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From Rambouillet to the Kosovo accords: NATO’S war against Serbia and its aftermath

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PART FOUR:

Aftermath
The purpose of war should be to secure a better peace. The question this essay addresses is ‘Did NATO’s war against Serbia result in a better peace for Kosovo?’ ‘Better peace’ in this context must include better prospects for human rights within and beyond Kosovo. Any answer to this question relies on an assessment of the alternatives to NATO’s war and of the conditions which now prevail in Kosovo and the world at large. This article analyses the rejection by Serbia of the Rambouillet Plan and NATO’s rejection of Serbia’s counter-proposal; the escalation of violence in Kosovo by Serbia following the start of NATO’s bombing campaign; the extent to which the deal which ended the war entailed concessions by either side in comparison with Rambouillet; and the situation within and beyond Kosovo since the bombing stopped. The assessment of these issues is organised around an exposition and critique of the pro-war narrative as propounded by NATO and many of the supporters of NATO’s war in Kosovo. While one could construct more narratives than just one pro-war and one anti-war, it is useful to structure the main strands of argument regarding the war around this extremely important policy choice.

THE POLITICS OF RAMBOUILLET

The pro-war narrative on the Rambouillet Interim Agreement proposed by the Contact Group (comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Russia) is that the Contact Group had done everything that it could short of the use of force to get Serbia to accept what was a very reasonable compromise deal, but Serbia rejected it in
order to retain a free hand in the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. The Serbian
government had abolished Kosovo's status as an autonomous province of
Serbia in 1989. Serbia presented this and its subsequent actions as a
defensive reaction to what it portrayed as ethnic cleansing of Serbs from
Kosovo by Albanian Kosovar terrorists and attempts by them to achieve
full federal status for Kosovo which would allow it to secede and then
become part of a Greater Albania. Serbia's absolute minimum negotiating
position was no independence for Kosovo.

The anti-war narrative argues that Rambouillet was an offer Yugoslav
President Slobodan Milosevic could not have accepted. The Contact
Group proposal was effectively a NATO proposal as Russia was in many
ways a dissenting voice within the Contact Group. Rambouillet required
Serbia to accept a NATO-led 28,000-strong Kosovo Force (KFOR) to
oversee the implementation process and be allowed to use force if
necessary against any parties violating the agreement (Chapter 5, Article
IV.2b). There was no mention of any KFOR accountability to the UN or
any other international body. Any non-NATO participation was to be
'subject to the direction and political control of North Atlantic Council
(NAC) through the NATO chain of command' (Chapter 7, Article I.1b).
That force was to be allowed freedom of movement, access and action
throughout Yugoslav territory, air space and waters, not just Kosovo,
which was to 'include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac,
manoeuvre, billet, and utilisation of any areas or facilities as required for
support, training and operations' (Appendix B, Article 8). Even if there
was no practical expectation that NATO would actually venture outside
the borders of Kosovo, to require Serbia to accept even in principle such
a thing is extraordinary. Without reassurances on the composition, role
and political authorisation of the force (including the presence of neutral
and Russian forces), KFOR looked to Serbia as if it was simply a
transitional guarantor force for Kosovo's independence.

As Rambouillet was merely an interim agreement, the question of what
was to follow it was crucial: 'Three years after the entry into force of this
Agreement, an international meeting shall be convened to determine a
mechanism for a final settlement for Kosovo, on the basis of the will of
the people, opinions of relevant authorities, each Party's efforts regarding
the implementation of this Agreement, and the Helsinki Final Act'
(Chapter 8, Article I.3). US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright
apparently gave assurances to the Albanian Kosovar delegation at
Rambouillet that the reference to 'the will of the people' meant the will of
the people of Kosovo (not Serbia or Yugoslavia) to be expressed in a
referendum. The Albanian Kosovar delegation probably signed in the full
expectation it was in a no-lose situation — either Serbia would reject the
deal, NATO would bomb, and the war of independence would continue; or Serbia would accept the deal and independence would come through a referendum after three years. Milosevic said: ‘What they practically attempted to impose in Rambouillet wasn’t autonomy but independence.’

One might be of the opinion that Serbia, through its brutal violations of human rights, had forfeited its moral right for Kosovo to remain within its borders. On that logic, the KLA has now forfeited its right to an independent Kosovo for the same reason. However, the point here is that the prospect of an independent Kosovo guaranteed Milosevic’s rejection of Rambouillet. Ironically, it is likely that the United States did not want Kosovo to become independent. The first draft of the US-sponsored Hill Plan of 1 October 1998 proposed autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia and proposed that this status could be changed only if all parties agreed, which is one of the reasons the unofficial government of Kosovo rejected it.

NATO always demanded that the Albanian Kosovar Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) cease to use force and agree to accept autonomy within Serbia only, and there was a widespread belief that NATO for a long time kept its military threats limited so as not to encourage the KLA.

Attention has been paid by anti-war analysts to the fact that the Serbian National Assembly made a counter-proposal on 23 March, the day before NATO started bombing. This counter-proposal was rejected out of hand by NATO and is ignored or given only a passing mention in pro-war narratives. In this resolution, Serbia condemned the withdrawal of the 2,000 members of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) which had been deployed as part of the Holbrooke Plan of October 1998, proposed ‘wide-ranging autonomy’ for Kosovo within a sovereign Yugoslavia, and rejected ‘foreign troops’ but stated its willingness to ‘examine the character and extent of an international presence in Kosovo’ once there had been a political agreement acceptable to all parties. Pro-war analysts could argue that, without a heavily-armed force to guarantee it, the deal would not be worth the paper it was written on in terms of human rights within Kosovo, and the resolution rejected such a force. However, exploration of the potential for compromise, even if improbable, between the Rambouillet plan and Serbian National Assembly resolution involving human rights guarantees and Kosovo’s autonomy rather than independence was rejected by NATO in favour of war.

