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in Comparative International
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Final Thesis

**The USA and Russia in 1998-
1999: the War in Kosovo, the
Occupation of Pristina Airport
and the Clinton-Yeltsin
Relationship**

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*To all peoples who are fighting for their
sovereignty and independence against the imperial ambitions*

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Abstract

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world faced a new world order, which brought with it the collapse of the bipolar system of international relations. Russian-American relations in the 1990s experienced a rebirth when President Boris Yeltsin assumed the post of President of the Russian Federation. Yeltsin resolutely abandoned the communist past and set Russia on the path of democracy, which consisted of ups and downs. The relationship between Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton has been going through ups and downs for almost 8 years. One of the challenges faced by the whole world, and in particular Russian-American relations, was the war in Kosovo. Slobodan Milosevic terrorized the territory of Kosovo for years, organizing ethnic cleansing against Kosovo Albanians, thereby exposing the entire security system of Europe to danger. Russia, in turn, was connected with Serbia not only by Slavic roots, but also by the communist past, so the Yeltsin administration faced a serious dilemma and was forced to decide which side it wanted to support.

If before 1998 Russian-American relations were going through a so-called "honeymoon", then after the escalation of the conflict in Kosovo, Clinton and Yeltsin faced deep misunderstanding and disagreement with each other. Yeltsin, weakened by internal economic problems, insisted on a diplomatic settlement of the conflict, while Clinton aimed at least repeating the scenario of Bosnia. On March 24, 1999, when NATO troops began bombing Yugoslavia, relations between Russia and the United States began to decline, despite the fact that Yeltsin needed to cooperate with the West, since he was economically dependent on IMF loans, Yeltsin was extremely negative about the NATO air campaign and demanded a cease-fire. Eventually, after the signing of the peace agreement, Yeltsin decided to leave his mark on this conflict and moved troops to the territory of the Pristina airport, thereby occupying it and causing indignation from the West, in particular the United States.

The purpose of this work is to examine the war in Kosovo through the prism of Russian-American relations, in particular the relations between Clinton and Yeltsin. The main focus of the work is on the occupation of Pristina airport, which is almost not covered in historical literature, as well as on the importance for Russia in "participating" in this conflict. The object of the study is Russian-American relations in the period 1998-1999.

The subject of the study is the war in Kosovo, the relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin and the occupation of Pristina airport.

This work is divided into 3 chapters, in which the chronicle of events in the period for 1998-1999 is gradually built, and also analyzes the relations between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin in the period before the NATO bombing, during and after, focusing on the occupation of Slatin airport by Russian troops. Unfortunately, when writing this paper, it was found that the topic of the Kosovo conflict through the prism of Russian-American relations has hardly been studied, and the occupation of Pristina airport is practically not mentioned in scientific papers, although it carries many consequences in the future. The Kosovo precedent has entered Russian foreign and domestic policy since 1999. First, Russia used it in Chechnya, trying to interpret it to the war in Chechnya, then in 2008 in Georgia, justifying itself and referring to this precedent, then in 2014 in Crimea and now in 2022 in Ukraine.

The first chapter of the thesis examines the war in Kosovo through the prism of Russian foreign policy and the importance of the war itself for Russia. In this chapter, various scientific articles, Concepts of National Security of the Russian Federation since 1993 were analyzed, memoirs of presidents and their associates were analyzed. Also in the first chapter the works of A. Tsygankov, N. Zlobin, E. Yesson, R. Panagiotou, S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, B. Jagietto, S. Talbott, S. Kieninger, and others were analyzed. As a result of this chapter, we can conclude that the war in Kosovo was important for Russia for several key reasons. Firstly, the deterrence of NATO, secondly, the use of this precedent in their own interests and in their foreign policy, thirdly, this is the "rebirth" of Russia in the international arena and attempts to take a leading position in the world.

The second chapter analyzed Russian-American relations, in particular the relations between Clinton and Yeltsin⁶, as well as their vision of the world order. Thus, this chapter used such sources as the Declassified archive of conversations and meetings between President Clinton and President Yeltsin in the period 1993-1999, various scientific articles and memoirs of Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, as well as memoirs of Talbot and Albright, who were directly involved in the negotiations and resolution of this conflict. Thus, in this chapter, it is possible to trace how cooperation between Russia and the United States moved along a curve, initially increasing, and after March 24, 1998 decreasing.

In the third chapter of this work, one of the key points that became the first step towards a confrontation between the United States and Russia, which continues to this day, was considered, namely the occupation of Pristina airport on June 12, 1999 by Russian troops transferred from Bosnia. It is worth noting that since this topic has practically not been studied in the scientific space, there was a minimal amount of material on a given topic. In this chapter, several scientific articles were analyzed and the main emphasis was placed on the analysis of the Russian-American media in the period from June 12, 1999 to June 20, 1999, during the occupation of the airport of Pristina. In the third chapter, such American media as The New York Times, CNN, The Washington Times and The Times were analyzed. It is worth noting that the analysis of the Russian media was very limited due to the blocking of many pro-Russian news sites, so in this work such publications as the Newspaper Kommersant, the Russkaya Gazeta, several news analytical sites such as the Istorik and the Lenta.ru as well as the newspaper Pravda and Komsomolskaya Pravda. It is worth noting that after analyzing these two positions, it was noted that a political and information gap. Firstly, this was due to the fact that not everyone was notified about such a step even within the Yeltsin administration, and secondly, Russia gave great importance to this step, unlike the United States, and was aimed at obtaining its own controlled sector on the territory of Kosovo, which it subsequently did not receive and was forced to remain under the control of NATO peacekeeping forces on the territory of Kosovo, after holding out there for 3 years, Russia withdrew its troops and lost any influence in the region. Thus, this paper analyzed a wide range of events in 1998-1999 in relation to Russian-American relations, in particular the relations between Clinton and Yeltsin, which had a very positive dynamic that has not been repeated in modern history. Moreover, the relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin has become unprecedented in its closeness, not only political, but also comradely. However, despite Russia's aspirations to enter the democratic world and the attempts of the Clinton administration to help in this, Russia has not coped with its not only external, but mostly internal problems and has not been able to achieve full democracy. It is also worth noting that the war in Kosovo also affected the direction of Russia's foreign policy, it realized the threat of NATO, which were approaching its borders and ultimately could not come to terms with this fact to this day. It is worth noting that the relevance of this topic is quite high even at the present time. Firstly, the territory of Kosovo is still a "hot spot" in the Balkans and is still being attacked

by the Serbian authorities. Secondly, the use of the Kosovo precedent has become entrenched in Russia's current foreign policy. Thirdly, the United States has repeatedly practiced the instrument of aerial bombing in its foreign policy since 1999, as well as Russia, which adopted this mechanism during the Yugoslav conflict. Thus, the importance of this work remains to this day, having studied this topic, it is possible to trace the key mechanisms not only of the US foreign policy, which conducted the bombing of Yugoslavia, but also of Russia's foreign policy to this day.

Astratto

Con il crollo dell'Unione Sovietica, il mondo ha affrontato un nuovo ordine mondiale, che ha portato con sé il crollo del sistema bipolare delle relazioni internazionali. Le relazioni russo-americane negli anni '90 hanno vissuto una rinascita quando il presidente Boris Eltsin ha assunto la carica di presidente della Federazione Russa. Eltsin abbandonò risolutamente il passato comunista e mise la Russia sulla via della democrazia, che consisteva in alti e bassi. Il rapporto tra Boris Eltsin e Bill Clinton ha attraversato alti e bassi per quasi 8 anni. Una delle sfide affrontate dal mondo intero, e in particolare dalle relazioni russo-americane, è stata la guerra in Kosovo. Slobodan Milosevic ha terrorizzato il territorio del Kosovo per anni, organizzando la pulizia etnica contro gli albanesi del Kosovo, esponendo così l'intero sistema di sicurezza dell'Europa al pericolo. La Russia, a sua volta, era collegata alla Serbia non solo dalle radici slave, ma anche dal passato comunista, quindi l'amministrazione Eltsin affrontò un serio dilemma e fu costretta a decidere da che parte voleva sostenere.

Se prima del 1998 le relazioni russo-americane stavano attraversando una cosiddetta "luna di miele", dopo l'escalation del conflitto in Kosovo, Clinton e Eltsin hanno affrontato profonde incomprensioni e disaccordi l'uno con l'altro. Eltsin, indebolito da problemi economici interni, insistette su una soluzione diplomatica del conflitto, mentre Clinton mirava almeno a ripetere lo scenario della Bosnia. Il 24 marzo 1999, quando le truppe della NATO iniziarono a bombardare la Jugoslavia, le relazioni tra Russia e Stati Uniti iniziarono a declinare, nonostante il fatto che Eltsin avesse bisogno di cooperare con l'Occidente, poiché era economicamente dipendente dai prestiti del FMI, Eltsin era estremamente negativo sulla campagna aerea della NATO e chiedeva un cessate il fuoco. Alla fine, dopo la firma dell'accordo di pace, Eltsin decise di lasciare il segno in questo conflitto e trasferì le truppe nel territorio dell'aeroporto di Pristina, occupandolo e provocando l'indignazione dell'Occidente, in particolare degli Stati Uniti.

Lo scopo di questo lavoro è quello di esaminare la guerra in Kosovo attraverso il prisma delle relazioni russo-americane, in particolare le relazioni tra Clinton e Eltsin. L'obiettivo principale del lavoro è l'occupazione dell'aeroporto di Pristina, che non è quasi coperto dalla letteratura storica, così come l'importanza per la Russia nel "partecipare" a questo conflitto. L'oggetto dello studio sono le relazioni russo-americane nel periodo 1998-1999.

Il tema dello studio è la guerra in Kosovo, il rapporto tra Clinton e Eltsin e l'occupazione dell'aeroporto di Pristina.

Questo lavoro è diviso in 3 capitoli, in cui la cronaca degli eventi nel periodo 1998-1999 viene gradualmente costruita, e analizza anche le relazioni tra i presidenti Clinton e Eltsin nel periodo prima del bombardamento della NATO, durante e dopo, concentrandosi sull'occupazione dell'aeroporto di Slatin da parte delle truppe russe. Sfortunatamente, quando si scrive questo articolo, si è constatato che il tema del conflitto del Kosovo attraverso il prisma delle relazioni russo-americane è stato appena studiato, e l'occupazione dell'aeroporto di Pristina non è praticamente menzionata nei documenti scientifici, sebbene porti molte conseguenze in futuro. Il precedente del Kosovo è entrato nella politica estera e interna russa dal 1999. In primo luogo, la Russia lo ha usato in Cecenia, cercando di interpretarlo alla guerra in Cecenia, poi nel 2008 in Georgia, giustificandosi e riferendosi a questo precedente, poi nel 2014 in Crimea e ora nel 2022 in Ucraina.

Il primo capitolo della tesi esamina la guerra in Kosovo attraverso il prisma della politica estera russa e l'importanza della guerra stessa per la Russia. In questo capitolo sono stati analizzati vari articoli scientifici, concetti di sicurezza nazionale della Federazione Russa dal 1993, sono state analizzate le memorie dei presidenti e dei loro associati. Anche nel primo capitolo sono state analizzate le opere di A. Tsygankov, N. Zlobin, E. Yesson, R. Panagiotou, S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, B. Jagietto, S. Talbott, S. Kieninger e altri. Come risultato di questo capitolo, possiamo concludere che la guerra in Kosovo è stata importante per la Russia per diversi motivi chiave. In primo luogo, la deterrenza della NATO, in secondo luogo, l'uso di questo precedente nei propri interessi e nella loro politica estera, in terzo luogo, questa è la "rinascita" della Russia nell'arena internazionale e tenta di assumere una posizione di leadership nel mondo.

Il secondo capitolo ha analizzato le relazioni russo-americane, in particolare le relazioni tra Clinton e Eltsin⁶, così come la loro visione dell'ordine mondiale. Pertanto, questo capitolo ha utilizzato fonti come l'archivio declassificato di conversazioni e incontri tra il presidente Clint e il presidente Eltsin nel periodo 1993-1999, vari articoli scientifici e memorie dei presidenti Clinton e Eltsin, nonché memorie di Talbot e Albright, che sono stati direttamente coinvolti nei negoziati e nella risoluzione di questo conflitto. Pertanto, in questo capitolo, è possibile tracciare come la cooperazione tra Russia e Stati Uniti si

sia spostata lungo una curva, inizialmente in aumento, e dopo il 24 marzo 1998 in diminuzione.

Nel terzo capitolo di questo lavoro, è stato considerato uno dei punti chiave che è diventato il primo passo verso uno scontro tra Stati Uniti e Russia, che continua fino ad oggi, vale a dire l'occupazione dell'aeroporto di Pristina il 12 giugno 1999 da parte delle truppe russe trasferite dalla Bosnia. Vale la pena notare che poiché questo argomento non è stato praticamente studiato nello spazio scientifico, c'era una quantità minima di materiale su un determinato argomento. In questo capitolo sono stati analizzati diversi articoli scientifici e l'enfasi principale è stata posta sull'analisi dei media russo-americani nel periodo dal 12 giugno 1999 al 20 giugno 1999, durante l'occupazione dell'aeroporto di Pristina. Nel terzo capitolo, sono stati analizzati media americani come il New York Times, la CNN, Il Washington Times e Il Times. Vale la pena notare che l'analisi dei media russi è stata molto limitata a causa del blocco di molti siti di notizie filorusi, quindi in questo lavoro pubblicazioni come il giornale Kommersant, la Russkaya Gazeta, diversi siti di analisi delle notizie come l'Istorik e il Lenta.ru così come il giornale Pravda e Komsomolskaya Pravda. Vale la pena notare che dopo aver analizzato queste due posizioni, è stato notato che un divario politico e informativo. In primo luogo, questo è dovuto al fatto che non a tutti è stato notificato ad un passo anche all'interno dell'amministrazione Eltsin, e in secondo luogo, la Russia ha dato grande importanza a questa fase, a differenza degli Stati Uniti, e ha l'obiettivo di ottenere una sua controllata del settore sul territorio del Kosovo, che successivamente non ha ricevuto e fu costretto a rimanere sotto il controllo della NATO, le forze di pace sul territorio del Kosovo, dopo aver tenuto per 3 anni, la Russia ha ritirato le sue truppe e ha perso ogni influenza nella regione.

Pertanto, questo documento ha analizzato una vasta gamma di eventi nel 1998-1999 in relazione alle relazioni russo-americane, in particolare le relazioni tra Clinton e Eltsin, che hanno avuto una dinamica molto positiva che non è stata ripetuta nella storia moderna. Inoltre, il rapporto tra Clinton e Eltsin è diventato senza precedenti nella sua vicinanza, non solo politica, ma anche cameratesca. Tuttavia, nonostante le aspirazioni della Russia di entrare nel mondo democratico e i tentativi dell'amministrazione Clinton di aiutare in questo, la Russia non ha affrontato i suoi problemi non solo esterni, ma soprattutto interni e non è stata in grado di raggiungere la piena democrazia. Vale anche la pena notare che

la guerra in Kosovo ha influenzato anche la direzione della politica estera della Russia, si è resa conto della minaccia della NATO, che si stava avvicinando ai suoi confini e alla fine non è riuscita a venire a patti con questo fatto fino ad oggi.

Vale la pena notare che la rilevanza di questo argomento è piuttosto alta anche al momento attuale. In primo luogo, il territorio del Kosovo è ancora un "punto caldo" nei Balcani e viene ancora attaccato dalle autorità serbe. In secondo luogo, l'uso del precedente del Kosovo si è radicato nell'attuale politica estera della Russia. In terzo luogo, gli Stati Uniti hanno ripetutamente praticato lo strumento del bombardamento aereo nella sua politica estera dal 1999, così come la Russia, che ha adottato questo meccanismo durante il conflitto jugoslavo. Quindi, l'importanza di questo lavoro rimane fino ad oggi, dopo aver studiato questo argomento, è possibile tracciare i meccanismi chiave non solo della politica estera degli Stati Uniti, che ha condotto il bombardamento della Jugoslavia, ma anche della politica estera della Russia fino ad oggi.

Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the world faced a new world order, the bipolar world that was divided between the United States and Russia was destroyed and the international arena suffered new challenges.¹ The United States, which was forced to take a leading position in the world, faced many consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which hit the world security system and destabilized the old-world order.² Thus, Kosovo has become one of the challenges for the entire world community, which has certainly become a product of the collapse of the Soviet Union.³ Long before the start of the war in Kosovo, the Serbian authorities terrorized the European population of countries such as Bosnia, Slovenia and Croatia “in an attempt to keep by force its Balkan Empire, created by Joseph Tito after the Second World War”.⁴ In 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army was formed on the territory of Kosovo, which was created in response to the terror of President Slobodan Milosevic, where he spent years on the territory of Kosovo in relation to the Kosovo Albanians. In 1998, the confrontation between Serbs and Kosovars reaches its peak when there is a clash between the Serbian police and the KLA, then the international community faces a new terrible challenge that took place on the territory of Europe.⁵ In parallel, in the period 1998-1999, Russia and the United States conducted close cooperation, relations between the presidents of the United States and Russia, Clinton and Yeltsin were unprecedented since the beginning of the Cold War.⁶ Russia and the United States have cooperated on many issues: economy, development, democratization, foreign policy and more. In 1998, Russia was facing major economic

¹ N. Zlobin, “The New World Order: US and Russia in the Post-Soviet Space: Mutual Squeezing or Cooperation?”, *International Journal*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2008, pp. 307–19. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40204364>. (Accessed 13.05.2022)

² Ibidem, p. 308

³ This statement could be found in these works: J. Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 1st ed., 2009, p.11. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/883236/kosovo-pdf> (Accessed: 13.05.2022); N. Zlobin, “The New World Order: US and Russia in the Post-Soviet Space: Mutual Squeezing or Cooperation?”. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40204364>. (Accessed 13.05.2022)

⁴ A. Arbatov, D. Acheson, “THE KOSOVO CRISIS: THE END OF THE POST-COLD WAR ERA”, *Atlantic Council*, 2000, pp. 1–20. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep03503.5>. (Accessed 13.05.2022)

⁵ J. Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*, p.11. Available at <https://www.perlego.com/book/883236/kosovo-pdf> (Accessed: 10.05.2022).

⁶ T. Zonova, R. Reinhardt, “Main Vectors of Russia’s Foreign Policy (1991-2014)”, *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali* 81, no. 4, 2014, pp. 501–16. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43580683>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

problems, a default occurred in Russia, and the foreign policy of the Russian Federation faded into the background due to the economic inability to enter into any conflicts.⁷ On March 24, 1999, Clinton, represented by NATO, decided to launch an air campaign on the territory of Yugoslavia, it was at this moment that disagreements arose between Russia and the United States, after several months of persuasion, Yeltsin could not persuade Clinton to solve the problem diplomatically and was forced to take a mediating position in diplomatic negotiations between the West and Milosevic.⁸ This disagreement subsequently led to the occupation of Pristina airport by the Russian contingent, which caused a lot of confusion during the settlement of the Yugoslav conflict in general.⁹

The purpose of this work is to examine the war in Kosovo through the prism of Russian-American relations, in particular the relations between Clinton and Yeltsin. The main focus of the work is on the occupation of Pristina airport, which is almost not covered in historical literature, as well as on the importance for Russia in "participating" in this conflict. The object of the study is Russian-American relations in the period 1998-1999. The subject of the study is the war in Kosovo, the relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin and the occupation of Pristina airport.

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following resources will be used in this work: as an archive of conversations between US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the period 1993-1999, various materials will also be used, such as various articles, books and archival documents on the Kosovo issue, including both in Russian and in English. Since the event of the Kosovo conflict took place in the period 1998-1999, the rule of 30 years does not apply and many documents are still classified, so in this study were also considered also memoirs of Clinton and Yeltsin, various articles, criticism and magazines, newspapers and presidential statements in the period 1998-1999. The primary sources in this study are the national archives, public statements of Clinton and Yeltsin, their speeches, as well as military documents during the Kosovo conflict. For example, such as reports of the United Nations, an archive of telephone conversations

⁷ This statement could be found, for example here: M. McFaul, "Yeltsin's Legacy", *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2000, pp. 42–58. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40260037>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁸ E. Yesson, "NATO and Russia in Kosovo", *Perspectives*, no. 13, 1999, pp. 11–19. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938>. (Accessed 13.05.2022)

⁹ V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy", *The International Spectator*, no. 50, 2015, pp. 256-260

between the presidents of the United States and Russia, speeches of presidents to the people or messages to the government.

Secondary sources in this study are memoirs of Clinton and Yeltsin, articles, books, articles from newspapers and magazines, analytical summaries and textbooks on the theory of international relations and the history of international relations.

This study consists of such approaches as historical, scientific, and since the analysis will be based on the Kosovo conflict, for example, A. Tsygankov's approaches such as conflict research and peace research, namely the analysis of negotiations in the period 1998-1999, were applied.

As a rule, the historical approach is based on the study of historical documents and events. At the same time, each event is considered as unique, this approach is used for a more complete study of an event. That in this study will allow us to see the full picture of the Kosovo conflict.

The scientific approach just makes it possible to classify events and identify patterns. There are four types in the scientific approach: behavioral, systemic, interactive and geopolitical. In this study, the geopolitical type will certainly be applied, since it implies a collision of two civilizations, as a rule, behaviorist, since this type considers as a rule two components - the decision makers and the political process itself and a systematic approach that includes the totality of all elements that interact with each other.

While the study of conflicts considers an event based on its origin and variety. Within the framework of this approach, there are two theories, the first that the emergence of conflicts is related to the structure of the international system and the second that with the environment of the international system, thereby confirming that the beginning of international conflicts is given by the international context due to the balance of forces in the international arena, which after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to duality and blurring.

Peace research asserts that the main way out of the conflict is in negotiations, which become the main form of interaction between states. They effectively reduce the likelihood of any military interventions and actions.

Moreover, in this work two types of scientific methods are used, the first is special historical research method and the second is general scientific method. The historical method of event research is based on the study of changes in the consideration of a

particular phenomenon, which allows us to establish cause-and-effect relationships. Also, the historical method helps to create a clear periodization, which helps to recreate and structure all the work. Regards to scientific method, this work will focus on general research methods, such as classification, which is part of systematization of the research of dividing the objects (in this work, these are the countries). Likewise, in this work the most important method is deduction and induction.

Thus, in this work, a set of research methods and approaches is applied in order to make the most structured picture of such a comprehensive issue.

Chapter 1

Importance of the War in Kosovo in the Russian Foreign Policy

1. Russian Interests in Kosovo

When Russia embarked on the road to democracy, Russian-Balkan relations¹⁰, in particular relations with Yugoslavia, were practically destroyed due to the communist present of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Thus, there were separations between Russia and the Balkans, firstly, Russia recognized independence and supported the sovereignty of countries outside Yugoslavia in 1992, and also after it joined Western countries and curtailed any cooperation with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. But the turning point for such a pro-Western position was the beginning of the NATO air campaign on the territory of Yugoslavia.¹¹ On October 22 in 1993, a conversation took place between Yeltsin and Clinton, they discussed Russia's cooperation with NATO, this partnership for peace included the inclusion of Russia along with all European countries, which would later lead to the expansion of NATO, then President Yeltsin did not understand this message, according to Warren Christopher Yeltsin was he was drunk and could not perceive the information correctly, so in subsequent years he perceived any expansion with great negativity.¹²

In the report for October 22, 1993 from the meeting of Kozyrev and Christopher, Christopher mentioned that "he wanted to review briefly where we were now in NATO expansion" and also, he mentioned that "the partnership for peace would be open to all the NACC countries".¹³ That is, back in 1993, Yeltsin was aware that NATO was going

¹⁰ In the context of the Kosovo conflict, it is worth considering Kosovo as the Balkans. Firstly, because Russia did not recognize the independence of Kosovo. Secondly, because during this period of time, that is, during the NATO bombing and the Kosovo war, Kosovo was also not an independent state.

