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Russian Diplomacy in the first Kosovo Crisis¹

Introduction

The Two World Wars in the 20th Century had their origins in Europe. An imbalance of power or an arms race in Europe is something to be avoided. This is easier said than done for security takes at least two to tango where one side's perceptions or misperceptions of another side's activities or security activities can often lead to war. Oblivious of criticism that I may face I intend to state the obvious which is often ignored, but when mentioned is brushed aside as being so obvious that it must be insignificant. Yet in this case, which is the crux of this Article, it is the most significant. The Russian Duma is now perceived as being an active and independent Player in International Affairs. It may be weak yet has the power to prevent the de-alerting and disarming of the large nuclear arsenal of the former USSR, simply by not ratifying the START II Treaty. This presents the opportunity for nuclear accidents or through residual capability for new intents to manifest themselves. The First Kosova Crises of June-October 1998 presented the Russian Duma with the perfect reason for not proceeding with the debate towards ratification.

This is unique to both Russian and Balkan History for during the rule of the Communist Parties in both regions, it was considered a matter of course for any agreement reached within a Summit to be implemented, at least on paper. Today Russian Domestic Politics are perceived as playing an active role in determining European Security arrangements through the actions and activities of the Duma. This occurs as the Russian Duma is perceived as having its own mind and will in the ratification of bilateral and multi-lateral Treaties. The Balkans have also turned to-

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1. The concepts behind this paper and its first draft were presented at the ISSS Conference held at Monterey, California on 5 November 1998.

wards a mind of their own, ignoring the lessons of "The East Question" and the "Assassination of Franz Ferdinand".

Looking at this helps us to perceive the Cold War as over, with Russia moving towards a state of democracy but still playing a game of European Regional Power. If this is the case then we are no longer in a state of Cold War between ideologies but in a process of Cold Diplomacy between established and fledgling democracies and states such as in the Balkans.

I use this term, Cold Diplomacy, with a definite objective in mind and hope that it is understood and if quoted, then not misquoted. The series of Treaties that the Russian Duma is being asked to ratify are a continuance of those that epitomised the Cold War. The buck has been passed from a Communist Leadership to a supposedly Democratically Elected State Duma! This same supposedly Democratically Elected State Duma is being reluctant to ratify the arms control Treaties using such excuses as NATO enlargement and NATO action in Kosova. Is the Russian leadership hiding behind the Duma or is the Duma the real controller of Russia? Does the USA send Diplomats to the Russian Leaders such as Yeltsin or to the Speaker of the Duma? Is there a dual control of Russia like in other democracies ie executive and legislative? If so then Russia meets the criteria of having moved to democracy!

The main point of this paper is then to look at European Security issues and to see whether or not Russian Diplomacy is hiding behind Kosovo as an excuse for failing to ratify International Disarmament Treaties. This is a crucial evaluation for it is possible that the present condition of Cold Diplomacy with Russia could at any stage revert back to a state of Cold War. Russia could have played its card of shrinking in size and capability to regroup its resources. Such a perception results from the lack of any substantial noticeable moves to alleviate the capabilities of the Cold War while the West in the form of NATO has not taken any substantial steps to include Russia actively in any European Security arrangements. Cold Diplomacy after A Cold War but maybe before The Next Cold War!

This is an alarming prospect, for Russia is still a major nuclear power. Traditional Soviet control of those nuclear weapons was political. Is the Russian Duma now in control of the usage of such weapons? Is it in control of the de-activating and de-alerting of such weapons? or is

the Russian Duma just a façade for Russian Leadership eg Yeltsin's Cold Diplomacy to the West?

The quest for European Security is an endless and extremely important one. NATO enlargement and START II/III are relics of the bi-polar Cold War between the USA and USSR but dominate efforts for European to attain its stability. Fragmentation and integration in Europe are iterative processes. When it seems that one part of Europe has just attained a lasting peace such as provided by the European Union then another part such as the Balkans re-erupts into violence. This is no surprise to students of history, diplomacy and security studies. Europe comprises of highly intelligent but claustrophobic tribes —each with its own identity, culture, language, religion and needs. War like diplomacy and trade is an option that has seen success in the past and will continue to be perceived as a means of attaining objectives in the future. The Russian Duma like the Russia people are Europeans who have played the game of war and diplomacy for centuries. Russia like other European countries have expanded and contracted and then expanded again as and when desired with great, political and economic acumen.

In 1998, Europeans including Russia seeking stability even for a short while from war had two options, each of which has already been pursued in the past: a strong collective security organization or disarmament. Historically both have proven to work and to fail. In 1998 the immediate options appeared to be NATO enlargement and the various START agreements and related arms control treaties. The other option over the horizon but not yet practical due to residual nationalistic tendencies is a common defence and security arrangement for the European Union which would encompass all European states including Russia. This however might exclude non-European countries such as the USA.

The Historical Perspective: Cold Diplomacy A Legacy of the Cold War

The historical perspective comes from the Cold War which is now being practised as Cold Diplomacy. If the Cold War is over then why the need for NATO Enlargement or even the need for START II/III? Why not implement an immediate and unilateral abolishment of weapons of mass destruction and give the EU a Common Defence and Security Posture that would include Russia with a USA umbrella and preferential trade

agreements. Surely this would ensure a positive step towards European Security. Such moves however would be unprecedented positive Diplomacy but are not happening as we are in a condition of Cold Diplomacy.

Option I is NATO enlargement where the Realities are that during the Cold War Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland did little to add to the strength of the Warsaw Pact but were seen as Soviet Satellites and hence adversaries of the West. In today's Cold Diplomacy the Czech State, Hungary and Poland will add little to the material strength of NATO. Their population is just eight percent of NATO's, and their combined output measures less than three percent of NATO's GNP. While they would give NATO a geopolitical buffer against Russia, they do so only by adding a military commitment that would be extremely dangerous to keep. The Russian Duma is therefore using NATO enlargement as a façade for other purposes.

This is clear to all for the Russian Duma knows that assuming that if NATO is for collective defense, who is NATO defending against with this expansion? If NATO is to be a new multilateral peacekeeping organization, why has Russia not been asked to join as soon as possible? Moreover, the Duma having looked at the above facts can only assume that NATO expansion is still aimed at Russia for domestic US goals which could ultimately become US foreign goals. The US has answered this by saying that NATO is changing, but no agreement has been reached about its new strategic concept. The Russian Duma believe "Let NATO change first, and then expand—rather than expanding first while asking Russia not to react".

For small gain then, limited NATO expansion poses great risks. Whatever westerners may say, that kind of expansion is directed against at least a hypothetical latent danger from Russia. It has no compelling purpose otherwise. So why should the Russian Duma believe Secretary Albright's characterization of more limited expansion, when she declared,

"The purpose of NATO enlargement is to do for Europe's east what NATO did 50 years ago for Europe's west: to integrate new democracies, defeat old hatreds, provide confidence in economic recovery and deter conflict".

