Still not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier: the geopolitics of the Kosovo war 1999

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Abstract

The Kosovo war of 1999 brought the checkered legacies of Russian and Western geopolitics back to the forefront of international relations. Central to the discussions of the Balkans is its century-old legacy as a Shatterbelt or Crush Zone. Though not identified by Saul Cohen as a Shatterbelt during the Cold War, the region is now located where the maritime (Western) and land power (Russian) geostrategic realms come into contact. NATO expansion and Russian insecurities about the region's future have revised interest in geopolitical linkages and historical antecedents. The tradition of pan-Slavism, linking Russia to the Balkans cultural and political networks, has been uneven and is now subject to intensive debate within Russian political circles. In 1999, public opinion surveys showed consistent support in NATO countries for the bombing of Yugoslavia but strong opposition in Russia and other Slavic states. The surveys also question many stereotypes, especially the geopolitical visions of Russian citizens. Modern geopolitics is differentiated from classical geopolitics by the insertion of public opinion into the formation of geopolitical codes and foreign policy, in both the western countries and in Russia. In such an environment, the Balkans will remain central to the strategies of the great powers but public opinion, modifying geopolitical cultures, will ameliorate confrontations. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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The starting point for our geopolitical analysis is the famous comment by Otto von Bismarck, the 19th century German chancellor at the time of the Congress of Berlin (1878), who dismissed the Balkans as "not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier". Yet, within a generation of the division of the European great powers into two alliance structures (Triple Alliance and Triple Entente), Balkan disputes had pulled the German Empire into World War I against Russia, France, the United States, and Great Britain. A century later, we have returned to the dilemma that confronted the great powers of late 19th century Europe — how to resolve or confine local ethno-territorial disputes in the area between Russia and the West without significant damage to the relations of the major powers? At a time when contemporary academic writings on the "borderless" world are filled with hyperbole about the free flow of financial, cultural and commercial goods, traditional geopolitical and territorial interests counter claims of globalization and geo-economic triumphalism; the war in Kosovo and civil strife in Macedonia, continued American and British air attacks on Iraq, Russian attempts to reconquer Chechnya, the Indian-Pakistani skirmish in 1999 and the U.S. administration attempts to build an anti-terrorist coalition after the attacks on New York City and Washington DC serve as useful reminders that bloody rivalries continue into the 21st century.

Debates within NATO countries over military strategy at the time of the 1999 Balkan war (e.g. ground invasion, selection of targets for aerial bombing, composition of peacekeeping forces) were predicated on larger strategic and political questions. These concerned relations between the American hegemon and the European states on the one hand and, on the other, between Russia and the West. Among the many lessons of the Kosovo war is a belated recognition of the central role that Russia must play in any stable resolution of remaining territorial conflicts in East-central Europe. This region was the first "crush zone" (Fairgrieve, 1941), the harbinger of the concept of "Shatterbelt" by Saul Cohen (1963, 1982), and its geopolitical significance, eradicated by its incorporation into the Soviet geostrategic realm during the Cold War, is now back on the international agenda (O'Loughlin, 1999). Whether East-Central Europe has returned to its interwar crush zone role and whether new geopolitical imaginations for the region are evolving in Russia and the West are the questions that motivated this paper. Specifically, we examine 1) the implications of the 1999 Balkan war for future relations between Russia and the west in the context of the Shatterbelt model; 2) support for specific NATO military and strategic actions in cross-national public opinion polls; and 3) the relationship between domestic Russian political debates and its geopolitical cultures that revolved around the future status of Russia in the crush zone of eastern Europe.

Recent work in geopolitical analysis has shifted from advocacy of the interests of a particular state, the *modus operandi* before the 1970s, to examination of the numerous post-Cold War developments that have challenged the stable world of balance of power models and territorial control assumptions (Bauman, 2001; Dodds, 2000). But after the removal of the bipolar Cold War division and the extension of the globalized world economy to all territories, the study of geopolitics has been dramatically affected. Newman (1999, 3–4) offers a useful identification of the key themes

of contemporary geopolitics that include globalization and the changing function of state sovereignty, the de-territorialization of the state, the critical study of geopolitical texts, narratives and traditions, the geopolitical imagination (especially the "imagined territory" of states), and the "re-territorialization" of the state and the emergence of new ethnic, national and territorial identities. This article contributes to the themes of geopolitical imaginations and "re-territorialization" of the state. We link the consideration of public opinion in democratic states with geopolitical analysis since, at the end of the twentieth-century, popular support for a foreign policy action is essential for democratic and quasi-democratic regimes. One of the most interesting concepts to emerge in recent research is that of "geopolitical cultures", the combination of attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and fears that characterize the worldviews of the citizens of the various states that constitute the world-system. Dijkink (1996) has made an important start in identifying the traditions in several countries and public opinion surveys have been used to contrast elite and popular geopolitical cultures in the United States (O'Loughlin, 1999) and Russia (O'Loughlin, 2001b).

For the past 40 years, Saul Cohen has promoted a systems view of the world geopolitical system and he has been correct in criticizing analysts who ignore the geographic complexity of the world's regions or worse, who view the globe as a billiard table on which international relations takes place. He summarizes his paradigm as "that of a world organized within a system of nested geopolitical frameworks – from global to regional to national to subnational…. The highest-order framework is geostrategic, for what occurs within that framework can have an impact on all parts of the world. The other frameworks are geopolitical, or tactical, in the sense that they are geographically limited" (Cohen, 1999, 274). And though dramatic changes have been evident on the world's political map and in political relationships, not least the end of the Cold War, "the creation and persistence of geopolitical fault lines that attend conflict continue to characterize the international system. These fault lines are the boundaries between global, regional and national forces, as well as the new ones within countries that were buried by repressive regimes" (Cohen, 1999, 272–73). Some of the most significant geopolitical faultlines have been on the edge of Europe, sometimes linking all parts of Eastern Europe, sometimes dividing the region latitudinally, sometimes longitudinally (Davies, 1996; Heffernan, 1998). In this paper, we examine the most recent geopolitical developments using Cohen's paradigm while focusing on the relationships of the two neighboring geostrategic realms, the trade-dependent maritime world of NATO and the Eurasian continental world of Russia. The Kosovo war of 1999 provides the "data" for our analysis.

A century of geopolitical rivalry: the Balkans between Europe and Russia

The historiography of geopolitics and the history of Eastern Europe are closely linked. Beginning seriously in the 1870s with shifting alliances resting on strategic and cultural considerations, great power rivalry in the Balkans helped set the stage for the development of geopolitics in Britain and Germany. After the turn of the 20th-century, the "Cold Peace" that had existed since the 1870s ended as rivalries

in the Balkans intensified because of the Serb goal of uniting all south Slavs under their leadership. First promulgated in 1904, Mackinder's Heartland model assumed that there was no more unclaimed territory for the great powers to control; consequently, competition would intensify for existing resources, including influence over the small states being created in the Balkans as the Ottoman Empire declined. Mackinder's 1919 geopolitical aphorism: "Who rules eastern Europe, commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland, commands the World-island; Who rules the World-island, commands the World" was developed in light of the events of World War I, especially the German victory on the eastern front against the Bolsheviks. Mackinder was most concerned with a Russian-German landpower alliance that would unite the "Heartland" (impervious to successful attack by the oceanic powers in Mackinder's view) against the leading seapower, Great Britain.

Mackinder's focus on Eastern Europe as the western edge of the Heartland dominated the geopolitics of World War II and its aftermath up to the certification of the region, to use Saul Cohen's (1963) phrase, as part of the Soviet-controlled Eurasian Continental geostrategic realm. Until about 1950, the region was most often seen as a "crush zone" of small states separating the two big states, Germany and Russia; but also as unstable and precarious due to internal dynamics and external pressures. "With the organization of the heartland and sea-powers, a crush zone of small states has gradually come into existence between them…With sufficient individuality to withstand absorptions, but unable or unwilling to unite with others to form any larger whole, they remain in the unsatisfactory position of buffer states, precariously independent politically, and more surely dependent economically. This zone of states has included …the Balkan states" (Fairgrieve, 1941, 329–331.) Fairgrieve's crush zone is a precursor to Cohen's (1963) shatterbelt concept; by 1982, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South-east Asia had been identified as "regions highly fragmented … by internal divisions […] exacerbated by the competing pressures from outside great powers" (Cohen, 1999, 283). At the end of the Cold War, only the Middle East remains a shatterbelt, as the other two regions are now part of the "trade-dependent maritime world."

