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**COMMUNICATING STRATEGICALLY:
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND
ORGANISATIONAL LEGITIMACY**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

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Abstract

This thesis aims to facilitate an understanding of some of the critical debates in public relations theory and practice. It joins others in contributing to a shift from a functional systems-based public relations paradigm to one where public relations is transparently seen as playing a role in shaping democracy in a global society.

The research analyses NATO's communication operations in the Kosovo Campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, examining the case from a number of different perspectives. The thesis contributes to the body of knowledge of public relations practices and how, in this case, they were used to inform and persuade publics of the moral cause of a bombing mission to achieve specific strategic organisational and communication goals. Further, it contextualises the case of NATO as an organisation facing a crisis in legitimacy following the end of the Cold War. It demonstrates how the Kosovo Campaign provided a vehicle to transform NATO's identity while retaining military capabilities, to make the organisation relevant to the global demands of the 21st century. In this way, NATO could claim a "unique self" and maintain its credibility and relevance.

The thesis argues that NATO's public relations campaign was successful in maintaining both credibility and popular support for a 78-day bombing campaign within the 19 nations of the Alliance. The campaign allowed NATO to claim that it was the only organisation that could provide

security and stability, as well as be the main bulwark of the defence of Western values in a rapidly globalising and changing world. Moreover, by framing the Kosovo air campaign as a humanitarian intervention, NATO was not only able to legitimise its actions but transform its military might with an acceptable human face in order to achieve its broader ideological goals in Europe.

This thesis demonstrates how military interventions on behalf of powerful interests can be legitimised if the appropriate public relations framework is used and acceptable communication strategies employed. It suggests how citizens of democratic countries can be led to support decision-makers who present themselves as acting altruistically even when their actions may be self-interested.

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List of Abbreviations

BDA	Bomb Damage Assessments
EU	European Union
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IFOR	Implementation Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Allied Occupation Force in Kosovo
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MLF	Multilateral Force
MOC	Media Operations Centre
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Coordinating Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
RRF	Rapid Reaction Force
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
SACLANT	Supreme Allied Command, Atlantic
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
WEU	Western European Union

CHAPTER 1

Locating the study

This thesis takes the unusual approach of using recent theories in public relations and organisational communication to underpin an extended examination of legitimacy issues surrounding NATO's (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) intervention in Kosovo. It uses the disciplines to appreciate NATO's legitimacy management challenges and, to a lesser extent, it uses the Kosovo case to explore the relevance of those disciplines to an understanding of international crises and strategy.

Support for this unusual approach can be found in NATO spokesman, Dr. Jamie Shea's description of his work leading up to, and during, the 78-day period of the Kosovo Campaign as the "ultimate public relations challenge" (Walser, 2000, p. 34). The thesis situates NATO's challenge as being to establish its continuing relevance to a post-Cold War world. It argues that although the organisation had adapted to take account of the changing political environment following the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO still needed to provide a rationale for its continuing survival that included retaining military capabilities. As a result, NATO undertook a major public relations and public information effort to persuade publics of the legitimacy and validity of the Kosovo intervention and, through that

intervention, the relevance of the organisation to the new geopolitical environment.

The thesis explores the ultimate public relations challenge through a critical analysis of NATO's public discourses about the Kosovo Campaign. By examining the communication strategies and tactics of NATO in this context, it makes a contribution to new theorisation in public relations by contextualising them in a recent case that illuminates contentious debates around central issues in the field (L'Etang, 2005; L'Etang & Pieczka, 2006; McKie, 2001; McKie & Munshi, 2007, forthcoming; Moloney, 2006). The fundamental issue of organisational legitimacy for NATO expands the usefulness of the case study in theorising the complexities of achieving and maintaining legitimacy for a supranational organisation.

A case in point

NATO's Kosovo Campaign offers an interesting vehicle to study the role of public relations in global issues, especially in terms of neglected issues of power. The campaign serves to highlight how power relations work in a global context and to illustrate how legitimacy issues connect military campaigns with moral imperatives. The thesis will argue that the latter connections operate in similar fashion to the processes whereby corporate identities link with corporate social responsibilities. The approaches enable a wider critical examination of how a public relations campaign can confirm organisational legitimacy even in the extreme conditions of

conflict. At the same time, the Kosovo Campaign sheds light on how recently instituted organisational changes can become embedded as a matter of natural course in the organisation's identity and image.

At this early stage in locating the study, for the sake of declaring personal factors impacting on the study, I put on record that my own particular interest in the developments and conflicts of the Balkan peninsular also contributed to the choice of the Kosovo Campaign as an object of study. Moreover, that personal interest also influenced me to analyse the case in a particular way and to follow a particular conceptual structure. As Stake (2005) points out: "In private and personal ways, ideas are structured, highlighted, subordinated, connected, embedded *in* contexts, embedded *with* illustration, and laced with favour and doubt" (p. 455). Therefore, I recognise that there is a "natural selection" of events, issues and concerns that are then subjected to my own personal interpretations. As a counterbalance, however, the thesis is also shaped methodologically by critical discourse analysis, which offers a structured means of analysis that lays open its choice of data, theoretical approach and assumptions. Critical discourse analysis enables the uncovering of different perspectives about the way discourses are constructed and the way various meanings may be construed.

Another reason for the selection of this particular campaign is that the military conflict foregrounds the blurring of the line between public

relations and propaganda. Demarcation disputes about where, and if, that line can be drawn have recently re-emerged in public relations. Since what Moloney (2006) calls “the Grunigian paradigm” (p. x) was established in public relations academic literature and teaching, the term “propaganda” has had very limited consideration within the field’s agenda. That paradigm, which was crucial in establishing a clear demarcation between public relations and propaganda, has been the subject of critical debate in recent years. Specific critiques include Brown’s (2006) questioning of the division’s historical warrant and St. John III’s (2006) revisiting of Ivy Lee’s 1913-1914 railroad campaign to make the case for “ethical propaganda within a democracy” (p. 221), and more general criticisms include Roper (2005b), L’Etang (2005; 2006a), McKie and Munshi (2007, forthcoming) and Weaver, Motion and Roper (2006).

Moloney (2006) has carried the propaganda-public relations dispute to the core of the Grunigian paradigm by contending that “public relations is not the search for communicative symmetries, but instead the search for communicative advantages that strengthens the interests of those it services” (p. x). His view contradicts the Grunig public relations excellence model of two-way symmetry in public relations (Grunig, 2001, 1992; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig & Hunt, 1984) and Moloney (2006), instead of differentiating the two terms, categorises public relations as “weak propaganda” (p. 165). Moloney’s categorisation is gathering increasing support (Brown, 2006; Mackey, 2007) and has assisted in

moving public relations beyond the Grunig models and contributed to a break in the established paradigm. Examination of the Kosovo Campaign helps illuminate these debates because such issues emerge more forcefully during war and conflict where partiality on matters of life and death make charges of – the other side – using propaganda more evident.

Context and content

This thesis also contributes to research that stresses the importance of examining public relations practices in terms of the context in which they occur. Contemporary culture has a past but public relations seems to live in an “eternal” present, that is, in the constant (re)definition of the concept in terms of the needs of the clients and organisations that use public relations (Cropp & Pincus, 2001). In countering this trend, the thesis attempts to show that increased understanding is possible when the practice is analysed over time.

These deeper historical contexts have not fared well in public relations. McKie (2001) has also suggested that their absence has been compounded by an accompanying insularity that restricts the exchanges between public relations and a variety of other disciplines such as media, political science and international relations. The thesis also contributes to public relations research by countering this insularity through mobilising a variety of discourses to extend the field of public relations enquiry and range of intellectual inputs. More specifically, it supports and builds on L’Etang’s

(2006b) suggestion that public relations and international relations share common ground, particularly in terms of “ethical and political issues which arise from a number of their practitioners servicing large and powerful collectivities” (p. 382). Accordingly, the research makes some forays into political philosophy especially when the duties and obligations of these supranational organisations are discussed in terms of their relationships with publics.

When governments or politically-oriented supranational organisations communicate with their publics for particular persuasive purposes, they are often considered to be engaging in propaganda. By colonising public relations into the realm of politics, these bodies are attempting to make their propaganda seem less like propaganda and more respectable and, at same time, aiming to make themselves more respectable.

In this thesis the NATO spokesman, Dr. Jamie Shea, is a central actor in the Kosovo case. His reference to “the ultimate public relations challenge” put NATO’s communication practices firmly within more of a peacetime frame in the dissemination of information and was more concerned with the persuasion of publics to support a legitimate intervention for humanitarian purposes. There are many examples drawn from the press briefings in which Shea refers to the other side’s propaganda (Serbia, President Milošević) as opposed to the truth and the facts that NATO tells in support of what is actually occurring in the theatre of war. It is possible

to suggest, therefore, that Shea was willing to own up to public relations activities so as to carefully avoid any charge of NATO indulging in propaganda.

Openly personal and political: Playing the *bricoleur*, producing the *bricolage*

In qualitative research practices, Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) discuss the term *bricoleur* which may be translated as “a maker of quilts” (p. 4). The anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss understood it to mean “a kind of professional do-it-yourself person” (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17). I understand the term to mean that the researcher draws together threads and, using a variety of tools, produces a particular interpretation of an event, an organisation or indeed a society or culture. The “interpretive *bricoleur* then produces a bricolage – that is a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 4).

My own academic and life history influences my sympathy with the Lévi-Straussian perspective. This arose through my earlier research as an anthropologist doing ethnographic fieldwork for a Masters thesis in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia in 1973 (Schoenberger, 1975). That situation forced me to reflect upon the implications of international politics, the politics of hunger and the power of hegemonic ideologies underpinning corrupt systems. I also witnessed the violent overthrow of these systems and the establishment of other corrupt systems to replace them. Thus, my

personal worldview is significantly influenced by issues of power and dominance, inequality and injustice and my intellectual allegiances have been influenced by anthropology, and especially revisionist anthropology.

At the time of carrying out my ethnographic fieldwork, the dominant paradigm within anthropological theory was to provide functional descriptive ethnographies of pre-industrial societies which contributed to the knowledge of diverse cultures and societies. More recent research theories provide more complex accounts. In contemporary theory, in writing up the material from ethnographic research, the author of the *bricolage* is seen to be piecing together a set of representations to reveal a complex situation. Moving beyond functionalism and objective description, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000b), in their authoritative *Handbook of Qualitative Research* observe: “The interpretive *bricoleur* understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 6).

My personal perspective is closely associated with my own heritage and life experience. My father and my husband were both survivors of the Holocaust in Europe. This makes me painfully aware of the effects of injustice, discrimination and war, and in particular, the uses of propaganda to justify and legitimate regimes and to convince citizens that particular actions are justified. Beyond this, my husband’s experiences as a

young child hiding from the Nazis in the partisan-held region of Yugoslavia have forced me to confront my own biases in this research project. I declare this here because, as Fairclough (1989) points out, it is important to “acknowledge these influences, rather than affecting a spurious neutrality” (p. 5).

Given that these biases exist, it is important for the researcher to acknowledge them and align their research accordingly. For this study, critical theory provides the means whereby these biases can be acknowledged and harnessed for the greater good of human society. Deetz (2005) comments that he suspects “everyone coming to critical theory has some degree of anger at social injustice and some love of the potential in human sociality” (p. 90). The result is that critical theory is as much a way of living as a theory. In public relations, L’Etang (2005) agrees that it is critical theory that “encourages us to be self-aware and transparent in the way we think, write and teach” (p. 522). I hope that this autobiographical account will serve to alert the reader to possible biases in interpretation and take them into account.

Kosovo: A “hinge” in history

As an organisation at the centre of European security, NATO needed Kosovo possibly more than Kosovo needed NATO. Many predicted NATO’s demise as an organisation after the end of the Cold War and expected its replacement by a looser grouping of nations better suited to the new

environment (Duffield, 1994-5). This thesis tracks how NATO persisted and changed its *raison d'être* in line with the changing political environment.

The thesis argues that NATO's intervention in Kosovo provided a "hinge" in history. The intervention changed the way people thought about war and also changed the way that wars were fought. Furthermore, it was a war fought without a United Nations mandate. It was the first war to be initiated and concluded by the use of air power alone and it was initiated ostensibly for protecting human rights. As a result, NATO also had to wage an important public relations campaign to persuade people that in spite of the fact that international legal processes were ignored, this was a just war fought for the right reasons.

Public relations was used to inform key publics and also to ensure military goals could be met. As part of its contribution to being a "hinge" in history, this war was not fought for territory but for the dissemination of Western democratic values. Through the intervention, Western Europeans could demonstrate these values to the people who were still part of the transitional economies of Eastern Europe. It was an exhibition of how things "might" look in the future.

The Kosovo situation also presents an excellent case to look at one of the primary questions facing a globalised public today: "how do we come to believe what we believe?" Perceptions of global issues are many and

varied but are generally formed from social practices that are prevalent within society. They tend to be reinforced by the dominant coalition, of which public relations is an integral part (Berger, 2005). Large organisations and, in this case, a huge supranational organisation, *need* people to believe that their actions are valid and justified. This belief maintains their legitimacy in their own eyes as well as those of international publics. They also need to maintain their standing and validity amongst other organisations of similar stature, as well as those nations that contribute financially to their existence.

The Kosovo Campaign is a complex tapestry of interwoven threads. It provides the opportunity to examine a specific example of social and political change to extrapolate the findings to provide insight into how we come to believe what we believe about our globalised world. Such beliefs reflect evolving changes in our value systems. They impact on what we would like to believe about how political events occur and help shape worldviews that are also in transition. The Kosovo Campaign also provides insight into how national governments and supranational alliances cooperate, and conflict, in the shaping of a new world order.

Public relations as practice

Beyond questions of knowledge and politics, this research offers one response to L'Etang's (2005) call for more critical case studies to supply multiple perspectives on our globalising world and to supply a "broader

understanding of public relations as a practice” (p. 523). This case study particularly lends itself to a critical approach because NATO is a supranational organisation which is politically based. It is a complex organisation concerned with power relations as opposed to the more functional operations of commercially-based corporations. In this case, public relations practice is transparently playing a role in shaping democracy in a globalised world. By taking a critical approach, this project goes some way in examining the socio-political issues at the turn of the millennium. It draws on multidisciplinary material to go beyond describing the discourse structures by seeking to explain them in terms of the way they confirm and reproduce, as well as legitimate or challenge, the systems of power and dominance in society (van Dijk, 2001).

Many studies in public relations are still concerned with providing ballast to Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) four models of public relations and Grunig’s (1992) promotion of excellence in public relations. However, this study does not revisit the tensions between functionalist and critical perspectives in public relations, but rather takes L’Etang’s (2005) advice that critical work has no need of justification or even to make “formulaic acknowledgement” (p. 523) of earlier functional work.

By taking a critical approach, this thesis does not seek to dismiss or attack the functionalist perspective (Grunig, 2006), but rather uses it to enhance and broaden understanding of the field of public relations. Critical

research enables and enhances this understanding by identifying dominant power relations and examining the dominant narratives present in the case. It questions how public relations is used to legitimise and maintain the organisation's position in society (Gower, 2006) as well as its role in democratic society.

This project takes up the challenge of analysing the Kosovo Campaign in terms of the public relations strategies and tactics and how they were used in maintaining public confidence and acquiescence to offensive action.

One major question that arises in this analysis is how propaganda and public relations often fall within the same definition and yet, being accused of using propaganda is somehow so much worse than doing public relations work. Moloney (2006) argues that "the most important question about modern public relations ... is how it relates to democracy" (p. 5). For public relations to have a beneficial effect on democracy's three main institutions, politics, markets and media, there must be "communicative equality in public debate" and "citizens and consumers, organisations and groups should develop more vigilant 'radar' in order to detect PR messages" (Moloney, 2006, p. 6). This is very much in line with Fairclough's (1992) argument for critical discourse analysis to be taught in schools to empower students to understand the ideological constructs of public relations discourses.

In addition, this thesis explores Moloney's (2006) idea of "PR-as-weak-

propaganda” (p. 14) in relation to NATO’s public information efforts during the Kosovo Campaign. It considers how NATO seeks to advance its own organisational interests in the eyes of its diverse publics and notes how journalists, covering the campaign from NATO headquarters in Brussels, were a ready target public to be “colonised” (Moloney, 2006, p. 151) by the public relations efforts. In particular, it analyses how the media played a significant role in reporting press conferences and press releases *verbatim* rather than acting, with rare exceptions, as a fourth estate questioning the truths of the powerful.

This thesis also supports arguments for the centrality of framing in public relations and provides original research of a particular case. It draws heavily from Hallahan’s (1999) general framework for examining the strategic creation of public relations messages. More specifically, it draws from his suggestion that framing theory provides an additional means of understanding “the underlying psychological processes that people use to examine information, to make judgments, and to draw inferences about the world around them” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 206). This public relations-centred approach fits extremely well into the critical discourse analysis method, which also pays attention to the mental models already held by publics receiving specific messages (van Dijk, 2001).

The thesis augments Hallahan by taking up L’Etang’s (2006b) notion of public relations as diplomacy and combining it with her earlier proposal

that public relations should be considered “in tandem with international relations” (L’Etang, 1996, p. 34). L’Etang’s contributions to the way public relations can be used as a means of developing and strengthening relations between collectivities, such as multinational organisations and/or nations, are elaborated here through the specifics of the NATO campaign.

By also drawing on Cheney and Christensen’s (2001a) work on organisational identity (and the linkages between internal and external communication), the thesis provides evidence for the way that public relations was used to construct one specific “unique self” for NATO after the Cold War. In doing so, it adds to the body of knowledge by providing a case study of a supranational organisation using public relations to not only manage its identity and legitimacy, but also to enhance this legitimacy when it is considered to be endangered. Because organisational legitimacy is most in danger during crises, the thesis provides evidence of how NATO dealt with three specific crises during the conflict with a critique of crisis communication techniques.

Thesis structure

The thesis is structured around one key question: How does NATO legitimise itself as a viable organisation for the 21st century? In attempting to answer that question, it looks at how NATO constructed a public relations campaign for action in Kosovo to support the maintenance of its

organisational legitimacy and to handle ongoing crises that arose during the campaign.

Such considerations of legitimacy are of course indebted to Habermas' (1975) theory of legitimation and its understanding of how the legitimacy of an organisation is maintained. Habermas theorises how selective worldviews and beliefs are reinforced for publics so they will continue to support and accept that an organisation is working in their best interests, and in line with their deeply held democratic values. This research also seeks to make an original contribution to the field of organisational legitimacy through its critical analysis of discourses located within a specific organisation, in a socio-cultural and political context and during a particularly complex period. This case, and its data, has not, to the best of my knowledge, been considered in this depth, and in this way, anywhere else, and certainly not from a public relations perspective.

Legitimacy also implies a means of justification for actions. The thesis uses critical discourse analysis to demonstrate how language is used to sustain the hegemony of the NATO Alliance. In the process, it provides a grounded illustration of how the discursive turn in public relations provides “a means of understanding the significance of the public relations contribution to the formation of hegemonic power, constructions of knowledge, truth, and the public interest” (Weaver et al., 2006, p. 21).

In support of my contention of the centrality of context, my second chapter, “Establishing contexts: NATO and the idea of Europe”, establishes the relevant historical and political background with a particular focus on NATO and its role in post-Cold War Europe. In addition, chapter two provides the historical context of the lead-up to the Kosovo Campaign as an essential framework for issues that arise in later chapters.

After chapter two has set out that broad background over an historical time span, chapter three “Emerging choices and opportunities”, brings in later developments and further outlines the more recent context in which the NATO discourses are presented.

The following chapters, four to six, involve a shift in focus away from background and on to approaches, methods and theories. The first of these, chapter four “Mapping the field (1): Organisational legitimacy through multiple discourses”, reviews literature relevant to organisational legitimacy and offers a provisional mapping of theoretical perspectives informing the analyses to follow in later chapters.

Chapter five, “Mapping the field (2): Public relations and discourse”, provides the second of this trilogy of chapters. It similarly focuses on theoretical matters through an examination of the relationship between public relations and propaganda as well as the role of public relations in political communication and international relations and a review of the literature theorising crisis management and crisis communication. All of

these are connected to NATO's communication strategies during the 78 days of the conflict.

Finally, chapter six's "Implementing the project: Methods and materials" concludes the approaches section with an account of the main methodologies deployed in the thesis and a discussion of data collection and selection.

The next five chapters form the substantive analytical chapters providing the empirical evidence. Chapter seven, focuses on NATO's strategic public relations efforts in transforming and legitimising its organisational identity. Chapter eight discusses how NATO discursively positions itself in terms of the international community and the demand for humanitarian aid as a consequence of the bombing campaign. Chapter nine provides the geopolitical context for the case study and uses critical discourse analysis to help reveal the wider discursive practices shaping NATO's public relations strategy. It draws on literature and evidence of current perceptions and stereotypes of the western collective understanding of the Balkans region and how NATO uses these understandings in constructing the "other".

Chapter ten follows by taking up the theme of the "ultimate public relations challenge" and examines the public relations practices used by NATO in the Kosovo Campaign. The chapter presents the public relations

and information challenges that faced NATO in its bid to inform, persuade and rally public opinion to support its actions.

Chapter eleven looks at the framing practices in NATO's strategy of legitimising its offensive war by framing it as humanitarian intervention. It discusses the development of the new discourse domain of military humanitarianism. This framing aimed to persuade publics of the virtuousness of a bombing campaign for humanitarian ideals and, by doing so, reposition NATO from a purely defensive organisation to an offensive military force that could gain widespread acceptance for deployment to other regions of the globe.

Chapter twelve focuses specifically on the strategies for dealing with crisis communication. The chapter analyses three crises of collateral damage as representative of how civilian deaths as a result of the bombing were communicated and how NATO avoided widespread condemnation for its actions.

Finally, the thesis ends with "Afterword: Conclusions and new directions". This section draws the diverse threads of the thesis together and indicates new directions for research in public relations and organisational legitimacy of supranational organisations.

CHAPTER 2

Establishing contexts: NATO and the idea of Europe after Yugoslavia

This chapter aims to set out a broad background and to establish a contextual framework. It begins with a description of the nature of NATO as an organisation and the organisation's role in defending Europe. It then moves forward in time to discuss more recent events that influenced the intervention of NATO in the Balkans. These are designed in accordance with the analytical framework of critical discourse analysis to establish key features of the socio-cultural and political context in which the Kosovo conflict occurred. In delineating the relevant background, the chapter draws on the historical discourses about the region. It evaluates these as both descriptive and evaluative, with the latter carrying implications of ideological or political bias that contributes to the apportionment of blame and responsibility (van Dijk, 1994).

However, since the focus of this thesis is on the communication strategies used by NATO in its bid to (re)establish organisational legitimacy, the chapter itself is biased towards aspects that impact on those strategies. Accordingly, it begins with an overview of the history of NATO and, particularly, how the organisation carved out a strategic role for itself in

the Balkans and offered a justification for that role.

NATO's *raison d'être*

Five Western European countries, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, signed the Brussels Treaty in March 1948 as a response to their concerns of the ideological, political and military threats posed by the Soviet Union. This was augmented by negotiations with the United States and Canada to form a single North Atlantic Alliance “based on security guarantees and mutual commitments between Europe and North America” (NATO, 2001, p. 29) resulting in the signing of the Treaty of Washington in April 1949.

The essential purpose of the Alliance was to defend the security and freedom of the members by “political and military means” (NATO, 2001, p. 30) in accordance with the principles of the United Nations. This meant that NATO's role was to provide a military bloc to counteract any potential threat from the Soviet Union. In effect, NATO was the defensive mechanism put in place in Western Europe to counteract any real or perceived threat from the East.

As a well-established and recognised organisation, NATO was closely tied to the issue of the balance of power between the two main ideological blocs represented by the two major superpowers, the United States and the U.S.S.R. between 1949 and 1989. Furthermore, the security of North

America was permanently linked to the security of Europe through this alliance. The 12 founding members of NATO were joined by Greece and Turkey in 1952, Germany in 1955, Spain in 1982 and the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in 1999.

NATO's *raison d'être* was simple: "to maintain sufficient military capabilities to defend its members against any form of aggression by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact" (NATO, 2004, p. 3). With the changing geopolitical circumstances, NATO sought a means of maintaining, and trying to extend, its position. The former suggested a re-emphasis on its ongoing importance to the defence of the "free" world in Europe; the latter implied a search for new opportunities to exert its influence beyond European borders.

The NATO organisation was structured so that member countries could coordinate their defence policies, as well as provide the basic infrastructure and facilities for military forces to operate. The organisation also provided a means of coordinating joint training programmes. The military aspect of the organisation was underpinned by a significant civilian and military structure that provided administrative, budgetary and planning staffs.

During the period of the Cold War, NATO provided an efficient infrastructure in the West to coordinate military and political activities. These formed a counterweight to the activities of the Warsaw Pact

countries of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. NATO could also claim that it had a significant role in reducing tensions between East and West, including agreements on the deployment of nuclear missiles in the region (NATO, 2001).

At the end of the Cold War, NATO developed a new “Strategic Concept” (NATO, 1991). This shifted its primary focus from defence and deterrence to a more fluid concept of managing issues of instability both within, and external to, its formal boundaries. Walt (2000) catches the circular logic of this new concept in that, “We are told that NATO is needed in order to handle low-level security problems like Bosnia or Kosovo, but we are also told that intervention in these regions is necessary in order to demonstrate that NATO is still needed” (p. 16). NATO was obviously concerned about its relevance within the newly emerging European Union and was attempting to find a way to carve out a new role for itself in an expanding theatre of operations.

McCalla (1996) points out that most studies of alliances tend to conclude that they will not last when there is no external threat to unite them. NATO averted this fate by enhancing the functions it was prepared to carry out, broadening its membership, updating its structures (Duffield, 1994-5; McCalla, 1996; Wallander, 2000) and perhaps, most notably, taking on the role of intervention in ethnic conflicts and the supply of peace keeping forces (MacFarlane, 2000). The new Strategic Concept, developed in 1991,

paved the way for more involvement in European developments.

The break-up of Yugoslavia and foreign intervention in the Balkans

The end of Soviet Communism brought dramatic political change to all of Eastern Europe. One country after another declared their independence from communist ideologies to which they had been attached for close to half a century. The countries surrounding Yugoslavia – Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria – all overthrew their Communist-led governments and engaged in a process of finding some form of democratic political system. The governments of Western Europe and the United States welcomed the changes as they watched the break-up of the Warsaw Pact and the demise of countries politically committed to communist ideology.

For Yugoslavia, the transition was both more painful and more difficult. As a federation of republics, unity was dependent on economic well-being. For those republics that believed they were better off than the others, it seemed to be a simple step in the new Europe to secede from the federation. However, they were still dependent on receiving recognition from their closest neighbours in Europe in order to gain independence and be recognised as new nation states. Bitter rivalry and old hatreds were rehashed, rejuvenated and reconstituted between the different ethnic groups and different religious orientations that had lived quite peaceably together since 1945.

Blagojevic (1999) refers to the development of rivalry and ethnic hatreds as a series of old and new narratives. She identified four main themes: victimisation – that we are the victims in this conflict; hierarchies of victims – we are bigger victims than you; justification for taking revenge against neighbours and friends of other ethnicities – we are getting back at you because of what you did to us in the past; and preventative aggression – if we don't do it to you first, you will do it to us first. These narratives of conflict soon move to actual fighting.

Outside of the region, these same narratives were picked up by Western commentators to explain what was happening in the Balkan region. Some characterised the stories as lethal forms of nationalism (Glenny, 1999a; Hagen, 1999; Judah, 2000). Others argued that the West had very clear economic aims for Yugoslavia and actively encouraged the break-up of the federation and Parenti (2000), for example, judged that “the motive behind intervention was not NATO's newfound humanitarianism but a desire to put Yugoslavia – along with every other country – under the suzerainty of free-market globalization” (p. 2). This kind of perspective was first formulated three years earlier by Michel Chossudovsky (1997) who noticed its absence in the mainstream discourses of the time:

[T]he strategic interests of Germany and the US in laying the groundwork for the disintegration of Yugoslavia go unmentioned, as does the role of external creditors and

international financial institutions. ... But through their domination of the global financial system, the Western powers, in pursuit of national and collective strategic interests, helped bring the Yugoslav economy to its knees and stirred its simmering ethnic and social conflicts. (p. 375)

Chossudovsky (1997) is referring to Germany's immediate recognition of the new nations of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, both of which had been part of the earlier Austro-Hungarian Empire and had also joined the Axis powers in World War II. Following this recognition, most of the Western European nations followed suit, thus paving the way for the next round of secession wars in the region.

The role of the international financial institutions in the break-up of Yugoslavia has been subsumed by the more widely accepted explanation that it was the ethnic rivalries of the population of Yugoslavia that caused such intense fighting. Ethnic rivalries may indeed have had huge influence, but this does not explain the fact that for more than 50 years previously, the peoples of Yugoslavia had lived closely together and inter-married.

During the 1980s, as economic indebtedness and inflation increased in Yugoslavia, the governments of the different republics borrowed heavily. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) required structural economic reform in return for the loans, demanding the dismantling of the welfare state, increasing foreign debt, and the well-known "shock therapy" that began in Yugoslavia in 1990. Government revenue was diverted from

transfer payments to the republics and provinces to repay foreign debt (Chossudovsky, 1997).

The United States, under the Reagan Administration in 1984, also played a role in the implosion of Yugoslavia. A “secret sensitive” document on “United States Policy towards Yugoslavia” was issued as US National Security Decision Directive 133. Declassified in 1990, the document called for “quiet revolution” to rid Eastern Europe of its Communist governments and to integrate them into a market-oriented economy (Chossudovsky, 1997; Parenti, 2000).

These economic interventions during the 1980s precipitated increased poverty amongst parts of the population and encouraged the emergence of ethnic nationalisms, especially in the more wealthy republics of Croatia and Slovenia. As a result, the common response amongst the various populations was to look for scapegoats. Such scapegoats were readily identified as the “other” – the others who were members of a different ethnic group – neighbours, friends or even members of the same family.

NATO carves out a role in the Balkans

It was under these conditions that NATO made a first foray into active operations in Bosnia, formerly a part of Yugoslavia. Despite reluctance on the part of NATO to become involved in what was essentially a United Nations (UN) action (NATO, 2004), it was increasingly called on to

provide military support for the UN forces in the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. The first NATO air campaign was conducted against Bosnian Serb forces in Operation *Deliberate Force* in 1995, under a UN mandate. This campaign lasted 12 days and “helped shift the balance of power between the parties on the ground” (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2005b).

The shifting of the balance of power on the ground from the Bosnian Serbs to the Bosnian Muslims paved the way for the Dayton Accords in 1995, bringing the civil war to an end. As a consequence, NATO found further employment through deploying the Implementation Force (IFOR), which was subsequently replaced by the Stabilisation Force (SFOR). As a result of these actions, NATO was learning to adapt organisational and operating procedures “to become an extremely effective peacekeeper, building up invaluable experience in IFOR and SFOR for missions elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia and the world” (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2005b, p. 5).

Drawing on its experiences in Bosnia, NATO began to see a significant role for itself in managing the problems of ethnic conflicts and international interventions. It was admirably placed to supply military support for UN resolutions, especially on humanitarian grounds. International intervention in the war in Bosnia was extensive at both the official and humanitarian levels. Kaldor (1999) makes a distinction between the two –

the former being involved with political talks and missions and the latter being a new form of humanitarian intervention that had a military face. The ineffectiveness of UN troops who had been sent to Bosnia to protect the civilian population “were hamstrung because their masters were so fearful of being dragged into a conventional war” (Kaldor, 1999, p. 59), thus preventing them from carrying out humanitarian operations. From the organisation’s subsequent evolution, it seems clear that NATO saw the opportunities for extending its operations to deal with these types of situations.

NATO had set a course for involvement in the Balkans through its deployment of troops in Bosnia and its engagement with the Dayton Accords afforded it a significant place in the negotiation of future developments in the region. However, there was a considerable amount of ground to cover before NATO again employed military force in Yugoslavia.

Representing the Balkans

When faced with the myriad of diverse views and understandings of the area designated as “The Balkans”, the researcher must be prepared to be pulled first one way, then another, as new dimensions are revealed through research. As more and more dimensions appear, the complex nature of the history of the region becomes a virtual tapestry of intertwining threads.

The Balkans are, at one and the same time, an imagined community, a geographical location and a metaphor widely used to suggest and describe the division of an area “into smaller mutually hostile states” (Oxford University Press, 1998). Also, the Balkans hold a sense of mystery. Standing as they do at the crossroads of East and West, they suggest a fundamental “otherness” of the societies that are neither one nor the other. The symbolism and meanings embedded in the cultures of the various ethnic groups make it both more difficult, and more interesting, to unravel the complexities of relations within the region.

Although it is situated close to the heart of the European continent, the Balkans as an entity (reaching from northern Greece through Macedonia and Albania in the west, to Bulgaria and Romania in the east, as well as all the nations that comprised the former Yugoslavia) has always been somewhat “beyond the pale” when trying to understand or explain aspects of life and history in the region. Many historians, travellers, raconteurs and journalists have written extensively on their observations of this part of the world (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993; Crampton, 2002; Durham, 1905; Glenny, 1999a, 1999b; Hammond, 2005, 2004; Holbrooke, 1998; Ignatieff, 2000; Judah, 2000; Malcolm, 1998; Owen, 1995; Prentice, 2000; West, 1968). They have often found it difficult to avoid taking a position on the inter-ethnic rivalries which seem to be so much a part of actually being there. As David Owen, former British Foreign Secretary and founder of the British Social Democratic Party

stated: “Nothing is simple in the Balkans. History pervades everything and the complexities confound even the most careful study” (1995, p. 1).

Furthermore, with the spontaneous outbreaks of hostilities between the former republics making up the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War, many Western democratic nations in Europe rationalised that it was the ancient animosities between the peoples of the region stretching back centuries that had caused these renewed hostilities (Chandler, 2000; Daalder & O'Hanlon, 2000; Glenny, 1999a; Goldsworthy, 2002; Judah, 2000; Kaplan, 1993; Malcolm, 1998).

For many observers, as noted above, the wars for the break-up of Yugoslavia appeared to have their foundations in the ancient inter-ethnic enmities between the different religious populations of the area. This interpretation is by no means accepted by all (see, for instance, Allcock, 2000). There was little religious tension or discrimination in Yugoslavia in the post-World War II era and, “an individual born after the Second World War could live the whole of his or her life without experiencing ethnic or religious discrimination or prejudice. This was especially true in urban settings, of which Sarajevo was a prime example” (Blagojevic, 1999, para. 6). It is this aspect that is probably the most surprising in the wars of secession in Yugoslavia that followed the fall of the Soviet bloc.

For many in Yugoslavia, as well as expatriate Yugoslavs, the sudden reversion to ethnic and religious rivalries was a shock. They started a

series of events that lurched out of control and brought the country to a near state of anarchy. However, for many writers, the day that Yugoslavia began to crack was the day that Marshal Tito died.

For the 35 years of Tito's rule in Yugoslavia, the countries of Western Europe had accommodated Yugoslavia as the bridge between East and West, not entirely in the Eastern bloc, but certainly not in the Western bloc. Tito managed to maintain a fairly neutral, if not slightly pro-Western, position in the Cold War (Glenny, 1999a). Tito had ruled Yugoslavia from the end of World War II and had been at the helm of a strong Communist power structure that maintained unity amongst the various republics that made up Yugoslavia. When Tito died in 1980 at the age of 87, many predicted the imminent demise of Yugoslavia but the conditions at that time were very different from those in 1990.

In 1980, there was little interest either from the Soviet Union or the United States. Nor did the nascent European Union appear concerned about destabilising or changing the situation in Yugoslavia. For each of these power blocs, the status quo was the most viable option. Although the economic situation in Yugoslavia deteriorated significantly during the 1980s, the country was still able to function as a political entity. The power-sharing model of government, in which senior positions were rotated every year to prevent the accumulation of power in the hands of any one republic or any one politician, was successful for five years

following Tito's death (Glenny, 1999a).

The Communist parties in power in each of the republic constituencies were dominated by conservatives who were not particularly concerned with the developing situation of confusion and corruption, a direct result of the economic recession. However, as the number of political and economic crises within the country began to grow, the political legacy left by Tito was incapable of adapting to the new situation.

Slobodan Milošević and the road to NATO intervention in Kosovo

Slobodan Milošević became the central figure featuring in the wars that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Many, although Allcock (2000) argues that the process was far more complex, attribute these wars to a rise in nationalist feeling in Serbia, fuelled by rhetoric and nationalist sentiments. It is, however, now generally accepted that Milošević was an opportunist who used nationalistic sentiments at every opportunity "as a suitable instrument for the seizure of state power rather than as a matter of conviction" (Allcock, 2000, p. 429) to advance his control of power.

One critical point in the appropriation of nationalism for specific ends occurred on 24 April 1987. At that time, Milošević was sent by then Serbian Communist Party Chief, Stambolić, to listen to the grievances of the Kosovo Serbs. This was a ploy to prevent their coming to Belgrade to

demonstrate against the government in Serbia. In the Kosovo capital of Pristina angry Serb demonstrators were throwing stones and fighting against the police. The policemen were mainly ethnic Albanian and as Milošević appeared, he said: “No-one should dare to beat you!” (Judah, 2000, p. 53). As Allcock (2000) observes in a footnote, this statement:

has possibly become the most misreported statement in the history of the Yugoslav conflict. As an off-the-cuff remark delivered by a worried man under pressure to an immediate circle of the crowd encircling him, and incidentally caught on tape by a press team, it has been elevated to the status of a demagogic clarion call inserted into a “speech” intended to mobilise the masses. This is not to deny that Milošević was quick enough on his feet to take advantage of the fact that Dusan Mitevic, the head of RTV Beograd, then saw fit to broadcast this fortuitous snippet whenever the opportunity presented itself. (p. 429)

Milošević, who saw himself as the replacement of Tito, was an ambitious leader. By manipulating genuine grievances and demonstrators, Milošević was able to drive through an agenda that put him firmly in the role of leader of the Serbs. Assuming the position of President in May 1989, Milošević made the most of the Kosovo situation in order to consolidate his power. In effect, he used the deteriorating position of the Serbs in Kosovo to rally support for his nationalistic agenda. He was very aware of those situations that could be manipulated for different purposes. Judah (2000) notes that:

Milošević chopped and changed his policies to suit himself. If he could not dominate the whole of the old Yugoslavia, then he would carve out a Greater Serbia. When that did not work he opted to play the peacemaker, because that suited his needs at the time. (p. 59)

Judah's (2000) analysis presents that the issues confronting Kosovo as simply a microcosm of the wider problems and issues facing the different ethnic communities within the old federation of Yugoslav republics. Each of the republics went through its own experiences of severing ties with the central government. Moreover, since Kosovo was never a republic, the issues facing the region were even more complex.

Although the Yugoslav civil wars are not the main focus of this thesis, they need to be covered because they played a significant part in shaping the context in which NATO increased involvement, and finally intervened in Kosovo. Throughout the 1990s, President Milošević was identified as the villain who perpetrated the misery of the people in the former Yugoslavia. Thus, it is important to gain some perspective on how Milošević was able to maintain his power base.

When he became President of Yugoslavia in 1989, one of Milošević's first acts was to withdraw regional autonomy from both Kosovo and Vojvodina (in the north). It was hoped that this would satisfy the nationalistic feelings of the Serbs in these provinces. The imposition of new laws and decrees allowed for central control of the provinces from Belgrade.

In Kosovo, one of the laws and decrees passed during this period addressed the issue of land ownership, making it illegal for Albanians to buy land from Serbs. For the Serbs, it was seen as an encouragement for them to remain in the province and even encourage those who had earlier migrated to Serbia to return to Kosovo. In education, the Serbian curriculum was reintroduced into schools, thereby changing the emphasis in history, geography, music and language (Judah, 2000). The outrage felt by the ethnic Albanian population was widespread, though this did not result in a violent uprising. Instead, for the first time in the history of the Balkans, passive resistance gained some traction under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova.

Kosovo after Bosnia

At the heart of all the wars in Yugoslavia was the fundamental struggle between peoples to control the same land. In Croatia, it was the control of the Serb enclaves in Vukovar and Krajina. In Bosnia, it was the control of areas populated by Muslims, Croats and Serbs such as Sarajevo, Srebrinića, Tuzla and Mostar. It was about who, or more accurately, which religious group would wield power over the other. This had indeed become a religious issue rising out of the suppression of religion under communist rule for 45 years. Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox Christians were fighting for power over each other.

Most of the facts presented in this section, and those following, are drawn from Tim Judah's (2000) extensive research on Kosovo. His work draws together a formidable reference list of historical documents, early research papers, travel diaries, organisational reports, census figures, eyewitness reports and interviews.

In the early 1990s, Kosovo did not present any concern for Western Europe or for the United States. There was no suggestion that it might be considered a republic or that it should have the right to self-determination. Little attention was paid to Kosovo internationally since far more urgent attention was required in Croatia and Bosnia. Furthermore, with the ethnic Albanian policies of passive resistance to Serb rule, there was not much for the foreign press to report (Judah, 2000).

However, the United States maintained its vigilant watch over Yugoslavia, issuing a "Christmas Warning" on 24 December 1992. The acting Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, a former US ambassador to Belgrade, sent a cable from President Bush to President Milošević: "In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the US will be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper" (cited in Judah, 2000, pp. 73-74). This appears to have been a "one-off" threat from the United States. It may have been because Eagleburger himself had specific interests in making the threat, or simply as an on-going part of American foreign policy of the day, in which the threat of

force was a common occurrence. (Other comparable instances included Granada, Panama and Iraq, whereas only months previously, the United States had been forced to withdraw from Somalia.)

The Dayton Accords, negotiated by United States envoy Richard Holbrooke, were the outcome of an agreement between Serbs, Muslims and Croats in Bosnia Herzegovina. They had a profound effect on the way Western envoys viewed the leaders of the Balkan region. Policy makers in Washington relied on the lessons learned in Bosnia about Milošević's reactions and responses (Redd, 2005). They believed they knew exactly how to deal with people in the Balkans, because it was the concerted NATO bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serbs that had brought their leaders to the negotiating table at Dayton (Clark, 2001).

As a consequence, NATO's manner in dealing with the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milošević was framed very much in terms of these experiences.

General Wesley Clark records in his memoirs that:

throughout the process of negotiation, I had learned the region and its personalities, the acute sensitivity to military power, the self-interest and corruption of some of the leaders. Above all, I recognized that fundamentally, quarrels in the region were not really about age old religious differences but rather the result of many unscrupulous and manipulative leaders seeking their own power and wealth at the expense of ordinary people in their countries. (Clark, 2001, p. 68)

This suggests that NATO leaders believed that they could use their military power against President Milošević again, this time to achieve their goals in Kosovo.

The Dayton Accords were made up of compromises to end the war in Bosnia and were never intended to be an encompassing agreement on all the issues facing the region. Kosovo was not on the agenda and there had been no reason to put it there since the question of secession of the province from Serbia did not arise. The Accords confirmed that the international community would not recognise any change in Yugoslavia's borders (Vickers, 2000) thus demonstrating that any Kosovar Albanian attempts to regain autonomy and self-determination through passive resistance had little or no impact on the West.

Having begun to establish the importance of the context to understanding the Kosovo intervention in this chapter, I use the next chapter to further develop the socio-cultural and political picture of international relations in the region and the lead-up to NATO's intervention. It examines the political processes at work and provides a chronological account of the developing crisis.

