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FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ARTS AND HUMANITIES

**The British Labour Party and the Break-up of Yugoslavia 1991-1995:
A Historical Analysis of Parliamentary Debates**

by

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Thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy

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“...differences between the parties have almost disappeared. Most of the differences between the parties are on foreign affairs, and often they are greater inside the parties than between them.”¹

“Foreign policy has always contained a reliable left-right fracture. Now the fracture was along some more obscure axis, and within both the left and the right.”²

¹ Denis Healey in an interview in *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 2009, p20.

² John Major writing about the break-up of Yugoslavia, in *John Major – the Autobiography*, (London: Harper Collins, 1999. Paperback 2000) p535.

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ARTS AND HUMANITIES

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THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY AND THE BREAK-UP OF YUGOSLAVIA
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by Ann Marie Schreiner

The break-up of Yugoslavia, and the ensuing wars, dominated the British foreign policy agenda for the first half of the 1990s. The way in which the British Government reacted to the series of crises was a matter of ongoing scrutiny by those within and outside of Parliament. The complex nature of the conflicts, in the early years of the post Cold War world, meant that responses by British politicians were in no way based on traditional ideological divisions, that is, M.P.s did not form neat, homogenous groups reflecting the three political currents. The Labour Party was no exception to this rule. The thesis is a study of the way in which politicians of the Labour Party responded to the break-up of Yugoslavia, and the way its M.P.s reacted to events in the region, and to the actions of the British Government.

With close reference to Parliamentary debates as recorded in *Hansard*, the thesis shows the many and complex ways in which politicians from one British political party responded to a foreign policy episode. What is demonstrated is that a number of factors influenced the opinions of the politicians. One would expect to find some level of front and back bench division. However, what is apparent is much more complex. Whilst, in general, the Shadow Cabinet mirrored the responses of their Parliamentary opponents, of more interest is the way in which the back bench politicians contributed to debates. Some M.P.s followed the example of their senior colleagues, whereas others took totally different positions. However, the motivations for these opinions varied. It is not possible to offer a simple, generalised reading of the responses that were taken by members of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Contributions to debates were influenced by a variety of features: namely, the way in which an individual viewed an international institution such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Union; the attitude that they took towards military intervention; and finally, the way in which the events of the Second World War informed their position on a contemporary conflict.

The thesis adds to the research undertaken by scholars such as Brendan Simms and Mark Phythian. Through close reference to debates in *Hansard*, this work offers the opportunity to gain a much more detailed understanding of the responses of one British political party to one episode in international relations.

CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
Author's declaration	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
I Literature Review	22
British Politics and the Break-up of Yugoslavia	22
The Power of Stereotypes? Describing the Balkans	27
New Labour Foreign Policy	33
Pragmatism vs Ideology: Studies of the Labour Party's Traditional Approach to Foreign Policy	49
Conclusion	56
II Positioning the Conflict in the International Arena	59
Labour Party and the 'Unity' around the United Nations	59
Thinking about a New World Order – a genuine solution? A European Solution?	68
Europhile and Euro-sceptic undercurrents	72
Precursors to Blair? The Labour Party and NATO	81
Conclusion	86
III Starting to Intervene – Sanctions and Arms Embargoes	89
Humanitarian Intervention – the wider debate	92
Doing something – introducing sanctions	100
The Arms Embargo – arguments for and against	111
Conclusion	125

IV	Acceptable Military Options? No-Fly Zones and Air Strikes	128
	Supporting the No-Fly Zone	129
	Support for Air Strikes	131
	Against Air Strikes	148
	Conclusion	157
V	Do More! Demands for Further Intervention	161
	Labour Warriors? Calls for Military Intervention	162
	Opposing Military Action	178
	Conclusion	197
VI	Legacies of History: the use of Second World War images in Parliamentary Debates	200
	History as a Warrant for Intervention	202
	Using the Past to Condemn the Present	221
	Conclusion	234
	Conclusion	236
	Appendix 1: Hansard Parliamentary Debates and Hansard Oral Answers	243
	Sources and Bibliography	248

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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1991-1995:

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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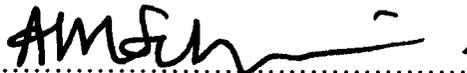
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INTRODUCTION

The break-up of Yugoslavia began in 1991 and lasted until the end of the decade. This period included the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, and the later NATO action against Serbia in 1999.¹ Across Europe, the outbreak of war on the continent provoked extensive debate within political and intellectual circles alike.² This was no less the case in Britain, where the question of how to deal with events in the Balkans became a topic for regular discussion in Parliament. The Parliamentary Labour Party contributed a broad range of interpretations. As has been well documented, the party has typically included politicians from a variety of ideological strands, that is, from those representing a more traditionally social democratic position to those who espouse a socialist perspective.³ These politicians provided a wealth of responses to the questions posed by the onset of the war. This thesis presents an original analysis of how they responded to an international relations crisis which brought chaos to the post Cold War world.

The thesis examines parliamentary debates which focussed on the break-up of Yugoslavia during the years 1991-1995 and other related issues, for example the

¹ The NATO action against Serbia was in response to the policy against the Kosovo Albanians that the Serbian Government was pursuing in Kosovo. The military campaign by the Alliance came after a prolonged period of international diplomacy in the quest to find some form of resolution for the region.

² Some examples of the work which was published include: Alain Finkielkraut, *Dispatches from the Balkan War and Other Writings*, translated by Peter S. Rogers and Richard Golsam (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. Part of the book was published as *Comment peut-on être croate?* Éditions Gallimard, 1992); and Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz (eds.), *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan War* (Stony Creek, Connecticut: The Pamphleteer's Press, 1993).

³ The following works all outline the broad ideological roots on which the Labour Party was founded, and how, to this day, this range of opinions still permeates through the party in Parliament: Brian Brivati and Richard Heffernan (eds.), *The Labour Party – a Centenary History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000); John Callaghan, *Socialism in Britain since 1884* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990); Keith Laybourn, *A Century of Labour – A History of the Labour Party* (Stroud, Glos: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000); and Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997). There are plenty more titles which explore similar themes; these are just a small selection.

imposition of sanctions and the use of airstrikes.⁴ It charts the stance taken by Labour politicians from across the party, that is, from those in the Shadow Cabinet to those on the back benches. The study shows how the main party of the left reacted to a foreign policy incident, and details how the views and opinions of its politicians evolved and developed during the period.

In a broader historical context, the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina raised many issues in the post Cold War world. International relations, previously dominated by the two superpowers and the realities of living within a bipolar world, was confronted by a series of new, challenging and difficult questions. In Britain, the start of these wars within Europe led to testing times for international diplomacy, with a pervading air of powerlessness, or an inability to deal with what was taking place. Within Parliament, politicians had to take decisions regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia which were no longer determined by Cold War realities. Thus, the opportunity to discuss topics previously considered an anathema, such as the sidelining of Russia with regard to NATO action in the Balkans, became a real part of Parliamentary debate. In this thesis I demonstrate how one political party reacted to one foreign affairs episode, and illustrate the complexities and conflicting views that shaped the debate, against the backdrop of a supposed 'new world order'.

The thesis offers a detailed study of how deliberations on the break-up of Yugoslavia were conducted during the course of that period (1991-1995). It traces how external factors influenced policy debated within the British House of Commons, and shows how party ideology related to discussions on international relations. My intention is to analyse the vast range of responses and reactions to the break-up of Yugoslavia that existed within the British Labour Party. The thesis shows that

⁴ A list of all of the debates that have been studied for this thesis is noted in Appendix 1.

Parliamentary Labour Party reaction to these wars was not based on one homogenous position informed by a specific discernable core ideology or policy statement. Neither was there a clear divide between the front bench and back bench politicians. Instead, what is demonstrated is that these responses cover the whole gamut of opinions conceivable on the range of issues examined herein. The sub-commentaries that I will reveal include: tensions between those in favour of NATO action and those who supported the United Nations; debates regarding the scale of intervention, namely humanitarian relief versus military action; and divisions between politicians in their support for the different constituent national groups within the former Yugoslavia.

As is shown within this study, the Shadow Cabinet offered a unified response to the unfolding crises in the Balkans. Whilst one would expect the front bench of the main Opposition party to present a consensual stance, of note here is that there was little striking difference between the Shadow Cabinet and the approach taken by the Conservative Government. The study will illustrate the position taken by these Labour politicians on a range of issues, and in the main it will show that there was little to divide the two front benches in their responses to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Whilst it is important to note that there were some differences in opinion, as will be shown, these distinctions were marginal, and cannot be viewed as a clear attempt by the Labour Party to present a comprehensive alternative to the policies undertaken by the Conservative Government. I therefore show that at this level, that is on the front benches, bi-partisanship in foreign policy was, albeit with some exceptions, maintained.

Contributions from back bench politicians of the Labour Party provide a complex area of study. The thesis shows that a multitude of views existed within this group of figures, showing little evidence of consistency amongst those from the same

political party. What is shown here is that responses from the Labour back benches varied from those who expressed agreement with their front bench colleagues, to those who demonstrated views identifiable as being more of the left wing, and finally to those contributing opinions that bore no resemblance to either the front bench, or the opinions of the left wing of the party. Politicians in this category included Tony Banks and Ken Livingstone who both advocated a strong position on intervention. What is shown then is how traditional Labour figures were very often divided in their views, leading to some on the left to express opinions that one would not expect to see from this branch of the party. Thus, Tony Banks, as has been previously mentioned, was proactive in his calls for intervention, whereas his back bench colleague Tony Benn was vehemently opposed to military intervention. This had the consequence of seeing unusual and unexpected alliances between figures that, under normal circumstances, would share little common ground.⁵ Conversely, it meant that politicians who were normally united in positions held on key issues were, in this instance, standing on opposite sides of a debate. Another factor which dominates the thesis is that back benchers who shared similar views did not always do so for the same reasons, thus motivations were often very different. This is most graphically illustrated in the debates that took place on the issue of military intervention. Reasons for the support of such action varied from an almost Benthamite approach to the situation, that is, the policy to be implemented should be for the greatest good of the greatest number of people, through to promoting British national interest, an inherent dislike of appeasement, and a means with which to criticise the lack of action of the Major Government. This thesis explores the vast range of views within the Labour

⁵ Tony Banks's calls for intervention mirrored the remarks made by Margaret Thatcher, a figure situated on the right of the Conservative Party. It is unlikely that these two figures would normally share agreement on political issues.

Party that surrounded the wars in Yugoslavia, and how surprising divisions – and indeed unions – arose from such deliberations.

The primary source used in this thesis focuses on Parliamentary debates from the British House of Commons. All proceedings are recorded in *Hansard*. These volumes provide a verbatim account of daily proceedings at Westminster. Using this material enables the thesis to show the wealth of opinion and comment that developed on the break-up of Yugoslavia within the Labour Party during the years 1991-1995. Examining the debates offers a chance to identify common themes and strands of discussion. It also enables the reader to recognise how different figures within the Labour Party presented their views, and reacted to each other. A broad range of politicians is studied, either from the front bench, thus presenting an official Shadow Cabinet stance, or those on the back benches of the House of Commons. The comments of these figures present the views of those not constrained by the responsibilities of being on the front bench of the party, thus presenting us with perhaps more frank, colourful contributions to the debates.

Using a source such as *Hansard* presents the historian with a range of both strengths and weaknesses. The advantages of such a document mean that it is possible to see how M.P.s reacted on a very immediate basis to events in the Balkans. Thus, any debate referring to a particular incident usually occurred just days later. This means that one is able to see how politicians reacted to issues and events in their immediate aftermath. The immediacy of the material then means that one is able to read almost instant responses to various crises. Using *Hansard* as the main primary source also affords the opportunity to examine all M.P.s and not just those who have subsequently published diaries and autobiographies. This means that those politicians, who perhaps enjoy a slightly lower profile than other, better known faces, are able to

be treated in an equal fashion. Likewise, as *Hansard* records everything which takes place in Parliament, it presents an opportunity to read the responses and reactions of the different politicians over the full four year period of study. This is something which may not be possible using other sources.

All sources present problems to the historian and *Hansard* is no exception. The House of Commons is frequently criticised as having a combative atmosphere, and of being a place where some politicians can be accused of ‘showboating’. This is especially true of the weekly Prime Minister’s Questions. As *Hansard* provides a word-by-word account of debates, it is possible to read all of the insults and more colourful remarks that are made in the House of Commons. This could mean that the quality of the material provided from *Hansard* is diluted due to the type of comments made by different politicians. However, after consideration of the debates examined for this thesis, it is fair to suggest that although there are examples of ‘showboating’ by some politicians, in the main, there is a large amount of good material from which to draw. Another weakness that can be identified from the use of *Hansard* as the key primary source is based on its presentation. Debates are published in column formation. From a purely practical point, it is fairly difficult to cross reference and easily identify appropriate speeches. Similarly, although there is a general index detailing debates, there is no one effective way to track one particular M.P.’s contributions on a particular topic. However, after the consideration of all of these points, it would be fair to say that *Hansard* has been an extremely rich and detailed text upon which to base this thesis, with its strengths easily eclipsing its shortcomings.

METHODOLOGY

Parliamentary debates are meticulously recorded in *Hansard*, the official report of all political business conducted within the Palace of Westminster. Despite the existence of an internet search engine for this resource, it has been more reliable to trawl through the archives by hand. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, this method has frequently been affected by the difficulties rendered by unreliable quirks that electronic databases can often present. In addition to this technical point, Parliamentary debates that covered issues pertaining to the former Yugoslavia were not necessarily clearly sign-posted as being on that particular topic. This is related to the use of 'key words' when using an internet search engine. Obviously a search is only as good as the words inputted at the beginning of the entire process: omissions at this stage could lead to relevant debates being missed. For example, discussions on wider issues such as the European Union would frequently include useful deliberations on the Balkans that would prove to be valuable to this study.⁶

Thus four years worth of debates from the House of Commons have been assessed in order to access debates pertaining to the break-up of Yugoslavia.⁷ This period covers the key, landmark developments that took place in the region, namely the initial breakdown in relations between the component republics of the Yugoslav federation, continuing through to the wars in Slovenia and Croatia, and the prolonged Bosnian conflict, ending with the Dayton agreement at the end of 1995. As well as enabling me to identify debates with obvious relevance, for example 'Bosnia', this approach has also offered the chance to find debates on related topics, such as 'Air Strikes'; use of the internet search engine would not necessarily have picked up such examples. In all, some 62 debates have been analysed from the years 1991-1995.

⁶ See, for example, *European Council (Luxembourg)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 July 1991), and *European Council (Copenhagen)* (Official Report, Hansard: 23 June 1993).

⁷ Please see Appendix I.

Additionally, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs questions from this period (1991-1995) have also been examined; this has offered the chance to highlight individual causes of concern or interest that specific M.P.s might have raised with either the Foreign Secretary, or one of his Ministers.

Broadly speaking, the methods of analysis used herein fall midway between the approaches demonstrated by Brendan Simms and Norman Fairclough.⁸ Brendan Simms's work, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, is a damning critique of the way in which Britain responded to the break-up of Yugoslavia.⁹ Although Simms does look at the British Parliamentary response, he examines the positions taken by all of the political parties, and does not analyse the Labour Party in-depth.¹⁰ Simms's work offers a general comprehensive study of British policy towards Bosnia during the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Fairclough presents an analysis of the development of ideas within New Labour. He uses the study of language and communication to show how the Labour Party presents its political ideas and policies. Analysis of political speeches shows how various issues are highlighted and focussed on by the government. Particularly relevant to this study is Fairclough's chapter on Kosovo.¹¹ He uses Blair's speeches to show how the argument for NATO intervention was presented to a wider audience. As Fairclough explains, "(t)he world is simplistically divided in Blair's speech into 'us' and 'the dictators', 'goodies' and 'baddies' ".¹² He further explains that in many ways the language used is 'disguising' reality:

⁸ Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001); and Norman Fairclough, *New Labour, New Language?* (London: Routledge, 2000)

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.* See pp297-300.

¹¹ Norman Fairclough, *Op cit.*, 'Chapter 6: Rhetoric and Reality: Kosovo', pp142-160.

¹² *Ibid.*, p154.

When I say language is disguising reality, I am not suggesting that there is a reality 'out there' which we can all see if we simply look in the right way. All we have are different representations of reality, drawing on different discourses. But that does not mean that all representations and discourses are equally good. ... So talking about a gap between rhetoric and reality is a shorthand way of questioning particular representations of reality – suggesting in this case that Blair's representation of reality is not as good as others (perhaps, for instance, those in a special issue of *New Left Review* devoted to the war).¹³

This thesis by no means presents a deeply complex linguistic analysis. It is a work of detailed contemporary history. However, the speeches of the different politicians are analysed and used to present an indication of the key debates that occurred during the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The method used within this thesis is a compromise approach sited someway between the two different examples discussed; that is, following a more detailed study of the Labour Party politicians than Simms, but without employing the linguistic analysis of Fairclough. If suggesting an example of a similar methodology to that used within this thesis, Oliver J. Daddow's work on British and European relations demonstrates a comparable style of 'soft discourse analysis', whilst offering meticulously presented insights into primary source material for the political historian.¹⁴

Secondary literature on the Labour Party and the precise subject of foreign affairs has, until the emergence of New Labour, been sporadic at best. The existing historiography typically focuses on two particular periods; either the years in the first half of the twentieth century, to include both the First and Second World War and the onset of the Cold War, or the years after 1997, and the emergence of New Labour.¹⁵

¹³ *Ibid*, pp154-5.

¹⁴ Oliver J. Daddow, *Britain and Europe since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914 – 1965* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969); Eugene J. Meehan, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960); John F. Naylor, *Labour's International Policy – The Labour Party in the 1930s* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); John Saville, *The Politics of Continuity – British Foreign Policy and the Labour Government, 1945-46* (London: Verso, 1993); Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World: Volume 1 – The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900-51* (Manchester: Manchester

This study then is positioned outside of either of these periods, that is, in the period after the end of the Cold War, but before the election of Labour as the party of Government. When locating this thesis in the wider historiography the works that are of most relevance here, are those by Eugene J. Meehan, Michael R. Gordon, and Rhiannon Vickers.¹⁶ These all offer suggestions as to the trends that the Labour Party, or in its widest sense the British left wing, has followed in the area of international relations, and the effectiveness that the party has shown in basing foreign policy on the principles of its ideology. Meehan has observed that “the evidence supports the view that strict adherence to the principles of an ideology is not really compatible with the responsibility of high office.”¹⁷ This view is echoed by Gordon in his commentary of the Attlee Government and its foreign policy, his analysis outlines four principles of socialist foreign policy: internationalism; working class solidarity; anti-capitalism; and anti-militarism.¹⁸ After an assessment of the 1945-51 Government, Gordon questioned “whether the party would adapt to the inescapable realities in foreign policy to which the Labour Government itself readily adapted.”¹⁹ This again shows a stress between the realities of office and the dogmatism of ideology. Vickers has given a similar assessment of such difficulties, stating that “the Labour Party itself has had great difficulty theorising and analysing the nature of its ideological stance on foreign policy.”²⁰ The one key principle that she does highlight is the issue of internationalism. This, Vickers argues, has been “espoused by Labour leaders from

University Press, 2003) are all examples of work that focus on Labour Party foreign policy in the first half of the twentieth century; Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones, *New Labour's Foreign Policy – A new moral crusade?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); and John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: The Free Press, 2003) focus on the period since 1997.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Eugene J. Meehan, *Op cit.*, p175.

¹⁸ Michael R. Gordon, *Op cit.*, pp13-43.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p286.

²⁰ Rhiannon Vickers, *Op cit.*, p192.

Keir Hardie to Tony Blair.²¹ These particular works then provide a political, historical and ideological context for this thesis.

Of most importance for this study, with regard to the break-up of Yugoslavia, is Brendan Simms's work, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*.²² A broad-scale study, it examines the actions of the British government, key British figures such as David Owen, and 'experts' who offered opinions on the Balkans. He considers that these individuals and groups, and others, all failed in their responses to the war in Bosnia. A wide-ranging work, his analysis offers a damning indictment of how all sections of the British establishment failed the people of Bosnia. In many cases, this is indeed a fair analysis of events. However, my work will show that within the Labour Party, there were politicians who spoke out against the status quo, and who campaigned for a more assertive policy to be taken *vis-à-vis* the Balkans. What is interesting, is that the motivations behind these M.P.s varied considerably; these included, promoting Britain's national interest, others wanted to avoid a late twentieth century episode of appeasement, whereas another group used their speeches to criticise John Major's Government, using the opportunity to show that the Conservative Party was very much on the decline. It is not unfair to say that, in certain cases at least, Simms's argument offers a much too general, comprehensive condemnation of British thinking on the break-up of Yugoslavia. Therefore, this thesis positions itself between the aforementioned works on Labour Party foreign policy and Brendan Simms's specific work on the war in Bosnia. The intention of this study is to bridge this gap in the current historiography. This research then is located within the broad area of contemporary British political history; more specifically the study focuses on Labour Party debates on one particular aspect of British foreign policy,

²¹ *Ibid*, p193.

²² Brendan Simms, *Op cit*.

namely the break-up of Yugoslavia. The thesis examines the way in which different politicians reacted to international institutions, and how these organisations were either favoured or dismissed. The analysis of the issue of intervention, and the way in which a 'sliding scale' of policies was discussed, demonstrates how Labour Party M.P.s reacted to changing British involvement in the region. Finally, the thesis demonstrates how images from the Second World War were used to 'frame' the contemporary conflict, and highlights the way that politicians used events from the past to inform their understanding of the formulation of a coherent policy towards the break-up of Yugoslavia.

In this thesis I use several key terms which must now be defined. Firstly, the use of *ideology* herein is employed to describe a broad set of political ideas. My use of the term is through a truth-neutral, non Marxist definition as explored by Martin Seliger.²³ Thus, no judgement is being offered on the merits or otherwise of the ideologies under discussion here; the use of the word is merely to identify a particular political viewpoint. Further, the use of the word herein "avoids making value-based judgements as to what is or is not ideological."²⁴

The use of the terms *traditional* or *old* when referring to the Labour Party denotes the party that existed from its inception in 1900 through the majority of the twentieth century until the mid-1990s. The often used, even hackneyed, notion of the party being a 'broad church' fits well into this definition of Labour. Thus the Attlee Government of 1945-51 would be a literal example that best exemplified this belief system. For the purposes of offering a definition here, the phrase *New Labour* will be used to identify the Labour Party that has existed since 1994 and the death of the party's former leader John Smith. Whilst he was in the process of modernising the

²³ See Martin Seliger, *Ideology and Politics* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1976)

²⁴ Hugo Frey, *Teach Yourself 101 Key Ideas History* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002) p44.

party, the emergence of Tony Blair as the new Leader of the Opposition hastened the party's evolution into that with which we are familiar today.

The thesis is composed of six chapters, the first being a survey of the existing literature in this field, whilst the remaining chapters offer a thematic analysis of Labour Party deliberations and debates. Chapter one maps out both the historiography pertinent to this thesis, and that which informs the broader picture. To this end, the literature covered within the chapter includes more general surveys of the nature of the Labour Party, alongside works that examine the party's stance on highly specific foreign policy issues. As well as this body of work, the chapter will also focus on writers who examine the Balkans, and Britain's relationship with the region. To that end, the literature review will focus on four key areas: firstly, studies of the relationship between Britain and the Balkans at the time of the break-up of Yugoslavia between 1991-1995; secondly, depictions of the Balkans which are informed by the use of various stereotypes, either in the way in which the author has written about the area, or analyses which outline how such ideas have maybe been significant in international relations, affecting the manner in which other countries have perceived the region. The third area of literature to be examined is the growing historiography on New Labour foreign policy. These works chart the way in which the New Labour strand of the party emerged over the last ten or so years and explore the very essence of its policies. As one would anticipate, within the last few years the historiography has dramatically expanded. This analysis will serve to strengthen this definition regarding the nature of the party, and its ideological composition. The final body of work considered are those historians who have written about traditional Labour Party foreign policy, typically presenting a comparison of the struggle between ideology and practice.

Following the literature review, the thesis moves on to its thematic analysis of Labour Party politicians and their responses to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Chapter two examines the way in which the Labour Party debated the role that international institutions could, or should, play during the conflict in the Balkans. There I argue that Labour has a tendency to follow an internationalist approach to foreign relations with an enduring belief in the effectiveness of the United Nations. However, as I explain, the Parliamentary party also spent considerable time debating the merits or otherwise of both the European Union and NATO.²⁵ Indeed what quickly became apparent is the way in which the party was split in its regard of both organisations. Speeches on the European Union show the party to be split between Europhile and Euro-sceptic groupings. Historically, this is a tendency that has traditionally divided Labour politicians.²⁶ Similarly, the party's appraisal of NATO fits within a broader context. My research indicates that there is a very real divide between those in support of the defence organisation, and those, normally from the back benches, who viewed the organisation with suspicion. This position emanates from the time of the Cold War when M.P.s from the left of the Labour party questioned the validity of the alliance, due to a marked tendency to show a loyalty with the Soviet Union.²⁷ Amongst these M.P.s this could alternatively be interpreted as a long-held antagonism or suspicion towards the United States of America. Indeed, the end of the Cold War, and the

²⁵ The parameters of this study encompass the period when, in 1992, the European Community was given greater powers and became known as the European Union. For the purpose of clarity and consistency, this institution will be known as the European Union throughout the entire thesis.

²⁶ Hugo Young's *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (London: Macmillan, 1998 Papermac edition 1999) provides a detailed study of the often problematic relationship that has existed between Britain and Europe, and also examines how the issue has manifested itself *within* Britain's major political parties. Also see George Robertson, 'Britain in the new Europe' in *International Affairs* (66, 4, 1990) pp697-702.

²⁷ The Labour Party's relationship with NATO, as well as more general defence issues, is covered in the following: David Edgerton, 'Tony Blair's Warfare State' in *New Left Review* (230, July/Aug, 1998) pp123-130; Bruce George with Timothy Watson, and Jonathan Roberts, *The British Labour Party and Defense* (Washington DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1991, and New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991); and Peter M. Jones, 'British Defence Policy: The Breakdown of Inter-Party Consensus' in *Review Of International Studies* (13, 2, 1987)pp111-131;

dominance of the USA as the sole remaining superpower could be seen to have done much to perpetuate this position. Interestingly then, distrust for NATO amongst the Labour rank-and-file continued well after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. However, in parallel with this group was the rise of those M.P.s offering the same robust support for the alliance that was apparent during the later NATO action in Kosovo in 1999. Already then, from 1991 the antecedents of this movement were clearly visible. The final issue considered in this chapter is the manner in which the concept of a 'new world order' was debated within Parliament by the Labour Party.²⁸ As the study shows, what quickly became clear – cynics may argue that this was always the case – was that this was very much an abstract concept with little evidence of reality in the international relations arena. Instead, what became apparent, was that deliberations surrounding international institutions were rooted around long established organisations, with the natural Labour Party affinity for the work and ideology of the United Nations underpinning all other discussions. There was a great desire by all in the party that the wars in the Balkans offered the opportunity for the U.N. to come of age. Only the failure of that institution led some to seek answers elsewhere.

The next three chapters of the thesis focus on the complex and often controversial issue of intervention. In the post Cold War period, intervention has dominated the foreign affairs agenda in a way unthinkable during the days of bipolarity. The term itself is problematic due to the myriad of options that it presents and offers to the international relations arena. The concept is one that has been intensely studied in the last ten years.²⁹ Indeed, its very essence is one that lends itself

²⁸ A thorough analysis of the entire concept of a 'new world order' appears in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Touchstone, 1995) p804.

²⁹ The following collection, Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones (eds.), *New Labour's foreign policy – A new moral crusade?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) provides a range of studies on intervention both from a theoretical perspective to the actual application of such a policy. Work from the collection that examines intervention as theory includes Michael W. Doyle, 'Ethics and

well to abstract, theoretical studies on foreign affairs and ideology. However, problems arise in the real and actual application of interventionist policies, leading to the vast range of debates and contributions apparent in the House of Commons during the break-up of Yugoslavia. The single question dominating the agenda regarded the extent to which the 'international community' should intervene in the Balkans and this exact dilemma is what is studied here, across three chapters.

Interventionist policies appear very much on a 'sliding scale' of extremes, from the more benign – at least to the external states involved – notion of sanctions, to, at its most acute, full-scale military action. Thus, these chapters will examine the debates that surrounded the degrees of intervention. Chapter three will study the most limited form of action, that is, normally the type of policy most acceptable to the public of any states taking such a position. The focus here then will be on the issues of sanctions, and the arms embargo which were applied respectively to Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), and to all of the states that had previously been part of the federation.³⁰ Here I suggest that even with seemingly limited policies, there was still intensive debate within the Labour Party. In fact there was no cohesion in the politicians' responses. Broadly, the Labour Shadow Cabinet took a stance almost identical to that of the Conservative Government. Discrepancies occurred on the party back benches, with dissent from key figures such as Dennis Skinner, Calum MacDonald, Tony Banks and Kate Hoey. Apparent in this section is that the back

foreign policy: a speculative essay', and Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'The Blair doctrine: advancing the Third Way in the world'. Studies that examine specific examples of intervention within the same collection include: Will Bartlett, 'Simply the right thing to do': Labour goes to war' and Angela Bourne and Michelle Cini, 'Exporting the Third Way in foreign policy: New Labour, the European Union and human rights policy'. A separate title that examines intervention is Karen E. Smith and Margot Light (eds.) *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Of specific interest to this thesis is chapter ten within that collection; Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'Blair's Britain: a force for good in the world.' A further useful title to consider is Mervyn Frost, *Ethics in International Relations – A Constitutive Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Reprinted 1997.)

³⁰ The states which had comprised the Yugoslav federation before the onset of hostilities were: Slovenia; Croatia; Bosnia; Serbia; Montenegro; and Macedonia.

bench critiques were based on a variety of different motivations. There was no homogeneity in the opposition to either the policy of sanctions or the arms embargo. Concerns centred around a variety of factors, for example, the debate against sanctions included comments that the policy was: 'too little, too late'; unfair as it was not applied uniformly across the region; and finally, that it was an example of interference too far in the affairs of a sovereign state.

Chapter four examines a range of further policies on the interventionist scale, namely military options which pose either little or a reduced threat to the nations involved in prosecuting any such action. Examples considered here are the imposition and implementation of a no-fly zone, and the introduction of air strikes. As one would perhaps expect, these types of policy provided a multitude of contributions from Labour Party politicians. As is apparent from those on either the front or back benches, the party provided a rich seam of opinion on this particular topic. Comments emanating from the Labour Party front bench pre-empted the views of politicians within John Major's Government. That is, broadly speaking, the Opposition offered suggestions which were taken up by the Conservative front bench at a slightly later point. However, back bench Labour politicians offered no such cohesion in their responses to these policies. These M.P.s could be split into two groups, those in favour of such policies, and those firmly opposed. However, of most interest is the manner in which this divide crossed the Parliamentary Labour Party. Thus, it is incorrect to assume for example, that all those figures traditionally viewed as being on the left of the party held the same position. Two people to consider here are Tony Banks and Tony Benn. Both are politicians that one would identify as being typically 'old' or traditional Labour, however, on both the issue of the no-fly zone, and the policy of air strikes they were diametrically opposed to each other. On the issue of air

strikes, for example, the former supported such a stance, and the latter was firmly opposed. Divisions and rifts within the party then on the issue of intervention did not recognise traditional groupings or cliques within the British Labour Party. The alliances which emerged can in no way be described as displaying shared reasons for the promotion of a more proactive policy in the region. However, as will be demonstrated within the chapter, a range of motivating factors were at play which led these M.P.s to take the position that they did. Thus, it would not be accurate to describe this group as a clique or faction as they were not all reaching a particular policy position because on shared opinions.

This observation is equally valid in chapter five. Here the thesis examines the views of Labour politicians when debating an even more enhanced type of intervention, namely full scale military action, involving the deployment of ground troops. Again, divisions and distinctions within the party provide for perhaps somewhat surprising conclusions. The Shadow Cabinet was shown to be in unison with the actions taken by the actual Government. However, those politicians on the back benches offered a diversity of opinions. As with the previous chapter, the traditional wing of the party provided perhaps the most fascinating of the examples regarding the manner in which Labour responded to events in the Balkans. Even one example goes some way to highlight the dichotomies that existed within the party. With regard to the implementation of ground troops both Ken Livingstone and Chris Mullin, neither of whom it is possible to classify as belonging to the modernising 'New' Labour wing of the party, advocated the introduction of ground troops to the Balkans in a bid to bring the conflict to an enforced conclusion. In contrast to these figures, fellow back bencher Tony Benn, also from the traditional wing of the party, spoke strongly against the escalation of international involvement in the region.

Clearly then, this one example highlights the complexities and myriad of interpretations that surrounded the issue of intervention in the Balkans. The explanation behind either stance will be explored more fully herein. However, here it is worth stating that whilst all three figures are seen to be on the left of the party, their interpretation of what should be a priority differed wildly. For Livingstone and Mullin, what was shown was a more assertive stance that exemplified the belief in fighting for an important principle. This bears a striking resemblance with the stance taken by the Labour Party during the period of appeasement in the 1930s. Conversely, Benn's position showed him to be regarding a traditional left-wing belief in internationalism as his overriding principle. Thus, all three figures are from the same strand within the party, but they showed a clear divergence on the issues with which they held to be the most significant when applying themselves to an international relations issue.

The role played by individuals in shaping discussions surrounding the concept of intervention is left behind in chapter six. Here the focus is on how the 'weight of history' hung over Parliamentary discussions on the break-up of Yugoslavia. As debates on the disintegration of the region progressed, what became clear was the manner in which politicians used historical references to substantiate their comments. Mention of the Second World War ensured that a variety of analogies were used to heighten awareness of the more recent conflict. References to the Holocaust were regularly made during debates that took place regarding the issues of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Whilst this is not surprising as the wars of secession in Yugoslavia were the first to take place within Europe since 1945, what is perhaps more striking is that despite these references, which generally took the guise of being used to support arguments for 'more to be done', in fact neither the British nor the broader

international response seemed to be swayed by these extremely powerful comments. However, what does occur herein is an analysis of the way in which both the Holocaust and other episodes from the past were used to ground the arguments of politicians taking part in debates on the Balkans.

It should be anticipated that alongside these comments regarding parallels with specific events from the past, there was also considerable mention of certain countries within the region, or more particularly the way in which various Labour Party politicians viewed other major participants on the world stage; normally basing their views on long-held attitudes influenced by the historical record. This is a theme which mirrors the analysis in chapter two regarding the way in which certain M.P.s viewed either NATO or member states of the European Union. Thus, chapter six further examines how members of the Parliamentary party brought their views on other countries into debates. What becomes apparent is how various resentments were employed within discussions surrounding the break-up of Yugoslavia. The chapter shows then how, as well as analogies based on episodes from the past, debates were also informed to a greater or lesser degree - depending on ones perception of the value of the contribution - by opinions held by the various politicians towards other key ethnic national groups in the ensuing conflict. As is shown in both this chapter, and indeed chapter two, these views were often based on long standing prejudices towards particular countries, and informed by imagery of the Second World War. Interestingly, what this demonstrates is that alongside traditionally held views by the west (that is, the notion of 'otherness' or an Edward Said-style 'orientalism') with regard to the Balkans, there were also long-standing prejudices present amongst Labour politicians with regard to countries, namely western powers, involved in the

diplomatic efforts.³¹ Thus, whilst the attitudes of some national governments towards the Balkans were seen to inhibit an effective international policy for the region, it can also be argued that certain unhelpful opinions held by some within the Parliamentary Labour Party, albeit directed against countries of western Europe, and indeed the USA, were equally at work.

³¹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1991. Reprinted with a new Afterword 1995. First published by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978).

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the existing scholarly literature relevant to this thesis. The historiography will be presented within four key areas: namely, works that examine the role played by Britain during the wars of secession in Yugoslavia; studies on the Balkans which either depict the impact of war, or which feature discussion on the way in which the region has been depicted within Western Europe, thus introducing the use of stereotypes; literature which charts the impact of New Labour on foreign policy; and, finally studies which outline the traditional stance taken by the Labour Party within the sphere of international relations. The literature review will demonstrate that each of these four core strands are of use to the wider thesis, and that the thesis which follows, draws on aspects of each of the areas included and discussed herein.

BRITISH POLITICS AND THE BREAK-UP OF YUGOSLAVIA

Brendan Simms provides an extremely detailed examination of Britain's response to the break-up of Yugoslavia, specifically Bosnia, in his work, *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*.¹ As the title suggests, he is damning in his assessment of how this country reacted to events in the Balkans. The book examines a range of groups and charts their actions during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Simms studies the role played by: the British Government; Lord Owen, who was the E.U. envoy during the Balkan wars of secession; the British military commanders working in the region under the peacekeeping remit; writers and intellectuals who offered commentary on

¹Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001)

the events; and the British Parliament. Chapter by chapter, Simms offers a damning critique of each of the different agencies and their response to the war in Bosnia. The picture that he describes is one of abject failure on the part of all of those who had either the responsibility or opportunity to make a difference to the situation in Bosnia.

Of most use to this thesis, is Simms's analysis of the Parliamentary response to the break-up of Yugoslavia.² As one would expect, by virtue of being the then party of Government, John Major's Conservative Party is subjected to a high level of criticism. Simms writes extensively about what he sees as a lack of will that was demonstrated by Government ministers in their quest to find resolution to the various crises. Of relevance to this thesis is the way in which he identifies a minimal lack of involvement by the Labour Party in attacking the Government's record on this issue.

Simms explains:

The number of Labour critics [...] included Peter Mandelson, Peter Hain, Clare Short, Calum MacDonald, Max Madden, Malcolm Wicks, and Kate Hoey. They harried the government as best they could; but they were never more than a doughty minority, even in their own party.³

As will be shown within the following chapters, these figures, as well as other Labour Party politicians played a regular part in debates. Simms also highlights those Opposition M.P.s who were reluctant for Britain's role within the conflict to be expanded, and who, by extension, help to support his argument that Bosnia was left by the outside world to implode. The recurring theme then throughout the earlier part of his study is that, despite the interventions of a few individuals, the Labour Party failed to provide effective opposition to the policies of the Conservative Government. However, Simms heralds the arrival of Tony Blair and New Labour with a cautiously more optimistic tone:

² *Ibid*, pp273-313.

³ *Ibid*, p276.

The Labour policy on Bosnia which emerged under Tony Blair and the new shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, in 1995 was a great improvement on that of 1992-4, but it lacked the clarity and steely resolve which became the hallmark of their Balkan stance in the late 1990s.⁴

In his concluding chapter, Simms makes further comments about British Parliamentary responses towards events in the Balkans, this time in the years that followed Labour's election victory in 1997. In his remarks, he is much more buoyant about the role played by the new British Government: "...by contrast with Britain's conduct during the Bosnian war, the trio of Prime Minister Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, and the Defence Secretary George Robertson proved extremely impressive."⁵ Thus, he is able to finish his book on a slightly more positive note.

Brendan Simms's work is extremely useful to this study in that it offers a very broad analysis of the Labour Party's response to events that occurred within the Balkans, specifically during the Bosnian War. However, as this thesis will show, it is important to stress that whilst there might not have been cohesive widespread Opposition support for enhanced British intervention in the region, the break-up of Yugoslavia did matter, and was an important issue to those politicians within the Labour Party who spoke on the subject, either for or against wider British involvement. Whether speaking in support of, or in opposition to, the Government's policies, many Labour politicians, especially on the back benches, spoke regularly on all manner of issues relating to the Balkans. Although the outcome of the debates may not have resulted in a more positive outcome for the former Yugoslavia, the discussions that took place were, in the main, informed by a degree of commitment, passion and interest amongst those who took part; this will be demonstrated in the chapters which follow.

⁴ *Ibid*, p299.

⁵ *Ibid*, p345.

In addition to Simms's contribution, Carole Hodge has also offered an in-depth analysis on Britain's relationship with the Balkans from 1991 until 2006.⁶ Her study covers the different events and diplomatic endeavours that took place during the Yugoslav wars of secession, and also the years of peace and resolution which followed the Bosnian ceasefire of 1995. Whilst there is some analysis of the Labour Party's role during the period 1991-1995, the majority of this earlier period is focussed on the Government's position and subsequent policies that were implemented. However, Hodge does offer a detailed study of the Labour Government's role during the Kosovo crisis, outlining the determined stance taken by Tony Blair.⁷ She explains how during the earlier conflict the Labour Party had, by and large, adopted a bi-partisan approach to solving the crises, in the main, supporting the Government's position. The election of New Labour thus heralded a new start in foreign affairs, and Hodge describes how a supposed 'ethical' dimension was to be introduced in Britain's dealings with the world. Her detailed analysis of the New Labour period covers both what she sees as the positive elements, such as more committed support for the International Tribunal at the Hague; along with more problematic episodes, such as the various controversies generated by Robin Cook's visit to Bosnia.⁸

Her chapter outlining the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo leading to the eventual NATO military campaign against Serbia is an extremely detailed analysis of the events that took place. Due to their political positions at the time of that conflict, Tony Blair, Robin Cook and George Robertson feature prominently.

⁶ Carole Hodge, *Britain and the Balkans: 1991 until present* (London: Routledge, 2006)

⁷ *Ibid*, Chapter 9.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp139-151. Robin Cook visited Bosnia in July 1997. His trip coincided with criticism being levelled at the Republika Srpska for its violation of the Dayton Accords. Whilst in the region, Cook implored all sides, making no distinction, to stick to the principles outlined in the peace plan. He also reassured the Republika Srpska President, Biljana Plavsic, that Britain would not arrest any more Serbs in the British controlled area of Bosnia.

However, the study focuses more on wider geo-political events than on responses within the domestic British political scene. Carole Hodge's work is useful for this thesis in that it provides a good overview of events that were taking place in the Balkans during the period of study. The inclusion of the analysis of the Kosovo conflict offers a contrast to the policy pursued by the British Government at the time of the earlier wars within the former Yugoslavia. Hodge provides a highly detailed account of Britain's relationship with the Balkans over a fifteen year period. The key theme throughout her argument is of the British Government, of either main political party, consistently failing the region, either in major ways, such as during the wars of secession during the early 1990s, or in less overt areas, such as in diplomatic efforts during times of relative stability. Essentially, Hodge's work follows in the traditions laid down in the publication written by Brendan Simms, examined previously here.⁹ Although she does examine key figures from Labour's front bench, and their response to what was taking place in the Balkans, she does not offer a detailed analysis of the variety of back bench responses that took place. Thus, although comments similar to those made by Hodge regarding the near unanimity shared by Government and Labour front benches on the break-up of Yugoslavia are also demonstrated within this thesis, due to the examination herein of the Labour back bench response this thesis will provide a more detailed picture of how the party reacted to events in the Balkans.¹⁰

⁹ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*

¹⁰ Carole Hodge, *Op cit.* For examples of her analysis of the Labour Party Shadow Cabinet, see p91 (John Cunningham), and p89 (David Clark).

THE POWER OF STEREOTYPES? DESCRIBING THE BALKANS

The use of rather hackneyed stereotypes on studies of the Balkans is commonplace. The various authors of the body of work studied herein have helped to either perpetuate or examine such ideas. The thesis will examine the way in which such attitudes affected Parliamentary debate, and by extension, possibly influenced British policy during the crisis. The use of stereotype regarding the Balkans is most apparent in chapter six of this thesis, in the examination of the impact of the Second World War on Parliamentary debates.

The literature that follows can be divided into two groups: works that have somehow suggested, through heavily descriptive narratives, the notion of the Balkans being somehow 'different', thus outside of the norms which would be expected for other European countries and playing on popular perceptions of the region; and those works which study these stereotypical ideas. Writers within the former category studied herein are Rebecca West and Robert D. Kaplan.¹¹ The latter group focuses on work by Maria Todorova and Lene Hansen¹²

Rebecca West's epic book *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia*, and Robert D. Kaplan's more recent title, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* are both relatively well known works of reportage describing the Balkans.¹³ Each is a heavily descriptive account of the authors' travels in the region. The richness of the language helps to create an impression of an exotic place, very different from other countries in Europe. West describes her initial view of Sarajevo in the following way:

¹¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd., 1993, Reprinted 1995 and 1997. First published London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1942.) Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994);
¹² Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1997); and Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006);
¹³ *Ibid.*

We noted then, and were to note it again and again as we went about the city, that such sites gave it a special appearance. The costumes which we regard as the distinguishing badge of an oriental race, proof positive that the European frontier has been crossed, are worn by people far less oriental in aspect than, say, the Latins; and this makes Sarajevo look like a fancy-dress ball.¹⁴

Although this book was written over sixty years ago, it is a well known text, and has presented and helped to promote a certain view of the Balkans. Lene Hansen has described how Rebecca West's pro-Serbian position has been assessed and critiqued.¹⁵ According to Hansen, Richard Holbrooke, the key US diplomat involved in the search for peace in the Balkans during the 1990s viewed West's work as a key reason behind the failure of a coherent Western policy.¹⁶

Published at the end of the twentieth century, Robert D. Kaplan's book fulfils a very similar role to that of the previous work; indeed, he makes frequent references to West and her journey.¹⁷ His work is an account of his travels around the Balkans, and details the sights that he sees, and the people that he meets. Kaplan's choice of title does an extremely good job of alluding to the tone present throughout the work: "I arrived in Zagreb by train from Klagenfurt. The last decade of the century was upon me. My ears were tuned to smoldering (sic), phantom voices that I knew were about to explode once again."¹⁸ Even the description on the back of the book cover, which is there to attract the buyer, gives an extremely clear idea about the tone of the book: "From the assassination that triggered World War 1 to the ethnic warfare now sweeping Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia, the Balkans have been the crucible of the twentieth century, the place where terrorism and genocide first became tools of

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p297.

¹⁵ Lene Hansen, *Op cit*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p157.

¹⁷ Robert D. Kaplan, *Op cit*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p5.

policy.”¹⁹ The inclusion in this literature review of these books by West and Kaplan serves to illustrate the nature of popular works on the Balkans that are available to a wider audience. Notions about the supposed mysterious nature of the area present in these texts – and indeed other works – serve to suggest that the region is in some way different, and maybe even warranting special treatment by the international community. The hyperbole which dominated some speeches during the break-up of Yugoslavia in many ways mirrors the language used to describe the region in such works. Thus, the depiction of the area as in some ways being ‘different’ is perpetuated by works such as these.

Analysis of these stereotypes, rather than their promotion through the type of works analysed previously, has been conducted by Maria Todorova and Lene Hansen. Maria Todorova’s book, *Imagining the Balkans*, examines the way in which the region has been viewed both from *within* and from *without*.²⁰ Central to her work is the key question: “How could a geographical appellation be transformed into one of the most powerful pejorative designations in history, international relations, political science, and nowadays, general intellectual discourse?”²¹ She examines the use of the term ‘Balkan’ and describes how it is used to convey a sense of difference:

It was the ethnic complexity of the Balkans that proved the most frustrating characteristic. Unlike Western Europe where nations lived in more or less homogeneous blocks, in the East they were jumbled in a way that added the word *macédoine* to the vocabulary of menu writers.....The complex ethnic mixture was held responsible for the instability and disorder of the peninsula, which was diagnosed as afflicted by “the handicap of heterogeneity.” ”²²

Todorova also provides analysis of the evolution of the term ‘balkanization’, showing how the expression has become used to denote a negative and chaotic geo-political

¹⁹ *Ibid*, back cover.

²⁰ Maria Todorova, *Op cit*.

²¹ *Ibid*, p7.

²² *Ibid*, p128. The “handicap of heterogeneity” cited by Todorova is from Joseph S. Roucek, *Balkan Politics: International Relations in No Man’s Land* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1948) p3, 7.

situation, of an area that has broken down into smaller units. As she argues in her book: “(w)hile a significant part of the American reading public would find it difficult to demonstrate even a remote geographical competence on the Balkans, it clearly understands the allusion to balkanization as the antithesis to the melting pot ideal...”²³

Todorova’s analysis then is despairing at the simplistic way in which such terms as ‘Balkan’ and ‘Balkanization’ have been appropriated. The final sentence of her work provides a fitting conclusion to the analysis of her argument:

If Europe has produced not only racism but also antiracism, not only misogyny but also feminism, not only anti-Semitism, but also its repudiation, then what can be termed Balkanism has not yet been coupled with its complementing and ennobling antiparticle.²⁴

Thus, Todorova’s work illustrates the way in which a single term, that is, ‘Balkan’, can be used as shorthand for particular stereotypes, and for our purposes herein, it is used to influence decisions made within the international relations arena. This point will be examined in detail when studying the different motivations and reasons behind the various stances taken by different politicians: to what extent did their assumption of these ideas inform their rhetoric and vision regarding the type of policy that should be implemented in the Balkans?²⁵

The final work to consider within this group of books is Lene Hansen’s study, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*.²⁶ The book is divided into two parts, with the first half examining the ways in which discourse analysis can affect the decision making process within international relations. The second part of

²³ *Ibid*, p35.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p189.