¹¹ R. Panagiotou, "The Western Balkans between Russia and the European Union: perceptions, reality, and impact on enlargement", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, vol.2, no.29, 2021, pp.219-233

¹² This analysis was shown in detail in the article: S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, "NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard", online edition, National Security Archive, 16.03.2018. Available at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-03-16/nato-expansion-what-yeltsin-heard> (accessed 20.04.2022).

¹³ This conversation was conducted during the period of conversation on NATO and its expansion: U.S. Department of State, *October 21-23 Visit to Moscow*, declassified 11.03.2003, 200001030, 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University.

to increase its potential, but tried to ignore this fact every time trying to resist it, instead of strengthening the partnership. Partnership between the United States and Russia has become possible, but only partially, because the expansion of NATO has become a huge obstacle in this partnership. Thus, the confrontation between Russia and the United States on the issue of NATO was due to the fact that Russia, which until 1991 was one of the superpowers, having taken such a step against NATO at the Pristina airport, was ready for the reaction to its intervention to be as during the heyday of forces, but on the contrary received only ignoring and belittling from the west.¹⁴

Immediately after the bombing began, Russia insisted that the entire international system should be based and rely entirely on the UN, when the United States, in the role of NATO, decided to launch an air campaign in the Yugoslav conflict without UN Security Council sanctions, Russia became the main NATO ally.¹⁵ The Russian side was so interested in NATO not launching an aerial bombardment that the Russian media expressed such an opinion: “The Yugoslav authorities did everything yesterday except one thing: they hardly tried to prevent the bombing. Russia was doing it instead. It seemed that Russians, not Serbs, were going to be bombed, and that Milosevic was not eager to save his compatriots.”¹⁶ In fact, Russia in no way wanted to allow the presence of NATO in the Balkans. The issue of NATO for Russia has always been the most important on its foreign policy agenda.

The history of NATO expansion goes back to the early 1990s, when the United States, in response to some security crises, decided to invite countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland to the alliance, thereby expanding NATO's borders to the east.¹⁷ Based on declassified documents of conversations between Clinton and Yeltsin, it can be noted that there has never been such an official agreement between President Yeltsin and President Clinton on the issue of banning NATO expansion to the east. In 1993, when US

¹⁴ This opinion is possible to see in this article: ““The Clinton-Yeltsin Relationship in Their Own Words”, online edition, *National Security Archive*, 02.10.2018. Available at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-10-02/clinton-yeltsin-relationship-their-own-words> (accessed 20.04.2022)

¹⁵ V. Brovkin. “Discourse on NATO in Russia During the Kosovo War”. *NATO*, pp. 11-12. Available at <https://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/brovkin.pdf>. (Accessed 07.05.2022)

¹⁶ G. Sysoev. “NATO nachali bombit’ Serbiyu”, *Kommersant*, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/215502?query=Kocovo>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

¹⁷ A. Tsygankov, “The Russia-NATO Mistrust: Ethnophobia and the Double Expansion to Contain ‘the Russian Bear’”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2013, pp. 179–88. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48610383>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Moscow to meet with President Yeltsin, she insisted that Russia's partnership with NATO would be beneficial to Russia itself for political purposes, thus this partnership would include, and not exclude Russia from the world agenda, to which Yeltsin absolutely did not object, but expressed his admiration.¹⁸ It is worth noting that there was not a word in the conversation that NATO was not going to expand, on the contrary, it was about cooperation with Russia, despite the expansion of NATO's borders, which was still planned at that time. Later in his memoirs Christopher will write that most likely Yeltsin was drunk and therefore did not understand his message.¹⁹ While the discussions on NATO expansion between Clinton and Yeltsin, although often flashed in discussions, they were also ambiguous. However, Russia and the United States concluded agreements on non-expansion of NATO, but only for a certain period of time. Like in 1995, when Russia and the United States agreed that NATO would not recruit new members during the parliamentary elections in Russia. Clinton's main message at that time was an emphasis on cooperation between Russia and NATO, but without discussing any borders for expansion.²⁰ Thus, Russia initially feared any expansion of NATO to the East, thereby the danger of NATO's presence in the Balkans, in particular in Kosovo, was a real danger and a challenge for Moscow to act in Kosovo and be present in this region.

Despite the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia lost its land borders with the territory of the Balkans and directed its foreign policy towards the CIS countries and cooperation with NATO, the territory of the Balkans still played an important role for Russia. The concept of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in 1993 emphasized the important role in establishing bilateral relations with the Balkan countries, in particular with Albania, Bulgaria and Romania.²¹ Moreover, even Soviet Russia supported the then not yet formed Yugoslavia in the creation of the union and was

¹⁸ "Secretary Christopher's meeting with President Yeltsin, 10/22/93, Moscow", *U.S. Department of State*, Date/Case ID, 08.05.2000, 200000982. Available at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/16380-document-08-secretary-christopher-s-meeting>. (Accessed 04.04.2022)

¹⁹ S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, "NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard". Available at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-03-16/nato-expansion-what-yeltsin-heard>. (Accessed 03.05.2022)

²⁰ Ibidem

²¹ B. Jagietto, "The Balkan Kettle: Russia's policy toward the Balkans", *Security & Defence*, vol. 35, 2021, p.51. Available at <https://securityanddefence.pl/The-Balkan-Kettle-Russia-s-policy-toward-the-Balkans,138674,0,2.html>. (Accessed 05.04.2021)

an example of such a union in the first place, thereby further linking itself with "historical roots" with this territory.²² It was important for Russia to maintain its presence in the Balkans, thereby restraining not only the expansion of NATO, but also the hegemony of the United States.

According to Seris, Russia considered the conflict in Kosovo as its own, firstly, Russia had the same disputed territory in the form of Chechnya, and secondly, it was important for Russia to maintain its political and economic influence, which was created throughout the existence of the Soviet Union. Also, Russia perceived Serbia as its "younger brother" in the context of bilateral relations, but at the same time Russia was aware of its unwillingness to provide economic assistance in this region, which Western countries were capable of. Therefore, Russia made countries dependent on itself through energy and political mechanisms.²³

One of the theses why Russia's presence in Kosovo was important is the historically formed confrontation between Russia and the United States. Russia could not afford to stay away from this conflict, at the same time Russia could not agree with the US foreign policy in Yugoslavia. Thus, Russia initially expressed itself sharply about the NATO air campaign and insisted on the need for negotiations, demonstrating to the United States its position different from NATO and the United States and its geopolitical interest in the territory of Kosovo.²⁴

2. Russia and the development of the War in Kosovo

The war in Kosovo was a product of the collapse of Yugoslavia, Kosovo Albanians were repeatedly discriminated against and purged by the Serbs, the conflict had its roots several decades ago.²⁵ In 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) appeared, then it was "a mysterious new guerrilla movement, launched its first attack against a Serbian police

²² Ibidem, p.52

²³ This statement based on the article: E. Sivas, "FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND SUPERPOWER POLITICS: COMPETITION OF U.S. AND RUSSIA OVER KOSOVO", TJSS, Vol. 4, No. 7, 2020, p.94. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/982266>. (Accessed 01.05.2022)

²⁴ L. Davies, "A "hybrid offensive" in the Balkans? Russia and the EU-led Kosovo-Serb negotiations", *European Security*, vol.1, no.31, 2022, pp.1-20

²⁵ J. Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*, p.11. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/883236/kosovo-pdf> (Accessed: 10.05.2022).

patrol.”²⁶ In 1998, there was a clash between the Serbian police, which controlled Kosovo and the KLA, as a result of which more than two thousand people, including women and children, were killed, this event was a turning point in this conflict and marked the beginning of the war in Kosovo.²⁷ The Clinton administration, in turn, tried to conduct any negotiation processes, trying to stop the confrontation between Slobodan Milosevic, the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Ibrahim Rugova, the President of the Republic of Kosovo. However, the negotiation process did not last long and was interrupted by the actions of the Serbian side against the KLA.²⁸ By that time, the West had already begun to plan its intervention through NATO, realizing that the situation in Kosovo undermined European security, but at the same time Washington was extremely careful, because it realized that NATO's intervention in Kosovo would become “worst case scenario”²⁹ for Russian-American relations. Firstly, the United States feared that Russia would be completely on the side of Serbia, based on the principle of a "fraternal" state. Secondly, the United States was afraid of any split and the beginning of a new confrontation between Russia and the United States.³⁰

It is worth noting that while the United States saw the Kosovo conflict through the projection of Bosnia and Iraq, and were also ready for a bombing attack, while Russia believed that it had its own interests and influence in this territory, most likely Russia conducted a parallel more with Chechnya, Firstly, the majority of the population in the southern part were Muslim, while on the borders the majority were Slavic Orthodox, as in Chechnya. Secondly, they insisted on separatism and independence of their own territory. Thus, even the divergence of opinions and understandings led to misunderstandings between States in this conflict.³¹ Moreover, according to President Yeltsin, Russia and the United States treated this conflict from different sides. For the United States, it was a great opportunity to punish Milosevic and his regime, while Russia

²⁶ Ibidem, p.11

²⁷ Ibidem, p.12

²⁸ Ibidem, p.13

²⁹ Ibidem, p.13

³⁰ These statements could be found here: J. Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*, pp.11-15. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/883236/kosovo-pdf> (Accessed: 10 May 2022); E. Yesson, “NATO and Russia in Kosovo”, pp. 11–19. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938> (Accessed 10.05.2022)

³¹ S. Talbott. (2002) *The Russia Hand*. 1st ed, Random House, p.301. Available at: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/russia-hand-a-memoir-of-presidential-diplomacy/oclc/48474282> (Accessed 10.04.2022)

looked at this conflict more globally, already realizing that after the collapse of the USSR, “the trend” in the collapse of unions became a causal link due primarily to Russia, which could lead to a humanitarian catastrophe.³²

Russia's position in the conflict in Kosovo was of key importance to the United States, President Yeltsin had a huge influence on Milosevic, which came from the historical ties of the Serbian and Russian people, as well as Russia's post-Soviet past. President Yeltsin repeatedly tried to reason with Milosevic to stop this conflict, but despite this, all attempts were unsuccessful and Milosevic continued to bend his line on the territory of Kosovo. However, according to Yesson, despite the fact that the United States feared Yeltsin's reaction in connection with the Slavic solidarity of the Russian president to the Serbian, which the West propagandized in its circles, dividing Europe into “Western' and 'Orthodox' civilizations typified this view in the West.”³³ Thus, Russia, despite its national identity with the Serbian people, was aware of its benefits in cooperation with the United States and NATO countries, firstly for economic reasons, since Russia was experiencing an economic default, and secondly for strategic reasons, realizing that it could be completely isolated together with Milosevic.

On May 31, 1998, 20 Kosovo Albanians were killed by Serbian policemen.³⁴ When a telephone conversation took place between President Yeltsin and President Clinton on June 15, 1998, the American president was no longer concerned about Russia's financial problems. The key topic of the conversation was the issue of Kosovo and the growing aggression and violence towards the Kosovo Albanians. At that time, it was definitely important for Clinton that Yeltsin took on the issue with Milosevic, undoubtedly, the president understood that Milosevic was not in the mood to build a dialogue with the United States. Firstly, Russia would not allow, despite respect and desire for cooperation, the United States to enter the territory of Serbia, even if it were nominally. Secondly, only Russia could have any influence on the "diehard" Milosevic. Yeltsin was adamant about

³² B. Yeltsin, *Prezidenskiy Marafon: razmishleniya, vospominaniya, vpechatleniya*, 1st ed, ACT, 2002 p.202. Available at <https://yeltsin.ru/archive/book/9201/> (Accessed 10.04.2022)

³³ YESSON, ERIK. “NATO and Russia in Kosovo.”, p.13. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938> (Accessed 10 May 2022)

³⁴ The statistics of crimes in Kosovo and the chronology of events can be found here: “A Kosovo Chronology”, *Frontline*. Available at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html>. (Accessed 15.04.2022)

NATO's involvement in the conflict, warning Clinton that it would disrupt any negotiations. He repeated more than once that “any use of force by NATO is inadmissible”, he divided zones of responsibilities, Clinton had to work on Albanian side and he was trying to push Milosevic for negotiations. Yeltsin understood that with this political mechanism he can maintain the US position and deter NATO forces for a while. But he didn't take in account the fact that Milosevic is sly and clever in these issues, for that he used Russia and Yeltsin as “a protective wall” from the decision to give up and stop the violence in Kosovo. Clinton, in turn, was not aiming to leave Yugoslavia within its borders, he believed that Milosevic was jeopardizing the independence of Yugoslavia by refusing to conduct any negotiations with the Albanians. Of course, Clinton hoped that Yeltsin would be able to reason with the Serbian leader and he would listen to him, but despite this, with every promise not to use NATO forces on the territory, there was always a "but".³⁵ Despite this, on June 15, 1998, NATO air forces in the number of 85 fighters flew over the territories of Albania and Macedonia, thereby showing Milosevic their strength.³⁶

On June 16, a meeting took place between Yeltsin and Milosevic, many experts claimed that "this is Milosevic's last chance to avoid NATO bombing."³⁷ The aerial maneuvers carried out by NATO forces the day before Milosevic's visit to Moscow certainly worried both the Serbian and Russian sides. After the aerial maneuver, military exercises were launched near the borders of Kosovo, which indicated to Milosevic that a solution to the conflict was not in his favor. According to Yeltsin, immediately after the meeting on June 16, in a conversation with Clinton, the Russian president persuaded Milosevic to agree on all points of the developed Contact Group agreement.³⁸

³⁵ This conclusion can be made based on the telephone conversation between President Clinton and President Yeltsin on June 15, 1998, which can be found here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin,” *Clinton Digital Library*. Available at <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57569>. (Available at 24.04.2022)

³⁶ The chronology of events is here: “A Kosovo Chronology”, *Frontline*. Available at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html>. (Accessed 15.04.2022)

³⁷ “Ot Natovskih bomb mozhets spasti tol'ko Yeltsin”, *Kommersant*, 1998, available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/200152>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

³⁸ The transcript is here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin”. Available at <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57569>. (Available at 24.04.2022)

Already in June 1998, the NATO leadership requested to develop any measures to resolve the conflict in Kosovo, thus starting to prepare any measures against the Serbian leadership in stages. NATO did not want to make the mistakes of the conflict in Bosnia and therefore planned a targeted, but full-scale bombardment.³⁹ For Russia, cooperation with NATO was necessary, and in principle, at this time it was quite successful, but unfortunately the NATO leadership kept Russia aside and did not include it in the agenda, which was outraged primarily by the Russian side and more than once tried to enter into a constructive dialogue with Clinton and other NATO representatives, but attempts were unsuccessful.⁴⁰

January 1999, 45 bodies of Kosovo Albanians are found in one of the villages of Kosovo in Racak, then the patience of the United States and the whole West finally ends in relation to the madness of Milosevic, the Contact Group decides to convene a conference on conflict resolution, choosing a place in France in the city of Rambouillet. In Rambouillet, the parties (Serbian and Kosovar) were offered a peace agreement, which they had to either accept or reject within two weeks. At first, that Milosevic, who understood that by not concluding this deal, he would have guaranteed himself military intervention, that for the KLA, who understood that they could lose international support, were interested in this process.⁴¹ Then the American, British and Albanian sides signed the agreement, while Russia and Serbia rejected it. Then Yeltsin realized that he had lost his influence in this conflict and took the position of Serbia. The Rambouillet Agreement became a decisive factor for Russia in determining the side of the conflict. The agreement implied that NATO would regulate and govern the province of Kosovo as an autonomous province within Yugoslavia.⁴² For Russia, this agreement was unacceptable due to the presence of NATO on the territory of Yugoslavia, firstly, it meant that NATO would move even closer to Russia's borders, which was a very sensitive topic for Russia's foreign policy

³⁹ See for example: H. Daadler, E. Michel, *Winning Ugly: NATO's Was to Save Kosovo*, Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp.30-31. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctvc77ndw>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

⁴⁰ These statements can be founded here: S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", *The International History Review*, pp. 781-795, 2020. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/07075332.2020.1848899?scroll=top&needAccess=true>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

⁴¹ J. Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*, p.14. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/883236/kosovo-pdf> (Accessed: 10 May 2022).

⁴² "The Rambouillet Text - Appendix B", *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, April 28, 1999. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/apr/28/balkans12>. (Accessed 04.04.2022)

and, in principle, its geopolitical security, and secondly, for Russia it meant that it had lost any influence on the development of the course of Kosovo's events.⁴³ On March 19, the process of signing the agreement breaks down and NATO has no choice but to intervene in the conflict.

On March 24, 1999, the NATO military operation against Yugoslavia begins. Yeltsin, in turn, reacted negatively to NATO's intervention in this conflict. In his televised address, he called the NATO air campaign "a blow to the entire international community."⁴⁴ I also asked the whole world to "join the indignation of the whole of Russia."⁴⁵

Moreover, with the start of the bombing, Russia immediately suspended its participation in the NATO-Russia Joint Permanent Council and any interaction with NATO at the international level. Russia's position in this case was also determined by the mood within the country towards America, as well as the attitude of the Duma to Yeltsin's policy. It is very important to note this fact that could have caused interference in the Kosovo conflict. This attitude of Yeltsin and the Duma, the president who, after Russia's bad communist past, sought to achieve democracy within the country and make friends with Western countries, first of all caused distrust among the Russian government itself. It is very important to note another fact that could have caused interference in the Kosovo conflict. This attitude of Yeltsin and the Duma, the president who, after Russia's bad communist past, sought to achieve democracy within the country and make friends with Western countries, first of all caused distrust among the Russian government itself. In May 1999, the Duma, which was in opposition to Yeltsin, tried to dismiss him from office. Before that, back in December 1993, even under the previous laws, the Congress of People's Deputies tried to deprive Yeltsin of office. Of course, the impeachment procedure was a kind of insurance for the Lady, since under the constitution of the Russian Federation it was forbidden to dissolve the government that impeached the president. In fact, the word impeachment came just the same to Russia from the country with which he tried to make

⁴³ These ideas could be found here: E. Yesson, "NATO and Russia in Kosovo", p.13. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938> (Accessed 10 May 2022); B. Radeljic, "Russia's Involvement in the Kosovo Case: Defending Serbian Interests or Securing Its Own Influence in Europe?" *Region* 6, no. 2, pp. 273–300, 2017. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26377322>. (Accessed 05.04.2022)

⁴⁴ Teleobrasnenie presidenta Rossii Borisa Yeltsina 24 marta 1999 goda v svyazi s ugrozoy NATO nanesti udar po Yugoslavii", 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/215535>. (Accessed 25.04.2022)

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*

friends, namely from the United States. At that time, in 1998, Clinton was impeached and this story spread around the world, and the post-Soviet world for the first time encountered this term suitable for them. Then the same reason was named for the impeachment of Clinton, namely the affair of the US president with his intern Monica Lewinsky, or rather his lie under oath when he stated that there was no such affair. Of course, the situation was much worse for Yeltsin, he didn't need any romance like Clinton. By 1999, Yeltsin had accumulated a lot of internal problems: a conflict due to the anti-crisis program of the government of Sergei Kiriyenko in June-July; default on August 17; an acute government crisis that ended with the appointment of the Duma protege, Yevgeny Primakov, to the post of prime minister; finally, an All-Russian protest rally on October 7 under the slogan "Yeltsin – resign!".⁴⁶ Thus, this served as another reason, Yeltsin's rating fell to 3-5% even before the impeachment, moreover, his opposition government repeated the hated American government, given that Yeltsin was not very objective in the late 1990s, this could also serve as a reason for intervening in the Kosovo conflict and ignoring his Western aspirations.⁴⁷

The Duma was also against the fact that Russia did not intervene in the Kosovo war, while more than 90 percent of the population opposed the NATO attack on Yugoslavia. Such inactivity of Russia shifted the opinion of the people to more communist and right-wing parties, which in turn advocated a tougher stance towards the West, including NATO and the United States. This opinion was held by Chernomyrdin and Gaydar, who correctly predicted that such inaction by Russia would lead to an anti-Western movement within Russia and would reach its maximum since the Cold War. Thus, Russia could lose its desire for democracy, which Yeltsin had been trying to cultivate within the Russian community for years.⁴⁸

Thus, Yeltsin needed to return at least to the negotiation process, thereby Yeltsin initiated the G8 meeting on the conflict in Kosovo. Yeltsin's main goal was to stop NATO airstrikes, while Clinton was convinced that first it was necessary to withdraw the Serbian

⁴⁶ This analysis based on the article: M. Savelova. (2008) "Neudavshiysya Impeachment", *Istorik*. Available at <https://историк.рф/journal/53/neudavshiysya-impichment-bb.html>. (Accessed 04.05.2022)

⁴⁷ P. Marantz, "Russian Foreign Policy During Yeltsin's Second Term." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30, no. 4, 1997, pp. 345–51. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45302041>. (Accessed 04.04.2022)

⁴⁸ E. Yesson, "NATO and Russia in Kosovo", p.13. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938> (Accessed 10 May 2022)

police and eliminate any control of the Serbian government.⁴⁹ But despite all the differences, Yeltsin understood that he needed to side with the United States, and on May 12, Yeltsin sent Viktor Chernomyrdin, the appointed representative for the settlement of the Yugoslav conflict, the former Prime minister of Russia, along with Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, to Belgrade to talk with Milosevic. According to Yesson, Yeltsin, despite his disagreement with NATO, supported NATO on all points put forward by the Western side due to the fact that Moscow wanted to demonstrate to the United States and the whole West the need for Russia to resolve the Yugoslav conflict, thereby putting NATO in a kind of dependent position on Russia, which had no resources to intervene in the conflict.⁵⁰

Thus, in this conflict, we can trace how Moscow has changed its position time after time in this conflict. If at the beginning of this conflict Russia took a position on suppressing Milosevic, hoping for the fact that Moscow's opinion would be taken into account in decision-making, including the decision to intervene NATO in the Yugoslav conflict, then after the intervention of NATO and the beginning of the air campaign, Moscow's position shifts towards Serbia, completely not supporting NATO's actions on the territory of Yugoslavia. However, a few days later, Moscow realizing that without the support of the United States, Russia will be isolated, and will also face economic problems, since President Clinton helped Russia in obtaining a loan from the IMF, Yeltsin changes his position towards the United States, thereby leaving Milosevic in political isolation and refusing to supply weapons to the Serbian side. In addition, it was important for Yeltsin to show the importance of Russia in the international arena, since after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia lost any leadership in the world and was forced to adapt to the international agenda in a democratic society.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 14

⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 13

⁵¹ This analysis based on these articles: E. Yesson, "NATO and Russia in Kosovo", p.13. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938> (Accessed 10 May 2022); B. Radeljic, "Russia's Involvement in the Kosovo Case: Defending Serbian Interests or Securing Its Own Influence in Europe?". Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26377322>. (Accessed 05.04.2022); Hughies, "Russia and the Secession of Kosovo: Power, Norms and the Failure of Multilateralism", *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5, 2013, pp. 992–1016. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23438652>. (Accessed 04.05.2022)

3. The importance of the Kosovo War in Russian Foreign Policy

The war in Kosovo, and in particular, the NATO air campaign on the territory of Yugoslavia, have left an indelible mark on Russian foreign policy. First, when Russia, in particular Yeltsin, failed to convince Clinton not to use military force in this conflict, Russia found itself in a very vulnerable position to the United States. Moreover, Yeltsin realized that in the international arena in 1998-1999 he had no power and influence. Thus, Russia took this intervention too "close to heart" and day after day entered deeper into the road of confrontation with the United States. Moreover, after the end of the Kosovo war, Russia increased its military budget and spending on the military industry, Russia also repeatedly emphasized the presence of nuclear weapons as opposed to NATO, Russia realized the threat of NATO and the alliance's approach to its borders, thereby responding to this challenge with a passive build-up of weapons and threats towards the West.⁵² Moreover, after the start of the NATO bombing, Yeltsin changed the Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation, where he emphasized the role of "individual states and interstate associations to belittle the role of existing mechanisms for ensuring international security, primarily the UN and the OSCE,"⁵³ that is, directly pointing to NATO's actions in Yugoslavia. He also stressed that there is a "danger of weakening Russia's political, economic and military influence in the world"⁵⁴ and "strengthening military-political blocs and alliances, primarily the expansion of NATO to the east,"⁵⁵ based on these points, it can be concluded that, in principle, all Yeltsin's fears about the United States were justified after the start of the air campaign and these fears will create Russia's foreign policy agenda for years to come.