Though Cohen only uses two criteria, internal divisions and external interventions, to categorize shatterbelts, other authors have extended the concept by expanding the list of criteria. For Reilly (2000, 50), shatterbelts are "defined by political instability, economic backwardness, cultural fragmentation, external military intervention, and isolation from the surrounding region and the international system at large." Reilly (2000, 52) further concludes that shatterbelts, "as a result of their cultural and social fragmentation, political instability, economic woes, and distinctiveness from neighboring states, […] are prone to violence. Hostile internal and external challengers constantly threaten their governments. This leads to aggressive policies on the domestic and international fronts. . Exacerbating these aggressive tendencies is the fact that major states are able and willing to exploit their vulnerability." Hensel and Diehl (1994, 34) assert that the shatterbelt literature has suffered from a lack of conceptual precision and rigorous empirical testing, and has generated a debate over the meaning and implications of shatterbelts. Their empirical study shows that shatterbelts gener-

ate a disproportionate share of militarized disputes and that internal conflicts are twice as likely as in other regions.

While Eastern Europe shared many of these characteristics before 1945, its incorporation into the Soviet bloc from 1945–89 ended any notion of a buffer or transition zone between the Western and Soviet blocs. Since 1989, the region has seen a dispersal of the states across the geopolitical spectrum. Some, like the new NATO members (Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary) are well on their way into the European economic and security blocs. Others, like Slovenia, the Baltic republics, and Slovakia, are promising candidates for eventual European Union membership though their NATO credentials are subject to complicated scrutiny; still others, like Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria are well removed from any dramatic change in their current "in-between" status. The past decade of post Cold War developments in Eastern Europe has not yet answered the question of whether the region will "realize its potential to become a Gateway region, or become geostrategically redivided between the Maritime European and Russian Heartland regions?" (Cohen, 1999, 295; also, see O'Loughlin, 2001b).[1]

Though the nineteenth-century had been a century of both revolution and of nationalism, great power war was relatively absent. Germany's location in central Europe meant that "(t)he fault-line of the earthquake zone ran along Germany's eastern border. …Hence from the start, the major duel over Europe's future lay between Germany and Russia" (Davies, 1996, 871). In the 1930s, Hitler reiterated Bismarck's program for the Balkans – neutrality, economic exploitation and control. Once the Germans had embarked on this road, the British, French and Soviet counter-offensive was colored by it. Their program involved linking the Balkans together and then tying this region economically to Poland and the Baltic states (Hitchens, 1983, vii). A shift from a West-East alliance in Europe to a West-Center alliance against the East (Soviet Union and its allies) ensured the bipolar division of Europe and since 1989, there is no oppositional alliance to the Western (NATO) powers. Various claims of historical and ideological alliances, including Pan-Slavism, have been mooted as a sustainable basis of opposition.

The Legacy of Pan-Slavism

As in the 1870s, the question of the strength of pan-Slavic unity re-emerged in the 1990s. Developed in Russia but focussed on Serbia, Pan-Slavism traces its origins to the early eighteenth-century. Pan-Slavism stressed the greater merits of Slavic (especially Russian) culture over that of the West. The first Pan-Slavic Congress, held in Prague in 1848, was confined to Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and

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[1] Saul Cohen defines "gateway states and regions" as playing "novel roles as nodes integrating regional and world systems…the distinguishing characteristics of the modern gateway are strategic locations to promote economic exchange and the unhampered political capacity to do so by having sovereign status…. They are all endowed with strong entrepreneurial traditions with links to different parts of their regions, and often the globe.These links are often strengthened by ties to overseas communities." (Cohen, 1999, 292).

was effectively anti-Russian. In 1858, the Slavic Welfare Society was established in Moscow, where a Slavic Ethnographic Congress was held in 1867. The Pan-Slavic thesis held that the Slavs were younger and more vigorous than decadent West Europeans. Pan-Slavism was never a hegemonic paradigm in Russia and even today, its basic tenets are widely challenged by the nation-based interest; the Pan-Slavic ideology represents only one camp of contemporary Russian geopolitical opinion. In the age of nationalism in the nineteenth-century, it was increasingly unlikely that the union of South Slavs for autonomy could be prevented; the key question was whether it would be inside or outside the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. (Over seven million Yugo-Slavs lived inside the monarchy and over three million outside it) (Mason, 1997, 73).

At the time of the First Balkan War (1876), the long-serving Russian foreign minister Prince Gorchakov, facing Pan-Slavic emotion in Russia, wrote to Bismarck that the Balkans problem was "neither German nor Russian, but European". Bismarck replied in a marginal note: "Qui parle Europe a tort…(c'est un) notion géographique." Tales of ethnically motivated atrocities pumped up Russian pan-Slavism and British jingoism. However, in the Ottoman-controlled Balkans, religiously mixed villages were frequently characterized by tolerance and centuries of living peaceably together at close quarters (Braude & Lewis, 1982; Campbell, 1998). Since the late 19th century, the mixed ethnic regions of much of the Habsburg monarchy have been converted to mono-lingual national zones through wars, genocides, treaties, and postwar ethnic cleansings, but the uncertainties of the frontiers of the three civilizations (western-NATO/orthodox-Russian/Islamic-Turkish) persist.

NATO's new strategic concept and the edge of Europe

A major difference between the geopolitical transition from British to American world leadership is the presence in Western Europe of the American hegemon. Europe has evolved from a region of five great powers (Germany, France, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia) into a partial American protectorate in the guise of NATO. With the queue for admission to NATO and the EU ever lengthening in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia is increasingly isolated on a territory now smaller than 100 years ago.

A comparison of contemporary Balkan conflicts (the Kosovo war of 1999) with those of the late 19th century reveals many similarities but some key differences. Among the similarities were calls for Pan-Slavic unity and greater Russian involvement in the Balkans to support the Serb position; emotional appeals in the West to stop ethnic slaughter; Serbian nationalism and Albanian irredentism; major naval forces in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean (now mostly American, but British in the 1870s); and general uncertainty about who is most at fault for ethnic cleansing and mass killing. (See Dodds, 2000, for a review of Isaiah Bowman's work on the ethnic dimensions of the postwar settlements/boundary shifts and the parallels to the present). Unfortunately, much of the analysis of the 1990s Balkan crisis characterizes the region as an irrational, hostile, barbaric place populated by bloodthirsty, armed

civilians out to avenge ancient tribal defeats (Todorova, 1997). These perceptions are then used by external actors to rationalize their military actions (Bakic-Hayden, 1995).

Debates about a new role for NATO in the post Cold War world ceased temporarily following the enormous power that NATO committed to the Balkans. During the bombing of Yugoslavia in April 1999, NATO met in Washington DC to celebrate its 50th birthday and to agree to a "New Strategic Concept". At this conference, it became clear that NATO has not yet solved the key question of where the edge of Europe lies; the queue for NATO membership grows ever longer with countries as far east as Kazakhstan conducting joint exercises with NATO forces. Despite an explicit promise to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989 that NATO would not expand eastward to Russia, by 1995, NATO was committed to admitting three Central European states and had promised to consider seriously the future admission of other former Communist states. Despite significant opposition from across the Russian political spectrum, the list includes former (Baltic) republics of the Soviet Union. If all would-be joiners are admitted, the alliance would take on a strong eastern European character and the "Atlantic" leg of the charter would look increasingly tenuous, predicated largely on the continued involvement of the U.S. on the European continent (O'Loughlin, 1999).

The "New Strategic Concept" neither delimited the geographic range of NATO's future military operations nor explicitly limited the number or criteria for new admissions. In the Washington declaration, the NATO ministers certified the openness of the Alliance, declaring that: "Our Alliance remains open to all European democracies, regardless of geography, willing and able to meet the responsibilities of membership, and whose inclusion would enhance overall security and stability in Europe. NATO is an essential pillar of a wider community of shared values and shared responsibility." In the "Membership Action Plan (MAP)", the NATO leaders declared that: "The door to NATO membership under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty remains open. The Membership Action Plan (MAP), building on the Intensified, Individual Dialogue on membership questions, is designed to reinforce that firm commitment to further enlargement by putting into place a program of activities to assist aspiring countries in their preparations for possible future membership." (Documents available from the NATO website: www.nato.int/docu).