²⁵ Further analysis of the ideas raised by Todorova, and how they tie in to the break-up of Yugoslavia, are explored by Joseph Sanders Pearson, in his thesis, *British Press Reactions to the onset of war in ex-Yugoslavia*. Pearson examines the break-up of Yugoslavia, and how the nature of ‘the other’ affected the reportage in the British media. He examines three events, namely the ten day war in Slovenia, the siege of Dubrovnik, and the discovery of the concentration camps in Bosnia, and analyses the ways in which the region was presented as being somehow ‘not of Europe’.

²⁶ Lene Hansen, *Op cit*.

the book is of most relevance to this thesis, offering a discourse analysis of the debates that took place in the West regarding the war in Bosnia. After presenting a history of the term 'Balkan', Hansen explains how the ideas and prejudices behind the term went on to influence the debates which took place regarding events within Bosnia. She explains that "(t)he construction of 'the Balkans' as incapable of change and with the capacity of entrapping the West functioned to legitimize a Western policy of inaction."²⁷ Attitudes such as this would clearly have prevented any type of coherent approach being utilised by the international community in the search for resolution to the conflict. The analysis of Parliamentary debates which follows within this thesis will demonstrate how such views were to considerably influence contributions made by some members of the Labour Party. Notions of stereotype, leading to a feeling that there was a certain 'inevitability' about the events that were taking place in the former Yugoslavia did much to colour the various discussions which took place in the House of Commons. At this point, it is important to consider that in addition to the attitudes held by various British politicians towards the 'Balkans', in the sense of being somewhat different through the use of stereotypes, similar views were also demonstrated with regard to other national groups, for example, 'the Germans'. An understanding and an awareness of the use of these ideas is extremely relevant in the analysis of the Parliamentary speeches herein, in that it is not exclusively confined to the Balkans, but also to other groups. In summary, such attitudes were almost a form of shorthand for attributing, and explaining, certain behaviours with specific nationalities.

In addition to the 'Balkan' discourse, Hansen also examines the idea of a 'Genocide' discourse, and how this affected the West's policy towards Bosnia. She

²⁷ *Ibid*, p109.

explains how discussions surrounding the use of the term 'genocide' *vis-à-vis* Bosnia led to a sense of 'ethical responsibility' within some quarters.²⁸ Accordingly, the use of the term 'genocide' acted as a catalyst for some, leading to calls for different forms of intervention. The chapters within this thesis will demonstrate how such demands made by Labour Party politicians regularly mentioned the atrocities that were committed in Bosnia. Thus, their case for intervention would be considerably strengthened. Hansen's work is important in that it demonstrates how two key terms were appropriated in different ways during the war in Bosnia. Specifically, chapter six of this thesis show how 'Balkan' and 'Genocide' became important parts of the discourse that took place within Parliament in debates concerning the break-up of Yugoslavia. Labour Party politicians speaking either in support of or against the different policies implemented by the Conservative Government frequently substantiated their contributions with a reliance on these remarks. As Hansen shows, the subtext of these remarks had considerable impact on the types of action that were taken by the West. The forthcoming chapters outline the extent to which the issue of stereotypes became a factor in contributions made by Labour Party politicians in Parliamentary debates concerning the break-up of Yugoslavia during the years between 1991-1995. In addition to this, the thesis will demonstrate the way in which the debates that took place on the break-up of Yugoslavia were an opportunity to promote domestic political issues, such as highlighting deficiencies in the Major Government, or displaying a position that would be seen as sympathetic to local constituency concerns.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p112.

NEW LABOUR FOREIGN POLICY

There is a wide range of material available on New Labour and the foreign policy that it has undertaken since its election to office in May 1997. The volume of literature available suggests to the reader that the election of the Blair government twelve years ago produced a somewhat different foreign policy to that which is traditionally expected from a Labour government. Appraisals regarding the extent to which the new incarnation of the Labour Party has succeeded and how it can further develop its ideas within the sphere of foreign affairs are increasingly common. The 'war on terror' which has led to British involvement in wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq has further encouraged publications within this field. The inclusion of this literature here is important in that it shows how Labour Party foreign policy developed in the years after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Thus, these texts have been included to help better distinguish the evolving attitudes to foreign policy that were taking place in the first half of the 1990s. Even in the years between 1991-1995, it was already apparent that participants in debates surrounding the break-up of Yugoslavia were displaying attitudes and approaches to international relations with which we associate with Tony Blair's premiership. Thus, one can argue that the genesis of the New Labour approach to international relations can be identified in many of the comments made during the wars of secession in the earlier part of the decade; before the party came to power. The existing literature that focuses on New Labour and foreign policy can be split into three sub-groups: studies that provide general overviews of New Labour's foreign policy; secondly, those works that focus on one particular aspect of foreign policy; and finally, general works on New Labour which include material relevant to the study of foreign policy.

An article by Denis MacShane, an edited collection of essays by Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones, and a monograph by Paul D. Williams all provide overviews of New Labour's foreign policy.²⁹ Each writer offers an examination of the general principles behind the New Labour Government's approach to international relations. Denis MacShane presents a good summary of New Labour foreign policy in his article for *Oxford International Review*.³⁰ It is to be anticipated that MacShane as a Labour politician puts a considerable gloss on the actions of the Labour Government. However, the article undeniably provides us with a useful outline of traditional approaches to British foreign policymaking. The issues that MacShane examines include traditional diplomacy – the Westphalian model – and Britain's long-standing relationship with Europe.³¹ The article then examines the way in which, as MacShane at least believes, Blair's Labour Government is approaching this sphere of policy-making from a different angle. Among the key points outlined by MacShane is the changing attitude to what takes place within the sovereign state. He explains how “(w)hat happens inside a state is no longer a private matter for the sovereign whether literally a monarch or the people as sovereign as in a republic”.³² This point is used by MacShane to help explain the end of non-intervention in foreign policy. An associated point is when he examines what is possibly the most widely recognised aspect of New Labour's approach to international relations, that is the issue of ‘ethical foreign policy’. MacShane outlines the speech where Robin Cook first raised the idea. In his analysis, he explains how Cook did not use the now notorious phrase, and goes on to

²⁹ Denis MacShane, ‘New Labour, New Foreign Policy? A Labour Perspective’, *Oxford International Review*, vol 9, no 1, Winter (1998/99), Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones (eds.), *New Labour's foreign policy: A new moral crusade?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), and Paul D. Williams, *British Foreign Policy Under New Labour, 1997-2005* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp22-24.

³² *Ibid.*, p23.

interpret what was *actually* said: “There is no big bang or grand declaratory approach to this new emphasis on asserting democratic values, the visions of Wilberforce rather than the gunboats of Palmerston as part of Labour’s new foreign policy.”³³ Again, it is necessary to remind us of MacShane’s position within the Labour Party and this should maybe temper our reading of his commentary. However, this point aside, his article is a good overview of New Labour foreign policy principles and acts as a useful starting point in this particular area of research. For this thesis, the article clarifies what a New Labour foreign policy purports to be, thus providing a useful yardstick by which to measure the subsequent actions of the Blair government. This is useful in that it illustrates how some of the ideas expressed within the Parliamentary debates discussed herein, were later developed into actual policy when the party was elected to government.

One of the most comprehensive examples to date of a study of New Labour’s foreign policy is the edited collection compiled by Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones.³⁴ This wide-ranging work covers both the theory and practice of the Blair government’s foreign policy. The four-part study examines how the theory of foreign policy has developed, and then studies the actual application of the policy by New Labour. New Labour’s policy is sited within a historical context and various examples are provided to show how the government has dealt with different issues, for example, topics such as the Anglo-American relationship, and arms sales.³⁵ Of particular relevance to this study are the chapters by Mark Wickham-Jones, Michael W. Doyle, Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, Jim Buller and Vicky Harrison, and Will

³³ *Ibid*, p29.

³⁴ Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones (eds.), *Op cit*.

³⁵ Richard Hodder-Williams, ‘Reforging the ‘special relationship’: Blair, Clinton and foreign policy’ pp234-250, and Neil Cooper, ‘The pariah agenda and New Labour’s ethical arms sales policy’ pp147-167, both *Ibid*.

Bartlett.³⁶ These chapters focus on issues of intervention and refer to the much vaunted ethical nature of the foreign policy of New Labour. A more detailed analysis of Dunne and Wheeler's work follows later on in this chapter. However, the chapters by the other writers provide the thesis with a range of relevant material. In this analysis of the break-up of Yugoslavia during the 1990s, the points raised on the theory of an ethical foreign policy and intervention are particularly relevant, as is the detailed chapter by Bartlett on the NATO action against Serbia. Thus, this edited collection gives a good overview of New Labour's foreign policy and plays an essential part in this review. An extremely important noteworthy point is that due to its sole focus on New Labour there is no opportunity to directly compare New Labour's foreign policy with that which preceded the arrival of Tony Blair as leader. However, it still presents the opportunity to examine how notions of an ethical approach to foreign policy developed and grew during the first Blair Government. Thus, this thesis will show how these such ideas developed during the years prior to 1997, and how the break-up of Yugoslavia possibly acted as a catalyst for the promotion of such a policy.

Paul D. Williams's monograph examines three areas: namely, the nature of Labour Party foreign policy; the party's relationship with three key partners in international relations, that is the USA, Europe and Africa thus redefining Churchill's three circles argument for the end of the twentieth century; and finally, key issues that affect the party's position in foreign affairs, such as its stance on the defence industry,

³⁶ Mark Wickham-Jones, 'Labour's trajectory in foreign affairs: the moral crusade of a pivotal power?' pp3-32, Michael W. Doyle, 'Ethics and foreign policy: a speculative essay' pp49-60, Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'The Blair doctrine: advancing the Third Way in the world' pp61-76, Jim Buller and Vicky Harrison, 'New Labour as a 'good international citizen': normative theory and UK foreign policy' pp77-89, and Will Bartlett, 'Simply the right thing to do': Labour goes to war' pp131-146, all *Ibid.*

and the party's foray into aid and the developing world.³⁷ Of most interest and relevance to this thesis is Williams's chapter analysing the Labour Government's involvement in 'other people's wars'.³⁸ Although Williams's book examines the Labour Government and its foreign policy in the years 1997-2005, thus covering the period immediately after the focus of this study, his observations are still useful in that they highlight the way in which the Blairite interventionist style of international relations developed. Areas that Williams highlights as being crucial to this evolution are; the motivating factors behind the Labour Government's various interventions, as well as the methods that the said actions used. Issues that he considers include Great Britain's desire to maintain its standing in the world community. Linked to the country's position in international relations was the legacy of Empire, so, some of the wars that prompted either involvement or interest from the Blair Government had some type of tie to colonial times, for example, Sierra Leone and the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Another observation that Williams makes ties in with the general theme of Labour Party foreign affairs:

Labour's commitment to liberal internationalism placed it in a position familiar to other powerful liberal democracies, namely, the need to argue that sovereignty and the norm of non-intervention should be conditional upon sovereigns fulfilling certain basic obligations to their populations.³⁹

His chapter then examines the nature of the various interventions that took place, dividing them into military and political engagements. Williams's book is an extremely useful study of New Labour foreign policy. Although it focuses on a later period, namely, when the party was in government which is in contrast with the parameters of study here, his work shows how ideas that were promoted during the

³⁷ Paul D. Williams, *Op cit*. In the years following the Second World War, Winston Churchill viewed Britain's role in international relations as being part of three circles, that is, spheres of influence, within the USA, Europe and the Empire/Commonwealth.

³⁸ *Ibid*. The chapter examining 'other people's wars' is chapter eight, pp164-184.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p167.

break-up of Yugoslavia were later developed into actual policy. So, whilst not covering the same period, it illustrates how approaches that had their genesis earlier in the same decade eventually developed when the Labour Party finally achieved office.

Aside from the aforementioned general studies of New Labour's foreign policy, there exist a number of works that focus on one particular aspect of the party's foray into international relations. Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler present in the previously stated collection, David Edgerton, Colin McInnes, and Kirsty Hughes and Edward Smith, feature in this particular group of literature.⁴⁰ Interestingly, with the exception of the Dunne and Wheeler material, all of these studies were published in 1998. Thus, the majority of the literature is not so much an assessment of New Labour policy but instead a stated intention of aims, for a government that had only recently been elected to office.

New Labour's 'ethical foreign policy' is covered extensively by Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler in a number of different articles. In a chapter in the edited collection *Ethics and Foreign policy*, they present an analysis of the term, and an assessment of the extent to which the government has achieved its goals within this field.⁴¹ Exploring the idea of 'good international citizenship', the authors trace the ideological development of ethics within foreign policy. The study then focuses on the issue of humanitarian intervention. Dunne and Wheeler define this term and highlight difficulties that exist with implementing such a policy, such as in China and Indonesia. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the NATO intervention

⁴⁰ Nicholas J. Wheeler and Tim Dunne, 'Good International Citizenship: a third way for British foreign policy', *International Affairs*, vol 74, no 4, (1998), Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'The Blair doctrine: advancing the Third Way in the world' in Little and Wickham-Jones (eds.) *Op cit.*, Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'Blair's Britain: a force for good in the world' in Karen E. Smith and Margot Lights (eds.), *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), David Edgerton, 'Tony Blair's Warfare State', *New Left Review* 230, July/August (1998), Colin McInnes, 'Labour's Strategic Defence Review', *International Affairs*, 74, 4, (1998); and Kirsty Hughes and Edward Smith, 'New Labour – new Europe?', *International Affairs*, 74, 1, (1998).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

against Serbia in the spring of 1999, action that occurred because of the human rights abuses carried out by the Serbian forces on the Kosovo Albanian population. They subsequently give an appraisal of the extent to which the New Labour Government has followed a new agenda that is different from that of its Conservative predecessor, within the realm of pursuing human rights in the foreign affairs arena. The chapter is a development of the ideas that they first presented in an edition of *International Affairs* in 1998, and latterly in the edited collection by Little and Wickham-Jones.⁴² Their work has thus been expanded to include the impact that NATO action over Kosovo has had on the debate regarding the pursuit of human rights within international relations.

Another of the writers to focus on one particular aspect of the foreign policy of the New Labour government is David Edgerton, who concentrates on the area of defence, in his article 'Tony Blair's Warfare State'.⁴³ As has been mentioned earlier in this review, the inclusion of an analysis of defence is relevant here because of the intrinsically close relationship that it shares with foreign policy. Accordingly, defence is so often the mechanism by which foreign policy is implemented, albeit in its most extreme, assertive or aggressive form. Edgerton analyses the content of the Strategic Defence Review, which took place in 1998, and writes what is essentially a critique of how the party has departed from a traditional left-wing foreign policy. He argues that the review is a missed opportunity by the New Labour Government to introduce a move away from the previous Conservative policies. His disappointment is apparent throughout. This view is especially evident in the final paragraph of the piece when he outlines New Labour's position on nuclear weapons. The Labour Government advocates, in extreme cases, the possibility of a British first strike of nuclear weapons.

⁴² Nicholas J. Wheeler and Tim Dunne, *Op cit.*, (1998) and Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler in Little and Wickham-Jones (eds.) *Op cit.*

⁴³ David Edgerton, *Op cit.*

Edgerton concludes the piece, thus: “In other words, first use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear nation. Like to (sic) much about New Labour: incredible, but true.”⁴⁴

Colin McInnes’s article provides an assessment of the Strategic Defence Review (SDR).⁴⁵ Against the background of post Cold War foreign and defence policy by the previous Conservative Government, he examines the aims of the Labour Party review, and the suggestions proposed within the document. In addition to this, and of relevance for this thesis, is the manner in which he explains the relationship that exists between foreign policy and defence planning.

Another aspect of New Labour foreign policy, namely Britain’s relationship with Europe, is explored by Kirsty Hughes and Edward Smith in an article in *International Affairs*.⁴⁶ Hughes and Smith outline Labour Government policy on this issue and suggest ways in which it differs, or is similar, to its Conservative predecessors. The article outlines an early assessment of Labour’s European relations, and for the purpose of this study provides another example of an in-depth analysis of one aspect of New Labour’s foreign policy.

The final body of work to consider here are those general studies of New Labour which study the ideological development and history of the party as a whole, and include an assessment of its stance on international relations. This literature is useful to include within this review as these titles demonstrate how some of the ideas and policy positions which had previously been promoted by Labour Party politicians during the break-up of Yugoslavia were later developed when the party reached government. Will Hutton, Anthony Giddens, Tony Blair, Gerald R. Taylor, Andrew

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p130.

⁴⁵ Colin McInnes, *Op cit*.

⁴⁶ Kirsty Hughes and Edward Smith, *Op cit*.

Rawnsley, Steve Ludlam and Martin J. Smith, Anthony Seldon, and Polly Toynbee and David Walker have all contributed studies to the debate.⁴⁷

As one would expect from the politician who is so easily identifiable as the public face of New Labour, Tony Blair has published work on the ideological development of the party, some of which includes an analysis of international relations. One of his essays, published by the Fabian Society, maps out the principles and politics of the new left. In *The Third Way – New politics for the New Century* he gives a detailed explanation as to what defines his vision of the party.⁴⁸ In this work, Blair takes the opportunity to examine the global role that the Third Way could potentially play in politics. The Third Way is depicted as being internationalist rather than isolationist, with a firm belief in the power of international institutions.⁴⁹ Peacekeeping is seen as important in promoting the values that are of such importance domestically. Thus he writes, “we support the efforts of peace-makers and peacekeepers abroad as an extension of our mission at home.”⁵⁰ The essay provides us with a good overview of the general principles of the ‘Third Way’, and of most relevance to us here, how this can be applied to foreign policy.

Further examples of this type of literature are the two volumes on the ‘Third Way’ written by Anthony Giddens.⁵¹ His illustration of the changing landscape of social democratic politics was the ideological basis for Tony Blair’s Labour Party.

⁴⁷ Will Hutton, *The State to Come* (London: Vintage, 1997), Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way – The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998. Reprinted 2000), Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000. Reprinted 2000), Tony Blair, *The Third Way – New Politics for the New Century* (London: The Fabian Society, 1998, reprinted 1999), Gerald R. Taylor (ed.), *The Impact of New Labour* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), Andrew Rawnsley, *Servants of the People – The Inside Story of New Labour* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2000), Steve Ludlam and Martin J. Smith (eds.), *New Labour in Government* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), Anthony Seldon (ed.), *The Blair Effect – The Blair Government, 1997-2001* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), and Polly Toynbee and David Walker, *Did Things Get Better?* (London: Penguin Books, 2001).

⁴⁸ Blair, *Op cit.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ‘Chapter 6: International not Isolationist’, pp18-19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p18.

⁵¹ Anthony Giddens, *Op cit.* (1998).

The first publication is a study of social democracy and how it needs to adapt to the changing political environment. For the purpose of this study, Chapter 5 'Into the Global Age', is of most relevance.⁵² Among the concepts that Giddens examines are how the 'third way' can be applied within the international arena, the concept of nationhood in the modern world, and the idea of cultural pluralism. Of special interest to this study are Giddens's views on 'Cosmopolitan Democracy', where he examines the changing face of international diplomacy and warfare, and how democratic ideas are inextricably linked to interstate relations.⁵³ He makes the point that democracies rarely go to war against each other, and that democratic belief systems are becoming closely tied with approaches to foreign affairs. Giddens also discusses the impact of international institutions on foreign policy, stating that from 20 international government organizations in 1900, at his time of writing there now existed 300 such institutions.⁵⁴ This, he argues, demonstrates the developments that have already taken place within a global approach to governance.

Giddens develops his ideas further in the second of his essays, *The Third Way and its Critics*.⁵⁵ This volume is an opportunity for Giddens to respond to his critics. Aside from the more domestic aspects of social democracy, such as economic and social issues, he explores in greater depth his ideas on global matters⁵⁶. Of particular relevance here is Giddens's position on the concept of old and new wars.⁵⁷ He discusses the rise in the number of states, due to the increased demand among ethnic groups for self-determination. The changing face of warfare is discussed, that is, how globalisation has affected conflict. He explains that:

⁵² *Ibid*, pp129-153.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp138-141.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p140.

⁵⁵ Anthony Giddens, *Op cit.* (2000).

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp122-162.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp153-159.

states may be multiplying, but territory is not as important to their power and prosperity as it once was, since natural resources count for less. ... The new sources of ideological conflict, such as those involving religious fundamentalism, for the most part stretch across, or affect specific regions within, nations.⁵⁸

The new form of warfare raises many issues, for example, the rise in the number of refugees. These wars present a variety of new questions, and are thus dealt with in a way different to those conflicts which preceded them:

The conflicts that have happened in ex-Yugoslavia, for example, are not a throwback to the history of the Balkans, but were much more of a contemporary phenomenon. The new wars are physically localized, but they typically involve a diversity of transnational agencies and relationships – international TV crews, foreign advisors, UN groups and non-governmental organizations.⁵⁹

Giddens argues that the ‘third way’ has to tackle foreign affairs in a way different from traditional methods. Thus, the ‘third way’ presents an opportunity to bring a fresh approach to international relations. He stresses the importance of improving methods of preventing conflict. Essentially what is required is a major change in attitude in foreign affairs. This is illustrated by the point that “(s)ince the new wars differ from nation-state conflicts, we cannot apply traditional thinking to them.”⁶⁰ Giddens thus suggests that emphasis should be placed on “the enforcement of cosmopolitan principles”, rather than traditional approaches to diplomacy and peacekeeping.⁶¹ Giddens’s work gives the opportunity to identify the ideological context in which to place ‘New Labour’.

Will Hutton has also published work which is of extreme importance when understanding the political development of Blair’s party.⁶² Hutton’s book *The State to Come* is essentially a study of economic policy and related issues. However, he

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p153.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p154.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p156.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p157.

⁶² Will Hutton, *Op cit*.

examines Britain's relationship with Europe, and relates the theme to the earlier chapters on the economy. For Hutton, Europe and the questions it poses are linked to the general economic thread of his argument. He writes that:

(t)he deeper problem is that Europe's political structures are so far undeveloped in relation to its economic ambitions – and are difficult to develop further given that the peoples of the European Union do not yet share a common cultural and political consciousness.⁶³

Hutton thus provides an essay on what he identifies as being the way forward for British success, that is a position inextricably linked with Europe. His argument is useful in providing us with a theoretical example of how, in his view, British politics needs to change. For Hutton, being aligned on the left of the political spectrum, this would obviously most likely be achieved by a Labour Government.

Gerald R. Taylor's edited collection, *The Impact of New Labour*, provides us with an analysis of various ideological aspects of Blair's party.⁶⁴ Of most relevance to this study is Russell Holden's chapter, 'New Labour's European Challenge: from Triumphant Isolationism to Positive Integration'.⁶⁵ Holden examines how New Labour inherited the problematic issue of Anglo-European relations from the Major government, and outlines how the new government has tried to tackle the subject with a different approach. He states that "the challenge is to win over public opinion rather than to be driven by it".⁶⁶ For Blair's government then, it was crucial to present a coherent policy on matters relating to Europe in order to have the best possible chance of succeeding in this area. This gives the government the opportunity to show that it is in control of policy, rather than just formulating a selection of *ad hoc* responses to external factors. Holden's contribution to this collection gives just a small insight into one aspect of New Labour's policy on international relations.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p94.

⁶⁴ Gerald R. Taylor, *Op cit*.

⁶⁵ Russell Holden in *Ibid*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p188.

Another study that offers an account of New Labour's first term in office is *Servants of the People – The Inside Story of New Labour* by journalist Andrew Rawnsley.⁶⁷ His book provides us with an exposé of various episodes and events that occurred during the lifetime of the first Blair government. As a political journalist for *The Observer*, Rawnsley obviously has a vast array of contacts which enable him to provide an account of the Labour Government that differs from other more traditional works in this field. This approach thus provides us with sources that would not normally be accessible to the conventional political studies writer. Although he does not write about the break-up of Yugoslavia in the period 1991-1995, of most relevance to this thesis is an analysis of NATO intervention in Kosovo.⁶⁸ His account begins with the decision to take military action against Serbia and what follows is a report of subsequent events. Rawnsley outlines how Blair's fortunes changed during the period of military action, and describes his ongoing role in the international diplomatic effort, including his relationship with the President of the USA, Bill Clinton. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the Prime Minister's performance during the campaign against Serbia:

This was a 'tempering experience' for Tony Blair. He learned that the judgement of mentors in the White House and professionals in Whitehall was not to be relied on. He had to make his own decisions. Blair invested great emotional and political capital in the enterprise and would have paid massively in both for failure. A man most often portrayed as a skilful opportunist exposed the moral, stubborn, zealous dimensions of his character. He took a stance and, as others scurried for cover, he held to it.⁶⁹

Rawnsley's book is a useful account of New Labour's first term in office. Perhaps the one weakness of the work, and this is a reflection of his journalistic career, is that many of the references are simply credited as 'private information' or 'private

⁶⁷ Andrew Rawnsley, *Op cit.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, Chapter 14: 'On a Wing and a Prayer', pp257-290.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p290.

interview'. This obviously makes it difficult, or well nigh impossible, to investigate his arguments in more detail. On balance though, this is a helpful illustration of New Labour in office. As with some of the other works in this field, the inclusion here of this title gives us the opportunity to examine how ideas that were first disseminated by some Labour Party politicians during the earlier Balkan conflicts developed into actual policy following the 1997 General Election.

Steve Ludlam and Martin J. Smith's edited collection focuses on a variety of issues pertinent to New Labour following their arrival in Government.⁷⁰ The development of ideological debate is covered along with assessments of specific areas of governmental policy. Chapter Twelve for example, written by Jim Buller, is entitled 'New Labour's Foreign and Defence Policy: External Support Structures and Domestic Politics'⁷¹. Buller examines previous Labour foreign policies and subsequently presents a critique of New Labour's attempts within this field. Through an examination of British foreign policy since 1945, he is able to provide a context to the foreign policy offered by New Labour. There are two key issues that are highlighted: firstly, Britain's relationship with Europe; and secondly, the now infamous 'ethical foreign policy' credited with the ultimate aim of 'cleaning up' Britain's role in international relations. For the purpose of this study, the latter point is possibly the more relevant of the two. Buller highlights two areas as warranting particular attention:

The first is New Labour's intention to put the worldwide pursuit of human rights at the centre of its diplomatic actions. ... Second, at the domestic level, an ethical foreign policy meant 'opening up' the process and making it more transparent to the outside world.⁷²

⁷⁰ Steve Ludlam and Martin J. Smith (eds.), *Op cit.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 219-233.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p230.

Overall, Buller feels that there has been progress within this particular area. However, he does raise the various criticisms that have been levelled at New Labour in foreign affairs, that is the dichotomy that exists between continued arms sales and the promotion of an ethical foreign policy, and also the claims of cultural imperialism that were raised over NATO intervention in Kosovo.⁷³

A further part of the literature that seeks to provide an assessment of the Labour Government, elected in 1997, is Anthony Seldon's edited collection of essays, *The Blair Effect – The Blair Government, 1997-2001*.⁷⁴ A far-reaching study, this collection assesses Labour's performance in its first five years in government. Foreign policy is covered in a chapter by Christopher Hill.⁷⁵ The chapter is divided into five sections covering ethics, intervention, domestic issues, development and foreign policy, and special relationships. As with the other literature in this group, this essay provides a thorough example of both an outline and a critique of the actions of the New Labour Government. So, we read of Robin Cook's speech on the hopes of introducing an 'ethical dimension' to foreign policy, and then a catalogue of the actual policy pursued by the government, for example, Britain's changed position on landmines, continued arms sales, relations with the Chinese government, and the detention of General Pinochet. Of particular interest to us is Hill's examination of the issue of 'intervention'. He outlines the theoretical arguments in favour of intervention that were put forward by Blair in the now famous 'Chicago' speech.⁷⁶ This provides us with a model against which to measure the subsequent actions of the government. Hence, Seldon's edited collection provides useful material relevant to this thesis, in that it demonstrates how ideas that were first mentioned during the wars of secession

⁷³ *Ibid*, pp230-232.

⁷⁴ Anthony Seldon (ed.), *Op cit*.

⁷⁵ Christopher Hill, 'Chapter 16: Foreign Policy', pp331-353 in *Ibid*.

⁷⁶ Speech made by Tony Blair to the Economic Club of Chicago, Hilton Hotel, Chicago on 22 April 1999, after the NATO campaign against Serbia had started. *Ibid*, pp340-343.

in the former Yugoslavia, developed into actual policy some time later, once the party had reached government.

A study that pays reference to the theme adopted by Labour for the 1997 General Election, *Things Can Only Get Better*, offers an assessment of the party's performance in office during their first term.⁷⁷ Polly Toynbee and David Walker assess various policy areas so as to provide an appraisal of Blair's government. Essentially they try to compare policy rhetoric with actual policy implemented. For the purpose of this study, the most relevant example of this approach is their chapter on foreign policy, 'Blair Abroad'.⁷⁸ Again, they present the well-documented notion of an 'ethical' foreign policy and measure the policy ideas against the reality. One example of this is Robin Cook's condemnation of human rights abuses in Iraq and Nigeria, but his omission to mention Chinese human rights abuses in Tibet.⁷⁹ As Toynbee and Walker argue:

Labour went to war in Kosovo (and Iraq) in pursuit of moral goals; but it stood and watched in Chechnya. Labour upped the ante with ethical talk, but when all was said and done there remained scores of Labour MPs with defence installations in their constituencies who knew what the military-industrial status quo was good for.⁸⁰

The general tone of this critique then is that, although Labour made a good start in office, there was still plenty to do in order to fulfil its potential and early promise.

This body of literature offering an assessment of the Labour Party's first term in power is useful for this thesis in that it illustrates how ideas which were formed and promulgated in Parliament during the break-up of Yugoslavia in the years 1991-1995, went on to become part of Government policy once the Labour Party had achieved

⁷⁷ Polly Toynbee and David Walker, *Op cit*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p122-141.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p126.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p123.

power in 1997. Thus, the inclusion of these works shows the evolution of ideas from when the party was in opposition to when it was in government.

PRAGMATISM VS IDEOLOGY: STUDIES OF THE LABOUR PARTY'S TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY

Aside from general studies on the British left wing and its relationship with the Labour Party, much has been written on the specific area of foreign policy and the awkward relationship enjoyed by the Parliamentary party on this issue. The key argument often offered by scholars centres on the extent to which the Labour Party has pursued a foreign policy that can be identified as traditionally left-wing. This introduces a debate regarding the identification of such a foreign policy and thus an analysis of what Labour Governments have actually achieved in this field. The historiography in this area can be broadly divided into two schools of interpretation: analyses of the relationship between ideology, foreign policy and the Labour Party; and studies on specific policy issues.

There are a number of works that fall within the first of these two groups, namely those which compare and contrast Labour Party ideology with the pragmatism of policies implemented when serving in government. The literature provides an illustration of the party's activities when in office and shows the tensions that can exist when politicians present policies which are not necessarily sympathetic with their political ideology. Accordingly, these ties between ideology and practice are explored by a number of different writers.⁸¹ However, this chapter will focus on a few

⁸¹ Eugene J. Meehan, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960), Kenneth E. Miller, *Socialism and Foreign Policy – Theory and Practice in Britain to 1931* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914-1965* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), John F. Naylor, *Labour's International Policy – The Labour Party in the 1930s* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), John Saville, *The Politics of*

key studies, namely, work by Eugene J. Meehan, Michael R. Gordon, Henry R. Winkler, Rhiannon Vickers and Mark Phythian. These texts tend to follow a particular model; namely an analysis of left wing or Labour Party foreign policy, that is, the theory behind the practice, with subsequent chapters examining various episodes in Britain's role in international relations, and identifying the extent to which actual events mirrored the party's ideological stance.

It could be argued, perhaps justifiably at first glance, that it is of questionable value to include literature in this survey which examines a period some fifty years before the chosen remit of this particular study. Nevertheless, Eugene J. Meehan and Michael R. Gordon, although writing in the 1960s, offer some of the most useful and relevant examples from within the literature surveyed for the purposes of this study; this will be shown later in the analysis.⁸² Thus, the inclusion of these earlier works provides an intellectual context for the arguments which follow later within this thesis. In addition to those titles, Rhiannon Vickers and Mark Phythian provide a good analysis of the problems of formulating an identifiably Labour Party foreign policy. They illustrate the ways in which principle has often been overridden on the grounds of pragmatism.⁸³ As well as examining actual policy and events, they offer an ideological context in which to base Labour Party foreign policy making. Henry R. Winkler's work is important in a different way, as it demonstrates the ways in which political personalities can affect policy outcomes.⁸⁴ As will be shown later within the

Continuity – British Foreign Policy and the Labour Government, 1945-46 (London: Verso, 1993), Henry R. Winkler, *Paths not Taken – British Labour and International Policy in the 1920s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), Dan Keohane, 'Labour's International Policy: A Story of Conflict and Contention' in Brian Brivati and Richard Heffernan (eds.), *The Labour Party – A Centenary History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1: The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900-51* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), Mark Phythian, *The Labour Party, War and International Relations, 1945-2006* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Rhiannon Vickers and Mark Phythian, *Op cit.*

⁸⁴ Henry R. Winkler, *Op cit.*

thesis, individual Labour Party M.P.s played a consistently important role in promoting certain policies and presenting particular opinions during the debates that were played out during the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Within the literature that compares left-wing theory against actual left-wing foreign policy, Eugene J. Meehan's study, published in 1960, is extremely useful.⁸⁵ He examines the period from 1945-51, the Attlee government, and seeks to illustrate the problematic relationship that existed between the traditional left wing, and the foreign policy of the Labour administration. Focussing on groups such as the left-wing press, left-wing M.P.s, and the left wing outside of Parliament, for example, writers, educators and publicists, he demonstrates the many tensions that existed between those who believe in an ideology and a set of principles, and those having to deal with the reality and pragmatism of office. The period chosen by Meehan is especially interesting due to the numerous stresses and strains thrown up within the British Left by the onset of the Cold War, and the subsequent changing relationship between London and Moscow. Meehan's work thus demonstrates how principles can be compromised when holding office. What he shows is that the further from actual power, in this case, serving in Government, and political decision-making one gets, the easier, or at least more straightforward it becomes to retain a strong sense of political idealism. Thus, through analysis of various episodes from the period 1945-51, Meehan is able to demonstrate how different elements of the British left wing reacted to particular policy pronouncements from the Labour Government.

Michael R. Gordon examines the nature of socialist foreign policy in Britain from 1914 to 1965.⁸⁶ He outlines what he sees as being the definition of a 'truly' socialist policy, identifying four key principles: namely internationalism, international

⁸⁵ Eugene J. Meehan, *Op cit.*

⁸⁶ Michael R. Gordon, *Op cit.*

working-class solidarity, anti-capitalism, and anti-militarism.⁸⁷ Gordon then explores the extent to which this policy was followed in the specified period. In his view:

whenever Labour has been in office, its foreign policy has invariably been controlled not by socialist ideology but rather by continuous adjustment to environmental determinants – in other words, by the logic of externally imposed demands and pressures.⁸⁸

Essentially, as with the other works on this topic, this is an essay on the struggle between belief and pragmatism, an issue that has so often befallen Labour Governments within the realm of foreign policy. Through analysis of different episodes in British international relations, Gordon is able to demonstrate the way in which the Labour Party reacted to foreign policy. He shows how different elements within the party responded to particular events, and demonstrates the complexity of theory retaining a close relationship with practice.

Labour foreign policy during the post-First World War period is covered in a work by Henry R. Winkler.⁸⁹ He illustrates how foreign policy was developed in the aftermath of the Great War and shows how the party's position was formulated by a process of discussion. Crucial to the emergence of the party's stance on foreign policy was the influence of various individuals in the shaping of political ideas. Winkler highlights the leading role played by Arthur Henderson and Ramsay MacDonald. Alongside this point, Winkler's study depicts how the party reacted to international events and how foreign policy thus became an important area for debate. Following on from the opening comments in this section regarding the merits, or otherwise, of including literature that examines such an early period, Winkler's work is useful in that it clearly demonstrates the impact that personalities can have on the formulation of foreign policy. Later chapters in this thesis will illustrate the important role played

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Chapter One.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. ix.

⁸⁹ Henry R. Winkler, *Op cit*.

by various politicians in the promotion of key causes. Frequently, in the Parliamentary debates which have been analysed, different M.P.s regularly promoted a particular position, meaning that it becomes possible to identify a specific policy stance with the various same individuals. Indeed, one of the outcomes of this study has been the identification of a cohort of figures making frequent, consistent contributions to debates relating to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Figures such as Max Madden, Alice Mahon and Tony Benn, although on the back benches, were regular participants in Parliamentary debates. Thus, Winkler's work gives us an earlier example of the way in which particular approaches in policy can be attributed to specific M.P.s.

Rhiannon Vickers writes about the history of Labour Party foreign policy in her work, *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1; The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900-51*.⁹⁰ She outlines the evolution of the party's approach to international relations, and then examines different 'events' in the first part of the twentieth century and considers the way in which Labour politicians reacted to them. Vickers demonstrates the different ways that the party responded to international affairs, and outlines how divisions existed on a number of issues. For example, the stance taken by the Labour Party with regard to the First World War shows the splits that existed within the party with regard to British involvement in that conflict. Vickers shows that internationalism is a key principle for those within the Labour Party. However, she highlights that differences occur in the achievement of this goal; thus, principles are very often in direct conflict with the actual process of international relations.

⁹⁰ Rhiannon Vickers, *Op cit.*

Mark Phythian's work on Labour Party foreign policy focuses on the second half of the twentieth century, and includes the years up to 2006.⁹¹ His book is extremely useful in that it offers the chance to examine the way in which New Labour has conducted its foreign policy, as well as assessing the party's stance from before its evolution into that incarnation. In common with the other texts in this section of the literature review, he outlines the principles which he identifies as being intrinsically linked to Labour's approach to international relations. In his case, Phythian focuses on the issue of warfare and the troubled relationship that the party has had with related policies. He assesses the way in which the Labour Party, either in Government or Opposition, has responded to conflicts such as the Korean War, the Falklands War, and, latterly, the second Gulf War, and British intervention in the Balkans. Phythian presents the second Gulf War as a controversial break with the Labour Party's traditional support for the United Nations, *vis-à-vis*, the troubled relationship which that institution enjoyed with both the USA and Great Britain in the build up to the war against Saddam Hussein. He illustrates how Tony Blair will be unable to escape the legacy of Iraq, and the aftermath of that particular conflict. However, the contentious details of that episode aside, Phythian shows that for the Labour Party, the issue of war has long been a complex and difficult one; frequently the Parliamentary politicians have been split along lines of principle and pragmatism, theory and practice.

Alongside these general chronological studies of Labour's foreign policy, there exist a number of works on specific policy issues. One such theme examined in the literature is the Labour Party's stance on defence. This is of interest due to the party's long held views on pacifism. The problematic relationship between the party

⁹¹ Mark Phythian, *Op cit.*

and defence is explored by Bruce George, Timothy Watson and Jonathan Roberts, and Peter M. Jones.⁹² Whilst not focussing specifically on foreign affairs, these studies are still relevant due to the at-times controversial policy that the party has exercised in this area and the ongoing relationship that exists between the implementation of foreign policy and defence matters. This is particularly germane with regard to the policy held on unilateral disarmament which was widely viewed as extremely unpopular by the electorate. Undoubtedly this would have had impact on Anglo-US relations at a time when the Cold War was still under way.

The British Labour Party and Defense by Bruce George, Timothy Watson and Jonathan Roberts provides a clear illustration of the tensions that have existed within the Labour Party on this particular topic.⁹³ The dichotomy that exists between the ideology of a party and the policy of a government is outlined, with the authors highlighting the problems that Labour have faced with regards to adhering to even a vaguely socialist policy in what appears to be a most incompatible area, that is, defence. The authors show how Labour policy is formulated and thus demonstrate the tensions that exist during the policymaking process. The study shows how defence policy has changed and developed. One of the best examples of this is the party's stance on unilateralism and how this was addressed by the Kinnock leadership.

Peter M. Jones covers the issue of defence in an article for the *Review of International Studies*.⁹⁴ He illustrates how defence had been a political issue that enjoyed cross-party consensus, and explains how the 1983 General Election and the changing Labour policy on issues such as the Bomb and defence spending heralded a

⁹² Bruce George with Timothy Watson and Jonathan Roberts, *The British Labour Party and Defense* (Washington D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1991 and New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991); and Peter M. Jones, 'British Defence Policy: The Breakdown of Inter-Party Consensus', *Review of International Studies*, vol 13, no 2, (1987).

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Peter M. Jones, *Op cit.*

new era for defence policy in Britain. Although the article covers the actions of the three major British political parties, it is very useful in providing us with a glimpse of the difficulties that affected the Labour Party at that time, specifically with regard to the change in ideological direction undertaken by the party – that is, the influence held by the left wing of the party at that time - and the impact that this had on their electoral success.

CONCLUSION

The thesis which follows draws on the approach taken by each of these four strands of literature. Clearly, Simms and Hodge are useful to this study in depicting the position taken by the British Government and the wider Parliament at the time of the break-up of Yugoslavia. Both authors demonstrate the role played by the Labour Party at the time of the wars. Clearly Simms is critical of the position taken by the Labour Party during the conflicts. However, what will be shown within this thesis is the degree and level of debate that was undertaken by different politicians. Through close analysis of *Hansard*, my research enables a detailed picture to be presented of how individual M.P.s developed and adjusted their particular position in debates over the period of study. Thus, although the outcome was not favourable to the position held by Simms, what is demonstrated is that M.P.s from the Labour Party were frequent and regular participants in Parliamentary discussions. The thesis then provides a more comprehensive study than hitherto undertaken of how members of the Parliamentary Labour Party responded to a foreign policy episode over the course of a four year period.

The portrayal of the Balkans and accompanying academic debates that exist surrounding the use of somewhat stereotypical and contentious terms is another area

of literature which is drawn upon within this thesis. The arguments presented in the secondary literature draw on the work undertaken by Edward Said, in his work on 'orientalism'.⁹⁵ What becomes apparent herein is that the use of stereotypes is not restricted to hackneyed descriptions of the Balkans. Instead, what is demonstrated is that a variety of groups or nationalities are described in a way which suggests a considerable degree of separation from the respective politician in Parliament. For example, alongside familiar language used to describe anything 'Balkan', there are also stereotypical descriptions of NATO as the 'world's policeman'.

An analysis of the historiography of New Labour foreign policy is included here so as to show how ideas that were presented during the break-up of Yugoslavia in the years between 1991-1995, evolved to become actual policies during the subsequent Labour Governments which followed the landmark election of 1997. What is evident is that arguments on intervention and the role of NATO in international relations had their genesis during the earlier period, and gained currency and effect once Tony Blair became Prime Minister. The three chapters within this thesis which chart the different debates on various types of intervention demonstrate the way in which supposedly New Labour approaches to foreign affairs were apparent even before the election of Tony Blair as the party's leader.

The final area of literature considered here, that is, the historiography examining 'traditional' Labour Party foreign policy presents an opportunity to show the relationship between theory and practice in foreign affairs. What becomes evident during the period of study is that elements of traditional left-wing foreign policy were frequently promoted by certain politicians during Parliamentary debates on the break-up of Yugoslavia. However, in reality, these positions were not pursued by the

⁹⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1991. Reprinted with a new Afterword 1995. First published by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978)

Shadow Cabinet. This thesis thus charts the continuing tensions that exist between a dogmatic belief in ideology, and a more pragmatic role in the formulation of foreign policy. To that end this work sits comfortably within the wider historiography which examines this issue. The thesis is thus informed by each of these four strands of analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

POSITIONING THE CONFLICT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

This chapter will map out the various responses of Labour politicians to the actions of the international community during the Yugoslav crisis in the early 1990s. In it I will argue that whilst original concepts such as the ‘New World Order’ were frequently mentioned, more traditional institutions, notably the United Nations, were the preferred means to find an initial solution. However, other issues will be shown to have been at stake. Discussion of the potential role of the European Union was marked by traditional divisions between Europhile and Euro-sceptic factions. Likewise, discussion by Labour politicians on the role of NATO proved divisive. The chapter concludes by showing that the germs of a ‘New Labour’, pro-NATO, interventionist stance were evident, if not unopposed.

LABOUR PARTY AND THE ‘UNITY’ AROUND THE UNITED NATIONS

The role played by the United Nations throughout the entire break-up of Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995 was to be an ongoing subject of Parliamentary debates. Firstly, it is interesting to note the relationship that exists between the Labour Party and the United Nations. Traditionally, left-wing foreign policy operates on a bedrock of internationalism, most obviously espoused by the very institution under discussion here.¹ In a debate on the United Nations in December 1992, Ernie Ross outlined the links that exist between the two organisations. “....It is specifically written into the

¹ See Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914 – 1965* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), Kenneth E. Miller, *Socialism and Foreign Policy – Theory and Practice in Britain to 1931* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967) and Eugene J. Meehan, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960). These titles all provide studies of the relationship that has existed between left-wing ideology and foreign policymaking decisions of the Labour Party. They all provide good historical examples.

Labour party's constitution that we not only support the formation, the work and the activities of the United Nations, but we are committed to its expansion and support....."² This point was also highlighted in a speech by front bench spokesman

Dr David Clark in a 'Statement on the Defence Estimates' almost one year later:

....The House knows Labour's historic commitment to the United Nations, which is enshrined in clause IV of the Labour party's constitution. We have always had our concerns and criticism of the United Nations, but they have always been used to support our calls for reform. In the past few years, our belief in the United Nations has grown stronger and our position was set out recently by my right hon. and learned Friend the member for Monklands, East (Mr Smith), when he said: "Our commitment to a strong United Nations must be the foundation stone of our foreign policy."³

As this remark suggests, discussions on the general role of the United Nations occurred on a regular basis throughout the period, either as dedicated debates, or in the course of deliberations on related topics such as intervention in the Balkan wars. It was felt by the majority of Labour M.P.s that participated in such discussions that these events, specifically the war in Bosnia, were the types of occasion which were the *raison d'être* of the United Nations. In a debate on Yugoslavia in March 1992, Ted Rowlands outlined his view of the United Nations's purpose in international relations:

....I agree with hon. Members – including my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr Foot) – who said that we have at last rediscovered the real function of the United Nations. It is now beginning to play the role that those who built and promoted it after the war meant it to play. It is a major international role, and I wholeheartedly support the commitment that we are making as part and parcel of the United Nations force. However difficult the task and whatever mire the force may go into,

² Ernie Ross (Dundee, West), *United Nations* (Official Report, Hansard: 4 December 1992) Vol: 215, Columns 499–564. Throughout this thesis, any reference to a politician's comments in Hansard will always include their constituency in parentheses after their name. Although many of the M.P.s included herein are well known and have a strong public profile, some figures are not as immediately recognisable, so it has seemed sensible and helpful to give the reader some more information about them.

³ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Statement on the Defence Estimates* (Official Report, Hansard: 18 October 1993) Vol: 230, Columns 49 – 50.

it could at least create some stability, but we must go further and offer other alternatives.⁴

As will become apparent, this fairly 'upbeat', optimistic view of the role of the United Nations would be seen to diminish by many politicians, and indeed other commentators, as the war in Bosnia developed. However, at the start of the conflict, politicians viewed the organisation, and the way in which it could handle the hostile situation, with a fair degree of confidence. In particular this was the preferred institution to shape the still forming post Cold War world.

Thus in a debate on the United Nations, Tony Banks expanded on this very theme:

The end of the cold war has highlighted the work and role of the United Nations in a changed world. I am sure that all hon. Members agree that the United Nations is the hope for the future because of all its international roles. At the moment, its peacekeeping role is the most significant. As a result of the way in which the world has changed in recent years, the peacekeeping role of the United Nations is now putting enormous demands on that organisation. The United Nations has done as much peacekeeping in the past four years as it had done in the previous 40 years. That is the scale of peacekeeping facing the United Nations.....

....I believe that the UN should have the right to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries. I know that there are Conservative and Labour Members who disagree. In a world that purports to be civilised – I do not believe that we can call ourselves civilised, but I hope that we are moving towards a more civilised world – we cannot allow the political leaders of a country to massacre their own people while we stand aside and claim that that is a matter of the internal affairs of another country. I cannot see how the people who are being massacred will be grateful for that legal advice.⁵

The value placed here by one particular Labour politician on the very essence and role that should be endowed on the United Nations was by no means unique in the history of the relationship shared between those within the party, and that particular institution. Existing literature illustrates clearly the belief invested in that organisation by the Labour Party, right from the inception of the United Nations in the dying days

⁴ Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 5 March 1992) Vol: 205, Columns 484-486.

