Media, Wars and Politics

Comparing the Incomparable in Western and Eastern Europe

Ekaterina Balabanova

MEDIA, WARS AND POLITICS

For my Mum and Dad

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EKATERINA BALABANOVA
University of Liverpool, UK

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List of Abbreviations

ACTORD	Activation Order
ACTWARN	Activation Warning Order
AP	Associated Press
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BNR	Bulgarian National Radio
BNT	Bulgarian National Television
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
BTA	Bulgarian Telegraph Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
DLK	Democratic League of Kosovo
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
IICK	Independent International Commission on Kosovo
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MSF	Medecins sans Frontieres
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCRT	National Council on Radio and Television
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RTA	Radio and Television Act
SC	Security Council
TANJUG	Telegraphic Agency of New Yugoslavia
UCK	Ushtria Clirimatare e Kosoves
UDF	Union of Democratic Forces
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UK	United Kingdom
WAZ	Westdeutsche Allgemiene Zeitung

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Introduction

'The unusual and the violent remain basic ingredients of news: discord is recorded, peacefulness is not' (Hoge, 1994: 143). Following this logic, contemporary forms of large scale conflict are an attractive subject for the attention of an increasingly global media. Many, if not all of them are carried out, albeit to different degrees, in front of a global audience. Developments in communications technology during the 1980s allowed for this transformation in the potential of the media to provide a constant flow of global real-time news with ever greater immediacy and realism. After the pioneering real-time coverage of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations by Cable News Network (CNN) in 1989, other broadcasters adjusted rapidly, seeing the power of live television both to set political agendas and to win new audiences (Hoge, 1994). Print journalism has also modified its style. The means of getting the information around and out of the conflict area are becoming more widely available, affordable, smaller, instantaneous and harder to detect (Taylor, 1999). Modern media are considered to be immediate and sensational, omnipresent and pervasive (Jones, 1991). They have increased their capacity to hold audiences' attention and to communicate different messages on a variety of matters reaching the vast majority of individuals. Today, global audiences are talking about the same issues at the same time. As Blumler and Gurevitch (2000: 161) point out the saturation of the media environment with round-the-clock coverage of the top stories of the day 'ensures that almost everyone, even some who "don't want to know," will be reached by news about major political events and conflicts'. What may differ across various outlets and their audiences is how those stories are framed, analysed and followed up.

In recent years a parallel development has been the growing understanding within the Western world that gross violations of human rights and oppression of whole groups should be a matter of concern for the international community, even if this contradicts the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states. The French President Jacques Chirac, observed of Kosovo in 1998 that a 'humanitarian situation constitutes a reason that can justify an exception to a rule, however strong and firm it might be'. Similar claims were voiced by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who argued that the principle of non-interference should not be jettisoned too readily, but it must be qualified in important respects by opposition to genocide and oppression (cited in Freedman, 2000: 342).

This trend is extremely important these days when the predominant form of warfare is intrastate conflict with an ethno-national or separatist character. Defined widely as 'new wars' these conflicts have severe consequences for the populations involved as they are the main target. Ethnic cleansing, destruction of homes,

economic centres, cultural buildings, identity politics, loss of legitimacy of political institutions within a country are among the main features of new wars.[1]

The news media are often depicted as the decisive causal link between a given crisis and the reaction of the international community. In the age of 'media pervasiveness', there is a 'common sense' understanding that the media are exceptionally critical players in security conflicts (Hoge, 1994; Shaw, 1996). It is widely believed that they have an impact on the *process* of foreign policy-making and on the resulting *policy* itself. The media's impact is assumed to be substantial as the claims for media-driven policy suggest. While the reality of real-time, instantaneous coverage of security conflicts as a result of incredible advance in communication technology is evident, the link between this coverage and policy-making is not so clear. There is a wide-ranging debate over the relationship between media coverage and foreign policy-making. It still remains inconclusive. While some journalists, such as Gowing (1996); Strobel (1997); Moorcraft (1999); Adie (2000), have questioned how influential the media really are, academics such as Shaw (1996) argue that media impact is profound.

To date much of the research on the media-foreign policy relationship has confined itself to the core of the Western developed states, most notably the USA. However, to what extent are the American media representative of the trends in the European media? Are the conclusions about the media-foreign policy relationship in the USA applicable to the interactions in Europe? Even if the answer to these questions is a tentative yes, what about Eastern Europe? The media in Eastern Europe remain still largely unexplored, leaving the question open as to whether they are just like their Western counterparts. Focusing on the general theme of the relationship between media and politics, this book brings the debate to bear upon the media-foreign policy relationship in a post-communist state and hence attempts to break a new ground in the field of media/policy research. The study moves beyond the geographical limitations of the research to date. It widens the debate beyond the US media and policy-making by considering the case of Western European and Eastern European media and policy processes. This incorporates different types of democratic regimes, including a post-totalitarian one, and a different and wider selection of media to include the popular press as well. The book also brings in the case of a small state's foreign policy – in a certain, albeit very different way both countries analysed here – Bulgaria and Britain – can be labelled this way. It tests the wider applicability of the various theoretical approaches established so far. By doing this it provides some useful comparisons and allows conclusions to be drawn on the media/policy relationship on a more general basis.

Set in this light, the book adopts a comparative perspective and looks at the media-foreign policy interaction in two European countries which differ geopolitically, economically, and culturally – Britain and Bulgaria. Bulgaria joined the EU at the start of the 2007 having been subjected to detailed scrutiny prior to that. The sudden and less than smooth transformation that took place in the country over the previous years led to the establishment of a democratic system of government. This book

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1   Although, the label new wars has been widespread just how new they really are is a matter of discussion. For a further exploration and discussion of the concept of new wars see Chapter 2.

focuses on the relationship that has been developed between the news media that are central to the liberal notion of democracy and the policy-making. The intention is to offer a comparative analysis of the media and policy-making interaction in a newly joined member of the EU – Bulgaria and one of the old members of the organisation – Britain. The aim is to identify, analyse, compare and assess the nature of the relationship between these two key players in the political field, thus drawing conclusions about the current 'state-of-affairs' in a newcomer to the EU state as seen next to a well-established member. This way the book provides a valuable insight into a new EU member state. At the same time, the book also examines the two countries as representatives of the Western and East European media and policy developments. While aware of the relative inaccuracy in the claim for representation, it is argued here that by examining the patterns in the selected countries more light can be shed on the media-foreign policy relationship in Europe overall. For this purpose and to illustrate the more general analytical framework, the research utilises a case study of the Kosovo crisis.

This began as a civil conflict but by September 1998 Kosovo acquired an international dimension. The conflict was brought to an end – in the sense of a real diminution of systematic violence – due to the involvement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Kosovo crisis became widely associated with the term 'humanitarian war'. It provoked considerable international response on both the public and policy levels.

With this in mind, the book has a number of key objectives. Firstly, to assess the interaction between the print media coverage of the conflict and the governments' foreign policy in Bulgaria and Britain by looking at what matters were emphasised and what attitudes were adopted. The aim is to analyse not the news sources, but the news content as it appears on the pages of the newspapers and its influence on the policy process.

Arguably, in the presence of 24-hour news channels and digital radio, television and Internet, the print media is somewhat outdated as a source of information for the majority of the audiences. It is contended here that this view represents a rather superficial assessment and it remains questionable whether the press is currently less important than other media. Rather the press still constitutes one of the most influential institutions in society (Vincent, 2000), which most of the public depends on as a main source of information (Taylor, 1999). The wide readership and popularity amongst a cross-section of society confirms this (Willcox, 2005). The appearance of online editions of newspapers has also helped expand their audiences and facilitated up-to-date news coverage, thus diminishing the significance of some of the criticisms addressed at the print media. In addition, some of the press's key and characteristic features clearly give it an edge – its quality, its longevity, and its partisanship. First, although newspapers are no longer able to be first with the news they do, as Hoge (1994) argues, report the 'what' of events and the elite, broadsheet newspapers incorporate the 'why' as well. Newspapers shift more and more to the background and analysis of the breaking news that their readers have seen already on television (Strobel, 1997: 45). They utilise their greater capacity to follow up headline news items in more depth. In other words, they are more analytical and interpretative (Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996: 35). Of course, not all newspapers have the same characteristics. The

press is highly differentiated and different papers reach very different audiences with very different messages. Despite this caveat, in purely quantitative terms of coverage, and also arguably in terms of quality, newspapers still have a certain advantage over other forms of mass media. As Strobel (1997: 15) argues on the basis of his own research, 'the printed word and photograph continue to have a distinct impact of their own, notwithstanding the growing dominance of television and the emergence of CNN and its brethren'. Second, the aggregated circulation of newspapers is very high and the press is a medium with built-in longevity. This points to its specific character regarding both the number of readers using one and the same copy and the possibility of accessing the information in newspapers any time after the actual date of publication. This is now even more the case with the advent of comprehensive newspaper archives available electronically on websites. Third, the press is partisan and biased, unconstrained by the kinds of regulatory regimes to provide the kind of 'balanced' coverage that British (and other) television broadcasters are under. The press has always been a medium of propaganda as well as of information. Therefore, it could be assumed that press influence would be different for different readers and would be more apparent in terms of attitudes than perceptions. Readers' preferences determine what exactly in the newspaper is going to be read and when it is going to be read (Miller, 1991). Each of the foregoing features of newspapers presupposes a high degree of motivation on behalf of the reader during the process of perception and analysis of acquired information.

The second objective of the book is to test the key analytical assumptions established and previously tested in the West regarding media's influence on foreign policy-making when a 'humanitarian' intervention is undertaken.

Finally, the book applies and thus tests on a practical level a policy-media interaction model developed by Robinson (1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002a, 2002b). Robinson's model draws upon the insights offered by the recent research on the relationship between news media and foreign policy-making in the USA and claims to offer an alternative way of understanding this relationship.

In view of the above, the study also addresses also more general questions about the nature of the media and the dilemmas of comparing media across borders, the nature of the media – policy-making relationship in countries still trying to find their way in political and economic sense, the nature of modelling and the limitations of generating universal models.

The main findings of the book relate first, to the suitability of models developed for the Western media outside of the Western context suggesting that their applicability is most likely specific to certain types of media systems and journalistic cultures. Second, the book argues that in the Bulgarian case, as opposed to the Western media, at this current stage of the post-communist development of the media (or development of the whole society) it is not able to seriously challenge the government. This is the case no matter how coherent, strongly held and well articulated the argument or on the contrary how inconsistent, uncertain and badly presented the policy is (which in effect is the established assumption for the Western media-foreign policy relationship). More importantly, the book also identifies the presence of neutral media coverage in Bulgaria. This type of coverage has not been discovered in any previous analyses of media-foreign policy interaction that involved the application of Robinson's media-

policy interaction model, which is used here. It allows for speculation not only about the use of models across borders, but also about the particular conditions that allow neutral coverage to be produced. The contingency of the category 'neutral', however, needs to be acknowledged. The terms of it are clearly defined in Chapter 5 and in essence involve an understanding of neutrality as a particular body of coverage that is rather even-handed, avoid taking a clear stand on an issue and achieve a degree of balance.

Shape of the Book

The analysis proceeds in six chapters. Chapter 1 sets out the background to the media-foreign policy interaction debate by establishing the link between these news media and foreign policy-making. The chapter briefly summarises the essential argument of the book and explicitly identifies those scholars whose work this study is influenced by and seeks to build upon. As such, it critically reviews the state of current thinking on the media-foreign policy relationship and specifies the contribution of the present work. The main theoretical approaches in the field – those falling within the 'manufacturing consent' thesis and those that develop arguments within the framework of the 'the CNN effect' thesis – are consecutively analysed. This establishes the lines of enquiry of the book and introduces the specific model that is used in the subsequent analysis of the British and Bulgarian media-policy relationship.

Chapter 2 explores the notions of new wars and new military humanitarianism and as such offers an insight into the emergent context that has made this study necessary. The chapter sets the context for the subsequent analysis by allowing a positioning of the case study – the Kosovo conflict – within the framework of the changing nature of wars and the changing international responses to new wars and humanitarian intervention in the post-Cold War period.

Chapter 3 deals with the case study. It examines the Kosovo crisis – its background and development, the events leading to the NATO decision to launch an air campaign, and the actual air strikes. It identifies the key features of the crisis that qualify it as a new war and assesses the new military humanitarianism in practice looking at the proclaimed motives and objectives of the Western action.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the Bulgarian media making a clear distinction between the so called 'old' and 'new' media. Their distinctive features are highlighted, their development patterns and readership figures indicated. The chapter is devoted solely to the Bulgarian media acknowledging the changes they are undergoing at the moment and the need to be familiar with them when analysing the actual media texts. This is in contrast to the well-researched and longer historical traditions provided by the British media that represents the second element of the comparative study. As the press coverage of the Kosovo conflict represents the case study material more attention in both cases is devoted to the print media.