Well, some in the Russian Duma do! Perhaps even using the exact

wording of Secretary Albright's but with the addition of Russia being a partner to NATO enlargement as part of Warmer Diplomacy to the Legacy of Cold War Arms Control. Leaders of the Democratic Choice of Party in the Duma have formed a deputies group called "For the Atlantic Union". Duma deputy Vladimir Averchev pointed out in reformist writers' weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (# 3, 1/23):

"We invite politicians in Europe and North America to build a strategic bridge between Russia and NATO symmetrical to the one built across the Atlantic over 50 years ago... One of the greatest disappointments of the last decade is that Europe has been unable to create a security basis of its own within the transatlantic community, as symbolized by its fiasco in the former Yugoslavia, where restoring peace took a lot of strenuous effort by U.S. diplomacy. France is going back to NATO's military organization to try again to help Europe take good care of its own security. Having Russia as a full partner along with the United States and Canada is the shortest way to that goal".

Maxim Yusin further reported in reformist *Izvestia* (1/22) about the recent Primakov-Solana talks:

"It looked as if Moscow was now interested in a dialogue no less than the guests from Brussels... Anyway, Russian leaders must realize that they need an early agreement more than the other side does".

Some like Andrei Medin call for a Russian initiative just as that in reformist *Vechernyaya Moskva* (1/22):

"Moscow still has time to reach an honourable agreement with Brussels. To do that, it must give up its imperial ambition and be ready for compromise".

If so then bringing Russia into NATO would finally complete what Tsar Peter the Great and other westernizers aimed to do from the eighteenth century onward: integrate Russia with the West, to their mutual benefit. It would bring security and enhanced stability at a lower cost than would bringing Russia into the EU, and more directly address con-

cern over the rising power of the military within Russia. For that purpose, considerable benefits would accrue to current NATO members by extending an offer of membership to Russia. Such an offer would integrate a potentially threatening state into NATO, and increase the overall power base of the alliance. For the Duma the new NATO would provide security assurances on its western front, and deterrent power vis-à-vis its eastern front.

Current plans that exclude Russia would therefore make sense only in response to an active Russian danger. This is Cold Diplomacy for Russia at present, is militarily weak and politically unthreatening. The fragmentation of the Soviet Union caps Russia's potential power at a level far below that of the United States alone. Limited expansion of NATO does not increase the security of the western alliance and risks undoing much of the progress that has been made toward integrating Russia into the western political and economic system. The Russian DUMA sees an extended NATO as a direct threat against them. Cold Diplomacy is in practise.

This has resulted from the Russian perception that the West has deceived them. For the past decade Russians were assured by the West that if Russia behaved itself, committed to domestic reforms, and resisted any moves to reestablish its empire, Russia would be taken into account as an equal partner in the international sphere. But Russia's views clearly have been disregarded on the issue of NATO expansion, and those who have advocated cooperation with the West feel betrayed.

This threat risks reviving old Russian fears of the West, strengthening Russian militarists and nationalists and inducing greater instability in Russian domestic politics and foreign policy. Subsequently NATO expansion is not good for Russian democrats; the only Russians who would benefit are nationalists and Communists. Over time, strengthening the hands of Russian militarists and nationalists will produce intransigence on arms control issues, an increase in the resources Russia devotes to rebuilding its military capabilities and a turn of its diplomatic orientation in a hostile direction.

This is already happening. NATO expansion has helped to galvanize and energize the communist-nationalist opposition (which has tended to exclude Mitrofanov's LDP) and depolarize its relationship with many in centrist parties, including Chernomyrdin's NDR. The former trend is re-

flected not only by the "Anti-NATO" deputies. More recently, Communist Party leader Zyuganov has demanded hearings in the Duma on national security and military reform during the autumn session, as a prelude to any vote on START II. The communists' call for these hearings, at the time that the budget is to be negotiated, signals their intention to use NATO expansion in order to demand increased defense appropriations and play on long-standing tensions in Russia's civil-military relations, revealing disturbing contradictions.

Right now, the Russian Duma can do little more than complain. These complaints may be well founded for the Duma rightly sees that NATO exists to provide for the security of its members. The wording and actions of the complaints however, exacerbate efforts at European Security. But if Russia's voice is so weak then why bother at NATO enlargement against Russia or even consider arms control with it?

So let's take a closer look at what exactly is happening and what are the alternatives as we perceive the Duma as perceiving them... I will do so by considering what exactly is START II/III and then place this in the context of the Russian Duma's dithering on ratification due to the NATO enlargement process.

The original START I agreement at the height of the Cold War was intended to cap strategic nuclear weapons at 6,000 countable warheads. START II moves down to 3,000. There has always been a tendency to associate START II with just a reduction in numbers, but what START II really was about was eliminating the heavy MIRV'd ICBMs on both sides. I should be more specific. Heavily MIRV'd ICBMs, because the SS-18 is the heavy MIRV to the arms control aficionados in the crowd. Eliminating the land-based MIRV'd missiles on both sides. The whole point of START II is to move towards much more survivable forces, to emphasize survivable forces. The key, obviously, was to emphasize the submarine and bomber forces, because in an alert situation the bombers can launch for survivability, but don't have to move towards their targets. For the Russians it's a mix of systems because they had already begun to invest heavily in the road mobile SS-25s. They do have a bomber component, although smaller than ours, and a submarine force. So that's one thing, strategic stability. A second thing is we all know that the Russian military is under extreme financial pressure. So a significant reduction beyond that would be anticipated in the START III agreement.

The Russian Duma began its consideration of START II in mid-July 1995. President Yeltsin and officials in his government have expressed strong support for START II. The Defense Minister, Igor Rodionov, expressed his support for the treaty after meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense Perry in October 1996. In addition, the Ministry of Defense reportedly told the Duma committees that Russia could not afford to retain high levels of strategic offensive forces and START II would ensure that the United States reduced its forces along with Russia. So far so good but despite this recognition of the value of START II initial consideration of START II in the Duma has been delayed since its signing in 1993, five years ago.

Some of these delays have been technical such as the Russian presidential election in June 1996. In sum however the two criticisms of START II that you hear most frequently from Duma members have nothing to do with START II: one is NATO expansion; and the other is the U.S. theatre missile defense program, which is somehow projected in the minds of people who don't know a great deal about it - to be the U.S. building a national ABM system.