⁵ Tony Banks (West Ham), *United Nations* (Official Report, Hansard: 4 December 1992) Vol: 215, Columns 533-534.

of the Second World War. Rhiannon Vickers has written about the part played by leading members of the party in the creation of that organisation.⁶ She describes how Clement Attlee and other leading Labour figures that were part of the wartime coalition, such as Ernest Bevin and Hugh Dalton, became:

increasingly involved in the development of the post-war international order....(I)t had been the Labour ministers who had responded to the American plans for the establishment of a multilateral regime....Thus, Labour's ideas for a new, more regulatory framework for international relations coincided with those of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, even if they differed somewhat in their ideological origins, and helped shape the post-1945 international economic order.⁷

Labour's inherent belief in an internationalist approach to foreign policy was employed during the aftermath of the war to shape the founding of the United Nations; an institution still the focus of discussion some fifty years later. After winning the 1945 General Election, the Labour Party was yet ever more closely linked in the development of that particular organisation. In returning then to the 1990s and the break-up of Yugoslavia, Banks's appraisal of the potential that the United Nations offered the world in a peacekeeping capacity was by no means unique, nor an original stance to take.

The way in which the United Nations acted in Bosnia, and the relative success – or not - of their specific operation was in fact an ongoing feature of debate in the Houses of Parliament. Whilst there was never a doubt about the fact that the U.N. should intervene in the conflict, there was constant assessment and analysis as to the means which that intervention should take. The notion of humanitarian intervention in this case meant that the United Nations was providing supplies, and the troops that were deployed to the region were there to ensure that the relief reached the people that were most in need. As the war developed, the United Nations was also present to

⁶ Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1: The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900 – 51* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

⁷ *Ibid*, p160.

guarantee the integrity of the now infamous 'safe areas'. For example, as early as September 1992, the House of Commons discussed the way in which the U.N. was dealing with the conflict in the Balkans. In a debate on United Nations Operations, Ernie Ross, a Labour backbench politician, offered an assessment of the situation:

....It is widely acknowledged that the UN relief agencies are buckling under the strain of responding to the Balkan tragedy. The costs of this and any UN operation must be met in full by UN member states. The Foreign Secretary claims that British medicines are supplying hospitals in Sarajevo, but nightly television pictures show a gross lack of provision of medical care. That is something else that the Government have to tell us; they must explain the gap between what is claimed to have been provided and what we see on our television screens each night.....

The reason is simple enough. In an area of such deprivation, food and medicine have become strategic weapons. Until the UN and non-government organisations have sorted out proper attitudes to humanitarian aid they will struggle against impossible odds. It is clear that there is a greater role to be played by the UN. Indeed, if the new world order is to be effective it must be interventionist.⁸

The problems faced by the United Nations force in Bosnia, UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), were partly as a result of the limitations of its mandate there. The relief effort was very much at the mercy of the various warlords and warring parties on the ground. This point is illustrated by a comment made by Clare Short in a debate on 'Bosnia' in 1993:

....The authority of the United Nations is being undermined. We have forces on the ground wearing United Nations helmets and operating under the United Nations flag yet the Serbian fighters are saying, "You cannot come here. You cannot bring food in here. We will not let you through." The United Nations is being belittled and humiliated and that is serious for the future of any order and decency in international law and world stability.....⁹

The issue of ensuring that supplies were reaching those most in need was to be an enduring concern for the politicians for the duration of the war.

⁸ Ernie Ross (Dundee, West), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212 Columns 155 – 158.

⁹ Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1237 – 1240.

As has been said throughout this section, although the mandate was often viewed as being inadequate, there was always praise for the way in which the U.N. soldiers carried out their role in the Balkans. This can be further illustrated by two different extracts from House of Commons debates. On 31 May 1995 in a debate on Bosnia, John Home Robertson gave the following assessment of the role of the United Nations forces in the Balkans:

....We have heard a lot about the failures and difficulties of UNPROFOR, and especially about the shortcomings of the so-called safe areas, which are plainly not safe.....

I want to highlight the spectacular successes of UNPROFOR, which are not spoken of enough in the press or anywhere else.....(N)ever let us forget that 3 million people who are, in effect, under siege in central Bosnia – including half a million people who are literally under siege in Sarajevo – have been kept supplied, at least with basic materials, for the past three years. That would not have been possible without UNPROFOR.....¹⁰

A similar statement was made by Frank Cook in the July of that year. He stated:

....What sickens me is the amount of criticism that is levelled at the United Nations. Members of both Front benches have made the valid point that the UN is us. Having visited Bosnia three times during the past two years, I can tell the House that the United Nations is coming of age through this bloody awful mess. Two years ago, it was chaotic. Twelve months ago, huge improvements were to be seen. This year, the UN is a very good organisation. It is not perfect, but it has real determination and high morale.

Instead of using the UN – and Britain is a member of the Security Council – as some kind of whipping boy to expunge our feelings of guilt and shame, we ought to give it credit for doing a first-class job.¹¹

These examples all show how the United Nations was perceived to be a force for good in the Balkans, if it had only had an opportunity to operate with unilateral, cohesive international support.

However, frustration at the effectiveness of the U.N. presence in Bosnia was apparent as the conflict progressed. This criticism was understandably intensified at

¹⁰ John Home Robertson (East Lothian), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1027 – 1030.

¹¹ Frank Cook (Stockton, North), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1773 – 1774.

times of extreme crisis or atrocity. The shelling of a Sarajevo market place in February 1994, in which 69 people were killed, led the House of Commons to debate the situation in Bosnia the following week.¹² David Winnick, a backbench Labour politician offered this assessment of the United Nations's achievements. He argued:

Is not it clear, even to this Government, that Saturday's butchery, in which nearly 70 people were murdered, occurred because, as with previous atrocities, the Serbian warlords believed, to a large extent, that they were secure from any form of western intervention and retaliation? Is the Minister aware of the feeling of deep betrayal that is felt by people in Bosnia, who believe that they have been let down by the United Nations and by western Governments and are the innocent victims of aggression? Unlike what happened with the Gulf war, in which action was rightly taken, the Bosnian people are being allowed to be murdered without any intervention from the western community and international organisations.¹³

Assessing the United Nations mandate and the effectiveness of its prosecution were constant themes in parliamentary debates. What was undisputed was that British troops were carrying out the mandate to the best of their ability. However, praise for their actions was almost always tempered by caution, or even criticism of what the United Nations was expecting to achieve in the area, with what many of the speakers regarded as a limited mandate. Additionally, it is important to stress that politicians were not criticising the concept of the United Nations; but showing disappointment in the way in which its constituent parts were operating; such an organisation is obviously only as effective as its member states, and the type of mandate that they had chosen to authorise. Here, elements of the Labour Party found it to be lacking. John

¹² The market place in Sarajevo was shelled on 5 February 1994. There were 69 fatalities, and over 200 people were wounded. Within Bosnia-Herzegovina, the scale of the atrocity made it an issue of controversy between the Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb politicians, with either side blaming each other. For a detailed account of the aftermath see Laura Silber and Allan Little's highly detailed study on the break-up of Yugoslavia; *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin Books and BBC Books, 1995. Revised 1996) Chapter 24.

¹³ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 7 February 1994) Vol: 237, Columns 19 – 20.

Hutton was one such speaker, and contributed the following comments to a debate on

Bosnia:

Whilst accepting that all the units which have contributed to the UNPROFOR mission in the former Yugoslavia have performed their tasks extremely well, does the Foreign Secretary accept that this miserable and depressing episode reveals a deficiency in the way that the United Nations considers a deploying force in support of Security Council resolutions? What thoughts and proposals does the Foreign Secretary have about finding a way to improve the delivery of force to support United Nations Security Council resolutions? What consideration has he given to the permanent convening of the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations?¹⁴

This type of comment, critical of the manner in which the United Nations mandate was being enforced, was also apparent in speeches by the Shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook. At a time when U.N. mandates such as the protection of 'safe areas' were being routinely threatened and jeopardised, he launched this attack on the ineptitude demonstrated by the international community in its prosecution of its responsibilities in Bosnia:

....I find it disturbing that none of (these) challenges to the UN mandate has been met with a UN response. It is only too clear that some parties to the conflict have used the last four months of ceasefire to apply the three Rs of regrouping, refunding and rearming. The question is, what has the UN been doing during those four months? What has it done to prepare the safe haven for the likely resumption of hostilities? What has been done to try to achieve the best of all outcomes for the safe havens – demilitarisation – so that they do not provide legitimate military targets within the UN areas?

.... The Foreign Secretary said that the Government and the UN would support a proportionate response to violations of the UN mandate. I understand that and I fully share that view. We have to ask the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence why there has been no response because, at present, the reaction of UN and UNPROFOR forces does not appear to be proportionate to the events of the past week¹⁵.

¹⁴ John Hutton (Barrow and Furness), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 7 December 1994) Vol: 251, Column 320 - 321. Douglas Hurd's response to Hutton's questions about improving the efficiency of the United Nations mentioned sending the Labour M.P. details of proposals that the Foreign Secretary had regarding improvements that could be made to that institution. Hurd did not, at this stage, elaborate as to what these ideas were, but agreed with Hutton with regard to making the United Nations better equipped to deal with such crises; Douglas Hurd (Witney), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 7 December 1994) Vol: 251, Column 321.

¹⁵ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 589 – 592.

Cook's criticism of the manner in which the United Nations acted in the Balkans was common of many speakers on the issue. Again, it is important to stress that it was always the extent of the mandate at fault, rather than the actions of the various armed forces charged with the duty of enforcing the said policy, or even the concept of the United Nations itself. However, in an example that clearly demonstrates the increasingly contradictory nature of much of the debate that took place for the duration of the Bosnian war, just two months after the previous speech, Robin Cook attacked those criticising the U.N. policy, specifically the way in which they presented their discourse:

....A commitment has been made by British forces in the fulfilment of the UN mandate in Bosnia. I find it a rather curious feature of some of the discussion about the crisis in Bosnia in the past few weeks that some people refer to the UN as if the UN were somebody else. They talk about the UN as if it were some other country, whose Government are to blame for the problem.....

The UN is ourselves. It is made up of countries such as us. Indeed, Britain has a leading responsibility in the UN as a member of the Security Council. We ourselves supported in the Security Council the very mandates that we are now fulfilling within Bosnia. We cannot put ourselves forward as that leading member of the UN if we do not also accept the duty to fulfil the mandates.

....Our response to the setbacks in Bosnia should not be to accept defeat and pull out, but to show a new determination to carry out the UN mandate. Two months ago, the international community demonstrated unity and resolve in delivering freedom from fear and oppression to Bosnia's civilians. The fate of the eastern enclaves raises doubts about the resolve of the international community, and doubts will have been raised in the minds of the Bosnian Government and the Karadzic Serbs.¹⁶

This extract bears all of the hallmarks of the criticism directed at the United Nations throughout this part of the thesis. Thus, the Shadow Foreign Secretary criticised the lack of will of the member states to act with regard to Bosnia. He also drew attention to the ineffective mandates that had been put in place with regard to solving the

¹⁶ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1748 – 1749.

conflict in the Balkans.¹⁷ As well as offering a critique of the United Nations, Cook's comments were also a vehicle with which to attack what he saw as the ineffectual foreign policy of the Conservative Government. However, at no time in this speech did Cook criticise the very *raison d'être* of the organisation; for him, the weaknesses were due to the poor resolve of its members. Thus, for the Shadow Foreign Secretary it was important for the United Nations to be successful; this would only happen if the member states gave it their total commitment.

To summarise, one can be sure that the United Nations found understandable support across the Parliamentary Labour Party. As Michael R. Gordon, Eugene J. Meehan, and Rhiannon Vickers have shown in their work, this was the historical tradition in which Labour politicians stood.¹⁸ They had looked to the U.N. before and I have shown how this perspective remained in the early 1990s. Nonetheless, different and new attitudes evolved in the Parliamentary Labour Party. A relatively significant number of M.P.s expressed concerns regarding the precise role that the United Nations could, and indeed was, playing in Bosnia. Its perceived failures were debated. Rather subtly the suggestion to protect the U.N. from humiliation surely also underlined how some M.P.s, for example, Robin Cook, as shown in the last extract, felt its credibility was being diminished.

THINKING ABOUT A NEW WORLD ORDER – A GENUINE SOLUTION?

In many ways running in parallel to discussions on the role and response of the United Nations to events in the Balkans, was the issue of the so-called 'New World Order'.

The end of the Cold War, embodied by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, saw

¹⁷ The impact of the ineffectual U.N. mandate in Bosnia was strongly felt in western Europe even some years after the end of the Bosnian War. In April 2002, almost seven years after the fall of Srebrenica, the Dutch Government resigned, following the publication of a report into the role of Dutch troops involved in the protection of the Muslim safe haven.

¹⁸ Michael R. Gordon, *Op cit.*, Eugene J. Meehan, *Op cit.*, Rhiannon Vickers, *Op cit.*

President George H Bush give a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, in which he stated: “We have a vision of a new partnership of nations that transcends the Cold War. A partnership based on consultation, cooperation, and collective action, especially through international and regional organizations.”¹⁹ The end of the bipolar world meant, in Bush’s eyes, optimism for a ‘new world order’; a place where, as communism would no longer be a divisive ideology, a more collective approach towards international relations could be taken. This concept could be seen as a slight shift away from a U.N. based type of intervention. Whilst Bush’s speech acknowledges the part to be played by various institutions in international relations, the defeat of Soviet sponsored communism meant that the USA held an unchallenged position of dominance, as the world’s sole surviving super power.

However, instead of this, what emerged after 1989 was a world riddled with conflict that appeared to be driven by a new force; that of a particularly aggressive, virulent form of nationalism. The void left by communism had been filled by that of a different challenge. As the Soviet Union retreated from Central Europe, back into its own borders, newly freed peoples looked to the goal of national self-determination for their lands. Within Europe, this happened either peacefully, for example with the division of Czechoslovakia in January 1993, or, as our subject here all too often illustrates, with the break-up of Yugoslavia this process also occurred through the use of force.

These developments led Labour Party politicians, in common with those from across the House, to discuss new approaches to foreign policy. The particularly virulent form of nationalism visible in the Yugoslav states, meant that these issues were particularly pertinent to the Balkans. In the House of Commons the nature of the

¹⁹ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Touchstone, 1995) p804. Bush’s address to the U.N. General Assembly took place on 1 October 1990.

changed threat to global stability was debated on a number of occasions. Bruce George, a leading member of the Defence Select Committee and frequent commentator on defence matters, offered this typical observation on the changing world climate in a debate on United Nations Operations in September 1992.²⁰ He said:

...It might seem perverse to view the cold war as anything other than a negative phenomenon, but in many ways it was simple. Not only did soldiers know who the enemy was; they knew which dug-out they would be fighting in, and they probably knew the name of the tank commander who would come against them. In those days policy makers did not need to think much. The world was a simpler and stable place. All those conditions have changed, not always for the better.

The turbulent, volatile and conflict-ridden world in which we now live surely requires much more thinking – fresh ideas are needed. One thing is certain: anyone who believes that we are entering a wonderful new era without war, in which armed forces can be reduced to negligible levels, is deluding himself. Such aspirations will be thwarted.²¹

This idea of a changing world with new problems needing different solutions had been mentioned in a speech in the previous year by Bob Wareing, a backbench Labour M.P. who was to spend a considerable amount of time and effort keeping the issue of the break-up of Yugoslavia alive in the chamber. In a speech on 'Foreign Affairs and Defence', he raised both the issue of aggressive nationalism, and how it was relevant in a specifically Yugoslav context:

It is true that 45 years of cold war have now come to an end and that everyone is appreciative of that, but a new spectre is haunting Europe – that of an unthinking and often mischievous nationalism....Indeed the nationalist card, like sometimes the racist card, is played for political ends.....

.....I started by saying that there was a new spectre haunting Europe. If the Tudjmans and the Milosevics of this world are allowed to show that they can win with the nationalist card, their example will be emulated in other parts of Europe. I applaud the granting of independence to the Baltic states, but parts of the Soviet Union – or is it the old Soviet Union? – have problems similar to those in Yugoslavia. We have to give our fullest support to Mr Gorbachev and others in the Soviet Union who want to avoid those problems. It was the old nationalism of eastern and central

²⁰ Bruce George has been a member of the Defence Select Committee since 1979. In 1997 he became the chairman of the committee.

²¹ Bruce George (Walsall, South), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol:212, Columns 163 – 165.

Europe that gave rise to the fascist threat which embroiled so many of us in the years between 1939 and 1945....²²

This idea of a different type of conflict threatening global and in this case European security in the post Cold War years was a theme which was to repeatedly recur in House of Commons debates during the period of the break-up of Yugoslavia (1991-1995). Even towards the very end of the conflict in May 1995, in a debate on the former Yugoslavia, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, made reference to the new type of crisis facing international relations:

...(The Foreign Secretary) was absolutely right to say that while the House debates the specific and particular problems of the former Yugoslavia, we should not regard them in isolation. The tragedy that we should recognise is that the problems of the troubled former Yugoslavia are only too representative of the new nature of the threat to the security of Europe and the world.

Conflicts between ethnic groups and civil war within states are now more frequent than war between states. In the past four years, the UN has recorded three wars between states, but has also recorded 70 conflicts within states. Dealing with the complexity and bitterness of a civil conflict is much more challenging than dealing with the simple morality required to denounce aggression between states. It is a challenge that we cannot avoid because it is now a more common threat to world peace.....²³

Thus, alongside the traditional Labour Party focus on the United Nations, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia became an area of consideration within the broader debates on the state of the world which followed the ending of the Cold War. President Bush's notion of a 'new world order' was given ample opportunity to be assessed during the wars in the Balkans. As illustrated herein by the comments made by different members of the Labour Party, on each occasion the concept was found to be without actuality and bearing little resemblance to either the situation in the former Yugoslavia, or the manner in which the international community had responded to the developing crises. The conflict in the Balkans thus presented a very real opportunity

²² Robert N Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby), *Debate on the Address: Foreign Affairs and Defence* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 November 1991) Vol: 198, Columns 150-153.

²³ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 593-595.

for the international community to act under the guise of the so-called 'new world order', but as has been demonstrated by the politicians here, this chance was found to be wanting; this sentiment was reflected in the contributions to debate that were made by the various members of the Labour Party.

A EUROPEAN SOLUTION?

EUROPHILE AND EURO-SCEPTIC UNDERCURRENTS

The main issue worth examining here is how the Parliamentary Labour Party reacted and responded to the actions of the European Union, and its policy towards the former Yugoslavia.²⁴ As one would expect, given the contentious way in which this organisation is viewed within the British political community, assessments by Labour Party politicians towards the E.U.'s handling of events in the Balkans were many and varied. It is possible to group these responses into two camps, namely Europhile and Euro-sceptic. As will become apparent herein, the general attitude taken by different politicians towards the concept of some type of European organisation did much to inform their individual assessment of the E.U.'s approach to dealing with the break-up of Yugoslavia.

At the very beginning of the conflict it is interesting to note the optimism with which the E.U.'s actions were greeted by the then Leader of the Opposition, Neil Kinnock. These comments followed the initial efforts made by the E.U. to intervene in the break-up. Kinnock stated:

.... I begin by expressing my strong support for the initiatives taken by the European Council to try to achieve stability, a secure ceasefire and productive discussions in Yugoslavia. I also express the hope that the efforts will be continued and that all the agencies of the Community and

²⁴ During the period of study for this thesis, 1991-1995, the European Community evolved into the European Union. This was as a result of the Treaty of Maastricht (1991). The European Union came into effect on 1 November 1993. For the sake of consistency in this thesis, the term 'European Union' will be used throughout.

of the conference on security and co-operation in Europe will be employed in trying to secure a speedy, peaceful and enduring outcome to the turmoil and divisions in Yugoslavia.²⁵

Hindsight tells us that these were to prove to be prematurely optimistic sentiments.

A further overt show of support for the policies undertaken by the European Union was apparent in a speech made by Calum Macdonald on 5 March 1992. His remarks provide a good illustration of the divergent views, in this case very pro-European, that were held by politicians not just within the Labour Party but right across the political spectrum. He said:

....I shall keep my remarks brief by focusing on one issue which has been mentioned during the debate – the implications of the crisis and the series of events for the attempts of the European Community to develop a common foreign and security policy. One thread of argument has run through the debate, implying a criticism of the Community in those attempts, and saying that what has happened with regard to Yugoslavia represents a failure on the part of the Community. I wish to argue strongly against that imputation.

The most remarkable aspect of the approach of the various countries of the Community towards the events in Yugoslavia is the way in which they have bent over backwards to maintain a united and common approach to the problem. They have tried to march in step when tackling the problem. Why have the various European countries done that, despite the obvious tensions? We have all mentioned the German angle, Germany's influence and its attitude to the recognition of Croatia. Despite that, there has been an attempt to maintain unity. Why?²⁶

Macdonald then makes two points. Firstly, that any likely success in remedying the problems arising from the break-up of Yugoslavia relied upon the unity of the European Union in finding a solution to the situation. This was due to the influence of a group of nation states being more powerful than the single voice of an individual state. Secondly, in Macdonald's view, if member states of the European Union had taken different approaches towards the crisis in the Balkans, there would have been a

²⁵ Neil Kinnock (Islwyn), *European Council (Luxembourg)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 July 1991) Vol: 194, Column 23. The 'European Council' refers to the Heads of State of the EU member countries.

²⁶ Calum Macdonald (Western Isles), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 5 March 1992) Vol: 205, Columns 493 – 494.

danger of different countries outside of the region being on opposing sides of the conflict, due to divided loyalties, leading to a fear of an escalation of hostilities. This view contrasts strongly with the position taken by politicians later in this section.

Concern regarding the nature of 'new' conflicts around the world led many commentators to use the example of membership of an international institution as a means of persuading warring states to stop their fighting. Ceasefires would lead to new states being allowed to join the 'hallowed' club of countries in organisations such as NATO and the European Union. This particular view, specifically here in relation to the new European states, is illustrated by an extract from a speech by the backbench Labour M.P., Ted Rowlands, speaking in a debate on Yugoslavia in March 1992:

....We should make it a condition that, to belong to the European Community in its broader sense, the North Atlantic Co-operation Council or to CSCE, those communities should accept a series of values, a form of behaviour and a way of resolving conflicts different from the way in which conflicts have been resolved in Yugoslavia. We should use the desire to belong to broader communities to change behaviour. Surely that is the great political value of the European Community.

Even in my political lifetime, Spain, Portugal and Greece have been governed by dictators. However, they will no longer accept dictatorship, because they realise that they cannot have a dictatorship and also belong to the broader European Community. If we can create the same meaningful relationship between the new smaller states and communities that will emerge as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union in respect of the broader community of Europe and NATO, and at the same time, impose the condition that those communities should resolve their conflicts differently from what has happened in Yugoslavia, there is real hope for a new European order.²⁷

What is of interest here, is that, at a time of real concern and disillusionment with how any of the aforementioned organisations had dealt with the war in Bosnia, membership of such bodies was still seen as appropriate means with which to persuade various warring factions to stop fighting.

²⁷ Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 5 March 1992) Vol: 205, Columns 484 – 486.

The use of membership of an organisation such as the E.U. being such a force for good was echoed by another Labour politician in the same debate. This more pragmatic view of the European Union, held with considerable optimism, was outlined by Donald Anderson. He outlined how that institution could be employed to hasten a swift end to hostilities. In a debate relatively early on in the break-up, Anderson explained how the European Union could be used as a force for good in the Balkans. In line with the bigger theme of the 'end of communism', and the range of 'newly emerging countries' wanting to become members of various international organisations, Anderson offered this view on how peace could be secured in the former Yugoslavia:

....A key card that was not played, at least not openly, was the fact that all the combatant republics in Yugoslavia would eventually, at the end of the fighting and when the dust had settled, be looking to the EC for financial assistance. That key leverage aspect was available to the Community, and had the EC, possibly earlier in the conflict, said in terms that any financial assistance would come only when the status quo ante in terms of frontiers had been established, that would have given a clear signal to the combatants and forced them to ask whether their fighting was worth while. That point may have been made forcefully in the corridors. It was not made openly.....²⁸

Again then, as with regard to the United Nations, an international body was put forward. This time it was the European Union suggested by the Europhile members of the Labour Party.

Criticism towards the European Union was apparent throughout the period 1991–1995. The first comments to consider here are by politicians who, whilst praising the various attempts at diplomacy that were being undertaken by the E.U., were of the opinion that not enough was being done to help the region affected by the break-up of Yugoslavia. In a speech to Parliament in 1991, Gavin Strang began in an

²⁸ Donald Anderson (Swansea, East), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 5 March 1992) Vol: 205, Columns 467 – 468.

optimistic vein when outlining his views on policies pursued by the European Union, but then went on to illustrate the sentiment that would become common to many speakers over the next four years, namely that something more should be done, and by implication that the European Union was inadequate. He commented:

While I support the invocation of the emergency mechanism of the CSCE with respect to Yugoslavia, are not there sound reasons for believing that if any international institution can avert civil war in that country, it is the European Community? I welcome the freezing of EC aid to Yugoslavia, but are there likely to be direct talks between the Council – through the three Foreign Ministers – and the federal army of Yugoslavia? Will consideration be given to any other sanctions that the European Community might bring to bear to try to avert a tragedy in that country?²⁹

A further example of the perceived shortcomings of the E.U. being highlighted is apparent in a speech given by Tony Banks on the issue of the European Union implementing sanctions. This was a topic which was to be discussed on a regular basis in the House of Commons, as will be shown in more detail in the following chapter. Banks, while broadly supporting the E.U.'s actions, outlined the difficulties which were apparent in implementing policy based on sanctions. He said:

.... It is a European problem that must have a European solution. We cannot sit idly by and watch Yugoslavia tear itself to pieces, watch people being killed in vast numbers, and watch the wonderful archaeological and architectural gems being destroyed, while saying that there is nothing that we can do. We cannot even get the Government to say that they will fully support oil sanctions against Yugoslavia. The Minister of State said that the Greeks would not be too happy about imposing oil sanctions. That is not acceptable. It is no good doing one thing in Iraq and something completely different that the Western European Union could undertake.....³⁰

Whilst the comments of the previous two speakers do not demonstrate the more overtly hostile and critical sentiments which one associates with the Euro-sceptic wing of British politics, many of the following politicians to be considered

²⁹ Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East and Musselburgh), *European Council (Luxembourg)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 July 1991) Vol: 194, Column 29.

³⁰ Tony Banks (West Ham), *Debate on the Address: Foreign Affairs and Defence* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 November 1991) Vol: 198, Columns 171- 172.

demonstrate sentiments which are often associated with those who dislike, or have a distrust of Europe as a political institution. A further strand of criticism directed towards the European Union, and its diplomatic efforts in the Balkans, came from politicians who felt that the intrinsic problems of the politics peculiar to the E.U., that is different member states having allegiance, or at least preferred clients, within the Balkans was one complication in formulating a coherent policy. This was an issue which was to exercise debate amongst members of the Parliamentary Labour Party. It is neatly illustrated in a speech given by Mike Gapes in September 1992:

Contrary to what an American academic said a few years ago, history is not dead; it is back with a vengeance. What we see in the former Yugoslavia is due to historic animosities and feuds, but I regret to say that it has also been contributed to by the mistakes of a number of countries in Europe and internationally.

I want the Minister to explain why, if 11 European Community countries are against recognition and one is in favour, a state is recognised; while if 11 are in favour and one against, the state is not recognised. A series of tragic mistakes have been made over the past two years, which have encouraged disintegration and prompted fanatics on all sides to sweep away the secular, democratic and pluralistic forces. As a result, it is now very difficult for democratic socialists of any kind in the former Yugoslavia to obtain a hearing anywhere. Religious fundamentalism and ethnic hatred are the dominant forces in all the republics.³¹

The extract refers to the divided manner in which the European Union responded to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Germany had been a leading voice in the call for Slovenia and Croatia to gain independence. For Slovenia, with a mainly ethnically homogenous population this was fairly non-contentious. However, in neighbouring Croatia, which had a large Serbian minority population, this decision would prove to be catastrophic, with no provision being made for that group's security. Alternatively, recognition for Macedonia was not forthcoming due to Greek opposition to the idea, based on the traditional cultural and historical Hellenic links to the name 'Macedonia'. This

³¹ Mike Gapes (Ilford, South), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 178 - 179.

highlights a weakness in the solution proposed by the Europhile group within the Labour Party.

More radical and far-fetched criticism of the lack of unity in the European approach is best illustrated in a speech by Dennis Skinner, the backbench Labour politician. He argued:

Does the Minister appreciate that western Governments are partly to blame for all the slaughter on the street of Sarajevo? Does he agree that when former Yugoslavia was in the throes of splitting up, Germany wanted to recognise Croatia? That was confirmed by Lord Carrington at the time and since. The Government and the House were wary of the possibility of that happening. Bosnia followed because Germany twisted the British Government's arm and a quid pro quo deal was done on the two opt-outs for Maastricht, and we have finished up with this mess. If there is any guilt – there is a lot of guilt around the conflict in the Balkans – does the Minister agree that the Government's hands are not clean?³²

The relationship between the German-led demand for recognition of Croatia and the British opt outs granted by the Maastricht treaty is a point that was often made by those critical of both events.³³ The most outspoken critics suggested that the future of the former Yugoslavia had been sacrificed for the national interests of individual E.U. member states. In the case of Skinner and also Tony Benn, who made similar remarks, their views can be linked to the traditionally Euro-sceptic stance which they took in the House of Commons.

Nonetheless, not all of this body of discourse was as colourful. Perhaps a more measured critique of the E.U. is provided here by Bruce George, a prominent speaker on defence issues, in a debate on United Nations Operations in September of the same

³² Dennis Skinner (Bolsover), *Bosnia* (Official Record, Hansard: 7 February 1994) Vol: 237, Column 26.

³³ Brendan Simms examines the relationship between German-led recognition of Slovenia and Croatia with the opt outs granted at Maastricht, and the criticism of such policy that emanated from the Labour Party. Dennis Skinner and Gerald Kaufman are two politicians that he mentions as being critical of Germany. See Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001) p 282, 297.

year. In assessing the achievements of the international community in dealing with the situation in the former Yugoslavia, George makes the following comment:

....I regret to say that the roles of the UN, the EC, the Western European Union, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, NATO and various national Governments have been far from encouraging; indeed, usually they have been dispiriting. I hope that that experience will serve to quash the idea that Europe is capable of looking after its own security, let alone anyone else's.³⁴

Again, this extract provides a striking contrast with the enthusiastic support for the E.U. shown earlier by key Europhile members of the party.

These contributions to the debates regarding the role in the Balkans played by the institutions of Europe are indicative of the wider literature covering the relationship between the Labour Party and the European Union. As with the Conservatives, the Labour Party has enjoyed a somewhat problematic relationship with Europe in all of its institutional guises. Britain entered the European Community under the Tory Government of Edward Heath. The election of the Wilson government in 1974, saw the Cabinet divided in its support of British membership. John W. Young has stated that "left-wingers Tony Benn and Michael Foot ranged against social democrats such as Roy Jenkins."³⁵ In an essay written in 2001, Tony Benn outlined his opposition to the closer integration of European states:

The integration of Europe is a political and not an economic question. It must be seen as such, since each step taken in that direction shifts power from the elected to the unelected, and this raises fundamental democratic questions.³⁶

Importantly he differentiated his position from Euro-sceptics on the right of the political spectrum:

³⁴ Bruce George (Walsall, South), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 163 – 165.

³⁵ John W. Young, *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century* (London: Arnold, Hodder Headline Group, 1997) p214.

³⁶ Tony Benn, *Free Radical: New Century Essays* (London: Continuum, 2003) p119.

It is very important that those on the Left who oppose this [integration of Europe] do so because it represents a steady erosion of the power of the electors who are not taken in by the crude nationalism of the Right, with their dislike of foreigners and strange commitment to the Queen's image on banknotes. What are the alternatives for those of us who are socialists, democrats and internationalists who do want to cooperate closely with European neighbours?³⁷

For Benn then, his difficulties with European institutions lay with what he considered to be anti-democratic consequences of closer political integration amongst member states. The opposing side of the argument *vis-à-vis* Labour support for the European Union is exemplified by Hugo Young, in his study of the impact that Tony Blair's arrival had on the party's policy towards Europe.³⁸ Using a speech made by Blair at Chatham House on 5 April 1995, Young outlined the value that the Labour leader placed on Britain and its relationship with Europe:

Britain should be 'at the centre of Europe', 'should set about building alliances within Europe that enable our influence to grow'. This, he thought, was about more than fulfilling our national interest. To hesitate before our European destiny, he rather more boldly said, was 'to deny our historical role in the world'. The role was to be 'a major global player', and would be forfeit unless we accepted Europe as our base.³⁹

What this example thus shows is the major gulf that existed between two strands of the Labour Party with regard to their respective stances on the role of Europe within British politics. The differences espoused here on a more general level become much more apparent when applied to a local, specific situation, such as the conflict in the Balkans. Hence, studying the arguments surrounding the part played by the European Union in the break-up of Yugoslavia provides us with a succinct summary of the potentially divisive nature of the debate, and the general confusion that existed during the entire four-year period on the issue of how the international community should act during the Balkan wars. Looking to the European Union was natural for some.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p119.

³⁸ Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (London: Macmillan, 1998. Papermac edition 1999)

³⁹ *Ibid*, p485.

Kinnock et al were New Europeans. Just as natural was a conspiratorial Euro-scepticism. What Bosnia did was accentuate this tension in the Party and thus make it too divisive a potential solution.

PRECURSORS TO BLAIR? THE LABOUR PARTY AND NATO

The part played by NATO during the conflict in the Balkans is worth discussion here because although easily fitting into the dominant theme of the debates on how the international community responded to the crisis, it also shows how discussions emerged on the redefinition of the alliance's mission in the wake of the end of the Cold War. Now I will examine NATO's role in the Balkans, and how the discussions on this topic evolved in the House of Commons, alongside contributions made to the debate on any future role for the alliance in the post Cold War world.

Any concern regarding NATO action in the Balkans was dismissed just over a year after the Bosnian conflict started by the Labour front bench spokesman, Dr David Clark. In the November of 1993, he welcomed the opportunity given to NATO forces to intervene in Bosnia.⁴⁰ This was within the context of a broader examination of issues arising from the end of the Cold War. For NATO to survive following the collapse of communism it had to adapt and adjust its original remit. It was to this that Dr Clark referred when addressing the alliance's role in the Balkans; thus NATO's longer term survival would be guaranteed.

George Robertson, a front bench politician who later went on to become Defence Secretary in the Labour Government elected in 1997, and following the military intervention in Kosovo, became the Secretary General of NATO, outlined his

⁴⁰ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Foreign Affairs and Defence* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 November 1993) Vol: 233, Columns 175 – 177.

view of a changing role for that organisation in a debate on International Peacekeeping in 1993:

....Peacekeeping means newly reinforcing old institutions. It means giving life to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and making it work well. It means seeing what new role NATO can play. NATO exists, so it has a value beyond the simple institutions which it represents today. Therefore, its new role must be developed to encompass its wider responsibilities beyond the military role which it had previously.⁴¹

This idea of an enhanced role for the alliance was also apparent in a speech given by Dr David Clark over one year after his colleague's comments. Clark highlighted the part that Labour played in both the creation of NATO (during the post war Attlee government), and the way that the party supported its existence during the Cold War. In his speech, Clark acknowledged the need for NATO to change to fit the different world order, and urged others to support this development:

.....I often hear debate in the west about whether NATO has a role. It is interesting that I hear that question only in the west. I do not hear it in the east because people there are certain that NATO has a future. They know that if it had not been for NATO, we would not be in the position that we are now in. They know the effectiveness of NATO. The great challenge for us in the west is how to change NATO. It has to change, yet it must retain its effectiveness.

The Labour Government were instrumental in the formation of NATO. We have always stood by our commitment to NATO. We regarded it in the past as the linchpin of our defence strategy. We still regard it as such, but it has to change. It has to move with the world. It is a great pity that Her Majesty's Government have not taken the lead in pressing for changes in NATO. There have been movements in the past two weeks. We welcome late conversions, but I feel that the enthusiasm is not there. Surely we ought to take much more positive steps to bring some of the former eastern European Warsaw pact countries into NATO.⁴²

This extract, provides a neat summary of the divergence of views that existed within the Labour Party on the issue of NATO. Clark and Robertson's suggestions regarding a more interventionist role for NATO provide a hint of what was to follow, with

⁴¹ George Robertson (Hamilton), *International Peacekeeping* (Official Report, Hansard: 23 February 1993) Vol: 219, Columns 849 – 852.

⁴² Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Orders of the Day: Debate on the Address, Foreign Affairs and Defence* (Official Report, Hansard: 17 November 1994) Vol: 250, Columns 218 – 222.

regard to a more proactive foreign policy following Labour's victory at the 1997 General Election. The sentiments behind this view of a further enhanced role for NATO are apparent in a speech given by Tony Blair in 1995. By then, he was Leader of the Opposition and the extract demonstrates the type of measured language with which the British Parliament and public is by now very familiar. Blair said:

....There is no doubt – there is no point in denying it – that this has been a profoundly unhappy experience for the international community. Yet, the errors and the uncertainty have arisen from the nature of the conflict itself. The choice is, has been and remains: do we stay out and let the conflict be resolved by force or do we become involved in order to provide at least a chance for a diplomatic solution to be found? However long this conflict goes on, that choice remains the same.⁴³

Although Blair's comments seem careful not to offend or to offer too extreme an opinion, with no firm detail, they do provide a glimpse of the future interventionist foreign policy that he would later advocate in amongst other places, Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

However, in the first half of the early 1990s and the earlier break-up of Yugoslavia, the Labour Party was in no way unanimous in its support for any extension of a role for NATO. Instead, by way of a contrast, concern at a more highly visible and proactive position for the defensive alliance was apparent throughout these conflicts. The issue of its involvement in the Balkans was raised by Labour politician John Spellar, whose speech in April 1993 highlights many of the concerns which were raised about extending the terms of intervention in the area:

If this were not a United Nations operation, would a UN-sanctioned NATO force be involved? Is it proposed, even, that if United Nations agreement could not be secured, a NATO force should act on its own account?....

NATO would be taking a dramatic step if it moved from being part of a defence pact to being a world policeman, able to intervene throughout the globe. It would have to take a far greater step than any taken in the Gulf

⁴³ Tony Blair (Sedgefield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1007 – 1009.

war, which involved a clear military objective, a clear international principle and a simple and straightforward issue. Favouring intervention in a civil war in Yugoslavia would represent a dramatic change in NATO's terms of reference, which would require serious consideration and a major debate before any action was taken.⁴⁴

This caution was mirrored in comments made by Tony Benn, speaking on the same subject later on in the Bosnian war, in 1995. Benn was concerned about the apparent dichotomy of British and French troops, under the guise of the United Nations, distributing humanitarian relief, and then other troops, under NATO command, being involved in air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. He stated:

...I have already put this point to the Prime Minister; let me put it again, as vividly as I can. We cannot have British or French soldiers in blue berets acting as humanitarians, and pilots in blue helmets bombing: that is not a sustainable position. That issue must be clarified.

I am also not happy about NATO's taking over the role of the United Nations. We are about to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, which – as the House must know – was set up to secure the peaceful settlement of differences. I was much moved at the time, as I still am when I reflect on the UN's charter. NATO cannot take over the agency responsible for the UN; if it does, I envisage many other dangers. NATO may, for instance, aspire to play a larger part in what it calls out-of-area functions, as part of the new world order. That is not at all what the United Nations is about....⁴⁵

Benn's latter comments regarding the role that NATO could play in a 'new world order' tie into the general debate that had taken place regarding the function of the alliance in the post Cold War world. Further remarks by the stalwart of the Labour back benches, made at the end of the Bosnian war, do more to illustrate his opinion of the defence alliance:

Is the Secretary of State aware that there are other interpretations of what has happened? The break-up of Yugoslavia was brought about by the recognition of Germany, and has been followed by the arming of Croatia by the United States, the use of massive air strikes – in which more bombs were dropped by NATO than by all of the other parties throughout the war – and the ultimatum at Dayton. Is it really the case that a NATO

⁴⁴ John Spellar (Warley), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1215 – 1217.

⁴⁵ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1021 – 1022.

occupation of former Yugoslavia – for that is what is involved, with about 60,000 troops deployed to keep the peace – and the requirement to introduce a market economy constitute anything other than a very unstable future which sidelines the UN? That is one of the anxieties that many people will feel when they hear what the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said.⁴⁶

The reader is left in no doubt at all as to the position that the older politician takes with regard to how the international community has dealt with the situation in the former Yugoslavia. Thus one can see a broadly internationalist pacifist discourse emerging to challenge the growing claims to use NATO in the Balkans.

The Labour Party's reaction to any potential role for NATO in the Balkans is split between those welcoming the alliance into the arena, and those displaying either caution or clear opposition. It is perhaps no surprise that those in favour of an enhanced place for NATO in the region were figures that loomed large on the Labour Party front bench after the 1997 election victory. However, it is more difficult to provide a neat summary of those in the second group, that is, the politicians who voiced concern about the increased role for NATO in the aftermath of the break-up of Yugoslavia. Tony Benn is clearly a figure of the 'traditional' left, who would have had a natural antipathy to the American led alliance. However, the other figure mentioned here, John Spellar, went on to become Minister of State for the Armed Forces, and voted in favour of the Iraq war.⁴⁷ It is not incorrect to suppose then, that he is difficult to position as one who would typically oppose military action.

⁴⁶ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 22 November 1995) Vol: 267, Column 664.

⁴⁷ John Spellar served as a junior minister at the Ministry of Defence between 1997-1999, and was Minister of State for the Armed Forces between 1999-2001. More details of his political career are available on <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/person/parliament/0,,-4912,00.html> His voting record on Iraq is available at the following website: http://theyworkforyou.com/mp/john_spellar/warley

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how the Labour Party analysed the way in which international institutions could solve the crisis in the Balkans. The extracts that have been selected can be taken as a wider summary of the divergence of opinions that existed throughout the Labour Party. There are, of course, elements of difference between front and back bench politicians. This is something that one would expect in any analysis of the way in which a Parliamentary political party responds to a crisis. However, and as has been shown in this chapter, what is apparent here, is the complexity of the contrasting positions which existed between party colleagues, and the possible motivating factors which could explain such varied views. Differing opinions also manifested themselves on the backbenches *between* politicians of the same party. What has been shown here is that alongside traditional left-wing responses to the break-up of Yugoslavia, perhaps best epitomised by strong support for the role of the United Nations; there was already apparent a more pro-interventionist strand within the party, displaying characteristics that fully manifested themselves in its foreign policy once Labour was elected in 1997.

In summary then, there were a variety of responses by Labour politicians to the part played by the different international institutions within the Balkans. As has been shown here, there was support across the party for the role played by the United Nations. This was a common sentiment for those across Labour. Where differences lay however, was in the practical failures of this institution; the U.N. as a concept was supported by all, but frustration grew at its inability to manage the conflicts effectively. In particular, of those highlighted here who were more critical of the United Nations, two figures, Robin Cook and John Hutton, went on to hold senior Cabinet posts in Tony Blair's different governments. By virtue of their close links

with him, they will be inextricably linked to his more interventionist style of foreign policy.⁴⁸ Likewise, the idea of a 'new world order' raised debate within the House of Commons. What was lacking however was any real substance arising from such a theory. Of interest here is that two of the politicians to speak with some scepticism about this new departure for foreign affairs were, or became, prominent figures within the world of international relations and defence; Robin Cook obviously as Foreign Secretary, and Bruce George as a senior figure in the House of Commons Defence Committee. The European Union proved similarly divisive amongst politicians within the Labour Party. As has been shown, this institution had historically provoked a variety of responses, and this was no less the case at the time of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Those in favour of the E.U. and its policy were from front and back bench alike. The group that was critical of the institution and its policy towards the break-up of Yugoslavia does not include high profile front bench figures. However, it is important to state that this group is by no means homogenous in its criticism, and in the observations that it made in debates. Some of these politicians do not employ the strongly held 'Euro-sceptic' language of their colleagues. Therefore, it is too simplistic to label these discussions as being between Europhiles and Euro-sceptics. Finally, NATO proved to be an equally difficult issue for Labour M.P.s. Whilst long-held hostilities prevailed, there were also the antecedents to the more interventionist, supportive stance taken by the Blair Government, elected in 1997. Of the four areas under discussion then, there was a distinct group of politicians speaking either in favour, or against a particular institution's role in trying to resolve conflicts in the Balkans. Thus, the multitude of views held by politicians within the Labour Party mean that it can be seen as being no different to other elements of the British left

⁴⁸ Although Robin Cook did resign from the Government in 2003 due to his opposition to the war in Iraq, he was Foreign Secretary and thus played a prominent role in earlier Blair outings into foreign affairs, namely, the NATO action against Serbia to name just one (1999).

wing, or indeed wider across the entire political establishment, in its multilateral approach to positioning the Yugoslav conflict in the international arena.

Of further relevance to the general themes outlined in the thesis, this chapter has also shown the way in which the use of stereotype was used in these debates regarding the role of the different international institutions. Very often, colourful phrases and convenient labels were used to reinforce the various speeches made in Parliament on debates relating to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Thus, negative comments regarding NATO as well as colourful phrasing to describe aspects of the European Union's policy are all apparent herein. This observation ties in to a general trend that is visible throughout this thesis, that is regarding the use of stereotype and other labels. What has become clear is that this device was not restricted with regard to describing the Balkans, but was employed when discussing other countries and international institutions.

CHAPTER THREE

STARTING TO INTERVENE – SANCTIONS AND ARMS EMBARGOES

The purpose of this and the following two chapters will be to outline the various debates that surrounded the different types of intervention implemented or discussed at the time of the break-up of Yugoslavia during the early 1990s. This very subject was at the core of the deliberations by the international community regarding their reaction and response to events in the Balkans. The multi-layered debates that took place perfectly encapsulate the complexities and difficulties that were highlighted by the broader issue, namely what the world should do in the former Yugoslavia.

The first point for consideration here is the very definition of the term ‘intervention’. I would suggest that at the very least, and with a minimum level of contention, the term can be defined, in the context of international relations, as the delivery of humanitarian relief, for example food and medical supplies, to an area affected by disaster, either natural or, as in this case, manmade, such as war. At its most extreme, intervention is when full-scale military involvement, even through the use of ground troops, is used to bring resolution to a conflict. Obviously, the former type is more likely to be implemented by national governments due to domestic political considerations than the latter; a full-scale military campaign would normally prove to be much more problematic to ‘sell’ to an electorate.

The debates on the very issue of intervention are so extensive that the topic will be divided between the next three chapters. Firstly, in this chapter, I will examine Labour responses to the initial policies that were implemented by the Conservative Government, normally when acting collectively as a member of an international institution such as the United Nations, the European Union, and NATO. Typically,

these interventions were non-combative and revolved around policies not directly involving military action, such as the implementation of economic sanctions. The chapter which follows will outline debates surrounding the implementation of more active types of intervention. As will be demonstrated, this focussed on military action such as air strikes with minimal risk for the external states involved. The fourth chapter of the thesis will focus on a series of debates that reflected the desperate escalation of events on the ground, with the proposal of more audacious policies of intervention. Typically, for reasons that have been mentioned, this and the following chapter discuss actual, implemented policies belonging to the milder end of the interventionist scale. More extreme types of action, and suggestions on policies that were much more problematic, and unlikely to be implemented, for example, the issue of introducing ground troops, form the basis of discussion in the third of these chapters examining the issue of intervention.

Within this thesis there are arguments both for and against the different types of intervention. Contained within either group, Labour politicians are further split between the front and back benches. The various divisions are important in that they highlight the vast range of responses and myriad of opinions that existed during this period. As will be shown, there was little consistency amongst the groups which emerged on either side of the intervention debates. Proponents for or against particular policies were not necessarily driven by the same reasons. Indeed, the very issue of intervention, the way in which the definition was used in different – and very often, emotive – ways, cannot be wholly isolated to specific strands of the Labour Party. Instead, what will become apparent is that this was a topic that cut across traditional ideological currents within the Party, leading to divisions in somewhat surprising places. For example, the response of those on the more pragmatic, consensual front

bench did not always mirror the voices of the 'traditional' left wing on the backbenches. Similarly, those of the so-called 'old' left did not always share the views of other traditionally left leaning politicians. Some of these politicians thus held somewhat surprising views on how the break-up of Yugoslavia and the subsequent issue of intervention should be resolved. What is certain is that the issue of intervening in the Balkans is one that provoked a multitude of responses; and the contributors to these debates cannot be formed into convenient, ideologically similar, tidy groups. In order to demonstrate this, this chapter will now look at the debates on policies that were implemented in the Balkans by the international community. After a general discussion of the notion of 'humanitarian intervention' this chapter will examine debates over actual "limited interventionist" policies such as economic sanctions and the arms embargo. What becomes apparent is that whilst it is easy to agree on the implementation of vague, general terms such as 'humanitarian intervention', differences of opinion manifest themselves when discussing specific policy ideas. So, for example, debates surrounding the issue of economic sanctions are characterised by a mixture of front bench and back bench figures supporting the policy, or calling for an extension of such an approach, or using the policy as a means to criticise the Conservative Government. Whatever the motivation, these Labour Party politicians were all in favour of economic sanctions. However, opponents of the policy were drawn from the back benches and did not have a clearly defined argument supporting their position: each politician used a different reason when opposing the implementation of sanctions. Different motivations included viewing sanctions as a threat to the sovereignty of a country, feeling that it was not the right time to implement such a policy, and arguing that they should be applied universally across

the region. Thus, identifying a core group with a coherent line of argument becomes difficult. This is a trend which is apparent throughout the thesis.

HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION – THE WIDER DEBATE

The types of intervention actually implemented in the Balkans tended to be those that produced as little risk as possible for external states wary of involvement in, what many perceived to be, a civil war. Normally, general discussions on the role that humanitarian intervention could play in the Balkans produced widespread agreement. After all, at its broadest, and as has been mentioned in the introduction, this policy includes the distribution of relief, that is food and medicine, and it is somewhat unlikely that politicians would argue against the implementation of such a strategy. As will become apparent later in this, and subsequent chapters, disagreements occurred when discussing highly specific ideas of how to resolve the Yugoslav crisis. Though the term ‘humanitarian intervention’ covered a plethora of options, the phrase itself was vague enough to provoke unanimous agreement. In these early days of the break-up of Yugoslavia, for example, up to 1992, use of the term ‘humanitarian intervention’ presented none of the problems apparent in scholarly definitions of the phrase, for example, Nicholas J. Wheeler’s observation that “(h)umanitarian intervention poses the hardest test for an international society built on principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and non-use of force.”¹ Of similar contrast before the war in Bosnia started, was the view of R.J. Vincent that humanitarian intervention was an “(a)ctivity undertaken by a state, a group within a state, a group of states, or an international organization which interferes coercively in the domestic affairs of

¹ Nicholas J. Wheeler, ‘Humanitarian Intervention and World Politics’ in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics – An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Reprinted 1999) p392.

another state.”² These more contentious views of humanitarian intervention were not necessarily relevant at this early stage of ‘relief effort’ based assistance. As I will now show, attention to detail tended to be a divisive factor in discussing intervention in the Balkans; the vagaries of general terms were not problematic. The tensions raised in both Wheeler’s and Vincent’s definitions manifested themselves only when more proactive, interventionist strategies were introduced at a later date.

The early Westminster debate on United Nations Operations in September 1992 outlined the official Labour Party position on the use of relief convoys to the former Yugoslavia. Dr David Clark, the Shadow Defence spokesman stated that:

....We do not demur from the Government’s decision to involve British troops in Bosnia. Indeed, we called for such action early in August. If the United Nations considers it appropriate to deploy troops to support humanitarian convoys in their efforts to get vital food and medicine through to besieged (sic) citizens and to protect the released detainees, the Labour party believes that we should do so. As a permanent member of the Security Council, we have a responsibility to ensure that British troops play that part, although I emphasise that that has to be under the aegis of the United Nations and has to be limited to the protection of convoys. ...³

Of note here is the unequivocal support that Clark gave to the United Nations and its humanitarian role in the Balkans. This is a clear link to the importance placed on the United Nations by the Labour Party as has been outlined in the previous chapter of this thesis. It is also important to note that Clark stressed the importance of Britain playing a role in the Balkans under the authority of the United Nations. It was not Shadow Cabinet policy for Britain to play a unilateral part in resolving the conflict in Bosnia. Calls for Britain to play a leading role only developed when it was apparent that international measures to deal with the Balkan wars were at best inadequate or at

² From R.J. Vincent, *Nonintervention and International Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) quoted in *Ibid*, p393. The war in Bosnia began in 1992. Until that point, the debates on intervention in the Balkans were not as vociferous as they would later become. However, the ferocity of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina led to a rising number of demands for more punitive forms of intervention.

³ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 179 – 182.

worst failing. Also noteworthy is the emphasis that Clark placed on the extent of the intervention. At this stage, he underlined that the role of the United Nations was confined to ensuring the safety of the relief convoys. As will be shown in later chapters, this is in marked contrast to the calls for a more assertive, interventionist policy that were made as the conflict developed.

Shadow Cabinet support for the humanitarian, non-military nature of the involvement of the United Nations was further stressed by Clark in a debate on Bosnia at the start of January 1993. He stated that:

(W)e were gratified when in September the Government announced in the House their proposal, which the Opposition had advocated, to detach a group of British soldiers to protect the United Nations convoys carrying humanitarian aid to the stricken people in Bosnia. I am glad to have the assurance of the Secretary of State today that the sole purpose of our troops deployed in Bosnia is to provide that humanitarian aid.⁴

This example further emphasises the belief held on the Labour front bench that, at that time, military intervention was not the answer to solving the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Clark's comments show that at this stage of the conflict, on the issue of humanitarian intervention, the front benches of both major parties held the same view. However, it is worth repeating that it is somewhat unlikely that politicians would argue against the provision of relief for refugees and other victims of war: divisions and heated debate only became visible when more detailed policies were discussed.

Further Labour Party support for limited international humanitarian intervention, this time from the Shadow Foreign Secretary Dr John Cunningham, was apparent by April 1993. In a debate on 'Bosnia', Cunningham made clear both his support for the humanitarian intervention policy already under way in the Balkans, and his annoyance at those criticising what was being achieved in the region. He

⁴ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia (Further Deployment)* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 January 1993) Vol: 216, Columns: 1058-1059.

showed his agreement with the Foreign Secretary's position regarding the work of Britain's troops in the region. Cunningham strongly contested the view held by commentators suggesting that 'nothing was being done'. His riposte to that position was that such a stance undermined the extremely valuable work that was carried out by the British forces in the region; Cunningham urged everyone to support the relief effort.⁵ Again, Cunningham's view illustrated that in the early stages of the conflict, the Opposition front bench was in agreement with the policies being implemented by the Conservative Government. Of further interest here is the use of the phrase 'our troops' in Cunningham's speech. Pre-1997, the Labour Party cannot argue that it was viewed as the party of foreign affairs and defence. The 1980s, for example, were the era of unilateral disarmament. This particular policy was disastrous for party support, and Labour spent the 1980s in the wilderness of opposition. Eric Shaw has written that: "Strategists recognised that defence could never be a vote-winner – hence the aim of the campaign was to reassure floating voters who were contemplating backing the Party by calming their anxieties about defence."⁶ At that time, fears about Labour's position on defence were contrasted with the robust foreign policy of the Conservatives, perhaps as best exemplified by the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. In short, Labour was seen as gambling with Britain's security on the global stage. However, some ten years later, in Cunningham's speech, the language employed was that which had a clear resonance with that from the Conservative front benches; there was little to divide the Opposition from the stance taken by the Major Government. Efforts had been made to align the Labour Party with a positive aspect of foreign policy, namely humanitarianism. In addition to this, the strongly displayed

⁵ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 23 – 24.

⁶ Eric Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979 – Crisis and Transformation* (London: Routledge, 1994) p73.

praise for Britain's troops arising from the Labour Party side of the House of Commons had the result of giving the party some much needed patriotic kudos.

Cunningham's view would change just a few weeks later, when, in line with growing back bench calls for a tougher international stance, he urged the Government to re-examine its policy towards the former Yugoslavia:

... We now face circumstances where the credibility of the United Nations itself is being questioned, not just by hon. Members and not just by people in the West as a whole but by many people in Muslim countries, and people in Muslim Governments too.

I want to begin, therefore, by making it clear to everyone that any action that Opposition Members would support, any new departure that we would endorse, would have to be firmly authorised under the provisions of chapter 7 of the United Nations charter, specifically article 39 which says: "The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security."

I do not believe that we should depart from those provisions.⁷

Cunningham's speech demonstrated considerable caution, again with an emphasis on the importance of acting under the auspices of the charter of the United Nations. As chapter two demonstrated, a key tenet of contemporary left-wing foreign policy, indeed possibly the only principle on which Labour Party politicians usually agreed in this period, was the reliance and belief placed on the role of that particular institution. This fits within a traditionally internationalist approach to foreign policy as demonstrated in Michael R. Gordon's study, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914 – 1965*.⁸ He argues that, in relation to the Labour Party and its approach to internationalism: "It was thus necessary to go beyond the nation-state, to aim at a more encompassing community."⁹ On the face of it, Cunningham follows this

⁷ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), Bosnia (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1178 – 1180.

⁸ Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914 – 1965* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969)

⁹ *Ibid.* p14.

tradition. He asserts that it is the ‘encompassing community’ – embodied in the United Nations – that must prevail. However, the U.N., particularly the five permanent members of the Security Council, is not that encompassing. One could argue that Cunningham therefore moves away from the global, internationalist voice as described by Gordon, and resorts to a narrower, traditional power-based *real-politik* style of foreign policy thinking.

The complexities of the nature of ‘humanitarian intervention’ were debated in the House of Commons as late as the final year of the war in Bosnia. In a general debate on the former Yugoslavia, Dr David Clark, the Shadow Defence spokesman, highlighted the very problems inherent in the term ‘humanitarian intervention’, making particular reference to the issue of peacekeeping and the real problems raised by that general term. Referring to a British Army document entitled “Wider Peacekeeping”, Clark explained subtleties of difference that existed between peacekeeping, wider peacekeeping and peace enforcement. He used the example of Corporal Mills, a British soldier awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross, who had described his experience in Bosnia thus:

“Working for the United Nations in Bosnia is an extremely difficult job. You are not there to fight a war. Your aim is to ensure that the food and other supplies get through to the Bosnian population – the victims of the war. You never know when one of the warring factions is going to take a dislike to the UN and start taking pot shots. You have to be prepared for it and respond to the situations as they occur.”

Corporal Mills puts in clear terms Britain’s mandate in Bosnia. It is incumbent on us all to make it clear to our constituents that restricted mandate and the fact that we do not have a peace enforcement role. Our rule is to get the humanitarian aid through, and we have been most successful in that. As long as British troops can continue to do that, we ought to support them....¹⁰

¹⁰ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 582 – 650.

What is striking about this extract is that, even in the last six months of the Bosnian war, a leading figure of the British Shadow Cabinet was clearly espousing the view that Britain's role in the intervention in Bosnia was restricted to that of a humanitarian mission. In the same speech, Clark went on to pay a particular tribute to the efforts played by British troops in the region during the crisis. He said:

We believe that our troops and UNPROFOR have been doing sterling work. We believe that they have kept alive tens of thousands of people, and that they are giving us the breathing space during which we can pursue diplomatic solutions. We equally accept that there may come a time when the risks to our troops are so great that we cannot justify them being there. If we can keep our troops there, and if they can continue doing a worthwhile job, the Government will have our support, as do the troops.¹¹

Thus, even in the May of 1995, when war had been raging in Bosnia for over three years, Britain's prosecution of a strictly humanitarian role was of key importance to the Shadow Defence spokesman; even to the extent of withdrawing troops if the situation on the ground there became too dangerous.

Such opinions were not restricted to the front bench. Continued support for humanitarian intervention at this late stage of the now bloody and genocidal conflict was visible from back bench Labour M.P. Mike Gapes. Speaking in a debate on Bosnia on 31 May 1995, he gave his ongoing support to this type of policy in the Balkans:

I believe in humanitarian intervention by the United Nations and I believe in internationalism and support for people who are suffering from starvation and oppression. However, I do not believe in being used and manipulated to fight somebody else's war whether it is being done from across the Atlantic or from our own continent. Therefore, we should not allow the justifiable increase in our forces going in to provide protection for our own peacekeepers to become an incremental escalation towards a longer-term, indefinite involvement.¹²

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Mike Gapes (Ilford, South), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1084 – 1085.

These comments clearly show that extending the role of troops in Bosnia was not on the agenda, at least as far as Mike Gapes was concerned. For him, military involvement was as part of an enhanced relief effort rather than anything more comprehensive: certainly, more proactive military action was not an issue. Thus remarks on humanitarian intervention were all obviously in favour of the role played by the United Nations in terms of delivering the relief effort. Opposition to the provision of food, medicine and other supplies was unlikely.

This fairly limited view of intervention led Brendan Simms to offer a damning critique of the way in which the Labour Party acted during the initial stages of the break-up of Yugoslavia. He states: “The most striking thing about the parliamentary response to war and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia was the absence of any concerted attack by the opposition on government policy. Instead, during the early stages, the Labour Party was a *retardative* factor.”¹³ Simms argues that there was very little to distinguish the responses of either of the two main British political parties. This comment fits the model that we have seen thus far, that is, both Labour and Conservative front bench politicians held a united position on the issue of support for intervention; this was centred very much on the provision of relief supplies for the local population, with little support for a more intensive and proactive stance. However, it would be wrong to depict all Parliamentary members of the Labour Party as being ‘retardative’. As will be shown throughout this thesis, for the duration of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, there were repeated interventions by politicians on the Opposition benches, calling for tougher action from the Major Government. It will become extremely clear in the chapters which follow that there was a cohort of figures who regularly called for a more comprehensive British policy towards the Balkans.

¹³ Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001) p297.

This will be explored in more depth herein. I will now outline the various debates concerning more specific examples of intervention during the break-up of Yugoslavia, firstly the implementation of sanctions, and then the arms embargo.

DOING SOMETHING – INTRODUCING SANCTIONS

It is important to clarify what is meant by the general term ‘sanctions’. Sanctions were imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) on 30 May 1992. U.N. Resolution 757 (1992) included a full trade embargo, ban on flights and a ban on Serbian and Montenegrin participation in sporting events.¹⁴ Sanctions were further strengthened with the implementation of two subsequent resolutions.¹⁵ Not surprisingly then, the majority of discussions about this policy took place in the earlier stages of the period of study. In 1992, during a debate on sanctions in Yugoslavia, Gerald Kaufman spoke about the issue in some depth. At that stage he was the Shadow Foreign Secretary. Kaufman said:

We give our full support to United Nations Security Council resolution 757, and we urge that the United Nations sanctions should be rigorously enforced. As the right hon. Gentleman will recall, Opposition Front-Bench Members urged such comprehensive United Nations sanctions many months ago. It is possible that the situation might not have got so tragically out of hand if action had been taken sooner, but now that action has been taken, we must hope and work for its success.¹⁶

Thus, a clear difference of opinion was emerging, with the Labour front bench raising subtle criticism of its Conservative counterparts. This sentiment, that is, the idea of cross-party division, was further repeated in a later debate by Gerald Kaufman who returned to the issue of sanctions in a discussion on the European Council.

¹⁴ U.N. Security Council Resolution 757 (1992) 30 May 1992.

¹⁵ U.N. Security Council Resolution 787 (1992) 16 November 1992: This banned the transportation of fuel, and steel through the area, unless approved by the sanctions committee. U.N. Security Council Resolution 820 (1993) 17 April 1993 reinforced the existing sanctions.

¹⁶ Gerald Kaufman (Manchester Gorton), *Yugoslavia (sanctions)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 June 1992) Vol: 208, Column 715.

“(S)anctions should have been brought in sooner and been much more comprehensive. We advocated that. I am sorry that our advice was not followed.”¹⁷

His comments show the division between Labour and Conservative front bench attitudes, with the Shadow Foreign Secretary expressing regret that such measures had not been taken earlier in the conflict. This particular example suggests that it would be difficult to agree entirely with Simms with regard to his comment describing the Labour Party as being a “*retardative* factor”.¹⁸ Thus, certainly with regard to the issue of sanctions, this example shows a departure from the front bench bi-partisanship previously displayed over the break-up of Yugoslavia. Instead, there were the first glimpses of party political point-scoring regarding events in the Balkans.

With regard to the adversarial nature of the House of Commons, it is prudent here to mention the role of the third party of British politics, that is, the Liberal Democrats, with regard to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Their leader, Paddy Ashdown, was a constant presence in debates discussing the wars in the Balkans.¹⁹ Bringing his previous experience in the armed forces very much to the fore, Ashdown was a continued advocate of a much tougher policy of intervention than that which was being supported by the British Government. His strength in foreign affairs, whether actual or perceived, was not enough to protect him from barbed comments across the Dispatch Box in Parliament. One such example dates from 20 October 1992. After a speech where Ashdown outlined a number of ways in which the British Government had failed in the prosecution of a sensible policy in the Balkans, John Major retorted with the following: “I have rarely heard a more arrogant assertion of inaccuracies. As the leader of the party that barely is, the right hon. Gentleman ought to be better

¹⁷ Gerald Kaufman (Manchester Gorton), *European Council (United Kingdom Presidency)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 July 1992) Vol: 210, Columns 988 – 989.

¹⁸ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p297.

¹⁹ Paddy Ashdown was Leader of the Liberal Democrats from 1988 until 1999. Following this, he worked as the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

informed about what this country has done.”²⁰ What is important to consider for this thesis, is that the high profile enjoyed by Paddy Ashdown as a leading figure both in calling for firmer action in the Balkans, as well as a critic of the Government’s position, could very well have acted as a catalyst in getting some members of the Labour Party to present a more assertive stance. Political point scoring would not just have been aimed towards the Conservative Government, but also in a rearguard action against the Liberal Democrats. Due to the difficulty in assessing the impact of cause and effect, this is an issue which is difficult to measure with any exactitude. However, it would seem sensible to assert that Ashdown’s presence in offering a highly visible alternative to the policy as espoused by the Tories would surely serve as some encouragement to the Labour Party front bench to play an active part in this foreign policy discussion.

The appointment of a new Shadow Foreign Secretary later in 1992 saw a continuation in Labour front bench assertion of a sanctions policy. In a debate on United Nations Operations, John Cunningham gave the House of Commons a detailed appraisal of the situation in the former Yugoslavia. After cataloguing various violations of sanctions such as claims that Greece had been breaking the embargo with supplies for Serbia, and Iran supplying arms to Bosnia, Cunningham went on to explain that strict implementation was the only way in which the sanctions policy could be made to work. He explained:

If we are to resolve such problems or to have some significant effect on them without resorting to military intervention, sanctions have to be made to work. We need much more effort from the Foreign Secretary in his role as president in the Community and from the Community as a whole to give effect to UN decisions.....

....In May, the United Nations voted for mandatory economic sanctions. I emphasise yet again, before I move on to other matters, that the Secretary

²⁰ The Prime Minister, *European Council (Birmingham)* (Official Report, Hansard: 20 October 1992) Vol: 212, Column 323.

of State and the British Government, in the role of presidency, has a major responsibility in the European context to see that that United Nations resolution is given real effect. I understand that some people are calling for a relaxation of sanctions against Serbia. I say that there should be no such relaxation until the Serbians use their undoubted influence in Bosnia to help to bring about a ceasefire.²¹

The extract again shows how economic sanctions became grounds by which to attack the Conservative Government for its handling of the situation. At that time, September 1992, there was a clear demand from Cunningham that the Government should be taking a tougher line on this issue. He made the point that in order for sanctions to work, and to bring stability to the Balkan region, they had to be rigorously implemented. However, the violation of sanctions continued, and these developments did not see the introduction of a harsher system for policing the economic embargo. In April 1993, John Cunningham made a further speech, based on the same two factors, namely recommendations on how the situation could be improved, as well as implicitly criticising the way in which the Conservative Government had dealt with the crisis. He criticised the delay in strengthening the sanctions that were already in place against Serbia. This was, Cunningham argued, despite the ongoing demands that had been made by politicians from across the House of Commons, demanding a toughened stance on such a policy. He spoke of the way that money laundering had become a significant factor in the region. For Cunningham, that this was carried out within the European banking system, was a further area of concern, and should be stopped. His speech concluded with a thinly veiled criticism regarding the expectations of those who felt that the pressure brought solely by enhanced sanctions would lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. For

²¹Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 131 – 134.

him, it was futile to believe that that policy alone would bring the Serbs to the negotiating table.²²

Further criticism from the Shadow Foreign Secretary was apparent later in the same month when the House of Commons again debated the issue of Bosnia.²³ In the one exchange, Cunningham offered an even harsher appraisal of the situation. He clearly outlined how the Government, and the wider European Community, had failed in ensuring that the sanctions policy was applied effectively.

What appears then is a consistent pattern of Cunningham praising the Government for the actions and policies that it has implemented, whilst all the while criticising it for the inadequacy of its efforts. In short, according to Cunningham, there was always more that the Conservative Government could have attempted in its quest to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. Cunningham was positioning himself in a particularly skilful way; his comments showed that he was neither a war-monger, nor a pacifist, but they left him enough scope to criticise the actions of the Conservative Government. Obviously, this was a position that he could enjoy by virtue of being on the Opposition benches, and thus not responsible for formulating British foreign policy. However, he had the opportunity to present himself in a better light than his Conservative counterparts; this showed that Cunningham was capable of employing a high degree of rhetorical skill.

Comments on the efficacy of sanctions were not limited to the Shadow Foreign Secretary. It is worth considering here the views of other leading figures on the Opposition front bench. The Labour leader John Smith displayed similar criticisms in

²² Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard:19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 23 – 24.

²³ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard:29 April 1993 Vol: 223, Columns 1178-1179.

a speech made during a debate on the European Council.²⁴ However, in this example, as well as criticising the policing of sanctions, in the light of the deteriorating relationship between Croatia and Bosnia, he argued for the extension of sanctions within the region. “(Is) it not the case that sanctions are still wholly inadequately enforced? Should not they now be extended to include Croatia in view of the recent deplorable activities of the Croats towards their Muslim neighbours?”²⁵ Another leading Labour Party figure to mention is the third Shadow Foreign Secretary who served during the period of this study. Robin Cook, who took the role following the death of John Smith and the subsequent Shadow Cabinet reshuffle, outlined his own views on sanctions in May 1995:

I hope that there will be no step to reduce sanctions on Serbia until Mr Milosevic has at least recognised Bosnia and accepts full closure of his border with the Bosnian Serbs. To do anything that would relax sanctions until we achieve that outcome can only encourage the Bosnian Serbs to believe that, in the fullness of time, the world will come to live with the present distribution of territory inside Bosnia.²⁶

Cook’s views echo those of his colleagues who have already been mentioned; that is, giving clear and unequivocal support for sanctions in the region, speaking in favour of a firm implementation of such policy, and finally, presenting a resolve markedly different from that of the Major Government. Thus, this stance implies that the Labour Party was capable of greater rigor and efficiency *vis-à-vis* foreign affairs, and that in this specific example, it was showing greater concern to what was happening on the ground within the Balkans.

The other significant front bench Labour figure that has not yet been included in this discussion on sanctions is Tony Blair. Blair became Leader of the Opposition

²⁴ Included in Mark Stuart, *John Smith – A Life* (London: Politico’s, 2005) are some general observations on Smith’s stance on issues relating to the break-up of Yugoslavia.

²⁵ John Smith (Monklands, East), *European Council (Copenhagen)* (Official Report, Hansard: 23 June 1993) Vol: 227, Columns 310 – 312.

²⁶ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol:259. Columns 593 – 595.

following the death of John Smith in 1994, and contributed to a debate on Bosnia at the end of May 1995. As part of a long speech outlining Labour's stance on the more general situation, Blair stated the importance of ensuring the enforcement of the economic embargo, and asked whether there were enough monitors along the Serbian border to ensure that supplies did not slip through undetected.²⁷ Again, this fits within the model that we have seen of unequivocally supporting sanctions, with a determination to ensure that the embargo was effectively enforced and policed. As we will see in chapter five of this thesis, Tony Blair's appointment as party leader saw him take a firm stance on the situation in the former Yugoslavia, demonstrating a more muscular approach to the situation than had previously existed. Indeed, as we now know, this highly interventionist approach to foreign policy became ever more noticeable after he became Prime Minister in 1997.

As a postscript to his remarks here, it is interesting to note that on arrival in Downing Street, Blair spent time analysing Bosnian history. According to John Kampfner, Blair "had shown little interest in opposition, but wanted to make up for lost time."²⁸ Blair "concluded that Bosnia had constituted primarily a failure of nerve – one, he insisted to his advisers, that must not be repeated in Kosovo. He confined himself to the broad outline, leaving the detail to the Foreign Office, which was adamant that diplomacy had to run its course."²⁹ As we now know, in 1999 NATO acted in anger against the Serbs, over their actions in Kosovo. Blair's role in mobilising the action is widely recognised as being pivotal to the success of the entire operation. Anthony Seldon has argued that "Kosovo ingrained in Blair that he was the bridge between the United States and Europe, and that he uniquely could explain the

²⁷ Tony Blair (Sedgefield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1011-1012.

²⁸ John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London, The Free Press, 2003) p 37.

²⁹ *Ibid*, pp38-39.

one to the other.”³⁰ A further assessment of the Prime Minister’s performance during the later conflict comes from John Rentoul. Of Blair’s tough stance over Kosovo, he writes: “(H)e behaved out of character, risking humiliation for no significant political gain. If it had not been for his insistence that NATO’s determination was total and that all military options were open. Milosevic might have succeeded.”³¹

Back at the time, early robust support for the economic embargo was not restricted to the Labour front bench. Key back bench figures also spoke in favour of the policy. Ken Livingstone raised the issue of sanctions in a debate on Yugoslavia in July 1991, asking whether they would be introduced if the situation in Slovenia deteriorated.³² Another Labour politician to express their support for the implementation of sanctions was Tony Banks. In a debate he expressed his support for their introduction, but also wanted reassurance regarding their successful implementation:

Does the Foreign Secretary recall that, about eight months ago, some of us argued for sanctions to be taken against the then Yugoslavia, especially against the Serbs, and that we met with blank refusals? Will he tell the House what attempts will be made to monitor sanctions? He just mentioned oil and, as there are no natural oil resources within Serbia, if oil can be cut off clearly sanctions will work. What monitoring will take place?³³

Aside from questioning the stringency of the sanctions, in this extract Banks also drew attention to the split between Conservative and Labour position on this particular policy issue. This fits within the type of comments that we have previously seen, where discussion on foreign policy can also afford an opportunity for political ‘point-scoring’ against one’s political opponents.

³⁰ Anthony Seldon, *Blair* (London: Free Press, 2004. Paperback edition 2005) p407.

³¹ John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister* (London: Little, Brown and Company. Paperback edition, Time Warner Paperbacks 2002) p531.

³² Ken Livingstone (Brent, East), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 3 July 1991) Vol: 194, Column 332.

³³ Tony Banks (West Ham), *Ibid*, Columns 717 – 718.

What is thus apparent from this study of those who supported the introduction of economic sanctions to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is that, without exception, all of the leading front bench figures serving in the Labour Party Shadow Cabinet at that time were unequivocal in their support for the policy. As has been outlined throughout this section, their stance was based on three key factors, namely firm support for the policy of sanctions, secondly, demands for a more effective embargo to be implemented, and finally, as the crisis became more prolonged, criticism – either implicit or explicit – of the position taken by their Conservative counterparts on the very same issue. This stance was echoed by some of their back bench Parliamentary colleagues. Taking such a position was good strategically in that, as Labour was in Opposition rather than Government, it was impossible for the party to substantiate its claims regarding policy initiatives. They did not have the opportunity to implement their own solutions. In a broader context, comments such as this were also indicative of the weakness of the Major Government; a Labour-generated mood of Tory collapse was apparent.

In many ways, of more interest in this chapter are the views of those who differed from the status quo in their attitude towards sanctions. Aside from the fact that all of these figures are on the Labour back bench, what is immediately apparent is that there was no consensus within these responses. Those criticising the implementation of sanctions were not necessarily speaking against an economic embargo per se, but found fault with elements of the proposed policy. Hence, some of the figures featured here were not specifically against sanctions but argued against their role at this particular point of the break-up of Yugoslavia. The first figure to mention is the back bench Labour politician Dennis Skinner. During the break-up of Yugoslavia, Skinner, as we saw in the previous chapter, had a propensity to contribute

to debates in ways that considerably departed from the mainstream; indeed, possibly in common with his other regular appearances in the House of Commons. Early on, he offered his opinion regarding the possible introduction of sanctions to the region: “The Prime Minister referred to a possible economic blockade of Yugoslavia. Is not that interference in another nation state; and how would he respond if other countries in Europe or elsewhere told him how to organise Northern Ireland?”³⁴ Whilst this stance could be dismissed as the views of a well-known maverick figure, here there are resonances of the earlier definitions of ‘humanitarian intervention’, with Skinner making a point of noting the issue of the sanctity of the sovereignty of the state. Further examples of opposition – or caution – to the policy of sanctions exist, with contributions from other back bench Labour figures. Following the implementation of economic sanctions in May 1992, a Parliamentary debate was devoted to this topic. Calum MacDonald was one figure who gave a wary response to the latest development of events:

Is it not a case of adopting a policy of too little, too late, making the situation much worse and more difficult to deal with? Will the right hon. Gentleman give details of the time scale within which he hopes the sanctions will work? Will he make it clear that there must be a cessation of hostilities by the Serbians within days rather than weeks, failing which, other options will have to be considered?³⁵

Thus MacDonald’s scepticism towards the policy was two-fold. Firstly, he criticised the fact that they had been implemented at too late a date, and secondly, it is clear that he believed that they would only be effective if presented within a broader, more cohesive policy for the region. Thus, for Macdonald, sanctions should not be an erratic “sticking plaster” approach to dealing with a serious conflict. This example shows that contrary to the mainly homogenous picture described by Simms herein

³⁴ Dennis Skinner (Bolsover), *NATO Summit* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 November 1991) Vol: 198, Columns 912 – 913.

³⁵ Calum MacDonald (Western Isles), *Yugoslavia (sanctions)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 June 1992) Vol: 208, Column 721.

regarding ineffectual Labour Party reaction to the break-up of Yugoslavia, there is evidence to demonstrate that some figures did speak out in favour of a more organised, cohesive policy of intervention. The situation is not as straightforward as suggested by Simms.

The final figure to consider here is the Labour politician Robert Wareing. As will be shown throughout this thesis, Wareing's views on the warring parties in the Balkans differed significantly from the majority of his Parliamentary colleagues. Depending on one's perspective, his position on sanctions was either based on what he saw as the moral equivalence of the situation in the former Yugoslavia, or on a fairly consistent attempt to show support for the Serbs. Simms has noted how Wareing was known by the nickname 'Slob-a-Bob', which clearly identifies his position in the attributing of blame in the region.³⁶ His comments reflected a desire on his part to treat all of the participants in the conflicts in the same way, irrespective of how the rest of the world saw them. For Wareing, it was not correct to attribute blame solely to one nationality; in his eyes, no side was innocent. This extract clearly illustrates Wareing's position:

With regard to Yugoslavia, is the European Community sure that, although the sanctions against Milosevic are justified and may bring about a change in Serbia, they will lead to peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina? Do not Presidents Izetbegovic and Tudjman have some responsibility for what is happening in that part of the world? What pressure is the Community placing on them – or is the even-handed approach by the British Government before 19 January being thrown away in order to achieve concessions on Maastricht?³⁷

Wareing's opposition then was clear. A sanctions policy should be applied universally across the region; singling out Serbia would not lead to peace in the region. Wareing's

³⁶ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p276. The nickname 'Slob-a-Bob' is a reference to Slobodan Milosevic, the then President of Serbia.

³⁷ Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby), *European Council (Lisbon)* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 June 1992) Vol: 210, Columns 582 – 583.

stance regarding the nationalities involved in the Balkan wars, together with any possible motive for such a position, will be examined in more depth in chapter six.

Thus, Labour Party criticism on the implementation of sanctions offers some important interim conclusions. Opposition, or perhaps more fairly caution, towards the policy of sanctions was not based on one specific reason. There was no single principle shaping this side of the debate. Instead, what was apparent was that the contributors to the discussion were motivated by their very own particular, private principles and agendas. Thus, Dennis Skinner's views fit with the comments espoused by him in the previous chapter, and thus do more to portray him as a maverick outsider operating within the confines of the Labour Party. Calum MacDonald's opinion on sanctions appears to be linked to his more general views on the conflict, including a support for and belief in a wider, and more extensive use of intervention. Finally, Robert Wareing's comments on intervention are plainly linked to his views on the attribution of 'blame' for the break-up of Yugoslavia. As will be shown in this thesis, Wareing's contributions to debate very often demonstrated a tendency to offer an unfashionable, even unpopular, view of the behaviour of the three warring nationalities, that is Serb, Croat, and Bosnian Muslim, with the M.P. repeatedly taking the position that the actions of all sides had moral equivalence.

THE ARMS EMBARGO – ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

Closely linked to the issue of economic sanctions was the arms embargo that was imposed on the whole of the former Yugoslavia when the federal state began to dissolve in June 1991.³⁸ The arms embargo was applied to the entire region at the very start of the break-up of Yugoslavia. Thus, the entire country was subject to a ban on

³⁸ U.N. Security Council Resolution 713 (1991) 25 September 1991, embargo on all weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia.

the delivery of all military equipment and hardware. This was strengthened by a subsequent resolution which re-stated that the arms embargo applied to all of the countries that had been part of Yugoslavia.³⁹ It was this aspect of the resolution that, as we shall see, became increasingly more controversial and problematic to enforce. Certainly, as the war in Bosnia continued, many felt that the way in which arms had been distributed at the start of the conflict, which had been a legacy from the days of the old J.N.A. (Yugoslav People's Army), meant that Bosnian Government troops were at a severe disadvantage. This issue, along with other related topics, will be examined next.

In common with the introduction of sanctions, this was a policy that could be implemented with no risk to external countries. Put starkly, it would not be a domestic political issue in the same way as introducing international ground troops to the region. Thus, the international community could feel that it was acting proactively in the region whilst maintaining a safe distance. In common with other issues that were discussed as a result of the break-up of Yugoslavia, the arms embargo was yet another topic to provoke serious debate. Again, as well as the views of those on the front bench, the opinions of the back bench Labour Party did much to add to the complexity of the whole debate.

Shadow Foreign Secretary John Cunningham outlined his frustration with the way in which he perceived the arms embargo to be failing, in a debate in November 1992. He said:

...Why is it that mandatory arms embargoes are not being effectively enforced many months after they were first voted on by the Security Council? Why is it that even now we cannot effectively blockade the principal if not sole aggressor, Serbia, and bring the Serbians to their senses and stop the appalling slaughter in Bosnia?

³⁹ U.N. Security Council Resolution 727 (1992) 8 January 1992.

We must impose more effectively and rigorously the will of the United Nations, and I urge the Foreign Secretary to do even more than he has attempted, to secure a peaceful settlement of those conflicts.⁴⁰

The views expressed here by Cunningham were observations that he continued to make during the break-up of Yugoslavia. A further such example came from him five months later:

I agree with what the Foreign Secretary said in support of the mandatory arms embargo. The Labour party is committed in its constitution to the United Nations. My colleagues and I support the decisions of the Security Council, and especially the arms embargo. It seems ridiculous that the people who are arguing for an end to the end to the embargo are, in the next sentence, advocating military intervention on the ground in Bosnia....

We should emphatically endorse the embargo against all the protagonists. We would not support any unilateral abrogation of it, whether by the United States of America or by any other country.⁴¹

Thus, for Cunningham, support for the arms embargo was unequivocal. Similar comments also came from the Shadow Defence spokesman David Clark. In an intervention in April 1993, Clark responded to those back benchers, discussed later in this chapter, who argued for the lifting of the arms embargo. Their motives were based on a desire to help the Bosnian Government. The arms embargo was applied universally across the whole region. However, with what many saw as the disproportionate balance in arms between the Serbs and Croats on the one hand and the Bosnian Government on the other, calls were made for the embargo to be lifted for the Bosnians. Clark responded thus:

The Secretary of State is right when he says that we cannot lift the arms embargo to the Muslims. It has always seemed to us rather crazy to try to douse a fire with petrol. It never works. Will he confirm that much weaponry is already in the hands of the 190,000 fighters from the three sides of the bloody conflict?⁴²

⁴⁰ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *European Communities* (Official Report, Hansard: 24 November 1992) Vol: 214, Columns 777 -778.

⁴¹ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 23 – 24.

⁴² Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Columns 832 – 833.

Clark's position showed a pragmatic reluctance to offer support for the lifting of the embargo. Politically, it would be extremely difficult to endorse the arming of one party in what was popularly viewed as a civil war.

Shortly we shall see that, as the war in Bosnia continued, calls for the lifting of the arms embargo increased amongst Labour back bench M.P.s. However, even relatively late on in the war, on the front bench Robin Cook still argued for the embargo to be enforced. He explained:

I am at one with the Secretary of State for Defence on the question of lifting the arms embargo. I see no way of lifting the embargo without immediately pulling out the United Nations presence, with all the consequences that I have just paraded before the House. As the hon. Gentleman has raised the issue, let me take this opportunity to issue a plea to the United States Congress not to make such a decision, and in particular not to make it unilaterally. Unilateral action by the United States to lift the arms embargo would have profound consequences not only for Bosnia and the United Nations presence there, but for the legitimacy of United Nations resolutions on any conflict around the world that the United States had chosen to set aside.⁴³

What is of particular significance about this comment is that it came just one week after the infamous massacre at Srebrenica.⁴⁴ Cook's opposition to the lifting of the embargo is argued in the wider context of the harm that this would do to the reputation of the United Nations. Thus, he placed greater 'moral' weight on that institution than reacting in an outspoken, spontaneous way to the genocidal events in Bosnia. As the previous chapter has shown, Labour politicians of all persuasions held that particular international institution, for all its failings during this period in international relations, in high esteem. Any action that would lead to the further weakening of its reputation and damage to its future authority was perceived as being important to avoid. Hence, in this extract, Cook's concern at the impact that ending

⁴³ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1749 – 1750.

⁴⁴ The Bosnian Serbs began the siege of Srebrenica on 6 July 1995. First reports of a massacre emerged on 16 July 1995.

the arms embargo would have on the United Nations is clear to see. At this belated stage of the conflict then, both Conservative and Labour front bench politicians were taking the same stance on the issue of the arms embargo. Additionally, the Labour Shadow Cabinet has been shown to have taken the same consensual stance as the Conservatives on this policy for the duration of the various Balkan wars. This would not necessarily have been for the same reasons. For the Labour front bench, support for the embargo was based on trying to ensure the continued importance of the United Nations, whilst the Conservative policy would have been based on a desire to maintain an isolationist position during the conflict.⁴⁵ Brendan Simms has offered this appraisal of the position taken by the Conservative Government on this very issue: “Indeed, thanks to her determined advocacy of the international arms embargo, Britain would not even allow the Sarajevo government to defend itself.”⁴⁶ He has attributed this to a number of factors, including a view that all of the combatant groups were equally as bad.⁴⁷

Of interest then is the homogeneous stance taken by the Labour front bench on this issue. Lifting the arms embargo would jeopardise the future authority of an organisation, namely the United Nations, held in great esteem by the Labour Party. Related to this was the added impact of the tremendous harm to those suffering on the ground in the region through any subsequent termination of the relief programme. Also noteworthy was that the views of the Shadow Cabinet presented a type of pragmatism more likely to be associated with those closer to power. The dogmatism

⁴⁵ In his work, *The Search for Peace - A Century of Peace Diplomacy* (London, Little, Brown and Company, 1997), Douglas Hurd examines the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. He explains that based on national interest, Bosnia would not have been a high priority for Britain. However, he does add that if military force had seemed a viable “rapid” option, then he would have agreed to it. pp98-99. John Major explain the policy decisions taken by his Government in *John Major – the Autobiography* (London: Harper Collins, 1999. Paperback 2000) pp535-536. The policy focussed on troops protecting humanitarian relief convoys. The policy was based on two factors: “to save as many lives as we could while the slaughter continued, and to do all in our power to limit the conflict.” p535.

⁴⁶ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p337.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p338.

of politicians further removed from influence and responsibility had no place on the Labour front bench on this issue. What is clear then is that on the Opposition front bench there was firm support for the stance that the British Government was taking on the arms embargo. According to these Labour politicians, the arms embargo should remain, and if anything, should be enforced much more rigorously than had previously been the case. The opinions of Government and Opposition on this issue were thus the same. Simms is particularly critical of the stance that the Labour Party took on this topic. He asserts:

For the most part, however, Labour policy and rhetoric was indistinguishable from that of the Major administration. The notion that all sides to the conflict were more or less equally guilty found widespread acceptance.... For this reason, the Labour Party opposed military intervention during most of the war. It was particularly supportive of the international arms embargo.⁴⁸

For Simms then, on the issue of the arms embargo and much else beside, Labour did not take the opportunity presented to it as the party of opposition; namely, it did not try to press the British Government into either taking a more proactive stance in the Balkans or assist the Bosnians. Thus, regarding the Labour Party front bench stance on the issue of the arms embargo, Simms's outspoken condemnation can, in this instance, be empirically verified.

The opposing argument for the lifting of the arms embargo is a complex area of the broader discussion. Back bench calls for the lifting of the arms embargo did occur. Many Labour back bench politicians saw the Bosnian Government as the victims of the policy, and argued that as the ban on weapons had been implemented on a Yugoslav-wide basis since the beginning of the war; this had given the Serbs and Croats a military advantage. This was the key principle guiding their objections to the policy. This very point was exemplified in an extract from a Foreign Affairs question

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p298.

asked by Labour M.P. Jim Marshall. It shows how one particular politician was more in tune with a leading, albeit outspoken, figure of the Conservative party than with his very own front bench:

Does the Minister accept that Lady Thatcher is not alone in believing that the present arms embargo plays into the hands of the Croats and the Serbs, and places the Bosnia Muslims at a great disadvantage? Does he further accept that there is an increasing feeling that the arms embargo should be partially lifted so that the Bosnian Muslims will at least be able to defend themselves against the atrocities being committed against their nation?⁴⁹

Marshall repeated similar sentiments in a debate later in the same month.

Does the Foreign Secretary accept that the apparently even-handed approach to the arms embargo is, in effect, playing to the territorial ambitions of the Serbs and, to a lesser degree, the Croats? In the absence of resolve by the west to intervene, or as the west has been unable or unwilling to intervene, will the Bosnian Government be able to defend their own citizens and territory only through the availability of arms? The Serbs and the Croats will still get the arms, but the Bosnian Government do not have the arms. In the interests of the sovereignty of Bosnia and of preserving the lives of the citizens of Bosnia, it is essential that the total arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia should be lifted.⁵⁰

The extract shows Marshall to be totally out of step with the policies being promoted by his very own front bench Shadow Ministers. Ten days later, he repeated demands for the arms embargo against Bosnia to be lifted. His argument was based on what he saw to be a lack of action by the international community. In Marshall's view, if the world did not intend to act to help the Bosnians, then they should at least be given the means to do so for themselves. He argued:

I am driven to the view that the west intends to take no action, but I believe that we should at least admit that the Bosnian Government and nation have the right of self-defence, the right to defend the lives of their people and to try to defend the integrity of their territory. The only way of doing that and the only positive policy that can offer the Bosnian Government is a partial lifting of the arms embargo so that the Bosnian

⁴⁹ Jim Marshall (Leicester, South), *Foreign Office Oral Answers* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 822.

⁵⁰ Jim Marshall (Leicester, South), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223. Column 32.

Government can acquire the elementary means of self-defence which the west has been denying them.⁵¹

Aside from Marshall continuing to take a stance that was different from that of his more senior colleagues, what is also of interest, and has been shown here, is that he consistently took this position regarding the lifting of the arms embargo. One explanation for this could be that Marshall represented a constituency with a higher than average Muslim population. This could lead him to take a more proactive stance on this issue than politicians from other areas. Such a point is extremely difficult to verify in that the 1991 Census which would provide the necessary data did not include a question about religion. However, it is widely noted that Leicester is a multicultural and a multi-faith city. This feature is acknowledged on the city council's website: "The city's thriving ethnic minority community accounts for more than a third of Leicester's population and continues to enrich city life."⁵² This is substantiated by data presented on the website. The most recent figures, from the 2001 Census, show that Leicester has a Muslim population of 30,885, representing 11.03% of the local population, whereas, nationally, Muslims account for 2.97% of the population.⁵³ Although the period under examination in this thesis covers the previous decade, it is worth noting that in the Survey of Leicester of 1983, 4.3% of the city's population were Muslim, thus presenting it as consistently having a larger than average Islamic population.⁵⁴ These statistics would suggest that Marshall was responding, even in part, to concerns raised within his constituency, and reflected issues brought to him in his local surgeries.

⁵¹ Jim Marshall (Leicester, South), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1228 – 1229.

⁵² <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=204>

⁵³ <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=1009>

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Constituency related motives for participation in debates on this issue are more clearly exemplified by the remarks of David Young. He argued that the failure of the sanctions policy to be implemented and policed effectively meant that there was a great imbalance in weaponry between the Serbs and Muslims, and that steps should be taken to give the Bosnian Government side the chance to defend itself. Reinforcing the way in which domestic issues can help influence policy towards an international crisis, he provided an example based on his own political experience. Young made the following comments:

There are many Bosnian Muslims in my constituency. One Muslim said to me, “We appreciate your food and we appreciate the bravery and dedication of your soldiers in getting it to us, but are we just going to be kept alive so that eventually we can be raped and butchered?” That is the challenge that we in this House face.⁵⁵

Of interest here is that the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina had by no means been homogeneously Muslim. This means that Young, although mentioning the Bosnian Muslims within his constituency, was speaking in favour of the Bosnian Government which originally represented the range of groups within the area. Although combatants from the Middle East and Asia had gone to Bosnia to fight for the Government troops, the majority of the population remained more secularly Muslim.⁵⁶ It was only as the war progressed that the concept of a Bosnian state became more strongly associated with Islam. However, what Young’s contribution to the debate illustrates, is that the very issue of religion and ethnicity was an extremely complex one during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Indeed, these remarks also highlight the way

⁵⁵ David Young (Bolton, South East), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 26 July 1993) Vol: 229, Columns 854 – 856.

⁵⁶ There is a wealth of literature that explores the history and impact of Islam in the Balkans. One such example is Noel Malcolm’s *Bosnia – A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994. Papermac edition 1996). For a literary depiction of the impact that religion has had in Bosnia see Ivo Andric’s Nobel Prize winning novel, *The Bridge Over the Drina* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1959. Harvill Press edition 1995.)

in which particular Labour M.P.s did relay the views and concerns of their local constituents to the House of Commons.

What these examples demonstrate is that almost a decade before the 'War on Terror' began, with the deployment of US and British forces to both Afghanistan and Iraq and the ensuing domestic issues regarding Islam and multiculturalism in Britain, a foreign policy episode, namely the break-up of Yugoslavia, had already led to Labour Party M.P.s raising concerns in the House of Commons based on the ethnic or religious background of some of their constituents. The wars in the Balkans, specifically the conflict in Bosnia, were a series of violent disputes which led some Muslim members of the public to demand more action from their politicians, and in turn the Conservative Government. The lack of commitment by the British Government, and other countries of the international community was to be a long standing source of tension and resentment within this area of British society.

From the spring of 1994, when the war in Bosnia had been raging for two years, calls for the lifting of the arms embargo increased amongst Labour politicians. It is from this point that more of the same names tended to make ongoing contributions to this particular debate. Tony Banks argued in April 1994 that if the international community was prepared to allow the Bosnian Serbs to flout international resolutions, then it should agree to the lifting of the embargo for the Bosnian Muslims.⁵⁷ In the same debate, Kate Hoey took the same stance. Using powerful reason, she asserted:

Does the Minister realise that many of us – on both sides of the House – have been saying for more than two years that the Serbs were not interested in diplomacy, discussions or talking, and that they were interested in a Greater Serbia? Does he now agree that, as the international community has failed so dismally, we cannot sit in the House of Commons and say that we will prevent the people of Bosnia, including the

⁵⁷ Tony Banks (West Ham), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 18 April 1994) Vol: 241, Column 650.

Government and the Muslims, from being armed and able to defend themselves if we are not prepared to do it?⁵⁸

In an example that illustrates both the duration of the conflict, and the ongoing inability of the international community to deal with the crisis, over one year later Hoey made a virtually identical speech.⁵⁹ Another politician to adopt the same theme was Max Madden. In just one week, Madden made two requests for the arms embargo to be lifted for the Bosnian Muslims. On 12 July 1995 he asked the following question: “(W)hat excuse can be left for denying arms to Bosnian Government forces to defend their people and territory from external Serbian aggression?”⁶⁰ The next week, Madden repeated his argument, this time making clear the strength of feeling that he felt towards the situation. He argued:

Since the United Nations, NATO and the international community have vividly demonstrated their unwillingness and inability to intervene militarily in a way which would bring this war to an end, and as the Bosnian Government naturally resist a political settlement resting on genocide and territorial gains made by external military aggression, will the Secretary of State, who does not come to this issue with any political baggage, make it clear that it is now time for the arms embargo to be lifted and the Bosnian Government to be given the means to defend their people and their territory against external Serbian aggression?⁶¹

A final example to illustrate the powerful views held by Labour politicians speaking in favour of lifting the arms embargo is the following extract, taken from a detailed speech by Clare Short. Noteworthy here is that Short was on the Labour front bench, albeit with a minor portfolio, thus making her the exception in those speaking against the arms embargo.⁶² She stated:

⁵⁸ Kate Hoey (Vauxhall), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 18 April 1994) Vol: 241, Column 653.

⁵⁹ Kate Hoey (Vauxhall), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 955–956.

⁶⁰ Max Madden (Bradford, West), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 July 1995) Vol: 263, Column 965.

⁶¹ Max Madden (Bradford, West), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Column 1741.