Chapters 5 and 6 mirror each other. They apply the policy-media interaction model consecutively to Bulgaria and Britain. Chapter 5 examines the Bulgarian print media coverage of two periods of the Kosovo conflict – the first one, between

24 February and 24 March 1999, which marks the time from the end of peace talks in Rambouillet to the commencement of air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the second, between 15 April and 15 May 1999 – the middle of the NATO air campaign, which marks the fading of support for the NATO action in light of its apparent lack of success and the beginning of more serious talks for the use of ground troops in the former Yugoslavia. The analysis of the Bulgarian print media coverage of the Kosovo conflict and the implications of this coverage for policy-making in the country is based on data obtained from eight newspapers – seven dailies and one weekly – *24 Chasa*, *Trud*, *Demokracia*, *Duma*, *Pari*, *Sega*, *Standart* and *Kapital*. The selection is determined by considerations of circulation figures – the above dailies are the leading ones published in Bulgaria and *Kapital* is by far the most influential among the weekly newspapers. In addition, factors such as political leanings and type of paper are taken into account. The subsequent analysis of the British print media coverage of the Kosovo crisis and its links to the policy-making in the country uses eight publications – *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Mirror* and *The Sun*. The selection is a product of the attempt to analyse a similar range of newspapers in both countries (as far as this is possible considering the different nature of the national press). The same factors such as circulation, political leanings and type of paper are considered. As a result, the final selection represents a representative sample of the very diverse British print media both in terms of political preferences and the quality/tabloid distinction. Chapter 5 also explores the foreign policy of the Bulgarian government towards the conflict within the identified time frames and finally, links the two parts of the analysis by assessing causation between the media coverage and government policy. Chapter 6 conducts an identical in structure analysis of the British press coverage and draws conclusions about its links with the policy of the British government.

The final chapter draws together the case study findings in order to reach conclusions both about the nature of media-foreign policy relationship in Europe and about the nature of modelling.

Chapter 1

Media and War

Introduction

The twentieth century was marked by war. As the historian, Eric Hobsbawm, insists '[the century] lived and thought in terms of world war, even when the guns were silent and the bombs were not exploding' (cited in Carruthers, 2000: 1). The end of the Cold War established an international system which is frequently described as being even more 'chaotic' than that which existed during the Cold War (see Kaldor, 1997; Carruthers, 2000; Duffield, 2001; Gleditsch et al., 2002). The nature of international crises post-Cold War has changed with the majority of the conflicts now being intrastate rather than interstate. They are fought with extreme brutality, with civilians as particularly prominent victims and they can, and have been, frequently captured on television and beamed instantaneously around the world. Arguably the reason why these wars within states have become conflicts of international concern is in some form related to the media. What follows from this is a picture of the world in which contemporary wars and modern news media attract each other. In this process, the media become a constitutive part of wars. They play a complex role in the conduct and prosecution of wars, which cannot be simply limited to being an observer of events. They have turned into participants and even catalysts in international crises. If so, how do they become such? The key aspect of media involvement in wars is the relationship between media coverage of wars and crisis foreign policy-making. It is frequently asserted that media coverage of violent intrastate conflicts produces a 'do something' reaction amongst the global television audiences. The so called 'CNN effect' invests news media with a power to influence audiences and thereby politicians. Do the news media act as a force that drives foreign policy decisions? Or do the media follow the line of 'their' government? Does the media-foreign policy relationship operate in a one-way direction, with either the government or the media solely dictating foreign policy? Isn't this interaction much more complex and based on 'interdependent mutual exploitation' (O'Heffernan, 1994)? Is the term influence an accurate reflection of the essence of the relationship? Assuming that this influence exists, under what conditions can media act as catalysts to international intervention? In exploring these sets of issues this chapter highlights the problematic and/or uncovered areas in the current research on the topic. It raises a number of questions that will be considered in the study while examining the role of the media in crisis foreign policy-making.

In particular, the chapter concentrates on the media coverage of conflict. It links contemporary wars with the nature of the news media. It consecutively examines the interpretation of the relationship between news media and foreign policy-making offered by the approaches falling within the 'manufacturing consent' thesis that

emphasise the role of governments to set news media agendas and then those within the 'CNN effect' thesis that put the stress on media power. The chapter looks into the various definitions of the 'CNN effect'. It also explores different methodologies and models that are used to measure the media/foreign policy relationship. In doing the above, the chapter critically presents the main findings of the research conducted to date on the interaction between news media and foreign policy and identifies the vacuum that the current book aims to fill.

Media of Conflict

Contemporary wars are defined by the greater involvement of civilians, whether as spectators, victims or active participants (Carruthers, 2000: 5). Those who do not experience the conflicts directly and personally become part of them because of the news media. The information and images of human suffering move around the world and reach almost everybody. This is happening instantaneously, with great immediacy and 'realism'. As Curruthers (2000: 200) notes: 'Images are beamed into homes almost as the very events under the camera's gaze actually occur'. It is an observation that has not by-passed politicians. The former US President, Clinton, for example, has claimed that '[b]ecause of a communications revolution, symbolised most clearly by CNN… we are front-row history witnesses. We see things as they occur. Now we are impatient if we learn about things an hour after they occur instead of seeing them in the moment' (cited in Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996: 90).

This statement rightly pinpoints the incredible advance in communications technology. Now there are more effective ways of gathering and distributing information than ever before. The existence of portable communications technology such as the satellite phone, camcorder and laptop computer, the proliferation of stations, channels and programmes, make possible not only the availability of more information but also its almost non-stop accessibility as part of the 'round-the-clock' 24-hour news day.

These developments though can only partially account for the increasing presence of wars in media accounts. The other element of the explanation lies in the very nature of the news media. News in itself is broadly defined as the 'unusual'. William Deedes (cited in Hooper, 1982: 14), editor of *The Daily Telegraph* in 1979, describes news as 'the unusual which will attract people's interest, attract people's attention'. Not surprisingly then, the media as a rule focus on the dramatic, the bloody and the controversial – 'more than ever in terms of news, war is better than peace, violence is better than non-violence' (Young, 1991: 1; Strobel, 1997: 13). As a consequence, the tragic and conflict-filled stories offered by crises like Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo with their starving children and captured GIs have the potential to command massive media attention and 'force their way to the foreground' (Nye, 1999: 29; Nacos, Shapiro and Isernia, 2000: 3). 'Good news', as Zimmerman (cited in Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996: 32) observes, 'is too often considered not newsworthy… Murder in a small town and its big-time equivalent, war within or between nations, makes better news than a nutrition program that improves a million lives'. A similar view on the human disposition to find alarming reports more stimulating than stories

about what is right with the world is expressed by Freedman (1994: 6): 'War is the deadliest of sins, and unfortunately sin fascinates, while good deeds bore' (see also Arno and Dissanayake, 1984: 2). Beyond this truism, Taylor (1997: 99) suggests a range of psychological motives that seem to trigger the palpable 'attraction' of war coverage in the media:

> Wars involve the deployment of troops and weapons in a manner that makes for exciting copy and pictures (the more high-tech the better); they produce a stream of human interest stories of tragedy and heroism; they provoke heightened emotions such as patriotism, fear, anger and euphoria; and they involve winners and losers.

From the perspective of the media a simple (not to say simplistic) conclusion follows: war sells. 'Good news seldom sells papers; dull news never does' (Hudson and Stanier, 1999, xi). As a result, war makes it to the most competitive category of headline news.

Not only are the media attracted to wars. There is a much larger claim that the resulting coverage of wars influences, shapes, and even determines the actual policy-making. The news media, and real-time television in particular, transmit images of human suffering from different parts of the world that attract public attention, including the attention of policy-makers and demand of them 'to do something'. This is how the so called 'CNN effect' comes into existence! However, as Livingston (1997a: 291) points out, 'despite numerous symposia, books, articles, and research fellowships devoted to unravelling the CNN effect, success at clarifying it… has been minimal'.

On a theoretical level there are two main approaches, highlighting the extremes of the debate, that deal with the relationship between news media and foreign policy-making: the 'manufacturing consent' thesis and the 'CNN effect' thesis.

The 'Manufacturing Consent' Thesis

The 'manufacturing consent' thesis holds that policy-making is the prerogative of an informed elite, with the media in a subordinate status. Political elites impel newsmakers to 'read' global events in a particular way, therefore the media are influenced by government and government policy. Consequently, the media's agenda reflects the priorities of policy-makers. This view is most notably argued by Chomsky and Herman (1988: 23) who claim that:

> [p]owerful sources regularly take advantage of media routines and dependency to 'manage' the media, to manipulate them into following a special agenda and framework… inundating the media with stories, which serve sometimes to foist a particular line and frame on the media, and at other times to help chase unwanted stories off the front page or out of the media altogether.

Within the general framework of the manufacturing consent thesis can be identified as the notion of governments setting news media's agendas an 'indexing hypothesis' can be identified. This is the idea that news media coverage of foreign affairs is 'indexed' to the frames of reference of foreign policy elites. In the words of Bennett

(1990: 108), 'mass media news is indexed… to the dynamics of governmental debate'. According to him, when media coverage is critical of official policy, this simply reflects a 'professional responsibility [for journalists] to highlight important conflicts and struggles within the centres of power' (Bennet, 1990: 110). Robinson (1999a: 304; 2002a, 13) labels this interpretation of manufacturing consent as the 'elite version' describing it as claiming that news media coverage conforms to the *interests* of political elites. An important element of the elite version is that news coverage critical of executive policy is possible when there exists elite conflict over policy. Thus, even though the elite version is within the manufacturing consent thesis, it does allow for critical media coverage and by implication for influence of this coverage on executive policy process. However, the latter possibility is not seriously explored and the media indexed to elite opinion is seen overall as passive and non-influential. Substantial empirical support for this view comes from the work of Hallin (1986). In his book, The Uncensored War, he studies the claim that during the Vietnam War the news media were oppositional and critical of the official US policy, which eventually led to the loss of the War. However, Hallin discovers that this probably most cited case of news media influence on government policy actually represents a case of media reflecting/responding to the divisions and strains that appeared among political elites on the policy by producing higher amounts of critical coverage. This occurred only after parts of the political elite turned against the war. On the basis of these findings, Hallin (1986) develops the concept of three spheres that exist with regard to any issue – of consensus, of legitimate controversy and of deviance. According to this, in the case of Vietnam War, as opposition to the war moved into the mainstream, the media reflected this movement of debate into the sphere of legitimate controversy. The media reflect the prevailing pattern of political debate, rarely producing coverage within the deviant sphere, rather:

> when consensus is strong, they tend to stay within the limits of political discussion it defines; when it begins to break down, coverage becomes increasingly critical and diverse in the viewpoints it represents, and increasingly difficult for officials to control (Hallin, 1994: 55).

Mermin's (1996, 1997: 1999) studies of post-Vietnam US military interventions offer further empirical evidence that elite indexing continues to structure how the foreign policy crises are covered by the media. However, while concurring with the indexing hypothesis, he adds that major media are doing something to maintain the illusion of fulfilling the journalistic ideals of balance and objectivity (Mermin, 1996: 182). The news media present as subject to question and debate 'the ability of the government to achieve the goals it has set' (emphasis in original).

> When there is no policy debate in Washington, reporters may offer critical analysis *inside the terms of the apparently settled policy debate*, finding a critical angle in the possibility that existing policy, on its own terms, might not work (Mermin, 1996: 182) (emphasis in original).

The indexing hypothesis view is also in part supported by the work of Zaller and Chiu (2000) who examine media reporting on foreign policy during and after

the Cold War. While the findings for the news media coverage of foreign policy crises between 1945 and 1991 confirmed the claim that news media reporting follows official policy debates, the findings for the post-Cold War period are more mixed. Looking at eight foreign policy crises up to 1999 Zaller and Chiu did not find 'indexing' characteristics. These results contradict Mermin's findings and are attributed to differences in the methodology and the coding schemes used in the two studies. In effect, this contradiction is indicative of the difficulties that media-foreign policy research faces in general.

Within the framework of the manufacturing consent thesis Robinson (1999a: 303; 2002a: 13) also identifies an 'executive version'. It posits that news media reports conform to the official *agenda* and do not function to criticise or challenge the executive policy line. Hence the implicit claim here is that the news media are prevented from influencing the executive policy. As Herman (1993: 25) argues, they 'serve mainly as a supportive arm of the state and dominant elites, focusing heavily on themes serviceable to them, and debating and exposing within accepted frames of reference'. He supports this claim with the analysis of cases of human rights violations, plane shoot-downs and Developing World elections and their media coverage, which allows him to conclude that the mainstream media tend to follow a state agenda in reporting on foreign policy even though this often requires them to contradict themselves and ignore relevant information that is incompatible with the agenda. A further example of the executive manufacturing consent is provided in the work of Entman (1991) on the moral framing of US media reports of the shooting down of a Korean airliner in 1983. According to him, in this instance the media coverage was consistent with the policy interests of the US administration. However, in a later study Entman (2000) observed changes in this trend and suggested that the media in the post-Cold War era are no longer acting as 'government's little helpers', thus coming close to the claims made by Zaller and Chiu (2000). He hypothesised that the influence of government leaders over foreign policy news has diminished with the emergence of the post-Cold War media – free of the old Cold War constraints and able to seize the opportunities to evaluate policy, choose sources and construct their own frames. As an example of this development he pointed to the framing of the Kosovo intervention in the US national media that 'tilted decisively against the administration', while the indexing hypothesis would have predicted a more balanced coverage of the administration and its critics. Overall, in their original versions both the elite and the executive versions of the manufacturing consent thesis oppose the existence of an independent news media effect on policy either by denying it completely or by not really exploring the possible media role.