Moreover, in the spring of 1999, in response to the start of the NATO air campaign on the territory of Yugoslavia, Russian troops conducted exercises that had the strategic name "Zapad-99", thus Russia was developing its actions if Russia entered into a conflict with NATO on the basis of the NATO bombing in Yugoslavia. It is also worth noting that

⁵² V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy", pp.256-274

⁵³ Konceptzia Nazional'noy Bezopastnosty RF, ot 17 decabrya 1997, (v red. Ukaza Prezidenta RF), p. III
. Available at

http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_17186/defb41ab8ba4fdacc0715ce94f552abb03f39aaf/. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

⁵⁴ Ibidem, n. III

⁵⁵ Ibidem, n. III

"according to the results of these exercises, it was found that Russia can resist possible aggression from the West only with the use of nuclear weapons, which caused a number of noticeable changes in the patterns of use of these weapons, especially tactical"⁵⁶, also "the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons was lowered, in addition, Russia actually abandoned the Soviet commitment do not use nuclear weapons first."⁵⁷ Thus, Russia, aware of its vulnerability to NATO, considered extreme actions in the event of an outbreak of this conflict, but aware that this measure would have terrible consequences. Moreover, Russia's inability to wage this "war" with NATO, even within the framework of the Yugoslav crisis, can explain why Yeltsin was forced to take a NATO position in this conflict.

Some experts believe that the attack on Chechnya in 1999 was due to Russia's vulnerable position after the conflict in Yugoslavia and events in Chechnya initially developed according to the Kosovo model.⁵⁸ Also, Chechnya became one of the fundamental reasons why Yeltsin did not intervene in the Kosovo war at the time, while there was a lull since 1996, Yeltsin was afraid of his actions in Kosovo to stimulate the escalation of the conflict within Russia.⁵⁹ Since Chechnya as part of Russia and Kosovo as part of Serbia were autonomous republics as part of the first-level federal subjects, Thus, Yeltsin was careful in his actions in Kosovo throughout the conflict and tried to achieve a diplomatic solution to the conflict.⁶⁰ Later, the Russian authorities were able to justify themselves thanks to Kosovo, when the West tried to point out the violation of human rights and the disproportionate use of force, thus Moscow repeatedly responded to the West's remark,

⁵⁶ "Ot Zapada-1981 do Zapada-2009", *RIA News*, 2009. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20090908/184193961.html>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁵⁷ Ibidem

⁵⁸ For example: V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy", p.123; A. Arbatov, D. Acheson, "THE KOSOVO CRISIS: THE END OF THE POST-COLD WAR ERA". Available at <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/marshall-center-papers/transformation-russian-military-doctrine-lessons-learned-kosovo-and-chechnya/transformation-russian-military>. (Accessed 04.05.2022); C. Zurcher, "Chechnya and Kosovo: reflections in a distorting mirror", *Mapping European security after Kosovo*, Manchester University press, 2002, p. 183. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt155jhw3.15>. (Accessed 04.05.2022)

⁵⁹ These statements could be found, for example here: S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations". Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/07075332.2020.1848899?scroll=top&needAccess=true>. (Accessed 24.04.2022); E.Yesson, "The Balkans, NATO and European Security after the Kosovo War", p.15

⁶⁰ C. Zurcher, "Chechnya and Kosovo: reflections in a distorting mirror", p. 183. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt155jhw3.15>. (Accessed 4.05.2022)

reproaching the West that Russia should have accepted their actions and the deaths of civilians in Serbia, thus, according to Moscow's logic, the West, in particular The United States should have accepted Russia's actions in Chechnya.⁶¹

Also, due to the Yugoslav crisis, interest in Russian weapons has increased in the world, thereby Russia itself destabilized the policy of disarmament. Of course, such a turn of events was beneficial for Russia, when the Russian economy slipped to the very bottom, the Kremlin was ready to sell absolutely everything just to stabilize the Russian economy.⁶²

It is worth saying that the main result of the Kosovo war for Russia was the change of the Military Doctrine. The NATO air campaign on the territory of Yugoslavia left an indelible mark on Russian-American relations, moreover, it intensified the confrontation between Russia and NATO.⁶³ NATO's actions put “the end of the post–Cold War phase of international affairs.”⁶⁴ The NATO air campaign has become an indicator that Russia's opinion is not taken into account in international security issues. Thus, Russia has made one of the key conclusions in conducting its foreign policy that the use of military force is the most effective mechanism in any disputes and conflicts. After 1999, Russia did not insist on negotiations, but held them only for the fact of their presence. Moreover, after the NATO air campaign, Russia began to put its personal interests first, thereby no longer relying on the UN system or on the interests of other states. Russia also began to apply one of the key factors in the future of Russian history, during any military conflicts, Russia carried out strong propaganda of its position through the media, as the United States did during the NATO bombing, when the American press constantly cited Tyrant-Milosevic as an example.⁶⁵ Moreover, FRY after 1999 was very often used in many

⁶¹ This statement could be found here: V. Baranovsky, “The Kosovo Factor in Russia’s Foreign Policy”, p.123

⁶² M.Gessen, “How the Kosovo Air War Foreshadowed the Crisis in Ukraine”, *The New Yorker*, 2022. Available at <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/how-the-kosovo-air-war-foreshadowed-the-crisis-in-ukraine>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁶³ This idea is here: S. Kieninger, “The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations”. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/07075332.2020.1848899?scroll=top&needAccess=true>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

⁶⁴ A. Arbatov, “The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya”. Available at <https://www.marshallcenter.org/de/node/1409>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁶⁵ This analysis is based on: A. Arbatov, “The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya”. Available at <https://www.marshallcenter.org/de/node/1409>.

military literatures, where “it is used as an important example of the changing character of conflict in the twenty-first century.”⁶⁶ It is believed that NATO's actions on the territory of Yugoslavia marked a new stage in the conduct of international conflicts. First, the United States imposed sanctions on the concept of "Humanitarian interventions" in this conflict. Secondly, the West has demonstrated disregard for international law and orientation towards the United Nations as a whole.⁶⁷

It is also worth noting the fact that the nuclear weapons deterrence agenda has also become secondary, if before 1999 Yeltsin and Clinton, in particular, were developing a scenario where weapons of mass destruction are minimized in the world, then after the end of the Yugoslav conflict, Russia repeatedly threatened the use of nuclear weapons against Western countries when they didn't agree with its foreign policy. For example, only one Russian media outlet, the “Kommersant” newspaper, has mentioned more than 500 coincidences since 1999, where Russia made a threat to Western countries in the use of nuclear weapons in the context of various conflicts.⁶⁸

Secession and the revival of confrontation between the United States and Russia became one of the consequences of distrust of NATO after the Kosovo war. Firstly, Russia has changed its foreign policy towards NATO, of course, it did not happen in an instant. This outcome was the product of many events that took place after 1999, but the war in Kosovo left a huge rift between Russia and the United States.⁶⁹ Secondly, Russia, realizing its backwardness in the military sector after the NATO air campaign, in response to this began to increase spending on the military industry, if in the period from 1992-1997 after the end of the Cold War military spending decreased literally 8 times, and in 1998 after the default reached a minimum point, then after 1999 and to date, the military expenditures of the Russian Federation and the military budget of the Russian Federation

(Accessed 05.05.2022); and also, on issues of such periodicals as *New York Times*, *CNN*, *The Times* during the period from March 24 to July 1.

⁶⁶ T. German, “A legacy of conflict: Kosovo, Russia, and the West”, *Comparative Strategy*, no.38, 2019, pp.426-438

⁶⁷ Ibidem

⁶⁸ This search is available here: *Kommersant*. Available at https://www.kommersant.ru/search/results?search_query=ядерное+оружие&sort_type=1&search_full=1&time_range=2&dateStart=1999-03-24&dateEnd=2022-05-12&stamp=637879895575240364. (Accessed 08.05.2022)

⁶⁹ This Idea could be found here: E. Sivis, “FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND SUPERPOWER POLITICS: COMPETITION OF U.S. AND RUSSIA OVER KOSOVO”, p.94. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/download/article-file/982266>. (Accessed 01.05.2022)

are growing more and more every year, with the exception of 2017 and 2018, when Russia faced economic problems.⁷⁰

Moreover, the conflict in Kosovo has demonstrated for Russia double standards and hypocrisy on the part of the United States.⁷¹ The double standards of the West have become another of the mechanisms of pressure of Russian propaganda, the Russian media constantly emphasized the fact that the United States does not support Russia's interference in other states, although the United States has done this more than once: "The hypocrisy of the West in relation to color revolutions and anti-state protest movements, which they actively support in undesirable countries, is especially boundless, but they severely suppress at home."⁷²

Moreover, Russia subsequently adopted some of the mechanisms that NATO used in the Kosovo conflict. Firstly, Russia realized that the use of air power is one of the least resource-intensive and costly mechanisms in conducting any operations or wars, we could observe this pattern of actions at the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022. Also, Russia began to use the pretext of infringement of the rights of the population (in the case of Russia, Russian-speaking), we can trace such trends in 2008 in Georgia and in 2014 and in 2022 in Ukraine. Russia has also repeatedly disregarded international law, the UN system and international security, thereby repeating the Kosovo scenario.⁷³

The importance of the war in Kosovo for Russia is certainly present to this day in Russian foreign policy. The mechanism for the introduction of the Kosovo War was adopted by the Russian authorities immediately in 1999, the precedent of Kosovo in the future was used by Russia repeatedly. Moreover, the very fact that the NATO bombing in Yugoslavia created a crack in Russian-American relations have an important role not only in the post-war period in the framework of the Kosovo war, but also to this day. The separation of the United States and Russia has been going on for years, the confrontation between

⁷⁰ This data is here: "Rashody Rossii na Economicu», 2020. Available at https://ruxpert.ru/Статистика:Расходы_России_на_оборону. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁷¹ T. German, "A legacy of conflict: Kosovo, Russia, and the West", pp. 426-438

⁷² "Dvoynye standarty Zapada", *Rukspert*. Available at https://ruxpert.ru/Двойные_стандарты_Запада. (Accessed 08.05.2022)

⁷³ This analysis is based on the works: E. Sivis, "FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND SUPERPOWER POLITICS: COMPETITION OF U.S. AND RUSSIA OVER KOSOVO", p.94. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/982266>. (Accessed 01.05.2022); V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy", p.123; Y. Pavlov, "Esli Kosovo – Ne Serbia, to Donbass – ne Ukraina", *EAdaily*, 2022. Available at <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2022/05/05/esli-kosovo-ne-serbiya-to-donbass-ne-ukraina-pochemu-zhaluetsya-vuchich>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

Russian politics and American politics in the international arena has only been growing and gaining strength since 1999. The change of the leadership of Russia in 2000, and subsequently the irremovability of the leadership certainly made an even greater imprint after 1999. Thus, we can say that the war in Kosovo served as one of the starting points in the distance and the buildup of confrontation between Russia and the United States, which to this day is increasing and growing deeper and deeper.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ The ideas given in this analysis can be found in these works: E. Sivas, "FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND SUPERPOWER POLITICS: COMPETITION OF U.S. AND RUSSIA OVER KOSOVO", p.94. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/982266>. (Accessed 01.05.2022); V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy", p.123; S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations"; E.Yesson, "The Balkans, NATO and European Security after the Kosovo War", Special Issue, No.13, 1999/2000

Chapter 2

The War in Kosovo through the prism of Clinton-Yeltsin's Relations and Clinton-Yeltsin's Foreign Policy and their World Order

1. Yeltsin's World Order through the Prism of Schools of Thoughts

The end of the Cold War was undoubtedly a turning point for the entire world community. December 25, 1991 Mikhail Gorbachev resigns and transfers his powers to President Boris Yeltsin. Some researchers criticize Yeltsin's vision of foreign policy and world order due to the fact instead of maintaining friendly relations with the states that were part of the Soviet Union, Russia redirected its foreign policy to friendship with its "enemies".⁷⁵ In fact, it is believed that the direction of Russia's foreign policy was a continuation of Gorbachev's "new political thinking", which implied that the Soviet Union would not challenge the United States, but on the contrary, the direction of foreign policy would be aimed at cooperation.

Thus, it is worth highlighting the spectrum of Russia's foreign policy views through the prism of several schools of political thought in order to understand and define Russia's actions during the conflict in Kosovo.

Firstly, Russia, which has vast territories, the nature of moving borders has described Russia since the time of the Russian Empire. Russia is also very pluralistic from an ethnic point of view, a multinational state where the population needed special patience, which most often characterizes the pluralistic democratic organization of society. Russia is also characterized by its uniqueness due to the Russian Eurasianism, which was developed and described in detail in the 19th century by the philosophical schools of Slavophiles. In the 20th century, Russian uniqueness changed from territorial expansion to Soviet ideological exclusivity, the uniqueness of which consisted in its ideological model and political influence. The post-Soviet transformation after the collapse of the Soviet Union was characterized by its weakness and ability to escape the union after the collapse of communism, as the collapse of the unitary state into fifteen new states. Stabilizing

⁷⁵ For example, M. El-Doufani, "Yeltsin's Foreign Policy - A Third-World Critique", *The World Today*, no. 6, 1993, pp. 105-108. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40396510>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

domestic politics in particular, President Yeltsin was afraid to take on a leading role in the post-Soviet space and found common ground with American Exceptionalism.⁷⁶

As mentioned above, Russia under President Yeltsin followed an unexpected scenario and chose the direction of rapprochement with the West. Therefore, it is worth considering the vision of Russia through the prism of Pro-Western Liberals. Usually there are such bright examples of this school as politicians like Andrei Kozyrev and Yegor Gaidar who held key government posts in post-communist Russia. The communist regime and Russia's reputation in the international arena, as well as friendship with former soviet states, only fuelled Russia for its economic backwardness, so Russia chose the path of rapprochement with Western countries that were considered as Western civilized nations.⁷⁷

National Democrats don't agree with their pro-Western colleagues about universally acceptable rules, instead of this they consider that human rights should be not a result of only western countries. They thought that in the case of Russia after the Cold War, the Russian government have to move away from its identity and uniqueness, and moreover they must learn in a co-dependent, but at the same time in a diverse world. Thus, the main treat to the world community is the violation of human rights and disrespect for cultural diversity. Therefore, Russia's task is not to imitate the Western model, but rather to find an appropriate way of life in a multicultural, but interdependent world.⁷⁸

In turn, as Neo-Communist argue that Russia, on the contrary, should remain a completely independent state and not compound with Western countries. Russia's interests should not overlap with the interests of the West, since they perceive the West as enemy states. The last school of thought worth emphasizing is Expansionists. This school considers Russia from the side of geopolitics. For this school, it is believed that for Russia, as a geopolitical empire, the main threat comes from the sea. Therefore, this concept considers

⁷⁶ A.Nikitin, "RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE FRAGMENTED POST-SOVIET SPACE." *International Journal on World Peace* 25, no. 2, 2008, pp. 8-9. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20752831>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁷⁷ In the article of Tsygankov he considers that as a key point A.Tsygankov, "The Final Triumph of the Pax Americana? Western Intervention in Yugoslavia and Russia's Debate on the Post-Cold War Order", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 34, no. 2, 2001, pp. 133-56. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48609412>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁷⁸ A.Tsygankov, "The Final Triumph of the Pax Americana? Western Intervention in Yugoslavia and Russia's Debate on the Post-Cold War Order", pp. 133-56. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48609412>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

the interests of Russia mutually with the interests of the West, especially with the United States. Moreover, the expansionists advocate territorial expansion and believe that this is the only sure way to survive in this world.⁷⁹

It is worth saying that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was in economic decline, which led to the political vulnerability of the state. This internal weakness damaged Russia's position in the international arena and Russia is becoming ordinary observers instead of an active actor. So, for example, in the situation with Kosovo, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization company left Russia in the "auditorium". Thus, many researchers are confident that, first of all, Russia should have settled its economic internal problems, since with an internal imbalance, Russia cannot be an active player in the international arena. The researchers also believe that Russia should not have extended its influence over the states that are part of the Cooperation of Independent States, but rather try to coexist and interact in cooperation.⁸⁰

2. Clinton's World Order through the prism of Schools of Thoughts

According to Tsygankov, he often criticized Clinton's foreign policy or the so-called "New World Order".⁸¹ First of all, many criticize Clinton's policy because of Clinton's desire for growing China, which led to its rapid growth since President Clinton missed these prerequisites. Also, the researchers claim that Clinton was too blind towards Russia, especially during the period of "strong friendship" with Yeltsin, thereby missing the corruption that Russia brings around the world, as well as political hypocrisy. Moreover, researchers claim that Clinton was too slow to use any force against Yugoslavia, as well as Iraq.⁸²

⁷⁹ A.Tsygankov, "The Final Triumph of the Pax Americana? Western Intervention in Yugoslavia and Russia's Debate on the Post-Cold War Order", pp. 133-56. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48609412>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁸⁰ "What Are Russian Foreign Policy Objectives?", 2022. Available at carnegieendowment.org/1999/05/01/what-are-russian-foreign-policy-objectives-pub-424. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁸¹ For example: S. Walt, "Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 2, 2000, pp. 63-79; N. Chomsky, "The Clinton Doctrine: World Orders Old and New", *A Journal of Literature and Art*, No. 22, 1994, pp. 78-111

⁸² S. Walt, "Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy", pp. 63-64.

It is worth noting that President Clinton had the opportunity to face a world with which no president before him was familiar. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, the growing power of China, conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. All this became a huge challenge for the state, whose economy was one of the leading in the world and its place in the international arena was one of the most important.

Of course, the entire US foreign policy should be viewed through the liberal prism of the theory of international relations, which is also one of the dominant ones. It is worth noting that since the end of the Cold War, there has been a transformation of liberals. In the initial version, this theory provided the state with only a small role in world politics along with large non-governmental organizations. After the end of the Cold War, the situation has changed, one of the impulses to transformation is article of Fukuyama "The End of History", which marked the end of the original theory of liberals. Thus, dialogue and the search for cooperation were replaced by an impeccable assertion of the ideal of market democracy on the American model. The famous thesis that President Clinton uttered in 1994 was "the policy of liberal interventionism of the USA", thus Clinton explained his desire to spread democracy around the world in his annual message to the US Congress.⁸³ Later, as is known, this theory was divided into two forms - power (Yugoslavia, 1999 and Iraq, 2003) and "velvet" (Yugoslavia, 2000 and Georgia, 2003).