CHAPTER 3

Emerging choices and opportunities

In further delineating the context in which the NATO discourses are presented, this chapter provides an overview of the political manoeuvrings and diplomatic efforts made prior to the actual Kosovo intervention. It examines them as ways of finding opportunities to begin a campaign to settle the emerging ethnic hostilities in Kosovo. As Satterwhite (2002) points out, the West appeared to be faced with a stark choice: intervene militarily and do something about the developing ethnic tensions in Kosovo; or do nothing and allow the mass displacement of Kosovar Albanians into neighbouring countries. The question was sharpened politically because the displacement may even have been to the very heart of Europe.

The rise of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)

At least until as late as November 1997, few observers believed that there was an imminent threat of major change in Kosovo. Furthermore, few people in Belgrade paid much attention to activities there. There appeared to be little urgency in dealing with any issues emanating from Kosovo, since the Serbs themselves had enough internal problems dealing with a strict regime of international economic sanctions and a rising tide of nationalism (Sells, 2000). There were few international journalists

reporting from Kosovo and “no all-important dead bodies on television to galvanise Western opinion” (Judah, 2000, p. 119).

However, in Kosovo there was ongoing political activity. A small force of fighters – some 150 men, according to sources cited in Judah (2000) – was active in fomenting support for a popular uprising against the Serbs. The leaders of this small group, which became the Kosovo Liberation Army, knew that Western governments, or the United Nations, were unlikely to consider Kosovo as an international issue unless something was done to bring it to world attention.

The KLA began a campaign to persuade ethnic Albanians that there was an alternative to passive resistance. They provided some military training and sourced small arms from various places outside Kosovo, in particular from neighbouring Albania, with whom the Kosovar Albanians shared a language and culture. Following the collapse of the financial structure in Albania in the spring of 1997, central control of that country was replaced by anarchy. Kalachnikov guns were sold by looters for \$10 per gun in the street (Todorova, 2000). Even then, as weapons became available and were being offered to the people of Kosovo, few Kosovar Albanians accepted guns from the KLA. There was still no general acceptance of the idea of a general uprising, since Bosnia was still fresh in everyone’s mind (Judah, 2000).

However, incidents of harassment, incitement and human rights abuses perpetrated by Kosovo Serbs on ethnic Albanians were becoming more common, thus undermining Ibrahim Rugova's policy of passive resistance. In Serbia itself, Slobodan Milošević and his Socialist Party were also facing growing opposition in local elections. Milošević managed to maintain control of local councils by interference in the election process (Judah, 2000) but, in November 1996, hundreds of thousands of outraged Serbs demonstrated against Milošević every day for 88 days until he finally capitulated and allowed the opposition to take power in the areas where they had been successful in the elections.

At the same time, in Montenegro – the other republic in the Yugoslav federation – support for the pro-Milošević party was wearing thin and Montenegro was threatening to secede from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. If this were to happen, Milošević would no longer have a job, since Yugoslavia would no longer exist. Milošević maintained his hold on power, not through any particularly clever manoeuvring, but rather because the opposition squabbled so much amongst themselves that he was able to emerge once more as the only leader. During this period of time, discussions on the future of Kosovo were put on hold, or rather, shelved completely.

By the beginning of 1998, the KLA was gaining some traction amongst the local population in Kosovo. Television satellite broadcasts from Tirana in

Albania were utilised to begin attacks on Rugova and his failed policy of passive resistance. In the mainly ethnic Albanian area of Kosovo's Dreniča Valley, the KLA was exerting more control. The main protagonists, through their contacts and networks in Western Europe, began a public relations campaign to gain publicity and favourable public opinion for their cause. Judah (2000) refers to a meeting between a BBC correspondent, who had just returned from Belgrade, and the three KLA leaders in Switzerland. They told him that they intended to launch an armed insurrection. The correspondent, Paul Wood, "did not file the story. 'What could I tell the BBC,' he says, 'that I met three Albanians in a café in Switzerland who told me they were about to start a war?'" (p. 135). In spite of this, the KLA was able to mobilise enough foreign journalists to cover developing events in Kosovo.

This campaign produced the results the KLA had been hoping for – to bring foreign correspondents and diplomats into the region to report on their activities. Funerals became a useful means of achieving publicity objectives. Funerals were filmed for the Albanian satellite broadcasts, at which uniformed KLA members would make dramatic speeches against the Serbs and thereby rally support for the fight for Kosovo. Television was a major weapon in transforming public opinion in Kosovo from support for Rugova's passive resistance to growing support for armed insurrection (Judah, 2000). KLA attacks on Serbian police and on ethnic Albanians believed to be collaborating with the authorities increased dramatically,

thus rallying support for an armed struggle.

The events in Kosovo began to make some impact on foreign diplomats. The United States sent their special envoy, Robert Gelbard, to Pristina, the capital of Kosovo in February 1998. On 23 February he made the statement: “We condemn very strongly terrorist actions in Kosovo. The UCK [KLA] is without any questions, a terrorist group” (cited in Judah, 2000, p. 138). For the Serbs, this message was clear. If the United States viewed the KLA as a terrorist group the same way as they did, then it was their duty to wipe it out. Attacks and counter-attacks continued throughout 1998, with the KLA and the Serbian police fighting it out in the villages and towns of Kosovo. The armed struggle had begun in Kosovo and foreign diplomats seemed mesmerised by the shock of what was happening. It seemed that conflict in Yugoslavia was, once again, spiralling out of control.

Violence and the international response

As the violence and fighting escalated in Kosovo, the Western media drew on the theme of violence as an integral part of the definition of the term “Balkan”. Allcock (2000) suggests that there are two quite contradictory interpretations of the nature and role of violence in Balkan society. On the one hand, violence is considered to be a normal and natural part of the social order of the societies that make up the Balkans. On the other hand, Europeans are aghast that such violence can be occurring in modern

European society because of “our tendency to approach Balkan societies through the screen of images that has been erected over the centuries, which emphasises their otherness, we embrace facts about them which we hide from ourselves when these also apply to our own society” (Allcock, 2000, p. 383).

But, as Allcock continues, the attitude that was developing in Western countries was that the upsurge of violence in Yugoslavia was aberrant and that something had to be done about it. Although there were numerous other internal conflicts during the 1990s, such as Chechnya in Russia and in Algeria in North Africa, in these instances there were no international calls for intervention. Chechnya was seen as a Russian problem, Algeria as an Arab problem, but Yugoslavia, located as it is “on the doorstep of Europe”, galvanised European capitals. Ethnic Albanians were now becoming an immigration issue for many countries in Europe.

During the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Albanians had left Kosovo and headed for the large cities of Western Europe. Whether for economic reasons or for “fear of persecution” in Kosovo, many Kosovo Albanians, and Albanians from Albania claiming to be from Kosovo, arrived in Germany, Italy and Britain, as well as in other European countries, claiming to be asylum seekers.

With the upsurge in fighting between the KLA and Serb police in late May and June 1998, Western leaders believed that it was becoming

imperative that they should be seen to be doing something (Halperin, 2000; Solana, 2000). In June of that year, NATO defence ministers met in Brussels to identify the options available to them thus maintaining the momentum of their involvement in the region in line with NATO's Strategic Concept. In an operation named *Determined Falcon*, 80 NATO planes flew over the airspace of Macedonia and Albania, which "proved nothing more than the fact that NATO had planes in the region which could fly very fast" (Judah, 2000, p. 166). By now, the situation in Kosovo was becoming part of the daily diet for foreign journalists in the region.

Although the Serbs still maintained a measure of control over the entire area of Kosovo, evidence was growing that tens of thousands of civilians had been displaced by the fighting. It was this evidence, brought by television into the homes of Western mass audiences that turned what the Serbs had believed to be a successful return of control, into a disaster.

Although there had been few casualties in the overall offensive, pictures of displaced families on television and the burgeoning population of Kosovo Albanian émigrés in Western capitals resonated with Western Europeans, creating a groundswell of public opinion that "something must be done".

Following a series of provocative attacks by the KLA on Serb areas of Kosovo in July, the Serbs attacked the predominantly KLA controlled Dreniča region, driving the population into the surrounding hills. Along with the population, the KLA also melted into the hills. This operation was

pivotal to the way Western diplomats perceived the situation. The KLA was very loosely structured and had no designated leader. Having been somewhat diffident about contacts with the KLA to this point, Western diplomats were now actively searching for someone to talk to.

With Ibrahim Rugova no longer considered a legitimate representative of the people of Kosovo and, with no one person coming forward as the leader of the “terrorist” organisation, most exchanges with Kosovo Albanians seemed to be concerned with one attacking the other, rather than looking for a common negotiating position to sort out the issues. This made it easy for the Serbs to claim that they welcomed negotiations but they had no one to talk to (Judah, 2000).

International diplomacy and personality clashes

American and British diplomats were the ones leading the diplomacy to find a solution to the problems in Kosovo. Richard Holbrooke had been President Clinton’s main negotiator in the talks to end the war in Bosnia. He believed that he knew the Serbs well enough to know how they were likely to react. In order to forge this earlier agreement, Holbrooke had called on NATO to back it up with some 60,000 NATO troops. NATO members, however, had become more diffident about the use of ground troops in Bosnia. They had already experienced the horrors of Srebrenića and other UN so-called safe areas. One of the major problems for NATO ministers was that America had no troops on the ground (unlike the

European members) and American pilots, flying NATO warplanes, were attacking the Serbs from 30,000 feet (Halberstam, 2001). The Americans were keen to show their involvement in the region without endangering their troops.

This threatened to cause a rift between the Europeans and the Americans but Holbrooke maintained that the Serbs “had not been punished enough. They needed more bombs before they would take him seriously at the negotiating table. ‘Give us bombs for peace,’ he demanded” (Judah, 2000, pp. 121-122). In this case, the bombing did bring the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table, together with President Milošević.

Following the success of Dayton, there was a lot of argument about the timing of the US-led NATO bombing. One side argued that if they had bombed the Serbs earlier, the war would have ended earlier; the other side argued that it was not the bombing that brought the Serbs to the conference table but rather that all sides in the conflict were exhausted and the Serbs had agreed to the principles of the agreement before the bombing began. As Judah (2000) explains, “these arguments ... came to shape the way Western policy-makers looked at the question of how to deal with the Serbs when Kosovo became an issue” (p. 123).

Following the Dayton Accords, Holbrooke left the State Department to become a private consultant. Madeleine Albright was now Secretary of State and she appointed Robert Gelbard as her special envoy to the

region. It was Gelbard who made the famous statement that the United States viewed the KLA as a terrorist group in February 1998. Aware that he had angered many prominent Albanian politicians in Kosovo, he attempted to retrieve the situation by taking a hard line with Milošević, by “shouting at him and telling him what to do” (Judah, 2000, p. 144). This simply resulted in Milošević ignoring Gelbard.

At the same time, Ibrahim Rugova approached Madeleine Albright and requested that she appoint Richard Holbrooke to lead the negotiations on Kosovo. Albright wanted to retain control but was finally persuaded to appoint Holbrooke, following personal interventions by Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott and Sandy Berger, National Security Advisor to President Clinton. However, as far as the American President was concerned, he relied “almost exclusively on the advice of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s information and opinions concerning policy options in Kosovo” (Redd, 2005, p. 140). At that time, the President was more engaged with his personal issues in the unfolding Clinton-Lewinsky sex scandal.

United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright was a central figure in the decision-making process to activate the bombing missions. She was the driving force that brought about the decision to start bombing. There were other diplomats who engaged with Milošević on different occasions to try to persuade him to reduce the violence that was becoming increasingly

brutal in Kosovo. NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana and SACEUR, General Wesley Clark, Ambassador Holbrooke and British Foreign Minister Robin Cook all had major roles in negotiating with Milošević (Albright, 2003; Clark, 2001; Holbrooke, 1998; Solana, 1999c).

It is difficult to evaluate how these personal accounts and animosities contributed to the deterioration of relations between the Western countries and Yugoslavia. However, it is possible to extrapolate that there was some impact from these interpersonal relationships since NATO's early justifications for launching the Kosovo Campaign were pointedly targeted at Milošević personally. He seemed to embody all the frustrations that the Western nations encountered and, as a consequence, became the target for the 78-day bombing campaign along with hundreds of thousands of people in Serbia proper and in Kosovo in particular.

Count-down to bombing

In the summer of 1998, the Serb offensive to regain control of the Dreniča region had reached its height but they had few resources to "occupy" the area. The KLA moved in behind them and retook control (Judah, 2000; Kostovicova, 2000). For the KLA, the Serb offensive was useful because it demonstrated that Serbs and Albanians were unlikely to ever live peacefully together again in Kosovo. It also set up the framework for the KLA's claim for an independent ethnic Albanian state.

Apart from the growing number of fighters in the KLA, no one had envisaged independence for Kosovo (Judah, 2000). Diplomats had foreseen some kind of Dayton agreement for Kosovo, in which Kosovo would become a republic of Yugoslavia, with built-in guarantees for the protection of the Serbian population. However, both the Serbs and the Albanians rejected this. Furthermore, there was a growing expectation in Washington that intervention was the answer to the developing situation in Kosovo. Joksimovich (1999) recounts the chronology of events leading up to the plans for intervention. He makes specific reference to a paper written in August 1998 by Senate policy analyst, James Jatras, in which Jatras noted that the Clinton administration was simply waiting for an appropriate event that would make intervention necessary.

However, major questions arose from issuing such threats: air strikes may encourage a KLA assault on the Serbs; the Serbs may force the Kosovo Albanians out of Kosovo in large numbers; the legality of the use of force; what role would the UN Security Council play; and how would the Russians and Chinese react to such a UN resolution? An estimation of the situation was carried out by the Foreign Office in London and it was decided that there was no case for intervention since the number of casualties of the Serb summer offensive was minimal, even though the numbers of displaced persons were huge (Judah, 2000).

But Richard Holbrooke was not convinced of this and, noting a line in a

Milošević-Yeltsin statement that Belgrade-accredited diplomats were allowed freedom of movement to monitor the situation (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000), he invented the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission (KDOM). This was, in effect, a sop to the Russians to let them feel that they had a part in the international negotiations (Clark, 2001; Joksimovich, 1999).

Observers on the ground multiplied significantly following the Russian agreement to this mission and became the core of the international presence in Kosovo. However, KDOM had no powers; it could simply observe and report and they quickly earned themselves the nickname of the Kondoms (Judah, 2000, p. 177). Now, foreign involvement in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia was cemented. There was no way out without some loss of face. Western governments would not be able to face public condemnation when television showed refugees freezing to death over the winter because they had not been able to return to their homes to take shelter.

Difficulties in decision-making

The realisation that action was needed resulted in a joint statement from President Clinton and President Yeltsin, which called for a halt to the violence in the province. This was followed by a statement by the NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana, that NATO had completed its plans for the use of military force. These plans had been put in place in 1998 and

military exercises took place in September 1998. In the same month, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1199, calling on Serbs and Albanians to stop the fighting and start talking. On September 24, NATO defence ministers approved issuing the Activation Warning for air strikes.

Tim Judah (2000) described what he called one of the most important meetings that took place about Kosovo on October 8, 1998, in London. The participants included the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Germany and Russia, the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, Richard Holbrooke and representatives from various European Union nations. The results of that meeting were that the Russians would veto a UN Security Council resolution that authorised the use of force. However, if NATO was to bomb Yugoslavia, they would do nothing about it. Albright was convinced that NATO had the “legitimacy to stop a catastrophe” (Judah, 2000, p. 184) and applied strong pressure on European governments to participate.

With British and French agreement, NATO ministers approved the plan for the bombing campaign. Armed with this approval, Richard Holbrooke was once again dispatched to Belgrade to confront Milošević with the threat of bombing. They concluded an agreement on October 12, whereby Serbian military and police would be withdrawn and negotiations with the Albanians would begin. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO would provide observers to monitor the

agreement. NATO would carry out air surveillance of the area and the OSCE would provide monitors on the ground.

The issue of foreign armed troops on the ground to be “peace keepers” was never part of the agreement. It was only later, when events changed the situation on the ground that this issue was raised. Holbrooke was specifically instructed not to push for foreign troops in Yugoslavia:

President Clinton, now facing impeachment because of sexual misdemeanours with Monica Lewinsky, the former White House intern, found it impossible to concentrate on his job and did not want to contemplate having to send US troops into any possible danger. Mid-term congressional elections were also forthcoming, and talk of US troops going to Kosovo was simply a vote loser. (Judah, 2000, p. 188)

This reticence on the part of President Clinton continued throughout the Kosovo Campaign, much to the chagrin of General Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR). NATO had made contingency plans for the eventuality that there would be a need for ground troops and had begun increasing its forces in the neighbouring republic of Macedonia (Clark, 2001).

Since the Holbrooke-Milošević agreement was simply that – an agreement between the US-led NATO Alliance and Slobodan Milošević as President of Yugoslavia – the KLA was not party to it. They had been completely discarded as a party to any talks and, as such, were not bound by the terms

of the agreement. As a consequence, when the Serbs withdrew their forces from areas in Kosovo, the KLA simply moved in to take their place. In order to avoid being bombed, the Serbs maintained their side of the agreement. This allowed the KLA to regroup and strengthen its membership. For them, the agreement had come at an auspicious moment: “They were hard pressed and were holed up in the hills; now the agreement gave them a reprieve, time to reorganise and rearm and, as they told anyone who cared to listen, time to prepare for their spring offensive” (Judah, 2000, p. 189).

The plot thickens ...

Holbrooke’s Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was headed by a veteran American “diplomat”, William Walker. He had previously served as American ambassador to El Salvador, at a time when internal civil strife was raging in the Central American states of El Salvador and Nicaragua. More recently, he had been part of the United Nations Transitional Administration in eastern Slavonia (in Bosnia), which included the Serb enclave of Krajina, the area from which the Serbs of Croatia had been driven. To the Serbs in Belgrade, this suggested some strong connections with the CIA (Judah, 2000) and they were highly suspicious of American motivations.

The KVM began their work and made reports on activities in Kosovo. Then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, reported that the KLA had increased

attacks on Serbian military and police in Kosovo and had occupied many of the outposts that the Serbians had been required to evacuate as part of the Holbrooke-Milošević agreement. There was little evidence that Serbs and Albanians would use the agreement to settle on terms for peace in the province. Instead, the personnel of verification missions were dragged into hostage and ceasefire negotiations.

The situation on the ground deteriorated rapidly during December 1998 and January 1999 and each attack by either side drew retaliation from the other. The attacks became less random and more planned and, in an ambush on January 8, the KLA killed three Serbian policemen and then another policeman two days later. At the same time, the Serb army was moving back into Kosovo in large numbers (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000) and deploying along the Albanian and Macedonian borders against a possible NATO ground attack.

On January 15, 1999, the village of Račak was at the centre of fierce fighting. On January 16, evidence was found of “arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial killings, and mutilation of unarmed civilians” (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2000, p. 354). The head of the KVM, William Walker, arrived in Račak on January 19 and immediately claimed that the Serbs were responsible for another atrocity. It was reported that 45 civilians were massacred in the village.

However, not all members of the KVM were convinced that Walker's judgement was correct. Gabriel Keller, a French diplomat who had been appointed to the KVM, believed that Walker had condemned the Serbs with no concrete evidence to support his claims – only what he had been told by Albanian villagers:

Suspicious were raised that at least one group of dead men might not have been civilians or that they might have been killed in the fighting and that the KLA had moved their bodies to make it look as though they had been executed there. Some sources believe that Walker rushed to condemn the authorities because he wanted to provoke a showdown. There is, however, no hard evidence to support any of these theories. (Judah, 2000, p. 194)

Walker's report condemned the massacre and called on the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) to investigate the incident. The Račak massacre had become the turning point in the role of the foreign observers. The authorities in Belgrade ordered Walker out of the country, claiming that he had supported the KLA's faked massacre scene. At the same time, the Serbian authorities also refused entry to the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000) to investigate the situation.

A fresh round of urgent diplomacy took place in Washington, Paris and London and, as a result, the Contact Group (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia) summoned the Serbs and Albanians to talk peace at a chateau in Rambouillet, south of Paris. NATO tried unsuccessfully to be

included in these talks (Clark, 2001) and was concerned that the organisation's credibility was at risk, especially since the NATO Council had given the Secretary-General full authority to activate air strikes against targets within Yugoslavia.

Since Račak is cited as the pivotal point for the conference at Rambouillet, it should be noted at this point that, following the bombing campaign, serious doubts were raised concerning the veracity of the massacre reports. An article published in the *Forensic Science International Journal* on February 15, 2001, reported that scientists from the Finnish EU Forensic Experts Team (EU-FET), having carried out autopsies on 40 of the bodies found at Račak, could "not establish that the victims were civilians, that they were from Račak or even that they had been killed there" (Georgian & Neslen, 2001).

There is no doubt that Račak played a crucial role in the build-up to bombing. It provided the reason for NATO to activate its strike orders. It was also useful to convince some of the more reluctant members of NATO that something had to be done. Furthermore, it became the prime motive to begin the bombing. James Rubin, spokesman for the State Department at the time, recalls:

The Albanians may not have been our models of enlightenment, but Milošević was most definitely the personification of evil. How could we make our allies see it this way? Milošević soon gave us the answer. On Saturday, January 15 1999, Albright awoke to the news on the radio that Albanians had been massacred at a town called Rajak [sic]. When international inspectors quickly confirmed that Serb forces were responsible, a window opened for a decisive shift in western capitals. (Rubin, 2000)

This shift in the thinking in Western capitals provided more impetus for imposing an agreement on the two sides at Rambouillet.

Rambouillet: Sign or be bombed

The die was cast with Račak. NATO's activation orders were in place and the final terms of the settlement were presented. A political document, known as the Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo, was drawn up by the Contact Group and brought to the negotiating table at Rambouillet.

The only issue that needed to be formalised was who would represent the ethnic Albanians. Many of the members of a hastily constituted representative team had never met each other before, some hated each other and others were deadly enemies. Still, as Judah (2000) points out, it was "a veritable 'Who's Who' of the most important Kosovar politicians of the last decade" (p. 200). The delegation included Ibrahim Rugova and others from the government-in-exile; Hasim Thaci and Xhavit Haliti, founders of the KLA; and three noted Albanian journalists who wielded

enormous influence within the province. They elected Thaci as the formal leader of the delegation to the conference while, at the same time, demanding that all decisions should be arrived at by consensus. On the other side, various members of the Serbian political elite attended the conference on behalf of the Serbs, though there was no one with any real decision-making power. Milošević himself refused to attend.

The initial talks took place from 6 – 23 February 1999. As far as the hosts of the talks were concerned, they believed that most of the work for an agreement had been completed. United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, had persuaded President Clinton's senior advisors to accept her plan that included the requirement that President Milošević accept NATO forces in Kosovo. This was ratified by President Clinton, thus allowing Albright to assert "her greatest influence over the foreign-policy-making process" (Redd, 2005, p. 143).

The two sides had agreed on the essentials of the Rambouillet agreement – namely, that substantive autonomy would be returned to the Kosovo region and the Yugoslav government would respect the political, cultural, religious and linguistic freedoms of the ethnic Albanian people; and, following free elections, the province would have self-government (Ramonet, 1999). However, when it came time to sign, neither side would do so. The ethnic Albanian delegation would sign for nothing less than complete independence.

Although the document granted Kosovo a limited degree of autonomy within Serbia, it had never been envisaged by any of the interested parties (apart from the Albanians) that Kosovo would become independent. The document continued to recognise the “sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” (Chapter 1, Article 2). The Yugoslav delegation raised no objection to the political aspects of the agreement, but would not accept the deployment of NATO forces in Kosovo. This was, in effect, a zone of occupation over the whole of Yugoslavia with “free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the Federal Republic” (Appendix B, Article 8) and full immunity for NATO forces from Yugoslav law (Articles 6, 7). It was the stalling point for the Yugoslav delegation. The agreement called for a *de facto* NATO occupation force within the sovereign territory of Yugoslavia.

The Kosovar Albanian delegation also blankly refused to sign anything that guaranteed less than full independence, causing some consternation at Rambouillet, particularly amongst the US delegation. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, led the negotiations. Her spokesman, James Rubin, in a reflection after the war, stated: “NATO’s war against Slobodan Milošević and the Belgrade regime had become a very personal war for Albright – and for me” (Rubin, 2000). He suggests that Albright was very concerned about taking her place in history and being in a position to “shape events, to author history in Washington rather than defend policy at the UN. And author history she did. Albright was so central to NATO’s decision to

confront the Milošević regime over Kosovo that it was often called ‘Madeleine’s war’” (Rubin, 2000).

The sticking point for the Albanians was the reference to independence. Even for Albright, Kosovo was clearly part of Yugoslavia. She was concerned that if the Albanians did not sign the agreement, NATO’s hands would be tied and the activation orders could not be implemented. Rubin was dispatched to persuade Thaci that he was the key to the solution and that he must sign if Kosovo was ever to get any kind of independence. If they did not sign, they would be left to the mercies of the Serb military and paramilitaries.

On the other side, the Serbs were urged to sign or be bombed. There were no further negotiations. As Redd (2005) points out: “It was apparent that NATO felt that further concessions to the Serbs were unnecessary because after a few nights of air strikes, Milošević would capitulate” (p. 143). For the Serbs, this was not a new experience and, once again, history had set a precedent. In 1941, Hitler ordered the Serbs to sign a pact with him or be bombed. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had also given the Serbs just such an ultimatum in 1914, prior to the outbreak of World War I (Talbot, 2000). Each time, the Serbs had refused to sign.

The talks in Rambouillet were postponed to give the parties the opportunity to receive directions from their respective advisors. It was agreed that a second round of talks would be reconvened in Paris on

March 15. During the period from February 23 until March 15, there was a great deal of diplomatic activity in the region, with Albright despatching Senator Bob Dole to encourage the Albanians to sign. As March 15 approached, there were positive signs that the Albanians would sign, after receiving new guarantees from the United States that, after three years, a referendum would be held to ascertain the will of the people concerning the final status of Kosovo (de la Gorce, 1999).

On the other hand, the matters of concern to the Yugoslav government remained unchanged. The articles providing for the presence of NATO forces in Kosovo, supervision of the judiciary and the police by NATO, the implementation of military provisions and the dispute settlement process all remained in the document. The Yugoslav government was presented with the ultimatum – sign the agreement or the bombing will begin. As de la Gorce (1999) points out: “Could anyone have believed Belgrade would sign a settlement that turned Kosovo into a protectorate of the Atlantic military alliance? In these circumstances the negotiations were bound to fail. The road to war was open” (p. 3).

Summing up

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the reader to the complexity of the situation in the Balkan region and to highlight the main issues that have been posited as the reasons for NATO instigating an offensive bombing campaign against the sovereign nation of Yugoslavia. On the

one hand, there are those who argue that it was the “lethal nationalisms of the Balkans” (Glenny, 1999a; Hagen, 1999) as the underlying cause of the break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the decade of the 1990s. Others argue (Chossudovsky, 1997; Parenti, 2000; Talbot, 2000) that it was foreign intervention and the desire of the West to advance the cause of economic globalisation throughout the former Eastern bloc that contributed to the tragic wars in the area.

This thesis takes the view that it was also shaped by larger political and economic circumstances. The admired and respected leader of post-World War II Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito, had left no succession plan and a legacy that his beneficiaries found hard to live up to. The decade of the 1980s was the era when pro-market neo-liberalism was the main focus of Western economic ideologies and Yugoslavia had few alternatives other than to borrow money from Western financial institutions.

With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was left in limbo. Its more affluent constituent republics were encouraged to follow Western European market practices and rid themselves of the socialist ideals that had been so much a part of their economies for more than 50 years. As wages were reduced through inflation and the burden of foreign debt, increasing impoverishment of the population brought about the resurgence of ethnic nationalisms and the search for scapegoats – a common response in Europe to economic

difficulties. The history of the region reinforced the aggressive turn towards nationalism of the various ethnic groups but, as Allcock (2000) argues, “too frequently the relationship between past and future is seen either in terms of the entrapment of the present in the past or as the rediscovery of the past in the present” (p. 414).

The dismemberment of Yugoslavia was not an isolated event, something that came out of the blue and required some type of explanation. The events were firmly grounded in the crisis of socialism that characterised this period of time and is still unresolved today in many of the former Eastern bloc countries. The response of the West to these events provided much of the road map for the wars of secession in Yugoslavia.

For most casual observers of the events, the explanation of the re-emergence of ancient rivalries appeared to be sufficient. The wars in Yugoslavia, coming as they did at the end of a long ideological battle between Western democracy and Eastern communism/socialism, were played out within a framework of different religious affiliations. The issue of economic meltdown took a back seat to the drama of resurgent nationalisms. After all, it is much easier to understand issues of ethnic/religious difference and much more complicated to work through economic ideologies.

Furthermore, the personalities involved in negotiating the future of Yugoslavia represented a new direction in global politics. In the United

States, President Bill Clinton pitched involvement in Kosovo as being in America's national interests and a moral imperative (Clinton, 1999). There was also some concern expressed about the credibility of NATO and the fact that it had been threatening air strikes for some time and nothing had come of the threats. In the UK, Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labour government talked of an "ethical foreign policy" (Wheeler & Dunne, 2004) that emphasised human rights, values and morality in foreign policy.

For this thesis, the most important element was that for NATO, the time had come to prove itself to be a decisive organisation, which could carry out its missions in line with its Strategic Concept. Air bombardment and planning for the possible deployment of ground forces into the Balkans would not only provide the organisation with credibility, it would also deter further questioning of its existence. Redd (2005) cites a report from the New York Times (Sciolino & Bronner, 1999) that United States Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, challenged NATO defence ministers to "embrace a new role for the alliance, asking if NATO could not gather support for a threat against Milošević under these circumstances, what was the point of the alliance?" (p. 141).

The events in Kosovo provided NATO with an opportunity to establish a new role for itself with the blessings of the United States, the United Kingdom and other leading European powers. It was also a means for NATO to deflect further questioning of its existence and its credibility as

an organisation. The events in Kosovo enabled NATO to extend its influence over a much wider area.

This background provides the socio-cultural and political contexts for the analysis of NATO's strategic communication efforts. It points to the importance of the public relations effort to maintain not only the credibility of the organisation but also to strengthen its identity as part of its overall transformation. The next chapter delves into current, relevant public relations literature to provide theoretical perspectives for the analysis of the NATO discourses that follow.

CHAPTER 4

Mapping the field (1): Organisational legitimacy through multiple discourses

This chapter reviews relevant literature on organisational legitimacy and draws on multiple discourses to map the underlying theoretical perspectives of the analysis chapters to follow. It uses a critical lens to focus on the communication practices of NATO and how language (discourse) is used to produce particular understandings and knowledge (or worldviews) that “fit” with the established order. The theory and methodology of critical discourse analysis is used as “a kind of microscope” (Chilton, 2004, p. 205) to understand the particular communication practices of NATO during the Kosovo Campaign so as to reveal how these may obscure or distort reality in the interests of powerful stakeholders.

In terms of organisations, critical theory concentrates on “demonstrating and critiquing forms of domination, asymmetry, and distorted communication through showing how reality can become obscured and misrecognized” (Deetz, 2005, p. 94). Building on Deetz’ insight, the thesis aims to reveal sites of contestation and locate how powerful interests may skew understandings of reality.

This chapter groups the literature into sections in order to provide a logical flow for the basis of the analysis chapters that follow. In the first instance, it discusses organisational legitimacy, drawing on Habermas' (1975) legitimation theory as a theoretical framework for the analysis of NATO's public relations campaign during the Kosovo conflict. Political theory and the issues of humanitarian intervention and values-centred discourse from political science also have some relevance to the context in which this thesis is located. They are used to provide a basis for understanding how supranational organisations, like NATO, operate within the democratic system.

Secondly, the chapter examines some of the current debates in contemporary public relations literature, in particular organisational identity and issues management. These central concepts within public relations practice help in understanding how NATO operates as a legitimate organisation during a remarkable period in its history. The concept of framing and its application within public relations is also developed.

Legitimation

Central to the understanding of how NATO was able to construct a credible and eventually successful public relations campaign is the concept of legitimation as put forward by Jurgen Habermas (1975; 1996). Legitimation is at the core of the issues associated with NATO's

involvement in Kosovo and Yugoslavia, particularly because NATO is an alliance of 19 democratic states with a specific purpose. As such, it conforms to an organisational system inherent in representative democracies, which requires decision-making processes to be considered legitimate and hence acceptable by citizens as being in their interests.

Legitimation refers to the process by which decisions are made “largely independently of specific motives of the citizens” but which “elicit generalized motives – that is diffuse mass loyalty – but avoids participation” (Habermas, 1975, p. 36). This decision-making process is underpinned by the “citizen’s conviction that he could be discursively convinced in case of doubt” (Habermas, 1975, p. 43). This preparing of a readiness to consent forms a vital part of the complex social systems of democratic states.

With the increasing complexity of modern society and the advance of Western capitalism on a global scale, the simple political unity of the nation state has been transcended by international economic and security considerations. In concert, these threaten the autonomy of the nation state to make decisions on behalf of their citizens. This autonomy may be taken over by organisations, like NATO, thus extending the powers of nation states to the supranational organisation. In effect, there is a dis-empowerment of the state itself when it gives over some of its authority to the organisation of which it is a member by conceding to consensus rather

than retaining the right to unilateral action.

In these cases, Habermas (2001) suggests that legitimation gaps “open up as competencies and jurisdictions are shifted from the national to the supranational level” (p. 71). He goes on to say that “these new forms of international cooperation lack the degree of legitimation even remotely approaching the requirements for procedures institutionalized via nation-states” (Habermas, 2001, p.71). Furthermore, legitimation, in Habermas’ terms, is then further weakened when considering the role of communication professionals in the construction of the specific discourses designed to persuade publics of the legitimacy of decisions. Roper (2001; 2005a) observes that it is usually the job of public relations professionals to provide the weightiest arguments and the most persuasive discourses on behalf of their clients.

Organisational legitimacy

Hybels (1995) claims that the definitions of both legitimacy and legitimation are abstract and indefinite and can only be made more concrete when applied to specific situations. The abstraction comes from legitimacy being bestowed on an organisation when it behaves in line with current social norms and values (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). When legitimacy is sought by multi-national organisations across national borders, the issue is, then, to whose current social norms and values the

organisation adheres?

Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) maintain that legitimacy is always a difficult concept because it is a social judgement delivered by the organisation's publics. Since large, complex organisations have a diverse range of constituents, there are often conflicting values and expectations on which to base legitimacy. Furthermore, they may suffer from: "ambiguities and inconsistencies in their transmission – in the laws and traditions that ratify values, the editorializing of the media, and the pressure campaigns of interest groups" (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990, p. 177). Because of this, there is the possibility that an organisation may "protest too much" thus undermining its own search for legitimacy.

In their work on multinational enterprises (MNEs), Kostova and Zaheer (1999) claim an organisation's legitimacy is dependent on the legitimating environment in which it operates. In the current study of NATO, the legitimating environment would necessarily be the member states of the Alliance and other liberal democratic states that may be drawn in under the title of the "international community".

Drawing on Metzler's (2001) premise that organisational legitimacy is at the core of most public relations activities, the thesis posits the view that it is the organisation's response to issues in the operating environment that receives the most public scrutiny. This scrutiny may bring into dispute an organisation's continued survival or, on the other hand, it may reinforce

not only its right to exist, but extend jurisdiction to supplementary activities.

The search for legitimacy

Suchman (1995) identifies two important dimensions to an organisation's search for legitimacy: "(a) the distinction between pursuing continuity and pursuing credibility and (b) the distinction between seeking passive support and seeking active support" (p. 574). In the first case, the continuity of the organisation is about its stability and the fact that its publics understand its need to exist. This makes it credible and worthy of support. An organisation's persistence is a "given" in the sense that it is embedded in society, reflects societal values and receives resources because it is considered proper and desirable.

The distinction between requiring passive support or active support is an interesting one, in that the organisation may have passive support for many years just by virtue of its continued existence. Organisational legitimacy is acknowledged or has "cognitive taken-for-grantedness", in contrast to the time when the organisation actively seeks support for its actions through "evaluative approval" (Suchman, 1995, p. 575).

Sjursen (2004) discusses this concept of organisational persistence in relation to NATO and suggests that many researchers in international relations took a constructivist approach that stated that NATO was "never

only a military alliance held together by a sense of a common external threat; rather it was and is a community of liberal democratic values and norms” (p. 687). As I will argue, the need to shift the emphasis of the image and the identity of the organisation is central to the way that NATO pursues its organisational legitimacy.

Moral legitimacy

According to Suchman’s (1995) review of the literature on organisational legitimacy, there are three broad categories of legitimacy: pragmatic, moral and cognitive. All three are based on “a generalized perception or assumption that organisational activities are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 577). Pragmatic legitimacy is based on the self-interest of the organisation and as such, it communicates with its publics in order to maintain its status. Cognitive legitimacy is accorded to the organisation by the perception and acceptance of publics that it is necessary for the organisation to exist.

In order to achieve cognitive legitimacy the process of achieving moral legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) for the organisation is important. Moral legitimacy requires a positive endorsement of both the organisation and its activities. It is dependent “on judgments about whether the activity is ‘the right thing to do’” (Suchman, 1995, p. 579). This moral judgement is more assumed than tested. It is talked about persuasively and lies at the heart

of NATO's public relations campaign strategy for legitimization of its intervention in Kosovo.

The moral aspect of organisational legitimacy is also aligned with Massey's (2004) reasoning that "when legitimacy is defined as congruence with the values of society in which an organization is embedded, then the role of organizational communication is to achieve that congruence" (p. 236).

Furthermore, the way an organisation communicates itself in terms of a worldview is closely tied to its identity (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a).

This, then, allows the organisation to claim some distinctiveness in what it does, by creating its distinctive profile in the society in which it is embedded.

If there is no congruence between the organisation's current identity and its desired identity, the discursive process of articulation may help to bring the two concepts closer together (Roper, 2005a). This process allows two disparate ideas or concepts to be brought together to form a new unified discourse (Hall, 1986; Moffitt, 1994; Slack, 1996). This new discourse, the organisation hopes, will be acceptable to the appropriate publics and in line with social norms and thus confer legitimacy (Habermas, 1975; Rahaman, Lawrence, & Roper, 2003).

Issues management

An organisation's legitimacy is not only dependent on its relevance and

place in the present day world. Legitimacy can also be tied to the many diverse ways that the organisation relates to changing environments and how it sees these as changing in the future (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a). For NATO, an organisation that constantly needed to adapt to changing political and security environments, issues management was essential. Although issues management has essentially been seen as a defensive activity for corporations (Heath, 1997), it can also be conceptualised as a means of supporting, maintaining and expanding power and control for large supranational organisations. That is one of the aspects considered in this thesis in relation to NATO.

Chase (1982) defined issues management as: “the capacity to understand, mobilize, coordinate, and direct all strategic and policy planning functions, and all public affairs/public relations skills, toward achievement of one objective: meaningful participation in creation of public policy that affects personal and institutional destiny” (p. 1). Heath (2005a) and others have since developed the definition further to encompass an understanding of issues management being “systematic and proactive” (Heath, 2005a, p. 461) as a means of responding to criticism or change.

Heath (2005b) identifies four central functions of engaging in issues management: planning that takes public policy trends into account; communicating issues from both the defensive and offensive positions; ensuring that the organisation is meeting and even exceeding the

expectations of stakeholders; and constantly monitoring the environment for any potential difficult issues. Each of these functions was important for NATO to consider as it began its transformation from a purely defensive military organisation to one that was engaging in a myriad of new activities. The new organisational activities, together with the expansion of its membership, required the organisation to consider the views of its changing publics and to try to reduce any fall-out that may threaten the ongoing viability of the organisation.

For complex organisations like NATO, the need to engage society through strategic communication (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a; Heath, 1997) has grown in importance, especially since they are dependent on the ongoing support of a diverse number of publics. Furthermore, by their very nature, complex organisations are required to maintain legitimacy and recognition in order to carry out their functions. This need for legitimacy is grounded in the interactions and democratic values of the organisation (Schlesinger, 1999; Sudbery, 2003). The way the organisation is perceived is also bound by its performance in the eyes of its publics. Sjursen (2004) suggests that such organisations are problematic to conceptualise in terms of a specific identity since they “lack a democratic mandate, but also because there is no cosmopolitan law to which it can refer for justification” (p. 688). This concern for a democratic mandate raises further issues for complex organisations in terms of the way they communicate their identity with

their many and, usually diverse, publics.

It is through identifying and managing issues in the operating environment that organisations are able to defend their legitimacy and attempt to deflect or avoid disputes that may question it. Given that complex supranational organisations establish their legitimacy through their membership or alliance, it behoves them to maintain this legitimacy by responding to developing issues in both a timely and socially appropriate manner. Zyglidopoulos (2003) claims that organisations gain or lose their legitimacy and reputation according to the way they respond or fail to respond to societal expectations in a changing environment.

Organisational identity and image as an issue

Organisational identity is central in the ongoing claims to legitimacy, especially for organisations that have been well established, supported and recognised in the past (Allen & Caillouet, 1994). However, maintaining this legitimacy requires flexibility in the face of changing circumstances and ongoing organisational change.

In their seminal article on organisational identity, Cheney and Christensen (2001a) argue that the organisation today is required to maintain a consistency in messages and in purpose, for without “such consistency, the organization of today will have difficulties sustaining and confirming a coherent sense of ‘self’ necessary to maintain credibility and legitimacy in

and outside the organization” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 232). The issue of identity then becomes a central issue for communication to both internal and external publics – how the organisation sees itself, what it wants to become, or to be.

But the image of the organisation remains contested terrain. Moffitt (2001) suggests that an organisation can construct its image in a particular way, but essentially, the image of the organisation is determined by the receiver. There are many different ways that images are formed by audiences. They can include organisational, cultural, historical and personal concepts and these may be positive, negative, indifferent or partial.

It is important for the organisation to recognise that there are multiple factors beyond the control of the organisation that contribute to its image. Moffitt’s (1994; 2001; 2005) work on corporate image focuses on the way individuals form an image of the organisation and then draw conclusions. It is important for the public relations professional to consider how to “target all these potentially ever changing images *within each individual* and *across all the individuals in a population*” (Moffitt, 2001, p. 353) [italics in original].

From the perspective of this thesis, the identity that NATO wanted to convey to its multiple publics had two key features. Firstly, it not only had to conform to democratic values, but secondly, had to be seen to be

working towards extending these values, which were common across the publics of the multiple cultures to which member states belonged. By projecting this identity, NATO could claim organisational legitimacy and credibility. Furthermore, since NATO's *raison d'être* had changed in the previous decade, the need to update its image was central to the case for continuing support from multiple publics.

The legitimacy gap

In consideration of the fact that organisations operate in an ever-changing environment, the communication of an organisation's identity and image may lack coherence at any point in time. In reference to business organisations, Sethi (1979) points out the likelihood of a gap between the actual performance of a business and how society expects that business to act or behave. This can also be transferred to political and international situations when the behaviours and actions of governments and/or supranational institutions do not conform to the expectations of the publics, thus developing a legitimacy gap.

Sethi (1979) identifies four strategies for narrowing this gap. Three of these concern communication strategies: changing the perceptions of publics (image), through education and information; manipulating symbols of performance (identity); and attempting to change society's expectations to make them more in line with the company/organisation's performance. It is only if these three strategies fail to close the legitimacy gap that the

company/organisation would need to reconsider what it is actually doing and change its own performance in line with society's expectations in order to bridge it.

This thesis is concerned with how the legitimacy gap between NATO's previous identity as a defensive military organisation is reconfigured to be a humanitarian organisation, which is more engaged in the protection and defence of human rights. It looks at how the process of discursive articulation is used to bring the embedded or current identity closer to the desired one. By intervening in a sovereign state because of alleged human rights violations, NATO needed to prove that not only its actions were legitimate but also that the change in purpose and focus of the organisation be considered legitimate in the eyes of its publics.

