

FOCUS

A Just and Necessary War

by William Jefferson Clinton

By the time NATO acted, 250,000 people were dead, more than two million displaced, and many have still not returned. People will look back on Kosovo and say that this time, because we acted soon and forcefully enough, more lives were saved and the refugees all came home. The Balkan conflict that began ten years ago in Kosovo will have ended in Kosovo.

WE are in Kosovo with our allies to stand for a Europe, within our reach for the first time, that is peaceful, undivided and free. And we are there to stand against the greatest remaining threat to that vision: instability in the Balkans, fueled by a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The problem is not simply ethnic hatred, or even ethnic conflict. The people of the former Yugoslavia, have lived together for centuries with greater and lesser degree of conflict, but not the constant "cleansings" of peoples from their land. Had they experienced nothing but that, their nations would be homogeneous today, not endlessly diverse.

The intolerable conditions the region finds itself in today are the result of a decade long campaign by Slobodan Milosevic to build a greater Serbia by singling out peoples for destruction because of their ethnicity and faith. The brutal methods are familiar now. Spreading hate in the media. Killing moderate leaders. Arming paramilitaries and ordering soldiers to conduct planned campaigns of murder and expulsion. Eradicating the culture, the heritage, the very record of the presence of his victims. Refugees are not the byproduct of the fighting he has initiated; the fighting is designed to create refugees. We are haunted by the images of people driven from their homes, pushing the elderly in wheelbarrows, telling stories of relatives murdered.

We saw this for the first time in Croatia and Bosnia. The international community responded at first with a studied neutrality that equated victims

with aggressors; it followed with diplomacy and the deployment of unarmed peacekeepers with mandate, but not the means, to protect civilians. By the time NATO acted, 250,000 people were dead, more than two million displaced, and many have still not returned. People will look back on Kosovo and say that this time, because we acted soon and forcefully enough, more lives were saved and the refugees all came home. The Balkan conflict that began ten years ago in Kosovo will have ended in Kosovo.

We cannot respond to such tragedies everywhere, but when ethnic conflict turn into ethnic cleansing where we can make a difference, we must try, and that is clearly the case in Kosovo. Had we faltered, the result would have been a moral and strategic disaster. The Kosovars would have become a people without a homeland, living in difficult conditions in some of the poorest countries in Europe, overwhelming new democracies. The Balkan conflict would have continued indefinitely, posing a risk of wider war and of continuous tensions with Russia. NATO itself would have been discredited for failing to defend the very values that gave it meaning. Those who say Kosovo is too small to be of great importance forget these simple facts.

When the violence in Kosovo began in early 1998, we exhausted every diplomatic avenue for a settlement. Last October, we convinced Mr. Milosevic that he should withdraw some forces from Kosovo and allow an unarmed international presence. That is the solution advocates of compromise

propose today. But it failed last fall. Mr. Milosevic broke his promises, poured more troops into Kosovo, poised for an offensive he had been planning for months. When it began, we had to act.

Mr. Milosevic's strategy has been to outlast us by dividing the alliance. He has failed. Instead of disunity in Brussels, there are growing signs of disaffection in Belgrade: Serbian soldiers abandoning their posts, Serbian civilians protesting the policy of their leader, young men avoiding conscription, prominent Serbs calling on Mr. Milosevic to accept NATO's conditions. Meanwhile, our air campaign has destroyed or damaged one-third of Serbia's armored vehicles in Kosovo, half its artillery, most of its ability to produce ammunition, all its capacity to refine fuel and done enormous damage to other sectors of its economy. Though he has driven hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians from their homes, Mr. Milosevic has not eliminated the Kosovo Liberation Army. Indeed, its ranks are swelling, and it has begun to go on the offensive against Serb forces hunkered down to hide from air strikes.

Now Mr. Milosevic faces the certainty of continuing air strikes, the persistence of the K.L.A. and the prospect of having to answer to his people for starting an unwinnable conflict



A map released 10 May 1999 provided by NATO shows the different targets in Kosovo.

that is bringing military failure and economic ruin. The question now is not whether his ethnic cleansing will be reversed, but when, and how much of his military he is willing to see destroyed along

the way. While I do not rule out other military options, we are pursuing our present strategy for three reasons. First, and most important, it is working and will succeed in meeting NATO's

basic conditions or restoring the Kosovars to their homes, with Serb forces out of Kosovo and the deployment of an international security force. This force must have NATO at its core, which means it must have

NATO command and control and NATO rules of engagement, with special arrangement for non-NATO countries, just like our force in Bosnia. Our military campaign will continue until these conditions are met, not because we are stubborn or arbitrary, but because these are the only conditions under which the refugees will go home in safety and under which the K.L.A. have any incentive to disarm. The basic requirement of a resolution that will work.

Second, this strategy has broad and deep support in the alliance, and allows us to meet our objectives. While there may be difference in domestic circumstances, cultural ties to the Balkans and ideas on tactics, there is no question about our unity on goals and our will to prevail. I have worked hard to shape our present consensus; 60 days into the air campaign, NATO is more unified on Kosovo than it was at the beginning.

