, the long-awaited liberation does not bring freedom. Days go by, and as people are still kept inside the camp, the occupation authorities install a new repressive order, using the prisoners as bargaining chips in the geopolitical game of late Second World War. This is a film about the absurdity of heroic myths, a story of both hope and disillusion-ment, and of the anguish and torment that remain the lot of individuals under any rule.

The landscape after the battle in Kosovo is murky and dubious. Together with the return of over 800,000 ethnic Albanian refugees, almost 250,000 Serbs, Roma and others have been ethnically cleansed, or were forced to flee.[13] The UN civil administration UNMIK and NATO's KFOR cannot guard the monopoly on violence, and acts of ethnic revenge against local Serbs are occurring on a regular basis, with several hundred reported killed or missing. Various offsprings of the KLA, from militias to guerrilla groups to criminal bands, are roaming free in the province.[14] The advent of a new democratic leadership in Belgrade following the popular uprising in October 2000, and two rounds of elections in September–December 2000, have delayed the Kosovo solution even further. Ironically, the continuing rule of Milosevic had been Kosovo's best hope for independence, as the international community regarded his claim to Kosovo as illegitimate. Now, however,

Serbia is run by Vojislav Kostunica and Zoran Djindjic, legitimate leaders recognised by the West. Both are equally unwilling to let Kosovo go; and this time the West will have to give them a say in Kosovo's affairs. It is characteristic that the Kosovo Albanian leaders met this change of the guard in Belgrade with suspicion. Now, as the dream of independence is virtually slipping from their hands, in a twist unimaginable only a year ago, the next stage of the conflict could take place between the Kosovo Albanians and KFOR.[15] The future of Kosovo suddenly looks more uncertain than it was following the end of NATO's air war.

On the military side, one of the biggest bombing campaigns in history has proven far from effective. For seventy-nine days a relatively small Yugoslav contingent with weapons from the 1960s and 1970s held its own against the mightiest military machine in the world and retained its capacity to respond with anti-aircraft fire – a remarkable achievement. Until the last two weeks of the war, when the Kosovar guerrillas' *kamikaze* tactics flushed the Serbs' armour into the open and rendered it vulnerable to NATO strikes, the infamous Serb army had escaped serious injury.[16] Even though Milosevic is now toppled, Serbian resilience and NATO's incapacity to diminish it and halt the ethnic cleansing during the seventy-nine-day war have sent all kinds of wrong signals around the globe.

NATO's decision to attack was a mistake from the beginning. Once the bombing had started, the Alliance proved surprisingly obdurate and inflexible, as well as hesitant and indecisive. Despite mounting evidence of the ineffectiveness of the bombing, loss of civilian lives, and the acceleration of ethnic cleansing, NATO did not modify its strategy and opt for a wiser course, a halt to the bombing or a riskier ground operation. This lack of flexibility and political will is quite understandable, given that NATO is an alliance of nineteen nations ruled by consensus and the politicians,[17] not by orders and the military; but it is nevertheless damaging to the Alliance's credibility.

In purely technical terms, the bombing campaign has not opened a new chapter in the history of warfare, as some were claiming. It has once again demonstrated that air power alone cannot produce victory. Military supremacy and high-tech weaponry provide no substitute for political solutions; on the contrary, they tend to increase tensions and reduce the likelihood of a lasting settlement. NATO's brand of military power may still be relevant in 'traditional' inter-state wars and high-intensity conflicts; however, most future conflicts will be of medium to low intensity, involving great numbers of civilians, just as in Kosovo or in Algiers. Judging by the case of Kosovo, NATO is ill-equipped to handle such contingencies.

The 'message' which the Kosovo war sent to potential perpetrators and troublemakers around the world has been mixed. NATO has yet to prove that it has the skills, tools and political will to handle any regional conflict effectively. The absence of such proof is a truly dangerous development,

with consequences reaching far beyond the Balkans. Should similar flare-ups occur simultaneously in places like Tibet, the Caucasus, Kurdistan and Eritrea, is NATO going to intervene, and, if it is, has it shown the capacity to do so rapidly and efficiently? And if NATO does not intervene, will it appear as a credible remote deterrent? While answers to these questions remain at best in the balance, NATO's operation in Kosovo served as a background (and arguably a pretext) for the start of Russia's second war in Chechnya and for a regional conflict in Kashmir – involving two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. In general, NATO's new role of self-appointed arbiter in regional conflicts is likely to increase reliance on nuclear weapons around the globe. The post-Kosovo world is not necessarily a safer place.

Nor does NATO's recourse to moral argument as being superior to the norms that govern international law make for a safer world. Laws, like sovereignty, may be outdated, but they at least tend to be inviolate, providing for stability in the system. On the contrary, norms are always subject to interpretation. Should Russia (or, hypothetically, the CIS Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security) now decide that human rights are being violated in Tajikistan, will the West endorse Russian intervention? Or what if Iran resumes its war with Iraq on the grounds that Saddam Hussein has violated Islamic norms?

What happens next? Fidel Castro, at the EU–Latin American summit in June 1999, cited the possibility of a NATO intervention in Colombia's cocaine provinces on behalf of the 'civilized world'. Meanwhile, protesters in East Timor in 1999, prior to the entry of Australian-led peacekeepers, were carrying slogans inviting NATO to their protection. Should the Alliance have become involved? Or will NATO engage only on specific occasions that (a) provide good PR feedback; (b) have no nuclear weapons and (c) run no risk of Alliance casualties?