Not only was the United States uninterested in the Serbian counter-proposal, it is likely that the United States wanted and expected Serbia to reject Rambouillet. This is a claim that gets ignored in the pro-war narrative. Former US Secretary of State and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger has claimed that ‘the Rambouillet text ... was a
provocation, and excuse to start bombing', and there are reports that Albright told reporters off the record that ‘we intentionally set the bar too high for the Serbs to comply. They need some bombing, and that’s what they are going to get.’ As US President Bill Clinton was consumed by the process of dealing with the impeachment proceedings which were under way against him for lying about his relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, Albright was very much the shaper of US policy, though with Clinton making the final decisions. She believed the situation was similar to the situation in Bosnia in the summer of 1995 and that Milosevic would capitulate very quickly after a few bombs had been dropped. On 13 March, Clinton and most of his advisers agreed with an intelligence report which stated that Milosevic ‘would quickly sue for peace after defending his honour’. On 24 March Albright said that the goal was ‘achievable in a relatively short period of time’. White House Spokesman Joseph Lockhart made the connection explicit on 24 March when he said ‘the President expressed hope that, as in Bosnia, ... a credible threat of force would increase chances for Milosevic to accept a lasting diplomatic solution’. Tony Blinken, Special Adviser to Clinton on the National Security Council, defended this line in April 1999: ‘I think that if you look at what happened in Bosnia, there was certainly reason to believe that when faced with NATO airplanes he would quickly calculate that his interests lie in making peace.’ The parallel with NATO’s bombing of Bosnian Serb nationalists was misleading. Milosevic agreed to the Dayton Peace Agreement over Bosnia-Hercegovina at a time when Bosnian Serb nationalist forces were losing rapidly on the ground to a joint Croatian and Bosnian government offensive. Dayton offered him a chance to avert total defeat and establish a Serb Republic within Bosnia in which the Bosnian Serb nationalists would be able to impose their will and even lay the basis for the partition of Bosnia and the establishment of a Greater Serbia. NATO’s bombing alone was not sufficient to secure his acceptance of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In contrast, Serbian forces had the clear upper hand on the ground in Kosovo, and the peace deal on offer would mean the end of Serb minority rule in that province and possibly even the loss of Kosovo, which is much more precious to Serbia in its nationalist ideology and much more important to Milosevic in Serbian coalition politics than any part of Bosnia. Instead of exploring a compromise, NATO started bombing.

**NATO BOMBING: FUEL ON THE FIRE**

A key dispute between the pro- and anti-war narratives pertains to the relationship between the commencement of the NATO bombing and the
massive escalation of human rights violations by Serbian forces which followed it. I assess this dispute by considering the process of escalation leading up to the bombing, claims regarding Serbian military planning, and the purposes and effects of NATO's bombing campaign.

In the face of extensive discrimination and violent repression by the Yugoslav authorities, the Albanian Kosovars under their unofficially elected leader Ibrahim Rugova had organised non-violent resistance in the 1990s, but this campaign failed to secure political concessions from, or serious international pressure on, the central government. Kosovo had not been on the agenda of the 1995 Dayton peace talks, which was a great political blow to Rugova's non-violent approach. In 1996, some Albanian Kosovars launched violent attacks on Serbian Kosovar civilians and police, and in 1997 the KLA emerged and started claiming responsibility for the attacks on police. The Serbian military response made no attempt to discriminate between the KLA and Albanian Kosovars in general.

While condemning the KLA as terrorists, NATO made increasingly clear military threats against Serbia from spring 1998 onwards. In spring and summer 1998, there was increasing KLA and especially Serbian violence, followed in September 1998 by a significant escalation by Serbian forces. On 13 October 1998, in the Holbrooke Agreement, NATO agreed not to carry out air strikes. In return, Milosevic agreed to return Serbian armed forces in Kosovo to February 1998 levels; accept deployment of the KVM; release and give amnesty to all Albanian Kosovar detainees; and cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in its investigations of war crimes in Kosovo. However, the KLA immediately occupied the territory from which the Serbian forces had withdrawn and continued its attacks, and Milosevic resumed his indiscriminate use of force to defeat it. By the end of 1998, the KLA had killed up to 150 Serbian police and perhaps up the same number of Serb civilians, and kidnapped a similar number, while Yugoslav forces had killed 2,000, detained over 1,200 and displaced around 300,000 Albanian Kosovars. On 30 January 1999, the North Atlantic Council stated that 'NATO is ready to take whatever measures are necessary ... to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, by compelling compliance with the demands of the international community'.

Before the bombing, Milosevic was building up his forces in Kosovo. According to Rudolf Scharping, German Minister of Defence, Serbia had a plan called Operation Horseshoe, in which Kosovo would be surrounded on three sides and the Albanian Kosovar population driven through the gap into Albania. Scharping made this claim in April 1999 (that is, while the NATO bombing campaign was still in its early stages).
It is unclear whether Scharping actually had in his possession such a document or whether the German Ministry of Defence deduced such a plan from the Yugoslav pattern of operations.\textsuperscript{21} Still in the early stages of the NATO air campaign in April, General Wesley Clark, NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, stated: ‘I’ve never seen those plans in any detail. They’ve never been shared with me. … I’m not familiar with any of the details of a plan such as this. But, on the other hand, I’m certainly familiar with the general concept and we received a lot of information about the general concept behind the plan.’\textsuperscript{22} If Scharping had the Serbian operational plans, it would have been criminally negligent of him to fail to pass them on to General Clark, whose job it was (at least in some versions of the pro-war narrative) to counter them.