The 'CNN Effect' Thesis

The other extreme thesis within the media-policy relationship debate is known as the 'CNN effect'.[1] In essence, it claims that news can make policy. Yet, as Strobel

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1   The label reflects the fact that the CNN epitomised the globilised real-time environment, and does not imply that only CNN has an effect on policy.

(1997: 4–5) points out, the term is understood and used differently both inside and outside the media. Some of the definitions of the CNN effect are more general, such as the interpretation of the CNN effect as 'the way breaking news affects foreign policy decisions' (Schorr, cited in Gilboa, 2003: 6) or as an illustration of the 'dynamic tension that exists between real-time television news and policy-making, with the news having the upper hand in terms of influence' (Seib, 2002: 27). Others use the term to describe the shrinkage of the time in which foreign policy officials must respond to world events that are instantaneously displayed on their, and many others', television screens (Livingston, 1997b, 2000). Some definitions of the CNN effect focus on the question of 'political control' (Robinson, 2002a: 21) – that is the responsibility for setting the news agenda (see Livingston and Eachus, 1995; Mermin, 1997). As Livingston and Eachus (1995: 415) argue, '[t]he question at the heart of the CNN effect is, who controls that capacity [to influence]'. This interpretation of the CNN effect is concerned with news sources as a way of determining if non-governmental actors have control over the policy process. In a way, this is similar to the elite manufacturing consent version that linked media reliance on elite sources with passive and non-influential media as it assumes that the CNN effect does not exist if elites are setting the news agenda, but does exist if non-elites do so (Robinson, 2002a: 22). Robinson (2002a: 23) identifies two inadequacies in this CNN definition. Firstly, analysing the sources of news reports could explain why journalists cover a particular crisis, but cannot explain why the news coverage appears to influence humanitarian interventions in some instances and not in others. Secondly, this definition is not useful in providing evidence for or against the claim that by compelling policy-makers to respond to emotive coverage of suffering people, news media coverage influences humanitarian interventions.

This latter claim is at the core of what seems to be the most dominant interpretation of the CNN effect, seeing it as a loss of policy control on the part of government officials charged with making that policy. This definition implies that there is an *independent* effect on the foreign policy-making process by the media such as CNN, which virtually wrest control from policy-makers, who in turn can do little or nothing about this transformation. As a result, the news media influence or determine what governments do. Public opinion can also be part of this process. It can be so moved by images of suffering humanity that it demands action, even when inappropriate (Freedman, 2000: 338). This is often assumed to be *the* major factor behind humanitarian intervention. For instance, when the Bosnian crisis began to dominate the headlines, the then British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, observed that the novelty is not 'in mass rape, in the shooting of civilians, in war crimes, in ethnic cleansing, in the burning of towns and villages', but 'that a selection of these tragedies is now visible, within hours, to people around the world. People reject and resent what is going on because they know it more visibly than before' (cited in Seaton, 1999: 49). In other words, the media drive conflict management by forcing external governments to intervene militarily in humanitarian crises, sometimes against their will. The causal mechanism of the CNN effect is usually conceived in the following way:

media coverage (printed and televised) of suffering and atrocities

journalists and opinion leaders demand that governments 'do something'

the (public) pressure becomes unbearable

governments do something

(Jakobsen, 2000: 132)

As Gilboa (2003: 7) points out, this definition consists of two parts: the first being a classic example of agenda-setting – forcing policy-makers to deal with an issue they prefer to ignore, and the second referring to the power of news media to force policy-makers through public opinion to adopt a policy 'against their will and interpretation of national interest'.

Some nuances of this understanding of the CNN effect can be traced. Neuman (1996), for example, describes the CNN effect in terms of a curve as she looks at the media coverage's impact not only on the initial decision, but also on the subsequent intervention phase including on the long term deployment and exit strategies. While she basically accepts the pattern suggested by Jakobsen (2000), she expands on it by arguing that television can force policy-makers to intervene militarily in a humanitarian crisis, but can also force them to terminate the intervention once the military force suffers casualties or humiliation (Neuman, 1996: 14–16). Neuman's 'CNN curve' is broken into two effects by Freedman (2000: 337–341). He talks about a 'CNN effect', where images of human suffering push governments into intervention and about a 'body bags effect' where images of casualties pull them out. In addition, he identifies a third effect of television coverage on humanitarian interventions – the so called 'bullying effect' whereby attacks that inflict significant civil casualties, whether intended or not, cast doubt on the competence of those responsible and on the objectives and costs of the war, thus reducing public support for intervention. All three of them, in essence, fall within the CNN effect. A further distinction was made by Strobel (1997: 5) who talked about effects on outcome and effects on policy-making:

> I found no evidence that the news media, by *themselves*, force US government officials to change their policies. But, under the right conditions, the news media nonetheless can have a powerful effect on process. *And those conditions are almost always set by foreign policy-makers themselves or by the growing number of policy actors on the international stage* (emphasis in original).

Further differences among different CNN effects are identified by Livingston (1997a; 1997b; 2000), Wheeler (2000), and Robinson (2002a). Livingston (1997a: 293; 1997b: 2; 2000: 361) identified three variations of the CNN effect: an *accelerant* to decision-making, as new communications technology compresses policy-makers' 'response times', instantaneous media speed up decision-making;[2] an *impediment*

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2   This kind of influence is identified also by Hopkinson (1995: 7); Gowing (1996: 83), Carruthers (2000: 207).

to the achievement of desired policy goals, relating first, to the capacity of media to undermine public and political support for an operation involving casualties and assuming that once there are casualties public support for an intervention will rapidly decrease[3] and second, to breaches in operational security; and an *agenda-setter*, suggesting that foreign policy agenda at times is simply a reflection of news content, that emotional compelling coverage of atrocities or humanitarian crises reorders foreign policy priorities. Wheeler (2000: 300) distinguished between 'determining' and 'enabling' effects of media coverage. Only the 'determining effect' implies policy forcing. The 'enabling' effect implies that media coverage enables policy makers to pursue a particular course of action, which in the current context is making humanitarian intervention possible by mobilising domestic support, by 'creating a constituency for intervention' (Wheeler, 2000: 165). Robinson (2002a: 37–41) contributed to the variety of CNN effects by identifying a 'strong' and a 'weak' CNN effect. The 'strong' effect assumes that media reports help to drive or push policy makers towards a certain policy line, hence becoming a significant influence on the policy process. In this definition, media are described as either a necessary or sufficient factor in producing a particular policy outcome. However, Robinson is careful to suggest that this should not be understood necessarily as media coverage being able to force policy-makers to take a particular course of action. Rather, he argues (2002: 37–38) that 'the decision ultimately rests with the policy-makers but, without the media coverage, the decision would not have been reached'. This suggests that even in the cases of a strong CNN effect what is meant is not exactly a media forcing role, rather a media influencing one. Robinson's 'strong CNN effect' overlaps with Livingston's agenda-setting, but is not identical to it. The difference being in the stage of the policy process. Robinson (2002a: 38) himself highlights this by identifying that the agenda-setting strong CNN effect occurs during a 'problem identification stage' (Linsky, 1986: 137) when media helps place an issue on the policy-making agenda. However, the strong CNN effect can also occur at a later stage when the media coverage influences policy-makers with regard to the course of action to be taken. In Linsky's (1986: 137–140) break down of the policy process, the strong CNN effect can be observed during both the 'solution formulation', when 'the policy-makers are developing and sorting out the possible responses', and 'policy adoption', when the 'options are being assessed and a choice is being made and disclosed'. Alternatively, the 'weak CNN effect' is present when media coverage is not creating an imperative to act, but rather causes politicians to be inclined to take a particular action (Robinson, 2002a: 39). Livingston and Riley (1999: 2–3 identify the same type of effect when they suggest that a media effect might occur when policy makers are personally affected by random media reports that highlight a particular crisis. Robinson (2002a: 40) recognises one more CNN effect labelled by him as a 'potential CNN effect'. This effect considers the possibility that policy makers might think about potential future news media coverage when formulating policy. As a consequence, they might be deterred to intervene due to fear of the potential negative media coverage of casualties. The opposite could be also true – to

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3   This is the same effect as the 'body bags effect' announced by Freedman (2000) and is often labelled the Vietnam syndrome.

decide to intervene during a humanitarian crisis in the expectation that subsequeng positive media coverage will lead to a political and electoral advantage. Another aspect of the same effect is the decision to intervene because inaction is seen as ultimately leading to negative news media publicity and public reaction.

Linked to some of the above identified CNN effects is the Belknap (2002) contribution in defining the role of the the media. She claims that the CNN effect is a 'double-edged sword – a strategic enabler and a potential operational risk' (Belknap, 2002: 2). It enables policy makers to get public support for operations but at the same time exposes information that may compromise operational security. Gilboa (2002) expands on this by introducing the idea of the media as a controlling, constraining, intervening or instrumental actor. In his interpretation the controlling actor notion of the media coincides with the CNN effect thesis understood as the media replacing policy-makers. The constraining actor role sees the media as one influential factor among others. In particular it refers to the high speed of broadcasting and transmitting information that constrains the policy process. Media coverage may lead to disruption in the routine policy-making process and to the reordering of policy priorities, while policy-makers struggle to maintain the professional standards of their analysis and recommendations. In this sense, the constraining role partially overlaps with already discussed agenda-setting and impediment effects of the media. The other two media roles that Gilboa identify relate first, in the intervening actor case, to the journalists' role as mediators, and second, in the instrumental actor case, to so-called media diplomacy, that is the media as a tool for promoting and articulating foreign policy.

Media Power and Foreign Policy

The assumption that real-time TV coverage of the horrors, for instance, of Bosnia, Somalia or Rwanda not only creates a demand that 'something must be done', but also drives the making of foreign policy is accepted by many in the media, the military and government as conventional wisdom. It in fact claims the existence of what Gowing (1996: 81) labels an 'automatic cause-and-effect relationship'. Logically as a consequence, there is talk about 'pressure' for action coming from media, but also the implication that more forceful effects are in play. For example, the former US Secretary of State, Albright, speaking in front of the Senate argued that 'television's ability to bring graphic images of pain and outrage into our living rooms has heightened the pressure both for immediate engagement in areas of international crisis and immediate disengagement when events don't go according to plan' (cited in Neuman, 1996: 14–15). At the same time, General Shalikashvili, former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, has claimed: 'The CNN effect: surely it exists, and surely we went to Somalia and Rwanda partly because of its magnetic pull' (cited in Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996: 46).[4] These perceptions were held not only by Americans. The former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has complained that 'CNN is the sixteenth member of the Security Council'

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4   This is a somewhat generous reading of US intentions as after the Somalia debacle the US was in fact extremely reluctant to intervene in Rwanda.

(cited in Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996: 4). This situation, though, is accepted with a certain amount of complaint:

> The new phenomenon of global instantaneous news reporting, particularly by television, has distorted the foreign policies of the western countries in the aftermath of the Cold War by forcing military intervention in such areas as former Yugoslavia, Somalia or Cambodia, while at the same time preventing that intervention from becoming effective by imposing arbitrary constraints on the level of force used, and on the willingness to risk taking casualties and inflicting them (Badsey, cited in Taylor, 1997: 58–59).

Presenting an opinion from the broadcasters camp, Ed Turner of CNN argues, 'we continue to collect evidence that television news does have an impact on the conduct of foreign policy, but no one knows how much' (cited in Taylor, 1997: 97). Rosenblatt (1996: 136) identifies the CNN factor as the difference between the 'faster, more massive, and more successful response by the US to the Kurdish crisis in 1991, the Somali crisis in 1992, the shelling of civilians in Sarajevo in 1993 and the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the US non-responses to the situations in Azerbaijan, Sudan, Angola and Liberia'. For him, 'the answer is prime time television news coverage'. All these opinions illustrate the general feeling that the news has the power to pervert or distort national policy processes. The news media are widely supposed to have increased pressures on government policy-makers, both directly and through the information provided to the public. Some suspect, as Minear, Scott and Weiss (1996: 1) observe, that the need for officials to be seen 'doing something' now outweighs the need to do 'the right thing'.