Third, this strategy gives us the best opportunity to meet our goals in a way that strengthens not weakens our fundamental interest in a long term positive relationship with Russia. Russia is now helping to work out a way for Belgrade to meet our conditions. Russian troops should participate in the force that will keep the peace in Kosovo, turning a source of tension into an opportunity for co-operation, like our joint effort in Bosnia.

Finally, we must remember that the reversal of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo is not sufficient to end ethnic conflict in the Balkans and establish lasting stability. The European Union and the United States

must do for southeastern Europe what we did for Western Europe after World War II and for central Europe after cold war. Freedom, respect for minority rights, and prosperity are powerful forces for progress. They give people goals to work for; they elevate hope over fear and tomorrow over yesterday. We can do that by rebuilding struggling economies, encouraging trade and investment and helping the nations of the region join NATO and the European Union. Already, the region's democracies are responding to the pull of integration by sticking with their reforms, taking in refugees and supporting NATO's campaign. A democratic Serbia that respects the rights of its people and its neighbours can and should join them. If it does, we will help to restore it to its rightful place as a European state, not a Balkan state, not a balkanized state at the periphery of Europe.

The Balkans are not fated to be the heart of European darkness, a region of bombed mosques, men and boys shot in the back, young women raped, all traces of group and individual history rewritten or erased. Just as leaders took their people down that road, leaders must take them back to a better tomorrow. Ultimately, we and our allies can help make this happen, if we stick with NATO's campaign and follow through with a strategy to insure that the forces pulling southeastern Europe together are stronger than the forces tearing it apart.

Courtesy: The article, written by the 42nd President of the United States, was published in the Opposite Editorial page of The New York Times on May 23, 1999.

Sino-American Relationship: Trials of Constructive Engagement

by Syed Maqsood Jamil

China's deep involvement with Serbia on Kosovo, serves very few strategic interests. It is a reminder of China's security concerns. She has a handful in Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Observers say that China is apprehensive of Kosovo taking place in their country. Her reaction is symptomatic of a deep seated fear of a China paralysed by turmoil, economic crisis and the indignity of becoming an underling of America. The accidental bombing of Chinese embassy has badly strained Sino-American relationship.

CHINA has never been a natural ally of America. The relationship between the two is close, but lacks the depth of time tested friendship. America has a diplomatic name for it: Constructive Strategic Engagement. A great deal of disapproval and mistrust are active beneath the surface. They do often make it to the top, in the hardening of stand, in tough statements. It is much pronounced in the reactions of public leaders.

The relationship lacks the depth of allies because, they do not have much in common, the things that help trust and dependence to grow. There are prickly points that stand in their way of accepting each other totally. Precisely, these are, democratisation, human rights, recognition of nationalities, Tibet, in particular, the Taiwan issue, trade policies, espionage of strategic technology, indiscreet defence partnership, etc. Most of all, China and America do not share a common view of the world. All the more since Vietnam and its satellites adopted market economy. Discontent appearing as discord has many grounds to thrive. It is prone to become tempestuous. The return of hostility, that loathes to go, cannot be altogether ruled out.

China, for Americans, is a matter of fascination. The land, its civilisation, its people, hold great attraction. They have been stimulating the imagination of the nationalities of the world, for centuries. The opening of China, with the rise of Deng Hsiao Ping, set the Americans on a discovery mission. The state level contact started growing manifold. In the warmth of newly formed relationship, the China spring started blossoming, and continued to prosper. Deng Hsiao Pin was the first Chinese Communist leader of the Long March era to visit America officially in 1979. The picture of Deng with a cowboy hat, carries the fond memory of those euphoric days of Sino-American relationship.

Deng, and the China, he built, needed America. He wanted that China should never again return to turmoil and

backwardness of radical communism. It was his formula of burying, for ever, the brutal and unpredictable change of Chinese leadership, and pacifying the ranks on which it rode. In market economy, he saw a tool, which he used with great determination and success. The material benefits China saw, changed it. China, to all sensible calculations, will not return to the Great Leap Forward of the great Helmsman Mao. Communist Party will, however, continue to rule, and without any dissent, as the only party. It will travel the path of market economy, instead of Marxist economy.

In the last two decades, the rewards of market economy has made China into a robust economic power. The most favoured nation status of 1990 was to greatly benefit China. The economic boom transformed its society, its people. It no longer presents the drab picture of unisex Mao coats. China is following the American model in modernizing its society. A natural observation is more likely to believe that China is ideally suited to become an unquestioning partner of America in the new world order. The similarity of economic approach makes it easier to think that these two countries can interact closely in broader policies. The best thing America expects from this transformation is to find China in the mould of an European ally, on a lesser level, like France. In Asia, like Japan. That is like asking the mountain to come to you. Even the optimist finds it a remote possibility.