Statements about the delays have include Prime Minister Chernomyrdin in 1997:

“For us, the question of the Start II is very important - very. It was signed in 1993, and today as you understand is '97, no signature, no ratification. It has a political and military bearing and economic bearing, this treaty, quite naturally. And we would like the Duma to treat it with utmost seriousness, and it is doing so. The issue cannot be addressed now solely in the context of the issue of the Start II. Once again, this question will certainly be linked with other issues—all other issues—of course, including the European security, which is not quite consonant to interests of ours. And the difficulty is today of these issues when we discuss the European security, Start II is Russia - United States - very serious and important nuclear issue. The price is too high here. But some other issues are inputted into it which we would not like to be converged with the Start II issues”.

This may seem ambiguous but the Russian Duma is actually repre-

senting the populations' views. A recent survey of young people (ages 16-28 in Moscow, Kalingrad, St Petersburg and Vladivostok), the most Western-oriented of Russians, found that 82 percent opposed NATO expansion. Therefore, over the mid- to long-term there is a political base upon which anti-Western forces can exploit NATO expansion at the polls. This could lead to either the coming to power of anti-western communist-nationalist forces or the hardening of a centrist Russian regime's stance toward the West. The first possibility was writ large in Yeltsin's 19 September 1997 statement in Orel, in which he stated that the U.S. has too much influence in Europe.

If this were the case then we should be very akin to the hardening of other Russian political forces which was made clear in a report made to the Anti-NATO Commission offering a rather chilling vision of an alternative future should NATO expansion produce this worst case scenario. The report, delivered by Chairman of the Duma's Committee of Geopolitics Aleksei Mitrofanov, a leading member of Vladimir Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), calls for a Russian foreign policy that seeks a revolution in the international system based on a national and ethnic ethos, rather than on "class struggle", a system informed by ideology and a geostrategic doctrine of Russian national egoism. The collapse of the Cold War's bipolar structure, in Mitrofanov's view, has given birth to a new stage in history: one of partitioning of the world.

Perhaps we should also be aware of such fluctuations in opinion within the Duma as reflecting fluctuations in public opinion. In February 1997, for example, deputies from the opposition "Power to the People" faction (Narodovlastie) in the Russian Federal Assembly's State Duma organized an "Anti-NATO" association of some 240 deputies. By July it had grown to 260, reflecting growing alarm among centrist deputies as well. This Duma majority could reject ratification of the START II nuclear weapons' reduction treaty, chemical weapons' agreements, the Open Skies' agreement and other important arms' control, non-proliferation and confidence-building measures. The leading organizers of the anti-NATO movement, for the most part, are members of the communist nationalist opposition, particularly the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) and Narodovlastie.

NATO is acutely aware of this and how it affects civil-military relations: NATO expansion, on the background of battles over the military

budget and reform, can only complicate already strained civil-military relations. No less than foreign policymakers, military and contingency planners everywhere plan for as many possibilities as far into the future as possible. Foreign policy is and should be built not on the intentions of foreign powers, but on their capabilities. Indeed, intentions, stated or real, cannot be read very far into the future. This is why militaries tend to approach contingency planning on the basis of capabilities. Looking at the implications of NATO expansion from the perspective of a Russian military planner—even imagining oneself to be not a hardliner, but a moderate military professional—one would have to conclude that the capabilities of NATO vis-à-vis Russia will grow, thus its capability as a potential threat. The correlation of forces will change drastically to the detriment of Russia's already compromised security.

The Duma pays attention to the military opinion one of which has been Colonel-General Vladimir Yakovlev, Commander of the Strategic Missile Forces. He noted one effect on Russia's security of NATO's post-expansion capabilities:

“Now that NATO is moving eastward it will have the ability to use most of its tactical aircraft to deliver strikes at our facilities. Moreover, they will be able to spend more time in our deployment areas, which will increase their combat load. There is no direct threat of this now, but the Strategic Missile Force is doing research designed to increase the viability of launching sites and command stations. This is done as part of the work to ensure high combat readiness and effectiveness”. (*Krasnaia Zvezda*, July 22, 1997, p. 2).

This dynamic was also reflected recently when a supporter of the Yeltsin-Chernomyrdin administration, General Lev Rokhlin, denounced President Yeltsin for intentionally destroying the military. Rokhlin, a leading member of the NDR and reportedly well respected in the military, was expelled from Chernomyrdin's party, but maintained chairmanship of the Duma's Defense Committee. He then organized a new military opposition movement that includes the most sinister of former and active-duty military and KGB officers in the country. In an appeal to President Yeltsin, whom Rokhlin now hopes his movement can impeach, Rokhlin tied NATO expansion to a demand for increased expen-

ditures on Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent.

"It is no accident that in Helsinki the USA's president agreed to ... America's observation of the 1972 ABM Treaty until the year 2000" asserted Rokhlin. "It will be at about this time that our strategic nuclear forces will be practically destroyed. This shows that NATO expansion can and may already be impinging on the fight between military and civilian leaders over military reform".

In addition to mobilizing and depolarizing various hardliner and centrist political groups, NATO expansion is already damaging important Russia economic interests that could come to the support of a more broad-based anti-NATO movement. Among them is the powerful defense industry lobby, which has been a special target of Rokhlin's activities. The availability of American arms impinges on the attractiveness of Russian arms among eminent and prospective NATO members.

NATO enlargement dominates security and arms' control debates: Following the May 14 preliminary agreement on the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Moscow think tank spokesmen found positive things to say about the benefits for Russia, along with many qualifications. When Yeltsin and Primakov briefed the text to the parliamentary (including committee chairpersons and party or faction leaders) on May 21, they won a measure of endorsement, especially from Duma chairman Genady Seleznyov (communist) and Federation Council chairman Yegor Stroyev (OHR), and from Duma Defense Committee chairman Rokhlin.

Although the evolution of the Russia-NATO relationship could produce further friction, the conclusion of the Founding Act may lower the confrontational mood in Moscow, potentially lowering obstacles to action on other arms' control and security issues. However, there should be no illusions: Zhirinovskiy's vitriolic opposition to NATO enlargement is on the record, as are Zyuganov's negative views. Duma leaders do not appear to be willing to put the Founding Act to an official vote.

An important point to remember that in Russia, legislative action on a treaty takes the form of a law. As such Yeltsin's approval of NATO's expansion is seen by Russia's communists and nationalists, who between them control the Duma, the lower house of Russia's Parliament, as a national humiliation. Another reason for delaying ratification of the

Start II treaty which calls for substantial bilateral reduction of nuclear missiles is to "punish Yeltsin and the United States".

It is therefore no surprise that Ultranationalist Zhirinovsky (LDP) and communist leader Zyuganov had disparaged Yeltsin's Helsinki performance right after the summit, accusing him of selling out Russia's interests on the NATO issue. Communist opposition to START II had softened in early 1996 (evidenced by the moderate *Spiritual Heritage* report produced in July 1996 by Alexei Podberiozkin), but hardened again last winter, ostensibly rejoining hard-line nationalist positions. Moderates in the Duma reacted negatively to the Helsinki demarcation agreement but are muting their criticism of the START II/III package, acknowledging that the START II time line extension and the START III framework agreement did address key Russian financial and practical objections to START II.