Whether the news media are really this significant in fact remains questionable. Actual attempts to pin down the CNN effect have yet to provide a convincing demonstration of its existence (Robinson, 1999b). As Minear, Scott and Weiss (1996: 1) claim the evidence of the CNN effect remains 'highly anecdotal'. Various studies' findings query its existence. For example, Neuman (1996: 16) concluded that global communication has not changed the fundamentals of political leadership and international governance. Gowing (2000: 204) and Jakobsen (2000: 133) argue the CNN effect is highly exaggerated. Adie (2000) confidently claims: 'don't think that the camera has power. It is a myth, perpetrated much by politicians and commentators'. Seib (2002: 27) states that:

> There is a certain logic to the [CNN] theory, and it cheers journalists who like to think they are powerful, but there is a fundamental problem: It just ain't so, at least not as a straightforward cause-and-effect process.

Natsios (1996: 150) argues that 'the so-called CNN effect has taken on more importance than it deserves'. For his part, Strobel (1997: 5) argues that the relationship between the news media and foreign policy-making is far more complex, situational, and interwoven, than the definitions of the CNN effect imply. The existence of these opposing views on the role of media justifies Gilboa's claim (2003, 15) that '[s]cholarly and professional studies of the CNN effect present mixed, contradictory, and confusing results'.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a consensus emerging in the academic community, that the ability of global real-time media to set policy agendas has been overstated. There are claims that 'foreign policy decision-making has become epiphenomenal to news decision-making' suggesting that by being selective and arbitrary in their coverage of conflicts the media in a way 'create' a conflict when they decide to recognise it (Livingston and Eachus, 1995: 415). According to Ben Thall (1993: 11–12), disasters do not exist – except for their direct victims and those who suffer in their aftermaths – unless they are publicised by the media and therefore the media 'actually *construct* disasters' (emphasis in the original).[5] The presence of graphic television images from a crisis zone demands that policy-makers respond to this particular issue, which is 'in the public eye', rather than others, which may be equally or even more serious. Moreover, they have to respond instantly in order to appease an emotional public demanding action. Thus, it is maintained, television distorts the policy agenda, re-arranging priorities, and leading sometimes to ill-considered action.[6] In other words, by focusing on certain conflicts and human rights problems and not others the media pressure policy-makers to respond to some foreign problems and not others. 'The media have a great deal of short-term influence in creating an instant constituency for appropriate action' (Rosenblatt, 1996: 138). To cite Nye (1999: 25): 'The so called CNN effect makes it hard to keep items that might otherwise warrant a lower priority off the top of the public agenda.'

Following this line of reasoning, it could be argued that the news media not only select what crisis to cover, but also ignore conflicts during the pre- and post-violence phases. The media are rarely the first on the scene and almost never the last. They usually fail to take an interest in a conflict before violence or mass starvation kills a large number of people (see Rosenblatt, 1996; Gowing, 2000). They also pay little attention to the successes of preventive diplomacy partly because it is invisible. At the same time, the 'Cyclops' eye', to use the term of Minear, Scott and Weiss (1996: vii), 'swings slowly, and once it focuses somewhere else it is not easy to draw it back' which rightly pinpoints the media's very brief attention span (see also Rosenblatt, 1996). Jakobsen (2000: 132) identifies this type of selectivity as the indirect, invisible and far greater impact that media coverage has on conflict management.

The reality, however, is not entirely straightforward. Journalists' agenda-setting power is hardly new. In 1963 Cohen (cited in Strobel, 1997: 60–65) wrote that 'the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about'. What has changed since this observation was made is television's ability to bring foreign policy problems to the attention of policy-makers much more rapidly and graphically.

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5 It is worth noting that the difference between constructing a conflict and 'creating facts' is very narrow (Moorcraft, 1999: 8). Closely linked is the issue of contributing to a conflict escalation, either directly or indirectly. Experienced war reporters observe that sometimes the very presence of cameras can prompt the sides to start shooting (Young, 1991: 1).

6 It should be kept in mind, however, that in some cases this so called media 'blindness' may suit governments. The reaction and overall policy of the United Kingdom (UK) Government to the situation in Sierra Leone could be a case to consider.

Strobel also distinguishes between the power to set an agenda and the power to make policy decisions. In his (Strobel, 1997: 62–63) words:

> whoever sets the agenda and decides what is and is not a priority has won much of the battle. Yet this is not the same as deciding what action to take on a particular problem or actually taking that action. There are things that the news media – for all their intrinsic power to say 'Do something!' – cannot do.

Additionally, Strobel states that governments retain formidable agenda-setting powers of their own. When they choose to highlight a foreign policy problem or make a decision on relations with another state, the news media are compelled to report it – the print media almost always, television less so. The importance of news coverage as a catalyst is underscored also by a former US Assistant Secretary of Defence, Allison: 'If a shell had fallen in Sarajevo and 68 people have been killed, and there would have been no pictures of it, would the US policy have changed? I do not think it would have' (cited in Seib, 1997: 41). Hurd reinforces the point: 'We have not been and are not willing to begin some form of military intervention which we judge useless or worse, simply because of day to day pressures from the media… pressures which I repeat are understandable, perhaps inevitable' (cited in Hudson and Stanier, 1999: 317).

Another conclusion points out that the news media have an impact on the conduct and processes of making foreign policy. New communications technology, it is argued, compresses policy-makers' 'response times', instantaneous media speed decision-making (Linsky, 1986: 10–11; Hopkinson, 1995: 7; Gowing, 1996: 83; Neuman, 1996: 21; Carruthers, 2000: 207; Livingston, 2000: 361; Povel, 2000: 2; Seib, 2000: 1). Real-time television images increase temporal pressures on senior officials to come up with a response to the events portrayed. These pressures, at worst, restrict the possibility for thoughtful analysis and considered judgement and may lead to rash, impulsive decisions. It is claimed that foreign policy has been made a very public process, as people demand instant responses from their government. Foreign policy decision-making as a whole has become much more reactive and intuitive, as crises in a remote corner of the world are no longer hidden from view, and foreign policy officials have less time to assess and analyse before having to decide whether or not to intervene (Solomon, 1997: viii). Awareness of distant events in real time, however, could also be viewed as a positive development: greater media-generated transparency may aid the decision-makers to make correct judgements (Livingston, 2000: 362). In either case, there are arguments that the time pressures inherent in real-time television can be managed and that the overall danger of a wrong response to information that later may turn out 'to be inaccurate, incomplete or otherwise distorted' (Hoge, 1994: 137; Neuman, 1996: 10–12) is overstated. Boucher, former US State Department spokesman, while agreeing that television reports do speed up the process of decision-making, claims that:

> They're probably the same decisions we otherwise would have made… As often as not, we buy ourselves time when things happen. If we think we need the time to decide, we take the time to decide (cited in Strobel, 1997: 82).

Another angle is offered by Moorcraft (1999: 12). He maintains, with a high degree of confidence, that 'diplomacy has always adapted, and usually ended up manipulating the new technology for its own ends. Skilled diplomats are rarely victims of media technology'.

Gowing (1996: 83) comes close to agreeing with this conclusion:

> Real-time TV pictures compress response times in a crisis. They put pressure on choice and priorities in crisis management. They skew responses. They shape the policy agenda but do not dictate responses. They highlight policy dilemmas but do not resolve them.

In addition, as Livingston (1997b: 1) establishes, 'different foreign policy objectives will present different types and levels of sensitivity to different types of media', which is a point previously made by Hoge (1994) who suggests that effects on policy are conditional and specific to policy types and objectives. Livingston (1997b: 10) identifies eight policy types – conventional warfare, strategic deterrence, tactical deterrence, special operations and low-intensity conflict, peace-making, peace-keeping, imposed humanitarian operations, and consensual humanitarian operations – and assesses their possible relation with different media effects. The conclusions that he draws out for the cases of imposed humanitarian intervention, which is of interest here, suggest the presence of high media interest, especially at the initial stage when US troops are introduced. This will happen even more if journalists can operate safely on the ground of the conflict. Still, according to Livingston, media content alone is not likely to lead to an imposed humanitarian intervention; however, this also cannot be ruled out. The potentially strongest effect that media can have is the impediment one.

Applied to the cases of humanitarian intervention, the latter two arguments would suggest that media generated pressures make a difference to policy by putting them on the agenda, perhaps against the will of governments, but the decisions to intervene are ultimately decided by other factors. Jakobsen (1996) analysed five factors: a clear humanitarian and/or legal case, national interest, chance of success, domestic support and the CNN effect and the decisions to intervene in Kuwait, Northern Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti. He concluded that in humanitarian interventions the CNN effect 'does appear to be a necessary condition for humanitarian enforcement', however, the decision whether or not to intervene 'was ultimately determined by the perceived chance of success' (Jakobsen (1996: 213).[7] In a later study Jakobsen (2000: 138) further expanded the list of factors and asserted that:

> …media generated pressure may make a difference to policy by putting military intervention on the agenda in situations when governments are reluctant to use force, interventions are unlikely to follow unless they can be conducted quickly with a low risk of casualties. Since this is rarely the case, media pressures on reluctant governments are

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7   In his discussion of the CNN effect Jakobsen distinguished between national-interest driven enforcement operations and humanitarian-driven enforcement operations and argues that in the case of the former the CNN effect is irrelevant as in this case the government wants to intervene and will use the media instrumentally to mobilise domestic and international support.

most likely to result in minimalist policies aimed at defusing pressure for interventions on the ground.

This argument is developed further by Strobel (1997: 215–219), who claims that 'if the media effect on policy exists at all, it is confined to situations of mass humanitarian tragedy, where officials see low cost and high benefits in an intervention'. Still, even in these cases the unique characteristics of the tragedy, especially officials' policy analyses of the situation, play an important part. The examples that Strobel provides are Bosnia and Rwanda in their early phases of these conflicts. He claims that, despite the 'horrific bloodshed' involved, the media had no power to force governments to intervene when the potential costs – especially the lives of their own soldiers, the so called 'body bags' effect – were perceived to be high while national interests were low.

The view that there is a direct link between the news media and foreign policy decisions to intervene in security conflicts for humanitarian reasons is also challenged by Gowing. On the basis of his own analysis of the assumed automatic cause-and-effect relationship between the news media coverage and the making of foreign policy, Gowing comes up with the argument that 'TV's unquestioned ability to provide a contemporaneous, piecemeal, video ticker-tape service – a tip sheet of raw, real-time images virtually instantly – must not be confused – as it usually is – with a power to drive policy-making'. At the same time, however, he admits that media coverage can change 'overall [government] strategy', although this happens only rarely (Gowing, 1996: 83, 88).

Gowing's observation can be linked to the findings of Strobel. He suggests that the news media's impact is highly dependent on the nature of the proposed intervention and the degree to which the government policy is in flux (Strobel, 1997: 127). Since the security conflicts taking place now are different from traditional warfare, involvement in them does not always place the intervening nation's physical or economic survival at stake. As a consequence, mass public opinion cannot be mobilised in the same way as at the time of the bipolar Cold War world, for example. The same applies to the news media: they cannot be restricted and the government foreign policy agenda can drive the media's decisions about what is news much less than before (Strobel, 1997: 10).

The idea of the second factor – policy certainty – as an element determining whether the news media have an influence or not is not only Strobel's. Similar conclusions are reached by Gowing (1996, 2000); Minear, Scott and Weiss (1996); Robinson (1999a, 1999b: 2000a, 2000b: 2001, 2002a: 2002b), Moorcraft (1999), Seaton (1999) and Seib (1997, 2002). In general, they all agree that policy is not swayed by images: only when policy is *unclear* are politicians liable to be pressurised into making 'pseudo responses' to media-manufactured crises. As Moorcraft (1999: 15) notes, '…blood-spattered television can nudge governments a little by raising the emotional temperature, but if foreign ministers do not want to act they will ride out the (brief) media storm. The media can shape policy occasionally, usually when decision-makers are caught off-guard'. The effect of real-time television (and news media reports in general) is directly related to 'the unity, coherence and communication of existing policy', 'the impact of real-time coverage is inversely

proportional to the solidity of government policy' (Strobel (1997: 219); Seib (2000: 1). If there is a clear policy, widely and strongly held within an administration, on a situation that has been anticipated then governments 'know what they want to do and where they want to go'. If the position itself has been well-communicated and has public support, then the media have little or no effect. A government committed to a policy will expend time, money and credibility in winning over the media and public opinion (Annan, cited in Gowing, 1996: 85; see Strobel, 1997: 219; Moorcraft, 1999: 15). Conversely, if there is a policy vacuum, if officials are searching for a new policy, or the policy is poorly formed, overly pliable media reports can have a decided effect (Seib, 2000: 1; Seib, 2002: 28). As Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, argued: 'When there is a problem, and the policy has not been thought [through], there is a knee-jerk reaction. They [governments] have to do something or face a public relations disaster' (cited in Gowing, 1996: 86). Minear et al. support the view that there is an inverse relationship between policy clarity and media influence. Hence, when policy is unclear or ill-defined the media indeed have some influence on policy. On the other hand, 'the media effect on policy decreases as the clarity of definition and articulation of strategic interest increases'. Accordingly, significant media impact can be detected 'only at moments of policy panic when governments have no robust policy' or 'where policy-making is weak or cynical' (Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996: 73); Gowing (2000: 210). There is therefore, as Gowing (1996: 85) argues, an important distinction between the *tactical* impact of TV – its localised, immediate impact – and its medium-to-long term *strategic* impact on overall government policy-making (emphasis in the original).