Central to the debate about NATO's future profile and Russian-Western relations is the determination of where "Europe" ends in the east and whether Russia is in, out or straddling the European divide (Heffernan, 1998). In the classical era, the limits of Europe ran along the river Don (near the present Ukrainian-Russian border), though the Urals became the commonly accepted divide in the 18th century with a Russian imperial boundary post on the road between Yekaterinburg and Tiumen. The U.S. administration and its pro-NATO supporters have argued strongly to redress the historic injustice of the Cold War divide in Europe by the rapid admission of the central European states. Moreover, this "re-discovery" of the European credentials of central European states is not a figment of some post-Cold War geopolitical imagination. During the Cold War, Seton-Watson (1985, 14) noted, "Nowhere in the world is there so widespread a belief in the reality, and the importance, of a European

cultural community, as in the countries lying between the EEC and the Soviet Union…. To these peoples, the idea of Europe is that of a community of cultures to which a specific culture or sub-culture of each belongs. None of them can survive without Europe, or Europe without them." Kundera (1983) took the analogy further by advocating a "kidnapped West" image in which the Soviet Union held Central Europe as a geopolitical hostage. Russia is still the "constituting Other" for the east European societies in their drive to certify their European heritage (Neumann, 1997). Western Russophobia is still evident in the writings and policies of geopoliticians as Russia is held to a different standard than the West (Lieven, 2000).

Recent polling data from the New Democracies Barometer (11 countries in Central and Eastern Europe) show dramatic differences in the perception of threats from Germany, Russia and the United States. Whilst 62% of Poles saw Russia as a threat in 1998, comparable figures for the Czech republic (48%), Slovakia (45%), Romania (42%), Croatia (18%), Ukraine (14%), Yugoslavia (11%), Bulgaria (6%) and Slovenia (3%) indicate the effects of distance, common religious/linguistic, and historical experience. Though 82% of Yugoslavs regarded the U.S. as a threat, only Ukraine (21%), Slovakia (24%) and Belarus (26%) of the other ten sample countries showed any significant concern. Attitudes towards Germany as a threat varied from 75% fearful in Yugoslavia to 2% in Bulgaria and 3% in Hungary. Large majorities in all countries surveyed, except Ukraine (58%), Poland (56%) and Bulgaria (54%), favored NATO membership. (See also Haerpfer, Milosinski & Wallace, 1999).

With the partial demilitarization of the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army), the withdrawal of Yugoslav military and civil rule, the compromise by Russia to allow its troops to serve under NATO control, the demilitarization of ethnic Albanians in neighboring Macedonia, and the emasculation of the United Nations in Kosovo, NATO now effectively controls the southern part of former Yugoslavia, with all of its attendant difficulties. More broadly, NATO has taken on the stability of the whole of the Balkan region that, since the years of Austro-Hungarian and Turkish imperial competition, has seen many external forces come and leave defeated. NATO definitely now has a new mission (peacekeeping in the Balkans), though how this fits the larger geopolitical aims of the organization remains to be seen.

Public opinion polls and NATO's first war

War-making has changed fundamentally in the past two decades because of rapid growth of cable television, the instantaneous transmission of news, the lingering effects of the Vietnam war, and the resulting attempt by governments, especially in traditional democracies, to avoid military casualties (Cumings, 1994; ÓTuathail, 1996). In the contemporary United States, foreign policy decisions are closely monitored by public opinion polls. Indeed, numerous polls and focus groups are conducted by political leaders to probe public reaction to possible scenarios and military developments *before* a decision is taken, with the Clinton Administration taking opinion polling to new heights. The spectacle of an American soldier's body being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu in 1993 remains a defining image of peacekeeping

in the post-Cold War world in the eyes of many Americans. An additional factor plays into the decision, a long engagement in the zone to be controlled: "Ground war is to be avoided not only for the devastating effects which the inevitable casualties might have on public opinion at home, but also because it might lead to a face-to-face and protracted engagement with the tasks of the management of the conquered territory, a practice which goes against the globalizing logic." (Bauman, 2000, 17).

Based on extensive polling about foreign military actions and about the Kosovo war, University of Maryland pollsters concluded, "Americans are very resistant to the U.S. acting on its own and looking like the world's policeman. Since the Vietnam experience, this is anathema to most Americans. ...Fatalities would definitely raise the political stakes, but ultimately, Americans do see it as part of America's role to participate in multilateral efforts to stop genocide." (PIPA, 1999). The perception of legitimacy (of military action) in the early years of the 21st century is molded largely by that supreme arbiter in modern democracies, public opinion, rather than the norms of international law or the expectations of strategic balance of power strategies (*Economist,* 1999). Though foreign affairs does not generally maintain a high profile in American public discourse, post-Vietnam political leaders strongly sense the need to mobilize public opinion or, at least, generate a cautious "wait-and-see" feeling. In respect of the 1999 aerial bombardment of Yugoslavia, 55–60% of Americans supported the aerial war throughout its 11-week course; at the same time, only about one-third favored a ground invasion of Kosovo for humanitarian aims due to fears about high U.S. casualties. Support for military actions decreases in proportion to the expected number of U.S. casualties (PIPA, 1999), a trend continued in the aftermath of the bombing attacks in New York and Washington. While 90% wanted a military retaliation against the perpetrators and their supporters, the ratio fell to 69% when the possibility of significant American casualties is raised (http://www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr010914b.asp). A symbiotic relationship between public attitudes and government foreign policies has developed over the past quarter-century since the end of the Vietnam War.

Starting in spring 1998, officials of the Clinton administration repeatedly made the case for NATO intervention in Kosovo for humanitarian purposes. The term "international community" was invoked frequently, though the United Nations was avoided as a forum of debate and action. The Kosovo war thus meets Bauman's criterion of a "globalizing war", "conducted as a rule in the name of the not yet existent but postulated 'international community', represented in practice by *ad hoc*, mostly regional, coalitions of interested partners. In the long run, perhaps, one shall be able to conclude *ex post facto* that such wars will have been the prime tools in turning the idea of the 'international community' into flesh" (Bauman, 2001, 14).

Stories of ethnic cleansing and massacres had swung the majority of Americans to the side of intervention by the beginning of 1999. About two-thirds of the U.S. public thought that the U.S. had a "moral obligation" to launch attacks on the Yugoslav forces and in general, humanitarian concerns and beliefs spawned more support for U.S. involvement than Clinton administration arguments about U.S. national interests. An April 7th 1999 Gallup poll showed that two-thirds believed that the

U.S. should be engaged in the war because of a "moral obligation to help the refugees" while just 13% thought NATO's credibility was important and only 8% cited strategic reasons. When asked directly to compare the principles of "national sovereignty" and "genocide prevention", more than twice as many Americans (62%) agreed that fears of genocide justified military intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state over those (28%) upholding the principle of national sovereignty. The support of the humanitarian principle is strong even in the face of charges of "American unilateralism". When asked about NATO's avoidance of the United Nations, 48% of the U.S. public were concerned that NATO actions did not have UN backing but that it should continue anyway; 30% believed that NATO action should wait for UN support (like the situation in Kuwait in 1991); and 19% were unconcerned that NATO was operating without a supportive UN resolution (PIPA, 1999). What these and other national polls show consistently is that about two-thirds of Americans will support military action for humanitarian purposes, though support drops in proportion to increasing rates of expected U.S. casualties; it is also reduced by lack of support from traditional allies. As long as U.S. leaders can demonstrate moralistic goals for overseas action and support from other countries (preferably including the United Nations, though it is not imperative), the U.S. public will support the military option. Kosovo, where Western powers launched military attacks ostensibly for humanitarian purposes without UN endorsement and, for the first time, established a protectorate within a sovereign state with ground forces, may be the first of post-Cold War Western interventions that increase the number of pseudo-states in the world system.[2]