Considering the US foreign policy from the neoclassical realists who insist on the unipolarity of the world and hegemony in the world as the best way to maintain stability in the world, the US actions in Yugoslavia and armed intervention in this conflict just confirm this theory.⁸⁴ From the constructivist side, if we consider the US foreign policy during the Clinton presidency, it is worth noting that this approach is close to the "soft hegemony" of America in the West. Describing and explaining, for example, humanitarian interventions, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the expansion of NATO and the spread of the Western system.⁸⁵

If we consider US foreign policy from the side of critical theories of international relations, for example, from the side of globalists and globalization. Most often, many researchers assess globalization as a whole positive, but its critics argue that globalization

⁸³ A.Tsygankov, *Sociologia Mezhdunarodnyh Otnosheniy*, Moscow, Aspect Press, 2006, p. 79

⁸⁴ A.Tsygankov, *Sociologia Mezhdunarodnyh Otnosheniy*, Moscow, Aspect Press, 2006, p. 77

⁸⁵ A.Tsygankov, *Sociologia Mezhdunarodnyh Otnosheniy*, Moscow, Aspect Press, 2006, p. 88

is by no means accompanied by greater stabilization and reduction of poverty around the world, taking into account the fact that the American system was just aimed at globalization. The researchers argued that despite the optimistic forecasts of neoliberalism, on the contrary, new forms of poverty and dependence on developed countries have emerged in the world.⁸⁶ For example, Cox R.W. argues that in the course of globalization, a global class of transnational managers is being formed. That is, the states that have huge resources choose which states to deal with and where to invest, thereby the states that have agreed to these conditions of globalization strive not for social justice, but for the stable preservation of power.⁸⁷

If we consider globalization from the side of cultural hegemony, it is worth saying that historians argue that globalization is not accompanied by increased political stability. This is justified by arms races, lawless and new forms of violence, such as in the early 1990s, including events in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, as well as the development of terrorism, such as the September attacks on the United States in 2001. For example, in the direction of critical geopolitics, it is believed that the positions and chosen strategies of states such as the United States, for example, proceed only from given geopolitical interests and parameters. Thus, historians argue that the United States, depending on its benefits, changes its foreign policy, thereby leaving gaps in geographical borders, which leads to various conflicts and humanitarian disasters.⁸⁸

3. Clinton's foreign policy and the Kosovo question

Clinton's foreign policy was quite extensive, but it is worth highlighting several key points that certainly played a role in the settlement of the Kosovo issue.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new stage began in the world, firstly, rapid globalization, which US President Bill Clinton actively supported and promoted. Some historians refer to Clinton as “Globalization President”.⁸⁹ Undoubtedly, Bill Clinton

⁸⁶ A.Tsygankov, *Sociologia Mezhdunarodnyh Otnosheniy*, Moscow, Aspect Press, 2006, p. 84

⁸⁷ H. Pellerin, “Global Restructuring in the World Economy and Migration: The Globalization of Migration Dynamics.” *International Journal* 48, no. 2, 1993, pp. 240–54

⁸⁸ A.Tsygankov, *Sociologia Mezhdunarodnyh Otnosheniy*, Moscow, Aspect Press, 2006, p. 88

⁸⁹ For example: Walter L. Hixson, *American Foreign Relations: A New Diplomatic History*, Routledge, 1st edition, 2015, p. 413. Available at <https://books.google.it/books?id=XyvCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA413&lpg=PA413&dq>.&f=false/. (Accessed

realized quite soon that the word “globalization” in that time was not only “the trend world” but also the way to enhance the US economy. He believed that the best political way to advance the US influence in the world economy and on the political stage is to maintain democratization, keep up with technological progress (the emergence of the Internet) and promote an open market. He signed many agreements such as North American Free Trade Agreement, he was an adherent of the creation of the World Trade Organization and, also, he pushed the Congress to accept the African Growth and Opportunity Act. But of course, a large amount of criticism of Clinton exists because of his position and role in globalization. The main turning point is his vision and actions. First of all, Clinton’s vision on globalization’s issue was characterized by short-term tactics and usually this interfered with his global vision of the issue. Usually, these blunders are associated with various trade agreements, numerous sanctions, which were aimed, among other things, at American companies, as well as at other states, in order to push them to conduct their trade in economically advantageous regions for the United States.⁹⁰

One of Clinton's main promises in his election campaign and after his election were the promised attempts to respect, support and promote human rights. After six years as President, in his speech on February 26, 1999, in San Francisco, he said: “We want all of Europe to have what America helped build in Western Europe – a community that upholds common standards of human rights, where people have the confidence and security to invest in the future where nations cooperate to make war unthinkable”.⁹¹ Clinton also promised to support institutions such as the UN, realizing the importance of this organization in the formation of world peace. However, the Clinton presidency is more associated with such a phenomenon as humanitarian interventions, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo. This is a reason for criticism by many researchers of Clinton's foreign policy. Despite this, Clinton managed to attract the attention of the whole world to the issue of human rights. According to some authors, by focusing his attention on this issue

04.04.2022); L. Walter, “The Post September 11 Debate over Empire, Globalization, and Fragmentation”, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 117, no. 1, 2002, pp. 1–17
Available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/798091>. (Accessed 04.04.2022)

⁹⁰ For example, here: “Clinton’s Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Policy*, no. 121, 2000, pp. 18–29. Available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/1149615>. (Accessed 04.04.2022); F. Lewis, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy”, *New Zealand International Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1994, pp. 25–27. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45234299>. (Accessed 04.04.2022)

⁹¹ B. Clinton, “Remarks by the President on Foreign Policy”, 7 April 1999, Washington D.C.

at numerous negotiations, meetings and conferences, Clinton has achieved that the level of respect for human rights has increased sufficiently during his presidency, for example, in the direction of the crisis in Haiti.⁹² According to others, Clinton respected human rights only when “it suited him”.⁹³

Among the main challenges for the United States, and in particular for the foreign policy pursued by President Bill Clinton, were the agendas of Russia and China. If China was growing economically and politically, then Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, on the contrary, was losing its power and slowing down its momentum. During this period, the objective of the United States was to avoid any risk and push Russia to completely free itself from the communist past. In particular, Clinton was aimed at cooperation with Russia, in his speech in 1999, he also said: “If Russia does what it must to make its economy work, I am ready to do everything I can to mobilize adequate international support for them. We will work to continue cutting our two nations’ nuclear arsenals, and help Russia prevent both its weapons and its expertise from falling into the wrong hands”.⁹⁴

According to Walt and Schewenniger, they claim that it was Clinton who lost Russia and for this he is often criticized.⁹⁵ But in fact, it is worth highlighting several factors. Firstly, Clinton, with all his desire to keep Russia on the line and build a safe distance, was aware of all internal problems, including economic ones. He did not approve of Yeltsin's "loan-for-shares" policy and believed that thereby the whole epic of active privatization would lead to the fact that most of the important assets would fall into the wrong hands, that is, to paid oligarchs, bandits or mafia, and would incur corruption. According to some commentators, it was wrong of Clinton to think that a state that had been a closed communist world for more than 70 years would be able to change its direction so quickly towards democratization and a free market.⁹⁶ According to Cox, the American administration was trying to help Russia because it was trying to help itself.⁹⁷

⁹² . Walt, “Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy”, pp. 63-79

⁹³ “Clinton’s Foreign Policy”, pp. 18–29. Available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/1149615>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

⁹⁴ B. Clinton, “Remarks by the President on Foreign Policy”, 7 April 1999, Washington D.C.

⁹⁵ For example, S. Walt and S. Schwenninger

⁹⁶ It also can be founded these statements in articles of Walt, S. and Schwenninger, S.

⁹⁷ M. Cox, “The Necessary Partnership? The Clinton Presidency and Post-Soviet Russia.” *International Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 4, 1994, pp. 635–58, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2624551>. (Accessed 13.04.2022)

During Clinton's second term, after the escalation of the conflict in the Balkans, of course, an important issue on Clinton agenda became the question of Kosovo. In a speech given in early 1999, Clinton declared: “The biggest remaining danger to this progress (he talked about that the USA helped to end the war in Bosnia) has been the fighting and the repression in Kosovo... We have a clear national interest in ensuring that Kosovo is where this trouble ends”.⁹⁸ Of course, Clinton was afraid of consequences that could also affect its allies, for example such as Turkey and Greece. Moreover, he said that if the both sides have no agreement to the peace, the United States will be forced to send a NATO-led international force to bring this region into the peace.

4. Yeltsin's foreign policy and the Kosovo question

Considering Russian foreign policy, it is worth highlighting several directions. But firstly, it is important to emphasize the Russian image in particular period. Needless to say, that reforms of Gorbachev and Yeltsin were directed toward the European direction and return to European civilization.

One of the main vectors were the relationships with USA, in the period from 1992 to 1996 Russia and USA had so-called “honeymoon”, they signed a huge number of different agreements. The most significant for Russia were the Charter of the Russian-American partnership and the Declaration on a new relationship between Russia and the US. In 1992 Yeltsin said during his address to US Congress: “We have left behind the period when America and Russia looked at each other through gun sights”.⁹⁹ Yeltsin was fully confident that friendship with the West, especially with the United States, would play into Russia's hands in the formation of democracy, as well as open up new horizons for international cooperation. Moreover, back in 1994, Russia was aiming to sign an agreement with NATO. But the Western side decided to ignore this aspiration and limited itself to an invitation to participate in the Partnership for Peace program. Thus, the United States and the West itself showed their distrust of Russia's political stability, and also ruled out the possibility of control over Eastern Europe for Russia. After these events,

⁹⁸B. Clinton, “Remarks by the President on Foreign Policy”, 7 April 1999, Washington D.C.

⁹⁹ “Quotation of the Day”, *New York Times*, 1992. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/18/nyregion/quotation-of-the-day-988692.html>. (Accessed 03.04.2022)

Russia, represented by Yeltsin and Kozyrev, took a position of fierce criticism of NATO, especially after the events in Bosnia. Firstly, before the election, Yeltsin's rating dropped significantly, due to the fact that he was considered a pro-Western politician and with a pro-Western Kozyrev, therefore, in order to restore his "popularity" in Russian circles, he replaced him with a pro-state Primakov. At that moment, Russia embarked on the path to achieve a multipolar world, although many politicians and historians have repeatedly criticized such an aspiration, pointing out that such a ratio in the international arena can be highly unpredictable.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the direction of foreign policy gradually began to change its course, from a pro-Western orientation, Russia changed its course to pro-Eurasian integration. Primakov, who had extensive experience in the intelligence service, was aimed at securing a leading place for Russia in Eurasia and beyond, unlike his predecessor, who for the most part missed and ignored this goal. Many critics claim that Kozyrev admitted that Russia has become very vulnerable in the international arena and thereby overlooked not only the growing globalization on the part of America, but also the growing power of China.¹⁰¹

Another of the more important areas in this period was the integration of Russia into the G7. It is worth saying that Russia's integration into the G7 was quite intense, perhaps even unpredictable, for a state that had recently collapsed. On the other hand, Russia was facing a picture of the expansion of the EU and the same expansion of the European Union, so Russia had no choice not to start its integration towards the G7. Back in Gorbachev's time, Russia began trying to integrate into the G7, in 1991 Gorbachev took part in the negotiations, but only in 1997 Russia became a rightful partner at this summit. For Russia's interests, this participation was very useful, thereby Russia was able to secure at least some influence in Eastern Europe and try to prevent the expansion of NATO.¹⁰²

Also, it is worth highlighting another direction of Russia's foreign policy during this period, namely, the European Union. Unlike NATO, Russia was not so afraid and struggled with the expansion of the EU. Firstly, it was a profitable trading partner for Russia, even despite the sharp drop in oil prices in 1998, fuel exports to the EU alone

¹⁰⁰ T. Zonova, R. Reinhardt, "Main Vectors of Russia's Foreign Policy (1991-2014)", pp. 501-16. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43580683>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

¹⁰¹ A. Lynch, "The Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.1, no.18, 2002, pp. 161-182

¹⁰² Idem, p.170.

amounted to 35.1%, not to mention the huge Russian reserve of metals and minerals. Secondly, relations with the EU were not a big problem for Russia, of course, that Russia was afraid of the expansion of the European Union to the East, including integration with post-Soviet countries, but the leadership of the European Union decided to conduct an "isolation policy" in the direction of Russia and remove it from any interference in the expansion of the EU, including the Baltic states.¹⁰³

Also, another key principle in Russian foreign policy was the idea of the multipolarity of the world, which was especially promoted by Primakov in the period from 1996-1999. The West looked at this concept very critically, Western politicians understood that this idea was aimed more at the interests of Russia than the whole world, thereby Russia would be able to contain the growing unipolarity of the United States on the world stage. While Russia tried to keep the United States in its own multipolarity, for example, with China, then friendship and good relations with China had their advantages, firstly, it was a supporter to help with the struggle of the growing influence of the United States, and secondly, it was an excellent maneuver to stop the growing China itself.¹⁰⁴

And finally, another direction of foreign policy was the relationship with the post-Soviet countries. At first, it was difficult to find a "common denominator" between the countries of the former Soviet Union, and the relationship was more like a dispute between different elites. The CIS, which had already been functioning since 1991, made it possible for Russia to form an alliance, but in fact, in this partnership, Russia was more in the role of a "breadwinner" than a union state. Some allied countries also understood the need to create some kind of institution, for example, in 1994, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed Russia to create its own Eurasian Union. But in turn, Russia simply preferred some kind of economic integration with the CIS countries. Such as the agreement on the establishment of the Customs Union (1995) or, for example, the union agreement between Russia and Belarus (1997). Later, the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union followed after the transition of power to Putin (2000-2001).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Idem, p. 173

¹⁰⁴ R. Panagiotou, "The Western Balkans between Russia and the European Union: perceptions, reality, and impact on enlargement", pp. 219-233. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26159410>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

¹⁰⁵ T. Zonova, R. Reinhardt, "Main Vectors of Russia's Foreign Policy (1991-2014)", pp. 501-16. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43580683>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

5. US-Russian relations in the late 1990s and the Kosovo conflict

In the 1990s, the foreign policies of the United States and Russia were aimed at mutual integration and partnership. The Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Kozyrev believed that integration with the West should be a top priority. They thought that due to the West integration they could build stable democratic institutions and regime in domestic politics. Moreover, the US President Clinton was an ideal partner this period of time, he carried a lot about all Russian reforms and movements forward to democracy, also he has been enough knowledgeable, friendly and engaged to Russia.¹⁰⁶

Firstly, it is worth saying that whatever Russia's interest, in fact, it was important for the government in the person of Yeltsin and at that time even Kozyrev to maintain at least some semblance of cooperation with the United States. Some historians believe that the trick on the Russian side was just to avoid choosing which side to support and independently allow NATO and the United States to choose the direction in the fight against this conflict.¹⁰⁷ In this impulse to resolve this conflict as soon as possible, a Contact group was created between Russia, the United States, France and Germany, and later Italy was included. One of such motives for creation was to avoid misunderstanding among States and certainly preserve cooperation. At the same time, Russia hoped that such an alignment of events would prevent, as a last resort, any strike against states without the approval of the UN Security Council, if it is under the close attention of its allies. Thus, the Contact Group, which was formed at the height of the conflict on the territory of Yugoslavia, also functioned in the Kosovo conflict.¹⁰⁸

In 1998, the Kosovo War unfolded when the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began fighting for the independence of the territory, thereby Russia and the United States took the positions of two different sides. The President Clinton tried to talk about Kosovo with

¹⁰⁶ S. Savranskaya, "Yeltsin and Clinton", *Diplomatic History*, Vol.42, Issue 4, 2018, p.564-567
S. Talbott, "Clinton and Yeltsin", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, 2018, pp. 568. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhy052>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

¹⁰⁷ A.Lynch, "The Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s", p. 167. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/826237>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

¹⁰⁸ Idem, p.168

the President Yeltsin during two meetings in 1998, for the first time in Birmingham in the middle of May and for the second time in Moscow in the beginning of September but Yeltsin was not ready and was not included in these discussions because, apart from the Kosovo conflict, there were not the best times in Russia's domestic politics. But despite this, based on the transcript of telephone conversations between Clinton and Yeltsin, the first time President Yeltsin himself mentioned the issue of Kosovo on April 6, 1998. Yeltsin believed that through joint efforts and Contact Group they could resolve the Kosovo problem. While Clinton thought that this conflict should be considered as Bosnia and Iraq, and they had to work on it until they achieve negotiations between Milosevic (the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and Kosovo.¹⁰⁹

It is worth noting that while the United States saw the Kosovo conflict through the projection of Bosnia and Iraq, and were also ready for a bombing attack, while Russia believed that it had its own interests and influence in this territory, most likely Russia conducted a parallel more with Chechnya, Firstly, the majority of the population in the southern part were Muslim, while on the borders the majority were Slavic Orthodox, as in Chechnya. Secondly, they insisted on separatism and independence of their own territory. Thus, even the divergence of opinions and understandings led to misunderstandings between States in this conflict.¹¹⁰

On May 17, 1998 during a telephone conversation Clinton and Yeltsin again touched on the issue of Kosovo. The President Clinton stressed that it is very important to work together on this conflict and "to keep them from killing each other". Yeltsin put pressure on Milosevic, thereby bringing him to a dialogue.¹¹¹ Which was beneficial for the United States, since Russia had its own levers of pressure and could encourage Milosevic to negotiate and enter into dialogue.

Moreover, according to President Yeltsin, Russia and the United States treated this conflict from different sides. For the United States, it was a great opportunity to punish Milosevic and his regime, while Russia looked at this conflict more globally, already realizing that after the collapse of the USSR, "the trend" in the collapse of unions became

¹⁰⁹ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kosovo," Clinton Digital Library, 5 February 2019

¹¹⁰ S. Talbott, *The Russia Hand*, 1st ed, Random House, 2022, p.301

¹¹¹ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kosovo," Clinton Digital Library, 5 February 2019

a causal link due primarily to Russia, which could lead to a humanitarian catastrophe.¹¹² During the conversation on June 15, 1998 Yeltsin stressed again that “any use of force by NATO is inadmissible” and suggested to work together in parallel, i.e., Russia should concentrate on pressure of Belgrade and USA focus on the Kosovar Albanian leaders. Yeltsin understood that the UN Security Council would not authorize a strike on Milosevic, and moreover that an unauthorized attack would aggravate the issue of NATO between Russia and the United States, and undermine any cooperation and trust.¹¹³ Russia’s fears about the intervention of NATO troops were quite logical. It is worth emphasizing that at that time Russia was experiencing its domestic conflict with the mood of separatism, namely Chechnya. Having allowed NATO’s military intervention in Yugoslavia with a clear intention to show its strength to Milosevic and thereby set a precedent for the entire world, Russia could have expected the same scenario in Chechnya, but there would have been completely different players and the end could have been deplorable for Russia.¹¹⁴

On June 16, 1998 a telephone conversation took place again between the presidents during which Yeltsin talked about his attempts to reason with Milosevic, avoiding an armed clash with NATO forces. They have developed a document, a bilateral statement and Milosevic has supported all the important points.¹¹⁵ Of course, Yeltsin thought that this meeting could prevent any arm conflicts and Milosevic’s ruthlessness towards Kosovar Albanians but instead of these and despite the meeting with Milosevic in Moscow the Serb forces were still committing violence towards Kosovo. Thereby, despite Clinton’s trust forwards to Yeltsin, for NATO this neglect was a “bright light” and signal for warning. Moreover, there was an inevitable migrant crisis that would primarily affect Western countries.¹¹⁶

Of course, it was not profitable for Russia or the United States to launch any military action on the Balkan territory. The United States, which has already used force during the

¹¹² B. Yeltsin, *Prezidenskiy Marafon: razmishleniya, vospominaniya, vpechatleniya*, p.202

¹¹³ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kosovo,” Clinton Digital Library, 5 February 2019

¹¹⁴ S. Talbott, “Clinton and Yeltsin”, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, 2018, pp. 568–571. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhy042>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

¹¹⁵ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kosovo,” Clinton Digital Library, 5 February 2019

¹¹⁶ S. Kieninger, “The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations”, pp. 781-795

conflict in Bosnia, and Russia, which tried to get rid of its internal problems first of all, but also to stay afloat in the international arena.¹¹⁷ In general, it is worth noting that the international community did not show proper interest in racial problems within the region until the conflict reached the stage of development and irreversibility of the situation. The West applied the predictability of its actions and the first thing it did was to direct sanctions against the Yugoslav countries. Some researchers believe that this policy was obviously wrong, because instead of trying to resolve the conflict, the West, in turn, "added fuel to the fire" and so into an unstable situation. While the Russian side, which obviously took a pro-Serbian position, certainly did not approve of such a step, and this was one of the reasons for the Russian-American disagreement in this conflict. But with the development of negotiations in the Contact Group, as well as with the threat of large-scale ethnic cleansing, Russia was rushing from one side to the other. On the other hand, there was the West, with which it was definitely necessary to cooperate. On the other hand, there was the "fraternal country" Serbia, as well as the Serbian ally, the growing China, which has repeatedly spoken out against sanctions and issued ultimatums. But it is worth saying that despite the fact that Russia did not have a clear position in this conflict, at least based on conversations with Clinton, as well as Yeltsin's actions inside the country and relations with other allied states, Yeltsin was still able to influence Milosevic and force him, in the person of his representatives, to enter into an adequate dialogue with Ibrahim Rugova, but even despite resolution 1160, from the UN Security Council, no Western country was able to influence the Kosovo leader and force him to engage in a constructive dialogue.¹¹⁸

Moreover, if consider the telephone's conversation between Yeltsin and Clinton it can be seen that while Clinton was building a clear position, Yeltsin was quite vague in his actions and he had only to put pressure on Milosevic. For example, during the call conversation between presidents, before Milosevic arrives to Moscow, on 15th June 1998, the president Clinton justified his clear position on this issue. First of all, he supported the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia but of course he understood that there is no chance to do this. In this case, Clinton considered his friend Yeltsin as the "pressure lever" on

¹¹⁷ S. K. Suter, "KOSOVO AND POSTMODERN WARFARE." *Peace Research* 32, no. 1, 2000, pp. 22–23. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23607682>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

¹¹⁸ R. Singh, "THE KOSOVO CRISIS AND THE QUEST FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION." *India Quarterly* 56, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1–26. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45073195>. (Accessed 07.05.2022)

Milosevic in his idea because Yeltsin had a great influence on Serbian side and also the big respect. Secondly, in that time Clinton wanted to avoid such mistakes as in Bosnia, and he was determined not to wait so long that it would not turn into a disadvantage. Thirdly, it was big concerns from Yeltsin about NATO's future actions in Balkans, they agreed to work on this issue together under the UN. Of course, despite the fact that, in fact, Yeltsin followed Clinton's instructions in resolving the conflict in Kosovo, such a position was advantageous for Russia. Firstly, Clinton supported and promoted Russia within the IMF and World Bank, and secondly, it was important for Yeltsin to approve of Clinton in domestic politics and in his "reformist Duma".

Thus, it can be said that during this period of time, Clinton used Yeltsin completely to his advantage. But at the same time, for Yeltsin, it was a way to restrain NATO and not allow it to invade the Kosovo conflict. However, despite Yeltsin's influence on Milosevic, he continued the violence by Serbian secret forces.¹¹⁹ Thus, Clinton and NATO became concerned about the actions of the Serbian leader and sent the first signal and NATO conducted massive air maneuvers involving more than 80 aircraft over the borders of Kosovo with Macedonia and Albania. Thus, the West believed that this would be a kind of blackmail and provocation to calm the unshakable Serbian president and put pressure on the uncooperative Kosovo leader. Many researchers believe that during this period, NATO equated itself with the international police, forgetting about all the institutions of settlement and not relying on the UN.¹²⁰

6. From cooperation and strong friendship to disagreement and confrontation

After President Clinton took office as the first president after the Cold War, his priority was to establish relations with Russia, in particular, with President Yeltsin. President Yeltsin, who tried to get rid of the past Soviet regime, was aimed at democratizing Russian society, for Yeltsin this meant friendship and honest cooperation with the Western democratic world. Their relationship was based on strong cooperation, they met

¹¹⁹ S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", pp. 781-795

¹²⁰ Idem, 783.

more than all the presidents combined for all time. According to Tallbott, while Yeltsin was creating a new state, carrying out various economic and political reforms, President Clinton was his “assistant” in the democratization of Russian society, and also fiercely advocated a place in the international arena for a New Russia.¹²¹ Of course, the friendship of the two states, which have always been in a state of confrontation, was absolutely ineffective for the old guard of Soviet Russia. When Yeltsin decided to conduct "shock therapy" and reform the entire economic sector, rather than doing it consistently, thereby allowing the Soviet elites to adapt to this system and seize all economic power, then Yeltsin had the first ardent opponents in the Duma, which would contradict the president's common sense during the Kosovo war more than once. One of Clinton's main miscalculations was that Clinton treated Russia already as a democratized state, while Russia was only at the stage of transition, moreover, corruption flourished in Russia, which Yeltsin prevailed even before the second elections in 1996, which later turned into an oligarchy, which the main opponent would hate Yeltsin in the form of the Communist Party.¹²²

The main dispute in the early 2000s in the American political community was the question "Who lost Russia?". Although it is impossible to answer this question, most likely it was formed through many external and internal factors. Rapprochement with Russia was primarily beneficial to the American side, the democratization of the world was one of the components of US foreign policy, moreover, it helped for the containment of its potential opponent by the example of Russia. Even joint participation in the settlement of the Bosnian issue in 1995 was beneficial for the American community, if only because Russia was completely controlled by the NATO army on Bosnia's territory.¹²³ Especially in the case of Kosovo, close cooperation with Russia became another working indicator for the United States, when, despite public sympathy for the Serbian people and outrage within the population and the Duma, Yeltsin did not take any action in relation to the

¹²¹ S. Talbott, "Clinton and Yeltsin", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, 2018, pp. 568–571. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhy042>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

¹²² M. Zygar', *Vse Svobodny: Istorija o tom, kak v 1996 godu v Rossii zakonchilis' vibory*, Alpina Publisher, 2021, p.70

¹²³ D. Rivera, S. Werning Rivera, "Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective." *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2009, p. 593, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40407006>. (Accessed 22.04.2022)

Kosovo conflict until last day, but on the contrary became a key player in the diplomatic settlement and removal of Milosevic from the territory of Kosovo.¹²⁴ The system of Eurasian security, to which Russia was forced to submit, where the United States was dominant, became more of a forced measure than approved by Yeltsin. Such a system eliminated the hostile mood between Russia and the United States and strengthened their cooperation on many issues. Russia's hesitation in this policy and system can be traced precisely during the conflict in Kosovo, when NATO began bombing Yugoslavia, Russia did not support the actions of Clinton, on the contrary, it began to vehemently condemn these actions, but at the same time Russia advocated a diplomatic settlement of the conflict and literally forced Milosevic to sign an agreement that "blocked the air". But despite Russia's cooperation, Yeltsin did not want to remain in the shadow of NATO and sent 200 paratroopers to Pristina, thereby challenging NATO and showing his independent position. Despite this, cooperation with Russia was absolutely positive, since during the Yugoslav conflict Russia refused to supply weapons to the Serbian side.¹²⁵ Russia's participation in the G8 summit was also absolutely beneficial for the United States. Back in 1997, Clinton, encouraging the already physically unstable Yeltsin, who was losing his rating within Russia day after day, ratified Russia's participation in this summit. At that time, this participation in the summit was important for Russia, because Russia was just entering the free trade and globalization market, although it defaulted in 1998.¹²⁶ It was thanks to the cooperation of states through the G8 platform that Russia supported the NATO plan and literally convinced Milosevic that if he continued the war, his regime would be in absolute isolation and invited him to surrender. According to Lieven there is an argument that if Russia had not sided with NATO in this conflict, the war could have continued for a long time. If Yeltsin had decided to supply arms to Serbia, Milosevic would have felt Russia's support, thereby continuing the war until his resources ran out and, consequently, Russia's resources. Paradoxically, the bombing of Yugoslavia gave Moscow an undeniable chance to resist the NATO forces and establish itself due to

¹²⁴ D. Rivera, S. Werning Rivera, "Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective", p. 594. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40407006>. Accessed 22 Apr. 2022. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

¹²⁵ A. Lieven, "Ham-Fisted Hegemon: The Clinton Administration and Russia." *Current History*, vol. 98, no. 630, 1999, p. 307. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45318363>. (Accessed 22.04.2022)

¹²⁶ S. Talbott, "Clinton and Yeltsin, pp. 568–571. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhy042>. (Accessed 22.04.2022)

this, but Yeltsin did not take advantage of this chance, only at the very end of the conflict Yeltsin tried to split NATO through a "march" to Pristina, thus dividing the NATO alliance into two camps, one of which was ready to open fire on the Russian contingent and the other, which feared the outbreak of a new war and the destabilization of the already destabilized territory. The reason for ignoring such a chance could be Yeltsin's economic dependence on the Western economy and future IMF lending in favor of Russia.¹²⁷

Relations between Clinton and Yeltsin during the Kosovo conflict were very tense. Russia did not approve of NATO's intervention in the former Soviet Republic, and concerns about NATO expansion have always been on the agenda of Russia's foreign policy.

