

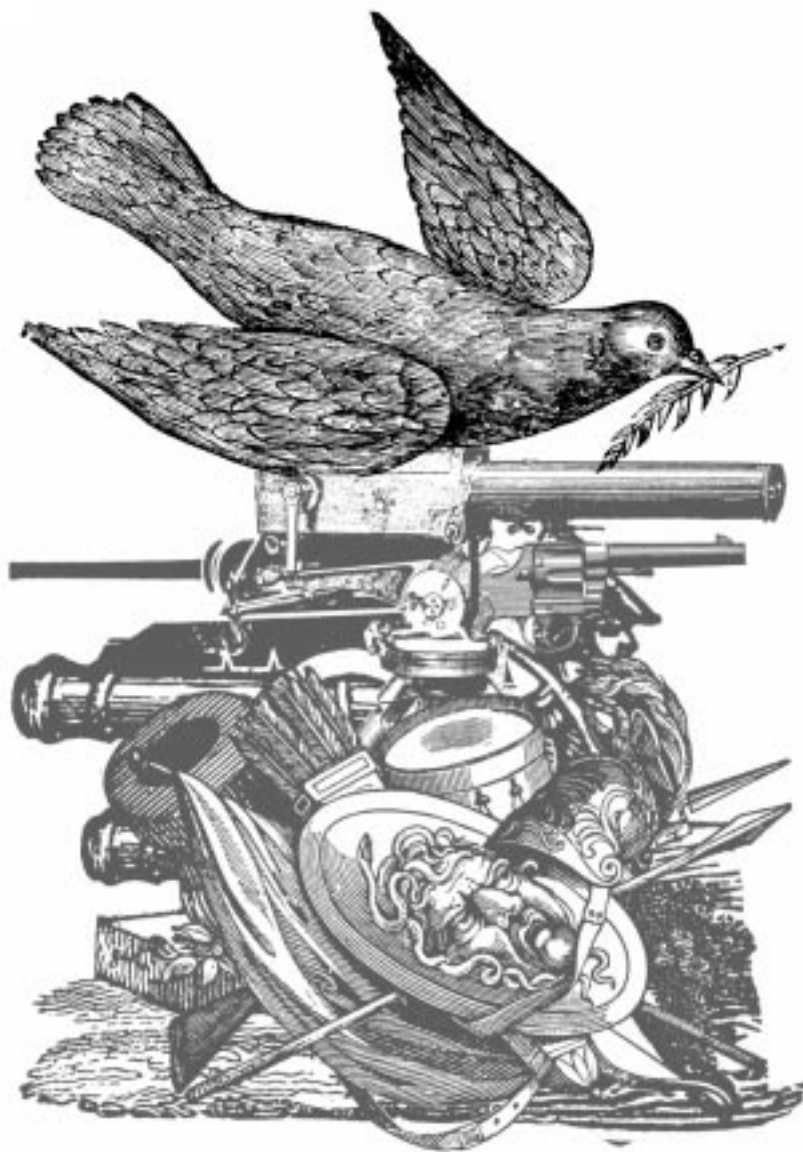
# A Stable Peace in EUROPE

*Can the Continent Put War Behind It?*

BY JAMES E. GOODBY

**T**he wars in the Balkans have made it starkly clear: nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War, Europe is only conditionally at peace; a deep chasm divides Russia and the West. The settlement in Yugoslavia will not alter this situation.

The United States and her NATO allies have decided in the case of Kosovo that internal ethnic conflicts may be defined as threats to international peace and security, justifying military intervention. This is a major innovation in European statecraft. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 opened the door to sanctions against a state that denies human rights to its own citizens. The new precedent expands the scope of these sanctions dramatically. But it fits with a view in the West that wars between nation-states in Europe have become almost inconceivable, that intra-state conflicts are the principal threat. In a *New York Times* article on May 23, President Clinton argued that instability in the Balkans, fueled by a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing, was the greatest remaining threat to a Europe that is peaceful, undivided, and free.



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Fortunately, within some clusters of Western European nations peace has become stable, which means that war among them has become unthinkable. But the European system includes the Balkans and countries—Russia, the United States, and others—that are European because of powerful and inescapable reciprocal influences. Within this extended European family of nations, the possibility of wars between nation-states remains firmly imbedded today in the thinking and planning of all the major powers. One of the unintended consequences of the NATO-Yugoslav war has been to put this fact on public display.