⁶² Shadow Cabinet positions held by Clare Short were Shadow Minister for Women (1993 – 1995), Shadow Transport Secretary (1995 – 1996), and Shadow Minister for Overseas Development (1996 – 1997).

But we must allow the Bosnian people to fight for themselves. We will not protect them, and it is absolutely wrong to allow them to be slaughtered.

The brave Bosnian army has absolutely no equipment, and a people who have been wronged as much as this people have must be entitled to fight for their own honour and future. It is unbearable and intolerable that we neither protect them nor allow them to fight. It is shameful, and I agree wholeheartedly, although with regret, with the right hon. Member for Guildford, that we must now move on and plan for the future, so that the Bosnian people can fight for themselves.⁶³

Her view on the arms embargo, specifically the injustice of it for the Bosnian Government, is clear. Yet again, a British politician had spoken passionately on the subject, and shown the frustration felt by those who thought that more should be done to try to relieve the situation in the Balkans. Similarly of interest, is the reference to the Member of Parliament for Guildford, David Howell. That Short found herself in agreement with a Conservative politician does more to show the confusion apparent in the responses to the break-up of Yugoslavia. As has been shown on the issue of the arms embargo, there was a tendency for Shadow Cabinet Ministers to support the Conservative Government. Here though, Short was distancing herself from her front bench colleagues who were supporting the Conservative Government. Instead she was aligning herself with a Tory back bencher who was clearly at odds with his own Government. What became apparent was that a multitude of responses existed, and that they were impossible to always classify along party lines: The example of Short, showing her agreement with David Howell, illustrates this point.⁶⁴ Also of interest, is the way in which someone who could be categorised as being on the left of the Labour Party was taking a position that one would not necessarily associate with that part of the organisation; advocating some form of armed assistance is surprising

⁶³ Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood), Bosnia (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1764-1766.

⁶⁴ David Howell was Chairman of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. Throughout the wars of secession in Yugoslavia he was critical of the Conservative Government and its policies. Simms, however, describes his interventions as lacking "force and coherence." Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p293.

considering the importance that pacifism and internationalism have within the British left wing. This has been mentioned earlier here with reference to Michael R. Gordon's work *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914 – 1965*. He outlined what he described as the four typical principles of socialist foreign policy, namely internationalism, the importance of international working-class solidarity, anti-capitalism, and anti-militarism, an antipathy to power politics.⁶⁵ Thus, Clare Short's support for the lifting of the arms embargo goes somewhat against what one would expect to see from within her wing of the Labour Party. In other words, there were politicians speaking out against this particular policy, vocalising some form of opposition. These people were thus in favour of introducing a more assertive form of intervention than had previously be employed in the region. This was then, a clear departure from the previously held consensual position of placing total faith in the United Nations, with the means to find peace through negotiation and diplomacy.

Opposition to the arms embargo was focussed on one key issue, that is, the perceived lack of fairness of this policy towards the Bosnian Muslims. Those speaking against the embargo argued that this part of the population should have the right – and the means – to defend itself. By extension, this meant tacit support for a more prolonged conflict: putting arms into the region would obviously lead to more fighting. These comments raise some interesting points about the views of the back bench Labour politicians. For them, the right to self-defence was of more importance than fears relating to the spread of increased fighting in the region. This is at odds with a traditional Labour stance on pacifism and anti-militarism. Historical parallels of this stance can be seen with the position taken by elements of the Labour Party regarding the Spanish Civil War, and the Second World War. In both cases here,

⁶⁵ Michael R. Gordon, *Op cit.* pp13-43.

participation in, or support of, a particular cause was of more importance than the implications of non-intervention. Also of importance here is the part played by constituency factors. As has been shown, some of the politicians who spoke in favour of a lifting of the arms embargo were from constituencies that might have viewed this as a particular issue of concern and interest. Thus, the line between both domestic and international politics was blurred.

What becomes apparent then in this analysis of Labour Party responses either in favour or against the arms embargo, is that, in common elsewhere in the thesis, the differing sentiments were all strongly argued by the various participants of the debates. The break-up of Yugoslavia and perhaps more specifically, the way in which the international community responded to the situation, was one that garnered plenty of passion and commitment especially by those on the backbenches. This was a situation about which people held strong views and that they cared about. As is the case in these examples, this was the situation whether examining the views of the Shadow Cabinet who looked to avoid escalation of the conflict and were opposed to the lifting of the arms embargo, or those on the back benches who used strident, vociferous language to state their demands regarding the lifting of the ban on the shipment of arms to the Bosnian Muslims. However, their support for the lifting of the arms embargo to one group involved in the conflict was not mono-causal, which could perhaps be seen to weaken their argument. It is too simplistic to state that the Labour Party offered little alternative to the policy of the incumbent Major Government. Instead what is apparent is that these politicians held a number of perspectives, some showing agreement with the Government, and some stridently opposed. Consequently, one could argue that the vast array of views exemplified by the politicians of the Opposition meant that there was an absence of one consistent,

homogenous voice that could effectively campaign against the stance taken by the Conservative Party.

CONCLUSION

This study of intervention at its most basic level in the former Yugoslavia shows that even supposedly non-controversial policies such as sanctions and arms embargos raised plenty of debate within the Labour Party. Even here there were discernible differences in approach between front and back bench politicians. In common with other debates, what occurred was a split between those in the Shadow Cabinet who, in the main, tended to take a more bi-partisan stance on the issues under discussion in contrast with politicians on the back benches. Those politicians presented a multitude of views in the debates.

The fundamental findings of this chapter are that despite the range of views and opinions examined, some key elements do exist. Thus, politicians from across the party showed unified support for the notion of humanitarian intervention. Indeed, around this particular term, there was a strong sentiment of bi-partisanship within Parliament as a whole. However, cracks in unity started to emerge when policies became more specifically defined. Therefore, a clear divide began to appear between front benches of either party on the issue of sanctions, with the Shadow Cabinet criticising the Government for its slow, ineffectual approach. Thus, John Cunningham, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, regularly called on the Government to do more regarding the enforcement of this policy. Conversely, the Labour Party front bench, which included Cunningham, showed support for the arms embargo which was fairly consistent with the position held by the Tories. As one prominent example

then, Cunningham was strongly opposed to one Government stance, whilst being in support of it in another policy area.

The position amongst politicians on the Labour Party back benches continued to demonstrate a wide degree of stances and opinions. Whilst sanctions received the support of some back benchers, other M.P.s were critical of such a policy. As has been stated herein, this was not for a sole reason; a range of arguments was used, including the idea that a country's sovereignty was being threatened, it was the wrong time to introduce such a policy, and that sanctions should be applied with equanimity across the region. Opposition against the arms embargo was voiced by a number of Labour back bench politicians. Typically, those who spoke out against this policy demonstrated a range of motivations, and presented views that were unlikely to be voiced by those on the front bench; the importance of portraying a consensual Shadow Cabinet stance would have negated any such comments. Therefore, concerns regarding the fears of local constituents, and the notion that as the Bosnian Government had seemingly been abandoned by the international community they should at least have the chance to defend themselves were all features of back bench dissent on the arms embargo. There was then, a greater complexity and depth of views in the Commons debates than is sometimes assumed. For instance, Brendan Simms's critical assessment of the situation has been well documented here. However, James Gow has offered a similar view. His work, *Triumph of Lack of Will – International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*, offers a study centred around international relations approaches to the conflict in the Balkans.⁶⁶ Although he concentrates more on international responses than the British domestic political scene, he still offers comments that resonate with the position taken by Simms. Gow argues that “(t)he

⁶⁶ James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will – International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (London: Hurst & Co., 1997)

major fault with British policy, therefore, was its pusillanimous realism.”⁶⁷ However, what has been shown within this chapter, is that some politicians were prepared to speak out, and argue against a policy that they felt was unfair and unjust. I have then shown that the criticisms vocalised by some within the historiography do not reflect the entire situation. British political responses, specifically here within the Labour Party, were not that straightforward, at least among some selected M.P.s. There was then no homogeneity in how the Labour Party responded to the start of the debate on intervention in the Balkans. This trend, namely a division between both Labour front and back bench, and also, within the back benches themselves, is consistent with what has already been seen in this thesis, and continues into the next chapter on the issue of more proactive forms of intervention.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p182.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACCEPTABLE MILITARY OPTIONS?

NO-FLY ZONES AND AIR STRIKES

The last chapter outlined the nature of the 'sliding scale' of policies that could be introduced and the ones that will be discussed here, that is, the issue of a no-fly zone, and the introduction of air strikes, are more proactive than those examined previously. However, the policies were still unlikely to cause much controversy in the external states involved. It was doubtful that mass demonstrations campaigning against the imposition of a no-fly zone in the former Yugoslavia would be held on the streets of European capital cities. However, there was a chance that any future, more extreme measures would have been met with greater anxiety. What this chapter examines then is the development of an interventionist policy in the Balkans, albeit one which fell short of full-scale military action by the international community. Specifically, the focus of study will be on the imposition of the no-fly zone, and the more proactive call for air strikes.

It is important to clarify the difference between these two policies. Put simply, a no-fly zone is an area where the use of aircraft is forbidden. Aside from the impact on civilian flights, this obviously has implications for either the transportation of troops and military hardware, or the employment of air strikes in the theatre of war. Controlling the no-fly zone depends on the will and the resolve of external states, usually under the auspices of the United Nations, to enforce such a policy. As will be examined herein, introducing a no-fly zone, and successfully implementing it were two separate issues entirely. Air strikes in this situation are obviously when forces acting for an international institution, use strategic attacks on targets which are

deemed to have maximum impact for the enemy forces, whilst endeavouring to keep civilian casualties to a minimum. As one would expect, this policy carries a considerable degree of risk, in that so-called collateral damage can occur, and if this leads to a high number of casualties, there can be serious repercussions for the external states prosecuting such a policy; in such situations there could well be a backlash amongst the domestic population campaigning against such a strategy. Finally, it is important to note that neither of these strategies is without risk for the countries involved in such action. Pilots, who are either enforcing the no-fly zone or implementing air strikes, are obviously in danger of being shot down. Thus, although either type of operation appears at first glance to present a relatively safe option for the international community, neither strategy is completely risk-free.

SUPPORTING THE NO-FLY ZONE

The implementation of a no-fly zone was yet another form of intervention discussed in Parliament, during the search for a resolution to the Balkan wars. Introducing such a policy over Bosnia-Herzegovina, similar to that imposed on Iraq in 1991, would have been mainly aimed at restricting the movement of Serbian aircraft.¹ U.N. Security Council Resolution 781 (October 1992) established the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the enforcement of such a policy was only determined by U.N. Security Council Resolution 816 in March 1993. Inevitably, the delay between the introduction of, and the policing of the no-fly zone led to considerable debate amongst politicians.

A wide range of figures from across the Labour Party spoke in favour of this policy. In Prime Minister's Questions on 15 December 1992, the Labour leader, John

¹ Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001) pp5, 61 – 62.

Smith, called for the immediate implementation of guaranteeing the no-fly zone over

Bosnia:

In view of the appalling suffering being endured by the inhabitants of Sarajevo and other besieged towns and cities in Bosnia, will the Prime Minister join the French and United States Governments in urging the speedy adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia?....

While appreciating the concern that the Prime Minister expresses for the humanitarian efforts, and for the safety of our own troops on the ground, does the right hon. Gentleman not appreciate that there is a growing feeling in this country, as there is in the international community, that there is no point in a no-fly zone which can be defied with such impunity? The time has come for effective international action. I hope that the Prime Minister will take the message from the House that he would be widely supported if Britain supported the other countries in making the resolution effective.²

There are a number of noteworthy points in this extract. Firstly, the no-fly zone had already been adopted by the United Nations; what was lacking was an international will to enforce the policy. Secondly, the role of British troops in a humanitarian capacity in the region, that is, protecting the delivery of relief convoys, meant that enforcing the no-fly zone became a very real problem. Any action that would jeopardise the safety of British troops on the ground in Bosnia would surely be avoided by the Government. The proper enforcement of the no-fly zone could obviously lead to casualties amongst forces from the United Kingdom. This would clearly be unacceptable at this point for those involved in the political and military decision-making process as well as for the public at large, and would possibly have had implications for future policies in the region. Thus in his speech, Smith's call for the proper policing of this United Nations resolution bore clear differences with the policy of the Government: at that stage, the Conservative front bench did not take the same view as its Opposition counterparts. A debate held in the following year

² John Smith (Monklands, East), *Oral Answers – Prime Minister, Engagements* (Official Report, Hansard: 15 December 1992) Vol: 216, Columns 290 – 291.

regarding the full enforcement of the no-fly zone showed that the Labour front bench was again in full support of the policy, with the Shadow Defence Secretary outlining his party's stance on the issue. He said:

I assure the Minister that he has the support of Labour Members in the enforcement of the no-fly zone as a symbol of the world's belief in the need to enforce United Nations resolutions and, at the same time, sending a message to the warring factions of the necessity for them to sign a peace accord.

....Does he agree that the enforcement must be completely even-handed with the Serbs, the Croats and the Muslim supporting planes being treated in exactly the same manner?³

Thus, the Conservative Government had, albeit belatedly, committed itself to a policy that the Labour leader had given his support to some four months previously. Significantly, Clark was clear in his view that the no-fly zone had to be applied evenly across the region, that is, there was to be no partiality in how the resolution was implemented. One year into the war in Bosnia, where, as we saw in the previous chapter, there were frequent back bench comments in support of the Bosnian Government, the Labour front bench spokesman for defence called for the no-fly zone to be applied with equanimity. Of further significance in Clark's speech is that – for him - we can see that enforcing the no-fly zone was as important as enforcing the will of the United Nations *per se*. The viability of that institution had to be protected. This resonates with what we have already seen regarding the Labour Party's attitude to the U.N. and its role in international relations.

SUPPORT FOR AIR STRIKES

There was considerable Labour Party support for the use of air strikes during the Bosnian conflict. Demand for such action came from both front and back benches. As

³ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *No-Fly Zone (Bosnia)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 April 1993) Vol: 222. Column 499.

has been shown, the Labour Shadow Cabinet supported the implementation of a no-fly zone long before the Conservative Government. This was also the case with the issue of air strikes. However, what is noteworthy is that this party support for air strikes was not part of a coherent general plan towards the Balkans. There was little elaboration given on how such an intervention could be prosecuted, and how it would fit into a wider strategy. The suggestion thus tended to fall within the “do something” camp, that is well-meaning, but suffering from a lack of detail which would obviously have an impact on a tactical, broader perspective. Likewise, the views of those behind the Labour front bench did not form a cohesive viewpoint, so back benchers held opinions on the issue from across the spectrum, either making calls for such intervention even before their Shadow Cabinet raised the issue, or even strongly opposing the policy. Thus, the range of responses did not suggest one specific argument, but rather a variety of opinions. A United Nations resolution authorising air strikes occurred in June 1993.⁴ The issue was debated before then, but, as one would expect, discussion on the issue increased after that point especially once the first action had been taken in April 1994. The debate continued until the end of the war in late 1995.

Calls for air strikes first emanated from the Opposition front bench in April 1993. In a debate on Bosnia, John Cunningham gave cautious support to the use of air strikes due to the further deterioration on the ground in Bosnia. He argued that “(t)here should be a permanent ceasefire and the Serbs should agree to sign the Owen-Vance peace plan. Unless they are prepared to do that, the Security Council should consider authorising a punitive air strike against the Serbs’ supply lines in Bosnia.”⁵ As will be seen later in this chapter, Cunningham was in agreement with a policy

⁴ U.N. Security Council Resolution 836 (1993) 4 June 1993.

⁵ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 23 – 24.

proposed by back bench M.P.s Dale Campbell-Savours and Tony Banks just one week earlier. However, for Cunningham, air strikes formed part of a United Nations policy towards Bosnia. This more measured tone and vocabulary contrasted heavily with the views of his back bench colleagues. As will be shown later in this chapter, Labour politicians away from the front bench were able to demonstrate more forceful opinions when discussing the issue. This emphasises the difference in tone and register often employed by those from the front and back bench of the Labour Party.

The next day in Prime Minister's Questions, the Leader of the Opposition added his support for the introduction of air strikes into the Bosnian war:

While it is essential that the sanctions against Serbia be intensified and properly enforced, as indeed they should have been months ago, is it not now necessary for a clear ultimatum to be issued to the Serbs that they will not be allowed to continue their aggression unchecked and that, if they continue that aggression, their lines of supply within Bosnia will be subject to air attack?⁶

John Smith was to be a strong advocate of firm air-power intervention in Bosnia and, on the above occasion, used his weekly platform in Prime Minister's Questions to raise the issue. A further example of this is from the following week when he repeated his calls for air strikes against the Serbs:

As the horrendous situation in Bosnia worsens even further and as no clear policy has yet emerged from the international community which would effectively deter continued Serb advance, is it not the case that the acknowledged risks of limited air strikes are increasingly outweighed by the very real dangers of continued inaction? Is there not a serious danger that if another policy is not adopted, moves will be made to lift the arms embargo, which would merely intensify the conflict?⁷

In many ways this extract provides us with yet more evidence of the complexities of the general debate that surrounded the issue of intervention in the Balkans. What is of

⁶ John Smith (Monklands, East), *Prime Minister, Engagements* (Official Report, Hansard: 20 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 179.

⁷ John Smith (Monklands, East), *Prime Minister, Engagements* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1148 – 1149. Two months later, Smith again spoke out in support of air strikes, *European Council (Copenhagen)* (Official Report, Hansard: 23 June 1993) Vol: 227, Columns 310 – 312.

interest is the way in which, although Smith was in favour of air strikes, he was opposed to the lifting of the arms embargo. For him, the judicious use of air strikes had considerable advantage over the dangers that would be incurred through the freeing of military hardware to the region. So, whilst Smith was in favour of one type of military action, he was not giving carte blanche to all types of intervention under discussion. In this one example, we can see how a number of apparent anomalies existed in attitudes to the Balkan wars. It could be presumed that someone supporting air strikes would also support the ending of the arms embargo as both policies would presumably help the Bosnian Government. Smith, however, took a contrasting stance on either issue. In his view, whilst air strikes would strategically assist the Bosnian forces, arming them further would lead to an escalation of the conflict.

In a debate on Bosnia, held on the same day, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, John Cunningham, agreed with his leader and gave his support for the same policy.

He said:

Air strikes have some advantages as well as some disadvantages. They can be far more readily controlled, politically as well as militarily, than involvement by ground troops in a combat role. They could be brought to an end and the situation reassessed after air strikes had taken place if the Serbians did not accept the ultimatum. However, none of my colleagues has ever suggested that there are any risk-free options in any of the propositions that we are discussing in connection with this war.⁸

Also from the Labour front bench, Dr David Clark the Defence Spokesman added his support for Cunningham's position.⁹ Thus far the Labour front bench was unified in its approach to the issue of implementing air strikes. However, in the same debate, the most interesting comments on the issue of air strikes came from Clare Short, another Shadow Minister. She took a different stance from the comments that have so far been

⁸ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1183 – 1184,

⁹ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 1243 – 1246.

examined. Her opening remarks place her firmly in favour of the idea of air strikes. However, where she differs from the earlier comments of her front bench Parliamentary colleagues is that she argued that that type of intervention should have been used much earlier in the conflict. The failure to do so, according to Short, had major ramifications for the possible introduction of such a policy at the current stage of the conflict:

The failure to consider limited air strikes earlier was disastrous. It was led by those who said that no troops could be risked on the ground. A generation, thinking of the Serbians as the good guys, roughly speaking, in the last war, could not see the reality of what was going on on this occasion. They were scared stiff by any possibility of troops on the ground and therefore ruled out even the use of air strikes.

When the artillery and the mortars were raining down on Sarajevo – remember, on the hospital, on the buses full of orphans trying to get away – if there had been limited use of air strikes then, it might have turned back the Serbian aggression. However, errors were made and we must deal with the situation that we face now.¹⁰

Of increased interest in the same debate is that Short argued that air strikes were no longer the answer:

The second option, the fashionable recent option, is air strikes. That is the “We have got to do something” option; the “We do not have a strategy, but it is dreadful just to let it go on. We do not want any troops on the ground, so let’s bomb a few supposed supply lines and pretend that that will bring the conflict to an end” option. That is not a serious option.

When military spokesmen spoke recently at press conferences about the need for a serious strategy, they were objecting to air strikes without an underpinning strategy.¹¹

Thus, she provides us with a clear example of yet further complexities that surrounded the entire issue of intervention in the Balkans. Whilst, in principle Short supported air strikes in the former Yugoslavia, one year into the war in Bosnia she felt that if events on the ground were taken into consideration, it was too late to use this type of military option. As has been mentioned then, Short is an interesting example of a politician

¹⁰ Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1237 – 1240.

¹¹ Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1237 – 1240.

from the left wing of the Labour Party. She acted in a way that would not seem immediately obvious as belonging to someone with her particular ideology; that is, air strikes seem an unlikely policy for a left-wing pacifist politician to support. However, one could argue that her actual stance on the prosecution of air strikes is impossible to verify in that she only spoke in favour of them retrospectively. This means that we have no way of knowing whether she would have actually supported this policy.

With regard to left-wing support for military action, there are obviously precedents in the history of the Labour Party. As Rhiannon Vickers has underlined, probably the best example from the historical record to consider is the way in which the party responded to the appeasement crisis of 1938. Although the Labour Party was by no means in favour of provoking a conflict with Hitler over the cause of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia, it was, in the main, dismayed by the agreement secured by Neville Chamberlain at Munich. Clement Attlee viewed the situation thus: “Munich, he said, left him with the same emotions he had at the evacuation of Gallipoli, a mixture of humiliation, relief, and foreboding.”¹² The Labour Party, at this juncture, was relying on the League of Nations to resolve the crisis. Perhaps in parallel with the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, at the time of appeasement, they did not present a clear, alternative plan in the event of their preferred strategy failing.¹³

Further calls for air strikes also came from Dale Campbell-Savours and Tony Banks, who both spoke in favour of this policy in the same debate in April 1993.¹⁴

The view of Campbell-Savours was thus:

¹² Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World – Volume 1: The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900-51* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) p135.

¹³ *Ibid*, Chapter 6.

¹⁴ There were general mentions of air strikes before this point, but normally as part of broader pleas for ‘something to be done’. For example, see Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *European Council (Edinburgh)* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 December 1992) Vol: 216, Column 38. It is from April 1993 that calls for air strikes consistently appear in House of Commons debates.

Since last August, a number of Opposition Members have positively supported the use of military intervention, in the form of air strikes, against Serbian positions because we believe that it is impossible to negotiate with fascism. We believe that fascism sets its objectives and ignores its victims. Fascism is what we have in Serbia. Is not it about time that this country, the European Community, the United Nations and NATO realised that this cancer growing at the very heart of Europe has got to be stopped now before it spreads even further?¹⁵

Using the spectre of fascism within his speech was a powerful tool with which to get support for such action. Evoking memories of the totalitarian regimes of the first half of the twentieth century was an effective device on which to base his argument. This was an approach which was regularly used in the House of Commons: the final chapter of the thesis will examine the ways in which the Second World War cast its shadow over the Parliamentary debates which took place regarding the Balkan conflicts. For Campbell-Savours it was imperative that air strikes were implemented as soon as possible. The language used is a striking contrast to that used by the front bench politicians. It highlights the difference in approach taken by those in the Shadow Cabinet, and those further removed from power. What is clear from the earlier examples taken from those on the front bench is that those politicians adopted a more measured tone, whereas figures on the back bench could speak with little restraint. This again illustrates the pragmatism of power which has manifested itself throughout this thesis: politicians closer to the decision-making process, albeit even on the Opposition front bench, demonstrate an approach to policy formulation that is very much rooted in realism, and some bi-partisanship. Thus Labour front bench politicians might employ rather more non-committal language to express the views as presented here by those on the back benches. This more reasoned approach is often at

¹⁵ D.N. Campbell-Savours (Workington), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 837.

odds with the views of those expressed outside of this immediate circle of power, even when demonstrating support for the exact same policy.

The opinion expressed by Campbell-Savours was echoed by Tony Banks who spoke on the same issue. In his speech, Banks went even further than his colleague, and gave specific details of how he believed the situation in the region should develop. He suggested:

Before the United Nations has to go into the ranks of the Conservative party to keep the warring sides apart, will the Secretary of State agree that Margaret Thatcher at least articulated the deep anger and frustration that many people in this country feel about the inability of European Community powers to do anything about the situation in Bosnia? Is it not time to consider giving an ultimatum to the Serbian Government that, unless they are able to bring the Bosnian Serbs to account, there will be strikes against military targets inside Serbia in order to cut off the supply of arms from Serbia to the Bosnian Serbs.¹⁶

Banks's speech shows us the complex divisions that existed within the British political world on the issue of intervention in the Balkans. Here, Banks shows both ironic support for the views of the former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, and frustration at the existing Conservative leadership's position on the very same issue. This raises both Banks's support for the stance of a politician far removed from his own political ideology, contrasting with his contempt for her colleagues within the Conservative Party, albeit those in Government. Of paramount importance though is the clear, unequivocal way that he called for armed action in the conflict.

Speaking in the same month, another figure to contribute to the debate on air strikes was Peter Hain, a then back bench Labour politician. He argued:

No one would deny that any solution is risk-free or without danger. Why is the Foreign Secretary not pressing the United Nations to use its air resources in the area to target Serbian supply lines, artillery, mortar and tank positions? The policy pursued by his Government and the whole of the west has failed abysmally. The genocide, rape and ethnic cleansing

¹⁶ Tony Banks (West Ham), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 838.

continue and, increasingly, the Government are speaking with the voice of Joseph (sic) Chamberlain on this crisis.¹⁷

Aside from his confusion regarding two former prominent politicians who shared the same surname, Hain's intervention showed him to be strongly critical of the Conservative Government, and thus in complete agreement with his front bench colleagues.¹⁸ Another figure from the back bench to show support for the policy was Andrew Faulds, who gave specific examples of how he believed air power could be deployed in the Balkans. His argument was based on a successful destruction of parts of the Serbian infrastructure, for example, bridges, which would serve to inhibit and hamper their military activities in the region. Additionally, Faulds argued that air power could be used to destroy Serbian artillery positions, as well as arms factories within the former Yugoslavia. Unless this was achieved, he argued that the use of air power against the Serbs was relatively futile.¹⁹ Faulds went on to argue that although there would be civilian casualties, the eventual outcome, that is peace in the region, would justify the means. Again, this back bench support for air strikes mirrored the views of the Labour Shadow Cabinet.

There is a range of literature that examines how bombing or aerial attacks have changed the nature of war. In his work, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, Jonathan Glover explores how the essence of warfare has adapted over the last one hundred years to accommodate developments in weaponry.²⁰ He argues: "Technology has created forms of cold violence which should disturb us far more than the beast of rage in man. The great military atrocities now use bombs or missiles. The

¹⁷ Peter Hain (Neath), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 33.

¹⁸ After the speech in which Hain referred to Joseph Chamberlain, the Labour politician was greeted with the following response from the Foreign Secretary: "I think that the hon. Gentleman has got his Chamberlains mixed up." Douglas Hurd (Witney), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol:223, Column 33.

¹⁹ Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1211 – 1212.

²⁰ Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999. Pimlico edition, 2001).

decisions are taken coldly, far away.”²¹ By extension, it is perhaps simpler for a politician to take a decision on air strikes than on a ground based intervention, as they, both the politician and the aircraft, are so far removed from the local situation. In exploring the nuclear strike on Hiroshima, Glover makes the following observations regarding the moral impact felt by those involved in this particular military operation. The analysis presented here can perhaps also help to explain politicians support for air strikes, seen as de-personalised, during the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Participation in a massacre is less threatening to the picture of yourself as a kindly and human person if the horrors seem to have little to do with you. To diminish the sense of personal responsibility is to weaken the restraining effects of moral identity. The sense of personal responsibility for the atomic bomb was weakened by distance and evasion, but, above all, was weakened by the way contributions to the use of the bomb were shared by so many people.²²

References to the atomic bomb aside, this extract can maybe explain why air strikes were perceived as an ‘acceptable’ type of military action. Theoretically prosecuted in a clean, clinical fashion, the almost unreal ‘computer game’ nature of such operations make them more palatable for a politician to accept in a way that a ground invasion would never achieve.²³

As should be apparent from the thesis so far, actual implementation of any policy in the Balkans very often occurred years after debate on the very same issue had started, either inside or outside of Parliament. Steps were finally taken to authorise air strikes by the United Nations and NATO in February 1994. Politicians from both Labour front and back bench gave their support to this policy. As one would expect, given what we have seen of their increased calls for this type of action,

²¹ *Ibid.* p64.

²² *Ibid.*, p99.

²³ Other authors who have written on the modern nature of warfare from a more theoretical perspective are: Sven Lindqvist, *A History of Bombing* (London: Granta Books, 2001. Reprinted 2002. Translated by Linda Haverty Rugg); Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema – The Logistics of Perception* (London: Verso, 1989. Reprinted 1992. Translated by Patrick Camiller.); and Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (London and Indiana: British Film Institute and the Indiana University Press, 1995. Translated by Julie Rose.)

the Shadow Cabinet spoke in complete agreement with what had been decided over Bosnia. All of the key politicians with responsibility for this area of policy made speeches in the respective debates. John Cunningham, who was Shadow Foreign Secretary at the time of the first aerial attacks, gave his support to any such future action in a debate in February 1994. He gave unequivocal backing to NATO, stating that he viewed the latest development as an essential step in ending the violence in the Balkans. Such a stance also gave strength to the integrity of international institutions such as the United Nations and European Union, as well as NATO. The new position showed that these organisations were no longer prepared to wait on the sidelines, waiting for the situation to be resolved. As well as comments encouraging this toughened new stance, Cunningham criticised the British Government for the amount of time that it had taken for them to reach this position. He concluded his remarks by stating his desire that the situation in Bosnia would be resolved without recourse to air power.²⁴ Cunningham's speech emphasised the ongoing pleas for air strikes arising from the Labour front bench. Explicit in his words is a criticism that the Conservative Government had taken so long to come to support the same policy as had been proposed by other governments, and by the Labour Shadow Cabinet. The Shadow Defence Spokesman, David Clark, gave his support to air strikes in a debate on Bosnia that took place in the November of the same year. He commented:

I thank the Secretary of State for coming to the House to inform us that British airmen have been involved in an air attack in the former Yugoslavia. I speak for the whole House when I say that we are relieved that they have come back safely. Opposition Members recognise that the action is justified, in accordance with United Nations resolution 958.....

The action was necessary on two main counts: first, to stop the killing of innocent civilians in the United Nations safe area of Bihac. If safe areas mean anything, that is the least that could happen, especially in response to napalm bombing. Secondly, we believe that it was necessary to

²⁴ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Air Strikes (Bosnia)* (Official Report, Hansard: 10 February 1994) Vol: 237, Columns 448 – 449.

maintain the reputation of the United Nations and NATO, for the lesson is that threats should not be made unless they will be carried out.²⁵

Clark's robust support of the air strikes was noteworthy for several reasons. Once again it demonstrated the strong resolve of the Labour front bench in supporting a military action against a third party. Secondly, of equal, if not more, importance, and clearly linked to the first point, is that the air strikes were intrinsically tied in to the United Nations and appropriate resolutions. The air strikes in the former Yugoslavia were not *ad hoc* attacks but part of an approach organised under the auspices of the United Nations. As we have seen in previous chapters, the United Nations was held in great esteem by Labour, and Clark's comments about the air strikes reinforce the widely held view within the party on the importance of protecting the reputation of that institution.

The final front bench spokesman to consider is Robin Cook, who succeeded John Cunningham as Shadow Foreign Secretary and took on the role in Government after Labour had been elected in 1997. Interestingly, Cook's comments on air strikes offer a broader analysis of their effectiveness. Whilst making slight reservations and acknowledging the weaknesses of such an approach, he still showed support for the policy. Cook presented the view that an earlier, firmer approach would have had considerable benefit for the situation in the former Yugoslavia:

I also agree with the Foreign Secretary that there are severe limitations on air power. It is a low-intensity ground war that cannot be won from the air alone. It is difficult terrain with successive mountain ranges which give only short spans over which a target is visible. It is not, as some Americans sometimes appear to imagine, the easy desert terrain in which Operation Desert Storm was waged from the air.

Nevertheless, I still take the view that the UN could have been more robust in the use of limited air power in response to local violations.²⁶

²⁵ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 21 November 1994) Vol: 250, Column 342.

²⁶ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 5899 – 592.

For Cook then, air strikes, for all their failings, were still an appropriate measure to introduce in the war in Bosnia. Support for the policy was similarly widespread on the back benches of the Labour Party, even once the action had started, as will now be shown.

Support for the enhanced policy of air strikes on the Labour back benches came from a range of politicians. Once the international community had finally been forced to intensify the pressure on the Bosnian Serbs with a firmer resolve regarding the issue of air strikes, Kate Hoey queried the lack of commitment that had been shown by the British Government *vis-à-vis* that particular policy: “Does the Minister recognise that millions of people in this country do not understand why the concerted action that has been taken in the past couple of weeks could not have been taken with Britain taking the lead over the past two years?”²⁷ Similar sentiments were made by Chris Mullin in a debate on Gorazde just over one month later. His question clearly illustrates the full support that some Labour M.P.s had towards this type of armed intervention: “Is the Foreign Secretary aware that some of us have been advocating such action from the outset? If it has been proved as successful as he said it has been, would not a great many lives have been saved had the policy been employed 18 months ago?”²⁸ The views held by both of these politicians both reiterate, and highlight the stance taken by many in the Shadow Cabinet, that is, that air strikes were an appropriate action to take in Bosnia, and that they should have been implemented at a much earlier date.

What is important here is that Labour politicians were attempting to make a distinction between the more proactive stance that they were taking, in comparison

²⁷ Kate Hoey (Vauxhall), *Oral Answers, Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 March 1994) Vol: 238, Column 932 – 933.

²⁸ Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South), *Gorazde* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 April 1994) Vol: 241, Column 24.

with the lack of resolve that was demonstrated by the Major Government. Taken in a wider context, this could be seen as an attempt by the Opposition to take an honourable position, one that showed them to be mature and prepared for office, in direct contrast to the Conservatives. By this stage of their long tenure in power the Tories were seen to be beset with sleaze, and somewhat morally bankrupt. Thus, the comments presented here are an opportunity to highlight a powerful ethical divide between the two main political parties.

The introduction of safe areas into Bosnia, that is United Nations designated zones where the safety of the population was supposed to be guaranteed, was a catalyst for more comment on the validity of air strikes as an appropriate form of intervention.²⁹ In a wide ranging debate on the former Yugoslavia, one Labour politician, Malcolm Wicks, was scathing in his criticism of the stance that the British Government had taken with the use of this type of military action over Bosnia. His speech was an indictment of what he felt was a failure by the West, heavily influenced by Britain, to resolve the conflict in an effective manner:

That brings me to the reluctance to use air strikes. I believe that the British Government in particular, have placed the brake on the use of air strikes. At different times when the United States Government clearly wished to take a firmer approach to the conflict in Bosnia and to stand up to the aggression by the Serbian regime of Dr Karadzic, British Ministers said no, and urged caution.

The history books will show that the west's overall response has been poor, but the role of the British Government will stand to be especially condemned. In recent years the Serbs have tested, prodded and then understood the feebleness of the west's response. Sadly, every time Ministers from the Ministry of Defence or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have stood up in the House to comment on the situation, when the speeches have been analysed they have served as a green light for further aggression.³⁰

²⁹ U.N. Security Council Resolutions 819 (1993), 824 (1993), and 836 (1993) on the introduction and protection of safe areas.

³⁰ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Column 634 – 637.

What is striking about the speech, aside from the outspoken language used, is that these comments were made by a Labour Member of Parliament. Traditionally we would imagine the Conservative Party to be the party of defence and foreign affairs. However, what is apparent here is a total condemnation of the way in which John Major's Government had dealt with this particular issue. Explicit in Wicks's speech is that more should have been done from a much earlier stage in the conflict. It is important to note that even as recently as the 1980s and the era of unilateral disarmament, Labour had been portrayed as being weak on defence, and by extension foreign affairs.³¹ These were very real areas in which many voters felt that the Labour Party was lacking. This period of Labour history obviously coincided with that of Margaret Thatcher as leader of the Conservative Party, and thus it is difficult to imagine a more striking contrast with regard to the international affairs arena. She was a dominant figure in global politics. To summarise then, Wicks demonstrated a pro-interventionist stance that one would perhaps be surprised to find in a politician from the Labour Party. His position could be seen as being representative of a growing determination within Labour to show itself as worthy of office, and capable of dealing with the responsibilities that came with being a potential party of governance. This also ties into the point which was made earlier in this thesis, about the role of the Liberal Democrats, and their leader Paddy Ashdown, in Parliamentary debates regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia. By offering itself as a responsible party, capable of debating foreign affairs, the Labour Party was able to present itself as a viable alternative to the Conservatives, whilst neutralising any nascent threat that

³¹ There are a range of works which deal with this troubled and turbulent period of Labour Party history. For example: A.J. Davies, *To Build a New Jerusalem* (London: Michael Joseph, 1992. Revised edition published by Abacus, 1996); Kevin Jefferys, *The Labour Party since 1945* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993); and Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

could be attributed to the third party, due to the prominent role that Ashdown played in debates on the Balkans.

The Labour Party was then moving away from the perception of liability within foreign policy and defence affairs which the wider public had previously identified it; a notable legacy of the dark days of the 1980s and unilateral disarmament. This new, assertive stance within international relations was one that would emerge ever more strongly within the party after Labour won the 1997 and subsequent General Elections, with Tony Blair taking an extremely proactive approach to foreign intervention.³² In a more general sense, the notion of Labour presenting itself as a very viable alternative to the Conservative Government was a sentiment that had grown ever since Blair's election to the party leadership, and the subsequent familiar re-branding of Labour into the party which we recognise today.³³ In foreign affairs then, and also more generally, there was a very real sense that the Labour Party was leaving behind the 'wilderness years' of the 1980s.

A final back bench M.P. to consider on the issue of air strikes is David Winnick. At the end of May 1995, as air strikes were increased in order to protect the safe areas, another debate took place in Parliament. He made the following remarks:

I say straight away that I believe that the air strikes were justified. Like others, I have argued that military action was necessary to stop designated areas being shelled by Serbian commanders, I took the opportunity on a number of occasions in recent weeks to question the Secretary of State for Defence and the Foreign Secretary about action to safeguard designated areas. Having urged air strikes where appropriate, I am hardly in a position now to say that they were wrong. They were right in all the circumstances.³⁴

³² See Iraq (1998); Kosovo (1999); Sierra Leone (2000); Afghanistan (2001); Iraq (2003).

³³ Anthony Seldon gives a comprehensive account of the modernisation of the Labour Party in: *Blair* (London: The Free Press, 2004. Paperback edition published 2005)

³⁴ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1037 – 1040.

Winnick's support for this type of military action fits within the model that we have seen thus far, that is, Shadow Cabinet consent for military action matched by similar comments from those on the back benches. Crucially then, approval for air strikes came from a significant bloc within the Labour Party; it was not confined to a handful of renegade, maverick figures. Analysis of these comments made by Opposition M.P.s shows a constant level of criticism about the Conservative approach. As we have seen, the particular topic of air strikes led the Labour Shadow Cabinet to portray a more interventionist role than that of its Conservative front bench counterparts. Similarly, a substantial group of Labour politicians from the back benches were fulsome in their support for the same type of intervention. The comments from these Labour politicians who spoke in favour of air strikes again belie the stance taken by Brendan Simms in his assessment of the party's response. Simms's view that Labour had been ineffectual in opposing the Government's stance is countered by the comments examined herein. Despite acknowledging that on the issue of air strikes the Labour Party did briefly diverge from the Conservative's position, in the main Simms maintained his critical assessment of the role taken by the Opposition during this stage of the war in Bosnia. Thus wrongly, he likened Cunningham's stance as being a "classic piece of Hurdite rhetoric (which) was interchangeable with that of the Major administration."³⁵ Even Cook and Blair who receive slightly more favourable comments are described as lacking "the clarity and steely resolve which became the hallmark of their Balkan stance in the late 1990s."³⁶ What is clear here though is that Labour politicians were prepared to speak in favour of the air campaign, however belatedly that particular policy might have been implemented. The comments examined herein, those demanding and supporting air strikes, are very much in tune

³⁵ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p299.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p299.

with British foreign policy in the years which followed the 1997 general election. Those speaking in favour of air strikes then can be identified as providing the antecedents of the muscular approach to international relations that we associate with the successive Blair Governments of 1997, 2001 and 2005.

AGAINST AIR STRIKES

It would be wrong however to believe that there was unanimous support for air strikes either as a theoretical policy or as an actually implemented military action. It is now time to consider the views of those who opposed the use of air strikes, either when discussed as an abstract concept, or when introduced as a real strategy. As one would expect, considering the unanimous support for air strikes emanating from the Labour front bench, dissent for this policy was confined to the back benches. In contrast with the heterogeneous nature of those in favour of air strikes, that is, figures supporting that stance came from across the entire political spectrum that is embraced by Labour, those opposing air strikes fell entirely within what could best be described as the old, traditional left wing of the party. Also, as will now be shown, the majority of this opposition to air strikes was due to a wide variety of reasons. Thus, backbench opposition to such action was not based on any such notions of homogeneity.

In 1993, Gwyneth Dunwoody expressed concern about the use of air strikes in Bosnia. Her unease was due to the fact that British soldiers were based in the region, such as the Cheshire Regiment, and these forces included members of her own constituency. They would be at considerable and obvious risk if not withdrawn before the start of any such bombing campaign.³⁷ Opposing air strikes for different reasons, and speaking in the same debate, was Jim Marshall. Marshall's opposition was

³⁷ Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 1182.

founded on strategic concerns, namely, the role that air strikes would play in the region in the long term. He claimed:

Air strikes are becoming increasingly popular among armchair generals. When they were used in Iraq and elsewhere, many people were critical of them, but now they seem to be becoming the day's best treat. Air strikes are nothing but a figleaf for military inaction. Unless they are the precursor of further military action, they will make no difference. And to pretend that air strikes will make any significant difference to the position of the Bosnian Government flies in the face of the evidence.³⁸

For Marshall, then, air strikes were not the answer if they did not form part of a more cohesive long-term military plan. In the same speech, Marshall had also spoken in favour of the arms embargo being lifted, at least on the side of the Bosnian Muslims. For this reason then, Marshall's wariness about the use of air strikes did not contain the same type of criticism as that demonstrated by the other opponents of this potential policy. That is, he was advocating certain military based methods of intervening whilst discounting others.

One of the most vociferous politicians who spoke out against air strikes was veteran left-winger Tony Benn. Examples from Benn's speeches perfectly exemplify a traditional left-wing reliance on an internationalist, peaceful approach to conflict resolution. Speaking in a debate on Bosnia in February 1994, he outlined his opposition to this particular type of armed intervention. The extract that follows is considerably lengthy, however, it is well worth including in its entirety as it raises many points that illustrate Benn's stance on Yugoslavia. He commented:

Is the Minister aware that the caution that has been shown up to now is much wiser than may be thought to be the case from some of the comments made across the Floor of the House? If air strikes were undertaken, not only would all humanitarian aid come to an end, which could lead to far, far greater loss of life, but British and other United Nations troops could be endangered and the peacekeeping attempts made by Lord Owen and others could terminate. That could lead to the long-

³⁸ Jim Marshall (Leicester, South), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1228 – 1229.

term involvement by Britain and other countries in a Balkan war, the outcome of which could not be foreseen. Those possibilities raise political and not just military questions.

Is the right hon. Gentleman also aware that the point made by the right hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr Jopling) about the uncertainty of so-called surgical strikes, as a means of bringing to an end a war that has a deep history and is the source of great bitterness, raises grounds for considerable caution? Were the Government to be cautious on the matter, they would receive far greater support than might be apparent from some of the comments made in the House today.³⁹

Benn's speech is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, as well as outlining the threat to British troops serving in the region, he highlights the threat to the humanitarian relief effort that would be incurred if air strikes took place. In the longer term this would lead to an increase in the number of casualties of those local people who, at that time, were being helped by the United Nations recovery programme. Secondly, his implicit support for the cautious approach that had been taken by the Government up to that point meant that his stance was at odds with those on his very own front bench, as well as many of his back bench colleagues. Further to this, he shows himself to be in agreement with comments made by the Conservative politician Michael Jopling, again emphasising the unusual alliances and rifts that have been demonstrated within this study.⁴⁰ Finally, his reference to the turbulent history of the region highlighted the intrinsically problematic nature of the break-up of Yugoslavia. It was too complex an issue to be dealt with in a straightforward manner, and in many ways this was what hampered the response of the international community.

Benn's opposition to air strikes continued after they had actually been implemented. It is in these further speeches that we get a more extensive glimpse of the position that he took regarding the way in which the international community responded to the crisis in the Balkans. The day after air strikes over Bosnia had been

³⁹ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 7 February 1994) Vol: 237, Column 24.

⁴⁰ Michael Jopling served as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food in the 1983-1987 Conservative Government.

authorised, and a protocol for their implementation agreed, Benn made the following comments:

Is the Secretary of State aware that the responsibility for global peace rests with the United Nations and not with NATO, which is not the policeman of the world? The danger of the Secretary-General organising air strikes against the opposition of Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, poses far greater threats for the future of the United Nations.

Is the right hon. Gentleman also aware that any action of this kind must necessarily involve the commitment of far greater numbers of British forces? Is he aware that the question will arise, if the Royal Air Force bombs Serbia, whether we are at war with Serbia in law? Have any contingency plans been made to consider the political implications that may follow if the intervention in the Balkan war escalates, as clearly it could do, with very grave consequences for peace in Europe and in the world as a whole?⁴¹

Thus, Benn's opposition to the use of air strikes in the Balkans was manifold. In his view, the United Nations was the appropriate institution that should deal with the conflict. He was outspoken in his criticism of the role of NATO. This would tie-in with traditional left-wing suspicions – a legacy from the Cold War – of the defensive alliance and its motives. There was also concern at the way that Russia was sidelined from the whole process, which again resonates with Cold War sentiments regarding the old Soviet Union.⁴² The exact nature of the intervention was also raised when he queried the legal status of any such action. An escalation of the conflict would, Benn argued, have serious effects on the wider peace in the region, and broader issues regarding the area's stability. His concern regarding both the role of NATO in the conflict, and attitudes towards Russia, was also apparent in a speech given a couple of weeks later. Coming after NATO had shot down aggressor planes in the no-fly zone, he reaffirmed his position regarding the alliance's actions in the region:

⁴¹ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Air Strikes (Bosnia)* (Official Report, Hansard: 10 February 1994) Vol: 237, Column 453.

⁴² Eugene Meehan's work, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960) provides a good examination of the beginning of the Cold War, and looks at Britain's relationship with the Soviet Union. He examines how the Labour Government dealt with this particular foreign policy issue.

...Is he (the Foreign Secretary) aware that NATO is not the world's policeman and that for a British Foreign Secretary to speak of Russia being "kept on board" – when the responsibility rests with the United Nations of which Russia is a permanent member, and when Russia has a much closer interest in the Balkans than the President of the United States whose aircraft were engaged – is clearly not a matter that can be brushed aside as if this were a western action to maintain peace on behalf of the United Nations, whose Security Council was never consulted specifically on the military action?⁴³

Clearly apparent again in this speech was Benn's commitment to the role of the United Nations. For him, there was no support for what he saw as a unilateral NATO action. This ties in with the traditional left-wing view of foreign policy that has been explored previously in this thesis. Benn's unease at the manner in which he perceived the USA to be dominating events in Bosnia is clear. Brendan Simms has offered the following appraisal of the position taken by Tony Benn on the issue of American involvement in the Balkans:

Nor does it come as any surprise to find the veteran anti-American Tony Benn calling upon the Foreign Secretary to 'make clear to the Americans' British opposition to 'lift and strike'. To Benn, US policy was the more sinister in the light of American global arms sales, which – he told the House – amounted to more than two thirds of the global trade and which fuelled the vast majority of contemporary conflicts: 'I have always thought the arms trade the most criminal in the world.'⁴⁴

For Benn then, suspicions of the United States of America, its hegemony, and standing in the post Cold War world were issues of real concern. Thus, in this example, left-wing unease of American motives, grounded in the history of the Cold War, had not evaporated. Benn substantiated this view in his diary, "NATO has entered the civil war as a belligerent; the United Nations has been totally edged aside by NATO."⁴⁵

⁴³ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Air Attack (Bosnia)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 March 1994) Vol: 238, Columns 790 – 791.

⁴⁴ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p279.

⁴⁵ Tony Benn, *Free at Last – Diaries 1991- 2001*, Selected and Edited by Ruth Winstone, (London: Hutchinson, 2002) p331.