This thesis follows Sjørusen's (2004) constructivist approach that NATO was "a community of liberal democratic values and norms" (p. 687) rather than simply an "alliance held together by an external threat" (p. 687). This enables the positioning of the concepts of values, humanitarian intervention and human rights as central to NATO's legitimisation process. Furthermore, since organisational legitimacy is bestowed on an organisation by its publics, their espoused values must resonate with these publics.

Values, human rights and humanitarian intervention

In the post-national federations of member states like NATO, legitimate solutions to complex issues often draw on a particular framework of values and morality. This poses difficulties since both terms are not easy to define and we are faced with the questions: Whose values? Whose morality?

A value is defined as “the judgement of perceived attributes and of paths to goals, normally associated with an attitude” (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery, & Fiske, 1994, p. 328). Included in this definition is the idea of a moral value, which takes on a subjunctive form – something that “ought to” or “should” be. So, when something is stated as being the “right thing to do” or, that it is a “moral duty”, it becomes clear that the strength of this framework provides a robust and persuasive argument for “selling” a policy or action to appropriate publics (Roper, 2001).

Traditionally, intervention into the affairs of sovereign states would breach international law and UN charters. Such intervention contravenes the international understanding of the concept of sovereignty. This concept is based on the principle that nation states retain the right to govern within their designated, internationally-recognised, territorial borders and that there is no other authority above the state beyond those borders (Reus-Smit, 2001). It is this conception that is considered mutually exclusive to

the concept of human rights.

In Habermas' (2001) *Remarks on legitimation through human rights* essay, the concept of power draws recognition from the "legitimacy claim of law" (p. 113). This makes it necessary for power to be not only accepted, but also deserved and therefore, justification must include claims "to worthiness of recognition" (Habermas, 2001, p. 114). For Habermas (2001), human rights are "Janus-faced, looking simultaneously toward morality and the law" (p. 118) and this creates a tension between "the universal meaning of human rights and the local conditions of their realization" (p. 118).

Elsewhere, Habermas (1998) also writes that the interventions by UN peacekeepers and other international organisations since 1989, are slowly transforming international law into cosmopolitan law and can be seen as reactions to a changed world situation. With political changes taking place in the transition from sovereign nation states to the cosmopolitan order, Habermas (2001) finds it difficult to decide where the danger actually lies: in "the disappearing world of sovereign subjects of international law" or in "the ambiguous mish-mash of supranational institutions and conferences, which can grant a dubious legitimation but which depend as always on the good will of powerful states and alliances" (p. 119). Moreover, Habermas (2001) acknowledges that the discourse of human rights is "plagued by the fundamental doubt about whether the form of legitimation that has arisen

in the West can also hold up as plausible with the frameworks of other cultures” (p. 119).

His reflections raise further questions about how human rights discourses are used (or misused) in the process of legitimisation of actions. As can be seen in situations surrounding issues, such as Muslim women’s veils and cartoons of the prophet in a number of Western European countries, this can arise in unique form when they concern with pluralistic societies that struggle with the differences of tradition and culture between the majority and minority groups.

Where human rights are being abused within a sovereign state, the international community cannot legitimately step in without breaching its own definitions and conventions. However, Rues-Smit (2001) argues that within the concept of sovereignty, it is implicit that a state is only legitimate if that state protects the fundamental human rights of its peoples and thus maintains its legitimacy and rights to sovereignty. He goes on to suggest that it is human rights that underlie the justification for the foundation for sovereignty of the state.

Such an argument moves the interpretation of international law into new territory that Habermas (1999) also explores. He explains, in his critique of the intervention in Kosovo, that the intervention has the “tacit authorization of the international community (despite the lack of a UN mandate)” (Habermas, 1999, p. 308). It is quite clear that, in Habermas’

view, intervention contradicts established norms. Nevertheless, he suggests that validity comes from an ideal society in which the world's citizens have considered and debated a significant change to the established norms. NATO's intervention in Kosovo could be conceived as the beginning of such a debate within the international community by emphasising values, morality and social norms.

Dealing with issues of human rights in terms of the concept of sovereignty raises some strong arguments for and against the use of humanitarian intervention. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was an important step in securing the preservation of human rights following World War II and the atrocities perpetrated by Nazi Germany. This declaration is only given substance by individual nations through respect for their populations and by avoiding any gross violations of human rights. However, intervention in conflicts within states creates completely different problems that were never included in the UN Charter.

Issues of sovereignty and human rights are very closely aligned in the international legal arguments, especially when consideration is given to the legitimacy of sovereign states and the behaviour of their rulers in regard to allegations of human rights violations. The principle of sovereignty grants supreme authority within territorial borders and denies any other attempted authority outside those borders. As such, it is a binding principle in the current international political order (Reus-Smit,

2001). However, the principle of sovereignty is now being challenged in line with the principles of legitimation that call for the recognition of sovereignty in terms of governments that have maintained legitimate sovereignty from serving their people (Annan, 2000).

This concept of political legitimacy as the relationship between a nation state and its people is a central idea in humanitarian intervention. As Walzer (1980) states: “A state is legitimate or not, depending upon the ‘fit’ of government and community, that is, the degree to which the government actually represents the political life of its people” (p. 211). Humanitarian intervention is claimed as the means whereby nations may intervene in the sovereign affairs of another nation. However, any intervention is dependent on the way in which the offending nation is understood or seen from a particular perspective. This becomes a particularly salient point in the discussion concerning the intervention of Western European powers in the affairs of Yugoslavia, since the region itself falls between the West and the East.

Culture and the construction of public relations discourses

In this particular case study of the public relations practices and strategic communication of NATO during the Kosovo Campaign, NATO is confronted with constructing discourses about cultures with which its publics have little familiarity. Sriramesh (2002) notes that cultural dimensions have an impact on public relations practices and, as such, it

is important to explore the many dimensions of culture. McKie (2001) similarly rues the insularity of public relations and the fact that deeper contexts are not more developed in public relations research.

This thesis delves deeper into cultural contexts to provide a fuller understanding of the way meanings have been constructed to pursue certain ends (including allowing the organisation to claim further legitimacy for organisational change). This approach is also in accord with the analytical framework of critical discourse analysis that is used in this thesis.

Chilton (2004) argues that globalisation has brought about major changes in the complexity of political interactions. The freer movement of money, people and goods has been accompanied by changes in language and discourse. Wars, terrorism and military interventions are “the most salient aspect of globalisation” (Chilton, 2004, p. 137) in political communication. It is the conceptualisation of the geopolitical space in which these events occur that provides context for the events. Furthermore, Chilton (2004) notes that the changing political environment at the beginning of the 21st century stresses “the language of self-legitimisation” and requires that new situations be explained to multiple audiences. He adds: “Most difficult to pin down, and perhaps most important, are the changing presumptions and establishing of new contexts” (Chilton, 2004, p. 137).

In a situation like the intervention in Kosovo, there was a problem of explaining the context, the place of military action and the culture of the people involved. Many in the West had never heard of Kosovo and, if they had, were not particularly interested in it. The ignorance meant that a communication intervention required a setting of the scene and references to the region and the people in it. Chilton's (2004) analysis of President Clinton's address to the nation demonstrates the three main topics of the President's speech: "the representation of the location of a particular territory (Kosovo) in subjective geopolitical space, the representation of potential dangers to the self (the United States), and the representation of frightening and morally outrageous acts perpetrated by the enemy" (Chilton, 2004, p. 153). This representation provided a particular framework for forming a picture of the occurrences in Kosovo.

Constructing the "other"

The representations of Kosovo, Yugoslavia and the Balkans have been the subject of many books and articles. In particular they have been concerned with the perception of the Balkans by Western audiences and the relationship to the European "other". Much of the literature associated with the construction of the "other" has been based on Edward Said's (1978) seminal work, *Orientalism*, which contends that Orientalism denotes "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short . . . a Western style for

dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 3).

Todorova (1997) claims that Said did not pay “enough attention to the essentialization (or, rather, the self-essentialization) of the West as the hegemonic pair in the dichotomy” (p. 10). Carrier (1992) approached this problem when he suggested that Westerners define not only the Orient in terms of the West, but also that these same “others” also define themselves in terms of the West. The West, therefore, is the standard of measure by which all others are defined and furthermore,

Orientalist descriptions are produced by means of the juxtaposition of two opposed, essentialized entities, the West and (for lack of better terms) the Other or the Alien. Each is understood in reified, essentialist terms, and each is defined by its difference from the other element of the opposed pair. (Carrier, 1992, p. 196)

More recent work has extended Said’s work to encompass the politico-economic relationship of an imperialist West to a submissive East (Bakic-Hayden & Hayden, 1992) that is concerned with the exploitation of economic resources, and to international public relations that is “structured-dominance” in favour of Western practitioners (McKie & Munshi, 2007, forthcoming).

Although Said’s work has been influential in many disciplines, some Balkan scholars claim that Balkanism is a subject in its own right.

Todorova (1997) argues that it is not a sub-genre of Orientalism. In addition, as Fleming (2000) notes, the history of the Balkans is very different to the Orient that Said examines, and the external influences on the political development of the region have been quite different to those of the Orient. There is also the propensity to lump the diversity of the Balkans into one category, as if the cultures of the people of Romania/Bulgaria/Croatia etc. are interchangeable with the peoples of Greece/Albania/Montenegro, as if they formed one particular entity or type (see, for instance, Fleming, 2000; Wolff, 1994). It would be more appropriate to look at the way in which the two historical empires – the Catholic Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) Empire and the Moslem Ottomans “shaped different Balkan territories in different ways” (Fleming, 2000, p. 1223).

For the Balkans, sitting as they do on the edges of Europe and of the Orient, with a political history bound by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, a clear distinction of oriental or occidental categorisation is irrelevant. What is relevant are the perceptions associated with the Balkans terminology and how this is mediated through text to achieve certain goals. By “othering” the peoples of the Balkans, prejudice can be rationalised by referencing the characteristics of the people of the region and thereby marginalising them from the European identity.

However, Allcock (2000) argues:

To insist on their marginality with respect to the European centre does not place them in a world apart from or beyond us. If they are marginal, it should not be forgotten that it is within our own margin that they are to be found. They will remain unintelligible, therefore, only for as long as we persist in the attempt to define 'them' and 'us', avoid the imperative of encompassing both 'them' and 'us' within a common figuration and neglect to include them within our understanding of the global character of the world in which we are all situated. (pp. 25-26)

Allcock's (2000) argument is to understand the Balkans as part of the exercise of understanding ourselves and our own society. He usefully focuses on the commonalities that exist in all cultures, stresses that there is nothing more or less rational or civilised in other societies and establishes that the job of understanding what is happening in the Balkans is to understand "the processes within which we ourselves are implicated, and to confront our own problems merely reflected back to us in a mirror" (Allcock, 2000, p. 6).

This process of constructing ourselves and others through discourse is discussed in depth in chapter nine, which analyses how NATO constructed the "other" and how binary oppositions, metaphor and personification are used within the NATO discourses. The use of binary oppositions as an analytic category comes from structuralism where meanings are generated by a two-term system (O'Sullivan et al., 1994). and is also a common analytical tool in media studies, especially in news structures.

Through the strategic construction of messages and meanings, organisations attempt to influence key publics (Trujillo & Toth, 1987) about their actions and performance in order to maintain both their identity and legitimacy. One of the strategies for constructing messages and meanings relevant to this project is the way that NATO could frame its messages in line with already existing mental models and stereotypes of the region. This provided the context for the delivery of other, more pertinent, messages and meanings. The Balkans as a region as well as a concept, is imbued with social and cultural meanings that resonate far beyond the specifics presented in this thesis, and therefore provide the context for other aspects of analysis.

Public relations, framing and discourse

There are many different ways of constructing messages – through argumentation, advocacy, persuasion, dialectics, storytelling, and so on. However, this thesis follows Hallahan’s (1999) view that framing theory provides “a useful umbrella for examining what actually occurs in public relations” (p. 206). There is a connection between framing theory and the underlying psychological processes that are used for absorbing and interpreting information and forming opinions. This fits comfortably with van Dijk’s (2001) concept of mental models, which refer to the generally implicit socio-cultural knowledge that people accumulate during their lifetime. Controlling mental models can be a way of achieving dominance.

When discourse is analysed critically, the locus of power is revealed.

Van Dijk(2001) suggests some of the ways that power and dominance play a part in mind control: that people tend to accept messages that encompass beliefs, knowledge and opinions and come from credible sources; when people are obliged to accept knowledge from institutional sources such as educational institutions or employment situations; when there are no alternative sources or discourses providing alternative points of view; or the individual may not have the knowledge that allows them to challenge the information given. In these cases, van Dijk (2001) states that “given a specific context, certain means and forms of discourse have more influence on people’s minds than others, as the very notion of ‘persuasion’ and a tradition of 2000 years of rhetoric may show” (p. 357).

Entman (1993) attempts to clarify how frames actually become “embedded within and make themselves manifest in a text, or, how framing influences thinking” (p. 51). He defines the essential elements of frames as selection and salience, which then define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies (Entman, 1993, p. 52). For him, and for this thesis, frames work by highlighting particular pieces of information by making them more “noticeable, meaningful, or memorable” (Entman, 1993, p. 53) and thus managing to associate them with a belief system that exists in the mind of the receiver.

It is through this clear association with mental models that frames can be most successful: “Texts can make bits of information more salient by placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). However, Entman (1993), in line with Moffitt’s (1994; 2001) work on the interpretive power of the receiver, warns that just as frames may be detected by researchers or by close readings of the text, there is no insurance that the intended meanings will, in fact, influence the audience’s thinking.

In communication, frames may make certain aspects of a reality more defined while managing to downplay other elements. This allows for the emergence of a dominant intended meaning by making sure the framing of the situation is “heavily supported by the text and is congruent with the most common audience schemata” (Entman, 1993, p. 55).

Framing provides a particular context for constructing discourses, and public relations is concerned with constructing particular social realities, or ways of knowing and understanding particular phenomena (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Hallahan (1999) points out that because public relations is concerned with such constructions, pejorative terms such as “image makers” or “spin doctors” are often used against public relations practitioners, but “because defining reality is the very essence of communication, constructionists would argue that the process is neither inherently good or bad” (p. 207). From this perspective, the role of framing

in public relations is vital because it shapes the ways that people see and understand the world. Hallahan (1999) describes it as a “window or portrait frame” which provides boundaries for the subject matter and draws attention to the key elements. “Thus, framing involves processes of *inclusion* and *exclusion* as well as *emphasis*” (p. 207) [italics in original]. This has both implications and applications for public relations because the decisions made concerning the framing strategies are the most important for the ongoing communication efforts of an organisation.

For Goffman (1974), a frame provided the context for people to “locate, perceive, identify and label” (Goffman, 1974, p. 21, as cited in Hallahan, 1999) information. This means that a frame organises information in a particular way and imposes some sort of order on social reality. This social reality is the way the everyday world is perceived. Perceptions are processed in terms of how the experiences of reality are sorted into categories and processes, thus allowing the individual to make sense of the world in which s/he lives (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Hallahan’s (1999) typology of seven models of framing include: the framing of attributes, which involves creating positive associations with particular beliefs and values; the framing of choices, a model for risk situations where people are required to make choices between options; the framing of actions, a means of accentuating particular behaviours and actions in a desired way; the framing of issues, which concerns the

acceptance or denial of responsibility particularly within the context of crisis management; and the framing of news, which is particularly important from a public relations perspective in that so much of media content is supplied by the public relations industry. In news, the publicists promote particular themes and characteristics for newsworthiness (Hallahan, 1999) in order to increase the likelihood that the item will be published as news.

These frames are particularly applicable to public relations and can also be used in combination with other frames as the packaging of the situation requires. They may also be used simultaneously at multiple levels. Framing for media consumption is particularly salient in the context of this study as a useful paradigm to examine the strategic creation of messages because the primary audience for the daily news conferences and briefings were international news and defence correspondents.

Tuchman (1978) uses the metaphor of news as a “window on the world” (p. 1) and describes the view from the window as being dependent on where one happens to be standing, how clear or opaque the glass is, and whether the window is large or small. Furthermore, news is also a means of making information available and is the “ally of legitimated organizations” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 4). The legitimacy of organisations requires the support of publics, and news is an extremely effective means of attempting to reach these publics and disseminate particular points of view.

While these must be borne in mind when evaluating the effectiveness of campaigns and messages, they have not been part of this thesis for the practical difficulties of running focus groups or individual interviews with appropriate respondents. Instead, the focus rests on the strategic process of constructing and framing the messages at the source and their subsequent dissemination to the news organisations, rather than on the actual consumption and understanding of the messages by, and of, the news organisations.

The following chapter takes up the theme of public relations and discourse through a discussion of how they relate to propaganda, diplomacy, international relations, and crisis communication strategies.

CHAPTER 5

Mapping the field (2): Public relations and discourse

This chapter continues the theoretical aspects of chapter four but focuses them around a range of public relations-specific issues: the possible demarcation of public relations and propaganda; the role of public relations in political communication and international relations and the relevance of crisis communication and crisis management. The chapter seeks to contribute to all three areas, especially the crisis concerns that were central in NATO's communication strategies during the 78 days of the conflict.

Public relations, propaganda and discourse

For many scholars, the line between propaganda and public relations is impermeable, and others it is very fine, or even non-existent. In some cases the two are absolutely separate and, in others, the two concepts are labelled interchangeably, depending on the context of the discussion. One major theorist of propaganda, Philip Taylor (2003), defines propaganda as:

the *deliberate* attempt to persuade people to think and behave *in a desired way*. ... the conscious, methodical and planned decisions to employ techniques of persuasion designed to achieve specific goals that are *intended to benefit those organizing the process*. (p. 6) [italics in original].

Taylor (2003) further concludes that public relations is essentially “a nicer way of labelling it [propaganda]” (p. 6). Other theorists of propaganda similarly claim the key to identifying a particular discourse as propaganda is to determine the intention behind it and what it is trying to achieve.

Jowett and O’Donnell (1992) provide a definition of propaganda as being “the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (p.4), which is close to Taylor’s definition.

However, Walton (1997) argues that by simply using the word propaganda, it immediately “suggests that the message referred to is intentionally manipulative and deceptive” (p. 384). As a consequence, he continues, to describing any discourse as propaganda immediately puts the arguments presented in an extremely negative light and suggests that any evidence produced is unreliable. Walton (1997), however, also concedes that: propaganda might be seen in a more positive light; and that there is nothing inherently negative or bad in propaganda, which could be viewed as “an organized and methodical type of discourse that is recognizable as such” and should be evaluated in the way argumentation is used “in

relation to the goals appropriate for such a use of arguments” (p. 386).

That concession aligns with both Jowett and O’Donnell and Taylor’s (2003) argument that it is the intent that “distinguishes propaganda from all other processes of persuasion” (p. 7).

The debate over the use of the terms propaganda, public relations or public diplomacy to refer to particular types of messages have become a feature of the world in which we all live, in the media as well as in the academy. What is important to understand is why the messages are being formulated the way they are, how they are being used and to what purposes they are put. It is this point that Weaver, Motion and Roper (2006) take up when they discuss the role of public relations communication:

public relations communication can be understood as the strategic attempt to control the agenda of public discussion and the terms in which discussion takes place. In these terms, public relations practitioners are complicit in the attempt to gain, and maintain, social, political, and/or economic power for the organizations that they represent. They do this by asserting the “common sense” truth value of what they stand for and communicate. (Weaver et al., 2006, p. 17)

This strategy of controlling the agenda of public debate can be connected with the maintenance of power. This can be done by appealing to the public as judge of the organisation according to perceptions of the organisation’s trustworthiness and whether it is worthy of support (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). This, in turn, raises questions of legitimacy when an organisation behaves in a way that is aligned with the public’s

perceptions of that organisation (Nasi, Nasi, Phillips, & Zyglidopoulos, 1997) and questions of delegitimation when it does not.

True colours? War, propaganda and public relations

Discourses during conflict and war are commonly categorised as propaganda, since the intention (Taylor, 2003) behind any such discourse is to persuade citizens that the government is defending their way of life, their values and their national interest. But, because of the pejorative connotations associated with the word, propaganda, any other term is usually preferable. This thesis provides support for Miller's (2004) contention that many of the communication methods used by contemporary governments and political elites have been learned from the public relations industry and the private sector.

Since the public relations industry is essentially one that operates "behind the scenes", it is often difficult to reveal its internal workings and these difficulties are compounded during war and conflict situations where external and internal censorship is introduced or intensified. This does not vary from propaganda to public relations. Sophisticated and complex discourse constructions often hide attempts to shape public opinion. Nevertheless, without getting behind the scenes, the functions of a public relations campaign can often be deduced from particular cases. At the time, there appear to be clear links between public relations strategies, goal, objectives and key messages and targeted at influential publics.

Such connections often find retrospective confirmation in the memoirs by, or books about, the communicators involved. (see chapter 12, for examples).

Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) colour code propaganda into white, black or grey according to the source and accuracy of the information. White propaganda is credible information from an accredited source whereas black propaganda is creatively deceitful and includes lies and fabrications. Grey propaganda is somewhere in-between, where the source may or may not be identified and the accuracy of the information is uncertain. For Moloney (2006), public relations falls into the category of white propaganda or, in other words, weak propaganda. Intention is still the key and, in liberal and market-oriented societies, it is public relations practitioners who produce messages for their publics in order to manipulate them to comply with "ideas, values and policies that economic and political elites (some elected) have favoured" (Moloney, 2006, p. 41).

Is it useful to try to draw a line between propaganda and public relations? Will that line progress and inform our analyses of information and communication processes? L'Etang's (2006a) view is that there is a great deal of room for different interpretations and "the discussion about the relationship between public relations and propaganda has shifted from complex methodological debate to becoming embedded in ideological difference (p. 28). Accordingly, she goes beyond Walton's (1997) notion of

propaganda as potentially neutral to conclude that the very “discussion about propaganda is not so much about method but has itself become propagandised” (p. 28). In effect, whether propaganda is positive or negative depends to an extent on how the speaker or writer, sees it. So, for one person, certain discourses can be identified as propaganda without negative connotations, and another, the mere label propaganda discredits the message and the messenger.

One of the most influential pioneers of public relations was Edward Bernays, who has been characterised as “a farsighted architect of modern propaganda techniques” (Ewen, 1996, p. 3) and who also wrote a book entitled *Propaganda* (Bernays, 1928). In merging the two, Bernays (Bernays, 1952) coined the term “the engineering of consent” to illustrate the unbreakable link between public relations and public sentiment. “Any person or organization depends ultimately on public approval and is therefore faced with the problem of engineering the public’s consent to a program or goal” (p. 159). Such public approval is required to sustain the legitimacy of an organisation and such propaganda is required to keep a nation’s citizens onside during a war.

It was Bernays’ work, based on the behavioural and social sciences that introduced the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations – practitioners sought information from the public through research, as well as disseminating information to the public. Theories of propaganda,

persuasion and the “engineering of consent” informed this model of public relations. In J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig’s (1992) later formulation: “The secret of successful manipulation was in understanding the motivations of people and in using research to identify the messages most likely to produce the attitudes and behaviours desired by an organization” (p. 288).

Much of Bernays’ training took place in the Committee for Public Information (CPI). The CPI was the American propaganda machine of the First World War, which packaged, advertised and sold the war to the public and provided the basis for the strategies and practices of public relations in the United States. In fact, the CPI provided the model by which marketing strategies for subsequent wars, to the present, were shaped (Ewen, 1996). Ewen (1996) believes that for Bernays, “public relations was about fashioning and projecting credible renditions of *reality* itself” (p. 6) and that the practitioner’s job was to influence and direct public attitudes.

Certainly, for Bernays, public relations was a vehicle for reconciling popular government with private economic interests, with public approval being essential for the success of any programme or goal (Bernays, 1952, cited in Lacey & Llewellyn, 1995, p. 48). In terms of international politics and, in particular, international conflict, public relations formed an essential part of the overall strategy. In the early 1920s, Bernays wrote that “governments act upon the principle that it is not sufficient to govern their own citizens well and to assure the people that they are acting

wholeheartedly in their belief. They understand the public opinion of the entire world is important to their welfare” (Bernays, 1923, cited in McNair, 1996, p. 42).

It is the approach to public relations and the philosophical assumptions that underlie the practices, which differ widely for scholars and practitioners: “Some see the purpose of public relations as manipulation. Others see it as the dissemination of information, resolution of conflict, or promotion of understanding” (J.E. Grunig, 1992, p. 6). The role of the public relations practitioner has grown in importance since the beginning of the 20th century as governments recognised the need to secure the consent of the public in pursuing foreign as well as domestic policies. It has become the job of the public relations professional to build consent and, therefore, “as the producer and disseminator of symbols which can contribute to the building of unity and consent around governmental policy, the public relations worker is of course, a propagandist” (McNair, 1996, p. 43).

Moloney (2006) focuses on public relations as “competitive communication for its principal’s advantage” (p. 167) and, as such, it is very strongly aligned with the concept of propaganda. Suggesting that the word propaganda has been “exiled under a regime of vocabulary apartheid” (Moloney, 2006, p. 166), he claims that public relations has, instead, become the byword for those communicative acts which are

“persuasive, self-advantaging [and] often mass-mediated” (p. 166). In liberal democracies, where human rights, public debate and free elections are championed, Moloney reasons, there is no place for propaganda.

However, it is in the arena of warfare and conflict that the term propaganda is most frequently used for the management of public opinion. Whereas in previous conflicts with similarities to Kosovo (the Falklands and first Gulf War), governments were able to control the dissemination of information through access restrictions to the war zone, the Kosovo conflict introduced new dimensions to the way in which information was revealed and relayed. Indeed, technological advances at the end of the century were so evident in the campaign in Kosovo that some have claimed it as the Internet war (see, for instance, Gocic, 2000; Horvath, 1999; Husic, 1999; P. M. Taylor, 2000b). It is beyond the scope of this project to develop a discussion of the “Web War” (P. M. Taylor, 2000b), but it is important to note that Yugoslavia was able to mobilise some support through this medium. At the beginning of the bombing campaign, websites were constructed quickly and underwent ongoing development as the conflict progressed.

In spite of a decade of war and sanctions, Yugoslavia was a developed European country with a good communications infrastructure supporting both global television and Internet access. Many of the population were literate in English (Husic, 1999) enabling them to communicate in

discussions on email lists, listservs and chat rooms. They provided alternative views about the conflict and email correspondence between people in Yugoslavia and friends and relatives living abroad was a major means of communicating the reality of war for the Serbs. The war on the Internet took a literal turn early on in the conflict when supporters of Yugoslavia “effectively shut down the official NATO website with a denial of service attacks, pinging the site repeatedly to tie up access” (Stratfor, 1999). The vast array of technological advances, the nature of the societies involved in the conflict and the immediacy of requirements for information, all contributed to how the conflict was presented and perceived.

Public relations as diplomacy and international relations

Diplomacy and public relations are linked together in many ways, particularly when it comes to international relations. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) identified theoretical similarities between public relations and public diplomacy. In particular, they identified the way in which diplomacy has moved from its more traditional format of diplomacy between individual representatives of government to showing more concern with “winning hearts and minds” of publics. Furthermore, traditional diplomacy, in moving beyond inter-governmental representation, is expanded into public diplomacy when “governments, private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public

attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions" (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992, p. 138).

L'Etang (2006b) also suggests there is common ground for public relations and international relations because of similar theoretical and philosophical frameworks. It is at the functional level that these two disciplines interact – representational (rhetoric, oratory, advocacy); dialogic (negotiation and peacemaking); and advisory (counselling) (L'Etang, 2006b, p. 374). When it comes to corporations or international organisations, the similarity in the work of diplomats and public relations practitioners becomes clear. Both of them manage public opinion: "Both parties have interpretative and presentational roles and both attempt to manage communication about issues. ... [They] conduct much of their business via the media and are media-trained to provide appropriate 'sound-bites' on the issues of the day" (L'Etang, 2006b, p. 375).

For Grunig (1993), the important aspect of public relations within international affairs is that it should be ethical and symmetrical, that is, it should benefit mutual understanding and help "to build relationships among organizations and publics and to develop policies that are responsible to those publics" (p. 158). Grunig saw the value of practising public relations within the public diplomacy framework only when such practice was symmetrical and ethical, taking the dialogic aspect of symmetrical public relations as being paramount and thereby making it a

moral communication process.

L'Etang (2006b) notes a certain dissonance in this approach to public relations and diplomacy since public relations attempts to explain political action. Governments and organisations use public relations for maintaining their reputation and credibility and gaining a communicative advantage for themselves. They become the main contributors to the debates on particular issues and, as such, influence public opinion. This suggests that there is an asymmetrical perspective when governments and/or international organisations carry out such activities. Furthermore, the contribution to the debate may be in the form of lobbying for a particular viewpoint, or simply as a means of maintaining credibility as an organisation.

L'Etang (2006b) looks to Wight's (1994) framework in diplomacy to identify the theoretical relationship with public relations. Wight (1994) identified three main approaches to the underlying assumptions and diplomatic style of political communication and international relations. These approaches are useful in this thesis as they are compatible with Habermas' legitimacy framework, the issue of humanitarian intervention and the morality and values that are espoused in diplomatic channels.

Wight's (1994) first approach can be categorised as Machiavellian. This is to say it is essentially pragmatic and one-sided (one-way asymmetrical) in which competition and conflict are characteristics of international

relations. This approach – the realist position – demonstrates self-interest and “seeks to persuade publics to fall into line and governments to accommodate organizational interests” (L'Etang, 2006b, p. 384).

Governments and organisations seek to enhance their own positions and the role of public relations is to persuade publics to conform to the attitudes and ideas of the government or organisation.

Wight's (1994) second approach is the rationalist position associated with the 17th century philosopher Grotius who argued that moderate negotiation was appropriate in diplomacy (Grotius, 2002). The emphasis rested on building good relationships and developing good reputations. This approach is concerned with “enlightened self-interest and reciprocity and can be likened to claims in the public relations literature which emphasize mutual understanding as an organisational goal” (L'Etang, 2006b, p. 384).

Wight's (1994) third approach is influenced by Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* and described as revolutionist. It “emphasizes a peacemaking approach in which the public interest is served by the world order. In public relations this is represented by the strong emphasis on public relations' potential to achieve transcendental mutual satisfaction and understanding between peoples” (L'Etang, 2006b, p. 385). It also corresponds with Grunig's (1993) symmetrical, ethical international public relations, which “provides a vital communication function for organizations, nations and even the world, helping to develop an

understanding among groups and eventually reduce conflict” (p. 138).

Wight’s (1994) framework is useful in terms of the international nature of the public relations campaign conducted by NATO. It was essentially a realist approach (Machiavellian) to using public relations practices to reach as many publics as possible. The use of daily press conferences to provide NATO’s view of the world was one-sided and pragmatic. This is also evident in communicating crises and their effect on the organisation’s legitimacy. As such it provides a demonstration in practice that even contemporary supranational organisations, such as NATO, are far from practicing two-way symmetrical communication. It suggests that older international relations theory fits what NATO does much better than the Grunigian paradigm, which is the currently dominant theory in public relations.

Crisis communication and legitimacy

Outside of the Grunigian paradigm, public relations has developed considerable expertise on crisis communication that is highly relevant to NATO’s attempts at legitimation. An organisation’s legitimacy is at its most vulnerable in conditions of crisis when an organisation needs to communicate about an event or series of activities (Massey, 2004). A legitimacy gap (Sethi, 1979) can open when the behaviours and actions of the organisation do not conform to the expectations of key publics, making it difficult to maintain legitimacy. Perception management is mobilised

in a crisis when the perception is considered to be different from the reality. Larabee (1999) contends that “the theory behind perception management is that in a crisis, ‘perception’ is out of synch with ‘reality’ and successful managers must bring the two together, asserting control over the external and internal ‘chaos’ created by a disaster” (p. 109). This aligns with the Habermasian (1975) approach to legitimation. Legitimacy is given when publics perceive that a policy or a particular perspective is common sense and there is no contestation of the discourse. A legitimation gap occurs when the actual reality is perceived as not being aligned with the communication of it (Roper, 2001).

Much of the literature on crisis communication covers many aspects of how an organisation can allay the potentially negative outcomes of communicating under stress, how to communicate with particular publics, and the most efficient way of maintaining identity and image during a crisis. Heath and Millar (2004) define a crisis “as an untimely but predictable event that has actual or potential consequences for stakeholders’ interests as well as the reputation of the organization suffering the crisis” (p. 2). The organisation’s response to questions concerning its responsibility for creating, or allowing the event to happen, will be judged in terms of its credibility and ability to regain control over the situation.

Heath and Millar (2004) observe that the “manner in which the

organisation addresses this responsibility serves as a turning point for it: Respond well and survive the crisis; respond poorly and suffer the death of the organization's reputation and perhaps itself" (p. 2). This is a qualitative judgement statement that relies on professional expertise to find an appropriate response that will resonate with publics (Stauber & Rampton, 1995) and thereby avoid a legitimacy gap (Sethi, 1979).

Heath (1997) argues that by using a strategic issues management approach, the effects of a crisis can be mitigated: "Crisis conditions and events can be lessened by effective strategic business planning and an appropriate sense of corporate responsibility that is implemented by effective operation and personnel procedures" (p. 290). Thus, guidelines have been developed within the public relations industry that identify best practice for dealing with crises (see, for instance, Fearn-Banks, 2001; Heath, 2004; Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2001).

Fearn-Banks (2001) concludes that crisis communication must be considered in the light of the fact that crises are likely to happen. If an organisation is prepared for the crisis and behaves ethically and professionally, it is likely to recover. It is important to have a crisis communication plan, but more important is a proactive public relations plan in order to prevent crises occurring in the first place.

However, such plans do not necessarily provide the answers to particular crises. Unusual events, especially in time of conflict and war, usually

require clear and definitive answers on such questions as: who is to blame,? What happened? How is it going to be fixed and how will the organisation change its activities to learn from the crisis? Issues management is a proactive approach to dealing with crises and as such can certainly be considered as part of the post-crisis stage. Seeger et al. (2001) agree that there is usually no dispute about the actual facts of the crisis, but cause, responsibility, blame and what needs to be done to remedy the situation are almost always contestable. The explanation of the crisis is important to the publics who want to know what remedial action has been taken to prevent further crises. This, then, returns crisis for consideration in terms of issues management.

Monitoring issues can have a significant impact on the way an organisation responds to a crisis. Through research, the organisation will have an idea of how its principal publics are likely to react to its performance and any crisis that may eventuate. As Heath (1997) suggests, if an organisation is engaged in issues management, the crisis will be identified before it occurs and a crisis management plan will be in place to respond to the event. It should identify “points in the organization’s operations where if a problem were to occur it would generate public outrage and uncertainty” (p. 303).

When a crisis occurs, an organisation’s first concern must be in terms of its reputation or legitimacy, for without maintaining legitimacy, the organisation’s right to exist may be called into question. If publics perceive

that the organisation is not behaving in line with social norms and values, then its legitimacy will come under public scrutiny (Metzler, 2001).

Therefore, the communication strategies that are chosen in response to a crisis should not only aim to provide the facts and explanations, but also should stress the legitimacy of the organisation by making its actions understandable and acceptable (Allen & Caillouet, 1994).

Crisis communication strategies

The development of crisis communication strategies has been a major concern for public relations scholars and practitioners for some time. It has also been the subject of many case studies and discussions about how organisations communicate under stress. According to Seeger et al. (2001), research shows that when an organisation communicates as openly and as accurately as possible, the organisation is more likely to be successful in maintaining its reputation. From this research, they put together eight guidelines for managing a crisis, suggesting essentially that an organisation should build on good stakeholder relations and image before the crisis occurs, engage in crisis planning by ensuring a crisis management team is in place to coordinate and assess the responses. When faced with a crisis the organisation should communicate not only openly and accurately, but also quickly, be consistent with messages and monitor reactions in the media.

Hiebert (1991) drew on the first Gulf War in a discussion of public relations as a weapon of modern warfare. When it came to crisis management, the rules of communicating crises were: “Tell as much as you can and tell it fast; centralize the source of information with an effective and well-informed spokesperson; deal with rumours swiftly; make as much as available to the press as possible; update information frequently; stay on the record and never tell a lie” (p. 31).

Coombs (1995) developed a similar “repertoire of crisis-response strategies” (p. 449) that provides messages to shape public perceptions of the crisis itself and how the organisation is involved in order to repair the organisational image. These strategies fall into five categories, each of which has several tactics associated with it. In fact, what Coombs (1995) provided was a choice of tactics to be used to communicate with stakeholders, depending on the type of crisis occurring.

Five categories were identified, each of which also had sub-strategies: non-existence, distance, ingratiation, mortification and suffering. In the first category of non-existence, the aim is to eliminate the idea that a crisis exists; distance strategies are used when the organisation acknowledges that there is a crisis, but that the link between the organisation and the crisis itself is somewhat tenuous. This is intended to make the crisis more acceptable by making excuses or justifying that the situation is not as bad as it may seem. These distance strategies are particularly relevant to

NATO's crisis responses in this study.

Ingratiation strategies are more concerned with the opinions about the organisation itself and are used by making the organisation appear in a much more positive light. This can also contribute to the transcendence strategies that contextualise the crisis more beneficially so that publics are led to consider the crisis from a more positive angle (Ice, 1991). The mortification strategies admit to responsibility and offer some form of repentance, usually by way of compensating the victims in order to get the public to forgive the organisation. The final strategy, suffering, "is unique among crisis-response strategies" (Coombs, 1995, p. 453) in that it aims to become the victim of the crisis and thus win the sympathy of publics.

The response to a crisis is generally selected in terms of the threat posed to the organisation. The response needs to fit the actual situation as well as ensuring that any response should not intensify the culpability of the organisation thereby threatening its survival (Coombs, 2002). Thus, each event should be evaluated in terms of whether it is a problem or a crisis. A problem can be dealt with by using the accommodative strategies suggested by theories of apologia and image restoration (Hearit, 2001) that tend to focus on helping the victims of an unpredicted event. Coombs (2002) suggests a threat grid be used to identify the level of the crisis and whether it, in fact, threatens the survival of the organisation.

These strategies of finding the right words and conventions to explain crises provide a checklist for practitioners, but it is important also to look beyond the checklists to the broader contexts in which crises arise. Tyler (2005) approaches the issue of crisis communication from a postmodernist perspective of the organisation as a storytelling system. The organisation has official stories, which provide the outside world with the story and culture of the organisation. When a crisis occurs, the official story is often upset and the narrative disrupted. This opens up a contest in which competing narratives counter the organisation's dominant story and sometimes produce "alternate narratives of which the organization is often wholly unaware" (Tyler, 2005, p. 567).

This, Tyler (2005) suggests, may upset the more traditional guidelines to the way communication should be approached. After all, when the spokesperson tells the story accurately and quickly, as crisis response strategies demand, it is the story that has been conceived by the power elite of the organisation, which may or may not be the "truth".

Holtzhausen (2000) picks up this point in an examination of the modernist interpretation compared to the postmodernist perspective on truth:

postmodernists accommodate many diverse ideas and perspectives, including the modernist perspective. However, where modernism maintains that it has found the real truth, the postmodern holds that this truth is merely the viewpoint of some dominant groups in society and should not be privileged over another viewpoint. (p. 96)

Thus, in any crisis, an organisation must be concerned with the outcomes of the way the crisis is dealt with in the first place. It also needs to deal with other narratives that may compete with the narrative of the organisation. Therefore, the organisation should be concerned with the actions they take so as to not only alleviate any suffering involved but, by doing so, provide solid ground for maintaining public support for the organisation.

This review draws on theoretical perspectives that underpin public relations practices that enabled NATO to maintain and enhance its organisational legitimacy during the Kosovo Campaign. The theory underpinning the empirical analysis provides an “imaginary road map” (Mackey, 2004) to aid understanding of these processes and examine a central question posed in this thesis: How did NATO legitimise itself as a viable organisation for the 21st century?

My understanding of the answer also draws heavily on techniques of critical discourse analysis. These enable the researcher to illuminate the processes and practices at work in language. Accordingly, the next chapter moves from the public relations literature to explain the methodology

of critical discourse analysis and the nature of the data selected, gathered and analysed.

CHAPTER 6

Implementing the project: Methods and materials

The central question of how NATO used public relations to legitimise itself as a viable organisation for the 21st century is tackled in a number of ways. This question itself directs the focus of the research onto NATO's specific strategic and organisational goals and how the organisation was able to adapt to a changing political environment. The thesis takes a dual approach: by analysing the discourses of the organisation at this remarkable period in its history, the thesis aims to reveal the discursive practices that enabled NATO to position itself as a legitimate and essential military organisation in a globalising post-Cold War world; and, in parallel, by regarding the transformation of NATO as a case study of a supranational organisation at a critical juncture, the thesis also provides insights that can be extrapolated to other supranational organisations.

Case study methodology

Stake (2000; 2005) suggests that by using a case study for qualitative inquiry, one is choosing what to study, as well as focusing on the epistemological question of what can be learned from studying a single case. In public relations literature, Cutler (2004) found that while a case

study method constituted one of the dominant modes of research, the method was poorly understood and applied.

There is a considerable literature on case studies outside the public relations literature. One of the major theorists, Yin (1994), identified four different types of case study. The fourth and last of these – the research case – is closest to my use of the Kosovo case. Research cases investigate activities and processes that occur within particular social contexts. They become a case by their bounded nature and by their flexibility in choosing how the data for the research can be gathered. Merriam (1998) extended the concept of a case's bounded nature by suggesting that the boundaries are clearly definable in terms of examining a particular concern, issue or hypothesis.

In this project, the case is bounded by a time period, a specific social and geopolitical context, as well as the public relations campaign that NATO presented to its publics. Furthermore, the choice of the case is both intrinsic and instrumental (Stake, 2005) because, first and foremost, the case of Kosovo is intrinsically interesting for its own sake, especially in terms of: geopolitical power relations; the future of military interventions for humanitarian reasons; and how supranational organisations are capable of developing a power base that draws on resources larger than any of its constituent nation states.

Secondly, instrumentally, the case provides insight into the issues of NATO's viability, legitimacy and *raison d'être* into the 21st century. This allows a discussion to advance understanding of how strategic public relations communication can support and facilitate organisational change and legitimacy. Thirdly, within the case study there are smaller examples of crisis cases that illuminate the phenomenon of crisis communication in a unique cultural, political and social situation.

As Stake (2005), who is probably the leading authority on the subject, observes, case study method utilises observation and, more importantly, reflection:

the researcher is committed to pondering the impressions, deliberating on recollections and records – but not necessarily following the conceptualizations of theorists, actors or audiences. ... The case researcher digs into meanings, working to relate them to contexts and experience. In each instance, the work is reflective. (pp. 449-450)

The Kosovo case is particularly appropriate for investigating the public relations practices and the construction of messages through critical discourse analysis since the data is available in transcription. This allows the researcher to deliberate and reflect on the intended meanings.

Discourse analysis

As Fairclough observes, critically analysing discourse is important because it “is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the

world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (p. 64). His view is reinforced by Chouliaraki’s (2000) suggestion that the “concept of discourse points at the fact that mediated language practices do not simply relay or ‘talk about’ a reality that occurs ‘out there’, but that they actually constitute this reality, in the process of communication” (p. 295).

The profound economic and social changes that have occurred on a global scale in the final two decades of the 20th century have, on the one hand, created new opportunities and vastly differing possibilities for many people. On the other hand, they have created considerable disruption to life, causing poverty and misery in many societies. Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) draw attention to the fact that these changes have “profoundly affected our sense of self and of place, causing considerable confusion” (p.3) but change is considered to be inevitable. In their view, these changes may be considered to be “at least in part the outcome of particular strategies pursued by particular people for particular interests within a particular system – all of which might be different” (p. 4).