This is part and parcel of a unique process of democratization in Russia that should not be shunned but should be welcomed even if it is delaying the implementation of a Cold Diplomacy process that has outlasted the Cold War. It is as important to view this debate in the Duma as it is to view and respect the comments of the Duma experts. These experts will eventually determine the value of any ratification in its implementation.

The Duma Defense Committee wants START III clarified first: Gen. (ret'd) Lev Rokhlin (OHR), Chairman of the Duma Defense Committee, argues publicly and privately that while he generally supports the joint Helsinki outcome as a big step forward, further work on START III, preferably a "documented" clarification of its elements, is a prerequisite for favourable Duma action on START II. Not surprisingly, Helsinki has given added impetus to long-standing interest inside the Duma and in foreign policy think tank circles in leap-frogging to START III (usually leaving unstated whether this would undo the START II ban on MIRVed ICBMs).

This has been echoed by Anton Surikov, who works for Viktor Ilyukhin (Communist), chair of the Duma Security Committee, and reportedly advises Duma chairman Seleznyov (Communist Party) on foreign policy, declaring that the treaty would only be ratified if the left supports it, that the trend is in the opposite direction, and without something extraordinary happening, START II will not be ratified by the Duma. He

gave the following reasons: (1) the United States enjoys a 3:1 “reversible” potential in uploadable missiles and reoriented bombers under START II; while START II bans MIRVed ICBMs, if Russia sticks with START I and keeps its MIRVed ICBMs, this U.S. advantage in reversible potential drops to 1.5:1; (2) NATO expansion makes its tactical nuclear weapons a “strategic” threat to Russia; and (3) U.S. ABM and TMD deployment plans become more threatening with deeper reductions than with START I levels. The Helsinki demarcation criteria would allow U.S. TMD deployed near Russian SSBN operating areas to intercept Russian SLBMs, and U.S. TMD also incites China to develop more nuclear strike capability, affecting Russia. In conclusion, he argued Russia should confine START II to the archives, and negotiate START III, which would be better, but if conditions with NATO make matters worse, then Russia should get a new president and stay within START I - boosting its defense budget and R & D enough to maintain those levels.

The positive note comes from people such as Petr Romashkin who agree that the Duma was likely to ultimately ratify START II, though perhaps rejecting the Demarcation Agreement. What really matters in such a ratification will be the general impression of U.S.-Russian relations rather than strictly on the merits of the treaty. It is most likely therefore that Ratification will likely be contingent on the inclusion of a list of conditions under which the Russian president could, in the eyes of the Duma, justifiably withdrawal from the treaty. This list of conditions will almost certainly include a provision regarding NATO expansion.

On the argument and assumption that NATO enlargement is more important for contemporary European Security than the legacy of the Cold War the Duma could also say that Start-II and Start-III are not really important anymore. This is confirmed given Russia’s economic constraints and its shared interest with the West in reducing military costs. Start-II is important for at least three reasons: 1) it implies a corresponding U.S. reduction (rather than a unilateral Russian reduction for economic reasons); 2) it will influence decisions about Russian weapons programs: without Start-II, there would be a growing pressure in favour of turning back to MIRVed ICBMs because they are so cost-effective; 3) it opens the way to Start-III, which would allow Russia to allocate more of its defense spending to military reform, rather than the construction of either numerous and expensive single-warhead missiles or new

MIRVed ICBMs.

Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Russian Duma's Committee on International Affairs said "We need to be respected. Our security problems are not less than the security problems of France, Britain or Poland. The selective entrance into NATO —that is the problem". He also noted that NATO and START II are old European Security Issues. According to him there are new risks: Albania, Yugoslavia, drugs, organized crime which needs discussion together.

To conclude it is clear that the Duma perceives that the United States neglected the Russian strategic concerns. How then can Russian reduce her most powerful strategic weapons when relations are put into question? It is not a problem strategically, but psychologically it is a big problem. A positive vote in the Duma is possible, but implementation of any START agreement it is a long way ahead...

The Russian Duma like NATO members know that over-enlarging NATO will eventually destroy NATO; while it also makes it less credible. Both know that it will be very offensive to Russia. It will strengthen the nationalist forces in Russia. Looking at such comments it is therefore not surprising that Russians have not accepted the expansion of NATO as a *fait accompli* as NATO will have to weigh up the odds!

NATO could begin a negotiation process with Russia on the conditions of Russia's possible entry into NATO, thereby taking Russian interests seriously into account and including her in the planning of Europe's future security infrastructure —without prematurely committing either side to Russia's inclusion in NATO. This would allow Russia to judge NATO's intentions and its sincerity in proclaiming an open door policy. Such a negotiation process is not very different START II/III which considers Russia a strong military power necessitating the allocation of intense diplomatic resources.

The above historical perspective has been written much in the same way one would have expected a Cold War scenario to have been written. A Zero-Sum Game of Diplomacy —that of NATO Enlargement, Numerical Debate of Nuclear Weapons and USA-USSR Negotiations. The only difference is the role of the Russian Duma! What I now intend to do is take this debate one step further to that of Cold Diplomacy by introducing a contemporary and realistic issue of European Security - The First Kosova Crises of June-October 1998. The purpose is to see

what if any role NATO Enlargement, START II/III and the Russian Duma have in European Security issues on a region that precipitated World War I.

Cold Diplomacy in the First Kosovo Crises: June-October 1998

In doing so we see that although technically a province of Serbia, Kosovo had some autonomy in its affairs until relatively recently. Certainly since 1989, but actually earlier, the rise of Serbian Socialist strongman Slobodan Milosevic gave Serbian nationalists the ally they needed to “rearrange” Kosovo. Although Kosovo is mostly Albanian in population, Serbian nationalists have an emotional attachment to “Old Serbia” (Kosovo), an area which does contain certain historical and religious sites of some significance to Serbs. Milosevic for over the past 10 years steadily turned up the pressure on the Albanians in Kosovo. Rights were eroded, and large numbers of Albanian Kosovars were forcibly evicted or frightened from their homes. This ethnic cleansing eventually turned massive, creating a situation which the world, including Russia, felt needed a response.

There has always been a “shifting relationship between these two Slavic entities. At times the relations of these two peoples, using similar alphabets, worshipping a common Orthodox faith, and sharing languages derived from a common source, have constituted a close alliance; at others, as in 1948, have prevailed alienation, tension, and near-conflict ... Nonetheless, the Serbs for almost three centuries have regarded Russia as their older brother and protector”². Alternatively supportive and distant, Russia was sometimes manipulative—even hostile—to Serbia during parts of the 19th century, and Serbia in turn totally disregarded Russian wishes in the early 20th century³.