Benn's concern regarding the situation in Bosnia was echoed by his back bench colleague Tam Dalyell. Speaking in the same debate, Dalyell exhibited concern that the air attack had taken place without universal support, citing Russian and Greek concerns over the action.⁴⁶ What was clear from the examples of both politicians was that there was a real concern in the way that the action had been prosecuted. Both men, either implicitly or explicitly, showed a commitment to the role of the United Nations as a competent, viable institution in the international arena. Of concern to both Benn and Dalyell was the way in which NATO had acted with Russia seemingly sidelined by the whole process. This provides us with yet a further example of more traditional left-wing thinking with regard to foreign policy; that is, the importance of the United Nations thus promoting an internationalist approach to global relations, and secondly, an awareness that Russia, as a major power, should be considered, holding as it did, a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. These views bear considerable similarities with the sentiments expressed earlier, in the chapter that examined the role of the various international institutions and the search for a resolution to the crisis. As was shown then, there were definite splits regarding the preferred organisation to be used in resolving the wars. Whilst all politicians expressed support for the United Nations, there was a definite split between those who supported NATO involvement, and those who opposed any such action. As we have seen here, this view was again apparent when discussing the implementation of air strikes during the war in Bosnia.

Tam Dalyell's criticism of air strikes continued the following year. Here, his speeches against the policy were founded on concerns for the United Nations troops

⁴⁶ Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow), *Air Attack (Bosnia)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 March 1994) Vol: 238, Column 792.

serving in the former Yugoslavia. In a speech in July 1995, Dalyell voiced his concerns about any possible escalation of action in the region:

Can the Foreign Secretary conceive of any circumstances in which air power could be used without creating a real threat to United Nations forces on the ground? Can the House of Commons have the assurance that Her Majesty's Government are advising all others, particularly the Americans, not to use further air strikes?⁴⁷

This view was repeated in a Parliamentary debate just one week later. Dalyell expressed concerns regarding the safety of British troops who were working as part of the United Nations Protection Force. If an air campaign began, these forces would be at risk from retaliation from local troops. Dalyell urged Parliament to view the broader picture, and consider the implications and long term impact that air strikes could have on British forces.⁴⁸

What both of these extracts show is Dalyell's commitment to the United Nations troops – the blue berets – serving on the ground in Bosnia. This links to the views of Tony Benn explained previously. Both politicians showed a belief in the role of the U.N. as the preferred institution to deal with the conflict in Bosnia. Their caution towards air strikes thus illustrated unease about any extension of the role of NATO in the region. As has been shown, this was also tied to a suspicion, or at best unease, about the role played by the United States, and the power that it exercised through the defensive alliance. This was in total contrast to the stance taken by the Labour front bench, and many other back benchers as well.

The final opponent of air strikes to consider here is the back bench politician Robert Wareing. He was questioning their use for a very different reason. Wareing's concern radiated from what he took to be a bias on the part of the international community to how they dealt with the various warring parties. He considered:

⁴⁷ Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 July 1995) Vol: 263, Column 964.

⁴⁸ Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1776 – 1777.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition made a very important point, which I hope will be answered, when he suggested that the safe havens should be demilitarised because many of the attacks which have been made, as general after general has said, were launched from inside the safe havens by Muslim forces. Even if the retaliation of the Serbs has sometimes been inordinate, Tuzla and Sarajevo have certainly been used as bases by Muslim forces to break ceasefire after ceasefire. Do we talk about air strikes against the Muslims? Of course we do not.

I am not suggesting that air strikes are justified in any event, but I am pointing out that if we talk about being even-handed, as the Prime Minister still does, we must remember that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. To act in any other way while putting an extra 6,000 of our troops into Bosnia-Herzegovina is to ensure the inevitability of their being sucked into a civil war on one side against the other. I do not believe that I could support that approach. It is a purely military strategy and there is a complete lack of political strategy.⁴⁹

For Wareing then, air strikes raised questions about international policy to the Balkans in general. Safe havens had been created to protect Bosnian Muslim communities from Bosnian Serb forces. However, in Wareing's view, (and, as we see from his speech, this particular point was one that he shared with the Labour leader) those particular areas should be demilitarised so that they did not act as a platform for Bosnian Muslims to launch fresh offensives against the Bosnian Serbs. Inextricably linked to this issue was Wareing's unease about air strikes; namely, this action was being carried out against the same forces that the Bosnian Government troops had the chance to retaliate against from within their own safe havens. His view then was one based on the notion that all parties in the conflict should be dealt with on an equal footing by the international community. This view of Wareing's is one that has already been underlined in this study, and one that will reappear later in this thesis. In his opinion, assisting one side more than either of the others meant that the world was being drawn into a civil war. Thus, rather than giving the Bosnian Government troops

⁴⁹ Robert Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1088 – 1089.

his out and out support, Wareing's view of the broader situation affected and influenced his stance on air strikes.

Back bench opposition to air strikes can be seen as being rooted in a number of motives. Whilst it is simplistic to view the motivations of those on this side of the debate as being mono-causal, there was a definite trend showing this particular group of politicians as demonstrating a certain loyalty towards the United Nations. Their belief in this organisation strongly tempered their arguments against air strikes. However, their motives varied enormously. For example, Dunwoody expressed concern about the U.N. troops serving in Bosnia as part of the humanitarian relief mission, and the danger that could be posed to them by air strikes. This stance was also informed by the fact that her 'local' armed forces, the Cheshire Regiment, were serving in the region. Thus, here was another example where constituency concerns helped to inform the policy stance of a particular politician. Alternately, Tony Benn brought traditional left-wing suspicions of the United States of America into his comments arguing against the imposition of air strikes. For him, the United Nations was the organisation that should attempt to resolve the situation; NATO air strikes were not the answer. This was a view also shared by Tam Dalyell. Another dimension to those arguing against air strikes was provided by Robert Wareing, who felt that international involvement on the side of the Bosnian Muslims, would lead to the world becoming embroiled in what he saw as a civil war. These debates also show a split between politicians who are typically described as being 'old Labour'. Thus, the figures mentioned here were on the opposing side of an argument to their traditional colleagues, namely Tony Banks and Chris Mullin. This then shows that the left wing of the Labour Party had fragmented over the issue of air strikes in the former Yugoslavia. The debates against the use of air strikes thus mirrored the controversies

and discussions that surrounded all of the interventionist measures that were implemented in the former Yugoslavia; that is, vociferous opinion against a particular policy articulated and argued for a multitude of reasons.

CONCLUSION

The chapter has shown that these particular interventionist policies implemented in the former Yugoslavia were subject to intense criticism and debate within the Labour Party. A set of trends can be identified regarding the use of each interventionist measure. Broadly speaking, the Labour Shadow Cabinet was either in agreement with, or slightly in advance of the Conservative Government regarding its views on intervention. Specifically, air strikes were an area that the Labour front bench supported before that of its Tory counterparts. There was also consensus shown amongst these particular Labour politicians; they all tended to share the same view on each issue. Figures considered here include John Cunningham, David Clark, John Smith and Robin Cook. They all demonstrated support for air strikes, but argued that they should be prosecuted as part of a United Nations mandate. The front bench then all presented very similar positions on this issue, which appeared to be, in general, informed by the same reason, that is the importance of working with the U.N. That is one, straightforward conclusion to be drawn from this chapter. However, matters become more complex when considering how the Labour Party back benches responded to the issue of air strikes. The policy enjoyed varying degrees of Labour back bench support. This does seem to counter the criticisms raised by Brendan Simms that have been mentioned within this chapter. There was then consistent support in favour of a more proactive military policy. However, what become of interest are the reasons given by these politicians in support of such a policy. As with

other examples presented within this thesis, there was not one overriding factor driving through Labour back bench demands for a particular policy, in this case, air strikes. A variety of motivating reasons were used in arguments. References to appeasement and fascism, which will be explored in more depth in the final chapter of this thesis, were one such justification for air strikes. Secondly, another argument was based on the point that the attacks were justified and should have taken place earlier in the conflict. This sentiment is interesting if considered in the broader context of a Blairite style of interventionist foreign policy. What this group of politicians were demanding then, was a type of foreign policy which was to be very much the hallmark of the next Labour Prime Minister. Thus, the foreign policy ideas which one associates with the direction taken by the government under Tony Blair, were in evidence during a conflict which predated the 1997 general election. Of further interest is the way in which for the majority of this period of study, Tony Blair was not the leader of the Labour Party. It is not possible then to suggest that he was asserting his own style and preference regarding foreign policy, and acting as an influence on his back bench colleagues. This suggests then that a so-called 'Blairite' foreign policy is not necessarily just attributable to that politician. Additionally, historically, politicians from the Labour Party have held a wide variety of foreign policy opinions. The break-up of Yugoslavia could therefore be viewed as just another example in this wider, general trend. This point is further illustrated by the variety of motivating factors which influenced opinion.

Although there were a range of clearly identifiable strands of agreement within the various debates, there was not one sole coherent argument. The party was divided in its response to a variety of different policies; these divisions manifested themselves both within, and between the different strands of the party. This is perhaps best

illustrated by considering those politicians who spoke from the Labour Party back benches. If we take the one example, again, that of air strikes, whilst there was plenty of back bench opposition to the policy; it was for a variety of reasons. Thus, Benn voiced concern at the supremacy of NATO over the United Nations, Dalyell and Dunwoody had fears for the safety of the United Nations troops on the ground, Wareing spoke of the importance of taking a morally equivalent stand within the region, whereas Marshall argued that air strikes had come too late to be of any real benefit. This multi-faceted approach to one specific issue was mirrored within debates on the other types of intervention, as illustrated in the previous chapter. Of importance was the way in which these debates were not necessarily conducted along fixed ideological lines; so two figures from the left wing of the party, Chris Mullin and Tony Benn, each took a very different position on the implementation of air strikes. This shows that there was a split within the left wing of the party towards this aspect of intervention. Thus, discussions on implemented interventions fit within the model seen so far within this thesis, that is, ideological background did not prove to be the primary concern in determining the stance that Labour politicians took in debates about the break-up of Yugoslavia. In fact, the defining characteristics were much more complex than that. What has been shown here, is that a wide number of motivating factors were at work, with each politician employing various reasons to substantiate his or her position and argument. There is seemingly little consistency with how the different M.P.s presented themselves in the arguments regarding intervention. Of longer term, more general interest is that this chapter has shown that the Labour Party was extremely fractured in its response to the break-up of Yugoslavia, specifically regarding the issue of limited military intervention. This shows that the way in which the party has divided recently on foreign policy is not a

recent development. Divisions in international relations since the 1997 election, most notably over Kosovo (1999), 9/11 (2001), and Iraq (2003-present), are not a new phenomena. For the Labour Party, disagreements over foreign policy are not restricted to the years post-1997.

Of further interest in this chapter, is the way in which certain ‘stereotypical’ attitudes manifested themselves in debates about airstrikes. Chapter one of this thesis demonstrated the way in which ‘the Balkans’ has traditionally been viewed, and how the term has become a form of ‘shorthand’ to denote a place somewhat different and removed from the west. As will be shown in more detail in the final chapter of this thesis, during the Yugoslav wars of secession, such stereotypical attitudes were not confined to the description of countries of that region. Even here in this analysis of air strikes, politicians used certain phrases, and held particular opinions which demonstrated a convenient labelling of other institutions and countries. Of particular relevance here is the way in which NATO was frequently described as ‘the world’s policeman’. During Parliamentary debates then on the break-up of Yugoslavia, the use of stereotype was not confined to descriptions of the Balkans.

What this chapter has continued to demonstrate then is that a myriad of views and stances existed amongst those Labour Party M.P.s who contributed to Parliamentary debates on subjects and issues surrounding the wars in the Balkans during the early 1990s.

CHAPTER FIVE

DO MORE! DEMANDS FOR FURTHER INTERVENTION

As the conflicts in the Balkans escalated, especially the war in Bosnia, debates surrounding the issue of intervention extended far beyond the parameters outlined in the previous two chapters. Discussions began to move towards the unpalatable idea of a more sophisticated type of military intervention. Comments were forthcoming on a range of topics, from the more abstract and vague notion of ‘military intervention’ to more specific issues such as the introduction of ground troops and the likely escalation of the conflict on the ground: further rifts, divisions and alliances within the Labour Party were apparent when discussing these more proactive forms of action. This chapter will examine the discussions that arose regarding these more aggressive policies, and seek to portray the differing opinions that developed. There will be a general analysis of debates surrounding the term ‘military intervention’, and the chapter will analyse the response of different politicians to this policy, and assess the extent to which these people can be identified as being part of a specific group.

It is worth noting here that the use of the term ‘military intervention’ did not suggest a policy in specific detail. Therefore, those politicians in favour of such action were using a particularly vague term in their arguments. It is one thing to argue for ‘military intervention’ but another thing entirely to demand the use of British troops in some sort of ground invasion. Although some politicians are shown here to make mention of an enhanced role for ground forces in the region, in the main, the phrase itself became an almost convenient way in which to demand action whilst avoiding giving more specific details.

LABOUR WARRIORS? CALLS FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION

Calls for military intervention in the Balkans began at the very start of the break-up of Yugoslavia. The controversial nature of the topic, that is the notion of intervening with ground troops in an already established conflict, meant that comments in favour of such an action were few and far between from those in the Shadow Cabinet. Hence, this examination of the politicians who spoke out in favour of military intervention will begin by looking at the views of those on the back benches who supported a more comprehensive action. The opinions of those on the front bench who only spoke in favour of this policy relatively late on in the conflict, and in addition to which were few and far between, will be examined at the end of this section.

In a debate in November 1991, the Labour back bench M.P. Tony Banks outlined his stance on the very issue of military intervention. Regarding the situation in Croatia and Serbia, he made the following observation:

The two sides simply cannot trust each other with ceasefires arranged from The Hague that do not hold on the ground. Is it not time that the Government went to the Security Council seeking sanction for a military intervention force so that a political settlement can be found? If they do not, we shall have to witness these people slaughtering each other, and that is disgraceful in a European country.

Of interest here, is that Banks was referring to the conflict between Serbs and Croats, and made no mention whatsoever of the situation in Bosnia. This emphasises the fact that he was making the point at a very early stage in the break-up of Yugoslavia. At this point, the war in Bosnia was five months away; hence Banks's forecast regarding slaughter in the region was particularly prescient. His support for military intervention was even stronger in the following summer, by which time, the war in Bosnia had begun. He argued:

¹ Tony Banks (West Ham), *NATO Summit* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 November 1991) Vol: 198, Columns 913 – 914.

Surely, if the Serbian irregulars in the hills around Sarajevo start lobbing bombs and mortars into that city, we should give those irregulars an ultimatum: if they do not cease their action, Western European Union military forces under United Nations jurisdiction should be used to destroy the batteries in the hills around Sarajevo.²

Banks's unequivocal support for military action was repeated at the end of the very same year. In a debate regarding the role of the United Nations, he gave a long speech in favour of some form of armed intervention in the Balkans. Although a fairly substantial extract is shown here, Banks's speech raises a number of interesting points. It is worth quoting at length:

...It is now time for the United Nations to intervene militarily in the former Yugoslavia if only to stop that conflict stretching into Kosovo and Macedonia and then involving Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and even Italy. There are dangers; but the greater danger is that of doing nothing at all. Although I will not adopt the "action man" mode of the leader of the Liberal Democrats and want to send large numbers of troops in without thinking about it, the right hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr Ashdown) has a point. However, it is very easy for politicians within the comforts of the Palace of Westminster to decide to send troops abroad to intervene in trouble spots because we do not run the risks. In those circumstances, troops should be volunteers. I do not know how that fits in with the fact that ours is a professional army, but we should send troops on a voluntary basis rather than on the basis of, "Pick up your pack and off you go, laddie." It would be wrong for politicians to adopt that attitude. Military intervention rarely provides a long-term solution. We must look to the United Nations political role to solve those problems. We must make people sit around tables and ensure that they stay there until they find solutions to their problems. Naturally, economic sanctions must be imposed, and perhaps with greater enthusiasm than they have been imposed. As has been said, arms control is also essential. We must cut off the causes of regional conflicts rather than deal with the symptoms. I am clear in my mind. I have not changed my position with regard to the United Nations. I have always believed in the role and function of the United Nations. It holds the key to the very future of world peace, and it deserves our unstinting support.³

The extract provides us with a variety of interesting issues that are each worth examining. Firstly, Banks clearly stated that it was time for the United Nations to take

² Tony Banks (West Ham), *European Council (United Kingdom Presidency)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 July 1992) Vol: 210, Column 977.

³ Tony Banks (West Ham), *United Nations* (Official Report, Hansard: 4 December 1992) Vol: 215, Columns 533 – 534.

military action in the former Yugoslavia. For Tony Banks, a key danger was that the conflict could develop into an extensive regional war. Of importance here is that although he was advocating some type of military action, he was pressing for the United Nations to take on this responsibility within the region. This offers the dichotomy of a left-wing politician suggesting military action albeit under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. As we have seen from the previous chapters, Banks's stance offers us somewhat of a dilemma. From Michael Gordon's work on the nature of left-wing foreign policy, the Labour M.P. appears to demonstrate two conflicting positions: that is, taking a stance that is against the traditional pacifist and anti-militarist position as outlined by Gordon, but showing his strong support, belief in and reliance on the United Nations as the appropriate institution for conflict resolution.⁴

However, there are further points to note from just this one speech by Tony Banks. Of considerable interest, is his suggestion that politicians should not have the power to send troops to a conflict, rather that the army should plan its operational activities on an optional basis, thus inviting soldiers to "volunteer" for conflict. This raises an interesting point in that this position would remove part of the responsibility away from politicians who, if such a policy existed, could argue that they had not compelled any British troops to go to war. The practicalities of enforcing such a scheme are obviously not explored by Banks. However, this somewhat tentative attitude to decision-making was also apparent later on in the speech. After opening with a clear show of support for military action, he then argued that it was rarely a panacea for resolving such situations, and ended with a complete show of confidence in the role of the United Nations, and its conflict resolution abilities. Again, in

⁴ See Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914-1965* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969).

common with the earlier analysis of his speech, what Banks demonstrated was the complexity of the very issue of military intervention. In many ways, it is relatively simple to call for military action; difficulties arise when more specific suggestions are required. As will quickly become apparent, this is a consistent theme when looking at the various calls that came in favour of 'military' intervention.

The difficulties presented by this very issue were apparent in a speech made by David Winnick during a debate on Bosnia, one year after the start of that conflict.

He interjected:

Does the Secretary of State recognise that there has been a shift of opinion, certainly across the country and in the House in recent months? I was among those who argued six or eight months ago against any form of military intervention. However, in view of the continued slaughter of innocent Bosnian civilians, is it not clear that far greater pressure must be placed on the Serbian leadership and military commanders? To a certain extent, one can draw an analogy with the ruler of Baghdad.

Is it not the case that the Serbs continue their aggression, war crimes and atrocities because they know that no force will be used to stop them? Whether Lady Thatcher is right or wrong, are we to be appeasers in the face of some of the worst crimes in Europe since the end of the Second World War?⁵

Of note in this speech, is that Winnick acknowledged that he had changed stance on the issue of military intervention, showing that the developing situation had led to a re-examination of his earlier position. Also, the reference to Lady Thatcher being in favour of military action shows that what with Winnick also taking this view, there was no clear-cut ideological split between political parties on this particular issue. Again, this shows the complexity of the debates that took place regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia: there was no straightforward grouping of politicians identifiable as being either for or against military action. Thus, David Winnick, a back bench Labour politician normally identified with the traditional beliefs of the party, was in favour of

⁵ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 841.

the same policy as Margaret Thatcher, a figure seen to be traditionally at odds with views held by those on the Labour back benches.

Of further interest in his speech is the analogy of appeasement, which he used to try and garner further support for a more interventionist policy. In making this, and other references to the Second World War, Winnick provided a direct link to the last time that Europe entered the dark days of conflict. The powerful images that resonate from the mention of that major war would perhaps be perceived as helpful in orchestrating support for military action in the current hostilities. The impact of the past on the debates surrounding likely intervention in this particular war was intended to be extremely persuasive. This is an issue which will be examined in more depth in the next chapter of this thesis.

A more direct call for military intervention was made by back bench Labour politician Andrew Faulds. Accepting that full-scale military action, that is, that which involved ground troops, was unlikely to come to fruition, he made a plea for a more concerted air campaign, acknowledging the very real practical difficulties that could occur with such action, that is, possible fatalities and the suspension of the United Nations humanitarian relief programme:

I do not believe that any of the leaders in western Europe will agree to the early involvement of ground troops made up of their forces. They are too frightened of the effect that the body bags will have on their electoral chances in future years. But if the military were instructed to mount specific actions against certain objectives, of course it could be done. It is outrageous to suggest that that could not be achieved. Remember the skills and precision displayed in the Gulf war, a somewhat less justified intervention than would-be intervention in Bosnia.....

Serbian aggression has to be stopped and to achieve that we must go in and mean to win. Of course, there will be civilian as well as military casualties, but civilian casualties are continuing all the time, compounded by cold-blooded murder, torture and rape as a policy objective.

The humanitarian operations will have to be withdrawn while the attacks on Serbian objectives continue. It would be foolish in the extreme to keep our and other forces in Bosnia as sitting targets for revenge operations, and the Serbians are not very nice fighters. The protection that those

forces provide and the provisions that they distribute would have to cease, hopefully only temporarily, while Serbia's military machine is crippled. On the achievement of that goal, and it can certainly be done if the west means to do it, humanitarian operations must be resumed.⁶

Noteworthy of Faulds's position, is the acceptance of the very real effects that would be wrought by a military campaign. The range of responses outlined in this part of the chapter do not show a general trend for this type of recognition of the very real difficulties that would occur in an armed intervention. Indeed, Faulds's speech was unusual in that it painted an extremely clear, graphic view of the likely consequences of military action against the Serbs. What was also distinctive was that he was not afraid to outline detailed points, in a cause and effect manner, whereas very often his Parliamentary colleagues made less exact, more abstract pronouncements on the implementation of armed intervention in the region. Of additional interest is Faulds's mention of the Gulf War (1991). His comment is significant in that he compared Bosnia favourably to the earlier conflict. Thus, in his opinion, intervention was more justified in the Balkans than it had been in Iraq. Missing from his speech, rather frustratingly, was his explanation and reasoning behind such a comment.

Another Labour politician in favour of military intervention was Max Madden. Participating in the same debate, he used a similar level of detail to that employed by Faulds in his speech. Citing the objections to military intervention used repeatedly in Parliamentary debates, for example the risk to United Nations personnel, the threat of civilian casualties, Madden stated that in spite of these factors, the local situation demanded some form of enhanced action. He spoke out in a debate in the House of Commons in 1993:

⁶ Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 1211-1212.

However, not only in the debate but previously, far less emphasis has been placed on the risks of doing nothing about what is happening in Bosnia. There is a formidable risk in inaction and failure to take effective military action. From day one, and certainly since British troops were first involved in the United Nations contingent, there has been uncertainty and confusion about not only Her Majesty's Government's political objectives but the whole exercise.....

....I cannot see how those objectives can be achieved without military intervention mobilised by and through NATO under the overall command of the United Nations. That inevitably calls for a major ground force. Like other hon. Members, I came to that conclusion reluctantly. But nevertheless I accept the consequences of that and I say clearly and unequivocally that those forces need to be deployed in numbers that military commanders judge to be necessary. They should remain there until, in the view of military commanders and their political leaders, their job is complete.⁷

What Madden demonstrated then was a resolve to implement a comprehensive military intervention in the former Yugoslavia. This is at odds with the typical view of left-wing foreign policy as epitomised in works on Labour and international relations by Gordon and Meehan.⁸

Further calls for military action were apparent in a debate on Yugoslavia at the end of July 1993. Calum Macdonald and David Young both commented on the need for a more coherent military approach to resolving the conflict. Although offering suggestions on how to improve the situation, Macdonald took issue with what he perceived to be the lack of support by the international community given to the United Nations as it tried to operate in the Balkans. He said:

That is not to criticise the United Nations, or those involved in trying to implement UN peacekeeping missions. It is not their fault that the member Governments of the United Nations have not supplied the resources and the wherewithal to allow the UN to carry out these missions effectively and properly.⁹

⁷ Max Madden (Bradford, West), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1224 – 1226.

⁸ Michael R. Gordon, *Op cit.*, and Eugene J. Meehan, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960.)

⁹ Calum Macdonald (Western Isles), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 26 July 1993) Vol: 229 Columns 838 – 841.

Young's comments in support of military intervention were also borne from a frustration towards the international community at its inability to act effectively in the former Yugoslavia. His assessment of the situation drew parallels with an earlier conflict:

When we hear all the reasons why we cannot act, I sometimes wonder whether it is time to consider some reasons why we should act. Perhaps action would have occurred long ago if Bosnia had oil. We find that action occurs quickly from surrounding countries in respect of oil-bearing states.¹⁰

The "intervening for oil" argument was one frequently used by those who advocated a more proactive approach to the war in Bosnia. This ties in with those who held sceptical views regarding the concept of a New World Order, as discussed in chapter two of this thesis. Essentially, foreign affairs was viewed as an arena in which states operated solely for their self interest; this is based on the realist paradigm of international relations. The end of the certainties of the bipolar, Cold War world had initially led to heightened optimism about a more cooperative global community who would united to fight various ills that were befalling different states. However, what became apparent with the break-up of Yugoslavia is that cooperation only manifested itself when national interest was at stake.

Two years after the war in Bosnia started another Labour back bench M.P. voiced the views of many with regard to the lack of action taken by either the British Government, or the wider international community. Dale Campbell-Savours used a comparison between two Conservative Prime Ministers to emphasise his position:

May I say to the Secretary of State what I really do believe? If Margaret Thatcher had been Prime Minister today, she would have sorted out this bloody – I use the word advisedly – nonsense one and a half years ago. At least she demanded that fascism should be stopped in its tracks in the

¹⁰ David Young (Bolton, South East), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 26 July 1993) Vol: 229, Columns 854 – 856.

heart of Europe, whereas this Conservative Government have ducked the issue.¹¹

This extract is noteworthy in that it demonstrates the complexities that were manifold during the Balkan wars. Here, as seen before with David Winnick, a Labour back bench politician was clearly critical of the Conservative Government. This might be of little significance for a number of reasons. Firstly, the adversarial nature of British politics means that very often there is disagreement between the major parties. Also, in this example, the issue of intervention in the Balkans was extremely contentious for many politicians. However, of crucial relevance here, and if not unique to the debates that took place regarding the former Yugoslavia it is certainly indicative of the confusion of the Parliamentary contributions, is the fact that Campbell-Savours showed open support for former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the tough stance that she advocated *vis-à-vis* Bosnia. Thus, the wide variety of views apparent at this time enabled the Labour politician to be critical of the current Government, whilst showing support for the position taken by the previous incumbent of Downing Street. Another reason for deploying the former Prime Minister into a debate as a means to attack the current government was to further weaken the position held by John Major at that time. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, aside from displaying an interest in events in the former Yugoslavia, Labour Party politicians very often used debates on the region as a means of ‘political point scoring’ against the embattled Prime Minister. This was a means to bring British domestic political issues into debates on events in the Balkans.

A further point to consider is that, as with previous contributors, the mention of ‘fascism’ was a device to remind people of the horrors of the Second World War,

¹¹ D.N. Campbell-Savours (Workington), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 18 April 1994) Vol: 241, Column 649.

and thus employed to encourage them to support enhanced intervention in the Balkans.

Further back bench support taking a firm stance on the issue of military intervention was apparent in the last year of the war in Bosnia. John Home Robertson made comparisons with three earlier events from twentieth century history. Firstly, he mentioned the way in which the situation was affected by an attitude of appeasement. The implication of this point has been mentioned when examining previous speakers. However, of significance is the way in which ‘appeasement’ was an easily understandable way to make a criticism about the existing type of policy. The obvious weaknesses of that particular example were intended to show how the world had failed Bosnia in the 1990s. The second and third examples that he used regarded much more recent conflicts, the Falklands War, and the Gulf War. Home Robertson used those episodes to illustrate his point regarding Britain’s national interest. Thus:

Bosnia-Herzegovina is a great deal closer than the Falkland Islands, and closer even than Kuwait. It is only a very short flight away, or three days’ drive in a truck. I suggest that protecting the people of Bosnia is a vital humanitarian interest, that the collective security and stability of Europe is a vital national interest for all of us in Europe, that respect for the United Nations is a vital international interest,...¹²

Explicit in this extract was the point that Britain had intervened in these earlier conflicts, which were geographically much more distant than Bosnia: the implication being, if forces could be deployed there, why not in the Balkans now?

Other politicians speaking in the same debate who were in favour of a more enhanced type of intervention included Andrew Faulds. As will become apparent, the nature of the break-up of Yugoslavia, that is the seemingly endless fighting and lack of success on the part of the international community in bringing peace to the region

¹² John Home Robertson (East Lothian), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1027 – 1030.

was such that many people spoke frequently on the various issues in a large number of debates; this particular Labour back bencher was just one such politician. In a passionate speech Faulds outlined the stance that he had taken on the Bosnian war from the start of the conflict some thirty six months previously. He clearly stated the action that should be taken against the Serbian forces, this included the destruction of their armaments factories and military infrastructure.¹³ Addressing the concerns of those opposed to such action, namely that many Serbs would lose their lives, and there would be large numbers of casualties, he argued that:

...there would have been and there will be heavy, heavy casualties among the Serbs and among the civilians of all faiths if the necessary action is taken. But there have been, over these years, in any case, hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties and there will be many hundreds of thousands more if the international community withdraws and allows the belligerence of all sides to fight it out to the bloody end. That, I believe, is the likely outcome of European procrastination – the Minister of State for the Armed Forces had better listen – and timidity.¹⁴

Thus, Faulds's stance seems an almost Benthamite - albeit in a rather brutal way - approach to the resolution of the conflict. The military action that he prescribed would be bloody and cause casualties. However, the argument used by Faulds was that if nothing was done, the situation would become even worse. Whilst not quite a manifestation of the 'greatest good for the greatest number' principle, his stance was one that demonstrated the need to consider the long term benefits to the majority however, bloody and desperate the intervening period. This approach would have been very difficult politically for many politicians to accept: any government sanctioned bombing would have certainly caused so-called collateral damage and would have been extremely controversial.

¹³ Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1060 – 1062.

¹⁴ Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1060 – 1062.

Speaking in the same debate, another Labour back bench politician to take a tough stance on the issue of military action was Calum MacDonald. Again, as with the previous speaker, this shows how some figures were regular participants in debates on the same topic. The importance of supporting the armed forces in their role in the Balkans was the key tenet of his speech. Critical of those who had mentioned the issue of withdrawal, MacDonald stressed the need to give the military unequivocal backing. Anything less, he argued, would be incredibly demoralising for those troops involved.¹⁵ They should know that they had the full backing of both the politicians and public at home.

The name Srebrenica has become synonymous as the site of the biggest massacre in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Television footage showed the now notorious deportation of all Bosnian Muslim men of military age. As one would expect, these events led to debate in the House of Commons regarding the developments that were taking place in the Balkans. Frustration amongst politicians was evident in a debate that took place in July 1995. Again, two familiar figures featured in the deliberations, espousing the tough view that they had taken since the start of the conflict. Andrew Faulds asked:

If our forces in Bosnia are to have any meaning or significance, they have to be used. Would it not be perhaps some strength to him to rid the western view of its pusillanimity so far – to ask our chaps in Gorazde whether they want to take action against the criminal activities of the Serbs? If the Government have not got it, those chaps have certainly got the guts and the balls to do it.¹⁶

Strong, outspoken language such as this clearly illustrates the anger that was felt by some of these politicians, along with many people outside of Parliament. Faulds's sentiments were mirrored by Tony Banks who, as we have seen earlier in this chapter,

¹⁵ Calum MacDonald (Western Isles), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1065 – 1067.

¹⁶ Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 July 1995) Vol: 263, Column 956.

consistently supported a more committed, robust type of military intervention, albeit one without a clearly defined strategy. Speaking in the same debate as his back bench colleague, he argued that by overrunning the safe haven of Srebrenica, the Bosnian Serb army had, in effect, declared war on the United Nations.¹⁷ This was due to the fact that the 'safe haven' policy was administered by that organisation. In the same intervention, Banks asked for clarification regarding how the situation on the ground could be improved.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter which examines the debates that took place on the issue of military intervention, the majority of those who spoke out in favour of a more assertive policy were from the Labour back bench. However, here it is well worth highlighting those in the Shadow Cabinet who spoke in favour of military action. Interestingly, due to the potential for controversy for any politician speaking out in favour of such a policy, both of the speakers in question were at different times the leader of the Labour Party. Thus, the only two figures to call for more assertive military intervention were the successive leaders of the Opposition. At the start of 1994, nearly two years after the start of the war in Bosnia, the Labour leader John Smith called for increased numbers of troops 'on the ground' in Bosnia.¹⁸ His demands were linked to increasing the numbers of forces in the UNPROFOR units serving in Bosnia. Although this would be seen as part of the humanitarian mission, Smith's commitment to sending troops to the region showed a desire to intervene in a more assertive manner than had been demonstrated up to that point. As we have seen in the earlier chapters of this thesis, John Smith's contribution to the various debates on the war in Bosnia were considerably proactive. His premature death in the spring of 1994 means that we obviously have no way of knowing how his

¹⁷ Tony Banks (West Ham), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 July 1995) Vol: 263, Column 964.

¹⁸ John Smith (Monklands, East), *NATO Summit* (Official Report, Hansard: 12 January 1994) Vol: 235, Column 179 – 180.

position regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia, and the chaos which ensued, would develop or change. In many ways, considering the way in which the foreign policy of the Labour Party in the years since 1997 has become increasingly interventionist, this is one of the great unanswerable questions of recent British political history: namely, would a Labour Government under John Smith have been as proactive in the international field as the Government led by Tony Blair. It is obviously impossible to answer such a question. In his official biography of John Smith, Mark Stuart outlines the politician's position on Bosnia and the break-up of Yugoslavia in only very general terms, which makes it difficult for us to get any further detailed impression of his stance. Stuart states that Smith did issue a statement calling for an ultimatum to be issued to the Serbs, but this could have been in response to an open letter written by some back bench Labour M.P.s to *The Guardian*.¹⁹ After this brief comment, Stuart continues to study how Cunningham handled the crisis. It is thus difficult to get further insight into Smith's position on the situation in the Balkans.

It is one point to speculate over the direction that a late politician would have taken the party; however, the last year of the Bosnian war saw vocal demands for military intervention from the new leader of the Labour Party, Tony Blair. No such speculation is necessary regarding the nature of foreign policy that he was to pursue on election to office. Chapter three of the thesis has already outlined his firm support both for the sanctions that were in place in the region, and for their effective enforcement. The following extract provides further information about the policy changes that he demanded for the Balkans. Although Blair was cautious of committing troops to a ground campaign, the sentiments that he demonstrated in this particular debate show particular resonance with the stance that he took on the

¹⁹ Mark Stuart, *John Smith – A Life* (London: Politico's, 2005) pp274-276. The letter was published on 17 April 1993.

international stage following his arrival in government in 1997; that is, the more muscular approach to intervention with which we are now familiar:

...Inevitably, this debate allows us to take stock of the medium and longer-term strategy in Bosnia. I think that the beginning of understanding in this matter – indeed, of humility – is to recognise that all options are fraught with difficulty and that there is no difficulty that is not vast in its character and complexity....

I do not believe that that is a compelling case for withdrawal from Bosnia and I shall tell the hon. Gentleman why. It is always possible to say that we should have intervened in other conflicts and there can be debates about that. However, the Bosnian conflict is in Europe and the consequences could spread to neighbouring European states. We have to make a judgement about where our national interest lies and take humanitarian concerns into account. I believe that that judgement is overwhelmingly in favour of involvement.²⁰

For Blair then, there was no question over Britain's commitment to intervention in Bosnia. In this speech, he acknowledged the complexities of any type of intervention, and outlined the basis of his argument in favour of such a policy; namely the guiding principle being one of national interest underscored with a concern over the humanitarian situation within the region. Within the same speech, he described exactly how he saw intervention taking place in the Balkans. In a robust defence of the use of a more effective policy, he called for the U.N.'s position to be clarified, with careful effort being taken to ensure that there was no ambivalence regarding the role of that organisation's troops in the region, and for the existing mandates to be strongly enforced. In parallel with that point, Blair also asked for the U.N. troop deployment to be strengthened, outlining how the existing force was not operating at its intended strength. In addition to these points, he called for both the demilitarisation of the safe areas, in order for the United Nations to be seen to maintain its

²⁰ Tony Blair (Sedgefield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1007 – 1009.

impartiality; and asked for a more stringent application of the sanctions policy *vis-à-vis* the rump Yugoslav state.²¹

The extracts from Tony Blair's speech examined here are interesting in that they show him, as the leader of the main Opposition party, to be interested in a key foreign policy issue. Within the context of the early years of the twenty first century, and various events that have occurred in the international arena, the comments also signpost the proactive stance pursued by the Labour leader since his arrival in Downing Street. These remarks offer a clear insight into the type of foreign policy that has been initiated by the various Labour Governments in the years since 1997. In short, Blair's comments here are a precursor to the type of muscular intervention, carried out for humanitarian reasons, that have featured regularly on the political landscape since his election as Prime Minister. Indeed, John Kampfner has examined Blair and his attitude towards committing British troops to battle in his study *Blair's Wars*.²² As Kampfner wrote in the preface: "(t)his is the story of a man who came to office in 1997 knowing precious little about foreign affairs, who within a year had defined a new mission for Britain overseas."²³ However, despite the absence of a background within the field of international relations, Blair's position in office has been focussed on the creation of a foreign policy that has been rigorously prosecuted even when opposed by many people or controversial in its implementation. Thus, what was shown in the extract from the Parliamentary speech referring to the earlier conflict was a desire to make a difference in the region and change the situation on the ground for the better, even when this meant positioning himself away from other front

²¹ Tony Blair (Sedgefield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1011 – 1012.

²² John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: The Free Press, 2003)

²³ *Ibid*, pix.

bench figures – of either side of the Parliamentary divide – on this one particular issue.

OPPOSING MILITARY ACTION

As one would expect, there were many within the Parliamentary Labour Party that opposed any type of more muscular intervention. Unlike the group that argued in favour of more enhanced action, politicians that argued against the military option included a broader representation from both front and back benches. The views of those from the Shadow Cabinet will be considered first, followed by an examination of those contributing to the debate from the back benches. Significantly, all of the politicians who served as Shadow Foreign Secretary during the time of the wars in Yugoslavia spoke out against military intervention. Thus, Gerald Kaufman, John Cunningham and Robin Cook all argued against the pursuit of such a policy. These high profile figures were joined by David Clark, the Shadow Defence Secretary. It is significant then, that there was no high profile campaign led by senior figures within the Labour Party to promote the notion of *military intervention*. As we have seen, the only figures to show support for such an approach were the leaders John Smith and Tony Blair. However, it should be stated that due to the nature of Parliamentary business at Westminster, the Shadow Foreign Secretary and Shadow Defence Secretary would speak much more regularly on debates pertaining to the break-up of Yugoslavia. It is these figures that would present detailed arguments showing the type of policy which they felt should be pursued in the Balkans. So, whilst the leaders made more overt, general statements regarding military intervention, one should recognise that although their speeches promoted the notion of a more muscular foreign policy, they did not give more specific detail on how this could be achieved.

The first of the Shadow Foreign Secretaries to consider is that of Gerald Kaufman. Just two months after the war in Bosnia started, Kaufman clearly outlined his opposition to any military intervention in the region. Two months into the war in Bosnia, the Shadow Foreign Secretary showed his opposition to any international intervention reliant on force. He stated:

The situation is far too confused for forcible intervention from outside to do any positive good. It is certain that force would lead to further unnecessary bloodshed and increase the number of people at risk. I hope that the Government will stand out inflexibly against any suggestions of forcible intervention by the European Community... The European Community should have no military role in this conflict or indeed in any other. The need is not to extend the conflict but to maintain it. ...The Foreign Secretary is equally right to make it clear that the Serbs are not the only guilty party – that others share that guilt. No solution will be acceptable unless it is based on the restoration of stability, coupled with the safeguarding of all minorities, and that includes Serbian minorities. We hope that the United Nations actions will provide a possibility for such a solution, and it is on that basis that we give the United Nations our full support.²⁴

This extract provides us with a range of points regarding both Kaufman's stance as well as that taken by the wider community towards the war in Bosnia. Of foremost importance was Kaufman's insistence on the importance of European Community troops remaining outside of the conflict. There was no suggestion whatsoever on the part of the Shadow Foreign Secretary that European troops should become involved in the region. Of further interest was his use of the moral equivalence argument regarding the apportionment of blame regarding the events in the Balkans. A key feature of the debates that took place regarding intervention in the various wars of secession was that each of the three ethnic groups was responsible for the horrific events on the ground. This argument was used against those who called for intervention; after all, if each group was responsible then why should an external

²⁴ Gerald Kaufman (Manchester Gorton), *Yugoslavia (Sanctions)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 June 1992) Vol: 208, Column 715.

force be deployed to assist one particular victim? Kaufman's comments are important to consider here, as they provide an explanation regarding his position on intervention; or rather they show why he did not approve of military intervention in the region.

John Cunningham succeeded Kaufman to the role of Shadow Foreign Secretary in 1992. He maintained the stance on military intervention that had been outlined by his predecessor. Just five months into the Bosnian War, during a debate on United Nations Operations, Cunningham made his position clear regarding any potential escalation of external involvement in the region:

The Foreign Secretary rightly ruled out military solutions to these complex problems, at least for the moment, but he and his European colleagues have got us into the worst of all possible worlds. The only realistic alternative to military intervention is effective implementation of the United Nations mandatory sanctions, particularly against Serbia and, perhaps, in the developing circumstances, against Croatia.²⁵

Cunningham's speech showed his opposition to the use of military action. Interestingly, considering our knowledge of the importance of the role of the United Nations to the Labour Party, he showed his support for that organisation and stressed that the only way in which the situation was going to improve in the region was if the sanctions that have been implemented were properly supported by the outside world. Just two months later, Cunningham continued to stress these two points; that is the need to avoid military action coupled with the importance of enforcing the United Nations sanctions in the region. Crucially, he stated the inevitable link between failing sanctions and the rise in demands for action. He asserted:

If that is not done, those voices calling for armed intervention – which I do not support – will grow louder and stronger as they see that the peace process is not working, because of a failure of will on the part of countries

²⁵ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 131 – 134.

– some of them our partners, and all of them signatories to United Nations decisions – in quietly but persistently flouting those decisions.²⁶

For Cunningham then, it was crucially important to ensure that the sanctions policy was properly enforced. If that policy were to succeed it would mean the cessation of the calls for armed intervention. His determination to avoid the use of more localised military action was apparent even after the introduction of air strikes which he did support.²⁷ In a speech made one year into the war in Bosnia, John Cunningham stressed the importance of basing policy on the practicalities of the situation on the ground rather than emotion:

Who does not share the anger and the anguish of people in Britain and elsewhere about the agonies of the Bosnian people? We all share the anger and anguish, but we should not allow anger to dictate the difficult political decision that we must make in trying to deal with the circumstances.²⁸

Linked to the large amount of publicity that surrounded the war in Bosnia, and tied in with the previous issue regarding the use of sentiment in determining foreign policy, in the same debate the Shadow Foreign Secretary attempted to demolish the argument that had been constructed regarding the need for action in the Balkans:

Nor do I accept the argument put to me by Dr Silajdzic and others that we have a moral duty to intervene in Bosnia. No one talks about our moral duty to intervene in Angola, where nearly three times as many people have been killed in a bloody civil war. No one says that we have a moral imperative to intervene in Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁹

Cunningham's dismissal of the 'moral' dimension of the argument is an interesting contrast to the principles that the Labour Party has followed in foreign policy more recently. Although there is currently no suggestion of

²⁶ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *European Communities* (Official Report, Hansard: 24 November 1992) Vol: 214, Column 778.

²⁷ For Cunningham's view on air strikes, please see the previous chapters. Also, see Dr John Cunningham, *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 23 – 24 for his contribution to a debate that covered this particular policy.

²⁸ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1178 – 1180.

²⁹ Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 1182.

intervention globally in an endless number of conflicts, what is interesting to see is the Shadow Foreign Secretary's honesty or cynicism, depending on one's viewpoint, regarding the restrictions that exist with regard to such an approach. Indeed, critics of the now infamous 'ethical foreign policy' have made a point of highlighting how when in government it is either naïve or implausible to expect to prosecute a foreign policy that is based on a moral dimension.³⁰ In this extract then, Cunningham provided a contrast with the later rhetoric of a more traditionally 'New Labour' foreign policy.

The final Shadow Foreign Secretary to consider from the period of this study is Robin Cook, the politician that went on to hold that position when Labour achieved office in 1997. In a debate that took place in the May of the final year of the war (1995), he expressed reservations about military intervention in the former Yugoslavia. The long term commitment required by such a policy was a key feature of his argument:

I fully agree with what the Foreign Secretary said about our inability to impose a solution by military intervention. The big problem with imposing a solution by military intervention is not whether we could successfully carry it out but how long we would have to stay to make the political settlement stick and how we would get out after imposing a political settlement that nobody wanted until the military arrived.³¹

Cook's position provides us with an interesting contrast to the opinion of Tony Blair, who was by that stage the leader of the Labour Party. Cook's caution was a marked difference to the notion of 'moral' obligation displayed by the Leader of the Opposition. In a later House of Commons debate on the topic of Bosnia Cook outlined his views on military intervention in more detail. Taking place in the

³⁰ Mark Wickham-Jones, 'Labour's trajectory in foreign affairs: the moral crusade of a pivotal power?' in Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones (eds.), *New Labour's foreign policy – a new moral crusade?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp3-32.

³¹ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 589 – 592.

aftermath of the Srebrenica massacre it is little surprise to note that Cook's stance had slightly adjusted from previous speeches. The following extract is based around what he identified as four key points regarding action in Bosnia. Although the speech is lengthy, it is worth looking at in detail as it illustrates how Cook's position on military intervention evolved very slightly in favour of action, albeit with a range of caveats:

First, we should clarify what are the feasible military objectives, and ensure that we provide the military assets to achieve those objectives. Equally, we must ensure that we do not make commitments to objectives that we do not regard as militarily feasible. Secondly, we must show resolve in securing the objectives that we define as achievable. It would therefore be helpful if those who speculate about what those objectives might be did not in the same breath speculate about the possibility of withdrawal.

Thirdly, we must back every possible diplomatic and economic sanction to oblige the parties to the dispute to reach a political settlement. In view of clear evidence over the past two months of the support that President Milosevic has given the Karadzic Serbs, there must be no more talk in the immediate future of relaxing sanctions on Serbia. That does not mean that we should not be prepared to lay on the table now a programme of economic reconstruction for the post-war period, which might help to concentrate the minds of those in the Balkans on the enormous destruction and lost opportunities that the conflict has cost the economy.

That brings me to my final guideline. As well as containing the military expression of ethnic hostility, the international community should engage more actively in the propaganda war that manipulates that hostility.³²

What Cook's speech showed was a measured approach to the expansion of the military capacity of British troops in the region. Absent from his comments was the more assertive, even gung-ho attitude of some of his back bench colleagues examined earlier in this chapter. For Cook, of paramount importance was that enhanced military intervention had to be properly prepared for, with clearly identifiable aims and methods. Proper provision had to be made in order to achieve such targets. Interestingly, in his third and fourth point, Cook stressed the importance of two non-combative policies; firstly by emphasising the importance of the continuation of the

³² Robin Cook (Livingston), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1751 – 1752.

diplomatic efforts, and secondly by showing how a propaganda battle could be prosecuted more effectively. Cook's speech then appeared to provide a more cohesive plan for the region compared to those of his colleagues who were merely calling for action. As has been stated in the first chapter of this thesis, for Brendan Simms, the arrival of Robin Cook as Shadow Foreign Secretary, under the leadership of Tony Blair, was grounds for slightly more optimism regarding the position that the Labour front bench was taking on the war in Bosnia; however, its approach was still not as forceful as Simms would have liked, and only developed into a policy of which he approved by the time of the NATO action against Serbia in 1999.³³

The final figure from the Labour front bench that spoke out against military intervention was the Shadow Defence Secretary, David Clark. In a debate on United Nations Operations held in September 1992, he was vociferous in his opposition to any type of military action involving British troops:

In no way can we give the Government a blank cheque for further escalation. To extend military participation further would be extremely dangerous, if not foolhardy. The terrain is ideal for hit-and-run attacks. The old Yugoslavian army, many of whose remnants are now fighting in Bosnia, were trained specifically for that task and we simply must not get drawn into a conflict on one of the various sides. British military involvement must not be allowed to escalate into such a quagmire, and we do not believe that escalation is inevitable.

...The truth is that the mission can be justified only on humanitarian grounds. In a sense, that is the essence of our involvement and that makes our responsibility as politicians doubly onerous. We must ensure that our ground troops out there have a clear guide to their role and a clear list of instructions of what they can and cannot do.³⁴

This was a comprehensively detailed speech outlining Clark's stance on the escalation of British involvement in the Bosnian war. As should by now be apparent, an ongoing theme of this thesis is the way in which unusual alliances and groupings emerged in

³³ Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001) p299.