This suggests a clear connection with the exercise of power that is often obscured through language and is not apparent at the surface level. As Mumby and Clair (1997) state: “one of the goals of critical discourse analysis is to move beyond a surface-level examination of discourse and to show how it simultaneously produces and hides ‘deep structure’ relations of power and inequality” (p. 183).

In the critical analysis of the discourses of war and propaganda, this analysis of language and the way information is communicated about the Kosovo campaign to a large variety of target publics aims to shed light on the underlying meanings and identify the intended preferred meanings. With the increasing professional intervention in the construction of meaning through what Fairclough (1992) calls the “technologisation of discourse” (p. 67) , it is important to peel back the layers of meaning and disarm these communication technologies and techniques in order to identify the power relations and ideologies underpinning their discourses.

Within the sphere of political communication, the discourse practices are usually consciously strategic. Fairclough (2000) refers to recent developments in the relationships between politics, government and the mass media in which “many significant political events are now in fact media events” (p. 3). Due to the deep penetration of mass media, political leaders, political commentators and aspiring politicians must also be concerned with communicative style, which is “a matter of language in the broadest sense” (Fairclough, 2000, p. 4). This includes body language, hairstyle, dress and posture – all of which can be used to convey messages to enhance the political message. As a civilian, NATO spokesman, Dr. Jamie Shea presents the receiver with a particular reading of NATO as a military organisation. Shea’s communicative style is discussed in chapter ten.

Political messages are also likely to be constructed by what Fairclough (1996) refers to as “technologists of discourse” (p. 73). These experts may have particular aptitudes or characteristics in terms of their relationship to knowledge, with access to specific information along with the ability to produce it for general consumption with an “aura of ‘truth’” (Fairclough, 1996, p. 73). Also, their role within a particular organisation is identifiable and accredited and they may also be in a position to train and mentor others. Because of these characteristics, the strategies and tactics for constructing text and talk may be analysed to discover how discursive struggles shape the text, how particular texts are strategically deployed and how such deployment may strengthen certain socio-cultural practices and not others (Motion & Leitch, 1996).

By using a critical discourse method of analysis, this thesis aims to uncover the hidden ideological aspects of an organisation’s use of persuasive language. It attempts to identify the more subtle ways of managing and manipulating the minds of the publics who are the targets of text and talk, and whose consent for action is required (van Dijk, 1993).

Social constructionism

The epistemological framework for the discussion of critical discourse analysis as a social scientific theoretical perspective is informed by Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) argument that “reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this

occurs” (p. 13). According to Allen (2005) this prompted the change in terminology from the sociology of knowledge to “social constructionism” and provided a focus for how knowledge develops through social interaction.

Social constructionism, then, is defined by Berger and Luckmann (1966) as “the relationship between human thought and the social context in which it arises.” (p. 16). In her discussion of more contemporary scholarship of social constructionism, Allen (2005) identifies several key assumptions: that understanding of the way of the world and ourselves should constantly be critiqued and re-evaluated; that all knowledge comes from specific historical and cultural contexts; and that “social processes sustain knowledge” (p. 37). For Allen (2005), the most important process is language, which is not only used to produce knowledge but also provides the means of making sense of the world: “Language is a system we use to objectify subjective meanings and to internalize socially constructed meanings” (p. 38). Finally, she observes how knowledge and social interaction are strongly connected.

The centrality of language is, of course, the means by which we interpret and argue our own subjective realities. By using language (discourse) we are engaging in a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1992). Indeed, for Fairclough (1992), “Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world

in meaning” (p. 64), and discursive practice “contributes to reproducing society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, yet also contributes to transforming society” (p. 65).

Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is both theory and method, located within the critical social sciences (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Its starting point is social issues and problems. Contemporary issues of concern to members of different disciplines, such as education, political science and sociology tend to be focused on democracy and the impact of globalisation on democracy (Fairclough, 2001) as well as on what Habermas (1989) refers to as “the decline of the public sphere” through the commercialisation and professionalisation of political communication. Furthermore, as a critical method, CDA tries to discover and identify the connections between language and other aspects of social life that may not be immediately obvious (Fairclough, 2001).

For van Dijk (1993), CDA is concerned primarily with the “discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice of inequality that results from it” (p. 252). He further insists that any scholar using critical discourse analysis as a method must identify their personal socio-political stance – “spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252) and, as

such, make a contribution to understanding change in society.

Fairclough (2001) notes that there is much greater awareness of language and its use in contemporary social life today, especially in the language of advertising, and also sexist or racist language. As a result, there are many creative ways of consciously attempting to manipulate and “control language to meet institutional and organizational objectives” (p. 231).

More specifically, CDA “focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 353). CDA research is concerned with how powerful groups or institutions control public discourses on specific topics and with the social consequences of such control. Fairclough (1992) argues that if discourse is a mode of political and ideological practice, it is more than a site of struggle, “but also a stake in power struggle: discursive practice draws upon conventions which naturalize particular power relations and ideologies, and these conventions themselves, and the ways in which they are articulated, are a focus of struggle” (p. 67).

Part of that stake in power struggles can be found through the concept of articulation. Articulation is central to the way discourses are formed and representations made. Articulation attempts to join together that which does not necessarily belong together – discourses, concepts, ideas – to create new meanings and new sense. It creates, in effect, a new

discourse which then receives acceptance as common sense (Hall, 1986; Moffitt, 1994; Slack, 1996). Hall (1986) describes this process as one which is dependent upon particular socio-political and cultural conditions at a certain time that allows publics to “see the logic” of drawing these two elements together and thereby accept the new discourse. For example, in the Kosovo case, two discourses are articulated to provide a new discourse domain: chapter eleven discusses NATO’s articulation of the military discourse with the humanitarian discourse to form the military humanitarian discourse.

The three-dimensional method of critical discourse analysis

The particular approach to critical discourse analysis followed in this thesis draws from that developed by Norman Fairclough (1989; 1992; 1995a; 2001). Faircloughian CDA draws together language analysis and areas of social theory in order to provide tools for understanding the ideology that underlies written, verbal and visual texts.

This type of analysis is particularly relevant to a small sample of texts (Fairclough, 1992) but when there is a large corpus of discourse samples, the method involves making decisions concerning the content and structure of the corpus. This can be done by doing an initial coding of the texts in terms of particular topics or discourse elements as well as identifying key words that occur relatively frequently (Fairclough, 1992,

2000).

One strategy for selection of particular texts is to identify crisis points in the discourse when it appears that things are not going smoothly, where there are misunderstandings, when one participant corrects another, repetitions and, what Fairclough (1992) calls “exceptional disfluencies” (p. 230) such as hesitation, repetition, silence and shifts in the style: “Such moments of crisis make visible aspects of practices which might normally be naturalized, and therefore difficult to notice; but they also show change in process, the actual ways in which people deal with the problematization of practices” (p. 230). An illustration of such exceptional disfluency is provided in chapter eleven.

In critical discourse analysis, text is analysed within the context of the discursive practices (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and the wider socio-cultural practices in which discourses occur. These three dimensions: text, discourse practices and socio-cultural practices, are not separate but can overlap depending on the level or levels that are most relevant to the research at hand. Thus, it is the research questions that shape and determine the level of the analysis.

Textual analysis

Text is at the heart of discourse analysis and its formal linguistic features provide the empirical data for interpretation. In assuming that discourse is

both constitutive of, and shaped by social reality, it is through a close analysis of the texts that it is possible to discover how and whether text is socially motivated. Analysis of both meanings and form are necessary as part of critical discourse analysis although Fairclough (1992) notes that the differentiation between these two elements is not always clear. He suggests, therefore, that if the formal aspects of the text are more significant, then they should be included in the discussion of text as discourse.

The “texture” of a text looks beyond the linguistic features to the ways in which other discourses are drawn into the text to provide alternative meanings and interpretations and to act as a guide to the specific discourse practices employed. Identifying the meanings of individual words in a text does not necessarily inform the analysis of the text itself, but rather it is the identification of “processes of wording the world” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 77). Or, to put it another way, the lexical style and signification that take into account the differences for different people and place them into a kind of meaningful order or hierarchy.

As we shall see in the later debate about whether Kosovo is a war or a humanitarian intervention, the use of alternative words can also indicate particular political views or ideologies. So also the significance of metaphors can impact the terms and nature of political or ideological struggles. Metaphors structure reality in a particular way and indicate “the

way we think and the way we act, and our systems of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 194). Metaphors can represent one aspect of the world that is then extended to another in different discourses. For example, in public relations, campaigns are military constructs: they have goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. So a public relations campaign is metaphorically constructed as a military operation.

As part of the analysis of vocabulary, keywords (Fairclough, 2000; Williams, 1983) are also identified in the text and interpreted according to the context in which they appear. Keywords are those words in a shared vocabulary that have a range of meanings and are used widely “to discuss many of the central processes of our common life” (Williams, 1983, p. 14). Keywords also indicate how changes in social and historical processes occur within language (Williams, 1983), demonstrating the complexities of the problems of relationships and meanings of words. Some examples of keywords in this study are “ethnic cleansing”, “mass graves”, “humanitarian catastrophe” and “evil”. The keywords are looked at in terms of their salience and repetition in the texts that point to a particular discursive construction.

Omissions in the text are also important in terms of how the text may be interpreted. What is not stated may require the reader or listener to “make the connections” from implicit knowledge which is based on “common

sense”. For example, by omitting the fact that Serbs were also forced to flee their homes in Kosovo and required humanitarian aid, people are led to believe that it was only ethnic Albanians who were refugees, driven out by the Serbs.

Discourse practice

Discourse practice, according to Fairclough (1992), does not stand in contrast to discourse as social practice but rather as a distinct form of it. He states that, in fact, social practice may be entirely made up of discursive practices, or a mixture of the discursive and non-discursive. The focus, however, in this particular dimension is the production, distribution and consumption of the discourses and the manner in which they are formulated and interpreted. As such, it is these practices that “mediate” between the texts and the socio-cultural practice dimension. In order to understand this mediating process, it is important to discuss the three main areas identified by Fairclough (1992) for analysis in discursive practice: the “force” of utterances; the “coherence” of texts ; and the intertextuality and interdiscursivity of the texts.

The force of utterances in texts is the action part of the text, that part which indicates what it is being “used to do socially, what ‘speech act(s)’ it is being used to ‘perform’ (give an order, ask a question, threaten, promise, etc.)” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 82). The coherence of texts is about making sense and that the parts of a text form a coherent whole. It has more to

do with interpretation than with the property of the text in that a text can only be coherent if it makes sense to the person hearing or reading it. For example, NATO spokespeople constantly declared that this was not a war against the Yugoslav people, but all of NATO's actions pointed to the fact that bombing was designed to inflict considerable damage on civilian infrastructure. For key audiences in NATO countries, however, the interpretation of the texts was aided by suggestions that this infrastructure was used by the Yugoslav military as well.

The concept of intertextuality was coined by Kristeva (1986) and refers to her observation that text is made up of historical texts as well as a re-shaping of these past texts into successive texts. By examining intertextuality, it is possible to discern what makes history and how processes of social change occur. The idea of how new texts are shaped in terms of prior texts is dependent on who is in a position to do this, which, as Fairclough (1992) points out, requires coupling intertextuality with a theory of power relations and the relationship between intertextuality and hegemony.

Hegemony is used by Fairclough as a means of theorising discursive changes. These relate to how power relations evolve: "Hegemony is the power over society as a whole of one of the fundamental economically-defined classes in alliance with other social forces" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 92). It is about the alliances that are formed to alter or influence beliefs

held by diverse publics, “through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent” (p. 92). In NATO’s construction of the Balkans, it is possible to see the interweaving of factual and fictional sources and genres to create a convincing picture from diverse texts rather than representing what the actual situation may be. By virtue of its widespread acceptance, the “Balkan discourse” can be regarded as hegemonic.

In the discussion of the discursive practices of the NATO texts, it is important to look at the question that Fairclough (1995b) poses: “What genres and discourse were drawn upon in producing the text, and what traces of them are there in the text?” (p. 61). Both interdiscursivity and manifest intertextuality are two areas of discourse practices that are the focus of text production.

Analysis of interdiscursivity reveals the different discourses that are drawn upon to produce the text with the strategic intention of shaping interpretations in particular ways. Manifest intertextuality is an area of analysis which is “a grey area between discourse practice and text” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 233). It looks at the way the text is constituted, in terms of the way other texts have been drawn upon in order to construct the text under analysis. In this project, texts and discourses of World War II are explicitly drawn upon.

As noted above, the distinctions between the three dimensions of analysis are not clear cut although Fairclough (1992) attempts to prescribe how to divide the topics between text analysis and discourse practice. When analysing textual features, text analysis is used. When looking at the strategies in the construction of the texts and their dissemination, texts are analysed in terms of the discourse practices. It is in the texts themselves that evidence of the discursive and social practices are found.

Social practice, language and investigation

Language has been at the centre of social investigation in many disciplines and its centrality has been understood as the universal structuring agent of society that was common to all humanity (Levi-Strauss, 1963). It is through language that social reality is constructed and understood and is, in Fairclough's (1992) terms a "mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world" (p. 63). Discourse is a means of reproducing and ordering social life for the producer of the discourse, as well as for the receiver of it. As such, it is heavily influenced by ideologies, political and cultural worldviews.

But discourse also constitutes social life – it contributes to the way society is structured and lived. It is the way we create sense and make sense of our lives, which brings us to the concept of "common sense". It is this common sense that provides the "natural" element of the discourse. When analysing discourse as a social practice, it is clear that a particular worldview or

ideology is shaping the formation of that discourse, but it is also contributing to the maintenance of a particular belief system as part of the reality.

In this study, the social and political belief systems of Western ideologies within a European context provide the framework for the analysis of the discourses as social practice. By drawing out and identifying the stakes in particular power struggles for dominance, the socio-political context of the discourse provides the context in which the analyst is able to understand the texts in terms of their production and dissemination. For NATO, the stakes are high, for the organisation must demonstrate not only that it is a viable organisation at the turn of the century, but also its organisational legitimacy in a changing globalised world.

Political discourses

The NATO texts are political texts in the sense that they involve power and, indeed, international policies and politics affecting large numbers of people (sometimes as a matter of life and death). The texts have clear strategic functions that enable the issuing institution to reach its goals. Chilton and Schäffner (1997) suggest four strategic functions of political discourse: coercion; resistance/opposition/protest; dissimulation; and legitimisation/delegitimation. These four functions can either be used to analyse how the hearer (receiver) interprets the discourse or as a means of

identifying different strategies used by the producer for coherence of the discourse in a particular society.

Three of these four functions are especially relevant in this thesis:

coercion, dissimulation and legitimisation/delegitimisation. Coercion looks at speech acts that are backed by some form of sanction.

Dissimulation is concerned with the control of information – whether it is adequate, uses euphemisms, attempts to blur the meanings and is used as a way of diverting the attention of the reader from difficult or unsavoury aspects of the information. The most important strategic function in terms of this research is legitimisation/delegitimisation. This function recognises that the actors must assert their “right to be obeyed” (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997, p. 213) through legitimacy when they are unable to exert physical force or coercion alone. These reasons for being obeyed must be communicated linguistically and this can be uncovered by looking at the pragmatics (interaction between speakers and hearers); semantics (meaning and structure); and syntax (the way the sentences are organised) (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997, p. 214).

By applying Fairclough’s three-dimensional critical discourse analysis model, aided by van Dijk’s (1996) suggestion of including the cognitive dimensions of structures and strategies that manipulate mental models of events through specific discourse structures, this thesis looks at the linguistic choices made in the production of the discourses; the strategic

functions of the discourse; the interactions between speakers; meanings and preferred meanings; the internal organisation of sentences; coherence; and word choice. It also looks at the organisational structures and processes of disseminating the messages, such as the press conferences and the selection of speakers. The context in which the texts are produced is a vital element in their interpretation in order to reduce ambivalence (Fairclough, 1992). By analysing the texts within the “context of the situation” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 81), it is possible to understand the social practices of which they are a part, thus focusing the meaning more succinctly.

The war in Kosovo was another war in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) at the end of a long decade of conflict, civil war and inter-ethnic violence in the republics that were breaking away from this centralised federation. These historical antecedents add a further dimension to the analysis of the discourses that presupposes what van Dijk (1996) terms social cognitions or mental models. In order to influence the current social cognitions of publics, specific discourse structures are devised, which may include themes, headlines, a particular delivery style, rhetorical figures and other discursive properties.

The major element in maintaining power and dominance is based on who has access to any particular communicative event. This means looking at the initiative for the communicative event, the control of the setting (who

is participating and how they are participating), the mode of communication used, and the scope of audience control, all of which suggest successful “access” to the minds of audiences.

This is, in fact, the ultimate form of power. Since the majority of the texts analysed in this research are from controlled settings, the research assumes that the communicative event will be “geared towards the control of the minds of participants, recipients or the audience at large, in such a way that the resulting mental changes are those preferred by those in power, and generally in their interest” (van Dijk, 1996, p. 89).

Keeping in mind the historical dimensions of the conflict in Kosovo, this thesis examines the texts in order to discover the way the current discourse is “embedded” within the historical dimension, as well as looking at the ways that particular types of discourse and genres are subject to change over time. Fairclough (1992) explains that this means that

the text absorbs and is built out of texts of the past ... the text responds to, reaccentuates, and reworks past texts, and in so doing helps to make history and contributes to wider processes of change, as well as anticipating and trying to shape subsequent texts. (p. 102)

This is a particularly salient aspect for the NATO discourses in that the events in Kosovo helped to change the way intervention and humanitarianism are viewed in a global context.

Thematic Analysis

Since the three-dimensional critical discourse analysis framework is deemed to be most relevant when applied to only a small amount of text, Fairclough (1992) suggests that when there is a large “corpus” of texts to be analysed, they should first be categorised into themes or topic areas. The thesis found Fairclough’s (1992) suggestion of identifying moments of crisis in the text to be particularly useful because communication of a war is constantly beset with the need to communicate crisis situations.

Identifying themes in texts was outlined by Owen (1984) in a research study of interpersonal communication relationships. This method is used in this thesis as an organisational tool to shape its structure. In structuring this thesis, instances of major themes were brought together as particular chapters. Owen (1984) suggests that a theme is present if there is recurrence, repetition or forcefulness in the text being analysed.

Recurrence is identified when the analyst can identify “the same thread of meaning” in more than one part of the text(s); repetition refers to “explicit use of the same wording or keywords and phrases; and forcefulness refers to the manner in which the text is vocalised” (p. 275).

Organisational legitimacy is the theme of chapter eight. According to Owen’s (1984) classification, it is the recurrence, or “thread of meaning”, of the concept of legitimacy that indicates the theme. Chapter nine is structured around the Balkans theme in terms of the recurrence and

repetition of keywords and how they are used to construct the “other”. Forcefulness is also a part of the theme in this chapter in terms of the way the texts construct President Milošević. Chapter eleven deals with the important theme of humanitarianism. It is the framing of military action in terms of humanitarian work that is a central theme throughout the NATO texts.

In this study, some of the texts were indeed broadcast on television at the time of the conflict and video clips are also available on the Internet. When particular attention is paid to a word, phrase or theme, the analysis of the text was extended to the vocalised text and noted. Roper (2000) suggests that forcefulness can also be “implied or discerned in particular emphatic features of text, such as an apparent emphasis on a negative within a sentence” (p. 66). These features are drawn out in the following analytical chapters.

The NATO Texts

The corpus of work analysed for this thesis are the transcripts from all the press briefings that took place at 3 pm daily at NATO Headquarters in Brussels between 25 March and 11 June, 1999. The press conferences conformed to a similar format everyday with the NATO spokesman facilitating the sessions. The press briefings by the spokesman and other participants (including those of NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana

and SACEUR, General Wesley Clark) were followed by a question and answer session with the journalists present.

All press releases emanating from NATO Headquarters were also used as supporting documentation. The NATO website provided operational updates for factual information on *Operation Allied Force* from 7 May until the end of the campaign, as well as extra daily morning briefings on the situation in Kosovo and *Operation Allied Force*, given by NATO spokesman, Jamie Shea at 10.30 am from 15 April until 9 June. These morning briefings provided supplementary and supporting documentation to the more expansive press briefings.

Fairclough (1992) suggests a number of ways of enhancing the corpus that, rather than simply adding to it, helps in the analysis in response to questions that arise. The corpus of text that is analysed in this project is supplemented by recorded interviews, documentary programmes, as well as personal reflections and academic articles by Jamie Shea. The NATO spokesman played a significant role in the construction, production, and dissemination of the NATO discourses and, therefore, his later writings and reflections provide important evidence to supplement the analysis of the discourses during the Kosovo Campaign. In particular, Shea's presentation to the United States Institute of Peace (Shea, 2000b) in which he provided his perspective of NATO's public relations campaign was an important source, as well as his later articles concerning NATO's

relations with the media.

Further supplementary evidence of the activities at NATO Headquarters is drawn from information provided by General Clark in his memoirs, *Waging modern war* (2001), as well as articles on the media operation by Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman, Alastair Campbell.

Following Owen (1984) the texts were coded into categories and critical discourse analysis was then used to analyse the selected sections of text. Fairclough's (1992) suggestion concerning "moments of crisis" also aided the selection of texts for analysis. The software programme *Highlighter* was used to identify keywords, clusters of words and proximity of words appearing in the texts, while retaining the paragraphs that formed the textual context of the themes. This process aided the selection of appropriate text sections to answer the research question.

CHAPTER 7

Strategic public relations: Legitimising NATO's identity

Chapter seven begins a four chapter sequence of analysis. Looking at NATO's transformation as a strong theme because of recurrence (Owen, 1984), it examines NATO's strategic use of public relations to legitimise an identity transformation. The chapter argues that through the public relations strategies deployed around and during the Kosovo conflict, NATO made a substantial contribution to this post-Cold War reframing. In particular, the chapter will consider the role of this Kosovo project in providing justification for NATO's of re-inventing itself as an important supranational organisation upholding the values of the "free world" on behalf of the international community.

The chapter also analyses how the public relations communication campaign during the Kosovo conflict clearly contributed to sustaining NATO's position as the premier organisation concerned with security, stability and the defence of Western values in an expanded European Union. In Europe there were ongoing discussions concerning security and defence with the possible mobilisation of a European rapid reaction force of the European Union. Also the role of the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in defining Europe's security environment

was becoming increasingly prominent (MacFarlane, 2000).

NATO provided the United States with a continuing political and military role in Europe as the leading partner in the North Atlantic Alliance. Its role in Europe had, from 1949-1989, been clearly defined as a North Atlantic military alliance responsible for maintaining the balance of power in Europe against the substantial military forces of the Soviet bloc. As such, the United States had an important investment in the organisation. Its political identity, though, had been subsumed by the need for constant military readiness in the face of possible attack from the East.

At the end of the Cold War, expectations for the survival of the organisation were minimal, and Sjørnsen (2004) comments that “with the loss of its enemy, the very purpose of the organisation, the basis of its legitimacy and the glue that kept the allied states together were also gone” (p. 687). This chapter, therefore, addresses the question of how NATO transformed itself to survive as an expanded and united organisation at the turn of the 21st century.

Organisational legitimation, issues management and supranational organisations

In making this transition, NATO occupies a space of considerable interest across the organisational and public relations fields because it disturbs particular boundaries. In non-military sectors, Cheney and Christensen (2001a) have convincingly argued that internal and external

communication practices can no longer be identified as separate fields of practice, but rather the boundaries have become so blurred that communication is directed at both audiences in order to maintain credibility and organisational legitimacy. The resulting attention on issues of identity is similar to NATO's having to engage with how the organisation wishes to be understood by all its stakeholders, and how it sees itself.

Supranational organisations, by their very nature, are required to maintain legitimacy and credibility across national boundaries and across diverse internal and external publics. By engaging in issues management and monitoring of trends in public opinion (Heath, 1997) such organisations aim to identify what might impact on their ongoing credibility and legitimacy. For these organisations, issues management offers a means of supporting, maintaining and expanding their own power and thus their legitimacy in the view of the nations that support and finance them.

Drawing on Cheney and Christensen's (2001a) conceptualisation of identity as a key organisational issue, this chapter examines what NATO is, what it stands for and how it wants to be perceived. In effect, these "identity-related concerns have ... become organizational preoccupations, even when organizations are ostensibly talking about other matters" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 232). Parallel concerns within NATO emerge through this analysis.

Nevertheless, the supranational organisation has some specific challenges. While NATO fits with the approach of identifying a specific issue as being useful to the development of the organisation (Hainsworth & Meng, 1988), it requires a larger than usual organisational range. Supranational organisations, such as NATO, the World Trade Organization and the European Union, have not only to identify issues that allow them to reinforce their identity in order to maintain the legitimacy and viability of the organisation in the long term, but have to do it across cultural and geographic boundaries. In other words, the conventional issues management importance of having organisations prove their worth continuously to their stakeholders (Massey, 2001) is magnified in size and diversity.

Part of that justification depends on an acceptable account of the past. In the case of supranational organisations, Chase's (1984) statement is particularly relevant: "History can be created, not just survived" (cited in Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 238). In this particular context, the thesis will argue, Chase's comment applies to NATO's discursive construction of a history that acts strategically to legitimise its ongoing survival. In effect, it contends that NATO identified Kosovo as an issue with the potential to enable NATO's active involvement while, at the same time, presenting the organisation as relevant new geopolitical realities.

NATO's struggle for identity

At the geographical level, the developing situation in Kosovo provided a means for NATO to carve out a slice of influence beyond the traditional borders of Western Europe. At the identity level, it also provided NATO with an opportunity to (re)establish its legitimacy as an essential organisation for contemporary circumstances. Cheney (2005) accurately described this discursive legitimising work as requiring actions that are *“rhetorical in nature and implication: They entail efforts to secure legitimacy, to win support, and to engineer the situation (and its ultimate history) for certain interests”* (pp. 55-56) [italics in original]. In effect such discursive efforts concern managing meaning for specific ends, identifying multiple target audiences and expanding the boundaries of traditional organisational communication. These are all mobilised in order to leverage support for a particular interpretation of the world. In this case, for NATO, it was also an issue of managing its own identity in order to establish what, in another context, Cheney and Christensen (2001a) describe as a unique “self” (p. 234). Such a self is designed to allow NATO the political influence needed for its survival.

In the specific case of NATO, this political influence and viability can be further illuminated from fields other than organisational communication. NATO's actions form part of a struggle for power that can also be considered in terms of Bourdieu's (1991) concept of the political field where power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of professional

communicators and “agents seek to form and transform their visions of the world and thereby the world itself: it is the site *par excellence* in which words are actions and the symbolic character of power is at stake” (Thompson, 1991, p. 26). NATO’s struggle for identity is also played out through its need to enhance its own position within the political field, which contains a number of other national and cross-national institutions that are vying for support in an overcrowded European Union market.

In this competition, NATO has some advantages. Walt (2000), for example, paints a picture of NATO’s highly institutionalised alliance as one of the reasons for its resilience and stability.

NATO is supported not only by the common interests of its members but by an elaborate transatlantic network of former NATO officials, defence intellectuals, military officers, journalists, and policy wonks whose professional lives have been devoted to the security issues of the Atlantic community. This elite community is unlikely to advocate dissolving NATO, and has labored hard to keep it alive. (pp. 15-16)

Such a community of professionals has a huge influence on, and in, international organisations as well as within their own home governments. Their lobbying to keep NATO as an independent organisation forms an essential element in the contest for legitimacy. NATO has also developed strong intra-alliance functions that have contributed to Western European stability amongst states that had often been bitter enemies in the past

(Duffield, 1994-5).

Because those earlier external threats that had brought NATO into being had ceased to exist, NATO was faced with threats to its very existence. As a result, NATO had to adapt and transform itself by identifying particular issues in its environment in which it could be involved, and seen to be involved, as a significant player. In effect, this is a defensive form of issues management (Heath, 1997). Furthermore, as a pro-active organisation that recognised the changing environment, NATO consciously sought a new focus for its activities. By recognising that its existence could be questioned by any of its members, NATO engaged in strategic planning based on established methods such as scanning, monitoring and analysis the environment (Heath, 1997).

Inventing identity and history

This can be identified, albeit retrospectively, as early as the 1990s. Looking back on the changes in his work as SHAPE spokesman at NATO during the period 1990-1993, Freitag (2005) reflected on changes from the perspective of a public relations practitioner. Recognising the need to counter questions concerning the continuing existence of the Alliance, he stressed the importance of messages being constructed to promote the ongoing the relevance of the organisation. He highlighted the importance of emphasising how NATO could continue to contribute to stability in a region that had known so much strife and war in the past century. In

his terms, messages also needed to “delicately introduce” (Freitag, 2005, p. 235) NATO’s interest in issues beyond its borders. This delicacy was important since the “out-of-area” concept was highly controversial both inside and outside the Alliance. This way of managing issues provided a means of responding to criticism or change along the lines recommended in Heath’s (2005b) summary of the practice.

Although the Cold War was over, Freitag (2005) noted that NATO carefully avoided statements that incorporated references to “winning” that war. This, together with the “extremely delicate” issue of possible expansion of NATO’s borders was designed, by inference and omission, to avoid any confrontation with Russia. These issues were also highly visible in the Alliance’s Strategic Concept, which was implicitly affirmed by Heads of State and Government in Rome, 1991, and which states that there was little likelihood of risks to NATO’s territorial integrity from aggressive acts.

The new Strategic Concept recognised that risks were more likely as a result of “serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes, which are faced by many countries in eastern and central Europe” (NATO, 1991) and that this could develop into armed conflict causing intervention by outside powers. Furthermore, it was envisaged that if such conflicts were to arise, it was likely that they would “spill over into NATO countries, having a direct effect on the security of the Alliance” (NATO, 1991).

This, however, did not reflect the interests of the United States in NATO. While the Soviet Union existed and was strong militarily, the United States had clear national interests at stake but now was the only remaining global superpower. For the United States, in general, there was dwindling political interest in Europe and, in particular, not much political will to keep footing the bill for European defence (Kupchan, 2000). Since 1989, there had been successful unification in Europe under Franco-German auspices, resulting in the reduction of United States forces in Europe. The message coming from the United States Congress was that Europe should be left to the Europeans, although concerns were expressed that this might result in the rise of a new superpower and threaten the hegemony of the United States (Kaplan, 2004).

Furthermore, the coup against the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991, the man more than any other who had contributed to a reunified Europe, provided strong evidence and “gave credence to the worry about instability in the region and, by the same token, increased reliance on the US as the comforting arm of NATO” (Kaplan, 2004, p. 116). These political and military challenges were identified as potential dangers to Europe from economic, political and social issues arising out of ethnic strife and territorial disputes. These challenges provided NATO with a new strategic function: crisis management.

Inventing identity and crises

Concern about the developing instability in the region was realised with the beginning of the Yugoslav wars of secession in Croatia and Slovenia. These wars then extended into the attempted secession of a third Yugoslav republic, Bosnia Herzegovina. This would be the first test of NATO's new Strategic Concept and this new outbreak of hostilities provided NATO with a number of "firsts" that "have helped shape NATO's evolution since the end of the Cold War" (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2005a). Through its participation in events surrounding these crises, NATO was able to redefine itself, gain legitimacy and maintain its credibility as an organisation essential in Europe and of importance beyond it.

By receiving a mandate from the United Nations for its first offensive foray into Yugoslavia, its actions were deemed not only to be legal, but also to be necessary as part of its new role of managing crises. As an organisation, NATO was able to position itself as an essential force in Europe and shape its image by emphasising its distinctiveness and unique contribution to a particularly salient issue (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a). As Kaplan (2004) notes: "A collaboration between NATO and the United Nations would give the international organisation the benefits of the infrastructure NATO had built over the decades and at the same time legitimise the new NATO mission of maintaining stability in Europe" (p. 118). There was now a distinct possibility of NATO becoming involved in other countries, regions or provinces that bordered on its territory, or even beyond.

NATO's current involvement in the "war on terror" in Afghanistan is evidence of this possibility becoming a reality.

Following the Dayton Accords that brought an end to the war in Bosnia Herzegovina in 1995, NATO turned its attention to the developing situation in the province of Kosovo in the southern part of Serbia. The situation provided an opportunity for NATO to complete its transformation from defending "liberal, democratic values embodied in the preamble to the original NATO treaty; namely 'democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law'" (Moore, 2004, p. 3) to an organisation that could not only threaten military force, but apply it by offensive intervention.

Drawing on its experience of limited actions in Bosnia, NATO was able to continue its transformation. By introducing the defence of values as an essential component of its *raison d'être*, NATO began to forge a distinctive new identity. This became particularly relevant with the use of coercive force in Kosovo, a campaign requiring an intensive public information campaign to embed it as legitimate and to transform its identity in the minds of publics. In the following statement, Javier Solana, then Secretary-General of NATO, articulates defence with offensive action as part of the new NATO:

NATO has changed too: the new NATO that emerged from the Washington Summit is ready for the next millennium. In all of this our core principles remain constant: in 1949 the founder members of NATO signed the North Atlantic Treaty to defend democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. These remain directly relevant to the world of today, and proclaiming them is not sufficient. The Kosovo crisis obliged us to take action to defend them. ... We have a moral responsibility to act to defend our values once the efforts of diplomacy have failed. (Solana, 1999c)

This statement illustrates clearly the confirmation of the transformation of the organisation by articulating defence with offensive action. This is the essence of the transformation. Kosovo has been identified as the crisis issue that provides the opportunity for action. By proactive management of these issues, NATO was able to participate in the creation of new policy that impacted directly on its “institutional destiny” (Chase, 1982, p. 1). NATO had clearly developed and implemented a programme of action in response to the political and military challenges that presented themselves at the end of the Cold War.

Identity frameworks

NATO’s role in Yugoslavia certainly provided the framework to operate politically and militarily and so maintain its identity as both a political and military organisation. In words that tended to legitimate the strategy, Javier Solana, Secretary-General of NATO, constantly referred to the values of the organisation: “We have a moral responsibility to act to defend our values” (Solana, 1999a). This articulation of moral responsibility

and defending values discursively positions NATO with an offensive role. Moore (2003) insists that NATO has always stood for the values enshrined in the original mission statement of the organisation. She claims that the Alliance is united by these values because they are central to the interests of each of the individual members. While she may be right, Kosovo also provided the opportunity for NATO to discursively apply these values to its organisational identity and help justify offensive actions against Serbia.

The opportunity for NATO to extend these values throughout the European continent provided legitimacy for their “ongoing efforts to (re)shape their image” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 242) . While admitting that there had been dramatic changes in the world over the past 50 years, Secretary-General Solana outlined his understanding of Western ideology as underpinning these values by stating: “The concept of security embraces economic, social and humanitarian issues” (Solana, 1999c). This discursively and practically reframes the meaning of security in Europe from its early sense of military defensive measures. Solana was widening the discourse domain by incorporating the economic, the social and the humanitarian into the definition of security.

The intervention in Kosovo was undoubtedly connected with individual rights which, in the new NATO, cannot be separated from issues of security. Not only was NATO becoming involved with the humanitarian aspects of human rights, but also this humanitarianism was a means of

embedding the transformation of the organisation. It provided NATO with a “coherent sense of ‘self’” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 232) and the strategic communication practices, which maintained that NATO was a values-based organisation, provided a central platform in the Kosovo Campaign.

Individual rights are strongly associated with the ideology of the protection of human rights. NATO’s intervention in Kosovo on behalf of human rights to protect civilians within a sovereign state, indicates a marked ideological shift from interests to values (Woodward, 2001). By emphasising values as the reason for bombing, NATO “created a new precedent in international relations, that defending human rights can override national sovereignty” (Thussu, 2000, p. 348). Furthermore, NATO could claim moral legitimacy for both the organisation and its actions (Suchman, 1995).

Aligning identity and humanitarianism

For NATO, human rights and humanitarian actions were a key part of the public relations strategy in legitimising military action against Yugoslavia in favour of Kosovar Albanians. This will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 11 with a discussion of how NATO framed war as humanitarian intervention.

The characterisation of NATO as an organisation with shared values offers a seemingly natural progression from an organisation with a shared enemy

during the Cold War. The shift also enabled the organisation to see itself as one with a collective interest in the defence of its shared values (Moore, 2003). The Alliance itself is made up of free, democratic states that are concerned with the protection and promotion of democracy and freedom as the way to a Europe “whole and free”.

Indeed, this was a view voiced by Secretary-General Solana: “The values we agreed in 1949 are also the values of the next millennium. We now have a framework to move forward; and to play our part in ensuring a safe and stable Europe for tomorrow” (Solana, 1999c). Here, again, is the argument for NATO to remain a viable, credible institution for the future. Solana is explicitly stating, that by using the original values of NATO as a framework, the organisation is able to continue to act within Europe, in spite of the fact that the collective enemy no longer exists. By using values as the focus for the organisation, NATO is discursively developing a new *raison d'être* and reinforcing its relevance in Europe (Sjursen, 2004).

In an article distributed to the international press on the occasion of NATO's 50th anniversary summit meeting in Washington in April 1999, Solana directly articulates NATO's actions in Kosovo with NATO's future:

If anything, the Kosovo crisis has reinforced the need for the Washington Summit. For this Summit is as much about Kosovo as it is about the future of wider Euro-Atlantic security, because as we reaffirm the Washington Treaty, we reaffirm our commitment to the core values on which this new Europe must be built. The summit will not only reaffirm these values – it will also ensure that we continue to have the means to protect these values when they are threatened. (Solana, 1999b)

NATO is ultimately a military organisation, one which was established as a collective force for the defence of Europe and, in 1999, presented itself as a force for the protection of the “core values on which this new Europe is built” (Solana, 1999b). NATO has been able to use not only the threat, but the actual application of military force, as a tool to legitimise itself as an organisation in practice and in theory. NATO thus confirms that democratic values lie at the heart of its mission and identity. Moreover, it presents the promulgation of these values as the contemporary extension of its original defensive mission.

Reinforcing organisational identity through values

This strategy of articulating NATO’s core values with the intervention in Kosovo provides a means whereby the intervention is endowed with cognitive validity (Fairclough, 2003). This is a rationalisation of actions by reference to value systems that are constantly invoked as part of the wider Western ideology and the underpinning of democratic societies. They are what Western societies are said to aspire to, adhere to, and believe in. As such, they provide the moral evaluation for legitimation (Fairclough,

2003). Over time, these values have become natural and taken for granted and align well with what Habermas (1975; 1996) refers to as the “generalised” motives that ensure mass loyalty. However, there is little reference to applying these values to regions that may not share them, or indeed, have little or no experience of them.

The strategic use of the word “values” in the NATO statements is to reinforce not only the legitimacy of the intervention in Kosovo, but by doing so, also to reinforce the organisational identity of NATO:

The crisis in Kosovo represents a fundamental challenge of the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of the law for which the Alliance has stood since its foundation. That is why the 19 democratic nations around this table could not remain indifferent. That is why we had to act. (Solana, Press Conference, Washington, April 23, 1999).

Solana’s positioning of the intervention as one based on the defence of values and, indeed, justified by the moral necessity of acting on these values, the text is doing “ideological work” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 58). That work helps to cement the existing hegemony and to confirm the universalisation of a particular set of values.

Using “values” as the prime motive for initiating this intervention, the intervention itself is vested with a particular meaning, with positive connotations. When this is later coupled with the word “humanitarian”, the ideology underpinning the legitimacy of going to war is complete.

NATO was concerned with maintaining the dominance of the meanings it wished to perpetuate. By using words like “values” and “moral duty”, the ideological meanings were made clear. This meant that NATO gave itself the moral mandate to intervene not only in a geographical region that was part of a sovereign nation, but one that was also outside the European sphere of influence.

In another press briefing by NATO Secretary-General Solana and SACEUR, General Wesley Clark on April 1 (after more than a week of bombing), values were again invoked to sustain NATO’s position:

What we have seen in Kosovo in the last few days is a direct challenge to all the values on which we are building our new and undivided Europe. Milošević and his government are the antithesis of all we value. So we cannot tolerate the behaviour of a more barbarous age in a Europe, in our continent, which is striving towards a more united and more enlightened future. Our cause is a just one. It is our duty to fulfil it. (Solana, Press Conference , April 1, 1999)

This quotation is a re-emphasis of the justification for the bombing campaign that has resulted in large numbers of refugees fleeing to the borders with Macedonia and Albania. The logical implications (Fairclough, 2003) drawn from the contrast between “a more barbarous age in Europe”, which draws resonance from World War II imagery of refugee columns and “a more united and more enlightened future” as the likely result when the war is over, draw on the “implicit meanings which can be logically inferred” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 60). Furthermore, the repetitive use of

the pronouns “we” and “our” are significant in reinforcing that NATO has the correct moral values and has the duty of defending them. The inference is clear: that President Milošević and his government are responsible for this more “barbarous age”; and those subscribing to NATO values are “enlightened”. NATO is able to lead the way by defending “our” values and also, by identifying its own actions as a “duty”.

There is also a moral evaluation strategy implicit in these references to value systems. It is identifying the value systems, which do not need to be spelt out, are taken for granted and provide motives for ensuring mass loyalty (Habermas, 1975, 1996). By following Habermasian (1975) theory, Solana’s claim that Milošević is challenging the value system, which is prevalent in the rest of Europe, can be tested discursively for validity since it is the basis on which NATO is acting. By presenting the issues in Kosovo as moral ones, Solana is carefully aligning the organisation with Europe’s future and asserting that any attempt to undermine these values must be stopped, because it is, by implication, immoral.

This claim to legitimacy and positive public opinion rests on the underlying consensus of communicative action: that it is understandable; its proposition is true; the speaker is sincere; and that it is appropriate for the speaker to be performing this act (Habermas, 1975; Marlin, 2002). Furthermore, articulating the value system with moral duty provides a robust and persuasive argument for “selling” the action to publics (Roper,

2001).

Even though the above statement was made at a press conference and the speaker was available for questioning, not one of the journalists from Western nations considered anything Solana had said here to be controversial. The only journalist present who broached the issue was from the Belgrade paper, *Novosti*. She questioned the bombing of civilian infrastructure as a means of defending moral values. The Secretary-General's response to this was:

With all respect to you let me say again, emphasize, that we have nothing against the Serbian people, on the contrary, we would like very much to see the Serbian people integrated into the movement which now is trying to construct Europe. A Europe that looks to a 21st century which is more united, which has the values it has defended always. (Solana, Press Conference, April 1, 1999)

In his response, Solana does not engage with the question regarding the morality of bombing civilian infrastructure as a means of defending the more prevalent moral values of a unified Western Europe. Solana, as the producer of the text, takes the issue of values as given and thus taken for granted. He hedges his response by inviting Serbian people to participate in the construction of a new Europe and thus dodges the issue of morality. There is no discursive testing when the value system is not up for debate. Solana is drawing on moral evaluations and value systems to legitimise

NATO military action.

Habermas' (1975) notion of claims being discursively redeemed or tested in a conflict situation requires rational argumentation (Fairclough, 2003). However, the context in which the claims need to be discursively tested provides little or no time to debate the issues. Any argumentation put up to challenge the claims of the dominant voices are lost in the rapid changes as the situation unfolds.

However, one could argue that books, articles, newspaper commentary and analyses during, and following, the war informed this debate. These can only be understood as a reflection on what actually occurred, rather than as a means of rational argumentation to discursively test the claims made by NATO. Many authors have tried to resolve some of the apparent contradictions that surfaced during the campaign. Some authors focused on the humanitarian issues facing NATO and the legitimacy of armed intervention from this perspective (Booth, 2001; Buckley, 2000; Habermas, 1999; Shinoda, 2000; Smith, 2004; Thussu, 2000). Others, such as Chomsky (1999b), Parenti (2000; 2001), Johnstone (2000a; 2000b; 2002), Chandler (2000) and Gidron and Cordone (2000) railed against NATO's actions and claimed that it was Western involvement that had brought Yugoslavia to its present condition.