On April 6, 1998 the President Yeltsin and the President Clinton touched the topic of Kosovo for the first time. Shortly after Chernomyrdin's resignation, Yeltsin decided to promote Kirilenko, who at one time had already managed to build good relations with Clinton. Moreover, Russia has already cooperated in the United States through the contact group on the Kosovo issue, while Russia tried to hope to resolve this issue peacefully, since it did not have the necessary resources to intervene, but the threat of such a step from the United States was present in any case. On May 12, 1998 Yeltsin and Clinton had a phone call again, now the Kosovo issue did not leave the presidents during their discussions, and a decision on this issue was inevitable. Yeltsin was sure that an exchange of views was necessary in resolving this issue so that the countries would not take two completely different positions. Moreover, President Clinton offered to stay in a place in Kosovo, but on the condition that Kosovo would be granted some autonomy within Yugoslavia.¹²⁸ During the conversation on May 17, 1998 in Birmingham the President Clinton compares the Kosovo crises with Bosnia. Clinton considered Kosovo as a part of Yugoslavia, implying that it is an Albanian part of Yugoslavia and it should be considered that way, including during negotiations between the Serbian and Albanian sides.¹²⁹ Thus,

¹²⁷ A.Lieven, "Ham-Fisted Hegemon: The Clinton Administration and Russia", p. 307. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45318363>. (Accessed 22.04.2022)

¹²⁸ This proposal was made by Yeltsin during a telephone conversation with a client, a transcript of the conversation can be found here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin," *Clinton Digital Library*

¹²⁹ This opinion was expressed by Clinton during the conversation with President Yeltsin in Birmingham, while they were discussing the issue of the settlement of the conflict between the Serbian and Albanian sides: U.S. Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation between The President and President

despite the fact that Yeltsin believed that all his attempts to restrain Clinton would be justified by success, Clinton was already targeting the scenario that was beneficial to him. Initially, considering this conflict as not only the establishment of American influence in the Balkans, but also the division of Yugoslavia into several parts. Clinton also noted that “the key thing is that the UN force not evaporate, since that would force us to come up with some other force”¹³⁰, thus noting that he does not exclude the possibility of using other forces on the territory of Kosovo if the UN does not support his intentions. In general, it is worth noting that despite the differences in the conduct of foreign policy, Yeltsin treated Clinton with great respect and appreciated this connection. This is repeatedly emphasized in their telephone conversations, correspondence and meetings, they said goodbye to each other as old and loyal friends, Yeltsin claimed that friendship with Clint is "more than just a friendship. It's what I would call co-leadership"¹³¹ believing that the American president puts Yeltsin and Russia as equals, perceiving the good relationship that took place between Boris and Bill as equal to the relationship between President Yeltsin and President Clinton. This was one of the main misunderstandings of Yeltsin, who wholeheartedly believed that personal relations between presidents should be projected onto the state relations of two different countries with a past spent in endless confrontation and conflicts. The well-known alcoholism and unclear mind also made themselves felt, Yeltsin could not perceive correctly the information that Clinton expressed during meetings and telephone conversations, at the slightest stress Yeltsin turned to the bottle, as for example he did not perceive the NATO goals correctly, as noted above, such a mistake and misunderstanding on the part of Yeltsin has consequences nowadays. Yeltsin was confident that it was possible to build a strong alliance (Soyuz¹³²) between Russia and the United States, which would be based on full

Yeltsin, 17.05.1998, Memorandum, *National Security Archive*, Suite 701, German Library, The George Washington University.

¹³⁰ U.S. Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation between The President and President Yeltsin, 17.05.1998, Memorandum, *National Security Archive*, Suite 701, German Library, The George Washington University.

¹³¹ Confirmation of this statement can be found in all archives of conversations between Clinton and Yeltsin in the period from 1993-1999: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹³² Yeltsin used the word union, although lexilogically it would be more correct to use the word alliance, but it can also be argued that this was not a semantic mistake, but on the contrary, he wanted to emphasize that he needed full cooperation and integration

trust and good faith, hoping that Russia would be perceived as an equal in this conflict.¹³³ In turn, Yeltsin literally put pressure on Clinton with his proposals for cooperation, realizing that without this cooperation he would be very vulnerable and would not be able to conduct politics inside Russia. Clinton certainly took advantage of this situation, he understood that without his pressure, the IMF was unlikely to issue a loan to Russia, moreover, he understood that Yeltsin would be forced to act on Clinton's instillations in the international arena and would not interfere with him in carrying out his foreign policy. Such uncertainty can be repeatedly traced in conversations between the presidents, for example, during a conversation on May 28, 1998, discussing a loan from the IMF, Yeltsin made sure several times and stressed that they will work together because they are convinced when they work together, they yield results, they have results.¹³⁴

In a conversation with the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany on August 7, 1998, Clinton stated: "Milosevic believes he is safe from any kind of NATO reprisal. He believes NATO will only act with a Security Council Resolution and he thinks Primakov has told him that Russia will block it...but I think restoring the credibility of the NATO military option is important just to convince Milosevic to stop".¹³⁵ A week later, Clinton informs Yeltsin about her plans, claiming that she intends to intervene and send NATO under UN sanctions or without if the situation worsens. Yeltsin perceives this news expectedly negatively, trying to persuade the American president not to use force and leave the region for peaceful resolution. This conversation can be considered a turning point in relations between NATO and Russia, it was already clear that Clinton had decided on what plan he would act on, and Yeltsin could not turn back time and force Clinton to listen to him, since he had already shown his inconsistency in negotiations with Milosevic.¹³⁶

¹³³ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin," *Clinton Digital Library*

¹³⁴ This conclusion can be drawn based on a conversation between Clinton and Yeltsin on March 28, 1998 during a discussion of Clinton's pressure on investors and the IMF: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin," *Clinton Digital Library*

¹³⁵ This conversation is here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl," *Clinton Digital Library*

¹³⁶ This conversation was conducted on 14 August, 1998, it can be found here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl," *Clinton Digital Library*

At this moment, Yeltsin was distracted by economic problems and he remains in such a position that he cannot conduct Russia's domestic or foreign policy, thereby distracting himself from the Kosovo issue. Then elections to the Duma are held and Yeltsin loses to his opponents Gennady Zyuganov and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who block his reforms and he remains in a hopeless situation. Chernomyrdin's party, which he helped sponsor, becomes the third in the rating, but cannot allow Yeltsin the privileges that he would like to receive. Yeltsin's popularity is falling sharply within the Russian population, he intervenes in the policy of the oligarchs, who will later aggravate the situation inside Russia, plundering it in parts thanks to privatization. Although Clinton's visit to Moscow still took place in September 1998.¹³⁷ Clinton's program in Russia looked like a real friendly meeting, despite the friction between the presidents, a large number of lunches or dinners with President Yeltsin, school visits on the first of September, university visits, etc. But despite this, Clinton noted at the morning security session that Russia, due to internal problems, was not in a stable and strong position to conduct foreign policy at that time. In the councils that wrote to the president before this session, it was emphasized that Clinton needed to emphasize for Yeltsin how cooperation with the West would be useful later for Russia, including in the Second World War. It was also noted that Yeltsin did not take into account Clinton's words that major ethnic cleansing was taking place on the territory of Kosovo, which could serve as a huge refugee crisis for European countries. Clinton also stressed that it is necessary to put pressure on Milosevic with all his might in order to avoid NATO intervention, if the Russian side does not want this.¹³⁸

Based on the documents and the schedule of President Clinton during his visit to Moscow, it is worth saying that the American side tried to cover up the tension between the two sides with such events as were described above. Clinton gave inspiring speeches to Moscow students, visited schools, and listened to a children's choir, despite the fact that some important issues were simply ignored. Of course, the United States did not want to devote Russia to NATO affairs, and thus President Clinton tried to distract the synthetic and friendly Yeltsin with the same approach only for selfish purposes. The clouding of

¹³⁷ These issues are discussed here: S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", p. 788

¹³⁸ The documents prepared for Clinton's visit to Moscow perfectly show the most important points of contact between Russia and the United States, it can be found here: National Security Council and NSC Executive Secretary, "Declassified Documents Regarding President Clinton's Trip to Russia, September 1-2, 1998," *Clinton Digital Library*

Yeltsin's mind did not allow him to understand the true goals of his colleague and he continued to believe that something meant in this conflict, that he was more than a mediator or a bridge between the Serbian world and NATO.¹³⁹ After Clinton's visit to Moscow, the Duma elects a new prime minister, she rejects Yeltsin's proposal to keep Chernomyrdin in office and Yeltsin nominates Yevgeny Primakov. In a telephone conversation on September 12, 1998, Yeltsin claims: "Mr. Primakov is, as we say, an Americanist. He has been an American expert since long ago when he was part of the Academy of Science". Of course, it was necessary for Clinton to maintain relations with Russia despite the disagreements caused by the war in Kosovo, on the one hand, Clinton counted on Primakov's support in his plans, on the other hand, he understood that despite all his efforts during his visit to Moscow, Yeltsin would not support any intervention by NATO forces. This was confirmed by the visit of Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, when during the meeting he conveyed to President Clinton a message from Yeltsin, in which it was stressed that Russia would not support NATO air strikes in any case, since this measure, according to Yeltsin, goes beyond diplomacy and approval.¹⁴⁰

According to Kieninger ten days after the visit of the Russian Prime Minister, a conversation took place between the presidents, Yeltsin was negatively disposed towards Clinton after his statement about the need to intervene in the Kosovo conflict. Yeltsin's position was based on non-interference by military means in this conflict, and its resolution by diplomatic means, he argued that a military adventure would bring many consequences not only for the Balkans, but also for the whole world as a whole. Yeltsin constantly interrupted Clinton and did not let him say anything and eventually hung up and ended the conversation without listening to him, it is worth noting that before that President Yeltsin did not allow himself to end the conversation so abruptly.¹⁴¹ After this conversation, there was a lull between Yeltsin and Clinton, the conflict in Kosovo, which

¹³⁹ These opinion can be found in some press articles, for example: J.Broder, "Clinton Tells Moscow Crowd That Future Won't Be Easy", *The New York Times*, 1998. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/02/world/summit-moscow-overview-clinton-tells-moscow-crowd-that-future-won-t-be-easy.html>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

¹⁴⁰ S.Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy*, p.300.

¹⁴¹ The memorandum of the telephone conversation can only be found in print in the archive of the US Department of State, but a clipping of the conversation can be found here: S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", *The International History Review*. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/07075332.2020.1848899?scroll=top&needAccess=true>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

was growing every day, brought the NATO leadership closer and closer to the decision to send NATO forces to stop Milosevic. During this period, several key events took place that justified the entry of NATO troops, such as the massacre in Racak on January 15, 1999, and subsequently the Agreement in Rambouillet, which allowed the introduction of NATO peacekeeping forces into Kosovo and which Milosevic did not accept.¹⁴²

7. Confrontation, acceptance, cooperation

The day before the bombing began, President Yeltsin sent a telegram to Clinton, where he stressed several times that the conflict should be resolved peacefully. He claimed: “I am deeply convinced that there is only one solution: to reach, as soon as possible, political agreements that could not only ensure broad autonomy for Kosovo while preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FRY, but also create conditions for bringing about lasting peace in the region”.¹⁴³ He also reminded Clinton that they (Yeltsin and Russian Government) “have been and will be categorically against this (using NATO force)”. He also asked Clinton: “On what basis does NATO take it upon itself to decide the fate of peoples in sovereign states? Who gave it the right to act in the role of guardian of order?”¹⁴⁴ While Clinton had long been aiming to introduce NATO troops, Yeltsin did not have such an opportunity and tried with all his might to convince the American president. Many experts believe that it was this turning point that gave rise to the fact that the United States, which for 6 years had been trying to build reliable relations with Russia and tried to keep Russia under control, being able to restrain it and reduce armaments, it was on March 24, 1999 that it lost it, deciding to send NATO troops and begin aerial bombing.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Chronology of events is here: “A Kosovo Chronology”. Available at

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html>. (Accessed 24.04.2022)

¹⁴³ The telegram can be found here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin,” Clinton Digital Library

¹⁴⁴ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning Russian President Boris Yeltsin,” Clinton Digital Library

¹⁴⁵ This opinion can be found here: D. Rivera, S. Werning Rivera, “Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective”, pp.591-610. Available at

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40407006>. (Accessed 25.04.2022); D.Simes, “Losing Russia: The Cost of Renewed Confrontation”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vo.,86, No. 6, 2007, pp.36-48. Available at

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20032507>. (Accessed 25.04.2022)

NATO bombing began on March 24, 1999, despite Yeltsin's persuasions, any attempts were unsuccessful. Shortly before the start, a conversation took place between President Clinton and President Yeltsin. Clinton understood that if he did not warn Yeltsin, then he would not be able to hope for any support from Russia. Moreover, if it was clear to Yeltsin that he was not going to supply weapons to Serbia, the Western side was still afraid of it.¹⁴⁶ From the very beginning of the conversation, Clinton tried to bring the weightiest arguments to justify his decision. He said that Milosevic “has left no choice”¹⁴⁷ and that he (Clinton) “can keep our (Clinton’s and Yeltsin’s) disagreement on this from ruining everything else we (they) have done and can do together.”¹⁴⁸ Also during the conversation, Clinton often called President Yeltsin by name, emphasizing and possibly emphasizing to Yeltsin that they still remain friends. Clinton claimed: “I did everything I could do along with you to try to negotiate with Milosevic...he (Milosevic) has massed 40, 000 troops in Kosovo around the border and nearly 300 tanks, and he is running people out of the villages again.”¹⁴⁹ Despite all Clinton's excuses, Yeltsin could not approve of his decision. Firstly, he understood that all the previous negotiations, where Russia was a key player, were becoming unjustified. Secondly, he knew that now Clinton and Yeltsin would not be able to conduct a dialogue as before, he highlighted that “there will not be such a great drive and such friendship that we (they) had before. That will not be there again.”¹⁵⁰ Clinton understood that as long as Yeltsin had political problems inside the country, he would not interfere militarily with NATO in the conversation. Also, Clinton understood the fact that for Yeltsin it will be “a political problem at home”¹⁵¹ but he was aiming “to restart the diplomacy at any point in this”¹⁵². Yeltsin, who was widely

¹⁴⁶ E.Yesson, “NATO and Russia in Kosovo”, p.14. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23615938>. (Accessed 25.04.2022)

¹⁴⁷ This conversation was conducted on 24 March, 1999, it’s here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁴⁸ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁴⁹ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁵⁰ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁵¹ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁵² Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

criticized inside Russia by the fact that his foreign policy was aimed at cooperation with the United States, understood that now it would be difficult for Russians to believe that such a result was possible and that cooperation itself was not in vain, he was sure that “people will certainly from now have a bad attitude with regard to America”¹⁵³ and for him it will be hard “to turn the heads of people, of the politicians towards the West”.¹⁵⁴ The conversation was abruptly interrupted and Yeltsin hung up without waiting for President Clinton's excuses. A few hours after Clinton spoke about the upcoming NATO bombing, Yeltsin made a speech on Russian television urging people to convince Clinton not to do this, pointing out that innocent people and children would suffer, and he also insisted that negotiations with Milosevic be resumed, emphasizing that “one, two, three should be with him, five, ten times to talk, but do not feel sorry for these ten, twenty times of talking with him in order to save hundreds and hundreds of people who will die in a few hours.”¹⁵⁵ It was at this moment that Russia and the United States turned onto two different roads, the road of political rivalry, despite future detente towards the two states. Of course, for Yeltsin, the war in Kosovo became a projection of American imperialism, despite the years of building cooperation between Russia and the United States, the confrontation has peaked since the Cold War. Yeltsin, distracted by Russia's economic problems, could not fully devote himself to intervening in Kosovo, the United States took advantage of this opportunity for a reason, scattering the attention of the already distracted Yeltsin.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, after the protracted conflict in Chechnya, Yeltsin realized that he was weak militarily, and Soviet technology could no longer compare with modern American technology. Thus, Yeltsin had to continue the dialogue with his former comrade Clinton in order to somehow control the situation in Kosovo.¹⁵⁷ The beginning of the bombing clearly showed “both the aspirations and the constraints of Russian

¹⁵³ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁵⁴ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁵⁵ “Teleobrashenie presidenta Rossii Borisa Yeltsina 24 marta 1999 goda v svyazi s ugrozoy NATO nanesti udar po Yugoslavii”, 1999

¹⁵⁶ This statement could be found here: P.Spassov, “NATO, Russia a European Security: Lessons from Conflicts in Kosovo and Libya, pp.21-40. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26326366>. (Accessed 25.04.2022)

¹⁵⁷ This opinion could be found for example here: A.Lieven, “Ham-Fisted Hegemon: The Clinton Administration and Russia.” *Current History*, vol. 98, no. 630, 1999, p. 310. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4531836>. (Accessed 25.04.2022)

foreign policy.”¹⁵⁸ Russia was forced to play by the rules of the US game, but it was also aimed at not losing influence on the Balkan. On April 19, 1999 President Clinton and President Yeltsin took the conversation for the first time after the start of NATO’s air campaign. Shortly before that, Yeltsin appoints Viktor Chernomyrdin as his personal representative in the Balkan issue, which allows him to take control of this issue to some extent. Firstly, Chernomyrdin was already familiar with the entire American elite and was perfectly able to find a common language with them. Secondly, he was a new modernist in the field of reforms and politics, which allowed him to understand his Western colleagues more forgiving than others. Yeltsin stressed at the time that despite the dialogue that exists between the countries, but “the anti-American and anti-NATO sentiment in Russia keeps growing like an avalanche.”¹⁵⁹ In fact, the trend of anti-American sentiment strengthened and grew in 1999 immediately after the start of the NATO air campaign, some experts argue that during the Kosovo war, anti-Americanism grew "out of necessity", which was provoked by opposition elites to suppress Yeltsin.¹⁶⁰ During the conversation, Yeltsin tried to convince Clinton that it was necessary to start negotiations between Milosevic and the "strong Albanian leader" and avoid the escalation of the NATO bombing.¹⁶¹ Clinton realized that a dialogue with Russia is necessary at the moment, because without Russia, negotiations with Milosevic could not take place, so he put forward common goals: “the ending of attacks, withdrawal of forces, the safe return of refugees, access for humanitarian organizations.”¹⁶² Also, on April 19, Clinton confirmed that in order to comply with these principles, an international presence must be established on the territory of Kosovo. The United States refused to supply weapons to the Albanian side, according to Clinton, and was against if Russia started supplying weapons to the Serbian side, because “the Serbs forces have burned all their villages,

¹⁵⁸ G. Gorodetsky, *“Introduction” in Russia between East and West: Russian Foreign Policy on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, London Frank Cass, 2003, p.9.