More importantly, the notion of Operation Horseshoe has been used in the pro-war narrative to argue that the ethnic cleansing and human rights violations were about to happen anyway to the same degree and thus that the NATO bombing did nothing to escalate them.\textsuperscript{23} This claim can be challenged in a number of ways.\textsuperscript{24} First, it has only been asserted that the ferocity of the plan matched the ferocity of Serbia’s actions. Releasing the plan (if Germany does possess it) might help, but even then an interpretative effort would be required. Second, preparing forces for a spring offensive is standard military strategy, and would have made sense in view of the concurrent build-up of KLA forces. The Serbian build-up itself cannot prove the existence of intent to carry out comprehensive ethnic cleansing. Third, it is plausible that NATO’s escalating threats and demands were an important factor in the military operations Scharping referred to and in determining how fierce the offensive would be. Serbia first had hints of serious US planning for military action against it in summer 1998 and began to plan counter-measures.\textsuperscript{25} Plans are implemented in response to circumstances. NATO had shown a willingness in the rest of former Yugoslavia to accept peace deals based on supposed ‘facts on the ground’, and Serbia may have been intent on creating them as NATO intervention looked more likely. Furthermore, creating a large flow of refugees to inhibit the military operations of an opponent is a common tactic. Fourth, in deciding whether or not to use force, US decision-makers were not being told that Serbia was going to attempt the complete ethnic cleansing of Kosovo regardless of what the United States did. Instead, according to Congressman Porter Goss, Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, the CIA was warning in early February that NATO air attacks could result in increased ethnic cleansing.\textsuperscript{26} General Clark maintains that retaliation against Albanian Kosovar civilians for NATO bombing was ‘entirely predictable’ and that the Western allies had
assumed it would occur. Indeed, in the public debate even before NATO started bombing there was widespread concern about this possibility. It is easy to see how Serbian forces, unable to hit back at NATO directly, would vent their fury against Albanian Kosovars. Accepting the existence and NATO knowledge of Operation Horseshoe as being of the most heinous intent imaginable makes NATO look worse, not better, if NATO started bombing even though it thought the bombing would trigger its full implementation. NATO’s claim to concern for human rights is undermined if it knew in advance that a massive refugee flow was about to be produced even if it did not bomb, but made no plans to help those people.

A key element of the pro-war narrative is the argument that NATO could not stand by and do nothing – that there was no alternative to bombing. Aside from the fact that it often does do precisely that, it could have and should have done nothing if ‘doing something’ would make the prospects for human rights much worse, and that was indeed the opinion of the intelligence community available to NATO. The first thing NATO should have done is seek a compromise, even if it was unlikely. If Milosevic had rejected a compromise, NATO should still have not bombed because of the escalation which it triggered. Furthermore, those who opposed the war argue that it is not their job to get NATO out of the political mess which its approach to human rights (critiqued later in this article) got it into. NATO’s official objective was ‘to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe’, and its chosen means were high-altitude bombing, cruise missiles and economic sanctions. The only way this could have prevented the massacre and expulsion of the Albanian Kosovars would be if Milosevic had capitulated within days. As General Clark said of the NATO bombing: ‘It was not designed as a means of blocking Serb ethnic cleansing. It was not designed as a way of waging war against the Serb and MUP [Ministry of the Interior] forces in Kosovo in any way. There was never any intent to do that. That was not the idea.’ As the weeks passed, with the humanitarian catastrophe escalating for the peoples of all of Serbia, NATO turned to targeting the military and economic infrastructure of Serbia rather than risk its pilots in lower-level attacks or use ground forces. In the assessment of the United States and Britain, this was the only way that there would be any support from the public and the only way to secure a consensus among NATO’s 19 member states. The British government estimates about 10,000 Albanian Kosovars were executed and about 7,000 are thought to have been taken away to Serbia (and are still missing). NATO bombing may have killed between 600 and 1,500 civilians, while Yugoslav sources say about 600 Serbian soldiers and Ministry of the Interior (MUP) troops were killed,
mostly by the KLA. Although the pro-war narrative usually attributes all 900,000 displaced persons to Serbia’s actions, an unknown proportion of them could have been fleeing anticipated or actual NATO bombing (and in some cases attacks by the KLA). It was not until the beginning of June that a peace deal was secured, by which time Kosovo and much of the rest of Serbia was in ruins.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PEACE DEAL

The NATO bombing was brought to a halt by the Ahtisaari-Chernomyrdin-Milosevic agreement of 2 June which became known as the Kosovo Accords of 4 June. This agreement was supplemented by the Kosovo Military-Technical Agreement of 9 June between Yugoslavia and NATO and UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1244 of 10 June. The pro-war narrative is simple: NATO bombed until Serbia capitulated, and thus it was an unambiguous NATO victory. However, there were some elements of compromise. First, although there is one reference to NATO participation and a unified chain of command, all of the documents refer to the force as operating under ‘UN auspices’ and usually refer in general terms to an ‘international security presence’ without specifying NATO. Second, the international security force is mentioned only in terms of being present in Kosovo as opposed to having rights throughout Yugoslavia. Third, the preamble of SCR 1244 affirms Yugoslavia’s ‘sovereignty and territorial integrity’. Paragraph 11(e) refers to ‘facilitating a political process designed to determine Kosovo’s future status’ while it is to be given substantial autonomy in the meantime: Rambouillet is only to be ‘taken into account’ rather than followed. This leaves open the possibility of extending the three-year deadline and moving some distance from Albright’s position that the settlement would involve a referendum within Kosovo. However, it all comes down to how the agreements are implemented in practice. NATO’s political clashes with Serbia and Russia and its various statements show that it has the power to impose its interpretation over theirs. How the peace deal is being interpreted and implemented is proving crucial for human rights.