The problem here is not NATO. The Alliance is not driven by an individual's malicious will, nor does it, by itself, seek world domination. NATO, and the nations that comprise it, is a mere instrument of a rising discourse that is somewhat awkwardly called the new world order (inadvertently paraphrasing the 'brave new world'). The post-sovereign, post-Westphalian, world need not be endowed with greater pluralism, freedom of choice and multiculturalism. Old national totalities are giving way to transnational ones; discourses of power are changing location but not the mode of operation. Or, rather, the discourse of power has become a-local (global) and a-topic (Utopian). It is neither good nor bad: it is the 'thin air' air of postmodernity, and it is not in our power to change the atmosphere.

However, one is always left with an option of deconstructing the new discourse of power by looking into its innate binary nature. In the story of Kosovo, the dichotomy imposed on the audience by the mass media was the false choice between the clear and present evil of Milosevic (and everything that comes with him, like violent nationalism and ethnic cleansing) and the

seemingly unavoidable use of military force by NATO (complete with 'collateral damage'), a choice between ethnic cleansing and NATO bombing. Apart from the fact that a 'third way' can often be envisaged (for example, an earnest search for a political solution or the use of economic mechanisms of 'seduction', whereby instead of bombing the enemy into submission one can buy him into agreement by allocating just a fraction of the funds spent on waging war), this dichotomy is clearly simulated. It is produced and communicated within the same binary opposition, making the recipient choose between 'us' and 'them', 'inside' and 'outside', 'Europe' and 'anarchy'.

Each side in this dichotomy has power as a goal and violence as its means. But while Milosevic's violence was ruthless and straightforward, the use of power by the West has been disguised as principle. A violence of a declining, archaic kind that has no moral pretence is opposed by a violence of the future, endowed with most of the world's resources and moral authority. Choosing between them is like choosing between the atrocities of Dachau and the bombing of Dresden, between Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Are we forever confined to this binarity, to the vicious circle of violence?

The 'new' discourse on European security has so far failed to come up with an answer. Indeed, the very notion of 'security' seems to have forever chained Europe to modernity, the world of Yalta, Versailles and Kosovo Pole, to the world of power, border and the Wall. One of the greater deficits of the European project is not the lack of political resolve, or the lack of its own peacekeeping force. It is the lack of imagination, as Europe has proved to be unable to envision its own identity beyond the narrow confines of security, systemic thinking and the friend–foe paradigm. Forget the Age of the Internet: European security is still in the Age of the Brick, erecting walls and destroying bridges, disciplining and punishing in a Foucauldian prison.

Notes

1 E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London, Macmillan, 1981 [1946]).
2 'Messy War, Messy Peace', *The Economist*, 12 June 1999.
3 The term *Ostmoderne* was first used in Christoph Zürcher, *Aus der Ostmoderne in die Postmoderne. Zum Wandel in der Früheren Sowjetunion* (Berlin, Arbeitspapiere des Osteuropa-Instituts der FU Berlin, 1998).
4 See chapter 6, by Maja Zehfuss.

5 On 28 June 1389, Serb Tsar Lazar chose to lead the Serbs into battle against hopeless odds at the Field of Blackbirds in Kosovo rather than capitulate to the Turks. Since then, Kosovo Pole has become one of the foremost symbols of Serb history and martyrdom, and a territorial anchor of national identity.

6 For comparisons between the wars in Kosovo and in Chechnya, see chapter 10, by Christoph Zürcher.

7 Jean Baudrillard, *La guerre du golfe n'a pas eu lieu* (Paris, Galilée, 1991).

8 A step in this direction was made during the Gulf War when CNN reportedly insisted in certain cases that the bombing was carried out at night. This looked more spectacular on TV, although it made the bombing less precise, increased collateral damage and carried greater risk for the US military personnel.

9 Cynthia Weber, *Faking It: US Hegemony in a 'Post-Phallic' Era* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

10 Heikki Patomäki, 'The Tobin Tax: A New Phase in the Politics of Globalisation?', *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 17, no. 4 (August 2000); and Heikki Patomäki, *Democratizing Globalization. The Leverage of the Tobin Tax* (London, Zed Books, 2001).

11 According to figures cited by Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian envoy to the Kosovo talks in May and June 1999, before the NATO attack 57 per cent of Russian respondents had a positive attitude towards the United States, and 28 per cent a negative one. In early May 1999, the figures were 14 per cent positive and 73 per cent negative (Viktor Chernomyrdin, 'Impossible to Talk Peace with Bombs Falling', *Washington Post*, 27 May 1999).

12 See Sergei Medvedev, *Russia's Futures: Implications for the EU, the North and the Baltic Region* (Helsinki, UPI and Berlin, IEP, 2000), p. 19.

13 Tim Judah, 'Kosovo One Year On', BBC World News, 16 March 2000, available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_676000/676196.stm (accessed 3 January 2001).

14 Jonathan Marcus, 'NATO's Incomplete Victory', BBC World News, 14 March 2000, available: http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_671000/671432.stm (accessed 3 January 2001).

15 Judah, 'Kosovo One Year On'.

16 'Messy War, Messy Peace', *The Economist*, 12 June 1999.

17 As General Michael Short, US commander of the air campaign, bluntly put it: 'It was war by lowest common denominator.' See Allan Little, 'Behind the Kosovo Crisis', BBC World News, 12 March 2000, available: http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_674000/674056.stm (accessed 3 January 2001).