Russia has all the concerns of a distant big power, which complicates the relationships. For example, Serbia signed an agreement in 1904 that Russia would arbitrate any disputes in the Balkans (of which there were plenty, especially between the Serbs and Bulgars)⁴. Russia had to bal-

2. David MacKenzie, *Serbs and Russians*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. xi.

3. *Ibid*, p. xiv.

4. *Ibid*, p. 173.

ance its interests, a difficult feat given that often both geographically and historically it has been closer to Bulgaria. Bulgaria has also, for various reasons, been more compliant to Russian wishes.

In all these matters, however, Russia above all made (and continues to make) decisions based on its own national interest first. Even in 1914, it did not want to go to war for Serbia. In fact, it begged France not to back it, so it would have an excuse not to intervene⁵. But France did back it, and the triggered chain reaction of alliances ignited World War I. Things have also been complicated for Russia in reference to countries surrounding Serbia. Nearly all East Europeans have regarded the Serbs as the aggressors in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Even after softening its support for Serbia somewhat because of this⁶, Russia is still perceived by the world as supporting the aggressor⁷.

Russian policy-makers and Diplomats have become somewhat wise in avoiding entanglements in a place where memories are long and trust is short. In both the Bosnian and Kosovan situations, Russian leaders⁸ have said there is no chance that Russia will get in a confrontation with the world over the Balkans, an area considered by Moscow to not be of vital strategic interest. Of course it isn't, and never really was. Only the emotionalism and arrogant shunting aside of professionalism has in the past (particularly WWI) led Moscow to allow the Serbs to get the Russians involved against Russia's own true interests.

Russians, along with other UN peacekeepers, have been taken hostage by the Serbs at times⁹. The Serbs and Russians, as they have done throughout history, regularly infuriate and "betray" each other (as during the Bosnian crisis). Russian representative Vitali Churkin was infuriated and humiliated by the stubbornness, lying, and betrayal of the

5. Thomas J. Christensen, and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks", *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2, Spring 1990.

6. Aurel Braun, "Russian Policy Towards Central Europe and the Balkans", in *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, edited by Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

7. Mike Bowker, *Russian Foreign Policy and The End of the Cold War*, (Dartmouth Publishing, 1997), p. 242.

8. Deputy Foreign Minister/Special Envoy Vitaly Churkin for one; see Bowker's book, p. 241.

9. Bowker book, p. 239.

Bosnian Serbs¹⁰. His anger at one point was so great that he proposed that Russia and the Western powers pour massive troops into the area to quell the whole situation¹¹.

Natural Russian empathy for the Serbs has often been blown out of proportion, even before the recent Kosovo situation. The Yugoslav Embassy in Moscow says it constantly gets calls and letters from Russians volunteering to join the Yugoslav army¹². Aleksandr Barkaslov, head of the Fascist Russian National Unity Party, has organized and armed Russian volunteers to fight with the Serbs¹³. Yet the numbers have not been huge. "In 1993, Western intelligence reckoned that there were only about 500 Russian volunteers fighting in the former Yugoslavia, and not all of these were fighting on the side of the Serbs"¹⁴.

It isn't just the impotence or preoccupation of Russia with domestic affairs that is leaving Serbia isolated. Serbia has been snubbed by the Russians before. No, a larger awareness has taken place. In the late 20th century the Serbs aren't as important—to Russia or anyone else—as they were perceived to be in the 19th century¹⁵.

Religion

Moslems worldwide sometimes fear a secret agenda at Kosovo and Islam's expense¹⁶. With so many Moslems in the "near-abroad" countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia must be sensitive to this. The Kosovan Albanians also have closer ties to the rest of the Islamic world than the Bosnian Muslims did, which makes this factor even more delicate¹⁷.

Orthodoxy is not as significant a factor in Russian-Serbian relations that many in the West believe. The Moscow Patriarchate only openly

10. Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova, "The Balkans Test For Russia", *Russia and Europe*, Vladimir Baranovsky, ed., (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 413.

11. *Ibid*, p. 414.

12. Ekho Moskvyy radio, as relayed by Reuters, October 5, 1998.

13. *Remaking Russia*, edited by Heyward Isham, (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 308, 309 of Biographical Notes.

14. Bowker, p. 242.

15. Something, by the way, the Serbs just can't stand.

16. H. T. Norris, "Kosova, and the Kosovans", in *The Changing Shape of the Balkans*, F. W. Carter & H. T. Norris, eds, (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 23.

17. *Ibid*.

supported the Serbian Church during the Bosnian crisis after lengthy discussions. Statements from Russian religious figures at that time were the usual nonsensical warnings "about the West just testing on the Serbs what will be later implemented toward Russia" and near-meaningless pronouncements of an "Orthodox Commonwealth" to be led by Russia¹⁸.

However, religious influence from Moscow did have some small effect on Yugoslav affairs. "The Russian influence upon the solution of the Serb question was, thus, developing through two parallel channels: first, the political one, through Milosevic and the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs and second, through an increasing religious solidarity between the Russian and Serb Orthodoxy"¹⁹.

Still, the Moscow Patriarchate mostly followed the official Russian Federation political line, both in Bosnia and Kosovo. In fact, Russian relations with the Serbs have been, and continue to be, less a matter of historical, ethnic, and religious solidarity, "and more an immediate political need of the regimes both in Moscow and Belgrade"²⁰.

Economics makes a big difference. The Yeltsin regime got more outspoken criticism about its Balkans policies during the Bosnian situation, yet felt less domestic pressure directly because of it, largely because the economy was a bit more stable at the time. Yet for its Kosovan policies, even though the opposition was somewhat less vocal, the Yeltsin regime felt more pressure because the economic situation had worsened²¹.

Russian nationalists play, sometimes cynically and loosely, the Serbian card to pressure the Yeltsin regime. The West strengthens Yeltsin's opposition by openly leaning on the Yeltsin regime to modify its ways both domestically and internationally. So while Russian leaders try to project an image of being "impartial, sensible, and reliable", Russian nationalists accuse them of "betraying the country", and the West blames them for "lack of movement from the Serbs"²².

18. Dusan Batakovic, "Geopolitics of Religion: The Confessional Dimension of Yugoslav Wars", *Eurobalkans*, Spring/Summer 1996, p. 49-50.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Wall Street Journal*, October 9, 1998.

22. John Scott Masker, "Signs of a Democratized Foreign Policy?", *World Affairs*, Vol.

The Russians generally held the same positions before the NATO bombing as during it. Even after “irrefutable evidence” was presented to the Joint Russia-NATO Permanent Council that Serbia had in 1998 exceeded permissible norms in suppressing terrorist activity, the evidence “failed to convince the Russian side that NATO had the moral right to bomb the Serbs”²³. But Russian analysts didn’t have any faith that anything could be done. NATO “will hardly be stopped by a statement made by Duma Speaker Gennady Seleznyov. Appearing in a Russian TV program, Seleznyov warned that if NATO carries out its air strike, the Russian parliament would take the initiative to abrogate the Fundamental Act that establishes partnership relations between Russia and NATO”²⁴.