Though the U.S. was the undisputed leader of the NATO alliance in the Yugoslavia conflict of 1999, the war demonstrated a growing fracture in NATO that pitted the U.S. and Britain as military activists against the greater caution of Germany, Italy and some smaller states that worry more about future relations with Russia. Public opinion surveys conducted by international polling firms (www.angusreid.com and www.harrisinteractive.com/harris-poll) at the height of the bombing of Yugoslavia allow us to compare support for different NATO actions across a large sample of countries, in and outside Europe. In general, the polls show a close fit between the practices of individual NATO members in the councils of the alliance and public opinion in the respective countries. Overall, just over half of respondents surveyed in all sample countries supported NATO actions in bombing Yugoslavia, with support in NATO countries reaching 62% (Fig. 1). Predictably, citizens of the U.S. and the UK were more supportive of NATO bombing actions in mid-April (about two-thirds support), though these ratios are matched by values for Denmark, Norway and Canada where the moral imperative of saving Kosovars held sway over considerations of national sovereignty in the popular media. Most other NATO countries show more support than opposition, though Italy (47%), Czech Republic (37%) and

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[2] A pseudo-state as a political-military entity that has achieved little international recognition, is involved in local conflicts and whose unsettled status makes further conflict possible. (Kolossov & O'Loughlin, 1999).
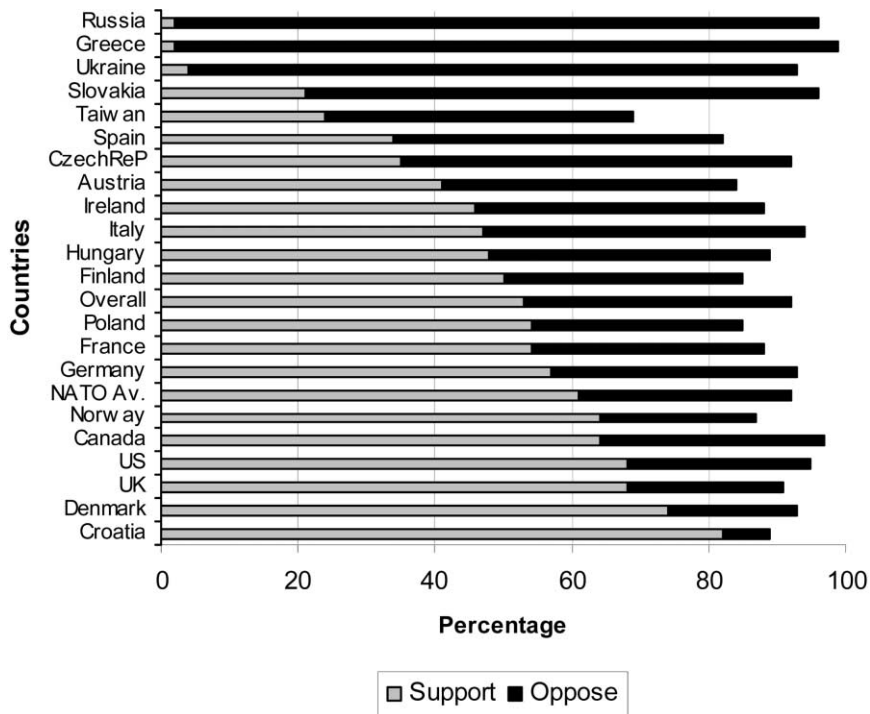
Fig. 1.   Public opinion in 21 countries about the NATO air attacks on Yugoslavia, April 1999. The questions asked: "Do you support or oppose NATO's actions in Yugoslavia?" The sources are the Angus Reid and Louis Harris polls.

Spain (36%) had majorities opposed. Greek public opposition (92%) is as strong and unanimous as in Russia and Ukraine, interpreted by many as Orthodox solidarity, though it was more likely motivated by traditional Balkan rivalries and historical geopolitical alliances. The Ukrainian figure is particularly significant since the country is polarized between a pro-Western (Ukrainian) and pro-Russian east (O'Loughlin, 2001c). Opposition to NATO actions spanned this internal cultural cleavage and pushed the previously Western-leaning Ukrainian government toward a rapprochement with Russia.

The 1999 Yugoslav war will be remembered in the U.S. for the proliferation of armchair strategists and military pundits on cable television. The public in the NATO countries was heavily engaged in the conduct of the war on NATO's terms. Interest was motivated further by careful manipulation and spinning of military news and a torrent of satellite television reports from points in Yugoslavia and bordering states. In the confusion about a clear strategic goal (the ostensible goal of protecting Kosovars took on a different dimension when the refugee flight reached full force), numerous options came into the public fray. The responses by the public to five options for NATO at the height of the campaign in mid-April are presented in Fig. 2. The results are consistent since the publics that were more supportive of the NATO poli-
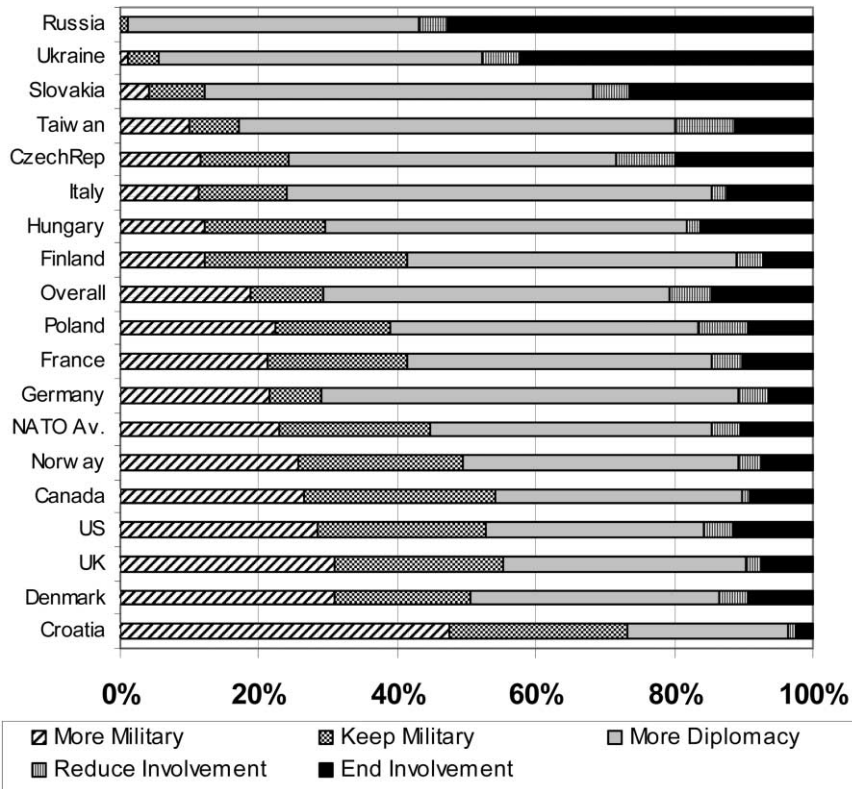
Fig. 2. Public opinion in 17 countries about the possible options for a resolution to the Kosovo conflict, April 1999. The question asked: "What should NATO do in Yugoslavia?" and offered five possible answers. The source is the Angus Reid poll.

cies were also the most warlike. Majority support for more or continued military action was found in Croatia, Denmark, Britain, the U.S. and Canada. Of these states, about one-third of the public surveyed supported a ground invasion.

A balance between continued military pressure and a stronger diplomatic effort to resolve the crisis can be seen by the responses from Norway, France, Germany, and Poland (Fig. 2). Respondents in Hungary, Finland, Italy and the Czech Republic preferred a stronger diplomatic initiative to the military option, while respondents in Russia, Ukraine and Slovakia opted strongly for either an end to NATO action or a diplomatic solution to the crisis. In the end, a combination of military and diplomatic activities by NATO followed and Russia's abandonment of Milosevic resulted in the ceasefire agreements negotiated in Bonn and strongly promoted under German auspices. Differences in opinion within the NATO leadership about the conduct of the war was mirrored by comparative public responses, leading to a questioning of unilateralist NATO action and a U.S. leadership significantly more inclined to use the military option than most European NATO states wished to pursue. In further discussions in the European Union about expansion and relations with the

countries of Eastern Europe, a key item will concern the nature of the cross-Atlantic political link and the continued U.S. dominance of NATO.