NATO has added three new members for the stated purpose of expanding “the area in Europe in which wars simply do not happen.” The idea was to extend to the east the kind of stability that exists in Western Europe. President Clinton speaks now of doing for southeastern Europe what we did for Western Europe after World War II and of helping the nations of the region join NATO and the European Union. This raises the question of whether a serious goal of statecraft should be to achieve, ultimately, a stable peace throughout the European system of nations. Why stop with the Balkans? A Europe enjoying a stable peace can be counted among the low-probability events of the world at this time, but the unification of Germany also seemed to be a low-probability contingency until it happened. Russia’s uncertain prospects for achieving democracy and the deep divide between Russia and the West over the Balkans and other issues are at the heart of the matter. The future of the transatlantic relationship is also important and, in this context, is often overlooked. In the next few years, given conditions in

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Russia, this relationship may bear the main burden of achieving a stable peace.

### **Peaceful, Undivided, and Democratic**

Both post-Cold War U.S. presidents, George Bush and Bill Clinton, have held out the prospect of a Europe undivided by ideological claims. President Bush spoke of a “Europe whole and free.” President Clinton’s vision of a “peaceful, undivided, and democratic” European continent comes close to describing a community of nations where the threat or use of military force by one nation against other members of the community is not an option or even

close to it is a useful device for imagining what the continent should look like and for highlighting how varied are the forms it might assume. The exercise also will show that a stable peace is hardly the end of the story of international relations. The five models described below would look and act very differently from one another even though each assumes that all the major nations of the extended European system are democratic. For the sake of simplicity the models are constructed with the United States, Russia, and the European Union as the principal actors, but of course, every other potential member of

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a consideration. Bush and Clinton seemed to be thinking not only of Western Europe, not just of geographic Europe, but of a larger system of nations, which they perceived as including the United States and, they hoped, eventually Russia. Neither president explained how this might happen or what the United States must do, if anything, to achieve this goal. After centuries of war in Europe, historical experience does not encourage hopes for a stable peace, but enough has changed to make the idea worthy of serious consideration.

### **Models of A Future Europe**

In a speech in San Francisco in April, President Clinton remarked that “we must look beyond [the current conflict over Kosovo] to what...the whole continent of Europe should look like in 10 or 20 years.” Describing a Europe that had achieved a stable peace or come

this system will have some part in determining how it is constituted.

- A system with three loci of power—the United States, the European Union, and Russia. The United States remains engaged in Europe; Russia is a solid democracy and functioning market economy; she takes an active and constructive interest in European matters; West European integration is successful, as is the enlargement to the east.
- A system in which the United States is first among equals owing to greater cohesion and economic strength. The European Union is powerful economically but foreign policy is fragmented; Russia has established a solid democracy and a functioning market economy but is lagging behind the European Union and the United States economically.

- A system in which the European Union is dominant, while the United States and Russia are only loosely engaged with Europe. Russia is democratic but remains weak economically and politically, less focused on external affairs than on internal problems and issues involving her southern flank. The United States devotes increasing attention and resources to Asia; Europe takes the lead in managing European matters, demonstrating consensus and strong, unified leadership.
- The West integrates while Russia becomes a peripheral player in European affairs. The United States and the European Union develop deeper trade relationships and closely coordinate their institutional arrangements; Russia is democratic in the electoral but not liberal sense, is experiencing internal difficulties, including inability of the central authorities to govern effectively throughout the Russian Federation. She is hostile toward the West.
- The United States is dominant, but European coalitions, including Russia, are assembled to offset U.S. pressure. Europe is challenging U.S. policies on key foreign policy issues globally, and trade competition is fierce. Russia makes common cause with the European Union as necessary to resist U.S. political and economic pressures.

### Assessing the Models

The term “Euroatlantic community” may be misleading since a clear differentiation among major power centers and groups of states within the system will exist even if a stable peace can be achieved. Fears of losing national identities in a featureless sea of Euroatlanticism are entirely misplaced. Differing sets of interests will generate different solutions to international problems and, hence, give rise to disputes. The only question is, how will they be settled?

A system based on North America, Russia, and the European Union that had achieved a stable peace is self-evidently preferable to the historical norm in which peace has been at best conditional, often precarious, and wars frequent. Some models of such a system might serve the interests of individual members better than other models, but if a stable peace, with all that implies, could be entrenched in Europe in the 21st century it would be a clear improvement over the experience of most preceding centuries.

This might not be the end of small wars, however, for even after a stable peace had been attained, pockets of authoritarianism might persist within the European system. Patches of ethnic or communal strife will be difficult to erase from the map, although the wars of the Yugoslav succession may be unique in their scale of violence. Small wars can destabilize relations among the major power centers, but they should not completely undermine a stable peace. The best insurance against that happening would be agreed policies and mechanisms designed to deal with ethnic or economic grievances—the preventive diplomacy of limited conflicts. The outcome of the Kosovo conflict may shed light on this. Multilateral security arrangements, like those now evolving among NATO, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, clearly will be needed even in a region enjoying a stable peace.