Others were concerned about the role of the media in the propaganda war (Goff, 1999; Hammond, 1999a; Hammond & Herman, 2000; Hoijer,

Nohrstedt, & Ottosen, 2002; Weymouth & Henig, 2001) and, although Daalder and O'Hanlon (2000) supported the war, they believed that NATO had gone about it the wrong way. Ignatieff (2000) presented Kosovo as a virtual war, one that was fought with technology for the right reasons. Latawski and Smith (2003) examined NATO's role in terms of European security, and Martin and Brawley's (2000) collection of papers were concerned with the organisational consequences of NATO's actions in Kosovo.

By positioning itself as the organisation for the propagation of Western values throughout Europe, NATO strengthens its organisational identity in the intervention in Kosovo. However, the imposition of "moral values" on a society through coercive means needs to "fit" the desired identity of the organisation with the view of the publics who provide legitimacy for its actions (Roper, 2005a). This is achieved by articulating values with coercive force and bringing the two disconnected ideals brought together to forge a new discourse construction.

This process of constructing a new discourse is ideological in that publics are able to identify with the values and are then guided to accept coercive force as a legitimate means of imposing values in these circumstances. From NATO's perspective, the legitimacy of its actions in Kosovo are dependent on this discourse being accepted as common sense (Hall, 1986; Slack, 1996). Evidence of this acceptance can be found in the facts that the

bombing campaign continued unabated for 78 days, with no Alliance member withdrawing support.

Organisational identity and humanitarianism

Claiming a distinct identity as a values-based military organisation runs the risk of being an oxymoron, especially when bombing for a just peace. Nevertheless NATO used that as a means of processing “its unique ‘self’ while connecting its concerns to those of the ‘cultural crowd’” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 234). There is little doubt that in Western Europe and the US, there were growing concerns about human rights, democratic and moral values. Some surfaced in tangible form as voices calling on governments to “do something” in the face of such humanitarian situations as the fall-out from the first Gulf War in 1991, the genocide in Rwanda and the Yugoslav wars of secession (Barsa, 2005).

In a theoretical framework in which the concept of power is central, Cheney and Lair (2005) suggest that there is a need to explore the tension between the concepts of power and persuasion. In the case of NATO and Kosovo, the use of military force as a means of achieving humanitarian ends has a rather dissonant quality that requires discursive strategies to explore the rationality of undertaking these actions. As Cheney and Lair (2005) note: “rationality must be ‘positioned’ not only vis-à-vis irrationality or nonrationality but also in terms of *how reason is*

accomplished in the processing of organizationally produced messages”
(p. 74) [italics in original].

Public relations practice has had an important influence on organisational communication in this respect. Although the mainstream public relations model (Grunig, 1992) is ethical in theory, the practice of public relations is still very much determined by economic and institutional environments. As a consequence, organisational communication tends more towards propaganda (the organisation “speaking”) than towards dialogue between organisation and publics (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, 2001b; Cheney & Lair, 2005).

As an organisation speaking, NATO claimed to be acting out of consideration for human rights and in defence of its values. In this way, NATO was attempting to reshape its identity by emphasising the humanitarian function of the organisation. By making humanitarian values as the focus of its distinct identity, NATO expressed a rationale for humanitarian bombing.

Following the commencement of the bombing campaign, the success of this organisational voicing can be seen in how the term “humanitarian catastrophe” became part of the common usage in press statements and press conferences. In the following statement, the term is used as part of the rationale for initiating the bombing campaign:

Our actions are directed against the repressive policy of the Yugoslav leadership. We must stop the violence and bring an end to the humanitarian catastrophe now taking place in Kosovo. We have a moral duty to do so. (Solana, Press Statement, March 24, 1999)

In this statement, Solana is articulating NATO's moral duty with a humanitarian catastrophe. This articulation is a peculiarly difficult one to embrace, since bombs were directed against a "repressive policy", which has no physical form, except perhaps in the human forms of the Yugoslav leadership. Aerial bombardments were also being used as the means of stopping violence and bringing the "humanitarian catastrophe" to an end. This message was consistently repeated in press conferences to support NATO's claim that coercive military actions support humanitarian aims. In this way NATO supported its claims to be humanitarian in nature and explicitly expressed that as what the organisation stood for and wanted to be (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a).

A good illustration of this can be found in the press conference on 28 March, 1999 (after four nights of bombing raids). That conference was presented by NATO spokesman, Jamie Shea (a civilian) and Air Commodore, David Wilby, the representative from SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe). Shea opens the conference with a brief comment on the previous night's bombing raid and then moves on to discuss the humanitarian situation:

I'd like to dwell on this if I may just for a few moments because I think this is the most significant development of the past few days. If we like it or not, we have to recognise that we are on the brink of a major humanitarian disaster in Kosovo the likes of which have not been seen in Europe since the closing stages of World War II.

By taking the time at the beginning of the conference, Shea is emphasising NATO's concerns. Up to this point, use of the word humanitarian was preceded by the words prevent, avoid or avert. In this statement Shea directly links the current situation in Kosovo with the image of refugees during World War II/ The image is extremely potent and brings to mind the devastation and appalling tragedies that occurred during that period. NATO deploys this discursive practice many times throughout the press conferences during the campaign to promote the rightness of NATO's actions by association. Shea develops the image in the following way:

We now estimate that the number of people displaced from their homes in Kosovo has gone over the half million mark. That is well in excess of 25 per cent of the total population of Kosovo, and that number is increasing at a rapid pace. Just over the last few days 50,000 people have been uprooted and are trying to seek shelter wherever they can. We have reports which are being confirmed with every passing hour of about 20,000 fleeing from the fighting in the northern central areas of Kosovo trying to get into Albania. (Shea, Press Conference, March 28, 1999)

Keeping in mind that this text is part of the press conference proceedings, Shea provides numbers for the journalists. He also provides facts for them.

The “numbers” and the “facts” are never questioned by the journalists and Shea colours the statistics with other visual images:

Many are still at the border, where reports indicate that they are being stripped of their identity documents, of any possessions that they may still have on them, and their car number plates are being also taken if they have motor vehicles. That suggests a policy by the Yugoslav authorities to make it very difficult for those people to go back. (Shea, Press Conference, May 28, 1999)

Relocating refugees

By depicting the Kosovo situation in terms of images familiar in World War II deportations and persecutions, Shea is engendering strong emotions that reinforce claims that strong actions are a rational response in the face of atrocity (see, for instance, Paris, 2002), just as they were in World war II. Aligning the Fascist past with the present Serbian behaviour, NATO implicitly positions its stance as a defender of democracy and humanity. Continuing in a similar manner, Shea fills out the picture:

And even more alarming is that the majority of these people are women and children. What has happened to the males between the ages of 16 and 60? That is a big question which has to be clarified. (Shea, Press Conference, May 28, 1999)

Now he is able to focus attention on the humanitarian problem in all conflicts – the women and children. At the same time, he is making a suggestion that something else is occurring as well. He is not providing facts here, but rather insinuations. He is also delivering this information to

the world press, thereby ensuring that such information is disseminated widely in order to encourage the sense of moral outrage. Such moral outrage helps maintain a positive public image of the organisation as acting ethically in a difficult situation.

For further support, Shea returns to the image of NATO as a responsible and non-aggressive organisation who have only been pushed into action reluctantly:

I would also like, if I may, just to take a very brief moment to remind all of you that NATO's air operations are a last resort. This is not a trigger-happy organisation. We have taken a long time to come to this painful decision to strike. (Shea, Press Conference, March 28, 1999)

The reiteration of the process by which NATO implemented air strikes “as a last resort” and as a “painful decision” emphasises the transformation of NATO to a values-based organisation that is concerned with how its actions are perceived by the wider public. Shea is insistent that NATO does not act without thinking – that it is not “trigger-happy” but rather, it is an organisation that takes its responsibilities seriously and only acts when there is no alternative.

There is further reinforcement to conclude this section of the press conference where Shea refers again to the images of World War II. In referring to an ongoing awareness of how public opinion rates NATO's

actions, Shea repeats the justness of the cause and the need to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe:

Finally, I would just like to say that our governments are resolved because we are acting in a just cause. We are convinced of that. And I believe also that there are indications that we have the support of our public opinion. I don't expect public opinion to be enthusiastic about the fact that we are dropping bombs on Yugoslavia. Naturally not. But I believe the current opinion polls show that public opinion understands that this has to be done to avoid the greatest humanitarian catastrophe in Europe since World War II and we are grateful for the support and on the basis of that support we will continue until our objectives are met. (Shea, Press Conference, March 28, 1999)

Recognising the need to keep public opinion on side during this campaign, this speech again links the present with the past through the image of refugees in World War II and in Kosovo. It also reminds publics of the justness of the cause. This is a particularly effective persuasion tactic in that the organisation appears to be acting in a rational manner (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a) and responding to public opinion polls. Shea is speaking to a selected audience at the press conference, made up of journalists from all over the world. They are the means by which NATO communicates its position to the wider public. This, too, fits with current organisational practices such as those laid out by Cheney and Christensen (2001a): "By 'communicating' systematically with selected audiences, organizations promote the elusive ideal of 'public opinion' while presuming to identify and respond to it" and this communication can be

used to “maintain themselves and confirm their identities” (p. 252).

This chapter’s analysis began an examination of NATO’s strategic use of public relations to legitimise its identity in a post Cold War world. It placed the Kosovo Campaign in relation to recent developments in organisational communication and public relations. It concluded by looking at the growing challenge to NATO’s strategy as the bombs continued to fall and the refugee problems escalated. The next chapter continues the analysis as NATO attempts to maintain, refine and strengthen its new identity as the Kosovo campaign runs into further challenges.

CHAPTER 8

Shifting positions: NATO, the international community and refugees

This chapter addresses the changing challenges to NATO's attempt to forge, and then reinforce, a new organisational legitimacy as the Kosovo situation deteriorated. It analyses how NATO spokespeople engaged with the possible negative fallout over the bombing and refugee crises through the convergence of a military role with a humanitarian one for coping with the large number of refugees exiting Kosovo to neighbouring countries. It also tracks NATO's discursive refinement, which included framing NATO as acting within the interests of the "international community" (Schoenberger-Orgad, 2002), and provided the basis for a new "Doctrine of the International Community" outlined by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair at the height of the Kosovo Campaign.

Shifting issues and falling bombs

Shea's press conference, mentioned at the end of chapter seven, engaged with the issue of bombing and defended NATO against possible accusations of being "trigger-happy" and mobilised a discourse of humanitarianism to justify the action:

But I believe the current opinion polls show that public opinion understands that this has to be done to avoid the greatest humanitarian catastrophe in Europe since World War II and we are grateful for the support and on the basis of that support we will continue until our objectives are met. (Shea, Press Conference, March 28, 1999)

Examining Shea's speech in this press conference from an issues management perspective, it appears that NATO had not considered that public opinion might waiver if the bombing went on too long. The speech was delivered on 28 March after four days of bombing, during which there had been little response from Yugoslavia to the demands of NATO. It has often been claimed that NATO had expected the air strikes to coerce the Yugoslav authorities to agree to their demands quickly (as had been the case in Bosnia) and were somewhat surprised by the fact that the Yugoslav government did not capitulate quickly (Remington, 1999).

As a result of both the NATO bombing and the internal displacement of refugees because of fighting in the region, there was a massive outpouring of ethnic Albanians across the borders into Macedonia and Albania. At the March 28 press conference noted above, Shea said: "I would just like to say that our governments are resolved because we are acting in a just cause. We are convinced of that." This was a means of defending NATO's bombing. The defence was necessary because it was clearly apparent that the bombing had caused the outpouring of refugees and given the Serbs more reason to continue their operations in Kosovo. This was an

unintended and unforeseen issue that arose very early in the campaign.

As Shea's speech indicates, NATO was very much aware of the need for legitimacy and the necessity of keeping public opinion behind the air operations by being proactive on the information front. The continuing justification for the action means "being involved in the definition and construction (albeit not necessarily control) of reality" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 253).

NATO's particular version of reality of what was occurring in Kosovo was communicated to its publics in ordered fashion. However, it had no control over what happened on the ground. In their critique of NATO's planning and actions over Kosovo, Daalder and O'Hanlon (2000) state that not only did NATO not expect the war to take very long, but that NATO had not even planned for that eventuality. Hard evidence for this claim is the minimal amount of forces and hardware available for a long bombing campaign. There was also widespread internal criticism of poor war preparation by Alliance senior commanders who claimed that NATO "lacked not only a coherent campaign plan and target set but also staff to generate a detailed plan when it was clear that one was needed" (Daalder & O'Hanlon, 2000, p. 104).

Unplanned issues

Furthermore, the lack of planning caused other endemic failures in the

system. No scenarios were built on what might happen on the ground in Kosovo after NATO began its bombing campaign. Daalder and O'Hanlon(2000) are particularly scathing about the lack of foresight of both the political and military leaders of the Alliance:

Convinced that a little bombing would force Milošević to accept NATO's terms, the allies failed to envision what might happen on the ground in Kosovo as it began to bomb from high altitudes. Remarkably, some officials appear to have ignored the basic fact that NATO airpower would simply not be physically able to stop Milošević's onslaught against the Kosovars. NATO leaders collectively ignored the distinct possibility that Milošević might actually intensify his efforts once NATO bombs began to fall. (p. 106)

As a result of this lack of foresight, two things happened. The first was that, when the bombing began, the Serbs increased the pressure on the ground against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, and the second was that the Serb population in Serbia united behind its government. As Judah (2000) notes after the first day of bombing:

A profound psychological homogenization was beginning to take place. Over the next few days all the bitter divisions in Serbian society simply vanished. The rule of Milošević, an issue which had caused such dissension in recent years, and particularly in middle-class society, became irrelevant. There was only one issue now, which was that the country was being attacked. (p. 238)

Opposition to Milošević was silenced and even the Opposition was terrified that a purge was underway to root out all opposition journalists,

academics and anti-Milošević dissidents and activists. Censorship of what had been a reasonably free media meant that there was only one line of argument to be broadcast: “All of us are one party now – its name is freedom” (Judah, 2000, p. 239).

It was this state of affairs that required NATO to develop an issues management strategy that would aid the maintenance of credibility of the organisation and enable it to continue its activities. NATO needed to persuade publics that the actions in Kosovo would reap genuine benefits for the Kosovo Albanians. The continuing bombing campaign needed to be communicated as a viable option and a natural consequence of the fact that NATO’s demands had not been met. Such a strategy would need to convince both internal (NATO ambassadors and NATO member governments) and external audiences (political pundits, ex-generals, analysts, think-tanks and the general public) that by bombing targets in Yugoslavia and Kosovo, NATO would ultimately be successful in achieving the goals it had set itself prior to the campaign.

Part of NATO’s response to these issues was to not only align, but also to conflate itself with the category “international community”. As such it could claim a mandate to demand acquiescence to conditions and thus achieve military goals. By stubbornly reiterating the military goals and, at the same time undertaking humanitarian work, the identity and image of NATO was reshaped and transformed in line with its Strategic Concept

(NATO, 1991).

NATO and the international community

This strategy was apparent in the early press releases of 1998, as NATO discursively aligned itself with the international community by taking over the role of spokesperson for this “imagined” community:

NATO and the international community have a legitimate interest in developments in Kosovo, inter alia because of their impact on the stability of the whole region which is of concern to the Alliance. (NATO Press Release 98-29, March 5, 1999)

In this press release, NATO’s stated interest fits clearly with its 1991 Strategic Concept of the need for stability in the region (NATO, 1991). These interests are semantically conflated with those of a constructed “international community”. Indeed, the use of “international community” calls into being a group of nations, which supports certain actions, has no formal institutional infrastructure and no democratic decision-making processes. Rather, it is a loose configuration of Western-oriented nation states, which either exert international political pressure or have it exerted upon them. The use of the word “community” implies fellowship and shared interests and, by adding “international”, it maps “political desire onto geopolitics” (Poole, 2006, p. 28).

In this conflict the role of the actual, recognised international community, the United Nations (UN), was reduced to passing a number of Security

Council resolutions. Although there were intensive discussions at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to formulate a resolution about the situation in Kosovo, NATO was already purporting to be acting on its behalf by activating military operations. In UNSC Resolution 1160 (1998), adopted March 31, 1998, there was no reference made to NATO. Instead, it referred only to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Contact Group and the European Union. It was to these bodies that the UNSC gave recognition as having a role in Kosovo.

In this situation, therefore, NATO chose to determine a role for itself rather than be included in the UN deliberations. Therefore, NATO could not be acting on behalf of this world recognised international community. The significance of this can be seen in the fact that three of the largest countries in the world, China, India and Russia, did not support NATO's actions in Kosovo. It was a very selective international community that NATO purported to speak for or with.

Nevertheless, NATO statements and press releases consistently used the legitimacy of a constructed international community to legitimise its own actions. Moreover, as Taylor (2000a) points out, their approach won the tacit assent of mainstream media organisations since there was no discussion or debate “about the legal and indeed wider moral implications about an enlarged NATO's new, post-Cold War, role not just within Europe but also possibly beyond” (p. 294). Taylor's perception seems prescient in

hindsight, considering that NATO has indeed gone on to develop a crucial security role for itself well outside European boundaries.

Avoiding a legitimacy gap

The lack of public debate about the wider role of NATO in Europe and the moral implications of NATO being a military force of intervention, suggest a recognition of the dangers of a legitimacy gap (Sethi, 1979). Such a gap would become more visible if NATO operations failed and would also contribute to the undermining of the cohesiveness of the organisation.

An awareness of the dangers of the development of a legitimacy gap can be seen during the first week of bombing. During this time, questions were being asked at the Brussels press conferences concerning the campaign's objectives, the legitimacy of the bombing campaign and NATO's role.

Because the threat of military action had originally aimed at getting an agreement for the internationally sponsored drafts accord for the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo, Secretary-General Solana was asked whether the objectives had changed. The question continued with greater specificity:

Now the objective and the justification is being stated in a rather different way, and I wondered if that's partly because of the problem of having militarily achievable aims and secondly whether there's a legal issue, whether you're trying to come up with a justification that makes some sense, at least in a context of international law. (Sarah Chase, National Public Radio, Press Briefing March 25, 1999)

This question illustrates the journalist's awareness of NATO's need to have a legitimate international mandate for its operations. The Secretary-General replied by attempting to conflate NATO with the international community, in order to provide a clear justification and to infer an international mandate for action:

I don't think that the objectives of the international community have changed and I don't think that the objectives of NATO in supporting the international community have changed. From the very beginning, we said that we would be prepared to help with our capabilities to achieve the objectives of the international community in general terms until the agreement was reached in October. (Solana, Press Briefing March 25, 1999)

The Secretary-General is hedging by stating that "we would be prepared to help" to achieve the objectives "in general terms". These objectives are the ones that the UN recommended in its two resolutions in 1998. Solana states that NATO is "helping" the international community to achieve its objectives, even though there was no UN mandate to support the bombing campaign. In this case, Solana is identifying the UN with the international community.

Other correspondents also raised the question of legitimacy with the Secretary-General, whose reply was consistent:

let me say that the NATO countries think that this action is perfectly legitimate and it is within the logic of the UN Security Council and therefore that is why we are engaged in this operation in order not to wage war against anybody but to try to stop the war and to guarantee that peace is a reality for a country that has been suffering from war for many, many years. (Solana, Press Briefing March 25, 1999)

Coping with paradox

While taking into account that this is an unprepared reply to a question, it is full of paradoxes that suggest the NATO leadership was well aware of the inconsistencies and limitations of their claim to the legitimacy of their actions in bombing Yugoslavia. On the one hand, NATO's actions are "within the logic of the United Nations Security Council", which legitimises an operation of not waging war against anybody (when they are obviously waging an offensive military action through bombing). On the other hand, this action is "to stop the war and guarantee that peace is a reality" for Yugoslavia. The discursive positioning of NATO with the international community adds weight to the argument for legitimacy.

In this statement a particular view of what is legitimate is shaping the NATO discourse. This illustration of "legitimising the legitimacy" of the action not only serves to influence, but also to perpetuate the belief that NATO operates within and for the "international community".

However, it is clear that NATO has defined this community in its own way for its own purposes. Once again the circumscribed community excludes such key geo-political nations as China, India and Russia.

NATO developed a strategy of authorisation for legitimisation (Fairclough, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2007) by reference to an institutional authority, even though this authority had not been defined. NATO was aware that it was open to significant international criticism of its actions in Kosovo. This required it to develop a strategy for legitimising its activities by reference to an “international community”, which oversees, authorises, states aims and goals and makes demands. By doing so NATO was, in fact, using the term “international community” to authorise its own demands, aims and goals in this situation and thus legitimise them.

By aligning itself and, at times, conflating itself with the term, “international community”, NATO was able to influence and reassert its dominance in the coordination of both military and humanitarian affairs in Europe. This was done by means of constructing a collective identity for NATO together with the international community.

Who are “we”?

The construction of the collective “we” always draws the line between who is included and who is excluded. It serves to identify who the group is claiming to speak for, and who it speaks against (Fairclough, 2000). In

NATO's discourse, "we" is used in different ways, but it is mainly used to refer to NATO exclusively and only sometimes to include the international community. These two uses of "we" are then combined to stand in opposition to him (Milošević) or them (the Serbs) as in the following excerpt:

You see also now that we are able to turn off and on the light switch in Belgrade, and hopefully also thereby to turn the lights on of course in the heads and minds of the Belgrade leadership as they realise that they have no option but to meet the essential demands of the international community (Shea, Press Conference, May 4, 1999)

In effect, NATO is the international community and no longer acting on behalf of it. "We" is not specified, but the intention is clear that it now is synonymous with the international community. This is illustrated at the outset of the bombing campaign:

Let me reiterate we are determined to continue until we have achieved our objectives: to halt the violence and to stop further humanitarian catastrophe. ... The responsibility for the current crisis rests with President Milošević . It is up to him to comply with the demands of the international community. I strongly urge him to do so. (Solana, Press Briefing March 25)

In this excerpt the international community and NATO are one and the same. This is repeated more forcefully by General Wesley Clark (SACEUR) in the same press briefing: "We are going to systematically and progressively attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate and ultimately destroy

these forces and their facilities and support, unless President Milošević complies with the demands of the international community”.

General Clark’s language is unequivocal and forceful. It is clearly what Fairclough (1992) would term militarised discourse. With the added impact of alliteration, it fits with the social practices and the construction of this particular reality and acts to normalise the actions taken. With the build-up and apparently authorised legitimacy given by the “international community”, the rationality of the actions is explicit and clear.

Furthermore, those making the statements have authority and are endowed with credibility. Such a rationalisation allows society “to endow them with cognitive validity” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 98). There is a clear alignment again here between the military discourse and the current social practices.

Ideology and belief systems in Western Europe and North America place a high value on international legitimacy in military offensive actions. This legitimacy underpins the democratic process and democratic institutions. Constant reference to the international community, acting on behalf of the international community and demanding what the international community demands, places the international community as the central signifier of the validity for the action.

This forms part of the strategy by which NATO naturalised itself as the military arm of the international community. NATO presented itself as

a common sense part of the accepted system of belief and knowledge (Fairclough, 1992) of the 19 countries making up the NATO Alliance, as well as those other countries in the Western world who subscribe to similar belief systems. As van Dijk (2001) suggests, people are likely to accept what is said, especially if they believe that the source is authoritative and trustworthy. As a consequence, they invest power in the authors of the statements.

This means of naturalising the discourse for acceptance is also illustrated in UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's explanation of the Doctrine of the International Community, using Kosovo as an example.

Doctrine of the International Community

On the eve of the Washington Summit for NATO's 50th anniversary, Blair (1999) gave a speech to the Economic Club of Chicago on April 22, 1999. This club is often referred to as the "who's who and who's to be" of Chicago's business and professional life (www.econclubchi.org). In this speech, he devoted a large section to Kosovo and placed it within the wider global context of economic, political and security issues. The title of his speech, in which Blair advanced the cause of internationalism over that of isolationism, was "Doctrine of the International Community".

Blair spoke of internationalism in terms of the global economy and called for reform of the international financial regulations and increased efforts

in free trade. He also spoke of security and the need to defend “the values we cherish” because “the spread of our values make us safer”. He then went on to consider intervention and how it should be determined. The third issue discussed was politics, defining “The Third Way” in international terms as “an attempt by centre and centre-left governments to re-define a political programme that is neither old left nor 1980s right” (Blair, 1999).

Fairclough (2000) has provided a fuller critical analysis of this speech as part of his work on the discourses of New Labour. The thesis does not seek to duplicate that more comprehensive coverage but concentrates only on aspects of the speech that are relevant to the understanding of how NATO set itself up as the military force to do the international community’s bidding.

These three areas – economy, security and politics – provide the context for Blair to introduce the Kosovo Campaign because: “...I do not believe Kosovo can be seen in isolation.” Fairclough (2000) comments that, “it is clear from Blair’s speech: the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia has to be seen as part of a new reality, which connects the global economy, international security, and international politics” (p. 151). By placing Kosovo within this context, Blair is paving the way for claiming legitimacy for the international community by making a coherent connection between the discourse domains.

Fairclough's (2000) analysis focuses on the use of "we" within the three discourse domains of economic globalisation, international security and the political discourse of the Third Way. He finds that "we" is a concept that "slides between NATO, G7, the 'new centre, centre-left Governments' who are oriented to the notion of the 'Third Way' as well as a more inclusive but undefined grouping of nations" (p. 152). Fairclough (2000) suggests that:

people could see what he was getting at, and see what he meant by the 'international community', by 'we'" and from this one could extrapolate that there was a common sense argument here which was clear to everyone that "a small number of the richest and most powerful countries, stand for, represent, act on behalf of, etc., the rest. (p. 152).

Political parallels

When deconstructing this particular speech and looking carefully at what "we" means in this context, this author contends that Blair had two main objectives. The first was to place NATO firmly within the international community, and the second was to conflate the two entities. By contextualizing the Kosovo Campaign as part of the economic, political and security framework for the new millennium, Blair was not only making a conscious connection with his audience – The Economic Club of Chicago – in terms of his wide-ranging view of global interdependence, globalisation, international security and politics, but also placing NATO's Kosovo Campaign firmly on the side of legitimate intervention: "No-one in

the West who has seen what is happening in Kosovo can doubt that NATO's military action is justified" (Blair, 1999). In this sentence, Blair is appealing to the emotional reactions of the listeners, encouraging them to participate in the way he sees the situation in Kosovo while, at the same time, making the case for justification based on this emotion.

As Fairclough (2000) points out, language is one of the elements of social practice that "holds diverse elements of social life together within a sort of network" (p. 144). By using the words "no-one in the West ... can doubt" members of the audience are being incorporated into the justification argument, as are all citizens of Western countries. The ambiguity evident in this sentence serves the strategic intent of providing the dominant discourse concerning Kosovo as one of justification and moral right. Blair (1999) then goes on to claim the "values" argument: "This is a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions, but on values. We cannot let the evil of ethnic cleansing stand. We must not rest until it is reversed".

In these two instances of using "we", Blair includes the selected members of the Economic Club of Chicago, people of high business and professional standing who are able to wield some power and influence within political circles, together with the NATO Alliance.

The verbs used in association with ethnic cleansing – stand and reverse – are unusual in terms of the discursive strategies. The use of the term "ethnic cleansing" is often used as a euphemism for "genocide" (Poole,

2006) depending on the particular political requirements of the time. The movement, from not allowing it to “stand” and then to “reverse” it, reinforces the justification of the bombing activity.

In Blair’s (1999) next sentence: “We have learned twice before in this century that appeasement does not work”, the intertextual link is implicitly specified through vocabulary. The key term is “appeasement”, a word that has such strong connotations with British political failure on the eve of World War II that the connection is completely clear. The “we” in this case refers to Britain, for it was the British who learned that appeasement did not work when Neville Chamberlain tried to appease Hitler. The “we” changes again with the next sentence: “If we let an evil dictator range unchallenged, we will have to spill infinitely more blood and treasure to stop him later” (Blair, 1999).

It now includes not only the British, but the Americans and other Alliance nations who fought against the evil dictator in World War II. The conditional clause is used to suggest a general understanding or common sense meaning followed by the consequences that are likely to occur. The evil dictator “range[d] unchallenged” in World War II, causing “us” to spill “infinitely more blood and treasure” to stop the carnage. The use of the word “treasure” is interesting since it is used as a metaphor for finance, money and wealth, thereby making the association with the listening audience.

In this section, the notion of a doctrine of the international community has been discussed in terms of NATO's positioning within and beside the international community. The timing and location of this important speech adds to the evidence for NATO's transformation in identity as the military arm of the international community. Furthermore, the authority, credibility and political position of Prime Minister Blair underlines the naturalisation of military intervention as an international response to a deteriorating humanitarian situation.

NATO's role in coping with refugees

This section discusses the transformation of NATO from a military focused organisation into a humanitarian organisation as it provided logistic support to other agencies to cope with the flood of refugees and displaced persons from Kosovo. It argues that, in spite of the astonishment and horror at the results of the first days of the bombing campaign, the leaders of the Alliance nations and the NATO leadership realised that they would now be required to explain this apparently unforeseen situation.

Furthermore, it argues that NATO saw the opportunity to maintain its credibility, redefine itself by its own actions and, most importantly, keep public opinion on side.

Recognising the new environment in which it was operating, and also preparing for the possibility that it would be blamed for causing the flood of refugees into other countries, NATO took action to capitalise on this

situation. Organisations do not always define the environment in which they operate in broad terms and, as a consequence, need to take control and redefine the situation in “self-serving and self-referential terms” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 253).

NATO reacted to its new environment very quickly. It devoted a lot of time in the press conferences to covering the situation facing the people in Kosovo and in reminding publics that NATO bombs were not responsible for the situation. Their proactive management of the issue (Heath, 1997), was designed to reduce and deflect the criticism that could be directed towards them. By redefining the environment, NATO attempted to determine “which voices from the outside deserve a hearing or how different opinions should be prioritized” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 254). One key aim had to be to defend itself from the criticism of being responsible for the confusion and for the outpouring of refugees from Kosovo. The situation needed to be urgently addressed if NATO was to maintain its legitimacy, credibility and, most importantly, favourable public opinion. It became proactive in managing the issues daily and did not just concentrate only on information about its bombing campaign.

By incorporating a humanitarian discourse into its organisational identity, NATO was not only communicating with its important key publics throughout the Alliance, but ensuring that the communication was also “self-serving and self-referential” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 253).

In this way, the organisation was engaged in defining its identity through its own actions and its comments on them.

In the press conference following the fifth night of bombing, Shea (1999) addressed the issues of what he called “this appalling humanitarian situation”. He claimed that the outpouring of refugees was part of a planned strategy by Milošević. This claim attempts to both remove any blame from NATO and, at the same time, to justify the bombing campaign:

if we look at President Milošević’s record as an ethnic cleanser we see that he has been involved in this activity for some time already and well before the Kosovo crisis began. Particularly in Croatia and Bosnia where we have seen the same systematic efforts to create mono-ethnic territories by permanently changing the identities of towns and villages. Unfortunately we are seeing the same again. (Shea, Press Conference, March 29, 1999)

In referring his audience to previous conflicts, Shea positions Milošević firmly at the centre of the refugee crisis by naming him as a “systematic ethnic cleanser”. He goes on to refer to NATO’s experience in Croatia and Bosnia (self-referential) to confirm that NATO had expected this situation to occur by articulating the current situation in Kosovo with Bosnia:

we have seen this before in our experience in Bosnia that the only time President Milošević has stopped doing this has been when he has met a combination of firm diplomacy and a readiness of the international community to use force as a last resort. It is true that President Milošević is very tenacious, so are we. (Shea, Press Conference, March 29, 1999)

This simultaneously signals NATO's intention to carry on its mission against Yugoslavia while reaffirming its commitment to its actions.

Drawing on experience from negotiating the Dayton Accords, NATO seemed to assume that bombing would resolve the humanitarian issues at stake. However, with the outpouring of refugees, NATO was immediately faced with maintaining the public view of the reality it had constructed. NATO also needed to maintain a united alliance of nations faced with the reality of the destabilisation of the southern Balkans area and further conflict developing in neighbouring countries. To this end, NATO had to reinforce the idea that not only was its strategy effective, but was also producing the desired results:

Yes, we are being effective, yes the mission is working. This is a methodical, systematic and progressive air campaign to strip Serb leadership bare of their military capabilities. ... President Milošević is beginning to run out of options and as the days go by he will have less and less options, so we are having an

impact. We're on plan, on timetable and we're on target and we are going in the next few days to progressively tighten the noose around the Serb war machine in Kosovo. (Shea, Press Conference, March 29, 1999)

This is an example of auto-communication (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a). It acts to bolster the morale of the nations of the Alliance and also of those working within the organisation. The statement illustrates how NATO is defining its identity through its own actions. Through the use of the metaphor of "tightening the noose", Shea identifies NATO's objectives and also admits that NATO is carrying out extensive bombing raids in Kosovo and making an impact. The situation now requires an extended mandate to deal with this new environment:

NATO's immediate concern and by that I mean both the organisation that the Allies as individual member states is to mobilise all our efforts to address the plight of the refugees. ... our Euro-Atlantic Disaster response Co-ordination Centre here at NATO Headquarters is activated, remains activated to co-ordinate NATO assistance to UNHCR. (Shea, Press Conference, March 30, 1999)

Shea's words discursively position NATO as the logical respondent to the new challenge presented by the humanitarian situation. They confirm NATO's transformed identity "as a responsible organization ready to take substantial measures to protect the environment" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 256). They address concern at NATO headquarters about the developing situation and the risk of key publics perceiving it as being the result of the NATO bombing. Shea's words contribute to a number of

NATO efforts to rectify any negative impression of callous bombing strategies causing widespread hardship and humanitarian disaster: “this situation makes us all the more determined to stop the fighting on the ground. Milošević cannot invade neighbouring countries with refugees in the hope that he can destabilise them” (Shea, Press Conference, March 30, 1999).

The closing statement reflects concern that President Milošević is trying to counterattack NATO by “invading neighbouring countries with refugees”. The use of this military metaphor is an attempt to explain this unforeseen situation in terms of “a master plan”, which is manifest intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992) through reference to World War II texts:

What we are seeing in Kosovo I think demonstrates increasingly that these actions of the Serb forces have been following a pre-arranged pattern. This type of humanitarian disaster is not improvised. It represents a master plan that was conceived and well on its way to being executed before the first NATO bomb was dropped against a military target. (Shea, Press Conference, March 30, 1999)

What Shea calls a “master plan” connotes semantically with the Nazi master plan and “Final Solution”, which was also “conceived and well on its way to being executed” by the Nazis. The use of intertextuality draws on specific other texts, which are familiar to audiences to persuade them that NATO’s bombing was not the reason behind the sudden outflow of

refugees.

Javier Solana reinforces this notion of a “master plan” in the press conference two days later when he interprets Milošević as “preparing for this ethnic cleansing for months now. Even before the talks in Paris ended, he had started his clean-and-sweep operations through Kosovo. He demonstrated that he was really only interested in a military solution, and totally on his terms” (Solana, Press Conference, April 1, 1999). This is what van Dijk (1993) refers to as “hyperbolic enhancement of ‘their’ negative actions” (p. 263). If this “military solution” is to ethnically cleanse Kosovo of Albanians, then the military solution aligns with the “master plan” referred to by Jamie Shea and draws interdiscursively on the “Final Solution” as discussed above. The negative construction of motive has its own motive as Solana uses it to pretend that the only option was a NATO offensive (albeit couched in the general term of “military operations” rather than bombing: “He left the Alliance with no other option but to start military operations” (Solana, Press Conference, April 1, 1999). The text is ambivalent here and requires the reader or listener to interpret it. This presupposes that the consumers of the text will make the association with the “final solution” and the role of the West to intervene to comply with the “never again” statements made at the end of World War II.

The idea of a systematic plan for the clearance of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo is a presupposition. This is reinforced as Shea goes on to point out

that refugees were forced from their homes before the NATO bombing:

On March 20th, the day after the Paris talks were suspended, the Serbs began to drive thousands of ethnic Albanians from their homes. Some of them were executed and then their homes were set on fire. That was four days, four days before NATO initiated air operations. By the time NATO's first planes took off from their bases, thousands of ethnic Albanians were already fleeing towards the borders. And contrary to what you may hear from certain quarters, it is not NATO's planes that are forcing people to flee. (Shea, Press Conference, March 30, 1999)

There appears to be a rising tension in the justification of NATO's actions. The second sentence in the excerpt presupposes that Shea's listeners will take this fact for granted, even if there is no quotable credible source, or witness to the fact. He is manipulating the text by introducing statements that have no evidence to support them, such as, "some of them were executed", and by using random numbers of "thousands were already fleeing" prior to the actual bombing. Shea's final statement, "it is not NATO's planes that are forcing people to flee", is an attempt to reinforce his claim that NATO bears no responsibility for causing the humanitarian disaster in Kosovo. The repetition of this key message may be accounted for by public awareness of the other side of the claim. In effect, such claims stand in direct contradiction to what people generally know from the past. In previous wars, when countries and cities are bombed from the air, the usual experience was of civilians pouring out of the bombing target areas to try to find shelter in a place where no bombs fall.

In the Kosovo situation, however, NATO's positioning as a humanitarian organisation puts it in line to take responsibility for the vast numbers of refugees in Macedonia and Albania. Shea observes how this put extra pressure on the organisation to juggle resources between providing aid to the neighbouring countries for the influx of refugees and logistically supporting an ongoing air campaign: "We are urgently formulating the organisation and plans to dovetail the flow of aircraft carrying humanitarian aid in with the activities associated with our operational mission. This is a complex task but we are moving ahead quickly" (Shea, Press Conference, April 4, 1999). This unexpected organisational dimension of the situation led NATO to explain its new position and its commitment to work collaboratively with other humanitarian groups: "We are confident that with the goodwill and excellent liaison existing between all the major agencies involved, we will be able to manage this problem efficiently and without detriment to our combat operations" (Shea, Press Conference, April 4, 1999). With this statement, NATO has completed its transformation into an organisation dealing with both coercive force and humanitarian aid and combining with the international community and other humanitarian agencies.

Shea goes on to hedge in terms of the timing and length of the bombing campaign, but at the same time suggests that this will be offset by the simultaneous relief efforts. Further statements dealing with humanitarian airlifts, aid, assistance, convoys, efforts, flights, missions, operations and

relief form a major part of the first section of each of the subsequent NATO press conferences. As discussion extends on the humanitarian consequences of NATO's actions in Kosovo, Shea is evermore adamant that the bombing did not create the outflow of refugees: "I'd like to stress again that NATO countries did not create, have not created this terrible humanitarian tragedy" (Shea, Press Conference, March 31, 1999).

These discursive interventions combine deliberate efforts to deny responsibility for the situation, accounts of providing humanitarian aid, and presentations that separate the bombing operations from contributing to the refugee situation in Kosovo. This major theme of humanitarianism, which positions NATO as a newly transformed humanitarian military organisation, is developed further in chapter eleven in a discussion of how the NATO discourses frame the Kosovo bombing campaign in terms of legitimate intervention on behalf of humanitarian relief. The next chapter further develops the background to the "we" and "they" binary division observed earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER 9

Supplementing public relations: Theory, practice and the Balkans as “other”

Chapter eight addressed the changing challenges to NATO from the consequences of the prolonged bombing. This chapter looks further back in the Kosovo Campaign and in Balkan history, to analyse how the Office of the NATO Spokesman was confronted with constructing discourses about cultures with which its publics had little familiarity. Such cultural dimensions have not been explored widely in public relations research (Sriramesh, 2002). This chapter hopes to add an unusual aspect to them by analysing the deeper cultural contexts of the Kosovo issue and how these have been constructed in support of organisational ends. The chapter's conclusions, that the cultural construction of meaning enabled the greater power, NATO, to pursue further legitimacy for its actions and thus embed organisational change, may well have relevance outside the bounds of this study.

For Yugoslavia, the lesser power in this public relations clash of civilisations, the critical asymmetry left it with few options in terms of public information. It was clearly the underdog in the information war (Toledano, McKie, & Roper, 2004) although there were opportunities to use the Internet as a means of disseminating information. These sites, both

official and unofficial, provided a “cultural snapshot” of how Serbs perceived the conflict (see, for instance, Ignatieff, 2000).

Binary oppositions and cultural coordinates

The chapter does look more deeply into the way NATO drew on historical, political and media discourses as a means of legitimising its military intervention in a region that had always been problematic for Western interests. It shows how critical discourse analysis helps to reveal the wider discursive practices underpinning NATO’s intervention in the Balkans and examines the way in which NATO used a clear dichotomy to distinguish “our” (civilised European) values from “their” (uncivilised Balkan) behaviour.

It argues that these binary oppositions provided an enabling structural framework: to legitimise NATO’s bombing campaign; to allow NATO to act in an active and interventionist – rather than passive and defensive – manner; and underpin a post-Cold War role that provided a rationale for NATO to survive as an institution. This chapter illustrates how, in executing these processes, NATO’s public relations strategy reinforced already current perceptions and stereotypes of the Western collective understanding of the Balkans region. This was a central theme in the NATO discourses (Owen, 1984).

In both continuing, and contributing to, already existing Western

metanarratives of the Balkans, the NATO public relations intervention drew from a number of archives. Nearly all reinforced a consistent Western image of the Balkans as an area of bleakness, political chaos, savagery and discord. More recently, in the immediate post-Cold War political collapse, events in many of the Balkan states seemed to confirm these territories as populated by people perched on the edge, waiting to be tipped into a final fight for survival. Political and media representations of the region and the people have “focused on uncertainty, irrationality and violence” (Kuusisto, 2004, p. 169).

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first dealing with literature concerning the image of the Balkans; the second part illustrating how this image provided the contextual framing, which underpinned NATO’s construction of the Kosovo Campaign with its use of binary oppositions, metaphor and personification of the conflict in the figure of President Milošević .

The chapter positions NATO’s public relations strategy as constructing the bombing campaign not only as a natural and “civilised” international reaction to what Jamie Shea termed “the demon” force of the Balkans, but also as a virtuous one where “moral and humanitarian standards, rather than national interest, were offered as a rationale for this campaign” (Behnke, 2002, p. 130). It did so by reinforcing the perception that the “inhabitants [of the region] do not care to conform to the standards of

behavior devised as normative by and for the civilized world” (Todorova, 1997, p. 3). This enabled NATO to present itself as a predominantly values-based humanitarian and caring organisation first and, only secondly, as a military organisation that could use the threat of force to back up its demands.

Framing interventions

Framing the peoples of the Balkans as being less able or reliable in governing themselves in a civilised manner in a post-Cold War world gave NATO certain advantages. NATO could for example, build on that framework to claim further, apparently legitimate, reasons to take a proactive role in sorting out the internal conflicts of states of the previous Communist bloc. Many of these developing conflicts were “nipped in the bud” through diplomatic or economic means. This has been borne out by invitations into the NATO Partners for Peace programme, as well as ongoing discussions for accession to the European Union.

However, the process of bringing Yugoslavia into the “family of Europe” was more complicated in that the peoples of the different republics still had to work through their own internal conflicts before acceding to new democratic and economic requirements. It was essentially these embedded internal conflicts that NATO sought to smother and extinguish through its interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo.