¹⁵⁹ The conversation on April 19, 1999 is here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁶⁰ The statistic id here: О. Серегин, “Antiamericanism suet elity, po mere neobhodimosty”, *Vyshaya Shkola Economici*, 2013. Available at <https://www.hse.ru/news/science/100058209.html>. (Accessed 25.04.2022)

¹⁶¹ These ideas have been put forward by Yeltsin during the conversation on April 19,1999: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁶² Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*.

burned them alive, raped children”¹⁶³ and that’s why “there is no way they will come back without military protection.”¹⁶⁴ Moreover, it is worth noting that the tendency of non-recognition of any genocide that was committed on the territory of Kosovo by the Russian authorities and widely propagandized in the Russian community, the leaders of the Russian government in the person of Chernomyrdin, Ivanov and Yeltsin went to cooperate with the American side in solving this issue by means of pressure on Milosevic. For example, Yeltsin told Clinton in a conversation that “Chernomyrdin will now go to several Muslim countries to try to help the Albanians. After that, he wants to go to Belgrade for a meeting with Milosevic”.¹⁶⁵ Chernomyrdin was a key player in this conflict, firstly, he had a trusting relationship, both with Milosevic and with his prime Minister Mirko Marianovich, and secondly, he was much more progressive than his colleague Igor Ivanov. The Kremlin believed that it was Chernomyrdin who could convince the Serbian side to withdraw its troops, and no one else.¹⁶⁶ Yeltsin repeatedly mentioned during the conversation that it was difficult for him to cope with pressure on him because of anti-American sentiments within Russia. Firstly, the majority in the Duma was occupied by Zyuganov's Communist Party, which pressed Yeltsin to send weapons and troops to the side of Serbia. Secondly, Yeltsin risked a lot to direct Russian foreign policy towards the United States after the end of the Cold War, assuring the Russian population that now there will be a "reset" in these relations, which will later lead to lasting cooperation, but NATO's actions broke this picture of the world and the Russian population began to blame Yeltsin, who already I've already lost my entire rating. After 6 days Chernomyrdin returns from negotiations with Milosevich, the negotiations achieve at least some success Yeltsin claims that “out of six points, we (they) have negotiated five. Out of the five points you (Clinton) named we have gotten Milosevic to agree to four of them. There is only one point remaining.”¹⁶⁷. These items included: “the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, then international assistance in the

¹⁶³ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem

¹⁶⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶⁶ This opinion it could be found in Russian press during the conflict, for example: G. Sysoev, Pokrepche Prizhat’ Milosevica”, *Kommersant*, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/217154>. (Accessed 26.04.2022)

¹⁶⁷ National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

reconstruction of Yugoslavia's economy, including Kosovo and the region as a whole, and an international presence under UN auspices with the participation of Russia agreed to by Yugoslavia and here, of course, is meant a military presence, then the pull out of troops and resuming work on the political regime on the future autonomy of the region and then the reduction of the military and police forces in Kosovo accompanied by pull out of units along the border with Yugoslavia and international assistance in reconstructing the Yugoslav economy including Kosovo and Europe as a whole.”¹⁶⁸ Moreover, even then Yeltsin declared that “Russia is prepared to take part in the peacekeeping operation.”¹⁶⁹ Based on the analysis of correspondence for April 25, 1999, it is worth highlighting several key factors, firstly, Yeltsin was more likely to announce to the press that they had managed to find a common solution with Clinton on this issue in as much detail as possible, so he asked Clinton if he could "after today's conversation we can tell the media that myself and President Clinton have found a common point of view on how we can solve this problem together and then the details can be worked out later, and we‘ will continue to work actively with Milosevic on all these questions.”¹⁷⁰ Clinton, in turn, was against it and pointed out to Yeltsin that they “should say as little as possible about the specifics of what we are going to do in the long run.”¹⁷¹ While Clinton tried to convince Yeltsin not to make such a decision because they were not sure it would work, the Russian president did not want to listen to his colleague and he continued to believe in what he wanted to hear. For example, as with the expansion of NATO, when Yeltsin did not take into account Clinton's repeated statements about their focus on NATO expansion in central Europe. Repeatedly in the conversation Yeltsin allowed himself to interrupt Clinton as soon as the conversation concerned information that was not “suitable” for Yeltsin. In the transcript of the conversation for April 25, 1999, the word "interrupting" was indicated 10 times when Clinton touched on the issue of the impossibility of translating several points into reality, as a ceasefire for 24 hours without any agreement with Milosevic, Yeltsin did not let him finish his position 6 times. It is worth noting that this is an illustrative example of how the Russian side perceived information during the Kosovo conflict and why the stated points in the Russian press

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem

¹⁶⁹ Ibidem

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem

¹⁷¹ Ibidem

were not subsequently fulfilled by the Western side, in which they were subsequently criticized more than once.¹⁷² On May 2, 1999 Yeltsin decided to call Clinton again and ask his confirmation about the Chernomyrdin's visit to Washington on May 3 with a very important letter from the Russian President. Chernomyrdin boarded the plane with the words, "If there hadn't been anything concrete, there wouldn't be such a trip."¹⁷³ It is worth noting that Yeltsin had a special affection for Chernomyrdin and full confidence, despite the fact that Yeltsin removed Chernomyrdin from the post of prime minister. In the internal circles of Russia, Chernomyrdin was called a reformer, although many politicians, including Russian ones, criticize his activities, firstly, Chernomyrdin allowed the oligarchs to come to power, who later took over the key companies of the Russian economy under the auspices of privatization, and secondly, Chernomyrdin was pro-American, according to Russian military experts, he allowed so that Russia loses the Balkans.¹⁷⁴ Yeltsin also noted that the choice of Chernomyrdin, and for example not Gaidar, was based on the fact that "Chernomyrdin had enormous weight and authority both in Yugoslavia and in the West, in the eyes of the American political elite. This unique combination gave him the opportunity to build a negotiation line freely, focusing only on the final result: an early cessation of hostilities."¹⁷⁵ Yeltsin's unwillingness to wage this war appointed Chernomyrdin as his representative, because he understood that no emotional techniques in which Yeltsin was guilty and also recognizes this in his memoirs will help in resolving this conflict, and the pragmatism of his protege will play into his hands. After the trip to Washington, the conflict and negotiations moved forward, which Yeltsin would repeatedly mention, emphasizing that the conflict could have been ended with negotiations.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² The correspondence for April 25, 1999 was analyzed, which can be found here: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl," *Clinton Digital Library*,

¹⁷³ "Chernomyrdin arrives in Washington with latest Russian proposal", CNN, 1999. Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/03/kosovo.diplomacy/>. (Accessed 03.05.2022)

¹⁷⁴ These ideas were described in some articles, for example: И.И.Юриев, "Kremlevskie intrigi vocrug Kosovo", *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 2003. Available at https://nvo.ng.ru/history/2003-04-18/1_ivashov.html. (Accessed 26.04.2022); P. Fedenko, "Viktor Chernomurdyn: chelovek, kotoriy hotel, kak luchshe», *BBC Russkaya Sluzhba*, 03.10.2010. Available at https://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2010/11/101103_chernomyrdin_profile. (Accessed 26.04.2022)

¹⁷⁵ Б.В. Yeltsin, *Prezidenskiy Marafon: razmishleniya, vospominaniya, vpechatleniya*, p.203.

¹⁷⁶ This analysis is based on Yeltsin's memoirs, it can be found here: B. Yeltsin, *Prezidenskiy Marafon: razmishleniya, vospominaniya, vpechatleniya*, pp. 202-208.

Yeltsin himself believed that one of the fundamental mistakes in the Kosovo conflict was different visions of this conflict in his memoirs, he wrote, “The West stubbornly continues to consider the war unleashed in Yugoslavia as a concrete retaliation against Milosevic, a struggle for the rights of national minorities, for human rights. We consider the Kosovo crisis to be global.”¹⁷⁷ Yeltsin claimed that the decision to bomb Yugoslavia was a failure because “The bombing did not stop Milosevic in March, April, or May, only the joint diplomatic efforts of Russia, Finland and the United States stopped him.”¹⁷⁸

Some historians assess this period as a test of the strength of relations between Russia and the United States. A test that two states have passed rather than not. Yeltsin's vague position towards Serbia played into the hands of the American authorities in order to lure Russia to their side later. The involvement of Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin and Ivanov in resolving the conflict in Kosovo was also highly appreciated by the American government.¹⁷⁹ Clinton, in conversations with Yeltsin, repeatedly expressed his gratitude for assistance in this conflict¹⁸⁰, realizing that the only communist leader in Europe in the person of Milosevic would talk to a state that is still going through "communist echoes of the past."

On June 10, 1999, the air campaign in Yugoslavia ends on the same day, President Clinton calls Yeltsin to thank him again for his cooperation and to say that UN Resolution 1244 comes into force, the bombing has stopped and now peacekeeping troops are expected to enter the territory of Kosovo. Yeltsin certainly expected that Russia would take part in the settlement of the situation in Kosovo, but Russia was not given such a role. Then, of course, Russia could not lose the Balkans from its sphere of influence, thereby, when the fire on the territory of Yugoslavia stopped, Russia still did not understand what the military contingent was preparing for and under whose control it would be, which certainly did not suit the Yeltsin's administration.¹⁸¹ Thus, Yeltsin decided to redirect

¹⁷⁷ Ibidem p.203.

¹⁷⁸ Ibidem, p.203.

¹⁷⁹ This opinion could be found for example here: S.Talbott, “Clinton and Yeltsin”, pp.568-571. Available at <https://academic.oup.com/dh/article/42/4/568/5063015>. (Accessed 26.04.2022)

¹⁸⁰ This trend can be found in transcripts of conversations for 1998-1999 between Clinton and Yeltsin: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*,

¹⁸¹ This misunderstanding in the balance of power in Kosovo can be noticed, for example, in the Russian media archives, for example here: G. Sysoev, “Segodnya v Yugoslavii nastupit mir. Rossiyskiy contingent gorov ego obespechit”, *Kommersant*, 10.06.1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/219895>. (Accessed on 26.04.2022)

Russian troops to NATO first, in his memoirs he explained that already "on the night of June 4, I decided whether to agree with the military's plan to transfer a column of paratroopers to the Pristina airport. All the documents have already been signed."¹⁸² Then he decided to transfer troops to the territory of Pristina airport, justifying that "in an environment of total rejection of our position by European public opinion, I decided that Russia is obliged to make a final gesture. Even if it has no military significance."¹⁸³

8. Pristina airport: rejection and resistance

The Russian democratic system was under attack, after several months of NATO's bombing in Yugoslavia, the anti-NATO movement was supported by 94%, Yeltsin had a choice to submit to NATO and lose any rating, allowing the communist Duma to suppress him or declare his presence on the territory of Kosovo. Yeltsin was widely criticized inside Russia due to the fact that Serbia was still a fraternal state for the Russian population, the Russian media covered the events not as the initial genocide of the Kosovo Albanians, but as a war against the fraternal people, which was unleashed by NATO air forces. Despite the fact that Yeltsin needed the support of the West, especially President Clinton, Yeltsin decides to send a Russian contingent to the territory of the Pristina airport, thereby occupying it and preventing the first forces of the peacekeeping operation from entering there.¹⁸⁴

The incident in Pristina showed the alignment of forces of influence in this conflict, as well as the weaknesses of any international agreements. Russia, which, in turn, played a rather key role in resolving the Kosovo conflict, as a result of the resolution, was left without an honorable place in the peacekeeping operation. Yeltsin repeatedly tried to make sure in conversations with the Client that a solution to this conflict would be impossible without Russian diplomacy, sometimes even tried to put pressure on him so that the West would recognize this role. The decision to send troops, which, although it was planned in advance, as confirmed by many sources, including the memoirs of President Yeltsin himself, was made at the very last moment, which indicates the hesitant

¹⁸² Б. В. Ельцин, *Президентский Марфон: размешления, воспонаниа, впечатлениа*, p.208.

¹⁸³ Б. В. Ельцин, *Президентский Марфон: размешления, воспонаниа, впечатлениа*, p.208.

¹⁸⁴ This opinion it could be found for example here: E.Yesson, "The Balkans, NATO and European Security after the Kosovo War", p.15

position of the Yeltsin administration towards the United States and Serbia. Firstly, from the very beginning of the conflict, it was possible to trace the confrontation, the detente in the relations of the presidents. From the very first day of the NATO air campaign, Yeltsin declared that he disapproved and condemned NATO, including the US authorities, in such a decision. From the very beginning of the air campaign, Yeltsin declared that "Russia will not allow itself to be drawn into the conflict," as a result of which Russia acted as an active actor in resolving and conducting this conflict. Secondly, despite the fact that Russian rhetoric demonstrated the suffering of the Serbian fraternal people, President Yeltsin initially supported Milosevic in his policy, realizing that Russia has the same conflict territory in the form of Chechnya, repeatedly changed his side and eventually switched to the side of the West, realizing that if Russia would somehow either to give in to the Serbian side, isolation and an even stronger economic downturn will await Russia. While NATO, including Clinton, have demonstrated their vulnerability to the Russian president. When Russian troops of 200 people landed at the airport of Pristina, taking into account that the territory of the airport remained controlled by the Serbian side, the Western authorities refused to attempt to liberate this territory from Russian troops. Of course, the echoes of the Cold War and the Russian-Western confrontation made themselves felt even in 1999, and no country wanted to wage war with Russia, realizing that this step could lead to a third World War, as British Commander General Michael Jackson said, justifying himself to the chief commander of NATO troops Wesley Clark. Thus, the Russian side, bypassing the general agreements, remained on the territory of the Pristina airport until the end of the negotiations, allowing itself to occupy the territory unreasonably.

One of the fundamental factors that was overlooked by Clinton and Yeltsin was the resolution of the Kosovo issue in the long term. Clinton, in turn, realizing that the fact of presence on the territory of Kosovo in any case will remain with NATO troops, including American troops, was calm in signing the resolution, while Yeltsin realized that if Russia's position is not clear in the short term, then there are no guarantees to guarantee Russia's presence in the Balkans through several years.¹⁸⁵ There is also an opinion among

¹⁸⁵ This analysis is based on the transcript of the conversation between Clinton and Yeltsin on June 13, 1999: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl," *Clinton Digital Library*

research circles that Yeltsin later aimed to divide Kosovo according to the principle of Germany after World War II and leave the Serbian part controlled by Russia and establish a Russian military contingent.¹⁸⁶ Thus, it was necessary for Russia to understand the long-term forecast that the Russian side would expect on the territory of Kosovo. While Clinton, realizing that this discussion would drag on for a long time, and the American side was already ready to "bathe" in the rays of gratitude from the Kosovo Albanians, was not ready to concede to the Russian president.¹⁸⁷ President Clinton refused Yeltsin's offer to meet personally with Clinton in a more private setting, somewhere, for example, on a submarine, in the way that he tried to change the course of the conversation and direct Yeltsin to solve the problem here and now. Yeltsin, insisting on creating a clear plan that will confirm future work in Kosovo and Clinton's refusal to do it now, clearly show the ever-present misunderstanding between the two presidents. Yeltsin's inattentiveness, or rather aimed inattentively at the perception of information, was vividly reflected in this incident. Some researchers believe that by using all the resources of the state, they could agree on the presence in Kosovo on the same day, instead of the negotiations dragged on until June 18, which also shows the diversity in the goals of the American or Western side and the Russian side.¹⁸⁸ Russia, with full understanding and seriousness of this situation, counted on the presence on the territory of Kosovo in the quantity that it wanted to receive. The American side, which did not count on any presence of Russian troops, did not want to make any concessions that would interfere with its plan. Yeltsin, who did not want to talk about resolving the issue in the short term for the Russian side, faced Clinton, who was forced to put the entire peacekeeping operation on hold.¹⁸⁹ Yeltsin tried to get the impossible out of Clinton on this issue. Throughout the conversation, Yeltsin tried to persuade Clinton to meet and discuss this issue, in turn, Clinton did not want to continue this conflict and tried by all means to settle down Yeltsin and offer him a short-term

¹⁸⁶ This opinion is could be found for example here: S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", pp.781-795.

¹⁸⁷ This confirms the fact that the Kosovo Albanians themselves were grateful to the American government. For example, in 2019, a monument to Madeleine Albright was erected on the territory of Kosovo as a sign of gratitude for the liberation of the territory.

¹⁸⁸ See for example: S.Talbott, "Clinton and Yeltsin", pp.568-571. Available at <https://academic.oup.com/dh/article/42/4/568/5063015>. (Accessed 26.04.2022); S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", pp.781-795.

¹⁸⁹ This analysis is based on the transcript of the conversation between Clinton and Yeltsin on June 13, 1999: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl," *Clinton Digital Library*

solution and a meeting with all explanations afterwards. Thus, this confrontation confirms the different vision of the situation between the two presidents and, moreover, the different goals of its resolution.¹⁹⁰ It is worth noting that Clinton, in turn, was limited by several other factors, the air campaign was carried out by NATO forces, Clinton had long before been criticized by his Western colleagues for close cooperation with Russia after the Cold War, so he could not allow the Russian side to get what it would like to have in this conflict, as a minimum because of that. that Clinton would have been widely condemned in the aftermath.¹⁹¹

Clinton understood that Russia was trying to undermine Kosovo peace which was almost established by the West and tried to persuade Yeltsin to stop trying to achieve what was not possible to get. So, in a conversation on June 13, 1999, Clinton persistently told Yeltsin: “Russia is going to stop this and wreck the peace. We were about to have at Cologne a celebration of Russia in the peace operation. Instead, we face day after day, international embarrassment that Kosovo will be wrecked. Our generals have already agreed on a short-term solution along the lines of our cooperation in Bosnia. We just need to get the operation up and going within Kosovo, and we need to work out this airport thing, and then you and I can meet in Europe and work out this long- term involvement of Russia.”¹⁹² While Yeltsin was not satisfied with the example of Bosnia, when Russia remained on the territory of Bosnia under the control of NATO troops, which in fact left only the nominal presence of the Russian side on the territory of Bosnia. Also, Russia understood that it was also facing its own regional problem in the form of Chechnya, which, like Kosovo, wanted its independence. And if Yeltsin led a tough policy in Kosovo and did not agree to a partial withdrawal of troops controlled by a peacekeeping operation, then he could have created a precedent inside Russia, thereby putting himself in a vulnerable position.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Idem: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁹¹ This opinion could be found here: D. Rivera, S. Werning Rivera, “Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective”, pp. 591-610. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40407006>. (Accessed 27.04.2022)

¹⁹² National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, “Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl,” *Clinton Digital Library*

¹⁹³ This analysis it could be found for example here: E. Stepanova, “KOSOVO AND CHECHNYA: ILLOGICAL PARALLELS.” *Security Dialogue*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2000, pp. 135–37. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26296632>. (Accessed 1.05.2022)

Thus, this conflict demonstrated that, on the one hand, an implicit fact that is controversial on the other hand. Relations between Russia and the United States deteriorated greatly after the situation in Kosovo, some historians believe that this was the starting point of the separation of the two states from each other, but on the other hand, considering this conflict through the relations of Yeltsin and Clinton, this conflict still demonstrated the fact that the personal relations of the two presidents helped the two states not to become that hour by the enemies, but at the same time demonstrating how the American side had overlooked many of Russia's actions, such as with the airport in Pristina. The situation at the Pristina airport demonstrated the fact that Western countries have not yet moved away from the threat of the Cold War or the Third World War. As a state that destroyed the previously agreed plan of a peacekeeping operation, this fact was forgiven and included in the new plan. Thereby allowing to create a precedent that will ensure Russia to carry out other occupations, for example, the case with Crimea, when the Russian military drove in the same pattern on tanks to the territory of the state of Ukraine.¹⁹⁴

9. Clinton and Yeltsin: the consequences of cooperation

If answer the question of who lost Russia, Clinton's accusations about this will be unjustified. In any case, despite favoring the Russian president, Clinton managed to keep him within the framework of his foreign policy plan, as for example in the situation with the Pristina airport, when the American president did not allow Yeltsin to get what he wanted. On the other hand, Clinton made a mistake, firstly, he put on reforms that would work in a democratic state, but not in a state with a Soviet past. Standing up for Russia in granting an IMF loan, Clinton made a mistake by not calculating that the announced reforms by Chernomyrdin and Gaydar, such as privatization, would not be able to perform the function that Western countries expected, the concept of a free market was only part of Russia's economic and political culture, instead of developing the economic sector, the Russian elite took control of the key the Russian economic sector, thereby ruining not only the domestic economy, but also the IMF money that President Clinton helped

¹⁹⁴ R. Angelova, "YELTSIN AND CLINTON: A CASE STUDY IN POLITICAL FRIENDSHIP", *Global History and International Relations*, 2000. Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2105/54083>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

provide.¹⁹⁵ One of the fundamental factors was also that President Clinton viewed relations and cooperation with Yeltsin through the prism of short-term results of foreign policy, based on the concept of *realpolitik*, while cooperation with Russia should be viewed in the long term, through the prism of *idealpolitik*, thereby ensuring cooperation in the long term.¹⁹⁶ Despite this, many representatives of Western politics highlight the cooperation between Yeltsin and Clinton very positively. For example, Talbott believes that, firstly, Russia's cooperation with NATO (NATO-Russia Funding Act) allowed the world community to resolve the conflict in Kosovo, since Russia, perceiving itself as an equivalent member of the international Western community, sided with NATO and helped put pressure on Milosevic, despite its historical proximity to this people.¹⁹⁷ Also, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, despite her initial caution towards the Russian side, perceived Yeltsin quite positively, believing that Yeltsin played a huge role in the history of Russia in its democratic path.¹⁹⁸

If we consider the relationship between the Clinton administration and the Yeltsin administration from the side of political realism, we can trace this trend. Clinton, in turn, tried to secure the United States by promoting democracy, economic assistance and cooperation in many important sectors. While President Yeltsin tried to preserve any progress made during the years of his rule and his reforms, using Clinton's influence, including on the IMF, to obtain additional loans. The situation in Kosovo perfectly demonstrates this approach, when pro-Serbian Russia, quite unexpectedly for the Western world, goes over to their side and plays a key role in negotiations with Milosevic, refusing to supply military equipment to the Western side and stimulate the conflict to develop. Also, the United States, which in turn missed the neglect of the agreement that Russia committed by occupying the territory of Pristina airport on June 12, 1999, thereby allowing itself not to enter into a new confrontation and confrontation with Russia.¹⁹⁹

Some researchers believe that the United States and Clinton did not lose Russia, such a result was due to the domestic political realities inside Russia, on the other hand,

¹⁹⁵ D.Rivera, S.Rivera, "Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective", pp. 591-610

¹⁹⁶ Idem, p.594.

¹⁹⁷ P.Desai, *Conversations on Russia: Reform from Yeltsin to Putin*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, p.173

¹⁹⁸ M.Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, Harper Perennial, New York, 2003, p. 203.

¹⁹⁹ L.Marsden, *Lessons from Russia: Clinton and US Democracy Promotion*, Routledge, 2018, pp. 127-130.

American diplomacy contributed to Russia's distance from the Western community, disappointed in its unjustified aspirations towards Russia.²⁰⁰ The cooperation between Clinton and Yeltsin became a historical and victorious factor in some sense, which characterized the 1990s. Despite the failure and collapse of democracy within Russia, a certain friendship between the presidents brought its benefits, firstly, in the case of Bosnia and Kosovo, a new confrontation between Russia and the United States did not begin, which could end with a new cold or world war, and secondly, Russia in some sense was able to free itself from the conscientious past by trial and error, although democratic reforms have not worked on an already economically traumatized state. Thirdly, Russia was able to come out of isolation for a while, joined the ranks of the Big Eight, signed a cooperation agreement with NATO and entered the free trade market. The situation in Kosovo gave rise to greater domestic political problems than foreign policy, so Yeltsin's rating fell and he was unable to govern the state, the Russian economy began to degrade because the reforms did not function properly, moreover, the conflict in Chechnya unfolded, which to some extent reflected the situation in Kosovo.²⁰¹ On the threshold of the beginning of the new millennium, Boris Yeltsin addressed the traditional New Year's greetings to the whole of Russia with the words: "Today, on the last day of the passing century, I am resigning...Russia must enter the new millennium with new politicians, with new faces, with new smart, strong, energetic people. And we – those who have been in power for many years – we must leave."²⁰² A few months before his address, President Yeltsin met with Clinton in Turkey, even at the meeting he said that "Putin, of course. He will be the successor to Boris Yeltsin. He's a democrat, and he knows the West."²⁰³ Then he already understood that his departure was inevitable a few hours before his statement in the New Year's address, Clinton said goodbye to Yeltsin with the words "I promise to

²⁰⁰ For example: S.Savranskya, "Yeltsin and Clinton", pp.564-567, accessed 26.04.2022, available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhy052>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²⁰¹ These ideas it could be found for example here: P.Desai, *Conversations on Russia: Reform from Yeltsin to Putin*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, p.173, accessed 26.04.2022, available at <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unive3-ebooks/reader.action?docID=271252>; D.Rivera, S.Rivera, "Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective", pp. 591-610, Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40407006>. (Accessed 27.04.2022); E.Yesson, "The Balkans, NATO and European Security after the Kosovo War", p.19

²⁰² Zayavlenie Borisa Yeltsina, 31.12.1999, Moscow, Kremlin. Available at <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24080>. (Accessed 27.04.2022)

²⁰³ Conversation on November 19, 1999 between the president Yeltsin and the president Clinton in Istanbul: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl"

be a good partner with Putin."²⁰⁴ It was at this moment that a new stage of estrangement in relations between Russia and the United States began.