³⁴ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Column

the search for resolution and peace in the former Yugoslavia: this speech provides us with yet another example. Clark's stance is a mirror of that of the Conservative Government. Thus, he was prepared to countenance humanitarian intervention but was resolutely opposed to any extension of the existing remit. His speech called for clear 'terms of engagement' for British troops stationed in the former Yugoslavia. Clark, in common with the British Government, was determined not to see British involvement extend to a more offensive role in Bosnia. Thus, his entreaty for a well defined mission for the troops puts his views as parallel to the Conservative front bench.

Brendan Simms has described how the break-up of Yugoslavia caused a front bench consensus in British politics. In his work *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, he stated that "Labour prided itself on not turning Bosnia into a party-political issue" and described the Opposition as being complicit in government policy.³⁵ The extract from Clark's speech examined here shows how closely the Labour Party front bench mirrored the views of the Conservative Government at this point during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Although the language of Simms's attack is highly critical, the analysis of both Clark and his front bench colleagues goes some way to substantiating his (Simms's) opinion.

Clark's caution or complicity – depending on one's point of view – was apparent at the start of the following year. In this particular speech, one could argue that Clark showed even more reserve than his Government counterpart:

In the middle of his statement the Secretary of State indicated that an advance group of specialist troops is to be sent to "make arrangements...for a larger force". That suggests a change in the role of British troops. Is that contingency or strategy?
If we are to deploy extra troops, will other countries do likewise? Has the United States said that it will supply troops? Will any of the conscript

³⁵ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.*, p300.

armies of our neighbours be sent to Bosnia? There is a strong feeling that the British cannot ourselves provide sufficient soldiers to do the job. It would be helpful if the right hon. and learned Gentleman would give more information on those points.³⁶

Whilst it is possible to argue that Clark was merely seeking clarification on elements of the Government's Parliamentary statement, what was apparent from his tone was that he was in no way whatsoever an enthusiastic supporter of extending the remit of British troops in the region. This point is substantiated by further contributions made by Clark in a debate three months later. As well as supporting the way in which the government had ruled out the use of ground troops in the conflict, the Shadow Defence Secretary illustrated in one simple sentence his stance on further British armed involvement: "Does the Secretary of State accept that this civil war cannot be solved by external military intervention?"³⁷ He supported his argument by calling for the government to make improved efforts in the diplomatic arena in order to bring the conflict to an end.

Clark's caution regarding the issue of military intervention manifested itself in a further debate on Bosnia, just two weeks after his previous comments. Whilst acknowledging that there was a need to expand military operations in order to protect the humanitarian effort already underway in the region, the Shadow Defence Secretary stressed his concern for the British forces in the region:

The Government have shown that they do not have a closed mind about military action. If the Government pursue that line, they must take the necessary precautions. They must either deploy additional personnel to protect the soldiers delivering humanitarian aid or they must withdraw those soldiers. Clearly, it would be highly irresponsible to carry out air strikes without taking those precautions.³⁸

³⁶ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia (Further Deployment)* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 January 1993) Vol: 216, Columns 1058 - 1059.

³⁷ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Columns 832 - 833.

³⁸ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1243 - 1246.

Explicit in Clark's response was a genuine concern to prevent British involvement in the region escalating to a degree that would cause harm to the troops already serving there in a peacekeeping capacity. Even in the final months of the conflict, the Shadow Defence Secretary's comments displayed his cautious, reluctant approach to British involvement in the region. In May 1995, David Clark highlighted anxieties regarding the potential for confusion during any military build-up in the region. His concerns mirrored the views held by some back bench politicians, whose views will be considered later in this chapter. For Clark there was a fear that the humanitarian, peacekeeping role of British troops in the region would be compromised by a more assertive military presence in the Balkans. This was an issue that he demanded need close attention and resolution.³⁹ This factor will be considered in more depth now, in examining the positions held by back bench Labour Party politicians.

Comments made by David Winnick in support of military intervention have been documented previously in this chapter.⁴⁰ However, in the early days of the break-up of Yugoslavia, he was unequivocal in his opposition to any involvement of British troops in the region. His statement "that British troops should under no circumstances get involved in such a vicious Balkan civil war"⁴¹ was indicative of much of the wider mood within Westminster, not just on the Labour back benches. His concern was again apparent in the following month when he took part in a debate on the European Council. He asked:

(I)s the Foreign Secretary aware that there is bound to be considerable support for the humanitarian measures that he mentioned, such as the airlift and monitoring, but there is no support in the House or in the country for military intervention on a large scale, or in the country for military intervention on a large scale, or of any kind, with the possible

³⁹ Dr David Clark (South Shields), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1090 – 1093.

⁴⁰ See footnote 5.

⁴¹ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Yugoslavia (Sanctions)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 June 1992) Vol: 208, Column 720.

repercussions of getting bogged down in a civil war? Can the Foreign Secretary assure the House that, if there is any question of such intervention during the long summer recess, the House will be recalled? The Government would need the authority of the House to follow that course, and I hope that they will not embark on it.⁴²

Winnick's concern regarding military intervention was such that he demanded that Parliament should be recalled should there be any need to discuss Britain's developing policy within the Balkans. Clearly, he was against any such expansion of Britain's role in the region. Opposition to a more developed policy of intervention was not restricted to David Winnick. Speaking in the same debate, Mike O'Brien also expressed his concern regarding the potential for any military situation to escalate, and he clearly outlined the parameters of what he felt was an acceptable level of involvement:

Intervention must be for humanitarian and not political purposes; it must be restricted to the protection of life, rather than the imposing or deposing of any regime; any military intervention must be at the minimum level necessary to secure a limited humanitarian objective; and intervention should take place only after the failure of all other diplomatic methods.⁴³

For O'Brien then, military intervention was limited to that which enabled the humanitarian relief effort to succeed: anything more was not acceptable. Intervention purely for political gain and military success was not something that he agreed as being a suitable policy for Britain in the Balkans.

David Winnick's concern regarding the absence of Parliamentary input on the issue of military intervention manifested itself less than two weeks after his initial comments on the very same issue. Speaking on 13 July 1992, he again made clear his desire for Parliament to be consulted on all potential changes of policy in the region.⁴⁴

⁴² David Winnick (Walsall, North), *European Council (United Kingdom Presidency)* (Official Report, Hansard: 2 July 1992) Vol: 210, Column 978.

⁴³ Mike O'Brien (Warwickshire, North), *European Council (United Kingdom Presidency)* Official Report, Hansard: 2 July 1992) Vol: 210, Columns 1019 – 1020.

⁴⁴ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Economic Summit and CSCE* (Official Report, Hansard: 13 July 1992) Vol: 211, Column 825.

At the same time a further Labour back bench figure appeared and added his weight to the debate against military intervention. Tony Benn is a politician who consistently took a 'traditional old left' approach to the break-up of Yugoslavia, as indeed he did with a number of other issues, both foreign affairs and domestic. His traditionally left-wing approach has been seen throughout the thesis. Speaking in the same debate as David Winnick, Benn too added his concerns to the issue of Britain extending its remit in the former Yugoslavia. As well as sharing Winnick's desire for Parliament to properly debate any change of British policy in the region, Benn also outlined the likely difficulties that British troops could face in the area. Thus:

Will he [the Prime Minister] assure the House that there will be no military involvement in Yugoslavia – by land, sea or air forces, or bases under our control – without the consent of the House of Commons? A long history shows that it is easy to get into conflict but difficult to get out of it, and memories of similar conflicts go back a long way. Will he give the House a specific assurance that British troops and bases will not be involved until the House has heard the case for it from the responsible Minister and has had an opportunity to register its feelings?⁴⁵

For Benn then, the summer recess was not a valid excuse for British policy in the former Yugoslavia to escalate into a more assertive military outing. Interestingly, as will be shown throughout the rest of this chapter, Benn's stance on military intervention, unlike that of Winnick, did not change at all, despite the worsening impact of the war on the local population. Thus, Benn's position on military intervention in 1995, that is towards the end of the war in Bosnia, showed no discernable difference to his views as illustrated here.

Two months later, in September 1992, a debate on United Nations Operations gave politicians further chance to offer opinion on the issue of the escalation of events in the former Yugoslavia. The complexity of the arguments regarding intervention

⁴⁵ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Economic Summit and CSCE* (Official Report, Hansard: 13 July 1992) Vol: 211, Column 816.

was clouded due to the nature of the existing United Nations involvement on the ground there. U.N. forces, including British troops, were working in a peacekeeping capacity. There were concerns that any extension of an international military force would compromise the safety of the existing troops serving in the area. The blurring of the two different types of role, that is humanitarian and military, was an issue discussed by Labour back bench politicians in this debate. Peter Hardy and Andrew Miller both spoke on this issue. Peter Hardy made clear his unease regarding the extension of Britain's role in the region:

We are now preparing for military intervention in Bosnia. For two years I have listened to people in Europe calling for military intervention and some of those calls have been very jingoistic. But Britain which was prudently, the most cautious of all is now sending the largest contingent. Some Conservative Members are making a considerable mistake by saying only that our troops must shoot back if someone shoots or prepares to shoot at them. Can soldiers shoot at a sniper who is firing from 1,000 yards or more or at those who are lobbing mortars from wooded terrain at an armoured convoy?

The Government must be careful. I am not suggesting that we should not put our forces behind the United Nations but if we are not careful, a situation of inextricable complexity and embarrassment will develop and that will place an unfair responsibility on our platoon commanders in the Cheshire and other regiments.⁴⁶

For Hardy then, enhanced intervention in the Balkans would lead to endless problems for British troops serving in the region. Of interest here is that this particular debate was focussing on the expansion of the humanitarian effort within Bosnia. Defining rules of engagement was a crucial part of United Nations involvement there. However, from Hardy's speech, there was a clear reluctance for any role for British troops that might put them at more likely risk of attack, even if the job in question was a humanitarian one with the right of self-defence. This shows that Peter Hardy was firmly entrenched against intervention by British troops within Bosnia.

⁴⁶ Peter Hardy (Wentworth), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 172 – 175.

Showing similar concerns regarding the rules of engagement was his fellow back bench M.P. Andrew Miller. Approving the use of British troops for the humanitarian effort, Miller was careful to offer a caveat of concern regarding any extension of their role in the former Yugoslavia. His concern focussed on the parameters by which the military could retaliate in self-defence. For Miller, of great concern was that soldiers in the peace-keeping force should not become involved in any extension of their role by stealth. He illustrated this point by outlining his views on the soldiers' right to self-defence:

On the ground, command may have to be given to people with a degree of control to deal with these difficult circumstances. We cannot possibly recall the House to decide each time a soldier needs to defend himself. He clearly needs the right to defend himself and must be properly equipped so to do, but that does not mean that the House should authorise the regiment to embark on anything beyond protecting its own personnel and helping the people whom it has gone to assist by means of the convoys.⁴⁷

Of crucial importance to him then, was that the British troops had a clear idea regarding their role in the region: it was important that they did not overstep their responsibilities in the Balkans. Miller was emphatic in his comments that unambiguous rules had to be introduced. In his view, the armed forces needed to know their status in the field as it was impractical to expect the recall of Parliament each time an incident ensued there.

As one would expect, in view of his stance taken on issues discussed earlier in this thesis, Tony Benn was a regular and vociferous speaker in debates covering military intervention. In a debate on troop deployment to Bosnia, almost one year after the start of war there, he again expressed his concern regarding the direction taken by events in the region. "[T]he commitment to further forces with an uncertain objective of either protecting or withdrawing leaves the House in some doubt as the

⁴⁷ Andrew Miller (Ellesmere Port and Neston), *United Nations Operations* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 September 1992) Vol: 212, Columns 176 – 177.

Government's objectives."⁴⁸ A key worry for the veteran politician was that Britain's role in the region was going to be extended by stealth, and that before long, the country would find itself committed to military action in Bosnia.

Benn's unease about events in the region was repeated just three months later when the House of Commons held a debate on Bosnia. As well as his opposition to military action, his contribution to the discussions highlighted his concern of the way in which Britain might stumble into participating in what he argued was a civil war. A key factor for Benn was that the situation in the Balkans was being treated as unique when worldwide there were other conflicts that could equally demand action, in this example he cited the Palestinian situation:

Is the Foreign Secretary aware that the media coverage of the atrocities has aroused much of the pressure for further action which has been expressed today? Of course all wars, especially civil wars, include atrocities on a massive scale, not all of which are equally covered. Is he also aware that the world community, the United Nations and the western nations must decide quite clearly at the beginning whether they can hope to lift the arms embargo, to supply arms or to become combatants themselves by air strikes or ground strikes and to maintain their role as peace-makers and agents of humanitarian relief? If the principles advocated today in the House by some hon. Members were applied to the Palestinian question, for example, the logic of what was proposed would become clearer.⁴⁹

The issue of equivalence with other situations is interesting in that due to his left-wing position, it is highly likely that the Labour back bencher would oppose any action if proposed for other such conflicts. This point is obviously difficult to verify with certainty. However, as has been shown consistently throughout this thesis, Benn was a firm advocate of the United Nations, and argued in favour of action by that institution rather than anything more militaristic. This point is substantiated by comments that he made in a debate on Bosnia one year later:

⁴⁸ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Bosnia (Further Deployment)* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 January 1993) Vol: 216, Columns 1062 – 1063.

⁴⁹ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 29.

Is the Secretary of State aware that the warnings given that the situation could lead NATO to stumble into a civil war in Bosnia are turning out to be frighteningly true? NATO is not the United Nations, although the humanitarian and peacekeeping roles may be successful. ...

Will the Secretary of State resist the siren voices from the White House and from this House encouraging further military action? Will he take the matter back to the United Nations Security Council, where all the permanent members can contribute their opinion, and restore it to a UN function, in which any military operations are under the command of the Military Staffs Committee and not under the command of NATO?⁵⁰

For Benn then, the United Nations was of crucial importance in attempting to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. Explicit in this extract was his belief that the U.N. had supremacy over NATO. Although Benn makes reference to military operations being run under the auspices of the U.N., throughout the break-up of Yugoslavia he consistently argued against armed intervention. For him, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated, of most importance was the desire to rectify the situation through peaceful, diplomatic means. A recurring theme of the thesis is the way in which a traditional left-wing foreign policy centred on a pacifist and internationalist approach to international relations: this is certainly the case with regard to Benn's stance on the break-up of Yugoslavia.

In the final months of the Bosnian war, Benn again outlined his views on resolving the break-up of Yugoslavia. The following extract from his speech provides a succinct summary of his suggested course of action:

My view is straightforward: it is that we should now build policy around the only things that can be done in a civil war – and it is time we got it straight – which are to provide humanitarian aid, mediation, arbitration and negotiation and an arms embargo to ensure that more arms do not get into the area. That is all that we can do.⁵¹

Benn then was consistent in his stance on the issue of military intervention in Bosnia. As has been shown herein, he regularly opposed any extension of Britain's role in the

⁵⁰ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 18 April 1994) Vol: 241, Column 646.

⁵¹ Tony Benn (Chesterfield), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1019 – 1020.

region. The extract here highlights the stance that he was prepared to take regarding this country's involvement in the war there; thus, Britain should be fully involved in diplomatic efforts but this was not to be compromised by extending any military remit.

It would be wrong to assume that Tony Benn was alone in his criticism of military intervention. Even in the latter days of the Bosnian war, there were still back bench colleagues who viewed such action with caution. Warning against any adoption of a more 'gung-ho' military action were Labour back bench M.P.s Ann Clwyd and Alice Mahon. In May 1995, and in the same debate where Benn spoke out against military intervention, Clwyd's intervention was an illustration of the complexities of the discussions that surrounded the break-up of Yugoslavia. She outlined how her position on armed action had changed during the course of the conflict:

There is clearly not the political will in the House to enforce a peace by military means. Large-scale force might have suppressed the conflict at an earlier stage – and I was in favour of that – but it would probably now incite guerrilla responses, ultimately backed by Serbia.....
Given past mistakes and political inadequacies, there are no easy answers; but the current Bosnian Serb belligerence arises partly through desperation, and Serbian support is already succumbing to external pressure. Greatly strengthening such pressure, while attempting wherever possible to suppress and contain the fighting, must surely be the best option.⁵²

What her response showed then was a concern regarding the extension of military intervention at that particular point in time: obviously in the first part of the speech she acknowledged how she was in favour of such action at an earlier point in the war. However, in the second section of the extract, Clwyd's ideas for the resolution of the conflict are quite vague, and although she talked about increasing pressure for peace, she does not explicitly say how this should be achieved.

⁵² Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1076 – 1077.

Speaking in the same debate as both Benn and Clwyd, Alice Mahon took a similar stance on the issue of enhanced military intervention. Her comments provide an unambiguous insight into the stance taken by many politicians – on both sides of the House – during the break-up of Yugoslavia, and the subsequent wars of secession.

She stated:

Experience teaches us that there are limits to external intervention in civil wars. I also believe that we have become involved in a civil war and that making paper threats has helped us lose credibility.

As many of our military commanders have told us, we should ignore those groups that encourage us to take sides. That is always dangerous. One Opposition Member referred to knowing which side to support; I am on the side of peace in the Balkans and that must be paramount. To be sucked into taking sides would be disastrous and would lead us into another Vietnam. That is why the United States does not want to commit any troops on the ground. The Americans have had their fingers burnt and realise that such a move would be disastrous.⁵³

Mahon's comments regarding the nature of the war are a good illustration of the stance that was criticised so heavily by Brendan Simms. For him, the idea that the conflict in Bosnia was a civil war was an argument which was used to justify the lack of appropriate intervention. Simms criticised this particular stance taken by politicians, citing it as an excuse for inactivity.⁵⁴ Also mentioned in Mahon's speech was a reference to the Vietnam war, which loomed large over any American decision to commit troops to any military campaign. Thus, the reference to the earlier war was justification for an absence from the current conflict.

Even until the dying days of the Bosnian war, Labour Party back bench M.P.s continued to show caution regarding Britain's involvement. In a House of Commons debate in July 1995, after the infamous Srebrenica massacre, politicians still showed anxiety regarding any developments to the existing policy. Denzil Davies stated that

⁵³ Alice Mahon (Halifax), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, columns 1080 – 1082.

⁵⁴ Brendan Simms, *Op cit.* For example: "Because most parliamentarians saw Bosnia essentially as an intractable civil war, they were highly susceptible to governmental suggestions that there was not much to choose between the sides." p289.

Britain's troops in the region should be acting for appropriate military reasons rather than to salve the consciences of international politicians and statesmen.⁵⁵ Speaking in the same debate was veteran Labour back bencher Tam Dalyell. As has been shown in the earlier chapters, Dalyell frequently brought historical references into his speeches. On this particular occasion he talked about the guerrilla nature of the old Yugoslav army, and the lessons that had arisen from the occupation of the country by Germany during the Second World War. Dalyell raised a further point, one that has been examined previously in this chapter when examining the views of Tony Benn, namely, asking why the world was obliged to intervene in the region in an incredibly complex conflict:

The option I have described [that is, exercising caution regarding intervention] may seem not so much craven as that we are not fulfilling our duty, but we have many duties and international obligations. I wonder whether such wealth as we have to devote internationally should not be devoted to the drought in Zambia, which is creating terrible problems, or to the appalling situation that is developing in Malawi, and Mozambique. If we are talking about saving lives, there are other places in the world where, instead of becoming involved in a civil war, we may be more effective in relieving great and equal hardship.⁵⁶

For Dalyell then, there were any number of international relations situations occurring around the globe that could benefit from attention. The key question that needed to be answered was why a civil war would benefit from intervention more than a famine or other disaster. This particular opinion emphasises the way in which a seemingly never-ending range of principles and perspectives affected the debates regarding intervention in the Balkans. Dalyell's comments tie in the points that have been considered *vis-à-vis* the break-up of Yugoslavia being a civil war, as well as demonstrating a traditionally left-wing 'internationalist' approach to foreign affairs.

⁵⁵ Denzil Davies (Llanelli), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1755 – 1757.

⁵⁶ Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 July 1995) Vol: 263, Columns 1776 – 1777.

Thus, just one speech gives us an indication of the ceaseless number of issues that were discussed with regard to these wars of secession, and here, with regard to military intervention, shows us the complexity of the different debates

CONCLUSION

The issue of military intervention garnered just as much comment as those topics that have been covered in previous chapters. What is apparent is that as with the previous discussions, there was no one coherent body of thought within the British Labour Party. Differences were apparent both between front and back bench, as well as between those who sat on the back benches, with even some difference in the way ideas were presented between those who sat on the front bench. In short, there was no one consistent position across the Parliamentary Labour Party. Military intervention is obviously a fluid, rather generalised term, however, it still fostered plenty of comment from those who spoke in the debates. Also of interest is the way in which many people spoke on a fairly regular basis on the break-up of Yugoslavia, and the issue of military intervention. Whilst there may not have been unanimity in the views held by the various politicians, what is important is the way in which many of those studied here determinedly participated in debates regarding the extension of Britain's role in the Balkans. This may not have led to Britain actually intervening, but what this chapter does show is that regular debates on this aspect of foreign affairs were taking place in the House of Commons, and that, whatever their particular opinion, the issue was important to a range of M.P.s, both front and back bench. What is apparent is that for a certain number of politicians, the break-up of Yugoslavia was a foreign policy issue on which there existed a range of strongly-held views. In turn, many of the

debates offered surprising outcomes with unlikely alliances between those holding similar views.

The group of politicians who spoke in favour of military intervention represented all areas of the Labour party. Motivations for demands for intervention included fears over the Balkan wars spreading into some type of regional conflict; concerns over a repeat of some type of disastrous appeasement policy; anger at the lack of resolve demonstrated by the international community; and a Benthamite style approach to international relations, i.e. following the policy that was likely to bring the most benefit to the most people. Figures speaking out in favour of such intervention were drawn from across the Parliamentary party. Tony Banks for example, who has featured throughout this thesis, would be described as a politician of the traditional left of the party, whereas Calum MacDonald would be seen as more moderate. On the Labour Party front bench, only the successive leaders, John Smith and Tony Blair mooted the idea of a more proactive interventionist policy. Of the two, Smith's comments were less explicit than those of Blair. However, due to the events that took place in the Balkans, namely the NATO intervention over Kosovo, this should be of little surprise.

Of the politicians that spoke out against a more enhanced policy of military intervention, there were a variety of reasons supporting their particular position. A key concern was that the international community risked being dragged into what some elements of the Labour Party continued to describe as a civil war. Other politicians feared that without properly defined rules of engagement, British troops would become embroiled in a conflict with no clear sign of an exit strategy. A further group felt that the current policies being pursued in the region, namely economic sanctions, and the presence of the United Nations in a humanitarian capacity should

be properly supported. A final opinion was based on the rather stark view that any military action had to be introduced for appropriate reasons, and not just implemented to assuage the guilt of any western leaders due to the international community's failure to deal with the situation in the former Yugoslavia. A further key observation is that of the politicians who spoke against military intervention, their concerns were not based on any Balkan-specific issues, but rather on broader geo-political considerations. Those opposed to a broader military intervention were not confined to the left wing of the Labour Party, and included members of the front bench as well as back benchers from across all areas of the party. In short then, the range of responses over the issue of military intervention in the former Yugoslavia was as varied as those we have seen throughout this thesis, and demonstrate some quite unusual alliances and interesting factions. These complex and varied reactions to events in the Balkans will again be apparent as the thesis turns its focus to the way in which the shadow of history loomed large over Parliamentary proceedings.

CHAPTER SIX

LEGACIES OF HISTORY: THE USE OF SECOND WORLD WAR IMAGES IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

A recurrent theme of the criticism regarding the British role in the break-up of Yugoslavia is that there was a lack of commitment to intervene, and that any policy which was implemented was not supported with enough conviction by those in a position of power. This thesis has demonstrated that whilst it may be easy to criticise the lack of assertive policy and the prevarication which accompanied the majority of the conflict, it is unfair to say that events in the Balkans were ignored by the British political community, or that they lacked commitment on the issue. Whether speaking in favour or against a particular topic, it is clear that there was a body of Labour Party M.P.s who were interested in what was taking place in the former Yugoslavia. Obviously, as members of the main opposition party, these politicians were unable to formulate policy. However, what has been shown herein, is that the complex nature of the conflict, in the still new, uncertain post Cold War world, meant that alliances were formed and disagreements developed between all manner of Parliamentary Labour Party colleagues. The break-up of Yugoslavia, and the ensuing conflicts led to a number of topics being debated in Parliament, these included: attitudes to the United Nations, the E.U. and NATO; issues regarding militarism and pacifism; as well as domestic party politics. However, alongside these issues, there was another frame of reference at work.

The amount of discussion which took place regarding the events in the Balkans is perhaps better explained and understood when positioned in the broader context of the previous fifty years. The last conflict to have affected Europe had been

the Second World War, and what became apparent in the last decade of the twentieth century was the immense influence which that war still held over politicians, and, more importantly here, how that war influenced their position on different types of policy. Mark Connelly has described how “(s)ince 1945 nearly every international crisis involving Britain has been compared to, or seen through the lens of, the Second World War.”¹ It is perhaps of no surprise then to see that within British Parliamentary debates on the break-up of Yugoslavia a so-called ‘hand of history’ was frequently employed by politicians in order to reinforce points that they made in particular debates. Labour Party M.P.s frequently mentioned incidents from the past in order to reinforce their arguments regarding events in the Balkans. Evoking key episodes from history was a device intended to add weight to the Parliamentary debates that took place in the House of Commons. There were certain significant themes from the Second World War which were regularly mentioned as a means of informing the position of each particular politician. These were: appeasement; the Holocaust, genocide and debates surrounding the issue of war crimes; specific factors relating to Yugoslavia in the Second World War, for example, the partisans and guerrilla warfare, and the Ustase; and the way in which the fiftieth anniversary of V.E. Day was to be commemorated. What is of interest then, is how events from the past were appropriated by politicians in order to reinforce and support their arguments regarding potential developments in current international relations policy. These areas can be divided into two themes: history as a warrant for intervention; and, using the past to condemn the present. Indeed, these two arguments were used in parallel to the subjects which have been discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis.

¹ Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It! – Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2004) p268.

HISTORY AS A WARRANT FOR INTERVENTION

The failed policy of appeasement in the 1930s was used by politicians as a means to criticise current Government policy, and indeed the stance taken by much of the international community, during the break-up of Yugoslavia. When mentioned by politicians in a speech, the very word ‘appeasement’ resonates with failure and all that has ever been wrong with British foreign policy. It is an easy form of shorthand that instantly conveys disappointment and a lack of success in international relations. That this word was used quite so often in debates focussing on the situation in the Balkans does much to illustrate how some politicians viewed the success – or otherwise – of the stance taken by the British Government. In fact, one can see in the debates to be analysed herein, that the very use of the word appeasement was a means with which to shame the Government, and indeed the outside world, into taking the action which, until then, had not been forthcoming.

In the very early days of the break-up of Yugoslavia, the then leader of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock, was one of the first to make an allusion to the issue of appeasement. Speaking in a debate in the summer of 1991, he made reference to Neville Chamberlain’s now infamous speech regarding Britain’s likely involvement in a conflict caused by issues of seemingly little relevance to the British public.² Neil Kinnock stated that: “[c]learly, for our generation, there are no “small countries far away of which we know little”.”³ His comment was in response to the first diplomatic efforts undertaken by the European Council, including the despatch of the E.U. troika Foreign Ministers to Yugoslavia, implemented in order to show European

² In a speech made on 27 September 1938, Neville Chamberlain said: “ ‘How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is, . . . that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.’ ” See James Joll, *Europe since 1870: An International History* (London: Penguin Books, 1990. First published Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973) p370.

³ Neil Kinnock (Islwyn), *European Council (Luxembourg)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 July 1991) Vol: 194, Column 23.

concern at events in the country.⁴ This followed the ‘ten days war’ in Slovenia, when the local forces took on the might of the JNA.

The next politician to cover the issue of appeasement was Andrew Faulds. As we have seen in previous chapters, he was a regular speaker on issues relating to the break-up of Yugoslavia and played a keen part in participating in debates on the subject. On this particular occasion, one year into the war in Bosnia, he mentioned the role played by the Conservative Government during the 1930s at the time of the civil war in Spain. Faulds drew a direct parallel to the contemporary situation by describing the way in which the government of the day refused to send arms to the Spanish Government.⁵ This was a clear reference to the lack of desire on the part of the Major Government to involve itself in any deeper way in the situation in the Balkans. Within the same speech, Faulds stressed the way in which “the second world war ensued because of such appeasement.”⁶ Another back bench figure to contribute to the debate was Ken Livingstone. Using the type of outspoken language that we would expect from this politician, he used the analogy of appeasement to criticise the Tory government for its lack of action. He said:

I have sat in the House sometimes and thought that it must have been the same mood – this is what it must have sounded like as year after year weasel-worded people got up at the Dispatch Box and said, “Czechoslovakia is a long way away. It is a small country of no significance to us. Hitler has legitimate aspiration but we do not understand him.” Some hon. Members said that the policies of the Nazi regime towards the Jews were an internal matter and no concern of theirs. That must have been the same as hearing people now say that the rape of women as an active policy is an internal matter and cannot be a matter for the international community.⁷

⁴ The troika of European Foreign Ministers refers to the previous, future and current incumbent of the holders of the presidency of the European Union. Thus, in July 1991, the presidency was held by the Netherlands who had followed Luxembourg in taking the position. Italy was due to succeed the Netherlands.

⁵ Andrew Faulds (Warley, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1211-1212.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Ken Livingstone (Brent, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1219-1220.

Livingstone's direct vocabulary left his Parliamentary colleagues in little doubt as to where he stood regarding the issue of intervention in the former Yugoslavia. In the one extract he alluded to two historical events, namely the appeasement of Hitler regarding Czechoslovakia, as well as the Holocaust, the Nazi policy of exterminating Europe's Jewish population. Livingstone's anger at the lack of what he viewed as appropriate action being taken by the British Government in Bosnia is clear by his mentioning of these two aspects of twentieth century political history. The reference to appeasement is a clear indication of how he viewed the stance being taken by the Government. Likewise, his mentioning of the Nazi policy towards the Jews was designed to highlight the way in which he believed the contemporary situation was being dealt with; that is, the victims in the current conflict were being similarly deserted. As will be shown later in this chapter, the events of the Holocaust were frequently evoked by other Labour Party politicians with the intention of provoking some type of firm British intervention.

Speaking in the same debate as both Faulds and Livingstone was another Labour politician who took a strong interest in the break-up of Yugoslavia, and who, as has been shown in previous chapters of this thesis, regularly contributed speeches on the subject. Max Madden, in common with Ken Livingstone, used direct and powerful language with which to make his point. He declared:

I venture to submit that the stench of appeasement hangs over the Government – and, indeed, over every EC Government. In my view, we do have an obligation to the people of Bosnia – Muslim, Croat and Serb – to defend their independent country from external aggression.⁸

Madden's use of the word 'stench' clearly illustrated the disdain with which the policy of appeasement was viewed by politicians in the late twentieth century. As will

⁸ Max Madden (Bradford, West), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1224 – 1226.

be clear by the end of the analysis on this particular point, no politicians stood up in the House of Commons and spoke about the virtues of such an approach. Thus, Madden's position regarding appeasement was indicative of the stance taken by his Parliamentary colleagues not just during deliberations on the break-up of Yugoslavia, but also when discussing foreign policy in general.

Just a few months later, another regular participant to debates on the former Yugoslavia added his views to the discussions around the issue of appeasement. In a lengthy contribution Calum MacDonald clearly outlined his opposition to the stance that was taken by the Conservative Government. In the following extract, he referred back to the dark days of Europe's past with mention of both appeasement and fascism. He stated:

The message that I hope will come out of tonight's debate is that, despite the delay and despite the pattern of appeasement, it is not too late. Europe can still rediscover its will and its conscience. By taking action now, we can still turn back the tide of nationalism and neo-fascism that is welling up in the Balkans and which threatens to spread across central and eastern Europe.⁹

Speaking in the same debate, David Young also used the analogy of the 1930s to substantiate his position as one that was critical of the existing policy towards the former Yugoslavia. In his speech, Young made mention of the League of Nations and how that organisation had failed due to a policy of appeasement.¹⁰ He argued that it was imperative that the successor to the League, the United Nations, did not fail for the same reasons.

Speaking almost one year after the previous debate, Malcolm Wicks raised the issue of appeasement. "Does he [the Foreign Secretary] now accept the ancient lesson

⁹ Calum MacDonald (Western Isles), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 26 July 1993) Vol: 229, Columns 838 – 841.

¹⁰ David Young (Bolton, South East), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 26 July 1993) Vol: 229, Columns 854 – 856.

of history that appeasement can never be supported and can never be successful?”¹¹

This comment illustrates several points. Firstly, it highlights the longevity of the conflict within the Balkans. Almost a year after similar comments were made in Parliament, it appears that very little had changed. Secondly, Wicks’s remarks show that, even in the last decade of the twentieth century, ‘appeasement’ was still very much a ‘dirty word’, a shorthand for diplomatic failure. The imagery associated with the word meant that, even in 1994, it resonated with all that had been deemed wrong with British foreign policy.

At the end of the year, Labour back bench M.P. David Winnick used the theme of appeasement in an ever more powerful way so as to illustrate the failure of the British response to events in Bosnia. He argued:

Is it not obvious that the Serbian warlords – many of them outright war criminals – are daily humiliating the United Nations and its authority, knowing full well that member Governments do not have the political will to resist what is happening in safe areas? Having listened to some of the exchanges in the House today, if one were to change the word ‘Bosnia’ to ‘Czechoslovakia’, it is easy to imagine what it must have been like in the House of Commons in 1938. The air of Munich pervades this place, which is very unfortunate when it comes to resisting aggression in other countries.¹²

What this example demonstrates, is that, yet again, in utilising the term ‘appeasement’ and specifically the Munich crisis, British politicians had a useful tool with which to express their disgust and despair at the policy of the British Government – and the wider international community - towards the break-up of Yugoslavia.

The final extract to consider that focussed on the issue of appeasement was in a Parliamentary debate on the Former Yugoslavia that took place in May 1995. Coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War, many

¹¹ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Air Attack (Bosnia)* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 March 1994) Vol: 238, Column 796.

¹² David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 7 December 1994) Vol: 251, Column 321.

M.P.s took the opportunity to mention that conflict and suggest parallels with the more contemporary situation. As has been the case in the previous chapters of this thesis, politicians very often spoke frequently on the events in the Balkans. Thus, a pattern has already been identified where certain back bench figures showed a keen interest in how the British Government was reacting to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Here, with the issue of appeasement, was no exception. Malcolm Wicks, who has featured previously within both this chapter and throughout the thesis, made a further contribution regarding the topic of appeasement. He argued:

In the face of genocide more than 50 years after the holocaust, our Foreign Office policy has never dared speak its name. British foreign policy has once again been one of appeasement. Once, 55 years ago, appeasement was thrown out by our nation and our House of Commons in favour of action, and hand wringing was eventually rejected to make room for resolution. All these years later, that may be the most valuable lesson to learn from our history – the lesson that appeasement never pays and that firm action must be supported.¹³

Here, as with the previous examples that have focussed on the issue of appeasement, Wicks presented a clear critique of the existing government policy in the region. Again, in mentioning events of nearly sixty years earlier, the back bench politician suggested that the current approach suffered from ‘guilt by association’ with the events of the 1930s. Thus, these examples have shown how Opposition politicians successfully appropriated the term ‘appeasement’ in debates surrounding the collapse of the former Yugoslavia; even decades after the events with which that policy is most famously – or infamously – associated. That one word resonated with such power in these Parliamentary discussions says much about how the earlier conflict still hangs heavily in foreign policy deliberations, and also, shows the gravity with which the contemporary event was regarded by those Labour Party politicians who spoke

¹³ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 634-637.

frequently on the subject. It is important to highlight that the M.P.s who used the term in their speeches represented the whole spectrum of the Labour Party, so from the left of the party one can identify Ken Livingstone, right through to figures who would be identified as taking a more traditionally centre left position, such as Calum MacDonald and Malcolm Wicks.¹⁴

The issue of appeasement has long hung over British foreign policy. Mark Connelly has described how: “Britons born long after Chamberlain returned from Munich with his piece of paper still react to that word, determined that never again should a British leader be caught talking peace with a deceitful opponent.”¹⁵ The notion of being weak in the face of adversity, albeit, in a situation that was of no direct impact on Britain, is a theme which has run throughout the comments seen thus far in this chapter. The legacy of appeasement continued to have ramifications for foreign policy in the Balkans at the end of the twentieth century. After the election of the Labour Party in 1997, Tony Blair employed a robust approach to foreign affairs. For our purposes here, his full support for the NATO action against Serbia in Kosovo, which took place in 1999, is of most relevance. According to Mark Phythian: “For Blair, the siege of Srebrenica would become a reference point in determining his approach to the crisis in Kosovo, which emerged as the Dayton peace unravelled during 1998.”¹⁶ Thus, the new Labour Prime Minister used the shame of appeasement as a justification for his muscular approach to intervention in the Balkans in 1999.

This chapter will now examine the way in which the Holocaust, genocide and war crimes were brought into British Parliamentary debates by Labour Party

¹⁴ Another examples of a speech that referred to appeasement and the Munich crisis is one made by Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South), *Oral Answers: Foreign Affairs, Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 December 1994) Vol: 251, Column 912.

¹⁵ Mark Connelly, *Op cit.*, p269.

¹⁶ Mark Phythian, *The Labour Party, War and International Relations, 1945-2006* (London: Routledge, 2007) p118.

politicians. It is worth clarifying here how these different phrases will be used in this chapter. The word 'Holocaust' refers to the Nazi extermination policy towards the Jewish population of Europe at the time of the Second World War. The orchestrated deaths of six million people is seen as unique in history due to the way that the policy was implemented. Use of the term 'genocide' refers to other examples of mass extermination such as the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Stalinist policies of genocide in Soviet Russia, the 'Killing Fields' of Cambodia during the 1970s, and the deaths of thousands of Tutsi at the hands of the Hutu in Rwanda during the 1990s. Finally, here 'war crimes' will refer to atrocities such as the expulsion of refugees, systemised rape of women, and the torture of the local population.

The Holocaust was mentioned by many politicians during debates on the break-up of Yugoslavia. The point was made that during the Second World War six million people had died during a highly organised, industrialised campaign of extermination, and no external intervention had been launched to stop that happening. However, in the 1990s, with the prevalence of media crews covering the break-up of Yugoslavia, there was no excuse to claim lack of knowledge, and thus avoid action over the atrocities that were taking place in the region.¹⁷

As will be demonstrated during this discussion on the Holocaust and memories of that atrocity, comments citing those particular events of the Second

¹⁷ There were a wide range of journalists working in the region who covered the events that took place in the former Yugoslavia. Maggie O'Kane, Ed Vulliamy and Janine di Giovanni to name just three, regularly filed reports from the conflict. They filed reports for, respectively, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, and *The Times*. These are just some of the writers that did much to keep events in the public eye. Television journalists also remained a constant presence in the region. Martin Bell, working for the BBC, is possibly the figure that is most regularly identified with his work reporting on the Balkan Wars. As one would expect, there has been a raft of literature written about the atrocities that took place during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Just two to consider here are: Thomas Cushman and Stjepan G. Mestrovic, *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia* (New York: New York University Press, 1996) and David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the failure of the west* (London: Vintage, 1995).

World War tended to come from those who were not serving in the Shadow Cabinet. It is difficult to suggest reasons for this, it could well be due to the fact that back bench politicians felt that they had more freedom to raise topics that could be considered controversial. After all, invoking the Holocaust in order to call for military action during the Yugoslav wars of secession could be viewed as a provocative stance to take. However, later in this chapter, during the examination of how mention of genocide and war crimes were brought into debates, it will be apparent that politicians from all areas of the Labour Party raised relevant points during Parliamentary debates: thus, M.P.s from both front and back benches mentioned genocide and war crimes.

Clare Short referred to the Holocaust in Foreign Office Oral Answers in 1993. Her question was succinct and to the point: "Does the Minister agree that there are awful parallels between Europe's failure to protect the jews (sic) before the second world war and our failure to protect the Bosnians from the systematic use of rape and ethnic cleansing?"¹⁸ Further mention was made of the Holocaust in the summer of 1993, during a debate on Yugoslavia. David Young stated that: "What perturbs me is that ethnic cleansing smacks of the holocaust. From our not too distant history, we know the penalty that was paid by ignoring the slaughter of the Jews in Germany. Reasons were given then for why we could not act."¹⁹ What is apparent from both of these extracts, is that the sentiment attributed to each speaker is the same, namely, ignoring the situation was no defence, and at its most extreme could lead to a situation that mirrored the action taken against the Jewish populations of Europe during the 1940s. Thus, reference to the Holocaust was used as a means to argue that some type of effective policy should be implemented. What was not seen then was a direct

¹⁸ Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood), *Foreign Office Oral Answers, Serbia and Montenegro* (Official Report, Hansard: 14 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 828.

¹⁹ David Young (Bolton, South East), *Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 26 July 1993) Vol: 229, Columns 854-856.

comparison with events in the former Yugoslavia with what took place regarding the extermination of the Jews. The two events were not seen as the same. However, the events of the Holocaust were used as a warning of what could happen if the situation in the former Yugoslavia was ignored.

This idea of using the Holocaust as a portent was made in a speech given by Frank Field during a debate on Bosnia that took place in the following year, 1994. He raised the way in which the atrocities in the former Yugoslavia were being well documented by the media:

Does he [the Foreign Secretary] accept that in the 1930s, when the Jews in Germany and Poland and surrounding territories were being exterminated, most people in Europe could claim that they knew nothing of what was going in, but that no one has that defence today?²⁰

This question ties in with the earlier observation regarding the way in which the wars of secession within the former Yugoslavia were covered by the media. There would be no way in which any politician or policy maker could argue that they did not know of the atrocities that were being carried out in the region. As Field suggested, that was a common argument used in the 1930s and 1940s regarding the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis. However, in the last decade of the twentieth century, pleading lack of knowledge and awareness about events in the Balkans was not an appropriate defence.

The recurring theme that has been demonstrated herein, that is, that the Holocaust should not be repeated, and that awareness of events in the countries of the former Yugoslavia meant that politicians should act to stop such atrocities was restated in the closing months of the Bosnian war. Labour back bench politician Malcolm Wicks gave a wide ranging speech about the situation in the former Yugoslavia. He drew parallels between the events of the 1940s, and those of the contemporary situation. Although this is a lengthy extract, it is worth examining in

²⁰ Frank Field (Birkenhead), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 April 1994) Vol: 242, Column 27.

detail as it raised so many of the points that occurred on this particular topic in the preceding years. He stated:

I was born a few years after the end of the second world war and, as I grew up in the 1950s and early 1960s, I learnt more about the causes and the experiences of that war. I remember when I first saw, as many other hon. Members would have done, the flickering black and white television pictures from the concentration camps. We not only asked how this could have occurred, but we were struck by the conviction that we would never again see or allow genocide on any scale in Europe. We vowed that we would never again tolerate such naked aggression or territorial gain of that kind by military conquest, certainly not in Europe.

Obviously the scale in the former Yugoslavia is different, but the experience has been much the same. Therefore, we should ask very humbly why we have again tolerated such genocide and naked aggression on the edges of Europe. In that post-war period we created the United Nations and we believed that, through the United Nations and by other alliances, we would prevent that kind of genocide in the future. Many of us who believed ultimately in the goal of peace recognised that we needed to expend money and large percentages of our national wealth on the military to prevent the threat of such incidents occurring again.²¹

The first point to consider is that Wicks drew a parallel with the film footage that was taken at the concentration camps at the end of the Second World War, with that which was being broadcast from the former Yugoslavia during the break-up of the country. The difference being that widespread awareness of the Holocaust only occurred after the war, whereas the situation in the Balkans was viewed almost 'in real time'. Next, Wicks acknowledged that the scale of events in the region was not comparable with the Nazi crimes of the earlier war. However, the overriding point made by Wicks was that widespread knowledge of the atrocities being committed in the former Yugoslavia had not stopped them from taking place. How, he wanted to know, had yet another genocide been allowed to take place in Europe under the watchful eye of the world's media. The incredulity demonstrated by Wicks in the extract does well to serve as a summary to the responses raised in Parliament regarding the linking of

²¹ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 634-637.

events in the Balkans with what had taken place in Europe some fifty years earlier. It demonstrates the way in which the television images of the atrocities in the Balkans led to the Holocaust being used as a point of reference for the contemporary debate.

Whilst the word 'Holocaust' is specific to atrocities committed by the Nazis at the time of the Second World War, the use of the terms 'genocide' and 'war crimes' are used in a more widespread, general way. These terms were frequently mentioned during the break-up of Yugoslavia, in order to offer comment on what was taking place in the region. Interestingly and as has been mentioned, in contrast with use of the word 'Holocaust', the use of these phrases to describe events in the Balkans was not confined to the Labour Party back benches.

The Shadow Foreign Secretary spoke out on the issue of war crimes during a debate on international peacekeeping later in the same month in 1993. In response to a statement made by the Foreign Secretary, John Cunningham gave a detailed speech commenting on events in the Balkans. With particular regard to the issue of war crimes, including the mass rape of women, he gave his support for the Government's calls to bring the perpetrators to justice:

I share the views expressed by the Foreign Secretary on the brutal crimes of violence against women the former Yugoslavia. The organised, criminal rape of women, which has taken place there must be condemned and prosecuted as a war crime with the full vigour of international law. Her Majesty's Government and the international community will have our wholehearted support in their pursuit of the perpetrators of such crimes against women, I urge them to continue their wholehearted efforts to pursue the criminals, as I know that the Foreign Secretary is doing, and to bring the full vigour of law to bear upon them.²²

Prime Minister's Questions on 1 April 1993 was an opportunity for the Labour leader to raise the issue of war crimes. John Smith expressed his concern at what was

²² Dr John Cunningham (Copeland), *International Peacekeeping* (Official Report, Hansard: 23 February 1993) Vol: 219, Columns 788- 790.

taking place in Bosnia, and linked his position with the issue of enforcing sanctions against Serbia.²³

As with other debates that took place regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia, participation was not restricted to those on the Parliamentary front bench: back benchers also spoke in debates. In February 1993, George Robertson raised the issue of war crimes during Foreign Office Oral Answers in the House of Commons. His question was linked to the pursuit of justice against the perpetrators of the various atrocities that had been committed in the region. He asked:

Is the Foreign Secretary aware that the House expects him to continue to press for the continuing pursuit of those guilty of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia? The whole world has been revolted by verified reports of actions which clearly fall within the description of war criminality, especially reports of the systematic mass rape of women in that area. For the perpetrators of such obscenities there must never be a hiding place.²⁴

The issue of meting out some type of Nuremberg style justice on those who had committed crimes in the region, was reiterated by David Winnick who spoke in the same debate. Winnick raised the coverage of the atrocities as they had been reported by *The Independent's* Robert Fisk making specific mention of the torture and rape of women in the region.²⁵ Like Robertson, he suggested the idea of introducing an international tribunal in order to deal with what had occurred in the former Yugoslavia. David Winnick is an important back bench figure to highlight here. As has already been demonstrated throughout this thesis, certain politicians spoke regularly on the break-up of Yugoslavia, and associated issues such as intervention. With regard to the issue of war crimes and the pursuit of justice in the region,

²³ John Smith (Monklands, East), *Prime Minister Engagements* (Official Report, Hansard: 1 April 1993) Vol: 222, Columns 494 – 495.

²⁴ George Robertson (Hamilton), *Foreign Office, Oral Answers, Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 10 February 1993) Vol: 218, Column 967.

²⁵ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Foreign Office, Oral Answers, Balkans* (Official Report, Hansard: 10 February 1993) Vol: 218, Column 974.

Winnick is a Labour M.P. who consistently spoke out on this topic. This will be demonstrated throughout this part of the chapter.

Speaking just under a fortnight later, David Winnick added his support to the calls for war criminals to be brought to justice. His contribution highlighted the way in which the attacks were not merely random, but were well planned and systematically implemented:

Has my right hon. Friend seen the newspaper reports which demonstrate that those terrible crimes – especially the rape of Muslim women – were not committed on the spur of the moment but were organised deliberately beforehand by criminals and gangsters? Some of the Serbian political leadership who were involved must bear responsibility for the actions of soldiers and criminals against women. I agree that those responsible, including the people who took the decisions, should be held to account and brought to justice.²⁶

The setting up of a war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was a further parallel with the events that had taken place during 1939-1945. This point was raised by Norman Godman in April 1993, during Prime Minister's Questions. He asked:

This is the first time since Nuremberg and Tokyo that an international war crimes tribunal has been set up. Unlike Nuremberg and Tokyo, however, is it not likely that the implementation of United Nations resolution 808 will turn out to be an exercise in futility? Has not the United States State Department already labelled those murderous leaders, Milosevic and Karadzic, as potential war criminals? Are they to be granted immunity from war crimes proceedings? Who will apprehend the criminals? Will British soldiers be involved? Will British police officers and lawyers be involved? It is surely a charade.²⁷

Mention of the earlier judicial proceedings provided a shorthand for comparing the atrocities that had taken place during the Second World War with what was then happening in the former Yugoslavia. The earlier conflict was an easy reference point to use in order for the speaker to emphasise what was currently taking place.