As identified earlier in this study, a major problem for NATO was the legitimacy of its intervention. Although national interests did play a part in the decision-making processes, these were not crystal clear (Thussu, 2000). As a consequence, the media had some difficulty in providing an appropriate framework for reporting the wars and conflicts that ravaged Yugoslavia. They responded by framing their coverage in terms of the never-ending ethnic hatreds, violent history and traditionalist attitudes in the Balkans. These ethnic and cultural characteristics from history and fiction then account for contemporary troubles in the Balkans, rather than the fact that the West has used the region “as a theatre for their power politics” (Gowan, 1999, p. 105).

Gowan’s (1999) claim of Western interference finds support in Chandler’s (2000) view that, in fact, it was the Western powers that prevented any possible compromise solutions for the conflicts between the republics of the Yugoslav Federation by undermining those institutions by their own policies and actions. Nevertheless, by reverting to such frames for explanation of the occurrences in the Balkans, those involved in disseminating information are able to simplify the conflicts for their consuming publics into uncomplicated, well-known and ubiquitous binary oppositions such as “us and them;” “good and evil;” “peace-loving and violent;” “developed and backward;” “consensus and discord;” and so on.

The use of these binary oppositions are scattered throughout the NATO

texts and provide an easily intelligible framework for general comprehension of the events in the region. Such deployment of binary oppositions is not new in the discourses of war, but for the “new” war discourses (Kaldor, 1999) the first Gulf War in 1991 provided a model: “they” are the unseen enemy – or the enemy who is personified through the name of the leader and seen only through the nose camera of the falling bomb; and “we” are the ones with the enlightened and correct values (Robins, 1993) and are bombing for the right reasons.

Baudrillard (1995) also referred to these oppositions in terms of the power asymmetry when he claimed that the Gulf War did not take place, but was rather a simulation. He saw the spectacle in terms of a fight “over the corpse of the war” (p. 23) because the Iraqis were no match for the international coalition brought together by the United States. The Serbs, too, were no match for NATO. NATO mobilises these same binary oppositions in Kosovo, using intertextuality from earlier conflicts; in particular the discourses from World War II and Nazi atrocities, as well as likening Saddam Hussein and Milošević to Hitler and nazifying the Serbs (Hume, 2000).

Cultural sources for binary oppositions

NATO could also access fictional sources in its construction of the Balkans. Numerous references to the Balkans in Western literature since the 18th century have provided a particular image of Yugoslavia and the Balkan

peninsula “as a kind of Eastern frontier, a dangerous peripheral zone away from the civilising influences of the centre” (Hammond, 2005, p. 145). This sense of danger is associated with a number of metaphors that emphasise a collision, or clash – the fracture zone of Europe.

Goldsworthy (2002) points out that this timeless figurative expression of “colliding cultural and religious tectonic blocks” (p. 25) goes well together with the “equally timeless ‘ancient hatreds’ as the preferred explanation for every Balkan conflict” (p. 26). This theme has been taken up many times, not only by Victorian and early 20th century travel writers (Hammond, 2005), but also by writers, diplomats and journalists who were, in one way or another, involved in the coverage of the wars in the break-up of Yugoslavia (see, for instance, Crampton, 2002; Holbrooke, 1998; Kaplan, 1993; Nicholson, 1994; Owen, 1995; Prentice, 2000; Simpson, 1999; Winchester, 1999).

Other authors have written popular fiction set in the Balkans, the most famous of which are Bram Stoker’s (1897) *Dracula* and Agatha Christie’s (1934) *Murder on the Orient Express*, which have been made into films where “the Balkans have often provided a threatening space – the mysterious and unhomelike (*unheimlich*) Eastern location for the unfolding of Western adventure” (Goldsworthy, 2002, p. 33).

Some more recent writing about the Balkans has tried to redress the balance and has identified the not insubstantial role of foreign powers

in the region (see especially, Glenny, 1999a). Nevertheless, on the whole, most writers have been content to bed down the common understanding of the Balkan peninsula as the home of people who are primitive and backward. As Hammond (2005) notes:

The West's response to the Yugoslav wars was to set the tone for the conceptualization of the whole peninsula. The understanding of Yugoslavia as a collection of fractious, malevolent entities was central to the wider discursive recovery of Victorian balkanism, the assessments and accusations that marked western commentary on the nation quickly spreading to encompass all post-revolution societies, and helping to make the Balkans once again a byword for mendacity and savagery. (p. 139)

Such representations contribute extensively to perceptions that have been built up over decades and are constantly reinforced by media articles and statements. Individually and cumulatively, they have laid claim to the fertile ground of imagination with dominant images that can then be exploited for particular ends.

This ground offered fertile soil for planting the seeds for legitimate international intervention without needing to explicitly draw on the “common sense” understanding of the region. Simply through the already-existing intertextual context, the NATO discourses could frame a particular interpretation that served their own interests. They could simply reinforce existing perceptions, that the Balkans were out of line with “civilised” nations, use them to support NATO's overriding requirement for

organisational legitimacy (Massey, 2004) and appear to be acting not only legitimately, but honourably, in undertaking a necessary bombing campaign.

Complexity or simplicity?

The perception of the Balkans as a volatile, unstable region has provided a strong structural basis for the construction of particular realities as required. At the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, many observers expected the Yugoslav Federation to be the first country of the former Eastern bloc countries to move to a democratic society following market forces economic reforms. In the following example, there is a before-after comparison offered as an illustration of this expectation. Shea contrasts two different images of Yugoslavia. In the first part, in a response to a question from a Yugoslav journalist, he talks about Yugoslavia in terms of what it used to be like before the end of the Cold War:

I would like to really stress we have no quarrel with the people of Yugoslavia. NATO has sympathy for the people of Yugoslavia. Ten years ago when the Berlin Wall came down, any economist looking at the map of Europe would have probably designated Yugoslavia as the country emerging in the post communist period which was most likely to rapidly catch up with the Western European mainstream. It was a wealthy country. People had private bank accounts, they went skiing in Austria and Switzerland, it was a very civilised country indeed and many people obviously went there on holiday and enjoyed it. (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999)

This idyllic picture of a wealthy, “very civilised” country whose citizens enjoy “skiing in Austria and Switzerland” and have “private bank accounts” provides no context of the economic turmoil that preceded the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. By using these images, Shea is reinforcing particular Western understandings of economic stability and wealth and using his text to do the “ideological work” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 58). This was a representation of the reality for some Yugoslav citizens and it was NATO’s intention is to return this way of life to the people for whom it had sympathy. The target publics in Western European nations can relate quite easily to these particular images, for they themselves would probably be amongst those who have been on holiday and enjoyed the sights of Yugoslavia, gone skiing in Austria and Switzerland, etc.

The stark contrast of the imagery presented in the first part of this quote underlines the trauma and shock of the second part, again through use of an economic market-oriented discourse:

But look at it now after ten years. It's gone from being at the top of the league of the post-communist societies to being virtually at the bottom. Its GDP has fallen by about 50 per cent vis-a-vis 1989. The military budget has completely consumed virtually all of the domestic resources that its [sic] being produced. (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999)

Here is a stark description in economic terms, set against the break-up of the Yugoslav federation. The consumption of domestic resources by the military indicates poor management, a militaristic society and

economic ruin. In this example, Shea is removing the reality from its economic context with no reference to the economic hardships and inflation of the 1980s (Allcock, 2000). The separation allows him to use volatility, instability and implacable inter-ethnic hatreds as the logical coordinates for an imploding country.

During the Bosnian war (and prior to it, during the violent secession of Croatia and Slovenia) Western leaders used the complexity of the issues of the region to legitimise *non*-intervention. In that conflict, the narrative of the region was framed by the use of metaphors emphasising not only the misery, senselessness and ugliness of war but also as a warning about the risks of getting involved. Any involvement could result in “a horrible dream of the dark hours, a sudden and violent natural catastrophe, and a treacherous swamp or quagmire” (Kuusisto, 2004, p. 181).

Similar metaphors can be used for quite different purposes. The point is to emphasise the role of public relations in the discursive deployment of public information about international politics, conflict and national interests. These are far from innocent practices and often feature the privileging of some versions of history over others. In her work on Western foreign policy statements during the war in Bosnia, Kuusisto (2004) found that the West legitimised its non-intervention by stressing “the complexity of the situation, the special nature of the people and the terrain, and the awkward position of outside powers” (p. 173). Ultimately the West

concluded that it was simply a civil war in which the West had no reason to intervene. The dramatic discursive shift from legitimisation of non-intervention in Bosnia to legitimising a large-scale, multi-national military intervention in Kosovo requires an explanation.

The complexity of the situation in Bosnia provided the West with a reason for non-intervention in that it was impossible to identify clearly which particular national community was to blame for the egregious human rights violations in the conflict. Bosnia had been a multi-ethnic republic made up of three national communities: Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, none of whom made up a significant majority. Atrocities committed by all sides in the fight to retain or capture territory for future purposes made it difficult to categorically identify one community as the aggressor, though the Serbs were, in the later stages of the war (after the events at Srebrenica) clearly the perpetrators of some of the worst atrocities.

Kuusisto's (2004) work on the rhetoric of Western leaders concludes that even though there was a recognition that the conflagration of Bosnia was in danger of spreading to other areas, it would be foolhardy to intervene:

The speeches of the Western leaders affirmed to the international audience that delivering humanitarian aid, watching over the no-fly zones and safe havens and offering negotiation opportunities (that is, assuming minor roles in the drama) was the best possible plan for third (or fourth or fifth) parties to adopt in Bosnia. The war was terrible and messy and mysterious; no purpose could be served by making foolhardy charges into the tragic battle. (Kuusisto, 2004, p. 174)

By claiming that the situation in Bosnia was too complex to take sides, Western countries appeared not only to be haunted by the spectre of the Balkans, but also by the prospect of being bogged down in a quagmire from which it would be difficult to extricate forces (as in Vietnam). There is a sharp contrast with the opposite attitude of Western leaders with regard to the developing situation in Kosovo. Ironically, Bosnia, and the failure of the international community to respond to the unfolding tragedy there, provided the dominant argument for intervention in Kosovo. Both US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright and British Defence Secretary George Robertson claimed that lessons had been learned from Bosnia and the West could not stand by and watch another human catastrophe unfold in Kosovo.

This analysis will examine the NATO texts in terms of how the discourses represent the region and its peoples and the presuppositions embedded within the texts. In particular the analysis will look at intertextuality by identifying the different discourses that have been drawn upon to create the new text. It will also look at what Fairclough (1992) calls manifest intertextuality that “raises questions about what goes into producing a

text, but it is also concerned with features that are ‘manifest’ on the surface of the text” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 233).

Instability and abandonment

One key term, which appears frequently in the NATO discourses, is stability, or stabilisation. Used in relation to the Balkan region and, in particular, Yugoslavia and its neighbours, it is marked by the absence of stability and contrasts with an area that is in chaos, has no secure ground and is prone to jolts (both physical and political). The implication of such internal instability is that it can only be secured by external help.

Jamie Shea draws a picture of the economic vulnerability of Yugoslavia with no reference at all to the economic sanctions imposed by United Nations sanctions in 1992. He provides only a stark contrast of a country brought to its knees in order to emphasise the instability afflicting the region and, in particular, the neglect of the needs of the people of the region afforded by the current leadership:

The Serbs and people in other parts of the former Yugoslavia have suffered terribly because of the policies of their government. I mean if there ever was a people that really has been let down by bad leadership its been Yugoslavia and we don't want this situation to happen. We don't want Yugoslavia to be what it currently is, a prior [sic!] state. (Shea, Press Conference, April 3)

The introduction of an imposed singularity of Yugoslavia – bad leadership, bad policies and a pariah state – allows Shea to reinforce the “them” and “us” opposition. Yugoslavia is no longer part of the civilised world but a pariah state. He goes on to position Yugoslavia as the outsider, the country that needs to be brought back into the mainstream, back into an embracing Europe. He goes on to say:

We want to have a situation of stability in the Balkans so that we can bring Yugoslavia into the same democratic mainstream as virtually all of the other countries of Europe. ... but we can't start even thinking of this until we end the current process of moving backwards into the 19th century, but hopefully there will be a better perspective tomorrow, but I want to make it clear that our quarrel is with your Government, not with your people. (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999)

Shea's rhetoric positions Yugoslavia not only as an outside other, but as an undemocratic backwater that needs to be brought back to the mainstream. In this case, “we” are seeking to stabilise it in order to allow it to catch up with “our” normal state. The repetition of the theme that this is not a war against the Yugoslav people but against the leadership, reinforces the argument that NATO's intervention is a humanitarian intervention for the good of the people of Yugoslavia. The bombing of the infrastructure is really only a means of destroying the military power of a bad leadership and ending “the current process of moving backwardness into the 19th century” (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999).

This statement shows how readily the perception of the Balkans as an unstable backward region can be called upon to reinforce a particular argument. In the earlier example of Yugoslavia being a wealthy country where (some) people had private bank accounts and went skiing in Austria and Switzerland contrasts with the process of moving backwards into the 19th century. The ideological work of this text (Fairclough, 2003) is to embed the assumption that Yugoslavia should be part of the “democratic mainstream as virtually all of the other countries of Europe” and that there is no place to deviate from this mainstream.

As Fairclough (2003) points out: “Seeking hegemony is a matter of seeking to universalize particular meanings in the service of achieving and maintaining dominance, and this is ideological work” (p. 58). The hegemonic view is to draw the “other” into the mainstream, thus neutralising the particular identity of a nation and providing the warrant and backing for the argument by associating any deviation from this norm, or common sense, as a return to the “backwardness of the 19th century” (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999).

In an earlier statement, Shea combined the idea of backwardness with the metaphor of abandonment, to shift to a family metaphor and suggest that Yugoslavia (the Balkans) is an orphan needing good parents in order for it to be stable: “I believe that they really do show that this is an area where we simply cannot abandon the Balkans to Milošević. We know what has

happened in the past and we know what would be the consequences if we did that” (Shea, Press Conference, March 31, 1999).

Not only is Shea reinforcing the “badness” of Milošević, but he is also drawing on what he believes to be the common historical knowledge of his audience about the Balkans. “We” know what has happened in the past – there is obviously no need to spell it out – and “we” also know the consequences that would occur if “we” do not intervene. This is what Jowett and O’Donnell (1992) refer to as “white propaganda”, where the source is credible and where the political ideology also fits. In this quotation, the assumption is that in the past –with no reference to recent or distant past – there was only turmoil, hardship and war. It omits any reference to the more than 40 years of peaceful co-existence in the former Yugoslavia. This is part of “the interwoven trinity” (O’Shaughnessy, 2004, p. 65) of rhetoric, symbolism and myth where the rhetoric provides the emotional persuasion, the myth is the underlying narrative, and “we” symbolise the “protectors” of stability in the region. Here, the “we” is inclusive of “all of us” and “our” understanding of the region.

Earthquakes and metaphors

The unstable metaphors associated with the Balkans are augmented through the geography and liminality of the region, particularly the use of language such as the “fault line” and the Balkan “tinderbox” (Krasteva, 2004). An example of this particular kind of unstable metaphor is well-

illustrated in the speech given by President Clinton at the beginning of the air strikes on 24 March, 1999: “We act to prevent a wider war; to diffuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results” (Clinton, 1999).

Clinton’s metaphor of the “powder keg” that has exploded reinforces the mental concept of the area as being unstable and prone to explosions, thus requiring some intervention to prevent “catastrophic results”. These types of metaphors work powerfully in suggesting that the forces involved are uncontrollable and that they should be expected because they are a product of nature and not a human construction. The metaphors work in ways that the listener is able to make sense of the meaning without too much effort (Chilton, 2004). For instance, the use of the word “earthquake” adjacent to “demographic” in reference to the flow of refugees out of Kosovo during the NATO bombing suggests that this was both uncontrollable and unstoppable. The effect is to suggest the flow is disconnected from the human activity of bombing: “The focus of the Alliance this morning is still very, very much on the demographic earthquake that we are experiencing in and around Kosovo” (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999).

For the previous ten days, NATO had been bombing Kosovo both day and night, and yet categorising this exodus as “a demographic earthquake that we are experiencing”, removes causal agency from NATO activities. As

Shea continues the tectonic metaphor he extends it into the scientific language associated with earthquakes with the use of the Richter scale (even though, in Shea's own qualified terms, it is not a scale to measure the intensity of a physical earthquake but rather a humanitarian scale of suffering): "I think that on the humanitarian Richter Scale of suffering, we hit a nine over the weekend" (Shea, Press Conference, May 25, 1999).

With this use of the earthquake metaphor, Shea is tapping into the already established understanding of the region as part of a natural fault line, subject to earthquakes, an area which is unstable and which, like other natural disasters, requires intervention for humanitarian reasons. The articulation of earthquake, the measure of the earthquake (Richter scale) and the humanitarian suffering evoke an image of a natural event and distances responsibility for the actual physical bombing of the area by NATO.

This is extrapolated from the strong notion of instability already associated with the region. It implicitly provides an underpinning support for whatever action it takes to stabilise the region. This extrapolation survives after the war when a "Stabilisation Force" is implemented (e.g., as in Bosnia) with NATO as the core of this force. A future role for NATO in Kosovo is established although they can "be flexible as to who participates provided that it has a NATO core and we have already the successful model of IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia that has functioned extremely well, which is

called Implementation Force or Stabilisation Force, has a NATO core but where you have the participation of 20 countries” (Shea, Press Conference, May 5, 1999).

Shea seamlessly links the earthquake metaphor and the legitimisation of NATO’s role in the region in the development of the plan for the future:

our formula is for far-reaching autonomy following a transitional period in which of course Kosovo would have to be under the protection of the international community and would have to be reconstructed and it's more likely, in my view, for Yugoslavia to go in a democratic way if part of Yugoslavia is already a multiethnic, democratic society under the influence of the international community. We would have a better chance than if it were hived off completely because as we found, any kind of partition tends to encourage the extremist parties rather than the democratic parties in the states that survive (Shea, Press Conference, April 28, 1999)

Here, Shea is positing the idea that through its intervention, Kosovo will become a multiethnic, democratic society that will lead the way for democracy throughout Yugoslavia. The ideological work of this text suggests an “unquestioned and unavoidable reality” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 58) that when the bombing campaign is over and NATO achieves its goals, Western-style democracy of tolerance and understanding will be unequivocally adopted by the inhabitants of the region.

Victims and villains

Binary oppositions also work to create villains and victims by demonising the enemy. Linguistically, it is also a means of delegitimising (Chilton, 2004; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997) the other by negative representation. In the case of Kosovo, the villain has a name, a face and a particular personality with which audiences became increasingly familiar. However, the villain requires victims as well and NATO was able to clearly identify the victims as ethnic Albanians. As Louw (2001) points out:

Finding “victims” to “save” has become an important device for justifying the use of NWO [New World Order] violence against foreigners. ... Essentially, mobilizing “victimhood” discourses that are already “trendy” in journalistic circles, means that psy-ops stories, promoted by military PRs, tend to receive no critical scrutiny from journalists. Propaganda is easily “placed” in the media if it confirms existing journalistic bias and/or fits their news frame. (p.174)

The support of the “underdog” in an international situation is not new in journalism and is known to provide positive propaganda results for the more powerful party. But this is only the case when the victims have been identified and characterised so that the listener is able to connect emotionally with the victim.

Accordingly for NATO, finding victims was an important device for legitimising a new offensive operation that could help transform the organisation. NATO’s claims to be helping the victims of ethnic cleansing

through a hostile bombing campaign raise the question of whether there is a hierarchy of victims in this particular intervention.

Victims and the villains could be readily identified in the Kosovo conflict. From the very outset, there was a particular construction of reality in the NATO texts. This construction was necessary from the perspective of keeping the Alliance together and staying focused on a particular enemy; it was also a necessity from the point of view of maintaining faith with public opinion. Although the decisions regarding confrontation were apparently made by a supranational institution, it was important to maintain positive public opinion amongst the citizens of the Alliance countries. The decision-making processes in representative democracies depend on citizen consent, taking the form of mass loyalty (Habermas, 1975) in which the citizen needs to be “discursively convinced” (p. 43) that such power is only exercised when there is a legitimate norm of action. Since rationality is at the crux of the relationship between the citizen and the state, it is necessary for the public relations professional to construct the weightiest and most rational arguments in favour of their political clients (Roper, 2001).

Text and talk are used in subtle ways to suggest particular meanings and thereby manufacture consent for the actions (van Dijk, 1993) and as Louw (2001) points out, demonisation of an opposition leader is a common feature of media war planning and is “often accompanied by identifying

refugees and exile groups and promoting them as future alternative governments. Demonization also involves the selective portrayal of history, especially where intervention is being made on one side of a civil conflict (as occurred in Kosovo)” (Louw, 2001, p. 178).

By discursively constructing the opposing leadership as irrational and unreasonable, it is possible to maintain positive public opinion for whatever actions are required to bring about a rational and reasonable solution to the issues at hand, thus maintaining legitimacy.

The “demon” force

From the early press releases to the final press conferences, it was quite clear that the villain was represented by one person, President Slobodan Milošević. The process of delegitimising (Chilton, 2004; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997) him was a predominant theme across the discourses. His name appears in the NATO documents 1,229 times. In comparison, the word Yugoslavia appears 540 times, Serbs appears 234 times; Yugoslav government appears 13 times; Yugoslav leaders, twice; Serbian government, twice; Serbian forces 21 times; and Yugoslav forces 98 times. The name Milošević was also used as a possessive noun for: government, machine, regime, authorities, citizens, command-and-control, communication, forces, military, objectives, policies, power, resolve and strategy.

The constant repetition of Milošević as the perpetrator of the conflict made plain the villain of the conflict. He had a name, a face and was, in fact, the embodiment of evil. On one occasion, Shea metaphorically described Milošević as diseased: “We are preventing Milošević from infecting the entire region with his virus of nationalism” (Shea, Press Conference, April 23). The interdiscursivity here, drawing on the medical discourse domain, as well as intertextuality with Nazi representations of Jews in Europe as a “plague” that was infecting Aryan society, presents an incredibly powerful metaphor for the demonisation of President Milošević. Furthermore, the statement articulates Milošević with an infectious virus, which infects the region.

It was this evil that needed to be defeated. In the NATO texts, Milošević and evil are used in close proximity:

there is always a cost to defeat an evil, it never comes free unfortunately, but the cost of failure to defeat a great evil is far higher in the long term. So this Alliance will not be shaken, we will not stop and we will not let up until Milošević and his killing forces withdraw from Kosovo. (Shea, Press Conference, May 31, 1999)

The articulation between Milošević and evil is clear, as is Milošević’s ownership of the “killing forces”. Evil, as personified by Milošević, presents the challenge to the NATO Alliance. There is now an exhortation to continue the battle, resonating from Churchill’s speeches at the height of the Battle for Britain that are manifested on the surface of the text

(Fairclough, 1992). These well-known examples of war-time speeches exhorting the people to support the efforts of the armed forces: “We shall not flag nor fail. We shall fight ... we shall never surrender” (13 May, 1940) and “Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be” (4 June, 1940), reinforce the mental models inherent in the discourse of the morality of this campaign as when Shea says: “...this Alliance will not be shaken, we will not stop and we will not let up” (May 31, 1999).

Shea also relates NATO’s actions to the value of making the effort to defeat evil. Putting a price on it draws on an economic discourse, as did Churchill (“victory at all costs”). The resulting interdiscursivity, of military and economic discourse domains, suggests an underlying aim of the campaign as having economic implications for the whole region. The discourse is shaped in terms of a future financial perspective. A victory for the forces of good (NATO) and a defeat for the forces of evil (Milošević) is not simply the removal of Serb forces from Kosovo, but embraces the wider implications of gathering “Yugoslavia into the same democratic mainstream as virtually all of the other countries of Europe” (Shea, April 3, 1999) with, by implication, an accompanying rise in the standard of living towards that of Western Europe.

Shea reiterates the need for action against these forces of evil. At the same time, he revisits the actual expulsion of Kosovar Albanians occurring since

NATO began its campaign:

I would like just to recall a phrase that came to me yesterday which I think is very appropriate from Edmund Burke, who wrote "Reflections on the Revolution in France" at the end of the 18th century: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing!" and NATO isn't prepared to do nothing. We'd rather accept those risks than simply allow Milošević to carry on expelling the entire Kosovar Albanian population. (Shea, Press Conference, May 16, 1999).

By referencing Edmund Burke, Shea cleverly impresses his public with his erudition, reinforcing his credibility, his intelligence and his ability to interpret the situation deeply. The expulsion of Kosovar Albanians is now the unquestioned and unavoidable reality (Fairclough, 2003) of the conflict. The key message is reiterated: Milošević is evil and it is NATO's job to stop evil even though there are risks involved. This is at the root of instability and dysfunctionality and is linked with suggestions that maybe Milošević is not a rational being – "it's very difficult for rational people in Western democracies to anticipate what irrational people are going to do, particularly as President Milošević is a rather silent figure" (Shea, Press Conference, April 5, 1999). In fact Milošević's behaviour deviates disturbingly from "rational" democracies in the West: "He doesn't make many speeches. He doesn't give State of the Union addresses to his Parliament. He doesn't produce government programmes as such. And therefore, we don't quite know what he is intending to do and when" (Shea, Press Conference, April 5, 1999).

This quote is structured around the opposition of rational and irrational. And implies that leaders who do not use Western democratic processes are or obstructing rational understanding. By painting Milošević as irrational (or, at times, mentally ill or insane), Shea is again drawing on a medical discourse, this time one of psychiatric disorder (as another dimension of instability). By using this interdiscursivity, the personality of Milošević provides an explanation for the need to continue the bombing campaign.

At this point, less than two weeks into the campaign, NATO seemed to expect that the initial bombing would bring Milošević to accede to NATO's demands. Therefore an explanation was required as to why the campaign needed to continue. Shea draws on previous experience with Milošević during the Bosnian war, suggesting that maybe he is not as irrational as he is painted:

Is he an irrational leader? Well, his habit in the past is that when he really does see that there is no way out, when he knows fully well that the international community is united and fully determined, he does, even at the 11th hour - or shall I say the 11.3/4 hour? - seek a way out so I wouldn't quite credit the idea of an irrational leader who is, if you like, going to go down in a kind of Wagnerian, if you like, ending. No, I wouldn't do that and I think at the end of the day there are enough people around Milošević to persuade him to do the opposite, to stop that before it happens. (Shea, Press Conference, April 28, 1999)

In this quote, Shea departs from the original line that only Milošević has responsibility for controlling the events in Kosovo, but prefers to posit that there is some rationality still within the Yugoslavian regime that will

not allow Yugoslavia to be reduced to rubble. An irrational leader would go down in a “Wagnerian ending”, another metaphor for the flamboyant, irresponsible behaviour that Milošević is demonstrating, one who prolongs the systematic bombing of his country. However, by applying the norms of Western democracies to Yugoslavia, Shea is determining that there is a consensus amongst the Alliance nations about what is and is not rational thereby providing a moral argumentation (Habermas, 1975) for consensus amongst NATO nations.

This framing of Milošević as the demon leader, as the personification and perpetrator of evil, provides an unequivocal construction of the villain. At its most extreme, this delegitimisation effectively denies Milošević his humanness (Chilton, 2004). Over time, as the picture is built up of an irrational and unreasonable person, who does not subscribe to common values but is willing to do anything to maintain his personal power, then the villain emerges within the discourse:

I have lost count of the number of senior envoys from NATO and other countries that have visited Belgrade and have tried to impress upon Milošević our desire and the rational preference for a diplomatic solution. The problem is that it is Milošević who doesn't seem to like diplomacy, quite frankly. (Shea, Press Conference, April 5, 1999)

This is an example of how Shea constructs the reasonableness of NATO and Western diplomacy in the face of obstructive, irrational behaviour on the part of President Milošević. The role of international diplomacy is

accepted by reasonable and rational people. Shea represents international diplomacy from a realist perspective (L'Etang, 2006b) and is using the NATO information platform of the press conferences as a means of influencing attitudes and opinions (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992). Shea goes on to argue:

As I have said, he had a golden opportunity just a couple of days ago to avoid the situation that he is now in, by signing a Peace Agreement at Rambouillet which gave Serbia a great deal, as well as of course to the Kosovar Albanians. But instead of negotiating, he stonewalled, wanted to re-open everything, and then even before the talks had ended, signalled his preference for a military solution by restarting his "clean and sweep" operations in Kosovo. So, it takes two to tango and it takes two to negotiate. But obviously, we would very much hope to start diplomacy as quickly as we can. (Shea, Press Conference, April 5, 1999)

The simplistic arguments posited here, that Serbia was offered "a great deal" and that Milošević "signalled his preference for a military solution" buried the complexity of the issues facing Yugoslavia over the problems in Kosovo. Shea omits any legitimate interests of the Serbian nation as the sovereign power, and the determination of leading NATO powers to instigate the bombing campaign. By delegitimising Milošević through blame and by making him solely responsible for the situation, NATO maintained its own legitimacy in exercising physical coercion on a sovereign nation and thus was able to establish "the right to be obeyed" (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997, p. 213).

By clearly identifying Milošević as the villain of Kosovo, the discourses focus on the burden of responsibility through vilification: “Clear responsibility for the air strikes lies with President Milošević who has refused to stop his violent action in Kosovo and has refused to negotiate in good faith” (Solana, Press Statement, March 24, 1999).

It was NATO’s decision to implement the air strikes and carry them out, but this articulation of the air strikes with Milošević makes him alone to blame for the hardship, destruction and collateral damage caused by the bombing. This position is reiterated many times during the course of the campaign: “Let me reiterate once again: NATO is not at war ... The responsibility for the current crisis rests with President Milošević who has refused to stop his violent action in Kosovo and has refused to negotiate in good faith” (Solana, Press Statement, March 27, 1999).

Again, the responsibility lies with Milošević. This time, air strikes are not mentioned, but Solana carefully points out that this is not a war between nations – it is really only a punishment strike against one person.

Mccgwire (2000) notes that there was an assumption by NATO that Milošević was able to halt the process himself and that no other persons were involved. This, in itself, is more than an oversimplification of the context and the political process in Yugoslavia. NATO assumed, rightly or wrongly, that Milošević was the sole decision-maker and dictator of Yugoslavia. Thus, Milošević himself was discursively constructed as the

enemy. Mccgwire (2000) states:

By demonizing one man, ignoring the complexities of Belgrade politics and absolving the Serbian people of any blame for the policy in Kosovo, NATO political leaders seem to have blinded themselves to how the Serbs would react to the threat and actuality of a bombing campaign. The Serbs have always been proud of their ability to fight in defence of their interests and their capacity to absorb punishment. (p. 19)

The issues raised here by Mccgwire highlight the fact that NATO provides no historical context for the discourses other than cursory references to earlier events in the break-up of Yugoslavia. The people of Yugoslavia are largely ignored in the NATO discourses, except on the basis of the insistence at the beginning of the campaign that this was not a war against the people of Yugoslavia.

By suggesting that chaos was the natural order of life in the Balkans, and that recent events represented a reversion to a more tribal, primitive backwardness based on ancient enmities and ethnic hatreds, NATO's use of metaphor and imagery offered ways to engage the popular imagination and reach audiences throughout the Western world. The strategy presented the idea of a virtuous bombing campaign for humanitarian ideals. In the process NATO repositioned itself from a purely defensive organisation so that the Kosovo Campaign simultaneously legitimised its intervention as an offensive military force. Such repositioning justified its own survival in post-Cold War conditions that no longer required it to act

as defender of the non-communist world.

By introducing a particular construction of reality, NATO persisted with discursive efforts to maintain credibility for the specific worldview it espoused. As a prominent, credible and trustworthy organisation, NATO was fortunate in having some latitude in the way it represented the context and the actual situation (Kuusisto, 2004). For target audiences in Europe, and especially in the United States, the region of the Balkans in general, and Kosovo in particular, were relatively unknown in terms of geography, culture, values and ethnicity. As such, the narratives could be framed to achieve maximum credibility for the organisation and its actions.

Conclusion

These last three chapters have been tracking NATO's efforts to reposition itself from a purely defensive organisation to an offensive military force. Such repositioning aimed to justify NATO's survival in post-Cold War conditions that no longer required it to act as defender of the non-communist world. Following on from chapter seven's establishment of the Kosovo situation as an opportunity for NATO to find a post-Cold War identity, chapter eight considered the difficulties of sustaining the humanitarian component of that new identity while simultaneously bombing a civilian population.

Both chapters related NATO's strategic communication to developments in

issues management and organisational legitimation. This chapter examined how, as part of NATO's identity construction and justification, NATO spokespeople were able to draw on the deeper cultural contexts of the Kosovo issue and to mobilise them in support of their organisation's ends. The next chapter looks at how NATO managed some of this identity work in two main ways: the first by avoiding accusations of propaganda that would have undercut its whole project; and second, by presenting its unique self through a unique messenger.

CHAPTER 10

Confronting “the ultimate public relations challenge”: Unique message and unique messenger

Propaganda is that branch of the art of lying which consists in nearly deceiving your friends without quite deceiving your enemies.

F. M. Cornford, British poet (1886-1960)

A central question introduced at the beginning of this thesis was: How and why do we believe what we believe? What makes us open to receiving information in a particular manner and accepting it as truthful and credible? Cornford’s quotation refers to an “art” in the use of language, which partially answers this question. But it is important to understand how language is used to achieve specific aims and thereby increase our consciousness of how we are informed, how we form our own opinions and avoid the trap of being deceived.

This chapter presents overarching public relations and information challenges that faced NATO in its bid to inform, persuade and rally public opinion to support NATO’s actions and its embryonic new identity. When communication practices are concerned with information about conflict and war, these practices are rarely understood to be public relations

activities but are more likely to be labelled as propaganda. Essentially, for NATO spokesman Jamie Shea, the ultimate public relations challenge was to pre-empt and denounce any information coming out of Belgrade and to “occupy the media space” (BBC, 1999) with NATO information. The premise, put forward by Shea, was that NATO provided frank and truthful information to the public through its media relations and it was the other side – Milošević and the Serbs – that delivered propaganda.

This suggests that, at least in Shea’s mind, there is a clear differentiation between propaganda and public relations. The establishment of a clear demarcation serves public relations practitioners by maintaining the credibility in their dissemination of truthful information. However, since public relations itself suffers from a negative reputation (L’Etang, 2006a), and public relations professionals are often tainted by the label of “spin doctor”, it is the job of the public relations professional to build trust and respect amongst the variety of target publics that s/he addresses.

Propaganda, public relations and spin

This chapter develops the discussion of the differentiation between propaganda and public relations in order to analyse Shea’s references to “our” truth and “their” propaganda, and his assertion that NATO did not engage in propaganda but was only interested in telling the truth. It is not the intention in this chapter to either prove or disprove Shea’s assertion,

but rather to analyse the output of the NATO information section to see whether such a distinction has any relevance in this study.

For Taylor (2003), propaganda is the “*deliberate* attempt to persuade people to think and behave *in a desired way*” (p. 6) [italics in original] and public relations is simply a nicer way of describing it. Since the process is deliberate, the core meaning of propaganda refers to the intent of those who use it. Rather than making an argument as to whether an information campaign is propaganda or not, or whether it is positive or negative, Taylor argues that “one needs to redirect any moral judgement away from the propaganda process itself and more to the intentions and goals of those employing propaganda to secure those intentions and goals” (p. 8).

This usefully suggests that the source of the information should be identifiable and that the stance taken should reflect the position of the organisation disseminating the material and is in line with thinking on propaganda in standard accounts (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1992). That view is central to the argument of this thesis that NATO, as an organisation, can be assessed in terms of its intentions and goals on the strength of its information/public relations campaign during the Kosovo crisis.

O'Shaughnessey (2004) claims that it is often difficult to distinguish propaganda from other forms of persuasive discourse, except retrospectively, since “propaganda in the social environment is often ‘naturalised’ and we are unaware of it” (p. 2). Therefore, defining

propaganda does not necessarily provide any clarification for identifying the type of communication being undertaken by the organisation, but it is only through later analysis that an organisation is charged with using propaganda, or simply utilising propaganda techniques. Moloney (2006) argues that all public relations is simply “weak propaganda” and comes in a variety of formats as a “Niagara of spin” (p. 1).

L’Etang (2006a) argues that the discussion about propaganda has “itself become propagandised” (p. 28). This discussion, she suggests, is less conceptual and more politically driven and has more to do with the speaker than the actual occurrences that are being described. There is no doubt, in NATO’s case, that spokesman Dr Jamie Shea, played a major role in the credibility of the information campaign directed by NATO. In this role he played an integral part in the success of maintaining positive public opinion until the end of the 78 day bombing campaign. Furthermore, he was joined by two of the best political communicators of the late 20th century, President Bill Clinton of the United States and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, both of whom were passionately in favour of bombing Yugoslavia.

Perception management

In considering these aspects of the public relations/propaganda debate it is useful to incorporate the term “perception management” as it is used in information operations as part of a military campaign. Reid (2002)

argues that it does not matter whether it is called perception management, marketing or spin doctoring, for it is really corporate public relations techniques that are utilised as the key elements in information operations “and as a cornerstone of 4th generation warfare” (Reid, 2002, p. 51).

Perception management is about “shaping” the information space during conflict and war and “targets the human dimension in politics and conflict in a way that kinetic weapons cannot” (Dearth, 2002, p. 2). It can also be part of the “influence operations” of information warfare but, as Taylor (2002) points out, “perception management may well be yet another pseudonym for propaganda” (p. 25). It involves a number of communication practices including public diplomacy, media relations, PSYOPS (psychological operations, including leaflets, broadcasts and loudspeakers), and “soft” power (the use of cultural and educational relations between countries). Taking these aspects together, it is crucial that the source of the information be seen as credible and that the target audiences are willing to believe what they are told (Taylor, 2002).

In terms of NATO’s efforts to stake out a claim for the hearts and minds of the Serbian people during the Kosovo conflict, the credibility of the organisation suffered in that they were seen simply as “the enemy” (see, for instance, Hromic & Deckert, 1999; Ignatieff, 2000; Prentice, 2000; Seierstad, 2006). This thesis argues that NATO was less concerned with perceptions and understanding amongst the Serbian people. As a

consequence, the lack of research, understanding and environmental scanning of the Balkans and its history resulted in a completely unsuccessful strategy to encourage the Serbian population to support NATO and its efforts to undermine the power of President Milošević in Serbia.

NATO's public relations efforts in Yugoslavia included the air distribution of more than 100 million leaflets over Serbian cities and warnings to Yugoslav forces in Kosovo to flee before an attack (Taylor, 2003). Jamie Shea would not discuss these particular aspects of the campaign but insisted instead that it was a part of the military operation rather than the information operation (Press Conference, May 30, 1999).

In spite of repeated claims – by NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, SACEUR General Wesley Clark and Shea – that NATO was not at war with the Yugoslav people, Serbian people rallied around President Milošević. The leaflets dropped by NATO planes focused on the same claim, but to no avail. Instead, the population rallied to Milošević and a new slogan encouraged the population to new patriotic fervour. “We are all targets” encouraged civilians to demonstrate on the main bridges in Belgrade to prevent NATO bombing the bridges as military targets. This was in direct opposition to scenes a year earlier when there had been month-long street demonstrations in Belgrade for the removal of Milošević from power (Taylor, 2003). This suggests that the efforts of NATO were either

misguided, or ill-planned or simply ineffective and that there was little accurate knowledge of the target audience.

Furthermore, as Taylor (2002) points out, the Serbian population had access to a wide range of Western media outlets such as CNN, BBC World and Sky News that failed to ignite any significant support for the Western Alliance's perspective because it was seen to be associated blindly with the NATO information line (Seierstad, 2006; S. Taylor, 2000). For Serbian civilians, NATO was attacking them because they were Serbs fighting for their historic rights in Kosovo.

For NATO's main target audiences, the Alliance nations, it was the scenes of thousands of refugees fleeing their homes allegedly because of Serb atrocities, which was the perceived reality that contributed to the maintenance of positive public opinion about the bombing campaign. This may be the crux of the matter. It was more important for NATO to maintain its relations with its own publics than it was to win hearts and minds in Serbia for, after all, those are the publics who indirectly fund and support NATO as an organisation and who will ultimately decide its fate in the future.

The personal is political communication: The case of Jamie Shea

NATO spokesman, Dr. Jamie Shea, must be credited with much of the success of NATO's media and public relations campaign and

undoubtedly became a media celebrity during the campaign. As Scott Taylor (2000) observes:

When NATO officials first visited the war-ravaged Kosovo capital, the ethnic Albanian residents of Pristina hailed the delegation as 'liberators'. Ironically, it wasn't NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana or General Wesley Clark upon whom the adulation was bestowed, but rather on the Alliance's spokesman, Jamie Shea, who was held aloft and cheered as the conquering hero. (p. 113)

Shea was seen to be the harbinger of good news for Kosovar Albanians: success in the bombing campaign, reiteration of NATO demands, and the "liberator" of the territory. Taylor (2000) notes that it was this gratitude on the part of the Albanians that "indicates how perception has overtaken other fundamental values in shaping world opinion. Information has become the most devastating weapon, and the media the most potent delivery system in modern warfare" (p. 113).

For the Serbs, on the other hand, the bombing of their country was seen via a "Jamie Shea lens" of which Shea himself was very aware: "I appeared on Serb Television many times during the Kosovo air campaign but as a hate figure and a basis for caricature" (Shea, 2004, pp. 109-110).

Both these examples suggest that Shea was more than simply a spokesperson for an organisation. Other spokespeople, particularly in the United States, also appeared daily at press briefings (e.g. Ken Bacon at the

Pentagon and James Rubin at the State Department) but did not reach the celebrity status of Shea in Brussels. As he himself stated: “I went through the Kosovan crisis and got my 78 days of fame” (cited in Kirk, 2003).

This fame was the subject of a number of articles in the British press during the Kosovo Campaign. For Simon Hattenstone of the *Guardian*, Shea had been an “unknown spokesman withering away in Brussels” who then became the star of the show:

Jamie Shea is having the war of a lifetime. Here he is conducting his daily briefing and the journalists gaze in awe. An audience with Jamie Shea. A little bit of information, a few purple passages, the odd hint of black propaganda, a smattering of jokes, and a whole load of ego-tickling seduction. You suspect the journalists would have paid for a seat in the stalls. (Hattenstone, 1999, para. 2)

Setting and credibility

It was these press conferences that were the stage for the Shea daily briefings. Knightley (2002) observed: “Shea and the NATO officers were on a podium with high-tech equipment for displaying images to illustrate their points – maps, film from cockpit cameras, gun and bomb sight and target details” (p. 503). Their position contrasted markedly with the journalists who “sat below the podium in rows of seats like in a classroom [and] like in school, they had to attract the attention of the podium to ask a question” (p. 503). It was little wonder that he concluded from “a

psychological viewpoint, there was no doubt about who was in control” (Knightley, 2002, p. 503).

This particular architecture provides yet another context for the delivery of text and talk. Its influence on the participants can only be gauged by the success of the public relations campaign overall. The control exerted over the information, as well as who would be chosen to ask questions (Chilton, 2004; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997) provided the NATO spokesman with an unusually compliant audience.

More than 400 journalists had converged on NATO headquarters in Brussels in the first week of the operation (Skoco & Woodger, 2000) providing NATO with a captive audience for its own particular worldview. As Louw (2001) observes: “Wars now have been designed as media events which, if all goes according to plan, strengthen the dominance of the ruling hegemony by generating a ‘feel good factor’ and enhancing legitimacy for the ruling alliance” (p. 179). This dominance of the media space contributed significantly to the readiness amongst the citizens of the Alliance countries to consent to the decisions being made on their behalf, especially since they were fed a daily diet of information on the number of sorties flown, damage assessments and optimistic scenarios.