Human Rights Violations with Impunity

In June 1999 Serbian forces were forced to pull out of Kosovo, and the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and UN Kosovo Force (KFOR) moved in, as did the armed Albanian Kosovar groups dominated by the KLA. The agreement of 21 June, in which those groups agreed to demilitarise, has not been implemented fully, and the use of small arms, bombs and mortars by Albanian Kosovars is still...
widespread. There is peace only in the sense that there is no combat between armed groups, and attacks on international agencies are rare. Thousands of non-Albanian Kosovars left Kosovo even before KFOR and the KLA moved in because they feared revenge attacks for participating in human rights abuses and looting or being persecuted simply for not being Albanian Kosovars. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that in October 70,000 Serbian Kosovars (out of at least 200,000 before NATO’s bombing), 11,000 Roma Kosovars, 20,000 Muslim Slav and Gorani Kosovars and 15,000 Turkish Kosovars remained in Kosovo.\(^{40}\) Around 300 Serbian Kosovars were killed and a similar number abducted between June and October 1999,\(^{41}\) and the killings and abductions continue. Even Muslim Slavs have been targeted by some Albanian Kosovars.\(^{42}\) These human rights abuses are widely portrayed in the Western news media solely in terms of ethnic hatred and revenge by radicalised individual Albanian Kosovars, by groups such as the KLA and very occasionally by Serbian Kosovars. However, the incentives are high to dress up criminal activity by Albanian Kosovars or by gangs from Albania itself as justified ethnic revenge.

Officially, the KLA was disbanded on 20 September, to be replaced by the civilian Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) with 3,000 active members, 2,000 reservists and ten per cent of its places set aside for non-Albanian Kosovars. It is dominated by former KLA people and in practice the KLA is still functioning: hence I continue to refer to the KLA. Many of those carrying out human rights abuses claim to be from the KLA, and current and former KLA members are reported by Amnesty International to have abused the human rights of Serbian and Romany Kosovars, supposed Romany and Albanian Kosovar collaborators and Albanian Kosovars suspected of mere disloyalty to the KLA.\(^{43}\) Intimidation and violence is now being carried out in the name of the KPC.\(^{44}\) Mitrovica, Kosovo’s second largest town, is effectively divided, with Serbian Kosovars concentrated in the north and Albanian Kosovars in the south. The KLA is preventing Albanian Kosovars from selling goods to Serbian Kosovars and is preventing Albanian Kosovars from visiting or returning to their homes in the predominantly Serbian Kosovar part of the town. Fearing a violent confrontation, KFOR does not intervene to halt this practice.\(^{46}\) Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of the KLA’s provisional government, blames the killings and abductions on ‘rogue elements’ and has condemned some of them, but has not taken any initiatives to investigate or end these abuses.\(^{47}\) Obvious worries of what would happen to non-Albanian Kosovars were addressed by NATO Secretary-General Lord George Robertson, who proclaimed that ‘NATO will not stand by and see the creation of a single-ethnic Kosovo’,\(^{48}\) but NATO has committed neither the political will nor the resources to prevent it.
In Spite of it All, Resistance to Ethnic Hatred Continues

For many commentators, multi-ethnic or non-ethnic approaches to human rights are finished in Kosovo. Yet there are many examples of resistance to ethnic hatred if one looks for them, and even the acts of repression are themselves testament to the continuing existence of pockets of resistance. Resistance to mono-ethnicity can be measured in terms of the continuing presence of minority groups such as the substantial Serb minorities in places such as Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Gjilan/Gnjilane. Although the Dragash/Gora area has an Albanian Kosovar provisional administration, it has a Gorani Kosovar majority. Seven hundred Serbs had even gone against the tide and returned to the US sector by early November 1999. Possibly some of those who have stayed have done so because they have no money to allow them to leave and nowhere to go. But they are still there in spite of the pressure on them, and their presence provides hope for the future.

There are remarkable examples of those for whom persecution has not been enough to create ethnic hatred within them. After the arrival of NATO, the KLA took away the son of Serbian Kosovar Bozhana Dedic and an unidentified gunman shot and wounded her husband. She finally felt forced to leave the town of Rahovec/Orahovac in central Kosovo. As she left, she nevertheless sympathised with the very people who were driving her out: ‘Many wrongs were done to them ... Milosevic is a fascist!’ In yet another example of the ways in which the situation does not fit crude ethnic models of the conflict, the convoy of which she was a part was heading for Montenegro because the people on it do not expect to be made welcome in Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church has spoken out about the crimes of Serbian forces, but has still come under attack from some Albanian Kosovars. Father Arsinje, a Serbian Orthodox monk in western Kosovo, whose monastery is guarded by KFOR troops, stated that ‘we have a strong belief that it will be better ... Maybe it won’t be easy but I believe in common sense and the humanity of the Albanians.’

