

Alex J. Bellamy, *Kosovo and International Society* (Palgrave Macmillan, London and New York, 2002). 259pp. ISBN 0-333-999260-1. Hardback, £47.50.

This book is a diplomatic history of international involvement in the Kosovo crisis up to June 1999, focusing on the factors that led NATO into war and influenced the manner in which the war was waged.

Bellamy's cover choice of the opening ceremony of NATO's fiftieth anniversary summit in Washington in April 1999 tells us more about the book's contents than its liberal-leaning title. This book is essentially concerned with *realpolitik* rather than norms and values and is a straightforward description and defence of NATO military and political strategy. The bulk of the work focuses on a positive contrasting of NATO's strategy of gunboat diplomacy with earlier legal and diplomatic approaches of the international community which 'mistakenly' respected Yugoslav sovereignty. Along the way he defends NATO strategy against liberal interventionist critics who have condemned the reliance on air power and reluctance to send in ground troops and also against critics from the Left who have suggested that the US was keen to force the conflict and undermine diplomatic solutions.

Bellamy's empirical focus throws up some probing questions of broader international strategy towards Yugoslavia, and Kosovo in particular. The strongest chapter is probably the first one in which he asks why Kosovo was dropped from the international agenda as soon as the international community had forced the recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia. He concludes that the failure to pursue a Yugoslavia-wide constitutional settlement and the international recognition of republics based on their internal administrative borders left the Kosovo Albanians without any representation or legal standing.

Although arguing that the EU and the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia made legal and diplomatic errors, he recognises the *realpolitik* behind the sidelining of Kosovo. Raising the Kosovo issue after recognition of the secessionist states would have strengthened the case of other minorities who wanted to change republic borders, like the Croatian and Bosnia Serbs. Bellamy usefully highlights that the status of the Kosovo issue depended on international interests rather than the situation in Kosovo itself. This was particularly the case once Milošević was seen as central to brokering an international solution to the war in Bosnia.

The return of Kosovo to the international agenda in 1998 is viewed as an inevitable result of what Bellamy terms 'malign non-engagement' the reintegration of Yugoslavia into the international community and international recognition that Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia. The lack of international attention to Kosovo resulted in the war by encouraging the rise of the KLA and forcing Kosovo Albanians to attempt to internationalise the situation through armed struggle. Bellamy charts at length the growing international involvement of the UN, EU, NATO and the international Contact Group from this point on and focuses at length on the politicking within the US State Department and diplomatic wrangling between leading Western states and between Russia the US and Belgrade, noting that the Kosovo Albanians had little voice in these diplomatic processes nor the gradual shift towards war at the 'peace negotiations' at Rambouillet and Paris.

NATO military strategy is defended and justified against a range of critics who are seen to be peddling 'myths': Rambouillet wasn't designed to fail; NATO action didn't lead to humanitarian disaster, this was an inevitable product of the pre-planned massive ethnic cleansing of 'Operation Horseshoe' although Bellamy doesn't seem sure if there is 'evidence' for this or not; the accidental NATO bombing of Albanian refugees may even have been due to the Serbs giving NATO false information. In short, the war was a success and NATO showed itself to have become a 'mature' security community, sharing an identity and values which makes the unilateral use of force legitimate.

Unsurprisingly the book does not consider post-conflict Kosovo. One reason for this is unquestionably that, in the longer term, the recourse to war rather than diplomacy has appeared to be much less of a viable solution than its advocates assumed. The continuing denial of Kosovo Albanian rights under the international protectorate and 'reverse ethnic cleansing' against non-Albanian minorities indicate the lasting destructive nature of the war and its negative impact on all of the communities in Kosovo. Bellamy's defence of black and white external military solutions to the complex problems of the Balkans is spirited, but one that fits ill with the facts. While the

opening chapters raise interesting questions over the inter-relationship between international policy and events on the ground, Bellamy's critical edge is quickly blunted where NATO is concerned. This is a shame.

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