From a critical political approach (Trujillo & Toth, 1987) to the public relations practices employed during press conferences, NATO was able to maintain and enhance its power and credibility as an authoritative and

acceptable organisation (Chilton, 2004; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997), carrying out the policies of its member governments on behalf of their citizens. The campaign was initiated and executed in the name of the NATO Alliance as a whole. Significantly, at no point during the 78 days of the air campaign, did any NATO member repudiate the attacks.

The daily press conferences served to inform these publics of the nature of the results of the decision-makers. Ongoing operations reached a stage where there was very little criticism or heated discussion of the campaign in the mainstream media (Hammond & Herman, 2000; P. M. Taylor, 2000a). Apart from a few querulous articles in the mainstream press (Hammond, 1999b; Watson, 1999), on the Internet (www.stratfor.com ; www.transnational.org; www.zmag.org) and in critical news monthlies (see for instance, Chomsky, 1999a; Ramonet, 1999), most op-ed articles supported the position of NATO.

Although the format of the press conferences always required a uniformed military spokesman as well, it was Shea who dominated the conferences and developed beneficial relations with journalists and media representatives. His autobiographical details confirm his skill as a spokesperson with an academic background of a doctorate from Oxford, adjunct professorships at a number of European and American universities, a fluent speaker in five languages and the author of scholarly works on NATO and European interests. However, it was his manner

rather than his academic qualifications that proved to be the most effective element during his time as spokesman for NATO. Also, much comment was made concerning Shea's "flat vowels" and East London accent, suggesting that credibility and authenticity were enhanced by the "common touch" of this particular spokesman.

This again raises the question: how and why do we believe what we believe? Aristotle (1952) believed a speaker's personal character makes persuasion possible because they are considered credible. People believe a person of good character. In this case, is it because the spokesman exhibits a credibility that may be lacking in others? Does the fact that the same person appears and builds relationships over a lengthy period make a difference to the way the information is received? Did Shea's warm relationship with the correspondents in Brussels influence the way they reported the facts?

Messenger and message: Personalisation and professionalisation

For Steven Pearlstein of the *Washington Post*, Shea's persuasive influence was a decisive force in the campaign to stop Milošević:

In contrast to the other weapons used in NATO's high-tech war against Yugoslavia, Jamie Shea is an anachronism, a rhetorical Gatling gun in an era of precision-guided munitions and poll-tested political manipulations. ... Every day at 3 p.m., Shea, 45, would wade through a platoon of television cameras, some hapless general in tow, and unleash another verbal barrage against Milošević and his campaign of ethnic cleansing. The daily 'Punch and Judy show' as he called it, was an idiosyncratic blend of press briefing, homily, university lecture and theatrical performance ... His voice would alternate between lip-curling sarcasm and moral indignation as he likened Milošević to Harry Houdini, Louis XIV, Al Capone and Sadaam Hussein. (Pearlstein, 1999)

Through Shea's personalisation and complete identification with the Kosovo Campaign, he was "the actor in the drama" (Castells, 1997, p. 322). The fact that he outshone both the other key personalities in the Kosovo conflict reinforces Castells' statement that "the messenger becomes the message" (1997, p. 322). Neither Javier Solana nor General Wesley Clark could claim the same level of authenticity and credibility. Alastair Campbell, former spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair, remarks that:

Jamie was seen, rightly, as a real person talking to real people. They believed him. That's why at the end of the day, as he might say, he was so effective. ... to the public, he was an honest bloke telling them what he knew, reassuring them that we were doing the right things, and making clear that any refugee tuning in should stay tuned, and stay hopeful. And they did. (Campbell, 1999, p. 36)

Shea was the acceptable face of NATO, the human face of an impersonal high altitude bombing campaign. He represented a military

organisation, yet was a civilian. He used military terminology, discussed bombing assessments and military strategy while drawing out the emotions of the audience with his verbal imagery, elegant literary quotations and professional conduct on the podium. At the end of the campaign, it was Shea who was carried aloft by ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo capital of Pristina and hailed as the hero. He is the man, remembered in Serbia today, as not only the voice of NATO, but the main perpetrator of the dreadful days of bombing in 1999 (Blagojevic, Z., personal communication, May 26, 2006). So, how was this achieved and maintained over such a long period requiring daily briefings, interviews and press conferences?

The professionalisation of political communication in the hands of media experts is often believed to influence the public in a negative manner. Instead of educated and informed discussion of the issues, with the strongest rational argument achieving some kind of public consensus, it is the media experts, trained in message development, advertising, image building, etc. who dominate and persuade publics of the rationality and rightness of their messages (Peri, 2004; Roper, 2005a). These communication professionals who construct the discourses are the discourse technologists (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995b; Motion & Leitch, 1996) who “sell” the messages to the consumers (Roper, 2005a).

This chapter maintains that Shea, as both spokesman and discourse

technologist was, in fact, the central identity of NATO's military operation in Kosovo. Since there could be little doubt of NATO's military superiority and its ability to call on any number of resources, it was Shea who successfully positioned the organisation to achieve maximum positive media coverage and thereby maintain popular public opinion.

Operationalising an organisational "self"

Cheney and Christensen (2001a) observe that an organisation's public relations activities work towards the establishment of the organisation's "unique self" (p. 234) while, at the same time, taking into account the concerns of target audiences. In this case, Jamie Shea became the "unique self" of NATO with the identity of the organisation being concentrated within the persona of the spokesman. His abilities in discourse production were evident throughout the 78 days of the campaign.

In particular, Shea's use of literary quotes and references to celebrities provided his journalist audience with quotes and sound bites to better express and illustrate NATO's position during the campaign. One such example is from the press conference on April 7 in which Shea recounts a story he heard from Strobe Talbott, the US Deputy Secretary of State, in which a woman had described the sound of NATO jet engines in the skies above Kosovo as "the sound of angels". Shea's comment to this was, "I could never have put it so eloquently."

However, one of Shea's laments about NATO's media operations was that whereas President Milošević controlled the pictures, he had to try to make up for the lack of pictures by grabbing media attention with his own brand of infotainment. This reinforced the uniqueness of the organisation and of the air campaign itself. Although Shea himself acknowledged he had the words, he grudged Milošević having the images: "I'm going to be honest, I would have given up all my Shakespeare quotations, my quotations from Edmund Burke, from Frank Sinatra and the Beatles for one or two good pictures that illustrated our side of the story" (Shea, 2000b).

Shea's total self-identification with the campaign and his determination to maintain public opinion with NATO is illustrated extensively throughout the press conferences. He was certainly instrumental in articulating the NATO military organisation with humanitarian aims to produce a new discourse of humanitarian intervention. As he later wrote: "NATO had to be able not only to take care of Milošević but also to show the other side of NATO as a humanitarian organization building refugee camps able to take care of these victims" (Shea, 2000b).

Shea attempts to present NATO as indeed a unique organisation – one that marries military intervention with humanitarian aims. The ambiguity in the use of the verb "to take care of Milošević" and later, "to take care of these victims" illustrates this "unique self" that differentiated NATO from all the other European organisations – humanitarian, military, political or

economic – and allowed the organisation to reach its original objectives in this campaign. NATO has two arms – one to take care in the military sense and one to take care in the humanitarian sense. Shea helped to maintain this as a dominant public relations strategy that played out over the 78 days of the campaign.

However, it was not only Jamie Shea who was responsible for media relations and dissemination of information. The military wing of NATO, SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe) also provided spokespeople for the press conferences.

SHAPE spokesmen in the media campaign

Every press briefing at NATO headquarters included a spokesman from SHAPE. These spokesmen represented General Wesley Clark (SACEUR) at the media press conferences. In the first weeks of the campaign, this representative was Air Commodore David Wilby of the Royal Air Force. The SHAPE spokesman provided the military updates of the activities of NATO before Shea took over the general briefing.

Over the course of the campaign, there were changes in SHAPE personnel. The first instance was when Wilby was replaced briefly by Colonel Konrad Freytag, the Chief of Public Information at SHAPE. This replacement was on the orders of the Secretary-General after several mistakes had been made by the SHAPE public affairs office. Freytag took over the briefings

until a replacement spokesman, General Guisepe Marani from the Italian Air Force, was appointed on April 14, the same day as the first major incidence of collateral damage, which will be discussed in Chapter 12. Another Italian, Commander Fabrizio Maltini, from the Italian Navy also appeared from time to time to update the press on NATO's humanitarian efforts.

For the three days of the NATO Summit in Washington, Colonel Freytag accompanied Jamie Shea to the podium for press briefings and then Marani returned to provide the daily updates again in Brussels. On 3 May, Marani was replaced by General Walter Jertz of the German Air Force who continued the SHAPE briefings until the end of the conflict. Although the nationalities of the spokesmen may not have any particular meaning or substance, it is important to point out that they represented two nations – Italy and Germany – both of which were recognised as having difficulties in persuading their publics of the legitimacy of the air campaign. It is beyond the scope of this research to delve any deeper into the reasons behind these appointments but it is sufficient to note the point.

Public relations: Strategies and tactics

The central strategy of articulating the NATO military discourse with a humanitarian discourse is evident throughout the NATO briefings. From the outset of the Kosovo Campaign, NATO had articulated the military with the humanitarian as a means of justification for the aerial

bombardment. Bombing was a means of coercing the Yugoslav state to accede to the demands of NATO. The articulation of the two discourses promoted a new, valid discourse domain of military humanitarianism, which provided a means of legitimising NATO and delegitimising the Yugoslav government. It was also a means of controlling the discourse in order to maintain favourable public opinion (Chilton, 2004).

This strategy can be illustrated by analysing the press conference conducted by Jamie Shea, together with Air Commodore David Wilby on April 5, 1999. The analysis identifies several of the tactics used to implement the discourse strategy. This press conference was at a crucial point in the air campaign. It had now become obvious that a few days of bombing was not likely to coerce President Milošević into withdrawing his forces from Kosovo; the weather was getting better, thus allowing more NATO sorties to be flown; and the numbers of Kosovar Albanians leaving Kosovo had increased significantly.

The conference opens with Wilby describing NATO's military activities by notifying the listeners that the bombing campaign has been stepped up another notch and affirming that NATO is keeping to its strategic mission. He does not elaborate on the particular targets of the bombing raids, but instead moves very quickly into positioning NATO as the backbone of the humanitarian effort:

NATO has also increased efforts to assist in addressing the disaster and human misery created by President Milošević in Kosovo and exported to the neighbouring countries. NATO military forces on the ground in Albania and FYROM [Federal Yugoslav republic of Macedonia] are conducting operations in direct support of the governments' and human relief organisations' activities; we are doing this to alleviate the human suffering and to ensure the safety and well being of the deportees until they are allowed to return to their homes. (Wilby, Press Conference, April 5, 1999)

Wilby, a high-ranking officer in the British Air Force, has clearly identified the role of NATO as a humanitarian support system for the relief of suffering. The discourse that is prominent in this section of the press conference is clearly about humanitarian aid for those suffering displacement. The use of the word "deportees" is an example of manifest intertextuality, which draws on earlier other texts that exhibit clear connotations with the deportations during the Nazi era in World War II. This example of intertextuality draws on shared meanings amongst the target publics in Western Europe who may themselves have experienced such deportations or are, at least, aware of recent European history.

In reference to NATO's efforts in "addressing the disaster and human misery created by President Milošević", Wilby asserts the responsibility of just one person in an attempt to maintain the line that NATO is not conducting operations against the Yugoslav people, but only against their President. The text, as it has been produced, makes an attempt to separate the two entities even though the targets for the bombing campaign are

definitely associated with the population living in these particular areas.

Personalising the humanitarian angle

As a further illustration of this key strategy of positioning NATO as a humanitarian organisation, the press conference continues with Jamie Shea taking over the briefing with the following statements: “I would like to focus my briefing on the humanitarian situation. As you know, NATO wants to be a good Samaritan to all of the refugees and displaced persons that have been forcibly expelled from Kosovo in recent days” (Shea, Press Conference, April 5, 1999).

He goes on to enumerate all the different activities that NATO is involved with and the help it is giving to the international relief organisations. In this selection of text, it is notable that Shea does not repeat Wilby’s assertion that the people involved are deportees but rather refers to them in the normal parlance of war and conflict: displaced persons and refugees, although he does make a nod towards the underlying meaning of deportation in that the same people have been “forcibly expelled”. By positioning NATO as the good Samaritan, Shea is reinforcing the identification of NATO with humanitarianism and is articulating the military discourse with the humanitarian one.

In the following section, Shea talks about the deployment of NATO forces:

At the same time we are actively planning for a small, but significant NATO troop presence in Albania ... to be able to provide immediate practical assistance. Already, certain advance elements, however, have been deployed on a national basis in advance of the formal activation order for this Force from the North Atlantic Council. There are some Greek forces, some Italian forces, and the United States has also now sent a force of 35 that have arrived at Tirana airport and are already installing equipment to offload refugee supplies from incoming aircraft. (Shea, Press Conference, April 5, 1999)

This provides an example of interdiscursivity where the military discourse is used in this description of humanitarian assistance. The features of this text are clearly associated with military language: significant troop presence; advance elements; deployed; formal activation order. The movement between military and humanitarian objectives is apparently seamless in that the discourses fit nicely together with no apparent barriers.

All these facilitate the perception that the organisation is taking a stand on humanitarian issues and NATO is doing so “with a distinctiveness that allows the organization to create and legitimize itself, its particular ‘profile’ and its advantageous position” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 241). By linking the two aspects of its role, NATO is claiming a distinct identity and “unique self” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a) that distinguishes it from other organisations in Europe. This acts to position NATO in terms of the European Union as well as in terms of a possible development of a Rapid Deployment Force in Europe, and so reinforces the way the organisation

legitimises itself as both a military and humanitarian organisation.

A further example, from a later press conference, illustrates the separation of the military and humanitarian discourses. This suggests that the public relations strategy being used in the press conferences is adapted to the circumstances and can therefore be fluid, depending on the questions asked, so that the text (or evidence) is constructed as a coherent and aligned argument. In the following example from the press conference on April 29, the question is posed: “If NATO’s been so successful in suppressing the Yugoslav air defences, why hasn’t some kind of air-drop mission been undertaken?” (Bill Drozdiak, Washington Post). Shea’s answer is an explanation of the difference between the military arm and the humanitarian mission:

The military are still looking at planning and various options for trying to bring some kind of assistance but we do not believe that air drops can be a panacea. It would be wonderful if they could be but they can’t, not just because of the operational risks that NATO aircraft would be faced with ...these C-130 aircraft that would be responsible for air drops would have to go in very low to be certain of being able to see the people that they are meant to be dropping the food to and would have to fly quite slowly because it’s very difficult to do an accurate drop if you’re flying at supersonic speeds. (Shea, Press Conference, April 29, 1999)

This is obviously a difficult question for Shea to answer. On the one hand he is explaining why the idea of providing humanitarian assistance through the use of relief air drops cannot be implemented while, at the

same time, he is misrepresenting (Chilton, 2004) at least one side of the situation. If NATO had indeed wiped out the Yugoslav air defences there would be no problem with flying in air drops of food. However, Shea is explicit that the planes doing air drops would need to fly slowly and rather low. What is most interesting, however, given the fact that there are still many displaced people in Kosovo who need humanitarian aid, together with the claim that air defences have been eliminated in the region, NATO is not prepared to institute air drops of food because of the dangers for low-flying aircraft.

Shea fudges the issue of the destroyed air defences that should allow for low-flying planes to aid the humanitarian effort by suggesting a solution to the overall problem:

The best way of achieving the result is obviously to stop the violence. I keep coming back to this point. Why are there people who are hungry, why are there people living in the hills? Because they've been force out by the Serb security forces. As long as the fighting carries on, we may be able to feed one group in place X but then of course see more ethnic cleansing going on in place Y, it would be a never-ending business. ... We have to stop the violence, that's the only way to start reversing this humanitarian situation and therefore we've got to keep our eye on the air operation, intensifying it, putting the pressure on the Serb forces. (Shea, Press Conference, April 29, 1999)

Here again, Shea is hedging. After building up a picture of NATO as a humanitarian organisation involved in the provision of aid to tens of thousands of displaced people, he does not want the organisation to be

perceived as not following through with the aid that had been promised at the Washington Summit on 21st April. Furthermore, he is “defocusing” (Chilton, 2004, p. 46) on the presumed lack of air defences by generalising the humanitarian aid effort in which NATO is involved.

The spokesman manages these issues as they arise through constructing the discourse to portray the organisation in the best light possible and to align it clearly with the current socio-cultural values and worldviews of its publics. Shea has been concerned with “shaping the attitudes the audience hold toward the organization” and “the audience or public becomes something that is ‘pursued’ with the goals of understanding, persuasion and control” (Cheney & Christensen, 2001a, p. 239). It is important for NATO that its publics see it as pursuing the correct path in its approach to the humanitarian situation in Kosovo, while at the same time embracing the military option of coercion in order to alleviate the humanitarian suffering as described by the organisation.

Other tactics implemented in the press conferences include daily bomb damage assessments (BDA) and lists of atrocities attributed to the Serb forces on the ground in Kosovo. This became particularly evident following the establishment of the Media Operations Centre (MOC) after the first major case of collateral damage. This aspect will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 12.

Strategies of legitimisation are positive constructions of the self and delegitimisation of the other through negative constructions (Chilton, 2004). As noted above, the articulation of the military with the humanitarian discourse provided a legitimisation strategy for the organisation to be seen in a positive light. It was not only performing its main task as a military organisation, but also acting on current moral values to provide a humanitarian response to the situation.

One of the major tactics within the production of the press conferences and the construction of the discourses was to use the theme of Serbian atrocities as an on-going accompaniment to the bombing damage assessment and the humanitarian aid. This included not only the reported evidence of mass graves, burned houses and rape camps, but also summary executions, human shields, deportations, or the separation of men from their families. The majority of press conferences dealt with at least one or two of these issues on a daily basis. For example, on April 10, Shea draws a grim picture of life within Kosovo:

Unfortunately, the ethnic cleansing continues. I think all of you have seen, like I have, the distressing, almost unbelievable pictures unfortunately not in the movies but in real life, of another village which was ethnically cleansed yesterday, about 50 miles from the Albanian frontier. Again, the usual story which is now becoming the daily routine of everybody being stripped of their identity cards, their valuables, whatever, being frog-marched to the border and then pushed over.

In this quote, the distress of the people in Kosovo is the basis of everyday life. Shea recognises that there may be some compassion fatigue amongst viewers and listeners and reminds the audience that this is not the movies but is real life. Furthermore, it is real life that is happening all the time. It is “the usual story” and the “daily routine” of atrocities. It is presented as a factual picture of daily life, and yet it is an emotional appeal to the sensibilities of the audience since the only evidence produced for these stories are accounts from the refugees crossing out of Kosovo.

This raises the question posed at the beginning of this chapter as to whether there is a line between propaganda and public relations. Using atrocity stories is a recognised form of propaganda, used effectively by the British against the Germans in World War I and since then, a common dimension in propaganda. Taylor’s (2003) contention that it is the intention behind the statements that determines whether it is propaganda, suggests that the use of atrocity stories was intended to reinforce NATO’s articulation of military and humanitarian discourse domains.

However, at the end of the bombing campaign, it was found that many of the stories disseminated from the podium in Brussels were merely that, stories, and appeared to have little substance in fact (Gilan, 2000; Goff, 1999; Hammond, 1999a, 1999b; Hammond & Herman, 2000).

Furthermore, the bomb damage assessment data, which was delivered at each of the press conferences, were also found to be somewhat inflated

when the conflict was over (Barry & Thomas, 2000; Halimi & Vidal, 2000; Reporters sans frontières, 1999).

Taking into account that mistakes are made in “the fog of war”, the problem of verifying facts on the ground during the conflict was difficult. At the beginning of the bombing, President Milošević had banned most foreign journalists from Yugoslavia and those who remained were tainted by the fact that they had been given permission to remain. This meant that there were few alternative information sources for audiences to access (other than official Yugoslav websites) and therefore there was little to contest.

Following Weaver et al. (2006), this situation presumes that if it is propaganda then it is counter to the public interest, but if it is public relations, then it works for the public interest. Within this context, the analysis suggests that even when facts are not necessarily true, they can work towards the construction of a particular reality and neither be for, nor against, the public interest.

As Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) suggest, if the source of the information is identified and the stance taken reflects the position of the organisation, NATO can only be judged in terms of moral evaluation (Fairclough, 2003) in its use of questionable data. As O'Shaughnessey (2004) points out, identifying points of propaganda does not necessarily clarify a situation, but can definitely cloud it. This supports Moloney (2006) who argues

that all public relations is simply “weak propaganda” (p. 1). In the next chapter, this theme is developed further with a discussion of framing discourses and constructing social reality using ideas from public relations.

CHAPTER 11

Offensive defence: Framing, public relations and the politics of humanitarianism

As Mackey (2006) points out, framing is a “process controlled, or at least strongly influenced by the intentions of those with power over the means of communication” (p. 2). This chapter builds on Mackey’s insight in relation to Kosovo, and Owen’s (1984) use of thematic repetition, to examine how framing, and access to the commanding heights of the means of communication, enables those with communicative power to convert that to ideological power through winning the consent of publics.

More specifically, it focuses on how NATO’s discourses frame the intervention in Kosovo in line with a particular Western worldview and emphasise the aspects of intervention that coincide with the beliefs and values of key publics. It goes on to suggest that such framing assists the exercise of power in ideological terms by winning the consent of these publics. In analysing the ideological underpinnings of this framing, the chapter identifies particular elements within the discourses that convey this worldview.

The job of the disseminators of particular worldviews is to make them appear natural, or common sense (Hall, 1986). Once a disseminated

version of reality is widely accepted as reality, then it becomes extremely difficult to operate outside, or to contest, that version as anything other than reality itself. In Fairclough's (1992) terms, when ideologies are "embedded in the discursive practices" (p. 87), they are at their most effective so that, for example, when a government's claim that the nation is in danger of going bankrupt is accepted by that nation's population, it become unrealistic (or even unthinkable) to raise wages or lower taxes.

In examining NATO's discursive work in terms of framing, this chapter addresses two central issues in the debate about Kosovo: the intervention's legitimacy in terms of international law; and its ethics, by asking the follow-up question, if the operation was not legitimate, was it "illegal but moral"? (see Kaufman, 1999; Koskenniemi, 2002; Woodward, 2001). The chapter argues that by framing the intervention in humanitarian terms, NATO's discursive strategy attempts to legitimise, in terms of public opinion, the use of military force in an offensive operation in ways that promote it with positive perceptions of the organisation. It further contends that NATO's framing of the war in Kosovo as a humanitarian intervention, or more precisely, as a war to prevent a "humanitarian catastrophe" was unique.

Framing discourses

The framing of reality is often discussed in terms of the hegemonic or ideological processes inherent in it. From a Habermasian perspective,

“communicative reason is constantly under attack in the present social and political milieu by the ‘strategic action’ of the dominant commercial and political power blocks” (Mackey, 2006). This advantages those who have the means of framing the issue in ways that allow them greater resources for creating, adjusting and/or defending dominant meaning.

This chapter draws on Entman’s (1993) definition of framing as a basis for understanding how discourses are framed: “To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52) [italics in original].

In earlier chapters, the thesis has illustrated how NATO promoted its selective view of the Kosovo intervention as a humanitarian one. This was discussed in chapter eight in terms of the way that NATO coped with the huge outflow of refugees. However, even when the frame’s particular construction of reality has been introduced, the framers need to make ongoing discursive efforts to maintain the credibility of this particular worldview as circumstances change. This chapter analyses these ongoing discursive strategies in terms of the challenges faced and how NATO was able to maintain its credibility through to the end of the conflict.

There have been few cases of states taking military action under the guise of humanitarian intervention. Apart from Kosovo in 1999, the other two notable interventions for humanitarian reasons were: the United States intervention in Somalia in December 1992; and the Australian-led intervention in East Timor in 1999. Both these interventions were mandated by United Nations Security Council resolutions and were legitimised by their respective governments as humanitarian interventions (Wheeler & Dunne, 2004).

The intervention in Kosovo was discussed by the Security Council and two resolutions were passed. The first, UNSCR 1160 (1998) on March 31, 1998 stated that the UNSC would keep a watching brief on the situation in Kosovo and emphasised “that failure to make constructive progress towards the peaceful resolution of the situation in Kosovo will lead to the consideration of additional measures” (United Nations Security Council, 1998a). In the second resolution, adopted in September of that year, the UNSC decided “should the concrete measures demanded in this resolution and resolution 1160 (1998) not be taken, that it would consider further action and additional measures to maintain or restore peace and stability in the region” (United Nations Security Council, 1998b). This second resolution expressed concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation and it called on both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Albanian leadership in Kosovo “to avert the impending humanitarian

catastrophe”.

Neither of these resolutions refers to any military action, nor do they mention NATO as an interested party. Furthermore, the use of military force for what was claimed to be legitimate humanitarian goals, actively breached the United Nations conventions on sovereignty and international law. This principle of sovereignty grants supreme authority within territorial borders and is a binding principle in the current international political order (Reus-Smit, 2001). However, Kofi Annan (2000) has challenged this principle of sovereignty by calling for the recognition of sovereignty only in terms of governments that have sustained their legitimate authority by serving their people.

Allegations and cases of human rights violations in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, for example, have focused attention on the activities of sovereign states within their own territorial borders and the United Nations has been called upon to intervene to protect citizens. Such developments raise the question of whether the Kosovo case signalled a watershed, in that human rights violations within a state's borders can no longer be ignored in the wider global context. They have become intertwined with challenging the concept of state sovereignty and legitimacy. As Woodward (2001) points out, however, there is a further dimension to be considered: the justification for NATO's intervention on humanitarian grounds. It is the application of morality to politics underpinning the NATO action, together

with coercive military force, that framed the Kosovo Campaign as “humanitarian intervention”.

Framing the intervention

For the stakeholders in the NATO Alliance, the predominant worldview and the wider socio-cultural processes at work are strongly linked to the earlier wars (in Yugoslavia, in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia), which blamed the conflicts in Yugoslavia as ethnic hatreds boiling over into internecine violence and a struggle for power.

Statements made by leaders of the NATO Alliance confirmed that, this time in Kosovo, the violence could not be ignored because it was occurring on “the doorstep of Europe” (Blair, 1999). Some self-interest also informed these concerns since there were already clearly identified problems within Western European states from unlimited migration of refugees from Eastern Europe, and beyond, into the developed countries of the European Union. What was at stake for Western Europe was to hold back another wave of refugee/migrants from Kosovo. One way of doing this was to shape the discourses to provide a response to the internal issues of what remained of Yugoslavia and an answer to individual Western European nations’ own problems of the likely mass migration of refugees out of conflict areas.

NATO discourses ignore Western Europe’s self-interest to focus on the use

of the more altruistic humanitarian frame in the lead-up to the military operations against Yugoslavia and in the daily press briefings during the intervention. This chapter illustrates the particular salience of the humanitarian frame in communicating the military intervention in Kosovo and, in particular, the promotion of the humanitarian frame as the causal interpretation and the moral evaluation which, in turn, legitimise the intervention.

These approaches of framing the military intervention as humanitarian not only emphasise the humanitarian aspect of the operation, but also attribute positive associations, which are associated with values and traditions. In this way they align with Hallahan's (1999) work on the role of values and traditions in public relations framing. Human rights discourse and humanitarian work are similarly associated with common mental models relating to the specific knowledge and opinions that have accumulated over time, as well as the socio-cultural knowledge that is part of the collective memory (van Dijk, 2001). Humanitarianism is one such mental model and is closely associated with altruistic assistance to people in need. The social reality thus constructed shaped opinions and worldviews about how humanitarian crises can be solved.

To illustrate the prevalence of the frame, this research tracked references to the use of the word "humanitarian" in press releases, press conferences and briefings from March 20 – June 10, 1999. It found 480 instances

where humanitarian is used as an adjective to describe a particular aspect of the situation. These range from humanitarian catastrophe, crisis, disaster, suffering and tragedy to humanitarian aid, airlifts, assistance, convoys, efforts, missions, operations, relief and support. Some of these uses will be examined in more detail below.

Framing the goals

NATO's goals were identified in the days leading up to the initiation of the bombing campaign and reiterated in press conferences, press releases and all NATO statements. In the following example, the context is a press conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels and the audience is the collection of defence journalists from global media. During it, in a statement made one week after the commencement of the bombing, Secretary-General Solana paints a grim picture of the situation in Kosovo to highlight the need for immediate action:

First and foremost, we must stop the killing in Kosovo and the brutal destruction of human lives and properties; secondly, we must put an end to the appalling humanitarian situation that is now unfolding in Kosovo and create the conditions for the refugees to be able to return; thirdly, we must create the conditions for a political solution to the crisis in Kosovo based on the Rambouillet agreement. (Secretary-General Solana, April 1, 1999)

Solana does not state categorically that bombing is going to stop the killing in Kosovo but frames it within the political goals of NATO. These are

general statements that reinforce the humanitarian nature of the conflict. The discourse is controlled by maintaining the frame and the credibility of the particular worldview. Milošević and the Serbs have no voice in these media proceedings and this silence allows NATO to define the reality through an uncontested use of “we” who will, although it is not said, use violence to “halt the violence and bring an end to the humanitarian catastrophe now unfolding in Kosovo” (Solana, Press Release, 040-1999). It is the same “we” who will take on the responsibility to “do what is necessary to bring stability to the region. ... stop an authoritarian regime from repressing people in Europe at the end of the 20th century. ... The responsibility is on our shoulders and we will fulfil it” (Solana, Press Release, 040-1999).

The humanitarian frame is also being extended to the risk of indecision – what might happen if no action is taken: “We know the risks of action but we have all agreed that inaction brings even greater dangers” (Solana, Press Release, 040-1999). This is a classic “framing of choices” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 225): do nothing and face other (greater) dangers; or “do what is necessary”, which remains undefined, thus providing an option to recipients of the message who may be risk-averse. By hedging and avoiding the use of military terminology and by using the term “do what is necessary” the framing motivates people to agree with the proposition or, at least, not resist it.

Logic, media control and humanitarian altruism

The logic of these statements is that military actions will “halt the violence” and create stability. But, there are further implicit assumptions made within this text to control its meaning: The labelling of the government of Yugoslavia as “authoritarian” immediately draws on the mental models of Western publics thus creating specific meanings about “what is ‘said’ against a background of what is ‘unsaid’ but taken as given” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 40). Further, this resonates with a generation that has either personally experienced or at least been aware of, authoritarian regimes in Europe. Here, the text implicitly draws on two references: the repression under the authoritarian Communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the repression of Europeans during World War II.

By placing these assumptions within the frame of humanitarian intervention, “moral duty” and “responsibility” necessarily provide the means of drawing the appropriate conclusion. These words act as triggers for the value assumptions (Fairclough, 2003) necessarily implied by the ideological framework. A further illustration of how assumptions are built into the text can be seen in the following example in the positioning of intervention as a “moral duty” for NATO forces: “NATO’s men and women in uniform, who are carrying out this important mission, are among the best in the world” (Solana, Press Release, 041-1999). The fact that they are in uniform distinguishes them from other humanitarian workers. The fact that they are in uniform and they are among the best in the world

suggests that now international humanitarian projects can include armed forces using weapons as part of a global coalition of humanitarian aid workers:

“NATO authorities, in conjunction with the United Nations and other international agencies are taking all possible measures to avert a humanitarian tragedy” (Wilby, Press Conference, April 3, 1999).

NATO continues to maintain the humanitarian frame by keeping it as the focus and the actual bombing as a simple support mechanism for the humanitarian organisations. NATO consistently insisted that it was not the bombing that caused people to leave: “I’d like to stress again that NATO did not create, have not created this terrible humanitarian tragedy. You only have to talk to the refugees and ask them who has forced them from their homes and I haven't heard one so far who has said, ‘NATO’” (Shea, Press Conference, March 31, 1999). NATO framed itself as part of the solution rather than a contributor to the refugee problem: “NATO countries today are at the forefront of the international community's effort to help these people” (Shea, Press Conference, March 31, 1999).

Self evaluation and the absence of dissent

In earlier paragraphs of the same press conference, Shea spoke of 150,000 refugees in Albania and another 5,000 in Macedonia. By suggesting that he had not “heard one so far who has said” that NATO was responsible for

them leaving their homes, Shea was being quite disingenuous. He also invites the question of, “who did you ask?” He is speaking for the Albanian refugees but not for the Serbian refugees. Because Shea and NATO had substantial control of the means of communication, they could contain the discourse and, even to some extent, its factual dimensions, within the frame of humanitarianism. This was supported by his evidence that the Kosovo Albanian leaders “outside Kosovo” wanted the bombing to continue.

In the following example, the frame accentuates the humanitarian attribute of the NATO organisation: “we can give the humanitarian organisations information and intelligence which will help them to identify the scale of the problem and the location of the refugees” (Shea, Press Conference, April 29, 1999). Shea is positioning NATO for a favourable evaluation (Hallahan, 1999) as a humanitarian organisation, thus encouraging its publics to maintain support for the action in Kosovo. This was a central issue for NATO because any wavering of support in any of the 19 countries of the Alliance was likely to result in the collapse of the collective will to continue with the bombing campaign (Shea, 2004).

By attributing humanitarian characteristics to itself as an organisation, NATO is “creating positively valenced associations” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 225) to comply with the beliefs, values and other cultural artefacts cherished by the various publics. Through these positive attributions of

NATO as supporting other humanitarian organisations, positioning itself alongside these organisations and actively talking about the humanitarian work being carried out as part of the bombing campaign, the actual bombing takes on a kind of naturalness and can be interpreted as a natural way of reacting to a humanitarian crisis. By embedding the humanitarian dimension within the ideological framework of the discourses, NATO sought to make a military option for humanitarian purposes seem to be the logical, if not the most natural, thing to do (Fairclough, 1992).

This sense of bombing being a natural response to a particular type of humanitarian disaster was further reinforced by the use of the earthquake metaphor discussed in chapter nine. Earthquakes are disasters that give a sense of magnitude along with the enormity of the damage inflicted. The metaphor was used by Shea on April 3 when he said:

The focus of the Alliance this morning is still very, very much on the demographic earthquake that we are experiencing in and around Kosovo. Yesterday 130,000 refugees were added to the list of those leaving Kosovo into neighbouring countries, this brings to a total of 765,000 the number of displaced people since the current upsurge in fighting in March of last year. (Shea, Press Conference, April 3, 1999)

This section demonstrates that NATO's use of the humanitarian frame for the daily press conferences was used effectively to legitimise its military intervention within the internal affairs of Yugoslavia and safeguard its collective will to demonstrate military solutions for humanitarian ends.

However, there were some challenges and contradictions to this frame.

Testing frames: Challenges

Journalists at NATO press conferences did not always take NATO's framing for granted and bombing for democracy as "common sense". For example, at the press conference on April 18, the Reuters representative asked for comment on Shea's previous statement that "this is one of the first humanitarian wars of modern times" and the view that "NATO is in a sense changing radically and is becoming an enforcer of humanitarian values".

Shea's reply allows some reflection before getting back on message: "Is NATO a humanitarian organisation? Not in the strict sense of the term, no, but we have seen that the military working together with organisations like the UNHCR provide a very quick response to these overwhelming situations" (Shea, Press Conference, April 18). His distinction is interesting in confirming that NATO is not a humanitarian organisation in the sense that it is not an aid organisation, but rather that it may be considered as one because it provides support for humanitarian work.

The frame was also challenged in the early days of the campaign as it was becoming obvious that refugees were pouring out of Kosovo into Albania and Macedonia. On 28 March, the CNN correspondent Christianne Amanpour alleged that the humanitarian situation had become worse

since the bombing had begun when she asked: “would you at least concede that the horrors that are going on there have accelerated, despite your insistence that they were pre-planned, would you at least concede it's gotten worse, that they've accelerated because of the NATO attacks?”

This question challenges the common sense aspect of bombing for humanitarian ends by asking if it had worsened the situation rather than improved it. The response from Shea was convoluted, ranging from the idea that the humanitarian situation was mobilising public opinion in the 19 nations of the Alliance “to see this through” to the need to attack the “military machine in Kosovo”. Since this had still not answered the question, Amanpour repeated it: “But, Jamie, are you conceding it's gotten worse and has accelerated since the NATO attacks?” This time the response ranged over the responsibility of the Belgrade government for the humanitarian situation in Kosovo, the International War Crimes Tribunal that was set up in the aftermath of the war in Bosnia and that the Yugoslav commanders and paramilitaries should be considering their own responsibility for the refugee situation in Kosovo. Amanpour again pressed the case: “Is that a ‘yes’ Jamie?” to which the reply was: “I would consider that to be a ‘yes’ Christianne. Yes, it's a ‘yes’”.

In this example, because Amanpour pushes through the NATO position of speaking for the refugees in general terms, Shea is finally forced to admit that NATO has been responsible for the deterioration in the humanitarian

situation. He introduces different arguments to avoid responding directly to this claim since it upsets the legitimacy of the humanitarian frame. By conceding that the NATO bombing in Kosovo was in fact causing harm, the selection of the specific humanitarian frame for communicating a “perceived reality and make [it] more salient in the communicating text” (Entman, 1993, p. 52) is upset and called into question.

This example also illustrates Fairclough’s (1992) concept of “exceptional disfluencies (p. 230) where, at a moment of crisis, the actual problem of the discursive practice is exposed. Up to this point, NATO’s discourse on the humanitarian response and speaking for the refugees has been naturalised, making it difficult to pinpoint any problems with it. Through tenacious questioning, Amanpour has exposed Shea’s hesitation and shift in style to force a concession from him. Interestingly, this was not sufficient to undermine the effectiveness of the frame, but it attests to the complicity of the media in their acceptance of the frame and not pursuing it further.

Testing frames: Contradictions

When is a war not a war? Another major challenge to the humanitarian frame was whether this was a war for humanitarian aims and, if not, what was it? Woodward (2001) asks: “In practical terms, how do the standard operating procedures and operational decisions by humanitarians mesh with the logic of war?” (p. 332). NATO answered this question quite

specifically: “NATO is not waging war against Yugoslavia” (Solana, 1999, Press Release 040, March 23). By claiming that military operations against Yugoslavia did not constitute a war, NATO was claiming that the use of force as a tool to achieve humanitarian ends (Weller, 1999) was legitimate.

The threat of force was a constant accompaniment to negotiations between Western (read NATO) diplomats. This was true at Rambouillet, where the presence of the parties involved was mandated through the threat of force; where agreement to the basic principles of the final agreement was ensured through the threat of force; and agreement to an occupying military force was also demanded through the threat of force. In effect, the use of force as a tool shaped the form and content of negotiation.

NATO used euphemisms for “war” and “force” to talk about its activities in Kosovo: campaign, conflict, crisis, intervention. These words were articulated with the word “humanitarian” to differentiate this particular action from other military offensive action, and to establish its legitimacy in terms of moral values. They also helped to establish the intervention’s legitimacy in terms of moral values and the justification for using military force in the affairs of a sovereign state. This is a form of dissimulation, or a way of controlling the discourse (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997). In setting the terms of the discourse through its press conferences, NATO presented their actions in Kosovo as being for humanitarian purposes only and thus not constituting a war. As part of that strategy, NATO also omitted, blurred

and softened the usual referents of war.

However, it was not always possible to keep the military briefers at the press conferences “on message” and maintain consistency in language use:

Our operations follow a thoroughly planned military rationale; we are well on track and it will become harder and harder for the FRY forces to continue their aggression against their own people, a people with whom we are not at war. Rather, we are at war with a regime and apparatus of oppression, terror and ethnic cleansing. (Wilby, Press Conference, April 2, 1999)

Here, Wilby asserts that NATO is not at war with the Yugoslav people but slips into battlefield terminology in relation to the FRY forces and the repressive regime. He has then to work with these slippery semantics to distinguish the Yugoslav people from the different people who are in the Yugoslav military.

In public relations terms, all references made by NATO spokespeople to fighting a war undermine the construction of the reality that NATO has determined will be the accepted one – that this is a humanitarian intervention and not a war.

Sustaining the message

The difference becomes visible in how Shea responds to a journalist’s reference to “war aims” and emerges through the denial of being at war in

any shape or form, which contrasts with the Wilby briefing discussed earlier in the last paragraph:

I would not use your term war aims, if you don't mind me raising that, because I have made it clear all along that we are not at war with anybody and certainly not with the people of Yugoslavia. But our objectives are clear and they are consistent. (Shea, Press Conference, April 5)

The use of the words “campaign” or “crisis” in place of “war” served NATO’s purposes. Throughout their discourses the word is used for the actions of both sides: their “campaign of repression” is contrasted with our “military campaign”, which “is designed to bring about a situation where we stop the violence once and for all” (Shea & Wilby, Press Conference, April 2, 1999). This suggests equality of power, even though the forces of the two sides were disproportionate and, at the same time, it maintains the positive association for the military campaign.

NATO’s communications were designed to influence a series of events and the key audiences of NATO. These included not only the people of the nations making up the NATO Alliance, but also all members of the United Nations and indeed, the people of Yugoslavia as well. NATO insists, despite lapses such as Wilby’s above, that the intervention is not a war. NATO’s discourse presupposes that the bombing of Yugoslavia will deliver the political objectives as stated and that they will prevent further human suffering. Furthermore, through the premise that this is not a war, NATO is using a legitimising strategy – legitimation by mythopoesis,

(building up a picture of Serbian atrocities by associating them with images of World War II, as identified in chapter eight) or, legitimisation conveyed through narrative (Fairclough, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2007) by relating the valuable humanitarian contribution of NATO.

There are many examples of the denial that this conflict is a war scattered throughout the press conferences. By carefully omitting the use of “war”, with its connotations of death and destruction, Shea is able to maintain the frame: “We have chosen the most effective *modus operandi* in line with our values which are not to be at war with the Serb people” (Shea, Press Conference, April 14, 1999). However, he does talk about winning – and that is associated with a war, but not with a humanitarian intervention or a crisis. In this way, NATO is constructing the discourse to reflect the reality of a war while simultaneously contending that it is mainly or merely solving a humanitarian crisis.

So, why is NATO so concerned about not using the word “war”? If they had a legitimate cause for war, a just war, then the word could have been used. Beyond perception management, NATO had to deal with the fact that because it was illegal in terms of the UN Charter, and not authorised by the United Nations Security Council, the word had to be avoided at all costs. NATO was unable to legitimise its bombing campaign through the authority of tradition, custom, law, or people in whom authority is vested (namely the United Nations). Instead, it appointed itself as the legitimate

authority and therefore sought to downplay legal infringement and foreground moral legitimacy.

Further challenges to the legitimising frame used by NATO were the daily military updates, bomb damage assessments and claims of success in degrading, disrupting and destroying the “Serb military machine”. These updates formed the military discourse which, when articulated with the humanitarian discourse, produced the new discourse domain. This articulation (Hall, 1986; Slack, 1996) of war with humanitarianism signalled a new development in international relations and finds support in the title of the first book published about the war: *The new military humanism: Lessons from Kosovo* (Chomsky, 1999b). Many other articles and books, both supportive and critical of this development followed (see, for example, Bring, 1999; Chandler, 2002; Daalder & O'Hanlon, 1999; Falk, 2001; Holzgrefe & Keohane, 2003; Ikenberry, 2000; Johnstone, 2000a; Lloyd, 1999; Luttwak, 1999; Roberts, 1999; Schnabel & Thakur, 2000; Schoenberger-Orgad, 2002; Solana, 1999a, 1999d; Thussu, 2000; Wheeler, 2000, 2001; Whitman, 2001; Woodward, 2001). Even though many of these articles are critical of the intervention, nevertheless they employ the discourse of military humanism. Thus, the coining of the words in the discourse remains unchallenged. This suggests that the articulation has received acceptance as a new discourse domain (Fairclough, 1992).