Models

These latter findings are incorporated in a policy-media interaction model developed by Robinson and applied by him in the analysis of the Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, US intervention in Bosnia and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo (1999a, 1999b, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b). According to Robinson (2002a: 37), this model 'advances media theory beyond a simple effect/non-effect dichotomy'. It uses the two concepts already identified above: policy certainty, as a key factor in determining whether the news media impact on policy and media framing, as a key factor in determining the potential of media coverage to elicit pressure for intervention. The model offers a more nuanced, two-way understanding of the media-policy relationship by theorising when, under which conditions media coverage might influence policy outcomes. It accommodates cases of both influence and non-influence. Although it is criticised for weaknesses in defining and measuring 'influence' and 'framing' (see Gilboa, 2003), it is contended here that it is a useful and effective tool. It helps to determine the extent to which media coverage drives humanitarian intervention and to explain the conditions under which this occurs. The policy-media interaction model is the theoretical tool used in the subsequent study, hence some more detail on it is provided below.

The model predicts that when there is an elite consensus over an issue the news media are unlikely to produce coverage that challenges the consensus. This claim

is in accordance with the manufacturing consent thesis in its executive version. However, when an elite dissensus exists with regard to an issue, following the elite manufacturing consent thesis, news media coverage reflects this debate and a variety of critical and supportive framing can be observed in media reports. Potentially, this is a situation in which media can play a more active and influential role in policy debate, as journalists will reflect the reference frames of one of the sides of the debate at the expense of the other. This can happen either consciously or unconsciously. If the elite dissensus is coupled with a high level of policy certainty within the executive, then the government could be expected to draw upon its substantial resources and credibility as an information source to influence media reports. In this instance, even if the media coverage is critical it is unlikely that it will influence the policy-makers already set on a particular course of action. On the contrary, if elite dissensus combines with policy uncertainty in government and critical and empathy-framed media coverage, there are conditions under which the CNN effect might occur. The government will be confronted with the possibility that public opinion might be influenced by the negative media coverage, that the government's image and credibility might be damaged, as well as that policy-makers themselves might start questioning the cogency of existing government policy. Thus, Robinson (2002a: 32) concludes, the greater the policy uncertainty of the executive, the more vulnerable the policy process is to the influence of negative media coverage. This is the case not only because of the inability of the government to respond to journalists by drawing upon its own resources. It is also because the critical media reports might provide extra bargaining power to policy-makers trying to change policy direction if there is a disagreement between executive sub-systems. Alternatively, if there is no policy in place, critical news coverage might put pressure on policy-makers to respond or 'face a public relations disaster', as Annan (cited in Gowing, 1996: 86) put it.

The two concepts that form the basis of the policy-media interaction model – 'framing' and 'policy certainty/uncertainty' require some definition. Framing refers to the 'specific properties of… [a] narrative that encourage those… thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them' (Entman, 1991: 7). Frames offer ways of explaining, understanding and making sense of events and as such could be also associated with the terms slant, bias or frame of reference (Robinson, 2001: 531; Robinson, 2001: 137). The concept of framing then allows us to understand how the particular text information is conveyed so as to render a certain interpretation 'more readily discernible, comprehensible, and memorable than others' (Entman, 1991: 7). As Entman (1993: 52–53) points out, 'frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience' and as such framing 'essentially involves selection and salience'. Therefore, by identifying the frame of a particular text the author's frame of reference could be revealed and some conclusions can be drawn regarding the likely audience response to the text. In this sense, 'whilst a framed text may be read in different ways by different people it is reasonable to assume that audiences will, by and large, adopt the frame of reference suggested by the text' as Robinson (2002a: 137) argues. In cases of humanitarian intervention media coverage can be framed either to empathise

with suffering people or to maintain an emotional distance.[8] Empathy framing often contains implicit or explicit criticism of a government opposed to intervention, while distance framing is implicitly supportive of a government opposed to intervention.

On a practical level, the identification and measurement of the empathy/distance or support/critical frames involves the application of a combination of approaches The first one requires the identification of the subject matter and overall tone of reports to show whether the reports are critical or supportive of government policy and whether they tend to empathise with suffering people or maintain an emotional distance. The second approach involves the identification in the media reports of an initially predicted set of keywords that could be expected to be associated with either of the two above outlined frames.

The second concept – policy certainty – refers to the absence or presence of policy regarding an issue. Robinson (2002a: 26) conceptualises policy-making as 'the outcome of a complex bargaining process between a set of sub-systems in government'. As a result, he defines policy uncertainty as a function of the degree of consensus and coordination of the sub-systems of the government with regard to an issue. Robinson (1999b: 7) argues that if an issue suddenly arises and no policy is in place, or if there is disagreement, conflict of interest or uncertainty within an executive, then an uncertain policy can be claimed to exist. The opposite – agreement and coordination between the sub-systems of the executive – would lead to policy certainty. Within the broad framework of uncertain policy distinctions can be made between: i) no policy line, when there is no official policy regarding an issue (possible in the context of crisis policy-making when unexpected events occur); ii) a wavering policy line, when a policy line changes frequently (this could happen when there is a lack of commitment amongst the policy sub-systems to the particular policy); and iii) an inconsistent or undecided policy line, when different parts of the executive may be divided over policy and pursue or publicly advocate different policies (Robinson, 2002a: 27). In order to measure policy certainty and assess its degree for both Britain and Bulgaria statements to national parliaments and press conferences cross-referenced with other available accounts of the policy process – published documents, secondary accounts and primary interviewing – are analysed. This way the final inferences with regard to the presence or absence of policy certainty are strengthened. The measurement of policy certainty requires an analysis of press briefings cross-referenced with other available accounts of the policy process.

Another useful model that identifies the conditions under which news media coverage plays an active role in political debates is the political contest model developed by Wolfsfeld (1997). According to him, while the news media normally function to reflect or mobilise support for dominant views in society, sometimes they serve the interests of marginalised groups, whom he labels as 'challengers'. The level at which authorities control the political environment is the key variable determining the role of the news media in political conflicts (Wolfsfeld, 1997: 24). When authorities dominate the political environment, the news media find it difficult

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8   For more on empathy and distance framing see Preston (1996); Shaw (1996), Robinson (2002a).

to play an independent role. The role of the news media depends on the political context of the conflict, the resources, skills and political power of the players involved, the existing relationship between the press and each antagonist, the public opinion, and the ability of journalists to gain access to the field. Wolfsfeld also uses the concept of framing to demonstrate how media coverage can take the side of challengers by promoting their specific perception of a certain political issue. As an example of a challenger gaining control of media agenda and the way media coverage is framed, Wolfsfeld analyses the Palestinian Intifada in 1987. Overall, unlike the Robinson's policy-media interaction model, the Wolfsfeld political contest model focuses primarily on explaining when and how challengers can set the media agenda. However, it offers no explanations of the link between the resulting coverage and the policy outcomes.

Additional insight into the link between media content and foreign policy decision-making is from Livingston and Riley (1999). They propose three pathways/models whereby the media may influence foreign policy. One pathway – defined as the direct influence pathway – centres on presumed psychological states of political leaders as a consequence of television exposure. In this model external political calculations – political, geopolitical, and so on – are de-emphasised. The logic is simple and straightforward: 'media coverage of emotionally compelling human suffering seen directly by principal foreign policy decision-makers leads to psychological tensions that might shock them into action' (Livingston and Riley, 1999: 2). A widely cited example of the psychological impact of media on policy decision-making may be found in George Bush's decision in 1992 to send troops to Somalia. The former US President claimed that it was television pictures of starving Somalis that led him to order the use of US troops in Somalia (cited in Hines, 1999). It is difficult to argue whether this indeed was the case or not.

The second model – the indirect influence pathway – assumes television has an effect on policy indirectly through the agency of public opinion. 'Emotionally compelling news leads to greater public sympathy, which leads to greater pressure on policy makers to adapt policy in ways intended to address the crisis' (Livingston and Riley, 1999: 5).

The third model is in a way a variation of the first two. It suggests direct media influence but through the agency of expected public opinion:

> Policy-makers rely on media content as a surrogate measure of public opinion, or implicitly regard media content as an expression of public opinion. Media content, in this way, plays a direct role in the policy process, but in a fashion that is masked behind the language of 'public opinion' (Livingston and Riley, 1999: 5).

Livingston and Riley examine these models in the context of the 1996 crisis in Eastern Zaire and discover that the news media have access to policy-makers and at various points in the decision-making process they may influence policy. They claim that media may have produced an emotional effect in the Canadian Prime Minister Chretien that provoked his direct interest in the crisis. Furthermore, the news coverage may have created a perception among policy-makers that the public's attention was on Zaire. These findings support the conclusion reached by

Gowing (1996: 84) that real-time television coverage of the proliferation of regional conflicts will create emotions, but ultimately make no difference to the fundamental calculations in foreign policy-making.

In sum, most of the research on the relationship between the news media and foreign policy-making in times of security conflicts reveals that the influence of the news media is less substantial and direct than is generally believed. It is true that the media can exert influence on policy-making, but whether this happens or not also depends on many other factors. The most important of these are the government officials, other different policy actors, and the nature of conflicts themselves. News media may speed up decision-making or make a small matter suddenly loom large, but only rarely can the coverage itself substantially change the course of policy. As Strobel (1997: 47) points out, 'news media reports do not determine policy per se but rather shape the milieu (and a rather stark one at that) in which governing takes place'. If the resulting policy is clear and strongly held, is communicated well and has the necessary public backing, then the news media tend to follow that policy. If these conditions are not present, implying weakly held policy with insufficient public and official support, inattentive or unsure policy-makers, then the news media may have some influence on policy.

Beyond Current Boundaries

The above-presented arguments concerning the media's influence in crisis foreign policy-making illustrate the current trends in research on the topic. They reveal the debates and the contradictions that the idea of a CNN effect triggers among politicians, journalists and academics. While for some the CNN effect has completely transformed foreign policy-making and world politics, others remain sceptical suggesting that the CNN effect has not changed the media-government interaction in general and in the context of humanitarian interventions, that it does not exist at all. For them, if it occurs this happens only rarely in situations of extremely dramatic and persistent coverage, lack of clear governmental policy and chaotic policy-making.

These findings, no matter how controversial and mixed, quite obviously are drawn out from research focusing primarily on the western media. To be more precise, the reference in most of the cases is to the American news media. Although, to a certain degree this is justifiable and understandable considering the leading role the US has in international interventions, the absence of analyses of the European – Western and Eastern – media-policy relationship is still surprising. The questions that are left out relate to both participants in this relationship individually and to their interaction together. On the media side, although both are well-established, American media clearly differ from Western European media. The existence of national print media is typical for Western Europe and less so for the USA with its regional or quasi-national press. Where do the emerging East European media fit? On the policy-making side, the CNN effect research to date seems to assume a particular model of policy-making and democratic responsiveness when analysing the role of media in foreign policy-making. Although, this model most likely applies to liberal Western European democracies, a claim like that will be slightly problematic if made with

regard to Eastern European countries. If we acknowledge that the two variables involved may be different from the ones which the current research uses, then it is logical to expect that there might be differences in the relationship between these two variables as well.

In addition, the theoretical model used in the study – the media-policy interaction model itself – was developed with reference to the American media and American foreign policy-making. It has been tested in similar contexts – using case studies involving American intervention or non-intervention and the corresponding coverage of key American TV stations and newspapers. This model has never been applied outside of this framework. Even setting aside the well-known argument that the application of models in general is a distortion of reality and hence their applicability to reasoning is doubtful, the above naturally raises the question as to what extent this particular media-foreign policy interaction model could be applied in a different environment. It might very well be the case that it can function only in similar contextual situations and under particular conditions – a well-established media and foreign policy in this case that characterise the Anglo-American model. Transferring this model to a less settled, even maybe chaotic environment – which is the case with Bulgaria both in terms of foreign policy and media – could lead to the observance of events and afterwards findings that will not fit into a model developed in the Western part of the world. New issues might be brought up that cannot be captured by the existing model. Therefore, while the main focus of the research is the nature of the relationship between media and foreign-policy, the use of this model could not only help to establish the specific features of this relationship, but also shed some light on the general issue of using models across different countries. Any universal model requires simplifications, 'stripping' of variables that are specific to different contexts and generalisations. As such it is questionable whether this way the whole debate on an issue can be resolved. The use of additional methods in this particular research complements the application of the policy-media interaction model, by allowing the observation and inclusion into the analysis of additional country-specific factors, as well as by offering a picture of the general context in which the investigated relationship is taking place. It is contended here, that despite the identified limitations this model is still useful and helpful in the analysis of the relationship between media and foreign policy-making in times of humanitarian interventions.