²⁰⁴ Transcript of the conversation on 31.12.1999: National Security Council and NSC Records Management System, "Declassified Documents Concerning German Chancellor Helmut Kohl"

Chapter 3

Occupation of the Pristina Airport

1. Russian march on Pristina Airport and resolution of confusion

On June 12, 1999, when the war in Kosovo is coming to an end, the Russian government decides to make a "march" and occupies the Pristina International Airport, where authorized NATO forces were supposed to arrive at any minute. Such a maneuver was a big surprise for the West. The operation, which went according to plan until the morning, was interrupted by the entry of Russian troops. Firstly, for NATO it was the next step to end the conflict inside Kosovo, and secondly, the Yugoslav troops still controlled part of the territories, including in the area of the airport of Pristina, which in turn was located far from the capital of Kosovo.

There are several expert opinions on how such an operation was managed and why NATO could not stop it. Firstly, the situation with the Pristina airport was initially unclear, the British forces who came to Kosovo representing the interests of NATO could not understand who controls this territory until the last moment, while they were calculating the offensive plan, Russian troops threw 200 military into the airport territory. In order not to cause panic, according to experts, British General Michael Jackson, in turn, said that he sees nothing wrong with the presence of Russian troops in the media, according to him, Russia was part of the KFOR and NATO forces are bringing them to this territory.²⁰⁵ Returning to the fact that it was important for Russia to keep NATO at a distance from its borders, Russia's intervention was logical, knowing about Yeltsin's concerns and his attitude to NATO's expansion to the east. Already after the celebration of the 50th anniversary of NATO in 1999 and the new strategic concept, which implied the expansion of the military alliance and excluded the provision on limiting the admission of new members, given the fact that NATO had already accepted the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary shortly before. Moreover, the new concept allowed NATO

²⁰⁵ "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE TROOPS; British Forces Reaching Kosovo Capital Find Russians, and Confusion", *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/13/world/crisis-balkans-troops-british-forces-reaching-kosovo-capital-find-russians.html?searchResultPosition=2>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

to respond to threats even outside the North Atlantic Alliance.²⁰⁶ Some researchers believe that Russia's decision to occupy Pristina airport is due to the fact that for Russia the presence of NATO troops in the peacekeeping operation in Kosovo caused great concern, thus, even though Russia's role in resolving this conflict was more passive than active, Russia decided to make a sharp transfer of troops towards Pristina, thereby securing themselves in this territory.²⁰⁷ It is worth saying that the Pristina airport was designed according to the NATO plan, as their headquarters, so Russia was unexpectedly able to block the air to the whole NATO plan and start negotiations, which already hindered Russia's direct participation in the peacekeeping operation. Russia's intervention was unexpected, but initially NATO officials did not criticize Russia's decision. Of course, NATO did not want to show the vulnerability of the alliance due to the unexpected trick of Russia, thereby allowing such a gross violation of borders to be devalued. Moreover, Yeltsin did not even warn the newly appointed prime minister for his own purposes, when Ivanov spoke on American television, he omitted that he had not received such instructions from senior officials, although he is the main negotiator in the peacekeeping process. It was unclear who performs the functions of force command and the next day, while NATO insisted on its command within the region, Russia referred to the fact that the United Nations should manage this region. But some military experts believed that despite the fact that such a maneuver gave Russia a privilege in the negotiations, Russia still put itself in an awkward position and all its forces and actions in this region came under the careful control of NATO. On the other hand, Russian officials believed that Russia, in turn, reminded that there are international agreements that oblige states to comply with them.

Years later, Yeltsin explained this dangerous step in his memoirs wrote: "Russia had not permitted itself to be defeated in the moral sense... This last gesture was a sign of our moral victory in the face of the enormous NATO military". General Michael Jackson in his memoirs wrote that the NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Wesley Clark has compared this step with 1945, when there was a race to Berlin, so this

²⁰⁶ T "The Alliance's Strategic Concept", 24 April 1999. Available at www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²⁰⁷ R B. Radeljic, "Russia's Involvement in the Kosovo Case: Defending Serbian Interests or Securing Its Own Influence in Europe?", pp. 273–300. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26377322>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

step, in his opinion, was not some kind of moral gesture, but on the contrary carried an echo of the Cold War. He believed that General Wesley Clark, took this step as negatively as possible and was ready to start World War III, perceiving Russian wax as a threat. General Jackson did not listen to Clark and soon he was removed by Clinton from the post of commander-in-chief. In fact, many historians highlight the fact that despite Russia's Soviet past, the United States did not sufficiently underestimate Russia's dangerous maneuver. If a few years ago such a maneuver would have caused another conflict, in this case NATO was very loyal to Russia. Some experts believe that such an attitude was possible due to the fact that the relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin during this period was in a kind of "honeymoon" phase, even though Yeltsin was outraged by NATO's intervention in this region, he found the strength to "betray" his blood bran in Serbia and advocate for the position of the West, but could not allow Russia to remain without a "consolation prize" after the end of this conflict.²⁰⁸

Many historians argue about the assessment of Russia's actions at the Pristina airport. There are several opinions why Russia decided to move its troops ahead of NATO. First, the most important threat to Russia was the expansion of NATO. This was, in principle, one of the main reasons for Russia's entry into this war, although at first it was a passive action. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia was losing its influence on European territory every day, the loss of the Balkans would be devastating for Russia. Moreover, Yeltsin could not allow all the glory to go to NATO, much less full control in Kosovo. For Russia, NATO's intervention was "interpreted that only as an unjustified assault on an historical Balkan ally, but also as a sign of a new emerging international order which the traditional idea of sovereignty could be suppressed in defense of human rights".²⁰⁹

Negotiations on the liberation of the airport dragged on, which was logical, if Russia had retreated immediately, it would not have been able to claim any territory under its control in Kosovo. Back on June 12, Vice President Al Gore made a call to Russian Prime Minister Igor Stepashin with a request to resolve this mess faster and release the Pristina airport, fearing that all the progress that has been achieved may be left behind. Thus,

²⁰⁸ See S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", pp. 781-795; R B. Radeljic, "Russia's Involvement in the Kosovo Case: Defending Serbian Interests or Securing Its Own Influence in Europe?", pp. 273-300. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26377322>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

²⁰⁹T. Varol, *The Russian Foreign energy policy*, EGALITE, Kocani, 2013, p.48

despite the danger of this maneuver, Russia was able to succeed for its interests and the West allowed the possibility of dividing the control zones. This gesture became a precedent in world history, after the end of the Cold War, when the West expressed confidence and cooperation to the Russian side in solving the key issue of control over the territory. Thus, by allowing Russia to achieve its interests in a cunning way, in the future it will allow referring to the situation in Kosovo in the Crimea and in the DPR and LPR issues.²¹⁰

Unsurprisingly, the indecision of NATO troops was immediately criticized by the whole world. Firstly, despite the fact that Russia took part in the resolution of the conflict, Russia was limited by resolution 1244 issued by the UN in the water of troops, to be more precise, it implied that troops of all UN member states could be brought into the territory of Kosovo in order to maintain peace, but also implied that KFOR troops would fulfill this function in this region. By the way, Russia decided to transfer troops to the territory of Kosovo, despite the early agreements. Secondly, NATO had a reason to interrupt this offensive and deploy Russian troops back to Bosnia, but General Michael Jackson did not want to unleash another conflict and was afraid of Moscow's reaction to such an ultimatum, which is why the West decided that in this case it was necessary to find a compromise between NATO and the Russian leadership, which led to vivid criticism among the population. According to the White House, this step was calculated long before, the United States and NATO understood that most likely Russia would not leave this region so easily, and therefore they developed two response plans. Both plans involved the use of units of NATO peacekeeping troops that were already stationed on the borders with Kosovo. Initially, it was assumed that the column of Russian troops would move from Serbia and then NATO troops would make a dash to the territory of Kosovo and block the path of Russian troops. There was also a second plan, which already implied the landing of NATO troops from the air immediately at the airport of Pristina. In the end, none of these plans worked when General Michael Jackson completely refused to speed up any plan and allowed Russian troops to occupy Pristina airport. The story with the reaction was delayed by several factors: the first thing that General Jackson refused to react, according to White House representatives, such a decree to the British general came from No. 10 itself, the office of the British Prime Minister, first of all, the

²¹⁰ See S. Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations", pp. 781-795

leadership of the NATO peacekeeping army was afraid not only of Moscow's reaction, but also of the consequences from Serbia, which could well refuse cooperate on the Kosovo issue. When General Jackson again refused to take active action, the Western side found an even more risky plan to drive Russian troops from the airport, namely, to conduct an air assault that would prevent Russian control over the airport. But there was no action, and any agreement with such radical actions could cause not only a split between the West and Moscow, but also a split within NATO. It is also worth highlighting that Russia brought this split between the American and British settlement of the NATO peace-making forces, despite the fact that the collective work of London and Washington was everywhere touted as a key factor in the success of the peacekeeping operation. Moreover, there was an aspect of the West's inability or unwillingness to cover the attitude in principle to Russia's actions. While Washington reproached London for its indecision regarding Pristina, London reproached Washington for its close communication between President Clinton and Yeltsin. And the Western media agreed that due to the lack of criticism of Russia, it is also worth throwing the "ball of accusations" from one continent to another.²¹¹

Of course, it was difficult to expect any active actions from Russia, which had long lost its political leadership in the international arena after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the economic crisis of 1998. But despite all the facts, Russia managed to confuse the forces of NATO and in particular the United States with its march. Of course, the main key factor was the influence of the Russians on the Serbian troops, who did not interfere with the "fraternal state" according to Milosevic. By taking a key position that provides access to food, military equipment and humanitarian aid, Russia not only misled the Western authorities, but also declared its inviolable presence in this region. The Kremlin had enough reasons, both external, which speak about the prestige and international position of Moscow, and internal, including pressure on the Kremlin not only by the Duma and the people, who completely disapproved of helping the West in negotiations with Milosevic, this can be highlighted as a fact why negotiations on the situation at the

²¹¹ "Airport Was Lost in Command Confusion: Faulty Allied Teamwork Helped Russian Dash", *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/19/news/airport-was-lost-in-command-confusion-faulty-allied-teamwork-helped.html>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

Pristina airport dragged on and Moscow has not made concessions since the first days.²¹² Prime Minister Ivanov was also not informed about the plans of the leadership regarding Pristina. Initially, he told Washington that President Yeltsin was so politically weak that he could not control the military leadership and “it was the military leadership that staged the incident in Pristina”.²¹³ Some experts reacted negatively to such a statement, even after Yeltsin's statement that he was the initiator of this troop transfer, which confused NATO more. After this, the question arose, if Boris Yeltsin did not actually order the deployment of troops to Kosovo, should the West worry about their situation, if theoretically the civilian and military population of Russia can ignore the authorities in this way.²¹⁴

It is also worth highlighting such an opinion that “the Russian occupation of the airport in Pristina, Kosovo, could be seen as a telling symptom of the Clinton Administration's troubling Kosovo policy, which ignored Russian and Chinese opposition by bombing toward a higher morality in Yugoslavia”.²¹⁵ Despite the fact that Russia lost its leadership position after the collapse of the Soviet Union, historically it was formed that confrontation with Russia is inevitable and even if Moscow does not have economic resources, according to some experts, Russia should be considered from a serious point of view, not only because this is a historical factor, but also because Russia will fight with some kind of US hegemony.²¹⁶ It is worth noting that 20 years later, the former commander of the Airborne Troops of Russia, Georgy Shpak, gave a comment on the transfer of troops to Pristina, firstly, he said that this operation was prepared carefully and had no plan B. Secondly, according to him, back in May 1999, he received an order from the chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin to prepare a secret operation to seize Pristina airport, it is worth saying that the airport was unique geopolitically, firstly, only

²¹² “Kosovo and the Kremlin”, *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/14/opinion/kosovo-and-the-kremlin.html?searchResultPosition=8>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²¹³ Ibidem

²¹⁴ Ibidem

²¹⁵ “Building the Peace in Kosovo -- and in Moscow”, *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/16/opinion/l-building-the-peace-in-kosovo-and-in-moscow-186708.html?searchResultPosition=21>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²¹⁶ “Kosovo and the Kremlin”, *The New York Times*. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/14/opinion/kosovo-and-the-kremlin.html?searchResultPosition=8>.; “Building the Peace in Kosovo -- and in Moscow”, *The New York Times*. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/16/opinion/l-building-the-peace-in-kosovo-and-in-moscow-186708.html?searchResultPosition=21>. (All accessed 05.05.2022)

a runway was located in it that could take a military aircraft, secondly, it would be immediately it also hit NATO's resources. When NATO countries decided not to include Russia in the peacekeeping operation, the Russian leadership decided to "remind the world that the Russians still have gunpowder in their powder flasks".²¹⁷ Moreover, according to the Russian military, the transfer of troops was not only planned by the Russian side, but moreover was approved by the Serbian side. Based on this, that is why Russia was able to enter the airport in a short time and cause such bewilderment among NATO and the entire West. "The airfield was firmly held by the Serbs, who were warned about our approach,"²¹⁸ the former commander said in an interview. Of course, it was important for Russia to occupy a separate sector that would be controlled only by Russian troops, historically creating a second Germany after the Second World War and strengthening its influence in the Balkans. It was the example of Ivanov who could prevent such a plan, who was not privy to the action plan in such detail and tried to settle the issue with Western enemies at the official level, thereby putting Russia in a position that had not been planned in advance. Thus, leaving Russian troops in Pristina, but only under the control of NATO peacekeeping troops.²¹⁹

It is worth highlighting the factor that created an ambiguous situation at the end of the conflict. Such a factor was a huge gap among the Western and Russian communities. Despite the fact that Yeltsin sought friendship with the West over the past years, which confirms the close relationship between President Clinton and President Yeltsin, the two societies had a completely different picture of the world. So, it can identify a large informational and moral gap in society, despite the fact that back in 1999 Russia had freedom of speech and a free press, the situation with the intervention in Kosovo was considered rather one-sided. The problem was that Russian society was not ready to accept the American point of view and try to understand their position, moreover, while Yeltsin realized that a "fraternal country" in the form of Serbia had long since ceased to exist and it was not politically beneficial for Russia, Russian society, including the Duma, refused to be considered with the fact of ethnic cleansing, which Milosevic carried out on

²¹⁷ "Byvshij glavkom VDV rasskazal o podgotovke broska na Prishtinu", *Lenta*, 2019. Available at <https://lenta.ru/news/2019/06/11/kosovo/>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²¹⁸ "Kto planiroval marsh-brosok na Prishtinu", *Fortanga*, 2019. Available at <https://fortanga.org/2019/06/kto-planiroval-marsh-brosok-na-prishtinu/>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²¹⁹ V. Brovkin. "Discourse on NATO in Russia During the Kosovo War", p.9

this territory. Just as the Western side did not understand the need for Russia to maintain a position in Kosovo, and even more so the effectiveness and meaning of this troop transfer. Thus, Yeltsin, losing any trust and support from the population and opposition parties, was forced to intervene in Pristina and maintain at least some influence in this region, more precisely, its issuance, so that Russian society and the opposition would be satisfied with this decision.

Regardless of the fact that Russia counted on the territory completely controlled by it, with which the NATO states could not agree under any circumstances, the negotiations still took place, despite the fact that they were very vague and protracted. In an attempt to break the deadlock, Defense Secretary William Cohen suggested that Russia allocate such a zone of responsibility. The talks intensified after Madeleine Albright and Igor Ivanov, the US Secretary of State and the Russian Prime Minister, joined them. After 33 hours of negotiations, Russia had to abandon the original plan and its own sector in Kosovo.²²⁰ It is worth noting just the fact of a huge gap in Russian society and the initial inability to achieve what you want. Firstly, it is the support of the Albright figure on the territory of Kosovo, the United States could not allow to share the territory of influence with Russia when they achieved full praise and approval among the population of their presence.²²¹ Secondly, this is an early loss by transferring troops, after Prime Minister Ivanov tried to officially resolve the fact of the presence of troops on the territory of Russia, the sky was closed by the countries neighboring Kosovo, so Russia would not be able to increase its military potential in any case, and 200 military could not in any case to cope with NATO forces. Of course, NATO had to make concessions, after Bosnia, Moscow could not agree to full control of troops by NATO forces, so the West had to make concessions and put Russia in command of KFOR, but also allowing decisions to be made by commanding Russian forces in terms of military and political decisions, NATO also had to open the doors for a group of militaries in its headquarters on the issue of the settlement of peace on the territory of Kosovo. Any clear division of forces could

²²⁰ "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE TROOPS; British Forces Reaching Kosovo Capital Find Russians, and Confusion", *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/13/world/crisis-balkans-troops-british-forces-reaching-kosovo-capital-find-russians.html?searchResultPosition=2>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²²¹ "Kosovo remembers Madeleine Albright, the autocrat's worst enemy", *Euronews*, 2022. Available at <https://www.euronews.com/2022/03/25/kosovo-remembers-madeleine-albright-the-autocrat-s-worst-enemy-view>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

become a clear division of Kosovo, when the Serbian side would completely withdraw to the controlled territory of Russia, and the Kosovars and Albanians would remain on the side of NATO, which in the future would aggravate Serbia's claim to a piece of "Serbian Kosovo".²²²

Thus, the Kremlin's plan failed, Russia got 3 out of 5 sectors of influence controlled by NATO and the right to introduce 3,600 troops into the territory of Kosovo. According to Baranovsky, he believes that the march of 200 Russian military became more of a psychological step than a political one, a kind of way to force the West to take into account the presence of Russia in this region. Since during the escalation of the conflict, Russia was a kind of mediator or "postman" who delivered NATO's demands directly to Milosevic.²²³

According to Zatsarin, there is a fact that occupation was "senseless feat that was not in vain." It was already too late to save Yugoslavia, but it was important for Russia to drive in front of NATO at that time. It was impossible for Russia to disrupt the ground operation, but it was possible to delay it, so Yeltsin decided to transfer troops to Pristina. The senselessness of the march was due to the fact that Russia did not take any clear and tough position at that moment and was not going to.²²⁴

According to Brudenell, there was a possibility that Russia seized the airport of Pristina in order to hold a referendum there later and separate this part of Kosovo so that the Kosovo Serbs would settle there.²²⁵ Russia could also seize Slatina (Pristina Airport) not only to show that it still has strength and voice in the international arena, but also to participate in negotiations within NATO in resolving the situation in Kosovo.²²⁶ But the Russians' plans were broken by their inability to provide themselves with a military contingent on the territory of Kosovo, as Russia transferred the remaining military personnel who remained on the territory of Bosnia at that time. President Clinton called

²²² "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: DEPLOYMENT; Accord Is Reached on Integrating Russian Troops in Kosovo Force", *The New York Times*. 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/19/world/crisis-balkans-deployment-accord-reached-integrating-russian-troops-kosovo-force.html?searchResultPosition=2>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²²³ V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy", pp. 256-274

²²⁴ "Bessmyslennyj podvig, kotoryj byl ne zrya. K godovshchine marsh-broska na Prishtinu", *Istoriik*, 2016. Available at <https://histrf.ru/read/articles/biessmyslienni-podvigh-kotoryi-byi-nie-zria-k-17-lietiiu-marsh-broska-na-prishtinu>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²²⁵ A. Brudenell, "Russia's Role in the Kosovo Conflict of 1999", *The RUSI Journal*, no.153, 2008, pp. 30-34

²²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 32

such a step as “stampede.”²²⁷ Thus reinforcing the fact that the Russians, in particular Yeltsin, were so caught between the economic problems that he was coping with thanks to the IMF lending and the negative-minded Duma, which fiercely criticized Yeltsin for his inaction.

However, despite the failed operation, Russia received a percentage that will be traced in the Kremlin's foreign policy for many years to come, as well as the realization that the West is ready to forgive non-compliance with agreements and cooperate at critical moments of any settlement. Secondly, Russia realized that the main fear of NATO countries at the sight of any military aggression from Russia is the possibility of a direct war with Russia and the hypothetical outbreak of World War III, which the Kremlin will use for many years after the Kosovo issue is over. Thirdly, despite its betrayal of "brother" Milosevic, Russia managed to maintain close ties between the countries, which in the future will give Russia an irreplaceable ally in international affairs.

2. March to Pristina through the Prism of Russian Rhetoric

The situation at Pristina Airport has brought a lot of confusion and ambiguity to the Yugoslav conflict. Firstly, there is an ambiguity in the purpose of the occupation, which is not known to this day. Secondly, these are completely different views on the conflict itself on the part of Russia and the United States. Thus, in order to understand the vision of the conflict, it is worth understanding the Russian rhetoric among various media outlets that covered the process of resolving this issue from June 12 to 20.

According to Kommersant newspaper, initially, NATO was supposed to enter Kosovo on June 11, but "operations were postponed for a day."²²⁸ The entry of NATO peacekeeping troops was postponed because "by the time the operation began, American marines did not have time to approach the Macedonian-Yugoslav border" and because of this, "CNN operators would not have captured soldiers with a star-spangled flag among the first NATO troops entering defeated Yugoslavia."²²⁹ That is why, according to the newspaper article for June 15, 1999, American President Clinton could not allow this and ordered to

²²⁷ B. Clinton, *My Life*, Hutchinson, London, 2004, p. 859.

²²⁸ ““Rossiyane voshli pervymi blagodarya CNN”, *Kommersant*, No.101, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/220064?query=Kocovo>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²²⁹ Ibidem

postpone the operation a day later. Then it allowed Russian troops to occupy Pristina airport before NATO troops entered there.²³⁰ It is worth noting that the Russian media treated NATO and the United States very negatively, and the Kosovo Liberation Army, inside Russia, was viewed in principle as more of a terrorist organization than an army that is fighting for its independence. Firstly, the Russian media used the word "boevik" (militant) when narrating about the KLA military, which in Russian rhetoric means a participant in an illegal armed formation or a member of a combat squad in a revolutionary party or other underground organization.²³¹ This word, in Russian rhetoric, is associated with members of terrorist and extremist organizations, as, for example, during the Chechen War, terrorist groups were named, or as the Russian media nowadays call Ukrainian troops, often the "Azov" military group.²³² The Russian side believed that "AOK is trying to take advantage of NATO's arrival in Kosovo to expand its zone of influence."²³³ Moreover, the Russian media claimed that it was precisely because of the Kosovo Liberation Army that Russia did not allocate a separate sector, since the KLA militants could react negatively and start military operations.²³⁴ It is worth noting that Russia's foreign policy has always been aimed at combating any military groups objectionable to Russia. When Moscow saw itself as a threat or an army for independence, it always branded itself as a terrorist or Nazi group, just as it did in Chechnya and also as it is doing at the moment in Ukraine. That is, this behavior is considered to be very historically formed, during the Soviet Union, the Soviet authorities fought against "dissidents" through harsh repression, then after 1991, this "system switched to Russia's foreign policy, when Russia literally "canceled" any objectionable formations, attributing to them the illegality of existence.