On what is often called ‘the other side of the ethnic divide’, some very brave Albanian Kosovars are speaking out against the KLA. Veton Surroi, the publisher of the newspaper Koha Ditore, has condemned attacks on minorities as fascism and a threat to the future of Albanian Kosovars. In response, the KLA’s news agency, Kosova Press, openly issued death threats against him and his editor, Baton Haxhiu. According to an Albanian Kosovar woman who survived the war by staying with a Serb friend in Belgrade and who returned to Kosovo after the war, ‘Albanians like me, who don’t think like a street mob, are in as much danger as the Serbs ... I believe that when this madness settles down, Serbs and Albanians will find a way to live side by side’.
NATO: Spendthrifts for War, Pennypinchers for Peace

What role have the NATO states played in this desperate struggle to win the peace and secure human rights within Kosovo? UNMIK, which is dominated by NATO-country personnel, is required under SCR 1244, Paragraph 10, to ‘provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions’. Prior to the holding of OSCE-monitored elections, the KLA's provisional government under Thaçi controlled through unofficial administrations 27 out of 29 communes. The UN lacked the resources to run the communes and relied on these unofficial KLA administrations, which were officially subordinate to UNMIK. These unofficial communal authorities were also very short of resources and relied on collecting unofficial taxes with varying degrees of success, fairness and coercion. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), a non-governmental organisation, the people are mostly indifferent to these authorities due to their lack of ability to deliver services or are hostile due to actual or perceived KLA involvement in extortion and intimidation. Furthermore, Rugova’s Democratic League of Kosovo and others refuse to recognise these communal authorities, and examples of non-Albanian Kosovars serving on authorities for communes with mainly Albanian Kosovar populations are very rare. In the absence of proper security guarantees, Serbian Kosovar leaders have called for ethnic cantons to protect the human rights of Kosovo’s remaining non-Albanians: this has been rejected by both UNMIK and Albanian Kosovar representatives as a possible prelude to the partition of Kosovo.

The ICG proposed that, if greater resources are not forthcoming, UNMIK makes the best of a bad job by working with the KLA communal authorities until elections to provide services to all regardless of ethnicity rather than wasting its limited energy on battles for ethnic tokenism in the form of small numbers of minorities serving in communal authorities. Although effective action is better than ineffective tokenism, it needs to be emphasised that the necessary resources are not being provided by NATO to ensure a better peace. Instead, the worst possible elements among the Albanian Kosovars – the KLA – are allowed to run most of Kosovo unofficially, often criminally, and in a way that excludes not only non-Albanian Kosovars but also moderate and non-violent Albanian Kosovars. On 10 October 1999, backed by UN police, the UN administrator successfully expelled the KLA mayor of Suharekë/Suva Reka. This shows that firm action can work, but one-off local actions like this are no substitute for resources and political will coming from the top.
There is a vital need to give people an economic stake in peace and the rule of law, but this is not being done. Of a working-age population of 1,330,000, only about 470,000 are economically active, due to the combined effects of the war, continuing conflict and discrimination. Furthermore, many in work are not being paid, and many unemployed and pensioners are receiving no or reduced benefits.\textsuperscript{66} Bernard Kouchner, head of UNMIK, and Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, have appealed for more resources to pay the salaries of public officials so that they do not turn the black market or the mafia.\textsuperscript{57} UNMIK had a shortfall in its budget of $25 million in 1999 and though Western governments in November 1999 finally got around to pledging $1 billion worth of reconstruction aid, it remains to be seen how much of that money will actually be given. It is dwarfed by the estimated sum of about $30 billion needed for reconstruction in Serbia (including Kosovo) and the $4 billion NATO estimates in spent on its 78-day bombing campaign.\textsuperscript{58} Kouchner requested 6,000 police from abroad: 4,700 were promised and only 1,700 have arrived, with little expectation of more.\textsuperscript{59}