Conclusion

The news media coverage of a given crises is often interpreted as a reaction-provoking factor for the international community. It is argued that the news media force the pace and even direction of government foreign policy formation and subsequent action. This claim is subject to considerable debate, not least because of the inherent difficulty in measuring in practice the influence of news media on foreign policy-making. Although there is no irrefutable evidence that news media directly impact foreign policy-making, it is hard not to acknowledge that media change the context in which foreign policy decisions are taken. The increased speed of communications

make it possible to bring crises from virtually anywhere around the world almost immediately first onto the television screens and then on the pages of newspapers and thus directly place them in front of the officials. By highlighting a certain crisis or a certain policy dilemma, real-time images can put pressure on policy-makers to make choices and to decide priorities in a compressed response time. The news media, therefore, in cases of international conflicts, rightly or wrongly, have the power to set the international agenda. As Cook (cited in Hudson and Stanier, 1999: 317) claims: 'The fact that we are witnesses in our sitting rooms to these events requires us to take responsibility for our reaction to such breaches of human rights'. Statements like this reconfirm the belief that it is the news media that determine international interest and hence national concerns if not actions. However, the news media by themselves cannot force anyone to do anything. As Sir Michael Howard (cited in Hudson and Stanier, 1999: 318) maintains 'We cannot solve the problems of the world even if CNN brings them every night into our sitting room'. There is no doubt that television and press inform and highlight policy problems. Nonetheless, whether they, with their dramatic images and words, their pervasive reporting, their persistent questions can be the only reason for a complete reversal of a policy direction remains doubtful. Rather, the news media have an impact on policy when it is weakly held, does not have support, or is in flux. If policy-makers are unsure or inattentive, someone else determines the direction. A strong government with a carefully considered policy based on national interest or on strong moral imperatives, as is claimed to be the case in most recent military interventions, should not be influenced by the 'random searchlight' of the media.[9] This understanding is incorporated in a policy-media interaction model developed by Robinson (1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002a, 2002b). Further insights into the link between media content and foreign policy decision-making is offered by Livingston and Riley, who present three pathways for possible media influence on foreign policy. Wolfsfeld's political contest model highlights the conditions for when, as well as how, marginalised groups can set the media agenda.

These findings, however, are not free from geographical limitations and leave a noticeable vacuum that this book aims to fill. The following chapters test the key analytical assumptions established and previously tested in the West regarding media influence on foreign policy-making when a humanitarian intervention is undertaken. They assess the applicability of the models developed for the Western media in a different context: that of Eastern Europe. In parallel, the following chapters test and challenge the CNN effect hypothesis with regard to humanitarian interventions itself. They question mainly the assumed direct power of the news media. It is contended here that while the CNN effect may not always be evident in the immediate response of governments to evidence of great human tragedies, the cumulative effect of reports from areas of conflict become part of the framework within which policy options are developed, evaluated and executed. Hence, a difference is being made between 'forcing' policy-makers to adopt a certain policy (and in this way taking over the

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9 'Random searchlight' is a term used by Douglas Hurd. He argues that 'The light shone by the media is not the regular sweep of the lighthouse, but a random searchlight directed at the whim of its controllers' (cited in Hudson and Stanier, 1999).

policy-making process) and 'pressuring' them to do so (where the media is one of a number of factors potentially influencing decisions).

Chapter 2

New Wars and New Humanitarianism

Introduction

'War and the threat of war shape lives across the world in all manner of direct and indirect ways' (Booth, 1991: 530). They have always been present. Their forms and specific characteristics, however, such as mode of warfare, types of military forces involved, strategies and techniques, relations and means of warfare, have differed considerably across time and in different circumstances thus making it difficult to provide an exact definition for this phenomenon. This is especially true since the early 1990s. Many of the conflicts now described as wars do not conform to various established ideas of what constitutes 'proper' or 'traditional' wars which are generally seen as a construction of the centralised, 'rationalised', hierarchically ordered, territorialised modern state. Against the grain of conventional thinking, it is evident that many contemporary wars are not necessarily conflicts between states; they do not always involve a very large-scale resort to violence; nor are they much influenced by formal legal provisions or their suspension; nor are they openly declared and resolved at certain moments and thereby clearly distinguished from situations of peace (Allen, 1999: 13).

The following chapter analyses the phenomenon of war. It consecutively addresses current trends with regard to the nature of wars and humanitarian interventions. It proceeds in two parts. The first concentrates on the changing nature of wars that led to the establishment of the term 'new wars' and identifies the distinctive features of these wars. The second part examines the changes in the international response to new wars that bring to the fore of international policy agenda the notion of human rights and an associated 'new humanitarianism'.

The Changing Nature of Wars

Contrary to widely held expectations that the end of the Cold War would eliminate armed conflict and bring 'a new era of peace and stability', the post-1989 world cannot really be associated with any significant decline in violence. Indeed, within Europe and beyond, the last decade has offered incontrovertible evidence that various forms of violent conflict have not become obsolete, whatever the likelihood of another 'major' war. A total of 115 armed conflicts have been recorded for the period 1989–2001 (Gleditsch et al., 2002: 616). What is in fact emerging is a much greater degree of complexity and uncertainty. As Barber (cited in Carruthers, 2000: 198) argues:

Cold War bipolarity has seemingly given way to a 'New World Disorder,' of disputed boundaries, of failed states, of 'ethnic' conflicts between peoples who in the face of globalising processes show a greater propensity for fissiparous fragmentation.

This supports the claim that the post-Cold War period is much more unstable and violent and that while the old style interstate war may be 'on its way out', there are new lines of division that continue to produce conflict (Kaldor, 1997: 8; Shaw, 2003: 217).[1] This forces a fundamental rethinking of the preparations for warfare and the nature of warfare itself, a reclassification of its predominant forms and purposes. As Hobsbawm (2002) observes 'armed operations are no longer essentially in the hands of governments or their authorised agents', 'the contending parties have no common characteristics, status or objectives, except the willingness to use violence'.

The traditional conceptions of war, at least in European intellectual thought, were developed by Clausewitz (1993) in the nineteenth century. He defined war as 'an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will' (1993, 83). This definition implied that 'we' and 'our enemy' were states, and the 'will' of one state could be clearly defined. Therefore, the armed conflicts between states labelled as wars were for clearly defined political aims – the state interest – where victory (or defeat) was absolute. Thus, Clausewitz accepted that war was an affair between states, that only states had a monopoly over the legitimate use of force and that this legitimate warfare was conducted following codified laws of war. As van Creveld (1991: 41) observes:

To distinguish war from mere crime, it was defined as something waged by sovereign states and by them alone. Soldiers were defined as personnel licensed to engage in armed violence on behalf of the state…They were supposed to fight only when in uniform, carrying their arms 'openly' and obeying a commander who could be held responsible for their actions…The civilian population was supposed to be left alone, 'military necessity' permitting.

In addition, a distinction between war and peace existed. Hence, traditional wars were taking place in the context of a clear separation between war and peace, the internal and external, between private and public, military and civil and between combatants and non-combatants (see Kaldor, 1997: 5).

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two 1977 Additional Protocols encompass the rules of war along the above lines and include guidelines for the treatment of wounded soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians (Geneva Conventions 1949; Additional Protocols to Geneva Conventions 1977). In particular, they establish that 'prisoners of war and wounded combatants should be protected from murder; discrimination based on race, religion, sex, and similar criteria; mutilation,

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1   The opposite argument that there is in effect a considerable improvement in the security condition in the world and that the current environment is less dangerous than that of the Cold War also exists (see, for example Snow, 1996). The claim is that national-security problems have become restricted to internal wars of limited interest and even more limited escalatory potential. The fact that we now witness messy internal wars is only because they are the only form that violence currently takes, rather then that they have become more numerous or more destabilising to the international system than they were before.

cruel treatment and torture; humiliating and degrading treatment; and sentencing or execution without a fair trial'. They forbid torture, mutilation, rape, slavery and arbitrary killing, genocide, crimes against humanity (which include forced disappearance and deprivation of humanitarian aid) and war crimes (which include apartheid, biological experiments, hostage taking, attacks on cultural objects, and depriving people of the right to a fair trial) against anybody in an area of armed conflict. In addition, the Geneva Conventions and supplementary protocols make a distinction between combatants and civilians. The two groups must be treated differently by the warring sides and, therefore, combatants must be clearly distinguishable from civilians. The Conventions also extend protections to civilians during wartime. They are not to be subject to attack – both direct attacks on civilians and indiscriminate attacks against areas in which civilians are present.

The conflicts that are taking place now in different parts of the world do not conform in full to this traditional view. It is often remarked that most conflicts and protracted political crises today are occurring *within* rather than between states (Gantzel, 1997). As Bassiouni (1997: 35) observes, only 10 per cent of reported conflicts in the last decade can be attributed to state actors as direct participants on both sides of the conflict. Similar results, although for a slightly earlier period, can be seen in the research on the dynamics of conflicts for 1989–1995, conducted by Wallensteen and Sollenberg (1996). Their figures show that out of the 96 conflicts recorded only five were clear-cut interstate armed conflicts. All other conflicts took place within states, between groups referred to as non-state actors on one side, and government forces on the other.

This new type of violence – although often highly localised – clashes with settled understandings of interstate or civil war because of the diverse range of involved protagonists, the issues over which it is undertaken, its consistently brutal impact upon civilians, its longevity and protracted nature and, significantly for this study, because of its unprecedented degree of public visibility (Lawler, 2002: 151). It also blurs the previously existing distinctions (however unproblematically available they might have been before) between peoples, armies and governments; between war, organised crime and large-scale violations of human rights; between war and peace; between what is private and what is public, state and non-state, informal and formal; between what is done for political or economic motives. A similar degree of difficulty is present when trying to separate within these conflicts notions of 'external' and 'internal' (or 'domestic' and 'international'), attacks from abroad and attacks from inside the country, local and global (Kaldor, 2002: 2; see also Keen, 1996; Duffield, 2001). A number of descriptions are offered in the literature for this phenomenon, including internal or civil wars, 'low-intensity conflicts', privatised or informal wars, uncivil wars, post-modern wars, network wars and 'degenerate wars'. In military circles they are labelled as 'fourth generation' or 'asymmetric' warfare, that is:

> …irregular or guerrilla warfare carried out by groups motivated by ideology, revenge, lust for power, ethnicity, religion or some other unifying bond. Such irregulars often are associated with or supported by regular military forces… (Center for Defense Information, 2001).

The most cited and probably most popular label for some of these conflicts is the one suggested by Kaldor (1997, 2002) – 'new' wars. In her use the term refers to 'internal conflicts which pit state and non-state actors against one another in a process of violent interaction, as a result of ethnic, tribal, religious or political differences' (Bassiouni, 1997: 35).

Kaldor (1997, 2002) provides a detailed account of the typical features of new wars that generally tend to be longer, more pervasive and less decisive. They do not presuppose any longer the existence of states. Indeed, new wars arise from the disintegration or erosion of state structures and state autonomy and in particular in the context of the erosion of the monopoly of legitimate organised violence. As a consequence, they are significantly different from earlier wars in terms of their goals, the methods of warfare and the ways they are financed. Nowadays, the centre-stage is taken by identity politics goals that come to replace previous geo-political or ideological goals. Kaldor (2002: 6–7) defines identity politics as a claim to power on the basis of particular identity – national, clan, religious or linguistic. Hence, maintenance of the exclusive right to territory because people of a particular identity dominate it or because of some historic claim and/or injustice is typical of contemporary identity politics. Such claims to power usually relate to an idealised nostalgic representation of the past:

> Political groupings based on exclusive identity tend to be movements of nostalgia, based on the reconstruction of an heroic past, the memory of injustices, real or imagined, and of famous battles, won or lost. They acquire meaning through insecurity, through rekindled fear of historic enemies, or through a sense of being threatened by those with different labels (Kaldor, 2002: 78).

However, as Kaldor (2002: 7) argues, despite the dependence of the narratives of identity politics on memory and tradition, this new reappearance of identity politics is by no means a mere resurgence of 'ancient hatreds' kept under control by colonialism and/or the Cold War. Quite on the contrary, there appears to be a process of 'reinvention' in the context of the failure or the corrosion of other sources of political legitimacy such as the discrediting of socialism or the nation-building rhetoric of the first-generation of post-colonial leaders. This would explain why this type of backward-looking identity politics is inherently exclusive and tends to fragmentation.