Opponents of the Yeltsin regime who favor a more forceful pro-Serbian stance have no international allies to help them —indeed, the only allies would be the very Serbs they are trying to help. This has helped Russia’s liberals to consistently defeat their opponents to produce a moderate and generally even-handed Balkan policy.

The Russian public seems little concerned about the Balkans. “Surveys repeatedly showed that many simply did not have any opinion on international questions, particularly of those related to specific ‘far-abroad’ issues”²⁵.

The “level of pan-Slavic feeling in Russia is too often exaggerated. There is little evidence to suggest that parliament is accurately reflecting Russian public opinion on events ... Apathy rather than outrage seems the current mood”²⁶. Although these comments were in the context of Bosnia, the Kosovo situation seemed to generate the same apathy. Russians personally interviewed in October 98 and June 99 reaffirmed this

160, No. 4, Spring 1998, p.182.

23. *Izvestia*, October 2, 1998.

24. As reported in *Izvestia*, October 2, 1998. Just as the Duma’s September 9, 1995 vote to remove trade sanctions against Serbia also had little effect. See *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, Malcolm, Pravda, Allison, and Light, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 331. Russia would like to participate more in the NATO Partnership For Peace, but the Balkan events strain that desire.

25. Alex Pravda, “The Public Politics of Foreign Policy”, p. 191 of *Internal*. The public actually supports intervention in any locale less than elites do. P. 197.

26. Mike Bowket, “Russian Policy Toward Central and Eastern Europe” in *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, Peter Shearman, ed. (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 87. This is not to say that Russians are happy with the US and NATO, however.

apathy (or perhaps more accurately, the overwhelming preoccupation with problems at home)²⁷.

Regarding the Bosnian situation, a high level official confirmed this disinterest. "Sergei Karaganov, a member of Yeltsin's Presidential Council: 'Almost nobody is interested in Serbia here, but the opposition is playing it up to make things difficult for the administration and the administration has to bow to that'."²⁸ Once again, little has changed in the present. The average person in the street doesn't give a flip about Serbia —the economy means everything, Orthodoxy means little to nothing, "culture" ties are iffy, and there are plenty of ethnic links of greater importance much closer to home. Pan-Slavists are a small, albeit vocal, minority²⁹.

If Internet postings are any indication, it seems that Serbs are continually hoping that Russians will feel solidarity toward them and come to their aid, while Russians are telling Serbs to grow up, get out of the Middle Ages, and dump not only Milosevic, but all ultranationalist imperial thinking"³⁰. This is not to say Russia is without external security concerns. Russia does have a Monroe Doctrine of sorts. It's just not about the Balkans (or East Europe; or the Baltics); it's about the countries of the CIS³¹. Russia does have a "highly trained and experienced Foreign Ministry staff"³². But decisions are often uncoordinated and even contradictory, and frequently overruled by the presidency³³.

Foreign policy expert Sergei Karaganov of the advisory Foreign and

27. Three Russians, from cities all across Russia but far away from Moscow, were interviewed by this author in October 1998. They expressed NO interest in Kosovo, a conviction that had not changed in June 1999. It may be that Moscow and Washington are similar in that élites in capitols get upset about matters that the rest of the country, for economic and other reasons, care little about.

28. "Russia Attacks UN Vote on Serbs" in Financial Times, April 20, 1993.

29. F. Stephen Larabee, "Russia and the Balkans," in *Russia and Europe*, Vladimir Baranovsky, ed., (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 394.

30. October 1998 to present Discussion postings in Russia Today.

31. *Internal Factors*, p. 196.

32. Neil Malcolm "Russia Foreign Policy Decision-making," in Shearman, p. 44. Russian foreign policy making consists of the (Russian) Security Council (which the President heads), the Inter-departmental Foreign Policy Commission, the Ministry for Cooperation, the Foreign Ministry working groups in the legislature, plus research institutes and think tanks, the most powerful of which is the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy.

33. *Ibid*.

Defense Policy Council has said "the economic crisis means the government will have to be more inward-looking and gives it less room for manoeuvres in foreign policy"³⁴. It is clear to all that the Russian Federation will not be imposing its will in world diplomacy anytime soon, and if it tried, would find a cool or deaf reception. Although blustering and flabby muscle flexing may sometimes take place, cooperation will be the soup du jour.

The collapse of Russia's finances has greatly impacted Russia's great power status. In fact, Yeltsin has often been reduced to "a flurry of telephone diplomacy aimed at averting NATO air strikes"³⁵. "Air strikes by NATO would mean a return to the Cold War"³⁶. Tough words, but Russia did not and has not relapsed into a Cold War foreign policy as a result of NATO bombing, although relations have certainly been more cool than warm.

"A hint of saber-rattling, in the form of a public announcement by the Russian air force that it had begun a major strategic exercise, may remind Western leaders not just of the risks of an escalation of tensions over the Balkans but of the dangers of letting Russia descend further into economic chaos"³⁷. This of course is one of the drivers of Russian behavior. Behind so much is the rage, frustration, and exasperation of its dismal economic picture. Worried voices in Moscow wondered if Russia would dispatch armed military units to the Balkans to aid the Serbs. News analysts Yulia Petrovkaya and Dimitry Gornostayev said "NATO air strikes could force Moscow's hand to come to the aid of Belgrade"³⁸. Similar things were said all during the NATO bombing campaign but little came of it other than a few "showings of the flag". And yet, despite the worry, few but ultranationalists want Russia involved in any conflict outside her borders, and most military analysts, including her own, believe she "is scarcely able to fight a difficult, protracted war outside the borders of the former Soviet Union"³⁹.

34. As reported by Reuters, *Russia Today*, October 7, 1998.

35. As reported by Reuters, *Russia Today*, October 7, 1998. He showed similar activity all through the recent bombing campaign.

36. Russia's Defense Minister on NPR News, KCUR Radio, October 5, 1998.

37. Reuters, *Russia Today*, October 7, 1998.

38. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Paper), October 7, 1998.

39. Bowker, in *Shearman*, p. 88.

Russia wants the UN, not NATO, to be in the lead in the Balkans. Russia would agree to many things were military operations within the UN aegis. Russia wants to be respected and doesn't want to be excluded, even though it recognizes the U.S. as the primary power player. Russia as expected repeatedly vows to veto any UN Security Council use of force, so the West has kept power moves mostly in the NATO realm.