A specific question by the opinion pollsters concerned the possible substitution of NATO by an alternative military force of the European Union. The answers are shown in Fig. 3. Though the correlation between the answers on this question and previous responses in Figs 2 and 3 are not as strong as those between the answers to the questions on NATO's conduct of the war, there is some consistency. Among the NATO countries, France and Italy show majority support for a European alternative to NATO. The question asked specifically about a "new defense and peacekeeping force" to replace NATO; 38% of Europeans sampled supported this idea. However, opposition to such a replacement for NATO is solid in two important original members of NATO, Germany and Great Britain, while the U.S. percentage sits close to the NATO average. The relatively high score for the U.S. is a function of the traditional isolationist streak of Americans and this position, with about one-third public support, argues that Europeans (and other U.S. allies) should pay more for their own defense and commit more military resources (O'Loughlin, 1999). Fearful of the actions of a unilateralist NATO, respondents in Russia and Ukraine, as well
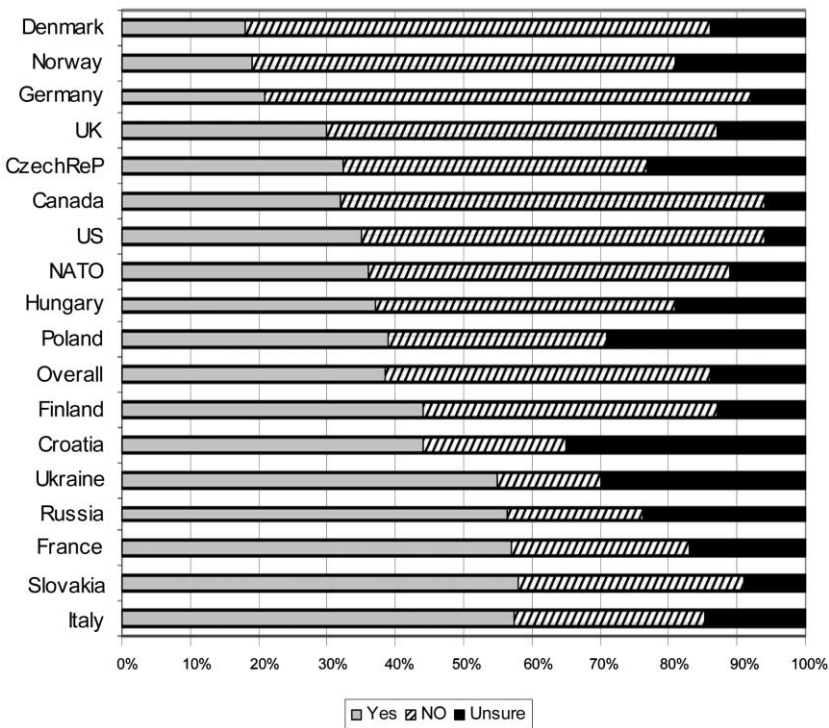

Fig. 3. Public opinion in 16 countries about a possible permanent European Union military force, April 1999. The question asked was: "Should the European Union develop a new military force to replace NATO?" The source is the Angus Reid poll.

as Slovakia, want its replacement by an EU force; the Croatian reaction (42% support, 22% opposition, 36% unsure) reflects the uncertainties of a Europe without NATO as a substantial part of the Balkans currently resides under its protectorate status. Opposition to a new EU military force is also strong in the small NATO states of Denmark and Norway (less than 20% support) and, in a separate survey, respondents in the EU neutral states also opposed the idea (Ireland 27% support and Austria 35% support) (Smyth, 1999).

Though the United States administration argued strongly during the course of the Yugoslavian war that NATO was united and determined to meet its goals, suspicions about the U.S. role in Europe and its long-term aims abound. When asked to contrast Russia and the United States in terms of which state is the greatest threat to world peace, citizens of NATO countries pointed to Russia, 53% to 23%. But in the six non-NATO countries in the Angus Reid sample, a slightly bigger majority pointed to the US, 52% to 19%. (The figures blaming the U.S. as the biggest threat reached 66% in Russia and 57% in Ukraine). Further evidence of the east-west gap in perceptions is provided by the answers to the question asking for an overall positive or negative rating of NATO as a contributor to peace. While the respondents in the NATO countries rated the organization positively by a two-thirds majority, 50% of Russians and 41% of Ukrainians rated it negatively. Further, 75% of respondents in NATO countries believe that the organization should ignore Russia's protests regarding NATO expansion but response to this question is evenly split in non-NATO states.

While the attention of Kosovo war pundits focussed on political developments in Moscow, analysis of the impacts of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia on other former Communist societies in transition has been relatively scarce. Ukraine is most often viewed as the most significant of the post-Soviet independent states for the future direction of NATO-Russian relations (Brzezinski, 1998). Ukraine straddles the new geopolitical divide that is emerging in Europe as criteria for admission to the Western institutions are defined and implemented. Since independence in 1991, successive governments in Kyiv have tried to paint Ukraine in European colors, despite a strong regional divide in the country based largely on ethnicity (Ukrainian and Russian) and ideology (Communist and reform). The Ukrainian government joined Russia in strongly condemning the bombings in Yugoslavia, despite the fact that NATO was a hugely popular institution in the country. By April 1999, 39 % of Ukrainians (and 70% of Russians) in the Angus Reid poll saw NATO as a military threat and dismissive comments by U.S. commentators about Ukrainians as peacekeepers in a U.N. force have only fuelled suspicions about NATO's goals, seen as more geopolitically self-serving than the ostensible goal of protecting Kosovars.[3] NATO has leased a military training ground in Western Ukraine, Ukraine has participated in NATO's Partnership for Peace program and also attended the 50th anniversary celebrations in Washington DC. Reflecting the geopolitical split in the country

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[3] James Rubin, U.S. State Department spokesperson, said that the last thing that NATO needs is "a bunch of Ukrainians running around with guns on their sides" (Andersen, May 27, 1999, 1).

as a whole, polls showed that 50 percent of the Ukrainian population opposed sending troops to Kosovo, with 25 percent in favor.

Public opinion can be fickle and can be manipulated by political leaders assisted by both state-controlled and private media. Nevertheless, extensive polling at the time of the Yugoslavian war demonstrated conclusively the "psychological iron curtain" that is developing in Europe between NATO members (both original and new) and the states to the east, especially Russia and increasingly Ukraine. The Yugoslavian war clarified this geopolitical divide and compared to the NATO-Russia/Ukraine public opinion gap, the differences within the NATO community (except for Greece) are relatively small. Unlike the United States, where elite and public opinion has been consistent over decades about the level and nature of U.S. involvement in world affairs, the citizens of European countries are newly confronted with the unanticipated consequences of dramatic geopolitical shifts on their continent. Parallel to the construction of a European "community" is the parallel determination of future members of the community and the nature of economic and political relations with the states to the east. It is not just public and elite opinion in the west that will determine this outcome but significantly, it will depend on the struggle over the nature of the political transitions in former Communist states as "westerners" and "Eurasianists" compete for the geopolitical futures of Russia and Ukraine (O'Loughlin, 2001a). Eastern Europe and the Balkans have been the geopolitical targets of strategists from the West and the East since the beginnings of political geography and geopolitics as formal disciplines over a century ago. Mackinder's promotion of the region as a buffer zone constraining Russia while he was an advisor to Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, was to be accomplished by the splintering of western Russia into smaller states to be added to the numerous smaller and altered countries created by the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (Parker, 1982). Near the end of World War II, the Allies divided the region clearly into zones of influence, with Russia allocated most of the Balkans. After two centuries of debate about the significance of Pan-Slavism and the importance of the East European buffer as a protection for Russia, the end of the Cold War has thrown all traditional beliefs into disarray. Combined with a turbulent domestic society, Russians demonstrate mixed feelings about the continued significance of the crush zone according to their ideological principles and the state of Russian-Western relations.