Moreover, there were rumors among the Russian media that NATO peacekeeping troops were conducting a brutal policy on the territory of Kosovo, for example, the Russian media claimed that "they (NATO) respond with fire to any provocation: NATO members

²³⁰ Ibidem

²³¹ The definition of this word can be found here: <https://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/боевик#Значение>

²³² This analysis based on this article: "My rassmatrivaem vozmozhnost' napadeniya na russkie vojska ", Kommersant, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/220063?query=Косово>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²³³ Ibidem

²³⁴ Ibidem

shot three Albanians and several Serbs just yesterday."²³⁵ Also, the Russian side stressed that the Kosovo Liberation Army is also waging a brutal struggle with the Serbian population, "Albanian militants are seeing off the retreating with fire and taking revenge on those who remained."²³⁶ Moreover, the Russian media claimed that it was precisely because of the Kosovo Liberation Army that Russia did not allocate a separate sector, since the KLA militants could react negatively and start military operations. Moreover, the Russian media claimed that "in the future, according to the generals' plan, Russian military transport Il-76s with several thousand paratroopers from Pskov, Ryazan and Ivanov were to land here."²³⁷ Thus, it is worth saying that most likely the Russian military were really going to allocate their own sector, but due to the fact that Bulgaria and Hungary opposed and closed the airspace for Russia, this plan was canceled and Russia remained in a hopeless situation, thereby putting its military in a state of complete isolation on the territory of Kosovo.

It is worth noting that the Russian population also did not understand the purpose of this military operation of the Russian Federation on the territory of Kosovo, on June 15, 1999, journalists conducted a survey among the population, to the question, "Are you ready to pay for the Yugoslav landing?", the Russian public had completely different answers from complete indignation to complete admiration. For example, some identified this military operation with such a proverb: "give some people an inch and they take an ell."²³⁸ Adding that "the price of such a "spectacular" march may become too high,"²³⁹ relying on the fact that "Russia has lost the chance to be a participant in the economic recovery of Yugoslavia and Kosovo — and this is a lot of money,"²⁴⁰ which Russia did not have after 1998. On the other hand, some admired Russia's actions, praising the "successes of Russian weapons"²⁴¹ and proclaiming that "now the West will not perceive us (Russia) like some preschoolers on the international stage."²⁴²

²³⁵ "“Rossiyane voshli pervymi blagodarya CNN”, *Kommersant*, No.101, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/220064?query=Kocovo>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²³⁶ *Ibidem*

²³⁷ *Ibidem*

²³⁸ "My rassmatrivaem vozmozhnost' napadeniya na russkie vojska ", *Kommersant*, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/220063?query=Kocovo>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²³⁹ *Ibidem*

²⁴⁰ *Ibidem*

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*

²⁴² *Ibidem*

At the same time, newspapers were already spreading rumors about Russia's plans in Kosovo, for example, according to the *Kommersant* newspaper, Russia planned “that the 10,000-strong contingent would consist of four brigades of four battalions each. A motorized rifle brigade will be formed in the Moscow, Ural, Leningrad military districts, and the Airborne Forces, which until now traditionally had a monopoly on Yugoslav peacekeeping, will delegate an airborne brigade. It has already been decided that the 106th Tula Airborne Division will allocate two battalions to the brigade, and the 76th Pskov and 98th Ivanovo Divisions will each allocate one battalion. In each brigade, one engineer company will be formed, which will be engaged in mine clearance of the area. Russian soldiers will have to undergo an accelerated training course: unlike Bosnia, there are no two months left (the first NATO peacekeepers entered Kosovo last week). The Russians will be armed with light armored vehicles — amphibious assault vehicles, infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers. In addition, it is possible to give each brigade a squadron of Mi-8MTV transport and combat helicopters (9 vehicles each).”²⁴³ It is worth noting that there was one "but" for such global plans in Russia, the Russian economy was in such a bad state that there were no funds for the maintenance of such troops, thus this operation was initially impossible, but for some reason it was planned weeks before.²⁴⁴ Also, Russia's position is clearly visible among the pro-Russian and pro-state media, of course many were afraid of the West's response to this provocation and how relations between the United States and Russia will now be built after the occupation of Slatina, the publication "Russian Newspaper" perfectly demonstrated Russia's interests in one of its articles: "in compliance with the legitimate interests of Russia. If someone tries to use all sorts of tricks to push us away from solving important problems affecting, among other things, our security, it is not a sin to resort to some cunning. We are not the first here in the history of diplomacy, nor are we the last."²⁴⁵ That is, even among the Russian rhetoric, there was an idea that Russian foreign policy could, in the interests of its own security, arbitrarily cross states and occupy territories. It was also emphasized that the West is the main villain in this conflict, which in turn was guilty of "the extreme

²⁴³ "Mesto postoyannoj okkupacii", *Kommersant*, 1999. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/15602?query=Kocobo>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²⁴⁴ Ibidem

²⁴⁵ "Vopros s zagogulinoj", *Russkaya Gazeta*, 1999. Available at <https://rg.ru/1999/06/16/reid.html>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

aggravation of the interethnic conflict in the center of Europe, which has turned into a humanitarian catastrophe."²⁴⁶

Thus, the Russian press perceived the occupation of Pristina airport through the prism of the fact that it is Russia that is a peacekeeping force in this conflict. Firstly, the Kosovo Liberation Army was, in the context of Russia, an illegal group that destabilized the Balkans. This may also explain the fact why Russia decided to occupy the airport of Pristina, since it is possible to conduct a parallel, for example, with the actions in Chechnya. Secondly, Russia wanted to teach NATO a lesson and show that it is still strong and has potential. Boris Yeltsin described it as: "This gesture of moral victory was demonstrated to the whole of Europe, to the whole world under the nose of a huge NATO military group." Russia needed to demonstrate its strength and point out that it has the right, after 2 months of active negotiations with Milosevic, to participate in this operation too. And thirdly, based on the planning data of this operation, Russia was quite ready to really take control of a part of Kosovo, hoping that the Russian military would be able to conduct their own policy there, and based on Russia's attitude to the KLA, the policy could be to clean up this territory from the Kosovo Albanians.²⁴⁷

One of the paradoxes of the Russian media in this period of time was that despite the freedom of speech and free media, which still existed in 1999, it was often the same as the war in Kosovo, that the Russian media viewed the situation at the Pristina airport unilaterally from the position of the opposition NATO. The Russian media viewed the war in Kosovo from the position that the Serbian population had to escape from NATO bombs, completely ignoring Milosevic's inhuman ethnic cleansing, such a media policy was also applied in the Soviet Union when the government sanctified what it needed without revealing the full picture. At that time, the Russian media were divided into parties, thus each party left its imprint in every news, if the media controlled by the Yeltsin administration reported the facts of bombing as facts, but not sanctifying Milosevic's atrocities, such newspapers as Kommersant, Russkaya Gazeta, Vestnik, for example, newspapers that were controlled by the Communist party led by Zyuganov, who at that time was waging a fierce struggle with Yeltsin, added to all the criticism of the

²⁴⁶ Ibidem

²⁴⁷ This analysis was carried out based on newspaper articles (Kommersant and Russian Newspaper) for the period from 12.06.1999 to 20.06.2022 the archive of admissions can be found here:

NATO bombing an ardent criticism of Yeltsin's policy, which allowed such a scenario to develop. For example, such newspapers as Komsomolskaya Pravda and Pravda. The same mechanism worked during the occupation of the Pristina airport, if the newspapers that were under the control of the Yeltsin administration sanctified the "heroic step" of the Russian military who were at the Pristina airport, then, for example, the oppositionists told how Yeltsin decided to get out at the last moment, but at the same time achieved nothing in Kosovo and so did not I was able to allocate a separate sector for Russia. Thus, it is worth concluding that during the Kosovo War and the occupation of Pristina Airport, there was a tough anti-NATO propaganda in Russia's rhetoric and filtering of those events that took place, thereby allowing the population to learn only limited information that took place on the territory of Kosovo.²⁴⁸

3. March to Pristina through the Prism of American Rhetoric

To understand the full picture of this step of the Russian troops, it is also worth drawing an analogy as this march was demonstrated inside the American rhetoric, thereby tracing which points of contact the states had or vice versa. The work of the American media not only during the Kosovo conflict, but also in general slightly differs from the mechanisms of the Russian media. As a rule, the American agenda is determined by CN, the mass media in the United States influence not only the American population, but also the conduct of politics, forcing the top officials of the United States to act with their own kind of spam. The coverage of the Yugoslav conflict was very clear and loud among the American agenda. While the occupation of Pristina airport was rather poorly covered in the American agenda, if The New York Times introduced daily updates on this conflict, but indicating only the facts without any specific opinion, then CNN sanctified this "incident" on June 12, the day when NATO troops discovered Russian troops and mentioned several times in passing during the days of negotiations, that is, without paying great attention to these actions of the Russian troops. The American press emphasized more during the bombing, when it tried to sanctify Milosevic as a terrorist and dictator,

²⁴⁸ This analysis is based on the archives of Newspapers as Kommersant, Russkaya Gazeta, Vestnik, Komsomolskaya Pravda and Pravda and also on the article, which could be found here: V.Brovkin, "Discourse on NATO in Russia during the Kosovo War". Available at https://demokratizatsiya.pub/archives/07-4_brovkin.pdf. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

after the signing of the agreement, the American media did not devote so much attention to the problem in the Balkans.²⁴⁹

Despite the fact that the American press covered the events at the Pristina Airport only factually, it is worth highlighting several key things that pointed to Russian actions in Kosovo. According to New York Times, when NATO troops arrived at the airport and found Russian troops, one of the Russian soldiers said that “they are supposed to stay here for two weeks, and then go back to Bosnia”²⁵⁰ because they came just for “prepare the airport for their troops.”²⁵¹ Moreover, it is the American media that confirms the fact that thousands of Serbian residents of Pristina took to the streets to greet Russian troops with flowers and shouts.²⁵² Thus, Russia demonstrated to the United States its initial position and side in this conflict, moreover, according to the New York Times, Russian troops agreed to carry out such a transfer of troops to Kosovo with the Yugoslav side, thereby making this gesture in support of Serbia, and not to American colleagues.²⁵³ On the other hand, NATO peacekeeping troops had even more support inside Kosovo. Firstly, all Kosovo Albanians and refugees who were forced to leave Kosovo were on the side of NATO. Secondly, they had full legitimacy in their actions, which was not an occupation, as in the case of Russia and the Pristina airport.²⁵⁴ According to CNN, the Russian occupation of the Pristina airport allowed Russia to quickly find out its position in the NATO peacekeeping operation, so the American side was forced to immediately start negotiations with Moscow after some time of attempts to delay such a step. Moreover, CNN stressed that the Russian military came to prepare the territory for further work, thereby they were engaged in demining the territory and preparing the landing of new Russian military. It is worth saying that it was repeated several times on CNN that it was necessary to start negotiations as soon as possible so as not to destabilize the situation in

²⁴⁹ This analysis is based on the archives of such publications as The New York Times, The Washington Times and CNN, and also based on article: F.Rizanaj, “The Kosovo War in Media: Between War Journalism and Foreign Policy of NATO Members”, Vol. 2, Issue 1, 2018. Available at file:///Users/ASUS/Downloads/The_Kosovo_War_in_Media_Betwe.pdf. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²⁵⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/12/world/crisis-balkans-overview-russians-enter-kosovo-early-but-moscow-calls-it-mistake.html?searchResultPosition=1>

²⁵¹ Ibidem

²⁵² Ibidem

²⁵³ Ibidem

²⁵⁴ “CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: DEPLOYMENT; A Short Pause, Then the Allies Start Moving In”, *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/12/world/crisis-in-the-balkans-deployment-a-short-pause-then-the-allies-start-moving-in.html?searchResultPosition=2>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

Pristina, which indicates the fact that the media agenda in the United States clearly indicates the introduction of foreign policy, by the evening of June 12, the dialogue between Russia and NATO was opened.²⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the American authorities claimed to the media that no one was against the presence of Russian troops at the Pristina airport, for example, Mr. Talbot said at a press conference that “Russia would have an ‘important and manifest’ role in parts of Kosovo”²⁵⁶ and also he emphasized that he didn’t think that “there is any question that Russia should have an area in which its responsibility is manifest, evident for all the world to see.”²⁵⁷

Moreover, The New York Times emphasized several times in its articles that most likely the decision to transfer troops was made for the following reasons: “To some extent, the Russian move may have been designed to counter intense criticism at home about the Kremlin's help in negotiating an end to the war mostly on NATO terms. Many Russians believe Moscow betrayed its Slavic allies in Belgrade, and some top military commanders have made little secret of their contempt for the Russian diplomacy.”²⁵⁸

In general, it should be said that the American media during the occupation of Pristina were quite objective, there was no propaganda or ardent criticism of Russia. Moreover, they absolutely freely stated how and why it happened that Russian troops arrived before the NATO peacekeeping forces. Moreover, we can say that the American media did not attach much importance to this occupation, although the Foreign Minister said the day before the occupation that Russia was not going to send its troops, the next day after the Russian military took a stand, the American media empathized more with "poor"²⁵⁹ Igor Ivanov in that that President Yeltsin "didn't even bother to notify him."²⁶⁰ Thus, the

²⁵⁵ “Russian troops block NATO forces at Pristina checkpoint”, *CNN*, 2019. Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9906/13/kosovo.01/index.html>. (Accessed 06.05.2022)

²⁵⁶ “CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: MOSCOW; Envoys Haggles Over Russian Role in Peacekeeping Force”, *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/14/world/crisis-balkans-moscow-envoys-haggles-over-russian-role-peacekeeping-force.html?searchResultPosition=12>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²⁵⁷ *Ibidem*

²⁵⁸ “Kosovo and the Kremlin”, *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/14/opinion/kosovo-and-the-kremlin.html?searchResultPosition=8>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²⁵⁹ “CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: NATO; No New Clashes Reported As Allies Expand Control”, *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/15/world/crisis-in-the-balkans-nato-no-new-clashes-reported-as-allies-expand-control.html?searchResultPosition=9>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

²⁶⁰ *Ibidem*

occupation of Pristina in American rhetoric can be said to have been covered only by the facts that occurred during the negotiations between the two sides.²⁶¹

4. March to Pristina through the Prism of the Comparison American-Russian media

Comparing the American and Russian media during the occupation of Pristina airport, it is possible to identify several key mechanisms that the Russian side adopted from the American one. The first such mechanism was pressure on Russian society by focusing on the common enemy of Russian society. Since June 12, 1999, Russian rhetoric has been telling about the image of an inhuman militant of the Kosovo Liberation Army, this narrative mechanism can be compared with the American before June 12, 1999, when the American media used similar turns of speech pointing to Milosevic's crimes on the territory of Kosovo. For example, the word "atrocities" is mentioned more than once in the Russian media, only in the context of the policy pursued by the Kosovo Liberation Army, while not long before the occupation of Pristina, the word "atrocities" was used in relation to Milosevic's actions carried out on the territory of Kosovo.²⁶² Thus, Russia demonized the image of the Kosovo Liberation Army, just as the United States demonized the image of Milosevic in its media in order to convey the interests of the government to its population. Moreover, if the American media did not attach great importance to the occupation of the Pristina airport, and moreover, the Clinton administration and the NATO leadership managed to twist it from the side that Russian troops were almost invited to the territory of Kosovo, then the Russian media showed the march on Pristina as a heritage of pride and success of the Russian military machine. The newspapers chanted slogans about the superiority of the Russian army and the cunning of our

²⁶¹ This analysis is based on the New York Times publications and CNN archives for the period from 12.06.1999 to 20.06.1999, which can be found at these links: CNN Video Archive. Available at http://edition.cnn.com/video_vault/. (Accessed 05.05.2022); New York Times Archive. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/search?dropmab=true&endDate=19990620&query=Pristina%20airport&sort=best&startDate=19990612>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

²⁶² For example, this rhetoric can be traced in these articles: K. Seelye, "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: WASHINGTON; Clinton Blames Milosevic, Not Fate, for Bloodshed", *The New York Times*, 1999, p.12. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/14/world/crisis-in-the-balkans-washington-clinton-blames-milosevic-not-fate-for-bloodshed.html?searchResultPosition=1>. (Accessed 09.05.2022); I. Safronov, G. Sysoev, "Proderzhat'sya do vosemnadcatogo", *Kommersant*, 1999, p.1. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/220042>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

government, the opposition media finally calmed down and approved the actions of the administration on the territory of Kosovo, the Russian population was confident that Russian troops were coming to the territory of Kosovo as liberators. Such an information gap was due to the fact that if it was advantageous for Russia to show that it had finally taught NATO a lesson, then it was better for the United States not to attach much importance and pretend that this was planned so as not to destabilize the conflict region and the tense situation inside the country.²⁶³ It is also worth noting the fact that Russia, which ignored any genocide by Milosevic, tried to circumvent this topic in its media rhetoric in order not to stimulate its conflict in Chechnya, while the American media repeatedly mentioned this fact, and also cited the example of the Russian government, which ignored the fact of genocide on the territory of Kosovo by the Serbian authorities.²⁶⁴

One of the main information gaps between the Russian and American media was this trend. Russia occupied the airport of Pristina among its population instilled the fact that Russian troops were preparing the territory for the further entry of the Russian military contingent, while the American media defined the occupation of Slatina as a way to get NATO to negotiate the status of Russia on the territory of Kosovo in the peacekeeping military forces. Moreover, Russia has already actively disseminated its pre-prepared plan of "intervention" on the territory of Kosovo, while the United States and NATO have not begun negotiations on the status of Russia in this territory. While the entire population of Russia was confident that a whole controlled sector would be allocated to Russia, the Prime Minister of Russia and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

²⁶³ This analysis is based on the archive of The New York Times, The Washington Times, Kommersant and Russian Newspaper for the period from 12.06.1999 to 20.06.1999, which can be found here: New York Times Archive. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/search?dropmab=true&endDate=19990620&query=Pristina%20airport&sort=best&startDate=19990612>. (Accessed 09.05.2022); The Washington Times Archive. Available at https://washingtontimes.newsbank.com/search?text=kosovo&content_added=&date_from=&date_to=&pub%5B0%5D=15090DF29750CF18&page=3. (Accessed 09.05.2022); Kommersant Archive. Available at https://www.kommersant.ru/search/results?search_query=AOK&sort_type=0&search_full=1&time_range=2&dateStart=1999-06-12&dateEnd=1999-06-20&stamp=637880880990693069. (Accessed 05.05.2022); RGRU Archive. Available at <https://rg.ru/sujet/5536/>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

²⁶⁴ For example, here: "The World; An Agony Promising New Days of Agony", *The New York Times*, 1999. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/04/weekinreview/the-world-an-agony-promising-new-days-of-agony.html?searchResultPosition=10>. (Accessed 05.05.2022)

tried to negotiate with their American colleagues about at least some minimum of troops that would be allowed to enter Russia into the territory of Kosovo.²⁶⁵

Thus, it is worth concluding that despite the fact that such a conflict did not exist during the occupation of Pristina airport, Russia and America gave this event a completely different meaning. If the American side perceived the occupation by the Russians as something insignificant on their world agenda, then the Russian side perceived this step as equal to NATO's intervention in the Yugoslav conflict. Perhaps if the United States could stop such a lack of agreement on the part of Russia, then in the future it would not be able to use Kosovo as one of the mechanisms for introducing its foreign policy. Moreover, as a result of these negotiations, Russia was allowed to enter the territory of Kosovo, but under the control of NATO, which subsequently lowered Yeltsin's rating to almost zero. Moreover, the situation at the Pristina airport demonstrated the fact that Russia and the United States looked at this conflict from completely different points of view, the propaganda that existed in Russia and in the United States accurately determined the course of events of the Kosovo conflict. For example, the American media considered Milosevic a terrorist and a tyrant, thus the United States primarily fought for Milosevic's ousting from the territory of Kosovo. While Russia, which had not decided on a position on Milosevic by the end of the conflict, identified the main core of evil in this conflict with the Kosovo Liberation Army. Thereby occupying the airport territory after signing the agreement, demonstrated all her disregard for the Kosovo troops and insisted on the presence of the region to control them.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ For example, here: "Под командованием НАТО мы никогда не будем", *Коммерсантъ*, 1999, p.1. Available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/220298>. (Accessed 08.05.2022); J. Broder, "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE WHITE HOUSE; Phone Calls to Russia Fail to End Stalemate", *The New York Times*, 1999, p.15. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/15/world/crisis-balkans-white-house-phone-calls-russia-fail-end-stalemate.html?searchResultPosition=7>. (Accessed 08.05.2022)

²⁶⁶ This analysis is based on the archive of The New York Times, The Washington Times, Kommersant and Russian Newspaper for the period from 25.03.1999 to 20.06.1999, which can be found here: New York Times Archive. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/search?dropmab=true&endDate=19990620&query=Pristina%20airport&sort=best&startDate=19990612>. (Accessed 09.05.2022); The Washington Times Archive. Available at https://washingtontimes.newsbank.com/search?text=kosovo&content_added=&date_from=&date_to=&pub%5B0%5D=15090DF29750CF18&page=3. (Accessed 09.05.2022); Kommersant Archive. Available at https://www.kommersant.ru/search/results?search_query=AOK&sort_type=0&search_full=1&time_range=2&dateStart=1999-06-12&dateEnd=1999-06-20&stamp=637880880990693069. (Accessed 05.05.2022); RGRU Archive. Available at <https://rg.ru/sujet/5536/>. (Accessed 09.05.2022)

Conclusion

In the period from 1998-1999, Russian-American relations suffered ups and downs. Prior to the start of the NATO air campaign, strong cooperation was noted between Russia and the United States, which was aimed at resolving the Kosovo conflict through diplomatic means. It is worth highlighting several key points that contributed to this cooperation. Firstly, NATO, the issue of bringing NATO closer to Russia's borders has been discussed since 1993, Yeltsin, in turn, was sure that such an agreement had been reached, although no official agreement had ever existed. Secondly, prestige, weakened after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was aimed at returning to the world stage and becoming a strong player, Russian proximity to the Serbian people and Russia's communist past played into the hands of the Yeltsin administration, which allowed Russia to participate in the solution of the Yugoslav conflict to the full extent and become a member of the Contact Group. On March 24, 1999, when NATO launched an air campaign on the territory of Yugoslavia, there was a rift in relations between Russia and the United States. Then Yeltsin realized that his persuasions were not effective and Clinton does not consider Yeltsin his equal in international affairs. Moreover, Yeltsin was afraid of an aggravation of the conflict within Russia, since Russia was waging such a struggle with separatist Chechnya, thereby she was afraid to create a precedent for the Chechen government and lose this territory forever. It is worth noting the fact that despite Yeltsin's irritation with the decision of the United States and NATO, Yeltsin was forced to cooperate with the West in resolving this conflict and refuse to support Serbia, both for economic reasons and for political reasons.

One of the key moments of the war in Kosovo was the occupation of Pristina Airport, when, in opposition to NATO, Moscow decided to transfer its contingent to the territory of Slatina Airport, thereby redefining its position and presence in the region and challenging the so-called NATO forces. It is worth saying that a "political gap" formed between Russia and the United States at this moment, Russia betrayed too much importance to this occupation, while the United States perceived it as an attempt by Russia to emphasize its presence in resolving this conflict, but did not allow Russia to occupy its own sector, which prevented the division of Kosovo into Serbian and the Albanian part. Moreover, the war in Kosovo has left an imprint on Russia's foreign policy, Russia has

repeatedly used Kosovo after 1999 to justify the introduction of its domestic and foreign policy, first in 1999 in Chechnya, then in 2008 in Georgia, after in Ukraine in 2014, and then now in 2022. The rhetoric of the war in Kosovo arises in Russia to this day, when on June 12, 1999, Russia defied NATO by occupying Slatina Airport, it took the first step towards a protracted confrontation between Russia and the United States, as well as NATO.

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