CHAPTER 12

Collateral damage, crises and criticism

Throughout the campaign of *Operation Allied Force*, NATO had to constantly justify and legitimise its unilateral actions in the face of criticism concerning its contravention of international law and the lack of a United Nations mandate. This was particularly evident when the air strikes caused the death and injuries of civilians in a number of highly controversial circumstances. In these cases, NATO was forced to manage the crisis while, at the same time, justifying the continuation of the bombing campaign. It was essential for the organisation to maintain its legitimacy by maintaining positive public opinion that would allow the bombing to continue uninterrupted as well as maintaining the organisation's reputation and image (Heath & Millar, 2004).

In any crisis, the stock position of good public relations practice demands that the primary actors must provide accurate information as quickly as possible (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Benoit, 1995, 1997; Seeger et al., 2001). As a result of this position, various strategies for crisis response have been developed to provide messages to publics that can be used to shape perceptions both of the crisis itself and the organisation involved and so mitigate the effects of the crisis. According to Coombs (1995), an organisation may use distance strategies that weaken the association

between the organisation and the crisis without denying the crisis itself. The objective is to make the crisis acceptable while “minimal negative feelings are transferred to the organization” (p. 451).

The need to explain unfortunate accidents during wartime presents a particular challenge to any spokesperson. NATO primarily used distance strategies including the use of excuses and justification to deflect blame for the organisation’s role in the crisis. When civilian death, even when euphemised as collateral damage is the outcome of these accidents, the challenge is all the greater.

Collateral damage

One of the most notable challenges of NATO’s public relations campaign was the issue of collateral damage. Collateral damage is a euphemism for military mistakes that have unintended consequences. New military terminology had come to prominence during the Gulf War in 1991, when phrases such as “collateral damage”, “smart bombs”, “surgical strikes” and “precision bombing” were used extensively in reference to the air strikes against Iraq. Much of the discourse surrounding the air war in Iraq was concerned with the new types of weapons used and, in particular, the accuracy of new missiles. The term “smart bombs” suggested that weaponry could think intelligently, and “surgical strikes” that bombs could fall on targets with pin-point accuracy. “Collateral damage” is connected with these targeted strikes as an explanation for any unintended

consequences, or failures, of such precision-guided weapons. This same terminology came to the fore again during the Kosovo Campaign.

Vocabulary with military and war connotations are subject to constant change. In many cases, they provide a means of softening the harsh realities of war even in such cruel situations as “friendly fire” when armed forces kill their own airmen, soldiers, or sailors. They are a means of providing a comforting distance from the horrors of certain physical realities.

Despite such semantic assistance, civilian spokespeople still face difficulties. These are often magnified when spokespeople are dependent on information coming from military headquarters, and appropriate information is not forthcoming. This was the case in Kosovo when NATO’s precision weapons went astray and collateral damage occurred. Notable cases of collateral damage during the campaign included the bombing of a civilian train on a railroad bridge near Grdelića in Southern Serbia, the bombing of a refugee convoy near the town of Djakovića and of civilians in Koriša in Kosovo, the destruction of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, and the attack on the hospital for tuberculosis and pulmonary diseases in Surdulića in Serbia.

Two incidents in particular impacted on NATO’s public information campaign. They occurred on April 12 and April 14, 1999 and changed the whole nature of the communication that had, up until this time, been more

or less successful in providing appropriate information for news-hungry correspondents. Since President Milošević had made it almost impossible for foreign news journalists to operate within Yugoslavia, NATO was forced to generate other coverage. It had managed to maintain its public information campaign through the televising of NATO news conferences, providing “talking heads” and archive footage. These, together with rather limited news pictures from the Yugoslav capital in Belgrade, and pictures of warplanes taking off and landing at Aviano airbase in Italy had been the main stories about the Kosovo Campaign. Its relative success could be judged by the fact that the NATO Alliance had held together and maintained unity for three weeks. This was tested as incidents of collateral damage claimed the headlines.

Grdelića railroad bridge

The first incident of collateral damage occurred on April 12 when a railway bridge was attacked resulting in the killing of ten civilians and the wounding of many more. This apparent mistake in targeting was covered in a news conference on April 13 at which General Clark gave the military part of the briefing. In his memoirs, Clark showed that he was well aware of the public’s right to know and the importance of releasing honest and accurate information:

In democracies, the public has a right to know as much about the ongoing actions as can be safely provided without endangering the operation or the forces themselves. We would have to release information, but we knew we'd have to navigate carefully. It was better to start with a restrictive information release policy and then gradually open up than to give too much initially and try to clamp down later. (Clark, 2001, p. 200)

In the press conference of April 13, Clark reviewed the situation to date, including the political discussions that had been held prior to the commencement of the bombing campaign. He then mentioned the bombing of the railroad bridge and the fact that civilians had been killed. He set the scene by revisiting the lead-up to the NATO decision to bomb Yugoslavia and by providing information on the size and deployment of the Yugoslav forces in and around Kosovo. He tried to establish that NATO was acting carefully and with a rational plan: "This is the situation today, April 13, and you can see some 23 battalion sized units are deployed in Kosovo today. So this is a clear pre-planned pattern of activity".

Clark then reviewed the outcome and provided corroborating details to support his account:

What was the result? Here are the destruction of Kosovar villages that we have reliable evidence on and we have had a lot of cloud cover, we don't have full coverage of this area and of course no-one is on the ground to verify this for us, so this is what we are quite confident in, based on reliable evidence. (Clark, Press Conference, April 13, 1999)

In this quotation, Clark is preparing to provide aerial photographic evidence of his claims for military activity within the Kosovo region. He is also hedging by providing some distance between the actual information and the manner in which it was collected. By outlining these limitations, Clark is navigating carefully (Clark, 2001) so as not to be caught out by the press on exaggeration or inaccuracy. He goes on to discuss the humanitarian efforts of NATO. He then returns to the objectives of the air campaign: to destroy, isolate and interdict the Serb forces, as well as to bomb the more strategic assets of command and communication. Clark reiterates the NATO message that the campaign is against President Milošević and not the Yugoslav/Serb people, a central theme throughout the press conferences. This differentiation works as a means of separating NATO from the responsibility of causing civilian hardship and casualties. He claims that NATO “has worked hard in this campaign. It is not a campaign against the Serb people” but it is “directed specifically to cause President Milošević to change his mind” and to do this, “we are using precision weaponry. This campaign has the highest proportion of precision weaponry that has ever been used in any air operation anywhere” (Clark, Press Conference, April 13, 1999).

Clark’s suggests that the weapons are so precise that they are being used to change Milošević’s mind. It also sets up the context for the first case of collateral damage. He continues: “We are going after militarily significant targets and we are avoiding, taking all possible measures to avoid civilian

damage”. Clark is using transcendence (Coombs, 1995) by contextualising the incident in a more beneficial way – that the campaign is against President Milošević and all the targets are military ones. This encourages the listeners to consider the content from a more positive angle. By prefacing the story of the train at Grdelića with the ongoing hard work of the Alliance and its use of precision weaponry to avoid collateral damage, there is more likelihood of the acceptance of the explanation.

Clark goes on to describe the pilot’s mission, which had been to destroy the railroad bridge, and how the pilot fired the weapon from many miles away, without being able to see the target or be aware of the train on the bridge:

He launched his missile from his aircraft that was many miles away, he was not able to put his eyes on the bridge, it was a remotely directed attack. And as he stared intently at the desired target point on the bridge, ... as the pilot stared intently at the desired aim point on the bridge and worked it, and worked it, and worked it, and all of a sudden, at the very last instant with less than a second to go he caught a flash of movement that came into the screen and it was the train coming in. Unfortunately he couldn’t dump the bomb at that point, it was locked, it was going into the target and it was an unfortunate incident which he, and the crew, and all of us very much regret. We certainly don’t want to do collateral damage. Clark, Press Conference, April 13, 1999)

There are obvious contradictions in this quote. Clark’s explanation was the pilot was many miles away, he couldn’t see the target and that it was a “remotely directed attack”. Yet, in the following sentence Clark states that the pilot could see the target and that he had checked it by staring

intently – “he had worked it, and worked it, and worked it, and all of a sudden...he caught a flash of movement”. Even then, according to Clark, the pilot believed that he had to complete his mission and destroy the bridge with another bomb. Accordingly, the pilot made a seemingly rational decision to aim at the opposite end of the bridge:

He put his aim point on the other end of the bridge from where the train had come, but by the time the bomb got close the bridge was covered with smoke and clouds and at the last minute again in an uncanny accident, the train had slid forward from the original impact and parts of the train had moved across the bridge, and so that by striking the other end of the bridge he actually caused additional damage to the train. ... it is one of those regrettable things that happen in a campaign like this and we are all very sorry for it, but we are doing the absolute best we can to avoid collateral damage. I can assure you of that. (Clark, Press Conference, April 13, 1999)

Clark’s explanation was very full and detailed, though somewhat confusing. He could claim it as accurate and that it informed the public’s right to know. He had fronted up to the press, in the best public relations practice for handling crisis management. He was the Commander of Allied Forces in Europe and it was his job to provide this information. The placement of the information within the briefing was carefully designed in that Clark had covered several other issues prior to discussing the incident. He was in fact providing a kind of “normalising account” (Massey, 2004, p. 239) of the incident, in a manner designed to prevent any perception of illegitimate organisational behaviour.

Clark's presence at the briefing could be further interpreted as a discursive strategy in legitimation when analysed in terms of the strategic construction of the text. Not only was Clark there to provide a military perspective on the operation, but he was available to provide the journalists with video tape and a suitable explanation for an incident likely to generate negative publicity for the deaths of innocent civilians.

In effect, NATO's strategy had acknowledged its pilot's role in causing the deaths, but offered a defence that put it down to understandable individual error in a way that distanced the organisation from the results. What public relations crisis literature calls the distance strategy (Coombs, 1995) served in classic fashion to weaken the connection between the incident and the organisation. In this particular case, a justification strategy is used whereby the situation is really not so bad but is simply "one of those regrettable things that happen in a campaign like this" (Clark, Press Conference, April 13, 1999).

When Jamie Shea had introduced Clark at the beginning of the conference, he stated that he had invited SACEUR to brief the press on how NATO had performed over the previous three weeks. Clark's opening lines were that he had wanted to come because it had been three weeks since he had spoken to the journalists and he "wanted to be able to put the operation in perspective, to provide some details and to ensure that the results are understood and it is clear where we are going" (Clark, Press Conference,

April 13, 1999).

There was no indication that Clark's briefing would include the first incidence of collateral damage, - let alone one that had the potential to damage the credibility of the organisation and open up a discussion on the issue of harming civilians through collateral damage. The downgrading of the event to part of a three week review, and the distancing and the use of seemingly detailed information, combined into an effective strategy.

Evidence for its success could be found in the fact that there were no questions in the subsequent Q & A session between the journalists present and Clark. Clark also provided a video of the event which, some months later, was reported to have been shown at three times the actual speed, "giving the impression to viewers that the civilian train was moving extremely fast" (Amnesty, 2000, p. 28). Indeed, there was an admission from the NATO press office that most of the video tapes reviewed at the press office were speeded up and, due to an error, the film was not slowed to its actual speed before the screening at the press conference.

In this case, NATO succeeded in burying the inaccuracy of its report, possibly verifying that this was a workable strategy for other uncomfortable issues. None of the journalists actually picked up the discrepancies in Clark's explanation, nor did they notice the speed of the train in the video.

Attack on refugee convoys near Djakovića

In this case, NATO aircraft, operating in daytime between the hours of 11am to 1 pm on April 14, mistakenly targeted two civilian convoys of tractors and trailers within Kosovo. The first news items concerning the incident came from Serbian television, operating out of Belgrade. Shea was informed by a phone call from a journalist in Belgrade whilst General Clark first heard of the incident on CNN (Stourton, 1999). Before Clark's first interview with an American radio some hours later, he had received a transcript of a Serb radio transmission on the incident. It was on this basis that Clark then publicly blamed the Serbs for the incident, stating that it was they who had opened fire on the refugees.

According to Stourton (1999), who extensively researched the incident for a BBC documentary (BBC, 1999), Clark was not only ill-informed but lying:

NATO had a significant fund of goodwill to draw on; most of the correspondents trusted Jamie Shea. But, in the days that followed, the Alliance ran through that trust like a spendthrift. Clark's blunder was a bad start; the following day's briefing made things worse. (Stourton, 1999)

This attempt to deceive the public by putting the blame on the Serbs recalls Cornford's perception of propaganda quoted at the beginning of chapter ten. Clark's intention was to persuade the public to think (Taylor, 2003) that the Serbs were, among other things, also capable of bombing refugees. Furthermore, all the imagery presented by NATO prior to this

incident was one of Serbs engaging in atrocities. The apparent blunders in communicating the crisis suggest that NATO was engaging in the same type of “propaganda” that they attributed to Milošević (i.e. lying and using fiction instead of fact).

The press conference on April 15 opened with Jamie Shea expressing regret for the loss of civilian life. For both his own, and NATO’s credibility, it was important to face up to the challenge of explaining the bombing of the refugee column and not be accused of lying or propaganda. He made several general statements of regret and reiterated the purpose of NATO’s operations: “We have taken every possible precaution to avoid causing harm to civilians. Our Operation Allied Force was launched to save civilian lives, not to expend them” (Shea, Press Conference, April 15, 1999).

The first sentence provides the cognitive model for understanding the actual situation in which “every possible precaution” is taken. NATO is taking care of the civilians who have been displaced but believes that bombing an area in which there are civilians is still a viable way of achieving the goal of the campaign. The word precaution does not necessarily fit well with the idea of high altitude bombing but, in this case, it refers to the precision-guided weapons systems being used by NATO, indicating its intention of avoiding harm to civilians in the area.

The next section of the press conference described the scene from NATO’s

perspective and provides the context in which the incident took place:

Yesterday a NATO pilot was operating over western Kosovo. He saw many villages being burned. This is an area where the Yugoslav Special Police Forces, the MUP, have been conducting ethnic cleansing operations in recent days. The 5,000 refugees that have arrived in Albania in the last 48 hours testify to that fact. The road between Prizren and Djakovića is an important resupply and reinforcement route for the Yugoslav Army and the Special Police. (Shea, Press Conference, April 15, 1999)

In this quote, Shea begins with two very short sentences – the location and the evidence of what was happening there. They provide a factual foundation that provides the context for further facts to follow. He then moves on to more general information about the area that justifies this area as an appropriate place to bomb. By talking about 5,000 refugees, ethnic cleansing, special police, resupply and reinforcement, Shea is interdiscursively (across humanitarian, military and political domains) invoking a particular mental model for the listeners (van Dijk, 2001). These words are chosen carefully to reinforce the NATO position, to justify the attack morally, and to soften the impact of the actual incident.

Shea also attempts to persuade publics to understand the feelings and motivations of the pilot, as one of themselves belonging to a Western liberal democracy for whom killing innocent people was anathema:

The pilot attacked what he believed to be military vehicles in a convoy. He was convinced he had the right target. He dropped his bomb in good faith, as you would expect a trained pilot from a democratic NATO country to do. The pilot reported at the time that he was attacking a military convoy. The NATO bomb destroyed the lead vehicle which we now believe to have been a civilian vehicle. (Shea, Press Conference, April 15, 1999)

This is the first account of the incident given to the waiting journalists.

Shea provides the conditions in which the action occurred, what actually happened and a justification for the incident. It is now a matter of interpretation, and the emotion and feelings about the incident “acquire greater legitimacy” (O’Shaughnessy, 2004, p. 54).

Shea’s construction of a particular way of viewing this accident is indicative of the way he handled many other incidents that were questionable in terms of civilian casualties and damage to property. He removes blame both from the pilot and from the organisation, by standard excuse strategies: denial of intention and denial of volition (Coombs, 1995). The pilot did his duty and checked his target in order to be convinced that the target was genuine. Then he “dropped his bomb in good faith”. The juxtaposition of these two concepts – dropping a bomb and good faith – work by articulating the actual act of dropping bombs with the good intentions of the bomber. The aim is to imply that, whatever the consequences, the intentions were good and that, furthermore, such intentions are clearly in line with what people in democratic NATO nations would expect. Furthermore, articulating NATO with “good faith” is a

means of legitimising NATO's actions while, at the same time, delegitimising (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997) Milošević and his countrymen, who are not from a democracy and who, by extension, would not act in good faith. This is, again, an example of a deliberate "us" and "them" dichotomy.

Shea went on to insist that "one tragic incident cannot and will not undermine our conviction that our cause is a just one to end human suffering and to save lives". Then, as if to put an end to the matter, Shea completed his part of the briefing with the following sentence: "So let us not allow one accident, no matter how tragic, to obscure the real stakes in this crisis, which is that sometimes one has to risk the lives of the few in order to save the lives of the many" (Shea, Press Conference, April 15, 1999).

In this excerpt Shea differentiates a seemingly aberrant incident from the overall justness of the NATO cause, then attempts to normalise it as acceptable in the context of having to "risk the lives of the few in order to save the lives of the many". In this phrase, Shea's words resonate with Winston Churchill's famous wartime speech, praising the heroism of British pilots: "Never in the field of conflict was so much owed by so many to so few" (Speech, House of Commons, June 18, 1940). However, in the reversal of actual power, Shea turns the numerical advantage on its head because NATO's air power vastly exceeded that of Serbia to an extent way

beyond Nazi Germany's advantage over Britain. The juxtapositioning of "the few" and "the many" creates an intertextual link with a speech from the past that listeners are likely to know and therefore use as a cue to interpreting the incident. Furthermore, Shea is intent on keeping his audience with him by referring to the overall context and objectives of the air campaign by transcending (Hearit, 1997) the actual incident and claiming the moral rightness of the overall context. These are the "real stakes", which should not be "obscured" by one incident.

The following day, Shea only briefly referred to the incident again as part of the formal part of the briefing. When one takes into account that there was no specific interest on the part of the journalists present at the press conference during the previous incident of collateral damage in the destruction of the Grdelića railroad bridge, Shea may have thought that this too would pass under the radar:

Yesterday I expressed NATO's regret for the tragic accident that occurred on Wednesday, but NATO puts its set-backs behind it and this is what we have done and are going to continue to do. We are not going to be blown off course. (Shea, Press Conference, April 16, 1999)

By using the past tense in the first part of the statement, Shea is attempting to deflect any further questions about the Djakovića incident. Set-backs are not an issue on which NATO intends to dwell, learn from or consider – they are put behind it. The wind metaphor then comes through with the statement that NATO will not be blown off course. NATO, in

this case, is a ship sailing a steady course, but struggling against the elements. This suggests that the organisation is moving forwards to a defined goal and even if there are negative events, they do not have enough weight to alter the chosen direction.

Unfortunately for Shea, however, the journalists at this question time were prepared and were clearly unhappy with the lack of information. For the first time, those journalists who had congregated in Brussels were in the invidious position of being unable to provide the information demanded by their editors. No one at NATO would provide it for them. Pictures were coming out of Belgrade and the few foreign journalists who had been allowed to remain there were invited to travel under escort to Kosovo to view the damage caused by the NATO bombs. Serb television had the advantage of broadcasting the first pictures of the disaster, while NATO was caught on the back foot, providing no information other than a message of general regret.

NATO's explanations over the next five days were many and varied. The prevarication of the spokespeople and their attempts at fudging the issue became more and more pronounced. The rules of crisis communication (Hiebert, 1991; Seeger et al., 2001) were not followed in this case. In the beginning, General Clark had attributed the attacks to Serb forces, then Kenneth Bacon, the State Department briefer in Washington said that Yugoslav aircraft had attacked the convoy. In Brussels, Shea and General

Marani from SHAPE continued to provide information concerning the ongoing NATO operations in Kosovo, citing notable campaign successes, including intensified air attacks on radar installations, tanks and artillery.

On April 15, the press conference included a video tape of an American pilot's debriefing at Aviano air base. Those at the briefing assumed that they were listening to the actual pilot who had bombed the convoy, but three days later, this turned out not to be the case. This caused uproar and outrage amongst the journalists present, and only added to the impression of deliberate deception by NATO. Following further requests for clarification on the incident, Shea stated:

We have no information whatever on the extent of civilian casualties, it is very difficult to do that when you are trying to find out what is going on in a very unfree place, without international observers on the scene, and we have no other information really on that incident to share with you at the present time. (Shea, Press Conference, April 16, 1999)

There is now a glaring contradiction. NATO has been giving detailed information on its successes, even to the degree of the numbers of tanks, artillery pieces and radar installations it has destroyed. With the convoy incident, the information stream has dried up. These attempts at ingratiation – by accentuating the positive outcomes of NATO's actions and bolstering the organisation for the listening journalists – are considered useful strategies in crisis communication (Coombs, 1995) and

they were not the only ones deployed by NATO.

By April 17, further crisis strategies were employed, in attempts to shift the blame. Allen and Caillouet (1994) state that when the organisation can no longer control an event, or a developing crisis, it is expedient to put the responsibility for the wider context onto a third party. NATO could claim that they had little control over the events occurring on the ground since a third party (President Milošević and the Serbs) are responsible for the wider context:

It is clear that there is mounting evidence of detentions, summary executions and mass graves. Refugees have reported incidents in at least 50 towns and villages throughout Kosovo in recent days regarding summary executions, these of course will have to be investigated, as you know ... In fact some refugees have even reported that Kosovar Albanians have been forced to dig these mass graves and put the bodies in. (Shea, Press Conference, April 17, 1999)

Moving beyond the crisis that NATO had still failed to explain to its audience, and reporting atrocities that were not fact but hearsay, Shea is using the overall context, and the justification for the campaign, to remind the audience of the reasons why NATO began the air campaign. By using intertextuality with imagery and text from the Holocaust, Shea weaves these images into the current situation as a lateral way of satisfying demands for explanations that reflect well on NATO. This is picked up a little later in the press conference when a journalist asks whether NATO was concerned about public opinion. Shea's reply is worth citing at

length as he handles the contradictions embedded in the death of innocent civilians by a moral military force:

Public opinion is obviously uneasy whenever there is an incidence in which NATO is responsible for harm to civilians. Let's face it, we are the people in this operation who are there to save lives, to help, that's why we got involved in the first place, that's where there's been this enormous mobilisation not for strategic purposes, not for sort of classical interests but for humanitarian purposes. This is perhaps one of the very few genuine humanitarian conflicts in modern times so of course it's embarrassing for us if harm is inflicted on civilians. (Shea, Press Conference, April 17, 1999)

This text reaffirms NATO's position – “we” are the good people, involved for the right reasons and as such, there is a very genuine level of discomfort in this crisis. This is a mortification strategy (Coombs, 1995) where there is an attempt to seek forgiveness for an unfortunate situation and find a level of acceptance for it.

Jamie Shea summed up the situation in a reflective article he wrote one year later:

if you can't provide a picture, there is no story, even though you are describing the fundamental reality of what is going on. But if TV can provide a picture of a tractor, which has been accidentally struck by NATO aircraft, that becomes the reality of the war. The individual incident is played up and the general trend is played down. Context suffers. (Shea, 2000a)

Shea clearly identifies the problem that he faced in the explanation of

Djakovića. His audience demanded an explanation of what they were seeing on television screens and his words could not compete with these realistic visuals. However, in the overall context of the bombing campaign, which was ostensibly aimed at degrading the Yugoslav military machine in Kosovo, Shea claims that he was hampered by the fact that the other side had the pictures and he had no explanation. A recurrence of this problem was prevented ten days later with NATO bombing RTS Serbian Television, the station that had provided the pictures to Western television broadcasters of the carnage at Djakovića.

The crisis finally came to a conclusion on April 19 when NATO admitted that its planes had indeed bombed a civilian refugee convoy. This was a turning point in the media operation. There was clear evidence that Shea and his military associates were unable to provide appropriate information at the required time and, as a result, lost credibility with their most important audience. It took five days for NATO to provide a coherent explanation and an admission that NATO planes had indeed attacked a civilian convoy. This time lag planted the suspicion amongst the journalists that not only was NATO not prepared to admit to its mistakes but was even prepared to lie about it (Stourton, 1999). This was the first indication that NATO was beginning to suffer from a legitimacy gap, and it was apparent that reality was not aligned with the communication of it (Roper, 2001).

Civilian deaths at Koriša

Just one month later, a marked contrast to the response to the Djakovića incident can be illustrated by the example of the NATO bombing of civilians in the village of Koriša in southern Kosovo on 13 May. NATO aircraft bombed the village causing the deaths of a significant number of displaced Kosovar Albanians who were sheltering there. According to the Yugoslav news agency, Tanjug, 87 people were killed and 78 wounded and Human Rights Watch reported that at least 48 were killed (Amnesty, 2000). On the following day, the press conference was given by Jamie Shea plus two representatives from SHAPE – Major-General Walter Jertz and Commander Fabrizio Maltini.

The information counter-attack began with General Jertz opening the briefing with a quick overview, which included slides of the military targets attacked the previous day. Jamie Shea then began his part of the conference with the media counter-attack:

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the last 52 days of Operation Allied Force, we have spent a lot of time, as you know, telling you and showing you what we, NATO, are doing. President Milošević is just as keen to ensure that you do not see what he is doing inside Kosovo, and today I would like to show you a rapid selection of photographs, some old, but many new, which I will call Milošević's battle damage assessment. What are you going to see? Well first and foremost, not military targets. (Shea, Press Conference, May 14, 1999)

What followed was a detailed commentary of pictures of destroyed homes in Kosovo, mass graves and stories of refugees.

This is evidence of part of the newly developed media strategy that included more pictures, more information, and more briefing notes. As Shea (2000a) himself remarked later: “Pictures are believed, even if they are untypical or distorting; words are distrusted even if they are true” and he recalled “urging the Pentagon and other Allied countries that had satellite photography to give me a picture of a mass grave, or of villages that were burning, or of internally displaced persons inside Kosovo to show at my daily briefing”. Shea saw this as a crucial element of the communication strategy for, otherwise, in his own words “nobody would believe me. I could even be accused of propaganda”.

As well as retaining long term credibility and avoiding associations with propaganda, Shea is extremely aware of the issues that faced him daily. He must keep on convincing his audience that NATO was doing the right thing, that the bombing is just and that the entire operation is important to all key audiences. His awareness of the stigma associated with propaganda is also indicative that his own reputation as a credible spokesperson was on the line, and that such an accusation would indeed threaten to destroy the authority and credibility of NATO as an organisation. This is in line with similar issues discussed by L’Etang (2006a) in terms of the problems and anxieties that public relations practitioners have with propaganda.

Following the introductory picture-showing, the first question put to Shea was: “Can you tell us any more about the reports of the NATO attack on the village of Koriša?” The answer was that there was still no detailed information on the event, in contrast to the daily listing of NATO’s bombing successes. In this case, Shea is choosing a tactic of “no information”, which was successful in moving the press conference on to other questions. The following day, the press conference opened on the Koriša attack. Before handing the press conference over to General Jertz, Peter Daniel (Shea’s deputy) provided a larger context for the attack that simultaneously tries to discredit the opposition:

I know there is a great deal of speculation about how many, and why, Kosovar Albanians were at that location at the time of the attack. We understand why you have those questions, but we can only tell you what we know to be true. Just as we are aware of Serb claims regarding casualties, we are aware of continued reports that the Milošević regime uses human shields. We are not there on the ground, and you are not there on the ground. Serb media has a history of misrepresentation, to say the least. So that while we cannot vouch for the completeness, nor the credibility of the television footage that has been broadcast, NATO deeply regrets any accidental civilian casualties that may have resulted from this attack.

Here, Daniel is trying to contextualise another obvious case of collateral damage. Using distance strategies (Coombs, 1995) by acknowledging the crisis, he is also attempting to remove the responsibility for the crisis from NATO. The “truth” features in the early stages of explanation in that NATO will only give information when it is true. This is in contrast to his

statement that the other side “has a history of misrepresentation” thus suggesting that there is an element of untruth about the reports, once again delegitimising the Serbian authorities.

Daniel also uses distancing strategies in dealing with the situation when he states: “Just as we are aware of Serb claims regarding casualties, we are aware of continued reports that the Milošević regime uses human shields.” In this sentence, Daniel links the casualties with the atrocity of deploying innocent civilians as human shields. This offers a different moral balance to the incident. The term “human shields” is also an example of intertextuality, drawing on the text of the first Gulf War in which it was alleged that Saddam Hussein used civilians as human shields at strategic military installations. Daniel also mobilises the same distancing strategy by refusing to validate the television footage but nevertheless provides the appropriate apology regretting any incidence of civilian casualties.

General Jertz picked up the conference following this introduction. He gave a very exact account of NATO’s information regarding the attack, including the description of the target, the verification process and the number of bombs dropped on the target. He completed this section by stating: “We have no way of confirming the casualty information being reported by the Serbian authorities”. The success of the strategy is suggested by the fact that very little questioning followed these statements.

Retrospectively, NATO can be seen as fortunate to escape more detailed scrutiny. Amnesty International's report on collateral damage during the Kosovo Campaign (Amnesty, 2000) collected extensive information on this particular incident. After interviewing journalists, who had arrived in Koriša the day following the bombing, as well as Kosovar Albanians who lived in the area, they concluded that "it remains unclear whether or not FRY forces or military installations were actually present in Koriša at the time of the bombing" (Amnesty, 2000, p. 54). Despite this, NATO managed to maintain its message that Koriša was a legitimate military target and that any civilians there were probably part of the Serb practice of placing civilians around military targets as human shields.

These three incidents of collateral damage demonstrate how NATO used traditional public relations methods for crisis communication. In almost textbook fashion, NATO as the organisation facing crisis: took control of the situation; presented itself as forthright and candid; and apart from selective use of specialists, deployed one authoritative spokesperson in the interests of preventing ambiguity. In each of the incidents analysed above, the crisis was contained within predetermined organisational narratives. These maintain the position that NATO is only interested in the overall aim of the campaign, that the campaign is for the ethnic Albanian people, and that in any conflict situation, accidents should be expected but NATO

is doing its utmost to prevent them. Crises were consistently framed as inadvertence error (Goffman, 1974) in which it is claimed that the organisation had no intention of causing such damage, instead of a likely consequence of the policy that sanctioned bombing in areas occupied by civilians.

These incidents could be viewed as crises that disrupt the dominant narrative (Tyler, 2005) of NATO, which call for a suppression or discrediting of competing narratives from other organisations or media reports. In the first incident (Grdelića), NATO was following a military strategy concerning the restrictive release of information (Clark, 2001) in the hope that it would be sufficient for the media following the events. In the Grdelića incident, that action proved successful, which may have been assisted by the absence of competing narratives at that time (Tyler, 2005; Venette, Sellnow, & Lang, 2003). In the second incident at Djakovića, NATO was not the only provider of information on the incident and had to compete to maintain its dominant voice. This was a new experience for the organisation. As a result, perhaps, it took a relatively long time to get the appropriate information out to the media. It also led to attempts to discredit or neutralise the information and pictures coming from the Serbian side. It seemed to take about five days for the organisation to realise the importance of maintaining its reputation and organisational image in the face of what was becoming strident criticism on behalf of the

journalists.

The end result was an expression of regret for causing civilian deaths but NATO was very much aware that this particular crisis had caused a crisis in confidence in the media. NATO lost control of the crisis when it had to compete with other forms of narrative that were appearing in the media from Belgrade, as well as on major television news networks around the world. What Djakovića also showed was a crisis in the confidence of the journalists in Brussels in NATO's credibility. NATO was unable to control the way the story was disseminated and it was forced to accept that there were other narratives being told as well as waiting to be told (Holtzhausen, 2000).

From a public relations perspective, the crisis over the Djakovića incident indicated that NATO needed to rethink its media operation. The relationship between the civilian information office and SHAPE was deteriorating. That failing relationship endangered one of the main aims of the information campaign: the maintenance of unity and sustaining the allegiance of Alliance nations. This crisis put this in doubt. As such, it could be viewed as a threat to the survival of the organisation (Coombs, 2002). NATO could not afford to let its response to this crisis be seen as indicative of the way it was likely to handle other crises. Since the campaign was intensifying there were likely to be more unpredictable events of this type.

In the third incident, there were significant changes in the way the crisis was brought to the media. This was a result of the reorganisation of the media operations at NATO headquarters that took place after the Djakovića incident. Following a conversation between Prime Minister Blair and President Clinton (Stourton, 1999), it was decided that the political consequences of another failure to explain could be disastrous for the overall campaign. Experts were co-opted into the media operation, including Tony Blair's communications advisor, Alistair Campbell, and Jonathan Prince, the White House speech writer who, according to veteran journalist Martin Walker of the *Guardian*, "is the civilian equivalent of the Pentagon sending in the elite 101st Airborne division" (Walker, 1999a). Campbell developed a new media campaign strategy that included the use of more pictures, more press briefings and more TV footage. As Campbell (1999) himself noted, one of the keys was to increase the infrastructure support:

When I saw what the NATO press service was, I was amazed that Jamie was still alive. He was doing his own scripts, fixing his own interviews, attending key meetings, handling every enquiry that came his way, large and small. He was the front man for the whole campaign, yet was expected to do the job without adequate support. (p. 32)

In response, the new media operations centre (MOC) went into action providing clear organisational charts and responsibilities. In an interview for the BBC documentary *How the war was spun – Kosovo, 1999* (BBC,

1999) and written up by the director in an article for *The Sunday*

Telegraph (Stourton, 1999), MOC covered the following:

Rebuttal – identifying and responding to misinformation put out by the Yugoslav news agency, Tanjug.

Lines – drafting catchy phrases for Jamie Shea, General Wesley Clark and other NATO spokesmen to use in press conferences.

Talking heads – monitoring the views of armchair generals and other pundits in television interviews.

Article factory – writing pieces to appear under the bylines of NATO leaders on the comment pages of national newspapers.

The Grid – twice-daily conference calls between Brussels and the key national capitals to co-ordinate the diaries and “message” of NATO’s national leaders to ensure maximum media support.

By expanding the press office and providing clear lines of communication to the press, a new NATO public relations offensive began in earnest. The evidence of an enhanced media operation became evident following the Washington Summit briefings. Shea spent a lot more time on the introductory section of the briefing before handing over to the SHAPE spokesman for the military update. He used this time not only to provide information of what was happening at NATO headquarters – visits, meetings, decisions, etc - but also his perspective on aspects of the air strikes, what was happening in Belgrade, and the humanitarian situation

in Kosovo and surrounding countries.

When new crises arose, the MOC went into a counter-offensive until it could provide more information on the actual event. There were no denials and requests for information were met with a standard response that the incident would be fully investigated and details given to the press as soon as they were available. Walker (1999b) adds that:

The results have been striking, with far more use of pictures, more explicit briefings on Serb military units and targets attacked, with tape cassettes of briefings and TV footage instantly available. There are now morning briefings as well as the 3pm briefing, and other news-points to take account of a 24-hour news cycle.

This fits well with the MOC's "keeping on message" and, as Campbell (1999) identified, the most important aspect of this for NATO was to have the story and coordinate the process with the correct people in the NATO capitals: "We demanded the facts from the military, got them and stuck to them, while the politicians began to repair the diplomatic damage" (p. 33). In this way it was now possible to eliminate the element of crisis by nonexistence strategies (Coombs, 1995), in particular, clarifying that there was no crisis since NATO's targets are military targets.

It is evident from the incidents discussed that NATO was extremely concerned about its organisational image and how it might be viewed in the light of civilian casualties. Overall, the organisation conformed to

the crisis management guidelines (Seeger et al., 2001) that make up an important part of public relations practice. NATO was able to maintain control (Heath & Millar, 2004) and, in fact, did set up a special organisation to deal with the issues as they arose (Coombs, 1999).

They fell short of a more postmodern approach to crisis communication. That would demand that the organisation places its emphasis on alleviating the suffering of the stakeholders likely to suffer most from the situation as a more ethical response to the crisis (Tyler, 2005). The most prominent publics in NATO's campaign were the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and, as such, were the recipients of NATO's care and humanitarian aid.

The individuals caught up in the cases of "collateral damage" were casualties of war, but NATO was able to maintain its dominant narrative of the events by "making sure that their narrative is one of the versions competing for public attention. Continuing to tell their narrative remains important because organisational narratives can and do influence public perceptions, even well after the initial publicity surrounding a crisis" (Tyler, 2005, p. 570).

By recognising that a crisis can not only threaten an organisation's credibility, but also its survival, the swift action in setting up a media operations centre undoubtedly eased the pressure on explaining cases of collateral damage. It was also a means of reinforcing the message for

journalists that NATO was concerned with getting the story out to its publics and provided them with more resources and information to use. From this perspective, NATO's information operation could recover from the fallout caused by the Djakovića incident and once again build up its credibility for the remainder of the campaign.

These three incidents demonstrate NATO's different strategies in coping with crisis communication. The first case illustrated that, in certain circumstances, it is possible to bury an incident in a deluge of other information and escape the scrutiny of zealous journalists. The second incident showed that this is not possible when there are competing narratives. From the outset of NATO's Kosovo Campaign, Jamie Shea had been determined to "occupy the media space" (BBC, 1999) but in the Djakovića case, the collateral damage proved to be too great to bury the story. This could have been the tipping point of NATO's information campaign, not only because Shea struggled to get the correct information, but also because he was unable to provide the pictures. However, because of NATO's "significant fund of goodwill" (Stourton, 1999) and with the 50th anniversary Summit meeting about to take place in Washington, NATO was able to deflect criticism for its actions. By being proactive and setting up the Media Operations Centre immediately following this case, NATO managed to successfully deal with all further instances and accusations of collateral damage.

Afterword: Conclusions and new directions

By taking a case study approach, this study has afforded both a micro and macro view of the Kosovo Campaign in terms of the transformation of NATO's organisational identity. The case study itself was of enormous significance as a "hinge" in history: as an event at a critical period politically, and as a process by which NATO reshaped, and then legitimised itself as a relevant and viable military organisation for the 21st century. While there have been many other studies of the Kosovo campaign, from media and from military perspectives, none has focused on the campaign as a public relations case study. The micro and the macro views have each contributed to the expansion of public relations theory and, therefore, the understanding of practice.

At the micro level, critical discourse analysis and critical theory have served to elucidate how an organisation can use public relations not only to manage its identity and legitimacy, but also to enhance this legitimacy when it is considered to be endangered. The art of public relations is couched in language and discursive practice, though it is an art seldom subjected to close critical analysis. Scrutiny of NATO's Kosovo texts revealed the strategies and intricacies of discursive construction with the intent to effect social change. The singularly powerful construction, through the technique of articulation, of the discourse of humanitarian intervention, well illustrates the point. Without the communicative

resources, including expertise and power, to not only construct the new discourse but to have it remain virtually unchallenged in the public arena, NATO could not have established itself as the military power it remains today.

Micro level analysis of the Kosovo campaign as a case study of military as well as discursive conflict has provided new insight to the current debate in public relations on the demarcation between propaganda and public relations. The work in this thesis adapted Moloney's (2006) categorisation of "PR-as-weak-propaganda" from a peaceful context to a military one. The public relations/propaganda demarcation remains as fuzzy as Moloney's characterisation suggests. This thesis also finds support for Moloney's conception of public relations and propaganda as part of struggles for communicative advantage. Of particular relevance are Moloney's (2006) concerns for "communicative equality" (p. 12), especially given the massively unequal dissemination abilities and resources of the two sides in the conflict. Indeed, the case has shown just how a large supranational organisation is able to mobilise its information resources to advance its own organisational interests.

The success of the Kosovo public relations/communication campaign has been shown to lie in its success in framing the event in ways beneficial to the information disseminator. Thus the centrality of framing in public relations has become evident. The research closely examined strategic

public relations messages by identifying specific frames in the discourse. The salience of the humanitarian frame, in particular, demonstrated how framing enabled those with communicative power to convert that to ideological power through winning the consent of publics.

The imbalance of NATO's power to frame was further strengthened by the professionalisation of military communication, which was taken beyond the military by the involvement of civilian public relations professionals, or discourse technologists. Crisis communication management, in particular, was handled by experienced political communication professionals such as Jamie Shea and Alastair Campbell. The thesis showed how they worked to maintain control of the narratives and to keep messages consistent, and to make good use of conventional crisis communication strategies.

The thesis drew from other organisational theory to argue how, by showing its caring, humanitarian face, NATO created a "unique self". The analysis showed that through issues management, the organisation was able to adapt itself to the changing environment of a post-Cold War world. Its findings suggest that the Kosovo conflict is more accurately a part of NATO's identity reshaping rather than as a means of punishing Yugoslavia for human rights abuses, or altruistic rescuing of refugees. Through analysing the discourses of key participants, it concluded that NATO's self-serving presentation of the Kosovo Campaign should be reframed as a conscious public relations/propaganda struggle.

At the macro level the Kosovo case allows extrapolation of its findings to other supranational organisations involved in international relations. Such extrapolation is enhanced by the attention paid in this thesis to context. The research findings have implications in terms of international relations, the role of supranational organisations in a globalised world and, in particular, the role of the United States as the one remaining superpower. It shows how NATO, led by the wealthiest nations in the world, could transform itself into the military arm of the powerful and act as a proactive enforcement agency for the spread of particular ideologies. In contextualising Kosovo in this way, the thesis provides a critical approach for future research into supranational organisations and how they legitimise their activities.

The rise and power of supranational organisations remains little studied in the field. This research suggests that such international organisations merit scrutiny not only of the organisation in relation to other, often weaker entities, but also in relation to democratic and moral values. Since most supranational organisations have not been democratically elected, their assurances of working in the public interest must be monitored. Further research might scrutinise how moral legitimacy is used as a process for obtaining cognitive legitimacy elsewhere. Since the conflict in Kosovo, similar issues have arisen around operations in Afghanistan and Iraq – both of which also drew on the discourse of humanitarian intervention. The Taliban, Saddam Hussein and the governments of North

Korea and Sudan have all been accused of perpetrating human rights abuses on their own people in press and television coverage in similar fashion to the portrayal of President Milošević.

The thesis contributed to recent public relations historical and context-specific research by placing the Kosovo conflict within the overall historical context of the Balkans and the more recent events that led up to the NATO intervention. It stressed the importance of examining public relations practices in terms of the context in which they occur and mobilised other discourses to extend the field of public relations enquiry and the range of intellectual inputs. By placing NATO's Kosovo Campaign alongside the discipline of international relations, it identified Kosovo as the means whereby a supranational organisation responded militarily to a particular situation without a mandate from the recognised international community of the United Nations. In addition, it took the campaign as a vehicle to demonstrate how one organisation used strategic communication to good effect outside more conventional corporate and government arenas.

In aiming to provide a view of the role of public relations in international issues, this thesis highlighted power relations in action in an important supranational organisation. As representatives of the wealthiest and most powerful nations, supranational organisations can claim legitimacy in terms of working in the public interest, particularly in relation to democratic and moral values. This analysis suggested how one attempted

to ensure “mass loyalty” (Habermas, 1975, p. 36) in a specific context. However, what will happen when new discourses challenge the legitimacy of the organisation? How, for example, will NATO maintain its reconstructed identity in the face of proven accusations of torture in Iraq, which tarnished the image of the US? Ongoing torture enquiries threaten to cast doubt on the moral legitimacy of any organisation that claims to be humanitarian. Yet, for now, NATO has achieved organisational legitimacy by transforming its identity from a purely defensive organisation to a global military organisation. It is an accepted supranational military organisation, working in the interests of the (still undefined) international community. It is now seen to be a viable and necessary organisation attracting requests for membership from as far away as Japan and the Middle East. On the strength of its reforged identity during the Kosovo Campaign, NATO looks set to go on playing a central role in this century’s global war on terror.

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