Geopolitical futures and public opinion in Russia

As other former Communist countries queue for membership in European institutions, Russian foreign policy debates are revisiting the major geopolitical paradigms that have existed in one form or another since the revolution of 1917. The geopolitical vision of Russia as a Eurasian country (a world unto itself, neither east nor west) is growing beyond its traditional adherents (Clover, 1999) as the grand question of whether Russia is part of the European-Western world or the center of a separate Eurasian sphere has split the political elite. The "Westerners" (*zapadniki*) want to be part of the Atlantic-European community but their opponents (supporters

of an independent Russian great power status) see Westernism as the root of Russia's problems. The perspectives of the centrists and Communists are less dogmatic but veer towards the western and the Eurasian ideologies, respectively. A shared belief that NATO enlargement institutionalizes a new European iron curtain is bridging ideological perspectives. Nearly 100% opposition to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in spring 1999 was accompanied by sympathy for the Serbian people and a condemnation of the actions of the Milosevic regime. Traditional links between the Orthodox peoples of Serbia and Russia were exaggerated by the Pan-Slavists during the Kosovo war. During the scramble for the territories of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans from 1867 to 1913, Russian support for Serbia was inconsistent and haphazard, though Tsar Nicholas I in 1826 obtained autonomy for Serbia from the Ottoman Empire and many Russian volunteers fought in 19th century Balkan wars.

Contemporary Russian public opinion of the Kosovo crisis was greatly colored by, and in turn, influenced domestic political alignments. During the Kosovo war of 1999, the "westernizers" who controlled the Russian policy circles and were associated with reliance on Western financial loans acted to defuse the crisis, and in the end, pressured Serbia to accept a cease-fire in March 1999. By firing Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov in the middle of the Kosovo war, President Yeltsin signified the marginalization of the "anti-Western forces" in Russia; in this regard, by reaching accommodation with the West to settle ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, President Yeltsin behaved as the inheritor of the tradition of Foreign Minister Gorchakov.

Public sensitivities to NATO actions in Eastern Europe were clearly visible in the strong and consistent reaction across the ideological spectrum, a rare occurrence in contemporary Russia. Ranging from Alexander Solzhenitsyn's comparison of NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia to Hitler's Balkan campaign to the milder denunciation of the Westernizers in Moscow, close to 100% of Russians opposed NATO's military campaign, and 70% saw NATO as a military threat to Russia. In the view of many Russians, NATO is engaged in setting up a series of military protectorates (Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo), thus edging into Russia's historic zone of influence (Wallender, 1999; Stepanova, 1999). With the growing turmoil in the Caucasus coupled with the increasing interests of external powers for geopolitical and economic reasons, Russians worry about NATO intentions in the "Near Abroad". Russian geopolitical dilemmas have evolved from the clash of a long tradition of geopolitical isolationism with the contemporary era of geopolitical transition.

The Soviet heritage and contemporary geopolitics

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, attention turned to the nature of the identities that would succeed the Soviet one in the successor states. During the Soviet period, a Leninist nationalities policy in the republics and the autonomous regions encouraged multiple identities, usually Soviet and that of a titular group. The policy was most successful for Russians, by far the largest titular group (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996; Lynn and Bogorov, 1999). As in other republics with similar mixed, overlapping and often conflicting identities, the content of what it meant to be "Rus-

sian" came into the discussion after 1989 (Eckert & Kolossov, 1999; Kliamkin & Lapkin, 1995; Tishkov, 1997). While now widely accepted among academic observers that individuals can have multiple allegiances and national and territorial identities, it is also clear that changes in identities shift in response to contemporary political and cultural developments. After three years of independence in 1994, 63% of respondents in the VCIOM survey of respondents in Russia said that they constantly felt Russian (an additional 17% added "sometimes"), while 35% constantly and 23% "sometimes" still perceived themselves as Soviet people.[4] Moreover in Russia, there is no consensus about the ideology or a set of foundational ideas that could be used as the basis of national unity and social integration. Unlike the United States, for example, where the founding statement of the republic is reified in the Constitution, promoted throughout the education of all American pupils, Russia has no unambiguous and unchallenged document that unites all citizens. Under the conditions of the deep, all-encompassing crisis embracing the country since the early 1990s, about 50% of the Russian population consistently suffer from fear of loss of national resources and national identity. For instance, 60% of respondents to a 1997 VCIOM survey were persuaded that Russia was under threat through the sale of national resources to foreign countries and 46% believed that their political leadership was betraying the "national interests".

The population of post-Soviet Russia inherited important elements of the Soviet mentality — opposition to the outside world, fear of a "hostile environment", strong mechanisms of group solidarity and appeals to symbols of "great powerness" — as compensation for the many humiliations and the psychological damage suffered in the post-Soviet times. President Vladimir Putin (2000) identified four elements of the Russian idea, namely, patriotism ("a source of the courage, staunchness and strength of our people"), social solidarity ("striving for corporative forms of activity that have always prevailed over individualism"), a strong state ("not an anomaly that should be got rid of…. Russians see it as a guarantor of order and the initiator and main driving force for change"), and great power beliefs ("preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitical, economic and cultural existence…determining the mentality of Russians and the policy of the government throughout the history of Russia"). The loss of great power status is deeply felt across the wide spectrum of Russian society. According to a VCIOM survey in 1996, more than two-thirds of the Russian population still regretted the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Unlike most post-Communist Central European countries, pessimistic predictions of the countries' present course and future direction, compared with the recent past, dominate in Russia, as they do in Ukraine and other former Soviet republics, except the Baltic states.

The longstanding perception of a hostile global environment was cultivated by

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[4] VCIOM (Russian Center for Public Opinion and Market Research) is the largest independent research company in Russia and was founded in 1987. It conducts regular social, political and marketing surveys in Russia, CIS countries and the Baltic states. They graciously allowed us access to their archival files of polls, some of whom are available in summary form (in Russian) from www.wciom.ru. The percentages used in this section of the paper are all from the VCIOM archives.

successive Soviet governments and is deeply rooted in Russian and Soviet mass consciousness. Many Russians see their country as a besieged fortress encircled by enemies. As a consequence, they site themselves in opposition to the "other" world. In 1994, 42% of VCIOM respondents fully or partly agreed with the statement that "Russia always provokes negative feelings in other states, and nobody wants us". This feeling was encouraged in the early post-Soviet years by an expulsion of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Russians from the Caucasus, Central Asia and Kazakhstan and by overt anti-Russian nationalism in the independent Baltic states. In 1996, 8% of VCIOM respondents declared that they believed that the military threat to Russia was real and 29% believed in the possibility of external military aggression against Russia. In April 1997, one-quarter of the respondents answered that the military threat to Russia had grown since the beginning of political and economic reforms under Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s.

For centuries, the Russian Empire and its direct successor, the former Soviet Union, built enduring geopolitical "envelopes" around the country to move perceived enemies away from "the besieged fortress"; this classic attempt to create buffers against external threat was directed both east and west (Kolossov & Mironenko, 2001). As a result, there were three such envelopes around Russia by 1991: the belt of Union republics on Russia's borders, the strip of Soviet allies in East-Central Europe and elsewhere and, finally, a discontinuous zone of "countries of socialist orientation", a set that grew significantly in the 1970s. Between 1989 and 1991, all three zones disintegrated. Moreover, NATO's recent enlargement into central Europe up to Russia's borders and incorporating former Soviet allies has made the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad a direct neighbor of Poland, now a NATO member. The perspective of a further eastward expansion of NATO to the territory of the former Soviet Union, for example to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, is highly negative and emotive for much of Russian public opinion.

Though believing in a general encirclement, Russian perceptions of the "other" are not typically aggressive. In 1997, only 17% of Russians explained their frustration with the present-day situation by loss of "external" self-identification towards the outside world. Negative attitudes of Russians are generally not focused against specific national groups, though there are some important exceptions. According to a 1997 VCIOM study, 47% of Russian respondents did not trust or were angry towards Chechens, (and after a series of apartment bomb blasts in Moscow and Rostov in autumn 1999 for which Russia blamed Chechens, this percentage undoubtedly increased dramatically) in addition, 41% were hostile towards Gypsies. In comparison, about 10% are hostile to Jews, 12% to Estonians, and 28% to Azeris. However, ethnic or political mobilization according to a single "oppositional" model that puts Russian identity as a frame of reference against other national groups of the former Soviet Union is simply not feasible among contemporary Russians. For Russians, a combination of a general lack of self-confidence, an uncertain identity and a general distrust of foreigners is not matched by strong negative feelings towards specific nationalities or countries.