The second feature of the new wars that clearly distinguishes them from earlier wars, as identified by Kaldor (1997, 2002), is the mode of warfare. In conventional wars the goal was to capture territory by military means, the battles being the decisive encounters. The new warfare tends to avoid battle and to achieve control over territory through political control of the population by using counterinsurgency techniques of destabilisation, creating 'fear and hatred'. It is consistently described as horrific, ferocious, vicious and uncontrolled in its conduct (Snow, 1996: 1; Kalyvas, 2001: 113). 'The aim is to control the population by getting rid of everyone of a different identity (and indeed of a different opinion)' (Kaldor, 2002: 8). The population expulsion – or 'ethnic cleansing' in the language of media headlines – takes the forms of mass killings, forcible resettlements, as well as various political, psychological

and economic techniques of intimidation. As such, Allen (1999: 34–35) argues, new wars are likely fundamentally to transform affected populations, because it is the population as a whole – unarmed and otherwise innocent civilians – that is the major, if not sole, object of the fighting and which bears most of the consequences. In the course of the twentieth century the burden of war has shifted from armed forces to civilians, who were not only its victims, but also increasingly the actual object and primary targets of military or military-political operations, civilian suffering is often the direct objective (IICK, 2000: 20; Hobsbawm, 2002). That is why new wars are associated with large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (cited in Kaldor, 2002: 101), the global refugee population has risen from 2.4 million people in 1975 to 10.5 million people in 1985 and 14.4 million people in 1995. This figure includes only refugees that cross international borders. Another 5.4 million people are classified as internally displaced. In addition, the traditional 'innocent victims' of war, women and children, are caught up increasingly in the fighting (Taylor, 1997, xxii). In societal terms, material resources and social networks – homes, economic centres, cultural buildings, are deliberately destroyed. A 1997 Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) report confirms this:

> Civilians have always been under threat in war. But the methods of modern warfare seem sometimes to threaten more of them more of the time. In recent years wars have seemed characterised by endless streams of wretched refugees, fleeing violence or mayhem or starvation… (cited in Allen, 1999: 24).

This pattern of violence is confirmed by the available statistics on new wars. In the beginning of the twentieth century the ratio of military to civilian casualties in wars was 8:1. At present the figures are reversed: in the wars of the 1990s, the ratio of military to civilian casualties is approximately 1:8 (Kaldor, 2002: 8).[2] Atrocities against non-combatants, sieges, destruction of historic monuments, and so on, were prohibited according to the classical rules of warfare and were codified in the laws of war by The Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907. Now these once considered to be undesirable and illegitimate side-effects of old wars constitute an essential part of the new mode of warfare.

The second feature of the new mode of warfare is the nature of the units that fight it. Again, vertically organised hierarchical units typical of 'old war' are replaced by something new. Typically, the new wars are characterised by a multiplicity of types of fighting units – public and private, state and non-state. They could include paramilitary units, local warlords, criminal gangs, police forces, mercenary groups and also regular armies including breakaway units of regular armies and regular foreign troops generally under international auspices (Kaldor, 2002: 8). They are highly decentralised, operate through a mixture of confrontation and co-operation, do not wear military uniforms to help identify friend and foe, make use of new technologies

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2   While the deliberate targeting of civilians during new wars is not questioned, there might be an element of truth in the claim that the circumstances in which new wars occur make accurate statistical analysis and comments on the status of casualties difficult to make. For more, see Duffield (2001: 187–201).

(the end of the Cold War and of related conflicts increased the availability of surplus weapons) and modern communications. The appearance of these different types of militias can be interpreted as a function of the decomposition or recomposition of the state's monopoly on force. As Liotta (cited in Strazzari, 2003: 143; emphasis in the original) maintains something called a 'parastate' emerges that is a 'force acting *against* the state, *within* the state or *in place of* the state'. This parastate often lays claims of legitimate succession to an expiring order by attempting either to transform itself into a state or align with larger states.

The third characteristic of new wars emerges from what Kaldor (2002) describes as the new 'globalised' economy. For her the new wars take place in a context defined as an 'extreme version of globalisation' (Kaldor, 2002: 101):

> Territorially-based production more or less collapses either as a result of liberalisation and the withdrawal of state support, or through physical destruction (pillage, shelling, and so on), or because markets are cut off as a result of the disintegration of states, fighting, or deliberate blockades imposed by outside powers, or more likely, by fighting units on the ground, or because spare parts, raw material and fuel are impossible to acquire.

Duffield (2001: 14) adds to this the actual effects of market deregulation and structural adjustment – the deepening of the forms of parallel and shadow transborder trade and the possibility for warring parties to forge local-global networks and shadow economies as a way of asset realisation and self-provisioning. Kaldor contrasts the latter to the war economies of the two world wars which were centralised, totalising and autarchic. They involved strong central control, self-sufficient economic production, together with mass social mobilisation in which populations are segregated into fighting and productive roles (Bojicic, Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1995: 10). New war economies are decentralised and heavily dependent on external resources. Unemployment is extremely high. The only productive activity tends to be extraction of valuable primary commodities – most of all minerals and narcotics. The money from this is used to finance the military campaigns. Participation in the war is low because of lack of pay and lack of legitimacy on the part of warring parties. Domestic production declines sharply because of global competition, physical destruction or interruptions to normal trade. Considering this, the fighting units finance themselves through plunder and the black market or through external assistance (Kaldor, 2002). Misappropriation of humanitarian aid is also very common (Shaw, 2003: 94). Therefore, war provides a legitimation for various criminal forms of financial gain while at the same time these are necessary sources of revenue in order to sustain war. Overall the war economy that is associated with new wars seems to represent a type of dual economy where the conventional economy is increasingly complemented by a largely unrecorded mixture of parallel and grey activities (Duffield, 1998: 97–98).

Exploring further the economic aspect of new wars, Duffield (2001) focuses on it and comes up with the label 'network wars'. He (2001: 14) argues that new wars can be understood as a 'form of non-territorial network war that works through and around states:

…the new wars typically oppose and ally the transborder resource networks of state incumbents, social groups, diasporas, strongmen, and so on. These are refracted through legitimate and illegitimate forms of state-non-state, national-international and local-global flows and commodity chains.… network war reflects the contested (selective) integration of stratified markets and populations into the global economy.

On his part, Shaw (1999, 2001a: 2003) offers the conception of new wars as 'degenerate wars'. The latter adds to the understanding of the phenomenon by explicitly connecting new wars with the genocidal tendencies of earlier twentieth century total wars and at the same time emphasising the decay of national frameworks, particularly in their military dimensions (Lawler, 2002: 158). Shaw (2001a: 2) describes new wars as a:

degenerate form of the total war, minus the national solidarity and progressive goals that characterised both state and guerrilla mobilisations at their best. What remains from these earlier models is the tendency towards mass slaughter of civilian populations, reproduced by a sickly combination of racism, authoritarianism, arms markets and brigandism.

Contemporary warfare therefore involves degenerate forms of the models of war which applied before (Shaw, 1999: 76). States no longer fight each other in all-out conflicts, rather they support, often indirectly, genocide against civilians in their own or neighbouring territories. States no longer mobilise national economies and societies, wars arise rather from the disintegration of such national frameworks. Regular armed forces alone no longer fight these wars, but are supplemented (or even supplanted) by paramilitaries, local self-defence units and foreign mercenaries. The weapons used are small-scale and high-tech. The goal no longer is simply territorial control, but also population displacement resulting in flows of refugees both internally and in neighbouring countries. The legitimacy for these actions is discovered not in programmes of social change, but in an identity politics directed towards the achievement of a homogeneous population. As a result the main victims of the violence associated with new wars are civilians. War is deliberately and systematically extended from that against an organised armed enemy to one against a largely unarmed civilian population. What is worth noting here is Shaw's (2003: 5) claim that the characteristics of degenerate wars can be seen historically also in the armed conquests and aerial bombing of great powers just as in guerrilla and counter-insurgency wars. Thus, he practically includes activities conducted by contemporary great powers, those who in reality (supposedly) undertake humanitarian interventions in response to new wars, within the scope of degenerate warfare.

A number of scholars have questioned Kaldor's depiction of contemporary wars as 'new' (for example Snow, 1996; Shaw, 2001b; Kalyvas, 2001; Shaw, 2003). Their arguments stress that this type of violence has been previously overshadowed and overlooked due to the dominance of the Cold War and its reasoning. And nowadays it is approached with a Cold War framework, which may be inadequate or even irrelevant to understanding and responding to new wars (Snow, 1996: x). The features of these new wars are not entirely new phenomena. Descriptions of extreme violence abound, mass population displacement is nothing new, the practice of using local semi-independent militia is widespread, and identity politics has always

been central to war. Examples of the above date back to the Russian, Spanish and Chinese Civil Wars (Snow, 1996: 145; Kalyvas, 2001: 115). It is also the case that the understanding of violence is culturally defined. As Kalyvas (2001: 115) notes, 'killings by knife and machete tend to horrify us more than the often incomparably more massive killings by aerial and field artillery bombings'. The distinction between civilian and military casualties has never been absolutely clear and large-scale and widespread massacres of enemy civilians have occurred in the past, including in such traditional wars as the Second World War (Shaw, 2001b). The claim that new wars are less a form of political expression and more a case of blurring the lines of war and criminality is also not entirely novel. The engagement in criminal activities and large-scale looting are a recurring element in civil wars, including 'the most ideological ones' such as the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. Apparently, 'even Lenin entered into agreements with "criminal elements" during the Russian Civil War' (Kalyvas, 2001: 106).

Kaldor's interpretation of new wars as a product of globalisation can also be subjected to certain criticism. Without engaging in detail with the existing globalisation debates (the literature on the topic is vast and offers conflicting interpretations) it needs acknowledging that Kaldor's claim for an erosion of states is not entirely accurate in general terms. Its acceptance or rejection depends on the approach to the whole set of globalisation questions. At the risk of oversimplification, there are three broad schools that interpret this phenomenon differently and Kaldor's claim seems to belong to one of these schools – the group of those who see globalisation as a powerful force in the political, economic, cultural and ideological sense and for whom the role of states in both 'authoring' and actively responding to global structural change is largely ignored (see, for example Ohmae, 1990; Fukuyama, 1992). At the other extreme is the view that downplays the effects of 'globalisation' on state choices. The works of Boyer and Drache (1996); Weiss (1998), Hirst and Thompson (1999) develop this argument. In between these two dichotomous approaches comes the more subtle understanding of the processes of globalisation that recognises that profound changes have taken place in the global organisation of capital but insists on the centrality of states in the processes of globalisation (see, for example Mittelman, 1997; Panitch, 1997; Dicken, 1998; Cerny, 2000; Germain, 2000; Scholte, 2000). It is worth noting also that analysts studying globalisation, such as the ones mentioned above, tend to focus on the impact of globalisation on relatively strong cohesive states. It might be the case that a different approach and hence different interpretation is necessary for weak failing states which seem to be exactly the states where the new wars take place. These states are in the poorest parts of the world, those most distant from the global economy (Snow, 1996: 98). This could lead to an additional set of questions, such as is it the integration into the globalisation processes or the opposite – the exclusion from them – that has a stronger effect on states? As Duffield (1998: 97) rightly acknowledges 'the reality of globalisation is as much concerned with heterogeneity and division, including new processes of inclusion and exclusion, as it is with the levelling effects of market forces'.

Taking a position on these debates as well as critically evaluating the novelty of the new wars is clearly not within the scope of this book; however, their brief summary does illustrate the set of issues Kaldor's new wars claim touches upon and

the controversies it triggers. What is of more relevance here are the actual features of the contemporary wars and there seems to be little doubt in their accuracy the way they are outlined by Kaldor. It is also of great relevance how these new wars actually become known to the world, as not taking this into account leaves out an important aspect of the contemporary warfare no matter how it is labelled. This is where the global media come into play as they are arguably the principal way the publics (and maybe even policy-making elites?) are made aware of what is happening around the world. Global media were not so much part of the mix before the end of the 1980s.[3] The advances in telecommunications technology since then such as light mobile video camcorders, laptops, and satellite transmission of photographed images made it possible to cover almost everything to which a reporter could get access. This in effect might be the crucial difference between the old warfare and the new one – the revolution in communications technology that allows now to make wars public and visible to the world (Snow, 1996). As Snow (1996: 2) puts it, 'the unrelenting eye of global television makes them more difficult to ignore than was the case in an earlier period'.

Changes in the International Response to New Wars

The new wars often tend to be 'relegated to the margins of international concern' and treated by the international institutions and external governments mainly in terms of geopolitical calculations (Kaldor, 1997: 7–30; Lawler, 2002: 158). This takes the form of a reluctance to get involved in geographically distant conflicts unless a clear strategic interest could be identified. This is in some measure due to an unwillingness to risk casualties, privileging the lives of nationals over the lives of people in faraway countries, and a readiness to sacrifice principles to 'realistic' compromises. It could also be explained with the genuine complexity of new wars that defies easy solutions together with their often highly localised impact. In his 1999 Annual Report Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General, also acknowledged that 'the failure to intervene was driven more by the reluctance of Member States to pay the human and other costs of intervention, and by doubts that the use of force would be successful, than by concerns about sovereignty' (cited in Wheeler, 2000: 300).