**NATO Short-term Credibility Bolstered at the Expense of Human Rights**

Some pro-war analysts assert that it is self-evident that NATO's motivation was primarily or even purely humanitarian because, it is claimed, NATO had no economic or strategic interests in Kosovo. However, according to US Secretary of Defence William S. Cohen and General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, NATO had 'three major interests' in going to war in Kosovo: preventing the destabilisation of 'NATO's south-eastern region'; ending repression by Serbia which had produced a refugee flow 'overtaxing bordering nations' infrastructures, and fracturing the NATO alliance'; and responding to Serbian conduct which had 'directly challenged the credibility of NATO'.\textsuperscript{60} Cohen and Shelton asserted that 'had NATO not responded ... its own credibility, as well as the credibility of US security commitments throughout the world, would have been called into question'. NATO, and especially the United States, has for a long time been very concerned, even obsessed, about its 'credibility'. It had been making threats for years against Serbia but had not got its way. The United States has also been keen to show that NATO has a post-Cold War role to play, to make use of the decreased constraint provided by the demise of the Soviet Union, to extend NATO's operations outside the NATO area, to establish the acceptability of US-led NATO action without constraints being imposed by the United Nations, and to establish US dominance in interpreting or rejecting international law.\textsuperscript{61}
It is easy to believe that NATO decision-makers were sincere in their proclamations of concern for human rights in Kosovo. Sometimes decision-makers lie cynically and self-consciously, but generally people have a great capacity to believe their own words and to believe in their own moral rectitude. However, human rights rhetoric, even when it is sincerely believed by those who employ it, is not enough. After all, claims to be promoting the greater good of humanity have for centuries been a standard concomitant of the most brutal and genocidal of imperialist wars. The question is less about whether or not NATO believed itself to be acting for humanitarian motives than about the nature and desirability of its humanitarianism. It is striking that the humanitarianism of Cohen and Shelton is not one which challenges the notion of sovereignty in the defence of human rights, but which sees the defence of human rights as a means of protecting the sovereignty of the states which are doing the intervening. The anti-war narrative does not demand pure or entirely self-sacrificing motives. It objects to assertions that NATO motives were primarily humanitarian if humanitarianism is defined as putting human rights ahead of state interests. NATO’s vision of humanitarianism is state-centric, and therefore will sacrifice or put at risk human rights on a massive scale if it perceives state interests as requiring it. When NATO bombed Serbia to shore up its credibility and show Serbia who is boss, it did so despite intelligence warnings that it would provoke terrible escalation of human rights violations in Kosovo. Hence NATO was guilty of the reckless endangerment of the Kosovars. A favourite supposed trump card used in the pro-war narrative is that we need to listen to the Albanian Kosovars: they wanted NATO to go to war, and they do not regret it even now. However, those who espouse the pro-war narrative suffered from selective hearing. Did Albanian Kosovars want that war – the one in which NATO flew at over 20,000 feet leaving them to be massacred at will by Serbian forces on the ground? Did they want the one after which they are left impoverished, without justice and at the mercy of Thaci’s thugs? Are they listening to Albanian Kosovars like Surroi and Haxhiu who regard non-Albanians as fellow Kosovars?

NATO’s promotion of its credibility and state-centric notion of human rights is in trouble even in its own terms when one looks beyond the short term. While there are some within KFOR and the United Nations who are fully committed to protecting what is left of multi-ethnic Kosovo, others in those bodies are of the view that a mono-ethnic Kosovo is the best way forward, to pave the way for what they hope will be a trouble-free referendum on independence in a few years’ time. NATO has failed to answer the big question about what it will do if Kosovo votes for independence or unification with Albania. A vote for
either option is likely to result in an attack launched by Serbia should the NATO forces withdraw and perhaps even if they do not. Furthermore, an independent Kosovo would be very destabilising: it would lead to increased demands for a Greater Albania through a merger of Albania and Kosovo and through claims on Macedonian and Montenegrin territory inhabited by Albanians. A war between Serbia and Montenegro over the possible independence of the latter would be similarly destabilising. The comprehensive approach needed to stabilise the region and protect human rights is absent.

Worthy and Unworthy Victims of Human Rights Abuses

The pro-war narrative argues that NATO’s humanitarianism should not be questioned just because it helps some but not others – it cannot help everyone. It also assumes that NATO either does nothing or mitigates violations of human rights. The anti-war narrative is superior in having a third category – that NATO may exacerbate human rights abuses, by accident or even design. The most direct comparison available is NATO member-state Turkey, which has also killed thousands, and displaced hundreds of thousands more, to crush both armed and peaceful resistance in a minority group (the Kurds). These are very similar to the figures for the suffering inflicted by Serbia on Kosovo before NATO started bombing. Far from bombing Turkey or imposing an arms embargo, or even just doing nothing, the United States and the rest of NATO (minus Greece of course) has armed it to the teeth and downplayed the repression.

What is it that makes the cases of Kosovo and Turkey different? The anti-war narrative has a systematic explanation: consistency underlies the inconsistency. According to Noam Chomsky, it follows a familiar pattern: ‘Serbia is one of those disorderly miscreants that impede the institution of a US-dominated global system, while Turkey is a loyal client state that contributes substantially to that project.’ In Chomsky’s terms, worthy victims of human rights abuses (such as Albanian Kosovars and Iraqi Kurds after Iraq invaded Kuwait) are those whose suffering is inflicted by an official enemy and thus to be highlighted and portrayed in anguished terms. Unworthy victims (such as Serbian Kosovars, Serbs in the Krajina region of Croatia, Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds before Iraq invaded Kuwait, East Timorese, Lebanese and Palestinians) are those whose suffering is inflicted by a tacit or formal official ally and thus to be de-emphasised or ignored.

This approach was exemplified in the actions of William Walker, who, according to Human Rights Watch, as US Ambassador to El Salvador in 1989 played down atrocities by the regime, but, as head of the OSCE’s
KVM, played a major role in publicising the massacre of 45 Albanian Kosovars in the village of Racak in spring 1999. Similarly, UNMIK chief Kouchner has argued that the ethnic cleansing of non-Albanian Kosovars which has been taking place since the Serbian withdrawal is different from the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo of Albanian Kosovars because ‘all the political leaders in Kosovo say ... that they want to build a Kosovo with all the communities’. However, the rhetoric of the official enemy Milosevic is identical: he has said that ‘our approach is multiethnic, multicultural, multireligious and insists on equality of national communities’ and ‘we make a big difference between the separatist movement in Kosovo and Metohija and the Albanian people that is honest, good’. From their record, I see no reason to believe either the KLA or Milosevic.