The new Russian isolationism

The state of cultural and social disorientation and the lack of identity markers in contemporary Russia have given rise to isolationism, to the desire of individuals to hide themselves from unpleasant realities and to become less aware of their own shortcomings. The results of the *International Social Survey Procedure* "National Identity 1995" program, conducted in 1995–1996 in 22 European countries, as well as the U.S., Canada and New Zealand using consistent methods and questions show that Russian citizens are neither proud of their country nor share a feeling of national exclusiveness (Gudkov, 1999). The ratio of those who believe that their country is "better than most other countries" was 42%, ranking Russia in 13th place of 22 countries (in Japan, positive answers to this question were given by 84% of respondents, in the U.S. by 81%, and in Canada by 77%). In the Russian sample, a remarkably small proportion (44%) would not like to be citizens of any other country. Respondents in a Russian sample rank ninth from the bottom of 65 countries asked in the mid-1990s if they were "proud of their country"; at the other end of the scale, U.S. respondents ranked 3rd from the top of the list. (Data from the World Values Survey; Inglehart, 1997).

Russia has ceased to be a great power in the eyes of most of its citizens. Traditional markers of identity in a great power are belief in the armed forces of the country, feelings of dominance over other nationalities, belief in the nation's ideology, and pride in a glorious and heroic past. This combination helps to nourish "imperial" feelings of self-satisfaction and partly compensates for the frustrations of individuals in their struggles with daily life. However, in contemporary Russia, this combination no longer cements national unity and the common identity of Russians. In the 1995 ISSP polls, only 14% of Russians were proud of their armed forces, compared to 49% of the U.S. and 48% of the British samples. A high level of science and technology education cannot substitute for these markers of self-identification for Russians. Only the domains of national cultural heritage, literature and the arts are highly rated by the Russian respondents and these characteristics could still be used as building blocks of modified ethnic and nation building in the post-Soviet years. The high proportion of citizens that "highly appreciate" their national cultural heritage, perceiving a particular collective solidarity, puts Russia in the company of small European countries like Ireland, Norway and Austria, but not with the traditional "great powers". Characteristically, contemporary Russian identity is oriented to the past, with 45% of Russian respondents "proud of the history of their country", slightly lower than the U.S. sample (50%). However, unlike the U.S., this does not correspond to a more general conviction of their country's dominance in most fields (Gudkov, 1999).

In general in post-Soviet Russia, most expectations and most disillusions concern domestic policy and extend only to the day-to-day economic difficulties and not to foreign policy (Byzov, Petrukov & Ryabov, 1998; Gorshkov et al., 1998). However, the crisis of post-Soviet identity has generated many geopolitical discussions and projections among political parties and especially among Russian intellectuals. An identity crisis is an important stage in the search for regional and global roles in all

the post-Soviet societies, but in Russia, the identity crisis has produced a louder and bitterer debate than elsewhere. Because of Russia's size and the leading role played by Russians in the Soviet state, the loss of Soviet identity cannot be easily or simply compensated by Russian ethnic-building and more expressive nationalism or by a rediscovery of new identity markers, as in most other former Soviet republics (Eckert & Kolossov, 1999). It is of little surprise that in today's Russia, ideologists of different parties, academic scholars and journalists attempt to evaluate Russia's new position in the world. Further, there is wide speculation in Russia about potential external threats to national security, actual and potential allies, and Russia's possible relations with world powers and neighboring states in order to generate new geopolitical codes in the emerging world geopolitical order. Importantly, by the mid-1990s, the term "geopolitics" had become almost monopolized by the opposition to market and liberal reforms on both the left and nationalist flanks. Thus, the Duma Committee on Geopolitics 1995-1999 was chaired by a deputy from Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the term "geopolitics" appears frequently in a book by the Communist party leader (Zyuganov, 1995).

Four main streams of geopolitical thought can be distinguished in the numerous geopolitical (or popular pseudo-geopolitical) publications that have appeared in post-Soviet Russia. (For further details, see O'Loughlin, 2001a). In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Atlantist (Westernizer) geopolitical orientation quickly became the hegemonic geopolitical discourse. After the economic distress of the 1990s, the Westernizers are widely accused by relatively liberal (meaning pro-marketization and democratization in the Russian context) critics and media of ignoring national interests. Further, they are attacked for blindly following the politics of the U.S. and other Western countries and for readiness to "surrender" to the West in the Baltic states, Transcaucasia, and Central Europe. This Atlantist doctrine was based on expectations of Russian development dominant at the end of the Soviet period, 1987–1993, among liberal intelligentsia and most voters, who sincerely believed that Russia would be immediately admitted to full membership in the club of Western powers. Subsequent disappointments in this regard have significantly reduced the attractions of the Atlantist model. The Kosovo war of 1999 further undermined its appeal dramatically.

Second, a new Russian isolationism has manifested itself in a varied and incoherent set of geopolitical concepts. The most interesting among these is the concept of "island Russia", developed by Vadim Zymburski. In his view, a weakened Russia should temporarily keep its distance from world affairs and focus on self-development on the "island" encircled by "straits" — geopolitically unstable and disputed territories resembling Saul Cohen's shatterbelts (Zymburski, 1993, 1997). However, the sense by most Russians of belonging to a great power overrides such isolationism, motivating engagement with world politics, most closely with the "Near Abroad" (Commonwealth of Independent States).

A third geopolitical perspective, the Russian "national" geostrategy, can be considered a variant of either the Atlantist or of isolationist concepts, or as a distinctive concept. It has united Russians who share the values of the market economy and democracy but do not trust promises of Western assistance for post-communist

reforms. This diverse group is skeptical about a future union of Russia with Turkic Muslim republics and is also concerned about "pumping" economic resources out of Russia. This concept demands that Russia withdraw not only from Central Asia but also from Transcaucasia and Muslim areas of the North Caucasus, especially Chechnya and Dagestan. Russians and other Slavs would dominate the remaining region, this match of nation and territory enabling the creation of a truly Russian nation-state. This geostrategy is based on a union with the former Slavic republics of the Soviet Union and argues for promoting the integration of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Northern Kazakhstan in this process. As it incorporates some points of the abandoned 19th-century concepts of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Orthodoxy, supporters of this "national geopolitical" strategy worry about NATO expansion to Russia's borders and view the events in Kosovo in spring 1999 as negatively as the neo-Eurasianists.

The "neo-Eurasian" school, the fourth geopolitical camp, has generated most concern in the Western media (Clover, 1999). Recently revived around the radical leftist opposition newspaper, *Den* (Day), evolving into a related publication *Zavtra* (Tomorrow), neo-Eurasianists claim to be heirs of a longstanding Russian philosophical and political tradition (Smith, 1999). One of its best-known representatives, Alexander Dugin (1997) is author of the manifesto *Osnovy Geopolitiki* (The Basis of Geopolitics) (1997) and founder of *Elementy* (Elements), a geopolitical periodical. Eurasianism was conceived in the 1920s and the 1930s by Russian emigrés in Prague and Paris who considered Russia as a separate and unique geographical and cultural entity with roots simultaneously in the civilizations of the Turkic steppe nomads and in the Slavs of the forests. Contemporary neo-Eurasianists have simplified and primitivized the founding concepts, especially the importance of the age of Mongol domination in the Russian mentality and the separation of the Russian cultural area from the Christian West and its orientation towards the Finno-Ugrian, Siberian and "Turanian" worlds.

Contemporary neo-Eurasianists strongly criticize economic and cultural globalization, viewing with alarm the importation of liberal democracy to Russia. In their view, the West is bent on destroying world cultural diversity to establish a unipolar world geopolitical order that perpetuates the Atlantists' (America's) dream. They promote the perspective that Russia's historical role is to lead global opposition to this American geopolitical order, stressing such slogans as "equality in diversity" and "mutual respect" among peoples and countries. They contrast Slavic and Russian innate cooperative spiritualism with Western pragmatism and practices based on incessantly promoting a senseless course for individualism, material values and consumerism. Mackinder's Heartland theory is well suited to the purposes of Eurasianists because it endowed Russian territory with a particularly important geopolitical role, considered the key to global stability while acting as the geographical center of world politics. (See Bassin, 1991; Dijkink, 1996; Kerr, 1995; Clover 1999).