²⁶ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *International Peacekeeping* (Official Report, Hansard: 23 February 1993) Vol: 219, Columns 790-791.

²⁷ Dr Norman Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow), *Prime Minister: War Crimes (Yugoslavia)*, (Official Report, Hansard: 1 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 496.

There has already been mention of the ongoing contribution to debates that was made by another Labour back bench M.P. David Winnick. In a debate on the no-fly zone in Bosnia, he again made clear his view of what was taking place in that country. As before, Winnick brought mention of the Second World War into his contribution so as to reinforce the significance of what was taking place in Bosnia:

Is the Minister aware that the imposition of a no-fly zone should be but a minimum step by the international community, under the authority of the United Nations, to protect those most at risk from continued Serbian aggression and crimes, which are almost at the level of the sorts of crimes committed in Yugoslavia during the second world war? Is the Minister further aware that if such crimes and atrocities that he has spoken about – and rightly deplored – continue, the international community will be expected to do more? We cannot wash our hands of the terrible things that are happening which are crimes against humanity. This country has a responsibility, as does the United Nations.²⁸

Of interest here is the way in which Winnick uses the events of the Second World War in order to almost shame British politicians into taking action. Essentially his argument is based on the point that the government had knowledge of what was taking place in the region, and that it would be absolving itself of its responsibilities if it did not make a concerted effort to improve the situation within the region.

Later in the same month, another familiar figure from the Labour back benches contributed to a debate regarding the events that were taking place in Bosnia. Max Madden has consistently been seen throughout this study to have played a key role throughout the break-up of Yugoslavia, speaking regularly on a range of issues, such as intervention. On this particular occasion he raised the topic of war crimes in Bosnia, and linked them to the atrocities of the Second World War. He asked:

When, in God's name, are the elected representatives of the people of Britain to be given a full and proper opportunity to discuss in the House of Commons, the evil genocide, murder and systematic rapes which are part of the unmitigated aggression of Serbia? When will the House be given an

²⁸ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *No-Fly Zone (Bosnia)*, (Official Report, Hansard: 1 April 1993) Vol: 222, Column 504.

opportunity to speak for the people of Britain on the biggest crisis facing Europe since the end of the second world war?²⁹

Of continuing interest is the way in which memories of the Second World War were used in order to shame politicians into action. The insinuation was clear; if nothing was done to help those in Bosnia, then Britain's politicians would have the blood of thousands of people on their hands. The implication being that their lack of action would mean Britain abdicating itself of any responsibility in trying to resolve the worst humanitarian disaster to hit Europe since the end of the Second World War. The earlier conflict was thus used as a moral framework with which to define events taking place in the closing decade of the twentieth century.

In the summer of 1993, David Winnick made a further intervention in the House of Commons regarding the situation in the former Yugoslavia. In Foreign Office questions, he raised parallels between the justice that was brought at Nuremberg, and the war crimes tribunal that had been set up in order to deal with the situation in the former Yugoslavia:

Does the Foreign Secretary accept that if, despite what he has told the House, those who have been responsible for the terrible crimes against humanity in former Yugoslavia are not brought to justice, that will encourage the continuation of such crimes and atrocities time and time again? Does he also accept that the framework established at Nuremberg after the second world war is a good framework within which to try people held responsible for such crimes against humanity?³⁰

Again, as with the previous examples that have been analysed herein, mention of the Second World War provided a particularly powerful argument with which to support the politician's call for intervention and justice for the area's victims.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War saw further mention of the parallels between the atrocities carried out

²⁹ Max Madden (Bradford, West), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 19 April 1993) Vol: 223, Column 36.

³⁰ David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Oral Answers, Foreign Affairs, Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 16 June 1993) Vol: 226, Column 850.

during that conflict and the war crimes that were being prosecuted in Bosnia. In a debate timed to coincide with the anniversary commemorations, Malcolm Wicks raised the issue of the earlier war. Again, as with so many back bench M.P.s that contributed to debates during the break-up of Yugoslavia, Wicks, as we have seen throughout this thesis, was a regular participant in discussions on the region. He offered the following observation:

We have also seen genocide against the Bosnian people – although not, as has already been said, on the scale practised by Nazi Germany. None the less, we are talking about evil and that is why, with others, I want to remind the House about the challenge that this debate brings us, when yesterday we were celebrating, and not only celebrating but remembering and thinking through the implications half a century after VE day.....

That brings us back to our celebration of victory in Europe 50 years ago. There have been celebrations and acts of sad remembrance, but learning the full lessons of 50 years ago involves more than celebration and humming along to well-known old songs. We must relearn the lessons of 1945 in a more complex post-war period.

Bosnia is a proud and democratic cosmopolitan society, particularly Sarajevo, which I visited for three days at the end of 1993. It is a proud and democratic city. The fact that it is still being shelled mocks our pretensions of celebrating VE day and challenges our post-war hopes.³¹

Firstly, Wicks discussed the parallels between the two wars. Whilst for him, the war crimes perpetuated within Bosnia were not of the same scale as those orchestrated by Nazi Germany fifty years earlier, the events within the former Yugoslavia still acted as an unpleasant reminder of the atrocities that could occur in wartime. Secondly, Wicks implied that there was a certain irony to commemorating the earlier conflict whilst taking little action to minimise the impact of the contemporary war. As he says towards the end of the extract, commemoration of the Second World War was worthless if measures were not taken to show that lessons have been learned *vis-à-vis* current events in the Balkans. For Wicks then, the lack of activity regarding conflict resolution within the former Yugoslavia in many ways made a mockery of the

³¹ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 634 – 637.

commemorative events of the earlier conflict. Essentially he asked whether lessons had been learned.

The use of the anniversary of V.E. Day coupled with the ongoing war in Bosnia was used by David Winnick in a debate at the end of May, just a few weeks after Wicks's comments. In his speech, Winnick mentioned the parallels between Nazi war crimes and the ethnic cleansing that had been employed in the former Yugoslavia. For him, both sets of atrocities were carried out against people whom the aggressor viewed as being "inferior".³² In common with Wicks, Winnick made clear that the scale between the two conflicts was very different. However, what was significant was the way in which both politicians harnessed the commemoration of the ending of the Second World War to highlight a current conflict, one which they felt had not been properly acknowledged by the international community.

The final example to consider with regard to war crimes is a further comment by Malcolm Wicks in October 1995. His question came just over three months after the ethnic cleansing that had taken place in Srebrenica:

Does the Foreign Secretary agree that, just as 50 years ago, Nazi war criminals were brought before a tribunal and properly judged, so today there should be no hiding place for those who have initiated war crimes, be it the policy of mass rapes, of murder or of frank genocide? Can he reassure the House that the Government are giving resources and support to the war crimes tribunal and that, however senior within their regimes those people may be, justice will be done?³³

Wicks used the inauguration of the war crimes tribunal for Yugoslavia to reinforce the parallel between events that had taken place in the last decade of the twentieth century with what had occurred over fifty years previously. Again, his tactic was clear. Mentioning the atrocities that had occurred during the Second World War did much to

³² David Winnick (Walsall, North), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1038 – 1040.

³³ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Oral Answers, Foreign Affairs, Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 25 October 1995) Vol: 264, Columns 1016-1017.

emphasise the gravity of what had happened in Europe during the break-up of Yugoslavia. The intervention by Wicks also reinforces the ongoing theme that has been apparent throughout this thesis. Various Labour Party back bench M.P.s invested a considerable amount of time in keeping the break-up of Yugoslavia on the political agenda. As has been seen so far, these figures did their best to maintain a constant source of pressure, both subtle and outspoken, on their own front bench and, perhaps more importantly on the Conservative Government of the day. Although the Labour Party front bench was also regularly present in debates demanding more action in the region, Parliamentary protocol – and political practicalities- deemed it necessary that the more high profile figures took a more measured approach.

Although Brendan Simms has argued how, in general, the Labour Party was not as vociferous in its criticism of the Conservative Government as it might have been, what has been shown here, and indeed throughout the thesis, is that there were elements within the Opposition who spoke out regularly on what was taking place in the Balkans.³⁴ What this examination of the discussion of war crimes emphasises, is that participation in debate was not limited to one part of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Figures from both front and back benches spoke out: concern regarding the wars of secession in Yugoslavia was not confined to a particular group of politicians. The Shadow Cabinet tended not to mention the Holocaust in order to support or strengthen their contribution to debates: the exception to this was Clare Short, who, as has been demonstrated in this thesis, although holding a front bench position, frequently adopted a more outspoken, maverick role. Aside from Short, use of the term ‘Holocaust’ came from the back benches. However, Shadow Cabinet politicians

³⁴ See “Chapter 7 – ‘Emulsifying the Whole Affair’: Parliament and the Public Sphere” of *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* for Brendan Simms’s examination of the role of the Labour Party in challenging government policy during the break-up of Yugoslavia. (London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, 2001).

used the terms ‘genocide’ and ‘war crimes’ in their speeches, and in doing so, mirrored their colleagues from the back benches whose use of these terms was designed to highlight the gravity of the situation in the former Yugoslavia, and intensify their demands for a more effective intervention. The back bench politicians who did use these terms were the people who were consistently calling for more action, whether the lifting of the arms embargo (Max Madden), or those who had spoken out in favour of air strikes (Malcolm Wicks). What this demonstrates then, is that events which had taken place during the Second World War, were used as an attempt to convince the Conservative Government that a much tougher position should be taken in the Balkans.

USING THE PAST TO CONDEMN THE PRESENT

During the Second World War, aside from its involvement in that conflict, Yugoslavia was also riddled with a civil war. The complexity of events of over sixty years earlier was used by British politicians when debating the more recent turmoil within the region. Broadly speaking, the focus in these Parliamentary debates was divided into two areas: namely, mention of Tito and the Partisans; and secondly, the Ustase, the fascist regime led by Ante Pavelic. For the population of the former Yugoslavia, the events of the Second World War remain an extremely contentious issue. For more detail of this period in Balkan history there are a number of studies available: Misha Glenny, Stevan K. Pavlowitch and Mark Mazower are just three authors who have written about the region.³⁵ However, this thesis will focus solely on how the events of the earlier conflict were appropriated by British politicians in order to substantiate their contribution to debates on this topic.

³⁵ Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London: Granta Books, 1999); Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans 1804-1945* (Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999); and Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000).

Early on in the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the spectre of the Second World War was mentioned in Foreign Affairs Oral Answers in Parliament. A warning was given that the fighting experience of the Germans in the area during that conflict provided a stark enough illustration as to why it was important to exercise caution in any intervention: “The Germans should recall their experiences in the area, when the fighting tied down seven German divisions.”³⁶ This point refers to two different issues. Many politicians viewed the German government as being chief architects of the plan to recognise Slovenia and Croatia. This was demonstrated earlier in this thesis, in chapter two, with the analysis of politicians and their responses to the role of different international institutions. However, of importance to us here is the implicit reference to the wartime experience within the former Yugoslavia. The Partisans, the guerrilla fighting force in Yugoslavia, inflicted heavy losses on the occupying German forces. The Partisans’s knowledge of the mountainous area was to prove incredibly problematic for the Nazi invading forces. The reference in Oral Answers thus acted as a warning against either blindly following the contemporary German government into action in the region, whilst implicitly mentioning the acts of some sixty years earlier in making reference to Tito’s forces.

A similar message was given in Parliament almost four years after the previous comments. This time the speaker was Tam Dalyell. As has been shown in previous chapters, this Labour back bench politician played an important and regular role in debates on the situation in Yugoslavia. In a wide ranging speech during a debate on Bosnia, Dalyell made reference to a variety of points pertaining to the history of the region. As with the previous extract, he made particular mention to the Yugoslav experience during the Second World War. Additionally, Dalyell spoke

³⁶ Merlyn Rees, (Morley and Leeds, South) *Oral Answers – Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 18 December 1991) Vol: 201, Column 261.

about the Cold War relationship between Stalin and Yugoslavia. Both points referred to the military training of the Partisan units, and their ability to fight using guerrilla warfare techniques:

What is an overriding problem, however, is that it is part of history that Tito's deterrent to Stalin was not atomic bombs, let alone hydrogen; it was the most powerfully trained guerrilla army ever.....We are coping with their sons if not themselves, trained in the tradition of guerrilla warfare.

It is a formidable deterrent. I understand that it was such a deterrent that Marshals Zhukov and Timoshenko told Stalin that on no account should the Red Army take on those people, although in the eyes of Moscow they were guilty of a deviant variety of communism.

I conclude that, unless we are prepared to impose a solution – and it will involve more than the 37 German Panzer divisions that the Yugoslavs tied down during the war – we are in no position for posturing. Whether or not we lose face, we have to talk seriously....³⁷

As with the previous speech, there was particular emphasis here on the fighting skill of the guerrillas, with Dalyell suggesting that the descendants of the Partisans would prove equally as adept, if needed, at holding their position in the tough terrain of Yugoslavia. By linking in Soviet-Yugoslav relations during the Cold War, the back bench politician does much to show the extent of the reputation enjoyed by the Partisan fighters. The implications for any policy to be introduced in the last decade of the twentieth century were obvious: take on these fighters at your peril, not even Stalin decided to confront the guerrilla forces of Yugoslavia. What this speech shows, is the way in which one particular interpretation of historical events can do much to considerably influence the present. Any politician of a younger generation than Dalyell, with limited knowledge of the events that he described, would, after hearing the veteran M.P.'s contribution, surely have thought twice about extending British involvement in the region. Whether the back bench politician's assessment of the current situation would be viewed as accurate or based on a hyperbolic description of

³⁷ Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 31 May 1995) Vol: 260, Columns 1048-1050.

the reputation enjoyed by a fighting force some fifty years earlier, one cannot dispute that his words reinforced the complexity of the situation in the former Yugoslavia. Interestingly, in 1999, during the NATO air campaign against Serbia, Tam Dalyell returned to the topic of the Second World War. To illustrate his opposition to the air strikes, he made reference to the 'Blitz spirit', in order to demonstrate how the military campaign could unite the Serbian population against the NATO alliance.³⁸ This point reinforces the comments of Mark Connelly discussed earlier in this chapter; namely, the way in which the earlier conflict continues to inform British foreign policy.³⁹ The fighting prowess of the Partisans in the earlier conflict was thus used as a means to warn against intervention in the region.

There has already been mention here of the civil war that beset Yugoslavia during the Second World War; for example, the fight between Chetniks and Partisans. However, the impact of the fascist Ustase was also noteworthy in the debates held in Parliament regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia. The link between the Ustase and the Nazis was regularly explored by politicians during debates examining events in the Balkans. A discussion on Bosnia saw Ken Livingstone raise the issue of fascism in Croatia, and how that affected people's perception of the country. He said:

I am also struck by the fact that the apologists for inaction say that the problem with the Croats is that they are all fascists and are on Hitler's side. It is interesting that we are told that history seems to have started in 1940, because in the 1920s and 1930s people – including Members of Parliament at the time – signed international letters condemning the Serbian oppression of the Croats in Yugoslavia. There were protests when the Serbian royal family, a member of whom was to become the king of Yugoslavia, began assassinating and eliminating the political leadership of the Croats. I condemn the Croats who lined up with Hitler as I condemn the resulting butchery. However, let us not forget: they have been

³⁸ Ann Schreiner, 'Humanitarian Intervention, the Labour Party and the Press' in Paul Corthorn and Jonathan Davis (eds.) *The British Labour Party and the Wider World* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd., 2008) p207.

³⁹ Mark Connelly, *Op cit.*

subjected to two decades of oppression as a minority in Yugoslavia. We must remember that when we hear these sweeping condemnations.⁴⁰

Striking about this passage is the way in which it summarises the various tensions and difficulties that have bedevilled the region for so long. As can be inferred from any of the works studying the history of the Balkans, it is far too simplistic to 'pigeon hole' any national group in that region. This point is emphasised by this speech from Ken Livingstone.

Further mention of Croatia's wartime past was apparent in a Parliamentary debate that coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of Victory in Europe day. The commemorative events that were planned in London were to be attended by a variety of world leaders. Much controversy arose regarding the part that the President of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, would play in proceedings. He was a contentious figure either widely supported and admired by Croats, or seen as a divisive nationalist leader by those from countries that bordered Croatia. These sentiments were apparent in a speech by Labour back bench M.P., Mike Gapes:

In view of the invitation to President Tudjman to come to this country to commemorate the victory over fascism, will the Foreign Secretary study an article in a Croatian magazine, called *Magazine*, by Dinko Sakic, who was the commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp, where 10,000 Serbs died, from 1941 to 1945? That man describes Tudjman's Government as a flowering of Croatian freedom parallel to the Pavelic dictatorship, which was the ally of the Nazis.⁴¹

This politician's mention of the Ustase atrocities during the Second World War, was a powerful means of focussing his fellow Parliamentarians on the nature of one particularly bloody aspect of Balkan history. Linking any politician to the atrocities of the earlier conflict was an effective way of making a point.

⁴⁰ Ken Livingstone (Brent, East), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 29 April 1993) Vol: 223, Columns 1219-1220.

⁴¹ Mike Gapes (Ilford, South), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 3 May 1995) Vol: 259, Column 333.

Just a few days later, Mike Gapes raised the issue again. During a debate on the former Yugoslavia, he talked about how Tadjman had been part of the V.E. Day commemorations in London. This was contrasted with an overview of the stance taken by the Croatian president regarding the atrocities that had been committed in that country during the Second World War, with particular emphasis given to the way in which Tadjman had written about the Jewish population of the former Yugoslavia:

My hon. Friend mentioned Jasenovac camp and the book by President Tadjman. I hope that he will confirm that the book, as I understand it, includes an allegation that the Jewish people in Yugoslavia were in charge of their own extermination in that concentration camp, and that it forms part of an anti-semitic tinge to President Tadjman, which our Government seem to have ignored in the past few years. They were prepared to invite Tadjman here – a man who admired the fascist Pavelic Government – but they did not invite anyone representing the partisans of Yugoslavia who defeated Hitler and his armies.⁴²

What is clear here, in the extract from the speech by Mike Gapes, is that the shadow of the Second World War loomed heavily over events in the Balkans during the 1990s. Franjo Tadjman's interpretation of events in wartime Yugoslavia was controversial and led this Labour politician in particular to question the position taken by the British Government in relation to its policy with the Croatian leader.

The role played by Croatia during the Second World War was further explored by the back bench M.P. Robert Wareing in the same debate. He appropriated Croatia's wartime activities to support the stance that he took against that country. In a lengthy speech during the debate on the former Yugoslavia on 9 May, Wareing spoke in detail about the collaboration of the Croatian Ustase with the Nazis during the period of the Second World War. He was critical of the Government decision to invite Tadjman to the V.E. Day commemorations in London. Additionally, he raised the question of why no one representing the Partisans had been invited to the events.

⁴² Mike Gapes (Ilford, South), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Column 616.

Wareing then gave two examples of how figures from the wartime Ustase were being rehabilitated into contemporary Croatia:

The Ustashi leader, Mile Budak, who was executed after the war for his quisling activities, is now recognised in Croatia. Schools are named after him; a commune in Zagreb is called after him, as are streets, squares and other public institutions. He was recently described as a martyr and a Nobel prize nominee in the 1930s – but he was, in fact, the ideologue of the Pavelic state set up by Hitler in 1941.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr Gapes) pointed out the other day, in a private notice question, that one Dinko Sakic – the last commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp – had seen fit to return from exile in Australia. This war criminal, who was never brought to trial, has returned to Croatia, and has said – according to a Dalmatian periodical

–
“I am proud to have been an Ustashi.”

In the Zagreb journal *Magazin*, to which my hon. Friend referred, he said:

“I am proud of all I did. If I were offered the same duty today, I would accept it.”

Those are the people with whom, unfortunately, we found our Ministers associating during the VE day celebrations – celebrations of the defeat in Europe of fascism, which had caused the deaths of many millions of people in the second world war, including our own people.⁴³

Although this is a lengthy extract to include here, it is well worth studying in detail.

The shadow of the Ustase state loomed large in the new Croatia. Thus, the first figure mentioned, Mile Budak, whilst being one of the leading figures behind the ideology of the wartime regime was being rehabilitated into modern society in a way which would have caused offence to those who had suffered under the NDH.⁴⁴ The second figure mentioned by Wareing, Dinko Sakic, the Jasenovac camp commander was a similarly controversial person to add to the discussion. During the Second World War, the Jasenovac concentration camp was the scene of the extermination of large numbers of opponents of the fascist regime. The actual numbers that died in the camp are heavily

⁴³ Robert Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 616-618.

⁴⁴ The NDH was the fascist regime, led by Ante Pavelic, which collaborated with Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The bitter legacy of this period has been discussed by, amongst others, Michael Ignatieff. In his account, he visited the region and explored the way in which the atrocities committed some fifty years earlier continued to impact on the area. Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging* (London: Vintage, 1994).

disputed by both Serbs and Croats. Michael Ignatieff has elaborated on the topic in the account of his visit to the region:

Serbs maintain the figure is 700,000. There isn't a Serb village in central Croatia which didn't lose someone in this place. Croats insist that the number is no more than 40,000. Independent researchers have put the total number of people exterminated at Jasenovac in the region of 250,000, but no one can be sure.⁴⁵

By including a mention of the Jasenovac camp in his speech, Robert Wareing highlighted both the traumatic past of the region, as well as the disputes, both past and present, that existed between Serb and Croat in that country. Of key relevance here is the way in which, yet again, events of the Second World War period were brought into deliberations on the events in the Balkans during the 1990s. Whilst one could argue that this particular example coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the earlier conflict thus it is unsurprising that the Second World War was mentioned, it is still striking to see the significance and impact that international relations from the 1940s had some fifty years later in debates that were taking place in the House of Commons regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Later in the same debate, held on 9 May 1995, Mike Gapes elaborated further on the wartime situation in the former Yugoslavia. In a detailed description of events in the Jasenovac camp, he outlined the casualty figures and the way in which the Ustase had collaborated with the Nazis. Gapes linked the events of the 1940s with the contemporary situation in the region. For him, anyone trying to understand the politics of the area had to grasp what had taken place during the Second World War. This was illustrated towards the end of his contribution to the debate:

Reference has already been made to the former second lieutenant, Dinko Sakic, the final commander of that camp. From April 1945 onwards, the Ustashi guards at Jasenovac toiled day and night to slaughter those still surviving – Serbs, Jews and gipsies. They did so under the control of

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p22.

Dinko Sakic. The killing stopped on 2 May 1945 only when Tito's partisans finally liberated the area. Anybody who is thinking and talking about events of the past week in Croatia has to understand that context. When we hear talk of appeasement, we must understand that history and that it is a little simple to associate the partisan-led, communist-led, predominantly Serb partisan forces and their successors with the Ustashi fascists of that period in quite such a glib way.⁴⁶

Apparent here, yet again, is the way in which the events of the past hung so heavily over the contemporary situation in the former Yugoslavia. For Gapes, there were striking parallels in the behaviour of the Ustase during the Second World War, and the Croatian expulsion of the Serbian population from the Krajina towards the end of the Balkan wars. Of particular interest in his speech is the way in which similarities of behaviour were identified between different generations of the same national group. This raises the question of how the Balkans were regarded by the British political class; namely, were certain types of behaviour specific to the region and thus not surprising, or was Gapes's argument that a cloud of history hung over the region something that would be inappropriate to raise with regard to other countries. Of interest to us here is the way in which the history of the region was used so heavily as a means to explain – or understand – what was going on in the then current situation. This use of historical parallel was one that occurred frequently during the period 1991 – 1995, the duration of the various wars of secession.

The idea of the Balkans being a place where violence was endemic, and savagery inherent in the behaviour of the population is a theme which is explored by Lene Hansen, in *Security as Practice – Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*.⁴⁷ She examines the way in which a 'Balkan discourse' featured heavily in the comments made by politicians when dealing with the break-up of Yugoslavia. Hansen

⁴⁶ Mike Gapes (Ilford, South), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 637-640.

⁴⁷ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice – Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006).

argued: “With the brutal violent continuity in place, the relatively peaceful co-existence of the nationalities of the second Yugoslavia during the Cold War had to be constructed as an anomaly, as something which broke the pattern of ‘normal’ Balkan behaviour.”⁴⁸ Thus, politicians linking the contemporary conflict in the region with the events of the Second World War were able to present the new conflicts as part of a pattern of behaviour consistent with the area.

The fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 1995 provided a natural reference point for those taking part in debates regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia. As one would expect, the following extracts are all taken from Parliamentary debates that took place in the summer of 1995, thus coinciding with the commemoration of V.E. Day. Again, as with other topics examined so far, comment was not restricted to just one strand or faction of the Parliamentary party. This will be demonstrated herein, with analysis of speeches from members of both the front and back benches.

During a debate on Bosnia in May 1995, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, raised a point regarding the events commemorating the end of the Second World and the current situation in the Balkans. He asked:

On the conflict in Croatia, will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that President Tudjman of Croatia is due to arrive here on Saturday to represent his country at the Victory in Europe celebrations? Do the Government still think it appropriate that the celebration of peace in Europe should be attended by a Government who have just broken the peace? If so, will our Government take the opportunity to impress on President Tudjman that there must be no further military assaults on UN-protected areas?⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p107.

⁴⁹ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Bosnia* (Official Report, Hansard: 3 May 1995) Vol: 259, Column 328

The timing of the commemorative events coincided with a renewed Croatian offensive which sought to drive Croatian Serbs from their homes in the Krajina.⁵⁰ For this reason, the presence of President Franjo Tudjman at the events in London was, for Cook and others, a controversial move.

The anniversary of the ending of the Second World War was used by Cook in a further speech just one week later during a House of Commons debate on the former Yugoslavia. Cook used the commemorations marking the earlier conflict to highlight the contemporary events in the Balkans. For Cook, there was a particular poignancy to the two events coinciding: “[y]esterday the House did not sit as a mark of respect for the 50th anniversary of peace in Europe. That gives added point to finding ourselves debating today the outbreak of war in one part of Europe.”⁵¹ Cook’s sentiments here tie in with the comments attributed to various speakers earlier, regarding war crimes and genocide. Due to the fact that both conflicts were European – or started on that continent – a theme regularly raised by politicians was that Europe should not allow such atrocities to occur again. Of interest is the way in which the break-up of Yugoslavia was discussed in a manner very different from other conflicts. For example, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was not debated in as much detail as the wars in Yugoslavia. It is difficult to suggest definitive reasons for this; one explanation could be that British politicians found the violent break-up of Yugoslavia more shocking as it was happening within two hours flying time from London, and that it was taking place on a continent where the memory of the Second World War held more resonance.

⁵⁰ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin & BBC Books, first published 1995, revised edition 1996) pp353-363.

⁵¹ Robin Cook (Livingston), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 589-592.

Back bench Labour politicians similarly held forth on the topic of the timing of the Second World War commemorations with what was taking place in the Balkans. Robert Wareing, a figure who has featured consistently throughout this thesis, commented on the presence of the Croatian President in London during the commemorative events. He said:

I consider it outrageous that not only Tudjman but his vice-president were invited to the celebrations here in London. They were not invited to other capitals. Indeed, the Israeli President refused to meet the Croatian president recently, when his country's delegation opened the memorial museum of the holocaust in Israel. According to the *New York Times*, the invitation to Tudjman to attend the opening of the holocaust museum was an insult to 6 million dead Jews. It certainly was.⁵²

Of interest here is the way in which the V.E. Day commemorative events in London were used as a means to criticise the Croatian President and offer a commentary on the stance that he had taken during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Tudjman, as has been documented here earlier, was a divisive figure who was seen by his critics as having reintroduced a fascist government into Croatia. Thus, as Wareing points out here, the Croatian President's presence at a Second World War commemorative event was controversial.

Speaking in the same debate, Malcolm Wicks also mentioned the juxtaposition of commemorative events for V.E. Day with the conflict in the Balkans:

I rise to speak in the debate because, like other hon. Members who have noted it, I too am struck by the coincidence that yesterday our nation celebrated the 50th anniversary of VE day and today we are discussing the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. It is a coincidence of timing that should challenge us all and encourage thoughtful and sombre reflection about where we are in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia. It puts into context all of the talk that we have heard recently about 50 years of peace in Europe. In Bosnia, just two hours flying time from London, we find experiences that mock our pretensions about the strengths of collective security in Europe.⁵³

⁵² Robert Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 616-618.

⁵³ Malcolm Wicks (Croydon, North), *Former Yugoslavia* (Official Report, Hansard: 9 May 1995) Vol: 259, Columns 634 – 637.

Wicks's speech provides us with a useful summary of the points raised regarding the fiftieth anniversary of the war's end and the break-up of Yugoslavia. He succinctly highlights much of what has been discussed by the previous speakers analysed in this chapter.

This examination of the impact of the events of the Second World War on the debates that took place over the break-up of Yugoslavia highlights some interesting points. Firstly, the majority of people who make reference to Yugoslavia's war time past present a critique of the Croats and the atrocities committed by that national group during the Second World War. This is especially evident when discussing the visit of President Tudjman to the 50th Anniversary commemorations in London. It is that national group which seems to be singled out for negative attention by the politicians; interestingly, the only M.P. to offer a broader reading of events is Ken Livingstone. He gives a more detailed analysis of Croatian history in the years prior to the Second World War. However, it would be wrong to infer from these remarks that the Labour Party was pro-Serb. Whilst the examples that I have shown suggest a high degree of anti-Croat sentiment, there is not a direct binary opposition. Instead, what is apparent is much more subtle than that. There are no blatantly pro-Serb comments: instead, remarks which single out another group focus on the communist Partisan guerrillas who fought against the fascist Croat regime. Although there were large numbers of Serbs within that group, their leader Tito, the post war leader of Yugoslavia, was a Croat. This may seem a subtle point, but the nature of the Balkan wars of the early 1990s, meant that few Labour Party back benchers, perhaps with the exception of Robert Wareing, demonstrated overt shows of support for the Serbian

cause. As Phythian has stated: “From the outset, it was clear that Serbia bore the greatest responsibility for the destruction being inflicted on the region.”⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how events of the Second World War impacted on the contributions that politicians made to the different debates that took place regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia. Again, as with earlier parts of this study, comments came from both front and back bench Members of Parliament. Indeed the only distinction seems to be that members of the Shadow Cabinet tended to avoid making points of comparison with the Holocaust. They restricted their comments to making observations regarding ‘genocide’ instead. Whilst this could be described as being a small distinction, it is perhaps noteworthy for the reason that more high profile members of the Labour Party might have wished to avoid making comments that could be viewed as controversial. The only exception to this was Clare Short, who, as has been previously mentioned, is well known for taking a more individual approach to politics than that of a conventional front bench politician. However, this difference aside, what is apparent is that politicians from all parts of the Labour Party, both front and back bench, harnessed the powerful issues of genocide and war crimes in order to call for more intervention. Many of these same politicians used the image of the failed appeasement policy of the 1930s when calling for tougher action. Indeed, this can even be seen as the harbinger for the muscular foreign policy orchestrated by Tony Blair in his subsequent premiership.

The Second World War experiences of Yugoslavia were also employed by Labour Party politicians in debates. As has been demonstrated, there were a number

⁵⁴ Mark Phythian, *Op cit.*, p113.

of remarks that could be described as anti-Croat. However, the politicians who made these comments cannot be categorised as one group; speakers included those who advocated a tougher policy in the region as well as those who did not support such a stance.

Fifty years after its conclusion, the legacy of the Second World War was such that it was used as a harbinger of the worst that could happen to the continent if intervention was not taken in the former Yugoslavia. The power of the imagery from the earlier conflict was such that comparisons were used so as to spur the government into action. However, the longevity of the Balkan wars of secession shows that the attempts to utilise the earlier conflict as a catalyst for action were futile. The thesis has demonstrated that the Second World War cast a substantial shadow over Parliamentary debates about the break-up of Yugoslavia. The impact of the earlier war served to act as a catalyst for the debates which have been analysed herein. Lasting memories and images of the Second World War were used as a platform on which to offer opinion on all manner of issues; for many politicians, such knowledge was at the root of the debates which determined topics such as intervention; thus, the conflict was used as a framing device with which to inform the themes examined in the earlier chapters of this thesis.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ As a final footnote to this chapter, it is interesting to note that Brendan Simms's detailed study of the break-up of Yugoslavia, which has been referred to throughout this thesis, is entitled *Unfinest Hour – Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001). 'Unfinest Hour' is a clear reference to 'finest hour', the phrase used in Winston Churchill's famous speech to the House of Commons in 1940.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the way in which the Parliamentary Labour Party responded to the break-up of Yugoslavia during the early 1990s. There were a multitude of different responses by Labour Party politicians towards the break-up of Yugoslavia. This could be expected, especially when considering that this was the first major conflict to affect Europe since the end of the Second World War. However, what has been demonstrated herein is that there were a complex series of opinions and positions in debates which cannot be easily categorised. It is far too simplistic to describe the various splits and factions as being emblematic of a front bench and back bench divide: that type of binary split would be expected. Instead, what is demonstrated throughout the thesis is a complicated web of alliances and opposing views.

As one would perhaps expect, the Shadow Cabinet, that is the Labour Party front bench, remained united on different aspects of policy that were discussed within Parliament. Both front benches of the House of Commons tended to take a bi-partisan approach to the break-up of Yugoslavia. What this thesis has demonstrated is that the Labour Shadow Cabinet supported the Government's position, the only exception to this being that they called for the implementation of air strikes slightly before Major's Government. This assessment of the Labour front bench is shared by both Mark Phythian and Carole Hodge. Phythian describes the two front benches as being "at one."¹ Hodge offers a similar assessment, stating how John Cunningham spoke out, "endorsing government policy" and that David Clark "confirmed Labour solidarity with the government position."²

¹ Mark Phythian, *The Labour Party, War and International Relations, 1945-2006* (London: Routledge, 2007) p110.

² Carole Hodge, *Britain and the Balkans, 1991 until present* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) p43, p89.

However, the back bench M.P.s present us with a wealth of different opinions and positions, which were informed by a number of motivating factors. Many back bench M.P.s remained loyal to the position taken by their front bench colleagues. However, in turn, many figures within the Labour Party presented strongly held views which were in direct contrast to the Shadow Cabinet. Tony Benn and Robert Wareing would be two such figures. Throughout this study, Benn spoke very much in the mould of a traditional old Labour figure, promoting strongly held beliefs in the role and power of the United Nations. Robert Wareing, however, consistently demonstrated a position informed by a stance of moral equivalence; he was reluctant to align himself with any one particular 'side' in the conflicts which he viewed as a civil war. Opponents of the position held by the Shadow Cabinet then, were not always informed by the same reasons.

To add to the complexity of divides and different opinions held in the Labour Party regarding the break-up of Yugoslavia, it is important to state that some figures that one would normally align together, that is, holding similar views and taken from the same part of the party were often on opposing sides of debates. One such example would be Tony Benn and Chris Mullin. Both figures are on the left wing of the party, but held opposing views on the implementation of air strikes. Likewise, Tony Banks, who would also be seen as being from the traditional wing of the party. He consistently took a strong line in debates about action that should be taken in the Balkans, very often calling for policies which were not promoted by the Labour Party front bench.

The thesis has demonstrated that there was strong support for the role of the United Nations. As one would expect with the Labour Party, this was very much the preferred institution for bringing resolution to the conflicts. However, the failure of

that body to succeed in the region, whilst not attracting criticism of the concept of the United Nations, led some politicians to look towards NATO for bringing the wars to a conclusion. Thus, it is possible to identify the antecedents of a 'Blairite' style interventionist foreign policy apparent even before Tony Blair had become leader of the party. In examining the way in which institutions were discussed by Labour Party politicians during Parliamentary debates, it is also important to consider the impact of the European Union on the proceedings. Whilst one would expect some kind of split between Europhile and Euro-sceptic M.P.s, that is again, too simplistic a distinction. It is fair to say that some figures used fairly colourful language when discussing the failings of the E.U. and its attempts to deal with the break-up of Yugoslavia. However, it is important to note that some critics of the institution's policy in the region used measured language which did not demonstrate a natural antipathy to the E.U.

An examination of intervention, and the different forms which this can take, forms a considerable part of this thesis. What is clear is that it is relatively simple for a party to gain broad agreement on general 'umbrella' terms such as 'humanitarian intervention'. It is, however, much more problematic to get consensus within a party on more specific, detailed policy examples. Thus, each of the different types of intervention that were mooted at different points in the years between 1991-1995 received extremely varying responses from the party within Parliament. As is shown throughout this thesis, the type of intervention suggested ran the whole gamut from economic sanctions right through to military action, including the deployment of ground troops. However, it is not possible to suggest a straightforward way in which to label politicians speaking either in favour or against any particular policy. As has

been demonstrated above, back bench figures were divided or, for that matter, united on all manner of issues.

The legacy of the Second World War loomed large in Parliamentary proceedings determining British policy towards the Balkans. Appeasement appeared as a spectre, and was a useful tool with which to strengthen calls for more effective intervention. Politicians, who mentioned appeasement in their speeches, were also those who demanded more effective, strong involvement in the region; this group included M.P.s such as Max Madden, Malcolm Wicks and Calum MacDonald. Yugoslavia's troubled wartime past was also used within debates, and this increased in resonance coinciding with the commemorations to mark fifty years since the ending of the war. The wartime role of the different national groups within Yugoslavia was used to inform debates regarding the present, particularly with reference to the Partisans, and their military campaign against the Nazis. This was seen as a reason to oppose intervention in the contemporary conflict; the lack of local knowledge about the terrain would give any international coalition a severe disadvantage if engaged in military operations. Thus, Tam Dalyell who spoke out regularly against any further military intervention in the former Yugoslavia was one such figure to describe the war time experiences of that country. In addition to this, Croatia's links to Nazi Germany were used as means to raise questions on the current situation. A significant back bench figure to talk about Croatia's fascist past, was Robert Wareing. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, he frequently talked about the moral equivalence argument with regard to intervention in the region. Using the contentious phrase 'civil war' to describe events, he was anti-interventionist and unwilling to place sole responsibility on one national group. As has been mentioned previously, he was

viewed as having pro-Serbian sentiments, which were not representative of the wider feeling amongst the Labour back benches of Westminster.

The impact of the Holocaust, genocide and war crimes was never far from the debates when politicians were calling for more decisive action in the region. Interestingly though, the Labour Party front bench did not use the Holocaust as a means by which to demand further intervention in the region. Clearly, politicians such as Cunningham, and Smith did not seek to employ the term 'Holocaust' for the purpose of political debate. Using the term 'genocide' was a more generalised way to describe events that were occurring in the former Yugoslavia, with slightly different resonances to 'Holocaust'.

A final point of consideration demonstrated throughout the thesis is the way in which Labour Party politicians regularly engaged in debates on a wide range of issues regarding the wars in the former Yugoslavia. The House of Commons is frequently criticised for its confrontational nature, and politicians are often viewed with little esteem. However, what has been demonstrated here is that a large number of Labour Party politicians spoke regularly on issues regarding the Balkans. The fact that these M.P.s frequently contributed to debates on this particular foreign policy issue shows that they had an interest and a commitment to events that were taking place in the former Yugoslavia. Their motivation for doing so was varied, but their participation in these discussions demonstrated a desire to be involved in informing policy on a topic which, to many people, was of little direct consequence to Britain, although one could perhaps argue that some M.P.s were influenced by constituency concerns. For this reason then, Brendan Simms's comments regarding the failure of the Labour Party to place pressure on the Conservative Government is unfair. Although there was no concerted mass campaign by the Labour Party, certain individuals, for example, Max

Madden, Malcolm Wicks, Tony Banks and Calum MacDonald, regularly spoke out in favour of more decisive action in the Balkans. Of course, all of these politicians were in the party of opposition, thus they had no chance of seeing their demands come to fruition. By extension of this point, one could ask whether these same M.P.s would have made similar contributions to debates if they had been in the party of government and thus in a real position to implement more proactive policies. For example, it is much easier to suggest military action when a political party is not in power as they do not have the means with which to reach their goal.

The thesis has demonstrated that there are certain themes as outlined in the literature review of chapter one which are pertinent to the findings herein. Firstly, the works on Britain and the Balkans, notably by Brendan Simms and Carole Hodge demonstrate that there was a lack of coherent policy implemented by the Conservative Party, and that the Labour Party front bench was more or less in agreement with the Government approach. However, this thesis differs from those two works in that it demonstrates, in detail, that there was an ongoing participation and commitment, specifically by back bench M.P.s, in arguing for a more proactive policy in the former Yugoslavia. The second body of literature, that is, the examination of the use of stereotypes when describing the Balkans, raises interesting questions for the findings of this thesis. What has been shown herein, is that although, certain hackneyed phrases and long held views were employed specifically regarding the Balkans, there were also entrenched attitudes displayed towards other national groups, either in Europe, or on a broader level, including the USA, via its membership of NATO. Thus, Tony Benn was critical of any extension to NATO's remit within the region; by extension, this would reflect his long held views on the USA and Russia. Likewise, Dennis Skinner's assessment of Germany's role in the ongoing diplomatic activity

also demonstrates a suspicion or mistrust of another country. Thus, the use of stereotypes within these Parliamentary debates, to describe either a particular country or institution, was not necessarily confined to the Balkans. Indeed then, politicians demonstrated a similar level of criticism or anxiety about a number of countries, or institutions. The literature which outlines New Labour in office examines the party's stance on international relations. This thesis shows how the more pro-interventionist policies espoused by some back bench politicians in these Parliamentary debates can be seen to have developed into a discourse close to the foreign policy of the later New Labour government. As has been shown, although Tony Blair only became the leader of the Labour Party towards the end of this period of study, his speeches already showed a more concerted policy of strong intervention. The fourth group of literature studied, that is, on the traditional approach of Labour Party foreign policy, also resonates throughout this thesis. Those who spoke in debates opposing intervention tended to be politicians who held most faith in the role of the United Nations, that is, held a belief in the power of internationalism in foreign affairs. As was demonstrated in chapter two, that is a key tenet of a traditional approach to left-wing foreign policy, and was still effective in the 1990s.

APPENDIX 1

Hansard Parliamentary Debates

Air Attack (Bosnia)	Vol: 238, 1 March 1994
Air Strikes (Bosnia)	Vol: 237, 10 February 1994
Bosnia	Vol: 222, 14 April 1993
Bosnia	Vol: 223, 19 April 1993
Bosnia	Vol: 223, 29 April 1993
Bosnia	Vol: 226, 11 June 1993
Bosnia	Vol: 237, 7 February 1994
Bosnia	Vol: 241, 18 April 1994
Bosnia	Vol: 242, 25 April 1994
Bosnia	Vol: 250, 21 November 1994
Bosnia	Vol: 251, 7 December 1994
Bosnia	Vol: 259, 3 May 1995
Bosnia	Vol: 260, 31 May 1995
Bosnia	Vol: 263, 12 July 1995
Bosnia	Vol: 263, 19 July 1995
Bosnia (Further Deployment)	Vol: 216, 14 January 1993
Bosnia (Peace Settlement)	Vol: 268, 12 December 1995
British Forces (Bosnia)	Vol: 239, 10 March 1994
Business of the House	Vol: 222, 15 April 1993
Business of the House	Vol: 236, 27 January 1994
Debate on the Address	Vol: 233, 18 November 1993
Defence	Vol: 264, 17 October 1995
Defence Estimates	Vol: 264, 16 October 1995
Economic Summit & CSCE	Vol: 211, 13 July 1992
European Communities	Vol: 214, 24 November 1992
European Communities	Vol: 234, 9 December 1993
European Communities (Amendment) Bill	Vol: 213, 4 November 1992
European Communities (Amendment) Bill	Vol: 215, 2 December 1992
European Communities (Amendment) Bill	Vol: 222, 30 March 1993
European Communities (Amendment) Bill	Vol: 225, 20 May 1993

European Community (UK Presidency)	Vol: 210, 2 July 1992
European Council (Birmingham)	Vol: 212, 20 October 1992
European Council (Copenhagen)	Vol: 227, 23 June 1993
European Council (Edinburgh)	Vol: 216, 14 December 1992
European Council (Lisbon)	Vol: 210, 29 June 1992
European Council (Luxembourg)	Vol: 194, 1 July 1991
European Council (Special Meeting)	Vol: 231, 1 November 1993
European Summit (Cannes)	Vol: 262, 28 June 1995
Foreign Affairs and Defence	Vol: 198, 1 November 1991
Foreign Affairs and Defence	Vol: 233, 19 November 1993
Foreign Affairs and Defence	Vol: 250, 17 November 1994
Foreign Affairs and Defence	Vol: 267, 16 November 1995
Former Yugoslavia	Vol: 259, 9 May 1995
Former Yugoslavia	Vol: 267, 22 November 1995
Gorazde	Vol: 241, 12 April 1994
International Peacekeeping	Vol: 219, 23 February 1993
Iraq (Military Action)	Vol: 216, 13 January 1993
NATO Summit	Vol: 198, 12 November 1991
NATO Summit	Vol: 235, 12 January 1994
No-Fly Zone (Bosnia)	Vol: 222, 1 April 1993
Peacekeeping Operations	Vol: 234, 13 December 1993
Points of Order	Vol: 238, 28 February 1994
Royal Air Force	Vol: 259, 4 May 1995
Statement on the Defence Estimates	Vol: 230, 18 October 1993
The Army	Vol: 219, 24 February 1993
The Gulf and the RAF	Vol: 217, 21 January 1993
United Nations	Vol: 215, 4 December 1992
United Nations Operations	Vol: 212, 25 September 1992
Yugoslavia	Vol: 194, 3 July 1991
Yugoslavia	Vol: 196, 14 October 1991
Yugoslavia	Vol: 205, 5 March 1992
Yugoslavia	Vol: 229, 26 July 1993
Yugoslavia (Sanctions)	Vol: 208, 2 June 1992

Hansard Oral Answers (also includes *Written Answers to Questions*)

Questions are listed in Hansard by department-of-state. Each sub-heading (e.g. Bosnia) might contain a number of questions asked by different politicians. If there is more than one entry of a particular sub-heading on the same date, this means that a number of questions were asked at different times during the same day. Different departments take questions on specific days of the week. During the period studied here, Foreign Office questions were normally dealt with on a Wednesday, and Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Defence – Bosnia	Vol: 223, 20 April 1993
Defence – Bosnia	Vol: 261, 6 June 1995
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Air Strikes	Vol: 238, 2 March 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Albania & Macedonia	Vol: 246, 13 July 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs - Arab-Israel Dispute	Vol:216, 13 January 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Baghdad (US Attack)	Vol: 216, 14 July 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Balkans	Vol: 218, 10 February 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 216, 12 January 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 214, 25 November 1992
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs - Bosnia	Vol: 216, 13 January 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 222, 14 April 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 226, 16 June 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 228, 14 July 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 236, 2 February 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 238, (No: 59) 2 March 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 238, (No: 60) 2 March 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 246, 13 July 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 251, 14 December 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 257, 29 March 1995
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 261, 7 June 1995
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 264, 25 October 1995
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia	Vol: 264, 25 October 1995

Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Bosnia-Herzegovina	Vol: 214, 25 November 1992
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Eastern Europe	Vol: 231, 3 November 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – European Foreign Policies	Vol: 231, 3 November 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Former Yugoslavia	Vol: 264, 25 October 1995
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – G7 Summit (Tokyo)	Vol: 228, 14 July 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Intergovernmental Conferences	Vol: 193, 26 June 1991
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Kosovo	Vol: 214, 25 November 1992
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Macedonia	Vol: 226, 16 June 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Serbia & Montenegro	Vol: 222, 14 April 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Tuzla	Vol: 238, 2 March 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – WEU	Vol: 264, 25 October 1995
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 191, 22 May 1991
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 201, 18 December 1991
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 208, 3 June 1992
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 216, 13 January 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 218, 10 February 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 224, 12 May 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 226, 16 June 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 231, 5 November 1993
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 236, 26 January 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 236, 1 February 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 238, (No: 59) 2 March 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 238, (No: 60) 2 March 1994
Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs – Yugoslavia	Vol: 246, 13 July 1994
Home Office – Yugoslavia	Vol: 214, 25 November 1992
Home Office – Yugoslavia	Vol: 214, 26 November 1992
Northern Ireland – Peace Process	Vol: 268, 7 December 1995

Northern Ireland – Political Initiatives	Vol: 217, 21 January 1993
Northern Ireland – Security Situation	Vol: 242, 28 April 1994
PMQs	Vol: 216, 15 December 1992
PMQs	Vol: 222, 1 April 1993
PMQs	Vol: 222, 15 April 1993
PMQs	Vol: 223, 20 April 1993
PMQs	Vol: 223, 29 April 1993
PMQs	Vol: 237, 10 February 1994
PMQs	Vol: 241, 19 April 1994
PMQs	Vol: 263, 18 July 1995

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