Irresponsible Humanitarianism and the Production of the LocoLocals

In the pro-war narrative, the discourse of humanitarianism is seen as representing ethico-political progress in comparison with the discourse of national interest, in which action is taken only if it is expected to benefit the nation which the decision-maker rules. However, humanitarianism as developed so far frames humanitarianism and humanitarian intervention in a way which generates irresponsibility at every level. First, it produces an image of loco locals – those immoral others with their ancient ethnic hatreds – who create humanitarian disasters. In this discourse, the societies from which the humanitarians (usually Western ones) come have had at most a marginal role in bringing about these situations. Second, the humanitarians come along and try to manage the dilemma of trying to help without being tricked and manipulated by the devious locals. They are supposedly doing the best they can for human rights in a difficult, even intractable, situation and so they have no choice but to work within the realities on the ground (of commitment to mono-ethnicity) while still trumpeting their own ideals (of commitment to multi-ethnicity). Third, the Western news media generally work within this framing, and they generally framed NATO’s war as a worthy enterprise in defence of human rights. Donald Trelford, former editor of The Observer and now a Professor of Journalism Studies at the University of Sheffield, complained: ‘It is puzzling that so much bad feeling should have developed between the British Government and media when the country’s newspapers, on the whole, strongly supported the war and presented Tony Blair as a hawkish hero against his “wobbling alliance partners”.’ If Trelford is right, on balance the news media served to sell the war to the public rather than maintain the kind of critical distance necessary to hold the government to account and democratic control.
Those in the news media, however critical they try to be, generally work within the state’s framing of worthy and unworthy victims of human rights abuses.\textsuperscript{70}

The binaries here are temporal and causal (they create the situation, then we intervene), moral (they are morally inferior to us) and spatial (they live there, we live here) with minimal us-them overlap. The discourse of NATO’s humanitarianism is an Orientalist or Balkanist one presuming ‘our’ civilisational superiority.\textsuperscript{71} It is a depoliticising discourse which disables criticism by presuming high moral intent as the principal motive of the intervener. In this way, the kind of systematic historical comparisons which help expose the operation of categories of worthy and unworthy victims is sidelined: as David Campbell argues, for humanitarianism to be truly human and not dehumanising, suffering must be put in historical and political context so that the extent of the reponsibility of actors claiming humanitarian motives is identified.\textsuperscript{72}

Irresponsible humanitarianism has permeated NATO policy towards Serbia. NATO has refused to take any responsibility for making negotiations impossible, for triggering the escalation which followed the beginning of its bombing campaign and for failing to prepare to assist the flood of refugees which it fully expected to occur. Now the war is over, it is not meeting its human rights responsibilities under UN SCR 1244 as it is failing to provide physical security and an effective interim civil administration.

NATO likes to think of its perspective on ethnicity and identity as radically different from the ethnic cleansers it claims to oppose.\textsuperscript{73} However, they have a great deal in common. They think in terms of identifiable, fixed and distinct groups, and prioritise the ethnic dimension of identity, and the Western notion of self-determination is that nation and state should coincide. Thinking in terms of ‘the Serbs’ versus ‘the Albanians’ appears to be natural and commonsensically true, but it is a political construct which has many negative consequences. Reducing all of Kosovo society to ‘ten per cent Serb, 90 per cent Albanian’ plays into the hands of the ethnic cleansers because such figures give absolutely no weight to those of a mixed ethnic heritage (and the further back through the generations one goes, the more mixed it will be in that supposedly ‘pure’ Serbs or whoever turn out to be ethnically mixed), or to political differences within the supposed ethnic groups. The notion of multi-ethnic human rights employed in Dayton and the Kosovo peace deal is still an essentialist one of tolerance (suggesting grudging coexistence and putting up with something you neither understand nor like) between fixed and supposedly separate ethnic groups. Typical of this attitude is Chapter 1, Article VII.7 of Rambouillet which states that ‘Every person
shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as belonging to a national community, and no disadvantage shall result from that choice or from the exercise of the rights connected to that choice.' Yet the main purpose of Article VII is to set out extensive ‘additional rights’ for national communities and their members both collectively and individually. These are to be additional to the international recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms specified in Article VI. If national communities have additional rights, individuals who do not choose to be identified with a national community must be disadvantaged. Belief in the existence of identifiable, fixed and ethnically distinct groups is a key part of the problem within and far beyond Kosovo. Hence my emphasis on hybridity throughout this article by using the labels ‘Serbian Kosovar’ and ‘Albanian Kosovar’ rather than ‘Serbian’ and ‘Albanian’, although even these labels do not escape a degree of ethnic reductionism. We need to think in terms of the fluidity and multiple dimensions of identity rather than reinforcing the present ethnic reductionism in which no other axes of identity are acknowledged because it is this reductionism or essentialism that makes ethnic violence possible.

CONCLUSION

The pro-war narrative, that NATO’s actions have resulted in a better peace in terms of human rights within and beyond Kosovo, rests on a series of claims which I have assessed in turn. The first is that the peace deal proposed at Rambouillet by the Contact Group and rejected by Milosevic was a reasonable one. The second is that NATO’s war against Serbia and the threats which preceded it did nothing to increase the scale of human rights abuses against the Albanian Kosovars. The third is that the Kosovo Accord which ended the war is essentially the same deal as the one which the Contact Group offered at Rambouillet and represents Milosevic’s surrender to NATO’s demands. The fourth is that NATO’s war against Serbia holds out the prospect of a better peace in Kosovo and elsewhere because it was a victory for the notion of humanitarianism.