The neo-Eurasianists remain a small group of intellectuals with little chance of becoming an influential social movement since it is almost impossible to mobilize Russians on the basis of huge utopian visions, as in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Russians are no longer ready to sacrifice private material interests and family well-

being for national glory. Berdiaev's (1938) ambitious objectives and traditional Russian idealistic messianism are artifacts of history. Individual, pragmatic, "petty-bourgeois" values now dominate among Russians. Only 3% of a national sample in 1998 thought the issue of Russians in former Soviet states essential for Russians; over 80% consider it not worthwhile and are unwilling to intervene in the internal affairs of former Soviet countries.

However, the influence of the neo-Eurasianists is much larger than their "direct" political strength. Their arguments are widely used by Gennady Zyuganov (1995), leader of the Russian Communist Party, the largest faction in the Duma after 1995. Sergei Baburin, head of the Russian National Alliance (*Sobor*), agrees geopolitically with Zyuganov, his former political ally (Baburin, 1997). They argue that as most of the world's Heartland was Soviet, this contributed to global Cold War geopolitical equilibrium; they castigate NATO for attempting to subordinate Russia and make it subordinate to major western countries, as a supplier of raw materials. Naturally, the Communist party and other leftist organizations were among the severest critics in Russia of NATO's Balkan policies which offered them the best possible argument justifying their position, a point repeatedly emphasized by George Kennan in his critique of NATO expansion (O'Loughlin, 1999).

Russia and NATO

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian public opinion towards Western countries has reversed. In 1990, 50% of respondents believed in a military threat to Russia. Of those feeling threatened, 33% declared that the U.S. was the source of the threat, 24% Germany, 8% Japan, and 8% NATO. By late 1996, only 2% of respondents believed that America and Germany were enemies, with enemy perception shifting to neighboring countries, with Estonia (22%) and Ukraine (10%) nominated most frequently as threats to Russia. Interestingly, many of these respondents were people with higher education living in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Southern Russia. However, most VCIOM respondents believe that the most important threats to Russian national security originate within Russia. Paradoxically, despite the Kosovo war and difficulties in relations between Russia and NATO, recent polls force the conclusion that there is no consistent anti-Western orientation in most of contemporary Russian society.

Before the 1999 NATO bombing, Kosovo remained a secondary issue for Russians. In early 1999 (before the NATO attacks), only 4% mentioned the Kosovo conflict as an important event occurring in 1998, compared with the 44% who named the Russian financial landslide of August 17, 1998 and the 29% who listed accelerated inflation after the financial collapse. For most respondents, the major foreign event of 1998 was the U.S. and British bombing of Iraq. At the same time, 47% considered the Kosovo conflict to be an internal Yugoslav affair and opposed any foreign involvement. Before the bombing started, 57% to 65% of respondents were against any Russian military involvement in Kosovo.[5] Even after hostilities in

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[5] The same majorities had been against Russian military involvement in the Bosnian civil war, 1992–1995.

Kosovo began, 63% of Russian citizens were "strongly against" or "more against than in favor" of Russian military assistance to Yugoslavia.

The VCIOM polls do not show much support for the so-called Pan-Slavic "civilizational" solidarity of the Russian and Serbian peoples. Only 14-16% of Russians sympathized with Serbs at the time of the Kosovo conflict. Though fewer sympathize with Kosovars, 40% of the respondents blamed both sides for the Kosovo conflict while 39% had no particular sympathies. However, both Ukrainians and Russians fear that the next NATO intervention could be in their domestic conflicts and contribute to further conflict and possible disintegration of their countries. Even the leaders of UNA-UNSO, the strongly anti-Russian Ukrainian ultra-nationalist organization concentrated mostly in western Ukraine and in Kyiv, believes that NATO could support Ruthenian anti-Ukrainian movements in Transcarpathia and Tatars in Crimea (*Nezavissimaya Gazeta*, 19 June 1999).

The official Russian foreign policy strategy, enunciated by President Putin in June 2000, can be summarized as the creation of Russia as an "independent power center in the multipolar world". The Kosovo conflict challenged traditional Russian interests in the Balkans, and indicated that NATO did not intend to maintain its longstanding geographical limits in central Europe. It was no coincidence that, as during the Kosovo war, Russia staged naval exercises in the Baltic, re-armed Armenia, halted oil flows from Azerbaijan through Chechnya, stepped up talks with China about "hegemonism in world affairs", and pressured Ukraine to allow passage of Russian aircraft to the Balkans. Though official Russia, controlled by "westernizers", does not view NATO's actions in Yugoslavia as meriting a highly negative response, jeopardizing relations with the West, any further NATO encroachment on former Soviet territory will likely meet a more robust response, motivated by public opinion and geopolitical theories.

Conclusions

An east-west gradient has existed in Europe for centuries and can be measured by several quantitative geographical, economic and cultural variables, such as geomorphology and climate, river networks and population density, land-use and natural resources, cultural preferences and economic development. For centuries, it has served to justify geopolitical ambitions, dividing neighboring countries into "friends" and "enemies", "ours" and "not-ours". The divide has been a powerful lever in building ethnies and nations and has been important in creating or transforming identities, especially at the supra-national level (Kolossov & O'Loughlin, 1998). However, it is not the struggle between "West" and "East" that determined the post-war and current geopolitical situation but that between modernization and traditionalism at all territorial levels. Most research and commentary on multi-national lines in Eastern Europe (the West versus the rest) perpetuate the tendency to reify the border separating Central and Eastern Europe. It remains unwise to ideologize the current economic and political situation in Europe in terms of a primitive, quasi-biological primordialism and "geological" determinism. All European borders are social constructs that can shift with time (Miller, 1997).

Plans for future coordination with NATO are uncertainly poised while the U.S. remains the dominant military power in the Europe. The answer to the question posed by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt: "Do we all want to become Americans?" is still not clear. Unless the EU departs radically from its cautious enlargement and deepening, the status quo for Europe will continue to keep "the Americans in, the Balkans quiet, and the Russians out" (Tom Friedman, *New York Times*, June 20, 1999, page A25). In the perception of many Russians, the present "Europe", a creation of the Cold War under American dominance, is expanding to surround Russia. It seems probable that this geographic and political encirclement will produce a strong Russian reaction in the form of a search for foreign alliances, domestic revival of the military, pressure on neighboring states, electoral success for anti-Western "patriotic" candidates, and a revival of a cold peace.

As Bismarck noted towards the end of the 19th century, Germany could not pursue military objectives in the Balkans without risking the soldiers' lives. At the end of the 20th century, Russia in Chechnya and NATO in Yugoslavia could pursue political-military objectives through air attacks, minimizing danger to their troops and preempting possible confrontation between democratically elected regimes and popular support for military action. Military technology has widened the range of options of strong states, no longer forced to choose between casualties, credibility and consent. The substitution of civilian for military casualties and destruction of infrastructure does not seem to matter much in the new calculus of war, public opinion and geopolitical strategy.

Public opinion polls in Russia highlight a disparity between perception (Russia as a country strongly antagonistic to the west and supportive of the Serbian regime and other opponents of NATO) and reality (Russians are generally not anti-Western and are overwhelmingly concerned with day-to-day struggles for a decent quality of life). Their major foreign policy concerns extend only to the countries of the "Near Abroad" on Russia's borders and to separatist movements in the Caucasus. Russian foreign policy actions are motivated strongly by a distance-decay effect and events in the (former) NATO theatre of operations are not yet significant enough to merit a strong and consistent political and military response. Russian domestic politics hinders the formation of consistent geopolitical codes. Until the election season of 1999-2000 clearly resolves the future directions of Russian political and economic life at the top, the longstanding issues about the scope of European identity and the extent of Russian insecurity will remain unanswered. We conclude this paper with Bismarck's deathbed prediction: "If there is ever another war in Europe, it will come out of some damned silly thing in the Balkans." Whereas the Balkans constituted a shatterbelt in 1914, recent Western actions have effectively brought the region into NATO's orbit. This suggests that Bismarck will be incorrect about 21st century conflicts. The frontier of geopolitical uncertainty has moved eastward to the borders of Russia, especially in the Caucasus, with the Chechen wars probably the first of many militarized disputes that will determine the geographic extent of Russian power and Western geopolitical reach.

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