Domestically, China and America operate within systems, which set them apart. The monolithic structure of communist party stifles dissent. America, on the other hand, is a democratic society which values human rights. It is her moral ground to world leadership. The differences are of fundamental nature. This incompatibility is a favourable ground for seeds of mistrust to grow into bitter hostility. The accidental bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade has brought to the fore the realities of Sino-American relationship.

It was a mistake of grave nature. The rational that even a Kosovar refugee convoy was bombed accidentally by NATO air strike, does not make it a lesser event. The loss of innocent human lives, three in the Chinese embassy and 60 in the refugee convoy, is tragic and regrettable. America was as apologetic as an offender could be. Its formal expression of apology and regret could not, however, succeed in convincing China to tone down its protest. At last, Clinton's personal call to Jiang Zemin could claim its national pride. The outburst was unlike an ally, conducting relationship through diplomatic contacts. Instead, China's reaction was terribly angry, furious in its condemnation. The official condemnation is much strident in its tone, terming the bombing as "barbaric attack", a gross violation of Chinese national sovereignty, seldom seen in diplomatic history."

In the line of fire, the American embassy was stoned. A close ally is not treated like that. China observers point out the xenophobic trait in the Chinese history. In the last century, it surfaced in the opium war—1839-42, 1852-62. Later, in the Boxer Rebellion of August 1900, which put the European missions in Peking under siege. Mao's cultural revolution was the vicious picture of xenophobic element, characterising America as the enemy number one. It will not be a thing of sheer disbelief, if America is once again characterised as evil. For that matter, America has indeed been denounced as Neo-Nazi in the Beijing street protests.

China has benefited much from America's constructive engagement policy. After getting the most favoured nation status, even after the grisly episode of Tiananmen Square,

China kept on piling the benefits. Eventually, the trade deficit in favour of China has reached 4.3 billion dollar mark. It keeps growing, because, China is yet to open its economy sufficiently to allow access to American goods and services. On top of it, is the allegation of Chinese high tech spying. It is reported that an US legislative committee headed by Representative Christopher Cox has prepared a 700-page report documenting the impact of Chinese spying on American national security. It catalogues a Chinese concerted effort to get US missile, rocketry and nuclear secrets. Among them is Chinese involvement in espionage at the top security National Laboratory of Los Alamos, New Mexico.

China's bellicose one China policy on Taiwan rattles America. Americans do not fully trust China's pacific intention in solving the Taiwan issue. This led America to provide Theatre Missile Defence (TMD), on the line of Reagan's Star War. China's reaction was equally hostile in firing missiles close to the shore of Taiwan. Many Americans question the wisdom of granting China, the MFN status, while its attitude towards Taiwan, treatment of Tibet and human rights issues have been consistently high-handed. Beijing, on the other hand, censures the democratisation process inside Taiwan.

Tibet is another issue, America cannot abandon. Reports inform that a systematic policy of weakening the Tibetan national identity has, over the years, fragmented its original population. Much of Tibet has been annexed into Chinese provinces, leaving it with a population of 2.2 million, down from original 6 million. China calls Tibet a "historical terri-

tory". The Muslims of Xinjiang are living under rigid control. These are issues which America cannot ignore. They deal with the credibility of America, as the leader of the unipolar world. China perceives these issues differently. The map of China is close to the heart of its perception of China as the world power. Particularly, for this reason, the Russian example is an outrage for China. They look on the dismantling of communist structure as a prescription for peril. In their estimation, advantages offered by the authoritarian one party commu-

nist rule guarantees their national security. There is little possibility, that the world will see the wearing way of China from communist party. China feeds on the belief that the centrifugal forces of communist party holds China together. Western democracy will weaken the foundations of sweeping state powers, its leaders, over the years, have relentlessly built communist party into the national structure.

Communist party, even when it rides the vehicle of market economy, is an abomination to American leaders. With Presidential and congres-

sional elections due in the year 2000, they will find the hardening of stand against China, favourable. By a natural reckoning, the Republicans will lead the hardliners. Already Senator McCain, supported by Bob Dole, has spoken in favour of a tough stand against China. There are many among the public leaders who see wisdom in blocking China's membership in World Trade Organisation. The Republican Presidential hopefuls are likely to gain by speaking more forcefully on the issue. Al Gore will also try not to look soft on the issue.

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underling of America. The accidental bombing of Chinese embassy has badly strained Sino-American relationship. In a relationship, where highly sensitive national pride and deep rooted mistrust are dominant factors, how it is going to affect their ties remains to be seen. It is believed that they understand the wisdom of quickly repairing the relationship.

The importance and urgency of bilateral economic interest have far reaching influence on Sino-American relationship. They simply cannot push it behind, to carry on the sabre rattling. This is likely to prevail on them, in taking sincere efforts at building even firmer understanding, which can weather such unpleasantness, without raising any storm. The understanding should allow their co-operation to function, even in disagreements. That will be a heartening news for the next century, and indeed for the world.

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