My overall argument is that NATO’s war did not result in a better peace. First, the Rambouillet peace proposal was unworkable and NATO should have explored compromise instead of going to war. Second, NATO’s use of force and its preceding threats made things much worse for Albanian Kosovars by provoking an increase in the human rights violations inflicted on them. NATO anticipated this but used force to bolster its credibility even though it expected this to jeopardise human rights in Kosovo. Third, the peace deal which ended NATO’s war against
Serbia involved concessions by NATO, although NATO is managing to a great extent to impose its own interpretation of the outcome. Fourth, NATO's humanitarianism is a deeply flawed and dangerous one which has produced a bad peace in Kosovo in terms of human rights – economic and physical insecurity, crime with impunity, and political structures which reward ethnic mobilisation. Annan has declared that 'we had all the resources for the war, and we should have a similar determination when it comes to rebuilding peace ... we will be knocking on all the doors of the governments who have given us the mandate.' Providing the resources for war but not for peace is only irrational if you assume that this really was a war in which the human rights of the people of Kosovo were the priority. It makes sense if it was a war for NATO credibility at Kosovo's expense, with Kosovar victims of human rights abuses who are deemed worthy to the extent that their suffering can be exploited to portray Serbia as a 'rogue' state, but who will otherwise be left in the lurch with the unworthy victims. I am no automatic opponent of NATO's use of force: I supported the NATO bombing in Bosnia in 1995. If NATO had committed the political will and resources to guaranteeing human rights for all in Kosovo, it could have persuaded many of those who opposed the bombing that it was worthwhile, on balance. Instead, since June 1999 it has presided over human rights violations – almost totally ignored by pro-war analysts – already approaching the scale of those which supposedly triggered its bombing campaign.

A truly humanitarian intervention in Kosovo – that is, one in which the human rights of the people of Kosovo would be the primary concern, in which the specific causes of their suffering were addressed and in which the interveners face up to their many responsibilities – is needed urgently. In Kosovo, it would require economic security to reduce the incentives for crime for material and political gain under an ethnic flag of convenience; physical security so that non-Albanian Kosovars and moderate Albanian Kosovars can stay, organise and speak out; justice to reduce incentives for acts of revenge; and the establishment of a political system which penalises ethnic mobilisation. More generally, it would involve exposing and opposing human rights abuses in equal measure regardless of the perpetrator and not just as a means of securing state sovereignty and discrediting opponents. However, simply recommending a non-ethnic, non-state-centric humanitarianism to NATO is pointless, as NATO embodies and produces ethnic, state-centric politics. Those in academia and the news media who proclaim NATO's war against Serbia and its aftermath to be a triumph for humanitarianism reinforce such politics. The change in NATO policy can only come when the societies
From Rambouillet to the Kosovo Accords

within NATO themselves change. In this sense, we need political intervention in NATO as well as in the Balkans.

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NOTES

2. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) is composed of the republics of Serbia and Montenegro. Serbia itself includes the province of Vojvodina in the north and Kosovo in the south. Yugoslavia is effectively defunct.
13. Some have constructed the narrative differently and argued that this was the War of Lewinsky’s Dress, namely that Clinton was trying to distract attention from and undermine the impeachment proceedings.
16. Interview in Hewitt and Mangold (note 14).
17. See Federica Andreoli, A Protagonist at the Air-Field, a Ghost at the Castle, MSc thesis, Department of Politics, University of Bristol, Sept. 1999.
20. Interview in Hewitt and Mangold (note 14).

22. Interview in Hewitt and Mangold (note 14).


26. Interview in Hewitt and Mangold (note 14).

27. Rupert Cornwell, 'Serbs Retaliate With Massacres as NATO Shoots Down Two Jets', The Independent, 27 Mar. 1999; Chomsky (note 6), pp.20-21, 36, 81-84.

28. Chomsky (note 6), pp.35-36, 82; Hewitt and Mangold (note 14).

29. Interview in Hewitt and Mangold (note 14).


33. For an extensive report on human rights abuses in Kosovo between October 1998 and June 1999, see part one of the OSCE report Kosovo/Kosova: As Seen, As Told, 6 December 1999: http://www.osce.org/kosovo/reports/hr/htm.index.htm.

34. http://www.newsunlimited.co.uk/Kosovo/Story/0.2763.55664.00.html.

35. http://www.newsunlimited.co.uk/Kosovo/Story/0.2763.57296.00.html.


38. Chomsky (note 6), pp.117-28; Peterson (note 37).


42. 'Janez Kovac' (pseudonym of a Sarajevo journalist), 'Reconciliation in Kosovo Tougher Than in Bosnia', The Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Balkan Crisis Report No.88, 29 Oct. 1999: info@iwpr.net.

43. Al (note 41).


45. Where place names in Kosovo are different in Albanian and Serbian, I indicate both versions (Albanian then Serbian), with the exception of Kosova/o where I have adopted the internationally most common version, i.e. Kosovo.


47. Al (note 41).
48. Quoted in ‘Kovac’ (note 42).
50. ‘Head of UN Mission’.
53. Bird, ‘Hate-Filled Town’ (note 46). Although Bird’s article contained clear examples of resistance to hatred, The Guardian chose a headline which portrayed the town as full of hatred.
54. Quoted in ‘Kovac’ (note 42).
55. This paragraph draws on ICG, Waiting for UNMIK (note 49).
64. Chomsky (note 6), p.13. See also pp.6-8.
67. Quoted in Reuters (note 59).
68. Interview of President Milosevic (note 8).
73. I am heavily indebted on this point to David Campbell. See especially his National Deconstruction (note 71).
74. ‘Secretary-General Tells Security Council’ (note 57).