### Reordering Foreign Policy Priorities

The idea of a stable peace in Europe still has not been cemented into the vital center of American foreign policy, either within the government or among the public. If a stable peace in Europe became a widely accepted strategic goal for the United States, like containment during the Cold War, effective transition strategies could be devised to help guide day-to-day decisions. This goal is more rhetoric than

reality at the moment. A reordering of American foreign policy priorities would be required if this and succeeding U.S. administrations took it seriously. The same is no doubt true for other nations, including Russia and members of the European Union.

The most obvious need for a course correction arises from the fact that U.S.–Russian relations have degenerated into bickering over Iran, Iraq, the Balkans, and nuclear nonproliferation policies to the point where the long-term strategic interests of the two countries are being defined by their differences rather than their common interests in a stable peace. Russian–American collaboration in finding a political settlement for Kosovo is a step in the right direction. A strategy aimed at making a stable peace in Europe, however, must be aimed at creating something akin to a security community, that is, a single security space throughout Europe, including Russia. Much can be achieved along these lines incrementally while internal conditions in Russia are being sorted out. Institutional linkages both with the center and with regions, joint peace operations as in the Balkans, and various forms of cooperative threat reduction can help.

When Russia develops the economic strength necessary to become a third center of power within an extended European system, Western policy should encourage that. During this transition, the minimum requirement for the West is constant support for democracy in Russia, including economic and other forms of help to underwrite what the Russians themselves are doing to strengthen the prospects for their democracy. In the West, greater accommodation to Russian views on the use of force, especially in Russia’s neighborhood, and a sensitivity concerning the process of extending NATO’s reach are needed and, in Moscow, more responsiveness to Western concerns about violations of democratic norms, regional instabili-

ties, and transnational security threats, such as terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The transatlantic relationship is a more subtle issue. A Western commonwealth that accepts the differences in interests and outlook between Europe and North America will recognize a distinct center of power in Western and Central Europe—the European Union. A more balanced relationship between the United States and the European Union is what many Americans and Europeans have been urging for years, but inherent in the process is the inevitable diminishing of American influence over European policies, an unpleasant consequence for those Americans who consider that a benign hegemony is a more satisfactory policy.

American strategic interests outside the Western Hemisphere runs through Eurasia and that a stable peace is dependent on relations among the United States, the European Union, Russia, China, and Japan. Second, the exigencies of our age demand that the United States act before a clear and present danger emerges; this, in turn, requires a fixed and predictable place in the international power structure for the United States and a national strategy that Americans support and others understand. The choice for the United States is between some form of hegemony or striving to create equilibrium among these power centers. Hegemony would be impossible to achieve, the effort to achieve it waste-

making a stable peace in Europe requires judgments about how, when, and why to use military force. NATO already has become a hybrid defense system dealing with peacekeeping, as in Bosnia, as well as with collective defense. The air campaign against Yugoslavia fell in the latter category as a military operation. When peacekeeping or peacemaking is the objective, participation of units from countries other than the major military powers is preferable. If this cannot be arranged because of politics or because military efficacy rules it out, the involvement of all the relevant military powers is the next best solution. And if that is not feasible, the American profile in the operation should be kept to the lowest level compatible with effective operations.

There are political reasons for this set of rules. For example, NATO's role in making a stable peace could be undermined if misperceptions arose about American intentions in the Balkans. The most basic consideration is that the core function of U.S. military forces is to deter and, if necessary, to repulse armed state-on-state aggression in the Korean peninsula, in the Persian Gulf, and potentially at

other points around Eurasia. In peacetime the presence of U.S. forces makes an essential contribution to stability and to cooperative relationships among the major military powers of Eurasia. U.S. defense operations and the defense budget should be oriented primarily toward that core function. The use of these forces in ways that would diminish their effectiveness in their core function should be minimized.

These prescriptions for policy run against the American grain in many respects, but they constitute a platform that will support a rational long-term U.S. engagement in international affairs. ■

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### **The Task Undone**

Hardly any government within the European system has outlined a vision of a future Europe so compelling as those of the last few American presidents, Reagan included. But if American presidents have meant to hold out the possibility of a Europe peaceful, undivided, and free as something more than a slogan, much remains to be done. Now, midway through 1999, it is time to reflect on how future U.S. administrations might pick up this task, considering both U.S. strategic interests and the use of U.S. military forces.

The effort must begin with the recognition that the main axis of

ful and damaging. Equilibrium, in the sense of limits on unilateralism and accommodation to the interests of other power centers, while difficult to manage, can engender cooperation including creating the conditions for dealing effectively with ethnic conflict elsewhere in Eurasia. Finally, in the 21st century, an American equilibrium strategy must deal with both ends of Eurasia simultaneously. Disconnected policies for Europe and for Asia—compartmentalization, in effect—is not compatible with globalization, which is here to stay, or with a coherent national strategy.

It is clear from our experiences in Yugoslavia from 1991 onward that