Moscow consistently stated its opposition to any use of NATO force in Kosovo unless the UN Security Council (where Russia has a veto) approved it⁴⁰. In fact, Russians would regard any use of force as undermining "the very foundations of international law" because the UN Security Council, not NATO, is "the only body having the right and authority" to use force against a sovereign state⁴¹.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the South Eastern European Countries have repeatedly called for negotiations in Kosovo. Russia, along with the U.S. and others, is an observer and facilitator with this group. Russia seeks to support international organizations and wishes to contribute to stabilizing the Kosovo situation according to "the principles and standards of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe and the Framework Convention on National Minorities"⁴². The ministers further called for "full respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the ethnic Albanian population"⁴³. The Western view that countries of the region are doing nothing and are just waiting to be sucked into the conflict is erroneous. This particular meeting in Istanbul also had representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other members of the Serbian opposition to Milosevic.

Although Russia has preferred a UN approach, it above all has wanted to non-NATOize any solution to the crisis. Initially it got its wish, when the OSCE was chosen in 1998 to be the new security monitoring system for Kosovo. But the ethnic cleansing, the bombing, and the resulting

40. Vladimir Chizhov, director of the Foreign Ministry's third European section, in his remarks to Interfax news agency. *Russia Today*, October 29, 1998, with similar comments all during the bombing campaign.

41. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 2, 1998.

42. "Istanbul Declaration On Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security And Cooperation in South Eastern Europe, 9 June 1998", *Eurobalkans*, Spring 1998, p. 48.

43. *Ibid*, p. 49.

agreement have pushed the Russians to a marginal role, despite Western diplomatic niceties and the presence of Russian peacekeepers. Ineffectual Russian manoeuvres, both diplomatic and otherwise, have done little to change the basic facts of the situation.

Both Kosovo and Albania need economic assistance that Russia cannot provide. This is mostly a drawback for Russian policy, but it does allow Russia to play a more objective position of sorts.

Then Russian Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister) Yevgeny Primakov, in December of 1997, said that Russia was against separatist trends in the province of Kosovo. In talking with Albania's Foreign Minister Nilo (Milo), Primakov said Albania and Russia have similar views on Kosovo. Primakov said that a series of steps to democratize the situation should take place. Nilo replied that Albania does not want to violate accepted sovereignty procedures, but strongly favors self-determination for the nearly 2 million Albanians in Kosovo⁴⁴.

The Russian Defense Minister came to Athens in October of 1998 for talks with his Greek counterpart. Greece and Russia are both Serbian allies of a sort, even though Greece's support of Serbia is lukewarm, and even cool, at times. Both Greece and Russia share a common goal for a diplomatic solution, an ostensibly common Orthodox faith, and similar economic interests in the region. However, Greece, a NATO member, has been ready if necessary to provide grudging logistical support for NATO airstrikes, and indeed did so, despite the troubles it caused for the Greek government⁴⁵.

Russian viewpoints and reporting on Kosovo have been surprisingly balanced. For example, well before the Kosovo crisis intensified, Russian reports on Kosovan demonstrations were critical of Serbian counteractions⁴⁶.

44. Oksana Polishchuk, "Russia: Albania's Nilo Asserts Kosovo's Right to Self-Determination", Moscow, ITAR-TASS, December 9, 1997, Foreign Broadcast Information Service-SOV-97-343. See also "Russia Favors Dialogue Between Belgrade, Pristina", Konstantin Zhukovsky, Moscow, ITAR-TASS, October 2, 1997, Foreign Broadcast Information Service-SOV-97-343.

45. "Russia Says Raid on Yugoslavia is War, Not Punishment", Reuters, Russia Today, October 7, 1998. During the bombing campaign we witnessed road blocks and other obstructive measures from some of the Greek populace.

46. "Kosovo demonstration put down by Serbian police. Russia favors peaceful solution". "Vesti" broadcast by Mikhail Ponomarev, Moscow Russian Television Network,

Of course, the Serbs are quick to point out when the Russians criticize the Serbs' foes. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative Vladimir Rakmanin went on record as recently as November of last year that he believed the main threat to the peace process in Kosovo comes from Albanian extremists trying to slant the situation to their own purposes⁴⁷.

If it seems at times as if Russia is talking out of both sides of its mouth, first approving enforceable Security Council resolutions that implied force could be used, and then almost immediately qualifying them a bit, because of its predicament. Russia is in the uncomfortable position of having to share responsibility for policies —Serbian and Western— not of its own making.

Supposedly a great power, the Russian Federation is dependent on foreign aid, and yet can not be seen by its domestic political forces as being too subservient to the West. It has tried desperately to find a middle ground. For example, prior to the NATO bombing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakmanin said that the "serious warning" of UN Security Council Resolution 1199 was indeed a serious warning but "both to Belgrade and to Pristina as well as to those who encourage terrorism"⁴⁸.

Rakmanin also deplored any attempt by NATO to place itself above the UN, and called for an unbiased investigation into massacres of Albanian civilians⁴⁹. Yet Russia has consistently and strongly supported the aim of granting more autonomy to Kosovo⁵⁰.

As far back as June 1998, multiple levers were being used at once to

October 1, 1997, Russian Television Program Summary, Foreign Broadcast Information Service-SOV-97-343.

47. As reported by the Serbian Ministry of Information, November 10, 1998. Russia has rightly criticized all sides. For example, the Croats were obvious aggressors in Krajina, and Russia rightly denounced this. *Internal Factors*, p. 331.

48. Foreign Ministry news briefing, as reported by Reuters, Russia Today, October 1, 1998.

49. "It has yet to be proven who is to blame for these appalling murders", he said in an interview with Ekho Moskvyy radio, as reported by Reuters, back in October 1, 1998. Given the recent events, few such statements are now being made, but Russia has not dropped its insistence for even-handedness, especially now that the Serbs in Kosovo appear to need protection.

50. Reuters, Russia Today, October 1, 1998.

pressure Milosevic. Russia is a prime member of the international Contact Group that was both telling Belgrade it had better not ignore its demands and that the International War Crimes Tribunal would have jurisdiction in Kosovo as well as in Bosnia⁵¹.

But direct contact by Moscow was being made as well. The crisis was temporarily depressurized in June 1998 “when Yeltsin wrung promises from Milosevic to end the Kosovo conflict”⁵².

But with NATO air strikes imminent in September 1998, Yeltsin dispatched Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, Defense Minister Igor Sergeev, and the first deputy director of the Foreign Intelligence Service to pressure Milosevic to end military operations in Kosovo and withdraw army and security units⁵³. One can only conjecture whether this allowed face saving on all sides: 1) the Russians told Milosevic that all of theirs—and his—options have run out; 2) Milosevic got to “cave in” to the Russians, not NATO; and 3) NATO allowed Russia to retain some stature, even though its power is weak and was in any case effectively outflanked.

It further allowed the Russians to play a special role because they could support the use of international force while opposing it, and hence be the peacemaker. As the Russian Foreign Ministry said, Yeltsin’s three top representatives delivered the message to Milosevic to take immediate steps to end the Kosovo crisis or “NATO could go ahead with its plans to use force against Yugoslavia”⁵⁴.

The message got through, and combined with the efforts of the Russian ambassador and special U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke, Milosevic was persuaded to accept an OSCE monitoring mission to both verify a pullback of forces and monitor the general situation on the ground, especially the aid to refugees⁵⁵.

The Russians volunteered after the first crisis to be part of the observers and monitors⁵⁶. Javier Solana, NATO Secretary-General, “wel-

51. Ian Black, Diplomatic Editor, *The Guardian*, June 13, 1998.

52. As reported by Reuters, *Russia Today*, October 7, 1998.

53. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 28, 1998.

54. As reported by Reuters, *Russia Today*, October 26, 1998. One wonders if the wording was deliberately interpretable in different ways.

55. As reported by Reuters, *Russia Today*, October 26, 1998.

56. “Russia to Supply 200 Observers to OSCE Kosovo Mission”, *European Internet*

comed the possible participation of Russia and other partners in the air verification regime"⁵⁷.

As all know, the OSCE did not succeed, through little fault of their own. In the second crisis, heavily armed troops, including Russians, would put sharp teeth in the agreement verification.

Some felt (and feel) that Russian observers will look the other way and not report brutal Serb actions. Perhaps they might, but at least the Serbs are less likely to take any Russians hostage, and if they do, it would free any last remaining restraints (if any) on the part of the West⁵⁸.

Inside Russia, however, there were questions about the Russian government's behavior. *Izvestia* questioned whether "Moscow is demonstrating aloofness or even benevolence toward western calls for military action against the Serbs"⁵⁹.

Others commented that the countries involved in trying to settle the Balkan difficulties have "widely different interpretations of the same decisions. The (primary) UN resolution, for example, demands that both sides in the conflict halt hostilities but some western politicians see it as an ultimatum to the Yugoslav leadership"⁶⁰.

Russia desired an end to the fighting in Kosovo but still wanted to avoid force or measures that were too rigorous on its Slavic brothers. "Russia was the only country that refused to ban flights to Yugoslavia, having earlier declined to support a freeze on investments or on Serbian assets abroad"⁶¹.

It may also be why sanctions against Serbia, while not negligible, have been rather porous⁶². Despite its official pronouncements, Russia has diverted oil, food, and weapons to Serbia since 1992. "The cargo is loaded onto ships nominally headed for states in Africa but is rerouted,

Network, October 19, 1998.

57. *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, November 2, 1998.

58. Russia already had monitors as part of the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission which was the nucleus for the OSCE team that was to absorb the Mission when ready. *Kansas City Star*, November 22, 1998.

59. "NATO Gets Ready To Bomb Serbs", Vladimir Mikheyev, *Izvestia*, September 25, 1998.

60. *Segodnya*, September 25, 1998.

61. *The Guardian*, *ibid*.

62. MacKenzie, p. 406.

thus eluding customs controls”⁶³.

One of the background thoughts of Russia, and Serbia also, is to avert Turkish or other Islamic involvement in the Kosovo struggle⁶⁴. In fact an undoubted desire for Russia is for Serbia to be a counterforce to Turkish influence in the Balkan region.

And certainly Russia wants outlets to warm water ports. But it isn't going to risk very much to get them. Those who see devious designs about Russia's policies in the Balkans are looking through old kaleidoscopes. There is no tinderbox in Europe, and the Balkan conflicts are “primarily moral and political” imperatives⁶⁵ and not the security-laden dynamite sticks of the past.

Conclusions

Serbs and Russians use each other for their own particular purposes⁶⁶. Serbs use the Russians to restrain somewhat any UN or NATO force against them. Russians in turn want to play the big power, by showing that they are vital to existing conditions in the Balkan region because only they can really influence their Serbian little brothers. In practice, while the Russians do have more non-coercive influence on the Serbs than anyone, it still sometimes doesn't amount to much. But because of their cultural, religious, and historical ties, the two often feel they have no one else they can turn to.

Since the Bosnian war, Russian political scientist Alexei Arbatov has held the view that Russia can stop the Balkan conflicts in their tracks by directly pressuring the Serbs, not joining an ineffective Western process⁶⁷. Whether that is correct or not, Russia has been a Diplomatic channel of communication between Serbia and the West, and having one

63. Sabrina Petra Ramet, “War In The Balkans”, *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1992, p. 91. The laser light which recently harmed NATO aviator eyes in Kosovo is a trick which the Serbs, like the Iraqis, have learned from the Russians. From the author's military experience.

64. Norris, p. 9.

65. William Pfaff, “Invitation to War: Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans”, *The New Shape of World Politics*, (NY: W. W. Norton, 1997), p. 250.

66. Bowker, in Shearman, p. 88.

67. Arbatov, “Russian Foreign Policy Priorities for the 1990s”, in *Russian Security After the Cold War*, Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven F. Miller, eds. (Washington: Brassey's, 1994), p. 31.

player that keeps in constant contact with the Serbs is valuable. Russian participation as peacekeepers has also reassured Serbs somewhat and allowed negotiated settlements of conflicts in this part of the world⁶⁸.

Although the Serbs would probably dearly love to draw the Russians into their troubles, Russia's being 1) preoccupied with domestic problems and 2) without the ready means to effectively intervene forcefully, has made moot such "what ifs" in the Kosovo situation. Furthermore, Russian and Western viewpoints have converged to "prevent any new frontier change in the region that has not been peacefully negotiated by the interested parties and condoned by international consensus"⁶⁹. Russia is further sensitive to a situation in Kosovo that can be mirrored dozens of times on its own periphery, or even within Russia itself.

Given its position and situation, Russia, and especially the mostly liberals who run its government, could not have performed in a better manner during the first Kosovo crisis and even much of the second. Russia's policies were consistent, reasonable, focused, and cooperative. U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke, who is generally given the lion's share of credit for helping to negotiate an end to the first crisis, was right in thanking the Russians for all their help⁷⁰. They had a weak hand-but they played it brilliantly. That they were trumped in the second crisis is little fault of theirs, nor even of NATO. The blame for that lost game for the Russians lies almost squarely on Milosevic and the Serbs. What does remain is that the Russian Duma has used Kosovo as a Cold Diplomacy to prevent greater European Security by refusing to even debate the Disarmament Treaties.

68. Bowker, p. 242.

69. Pfaff, p. 250.

70. NPR News, KCUR, October 13, 1998. Western power, combined with Russian influence and persuasion, showed Milosevic there were no other viable choices—for a time.