Gradual changes in this tendency, however, are becoming apparent. What appears to be happening is a transformation of humanitarianism – on the basis of reinterpreted humanitarian policy – from the margins to the centre of the international policy agenda; although it needs acknowledging that its application remains highly selective. Nonetheless, it could be argued that conflicts within states and their accompanying humanitarian consequences have begun to preoccupy quite substantially external governments and the UN. The comments of former US President Bill Clinton, illustrate this: '[A]ll of us feel our humanity threatened as much by fights going on within the borders of nations as by the dangers of fighting across national

3   A noted exception being the Biafran war, 1967–1970, that received a considerable media coverage and disseminated around the world pictures of starving Africans.

borders' (cited in Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996). There has been in recent years a greater readiness to define humanitarian crises arising out of new wars as a threat to international peace and security requiring a collective response in accordance with the UN Charter (Minear, Scott and Weiss, 1996). The most significant examples of the late 1990s probably are the so called Clinton Doctrine (Da Alder, 1999a; Da Alder and O'Hanlon, 1999), committing American power not only to defend vital national interests in a specific region, but to protect human rights wherever and whenever they are violated, and the Doctrine of the International Community proclaimed by the British Prime Minister Blair (1999e), based on the similar idea that 'we cannot turn our backs on conflicts and the violation of human rights within other countries if we want still to be secure'. To quote Clinton (cited in Daalder, 1999a):

> …we can say to the people of the world, whether you live in Africa, or Central Europe, or any other place, if somebody comes after innocent civilians and tries to kill them en masse because of their race, their ethnic background or their religion, and it's within our power to stop it, we will stop it.

Clinton's doctrine, formulated in relation to Kosovo, of course raises questions, as Daalder and O'Hanlon (1999) notes, about its practicality, longevity and even sincerity. And maybe that is why Clinton's Secretary of State Albright very quickly addressed the issue. Speaking in front of the Council of Foreign Relations in New York she stated that:

> Some hope, and others fear, that Kosovo will be a precedent for similar interventions around the globe. I would caution against any such sweeping conclusions. Every circumstance is unique. Decisions on the use of force will be made by any President on a case-by-case basis after weighing a host of factors (cited in Daalder, 1999a).

On his part, Blair (1999e) argued somewhat earlier in the same year, that:

> [t]he most pressing foreign policy problem we face is to identify the circumstances in which we should get involved in other people's conflicts. Non-interference has long been considered an important principle of international law. And it is not one we would want to jettison too readily… But the principle of non-interference must be qualified in important respects. Acts of genocide can never be a purely internal matter. When oppression produces massive flows of refugees which unsettle neighbouring countries they can properly be described as 'threats to international peace and security'.

This shift in the policy practices in the field of human rights interventionism advocated by the political leaders of Britain and the US clearly has redefined the threats to international peace and security without, however, effectively changing or even questioning the present status quo. In parallel to it has run the more ambitious idea of the UN that presses for redefinition of sovereignty suggesting that it should no longer be an unbreachable barrier when a large number of people are at risk and that it can be overridden when governments fail to protect their populations. The important document 'The Responsibility to Protect' (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001) has been a major attempt to codify and systematise the new humanitarianism in international law and practice. The report

deals with the actual 'right of humanitarian intervention': the question of when, if ever, it is appropriate for states to take coercive – and in particular military – action, against another state for the purpose of protecting people at risk in that other state. It puts forward the idea that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe, but that when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states.

This view implies that all states could be vulnerable to international intervention if atrocities are conducted on their territory. The UN Security Council (SC) has already empowered itself since the 1990s to consider humanitarian emergencies as threats to international peace and security and by so doing, has brought these conflicts within the ambit of the existing charter, specifically Chapter VII (Chandler, 2002: 8). In effect, it was Annan (2003: 28) who enunciated the new doctrine in 1999 by arguing that atrocities on a grand scale and the denial of democratic fundamentals should no longer be regarded as purely domestic matters. Thereby he tossed out ideas about the inviolability of national sovereignty that go back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. International interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, East Timor all seem to illustrate how sovereignty can be overridden when a large number of people are at risk. Nevertheless, while welcoming the new doctrine of humanitarian intervention, Annan (1999) also remained rather cautious about it:

> This developing international norm in favour of intervention to protect civilians from wholesale slaughter will no doubt continue to pose profound challenges to the international community.… Any such evolution in our understanding of State sovereignty and individual sovereignty will, in some quarters, be met with distrust, scepticism, even hostility. But it is an evolution that we should welcome.… Why? Because, despite its limitations and imperfections, it is testimony to a humanity that cares more, not less, for the suffering in its midst, and a humanity that will do more, and not less, to end it.

Still, it remains difficult to justify military intervention on the grounds of 'threat to international peace and security' and hence resort to it on a regular basis since many new wars do not threaten international stability in any orthodox sense and threaten the national interests only of the states contiguous to the conflict. By broadly defining international peace to include concerns which would have been earlier classed as internal questions the UN SC addressed the first point and established firmly the link between human rights-based humanitarianism and military intervention. Despite this, however, it did not recognise a formal right of military intervention purely on human rights grounds. The redefining of the national interest to include the 'nation's interest in being able to go to bed at night with a clear conscience', could be the response to the second point (Worsthorne, cited in Chandler, 2002: 82).

Nonetheless, the significant impact that the fate of populations involved in the conflicts has on the public worldwide has generated a considerable amount of demands that something should be done. Now 'doing nothing' can lead to accusations of moral indifference, just like 'doing something' to protect citizens of another state is likely to provoke charges of interference in the internal affairs of another state. As Lawler (2002: 151) points out, the political and ethical dimensions of going to war in response to such threats now have already moved to the centre of public and intellectual debate. Currently, the 'chief dilemma of international politics' has

become whether people in danger should be rescued by military force from outside (Walzer, cited in Lawler, 2002: 151).

Not surprisingly then terms such as 'new interventionism', 'new military humanism', 'new humanitarianism', 'new humanism', 'new military humanitarianism' abound and are widely used to label instances of international involvement or calls for such in conflicts throughout the world (for example see Chomsky, 1999; Blair, 1999e; Glennon, 1999; Wheeler, 2000; Duffield, 2001; Fox, 2001; Terry, 2002; Tirman, 2003/04; Finnemore, 2003; Holzgrefe and Keohane, 2003). They are associated with the proclamation of a new era in world affairs in which the 'enlightened states'[4] will be able to use force where they 'believe it to be just', discarding 'the restrictive old rules' and obeying 'modern notions of justice' (Chomsky, 1999: 4). This, however, raises a number of questions. To engage in detail with the debates provoked on the right of humanitarian intervention and its guiding principles is beyond the scope of this analysis. Neither is the future of humanitarian intervention, nor the framework within which it can be functioning, a key focus of the study.[5] What is necessary here is to indicate their existence and to identify the issues involved as this provides the starting point and assists the subsequent discussion and analysis of the case study – the Kosovo conflict. The first big set of questions obviously centres on what guides this new phenomenon: is it humanitarian concern or maybe power interests? Is the resort to force undertaken 'in the name of principles and values' or is it something familiar repeating itself? And related to this, considering that the incipient political and moral consensus that intervention is sometimes necessary to prevent human-rights violations on a major scale has not been formalised into a set of rules of international law, how are we to decide when it is just and when not, when it is legal and when not to implement the right to humanitarian intervention, who has the right to decide that a human rights crime is being committed or that it raises to the level of offence that requires intervention? The second group of questions highlights the issues of when and where to intervene. There seems to be an understanding forming that the focus should be on those conflicts where the scale of death and suffering is greatest, where intervention is unlikely to create great power conflicts, and where a mission can be designed that promises many lives saved at a low cost to intervening soldiers (O'Hanlon, 1999a, 1999b: 2000). And although these conditions may appear convincing their identification with regard to particular conflicts is likely to prove everything but straightforward. Most likely they will be even more blurred when the conflict location is in a place of limited economic and strategic significance for the intervening powers. Another set of questions raised by the 'new humanitarianism' relates to the actual method of intervention. Even if we leave aside the common argument that military power itself might not be a sound means of resolving conflict in any circumstances, the issue of the particular nature of military power deployed

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4   The 'enlightened' states are the USA and Britain according to Chomsky, who is, of course, being ironic.

5   For a detailed discussion on the indicated aspects of humanitarian intervention see: Fisher (1994); Campbell (1998), Guicherd (1999), Roberts (1999), Ronzitti (1999), Ali (2000), Gibbs (2000), Haass (2000), Schnabel and Thakur (2000), The Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000), Wheeler (2000), Evans and Sahnoun (2002).

remains. There seems to be an overall reliance predominantly on air power in interventions undertaken under the label of 'new humanitarianism' mainly due to the 'casualty-free' promise they contain (a point which will be returned to below) (see Daalder, 1999a; Haass, 1999; Wheeler, 2000). Although there is obviously a limit to the risks and costs any government could accept in 'saving strangers', it is also evident that using force the wrong way could exacerbate some conflicts and lead to many deaths both among local participants and intervening troops. Considering the significance attached to 'force protection' in determining the form of an intervention, and linked to this realisation that prolonged military commitments might become controversial at home should the number of casualties increase, it is quite possible that the scope of the new humanitarianism will stay quite modest. In similar vein, humanitarian action taken without reference to the political and human rights context of the crisis can 'fuel wars' and reinforce human rights violations (Cohen, 1999). Therefore, having a definite sense of what exactly is to be done – be it creating safe havens for the ones at risk, imposing a ceasefire line between warring parties or even helping one of the sides to win the conflict, having clear objectives, as well as a clear and achievable strategy to meet these objectives might help avoid unrealistic expectations and undesirable doubts regarding the level of commitment. Clearly this is very difficult to establish in individual cases at the onset of the operations.

Combining all of the above considerations a set of requirements can be identified that an intervention must meet in order to qualify as humanitarian. The criteria are derived from the Just War tradition and establish that first, there must be a just cause or in Wheeler's words (2000, 34) a 'supreme humanitarian emergency'; second, the use of force must be a last resort; third, the requirement of proportionality must be met and fourth, there must be a high probability that the use of force will achieve a 'positive humanitarian outcome'. These criteria, however, only present the minimum necessary conditions and any additional elements satisfied such as legality for example could only better the humanitarian qualifications of any intervention.

It is within the context of these debates that the emergence and development of a new ethical and moral foreign policy by governments of leading world powers has to be understood. In the case of the USA, Clinton has claimed that the country 'has made human rights a cornerstone of our foreign policy'; whereas Britain's Tony Blair has argued that the prioritisation of human rights has lead to 'a new internationalism based on values' (cited in Chandler, 2002: 6). Several considerations come into play when explaining this shift from pursuing clear national interests in foreign policy to focusing on human rights questions in areas where Western states have claimed little economic or geo-strategic interest but have accepted the 'responsibility to act as a force for good in the world' (Blair, cited in Chandler, 2002: 6). The first suggests that this shift is a part of a gradual evolution of human rights concerns since 1945. The second views the post-Cold War world as a more dangerous place with the nation-state becoming increasingly more fragile and the rising need for international human rights protection with 'failed states', 'complex emergencies' and civil conflicts. The third links the shift in foreign policy with the communication revolution, suggesting that now people have become more aware of abuses happening in different parts of the world and the CNN effect is forcing governments to respond to concerns of their people. All of these explanations present the ethical foreign policy as a

conscious realisation of the need to prioritise human rights (Chandler, 2002: 53–60). Naturally, they are being criticised. It is argued that the new policies and institutional developments do not simply express ways of implementing or applying pre-existing ideas, but reflect a fundamentally different conception of the relative importance of human rights questions. When drawing the picture of a more violent world, it is not mentioned that the annual casualty figures from conflict today are lower than the global average for the entire period of the Cold War (Norton-Taylor and Bowcott, cited in Chandler, 2002: 58). Neither, it is mentioned that of the 35 wars taking place in the mid-1990s only eight broke out in or after 1989, the other 27 began during the Cold War and were exacerbated by it. With regard to the interpretation of ethical foreign policy as a product of popular awareness and demand, resulting both from campaigning Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and international news coverage, the impact of the latter two on government policy is difficult to assess fully.[6]

The fourth offered explanation for the rise of ethical foreign policy is rather more sceptical in its nature. It identifies the main reason in the transformations of international and domestic political frameworks with the end of the Cold War, arguing that the attention to ethical foreign policy has been an important resource of authority and credibility for Western political leaders. As Klug (cited in Chandler, 2002: 63) notes:

> The post-Cold War search for new ideals and common bonds in an era of failed ideologies appears to have contributed to a growing appreciation of human rights as a set of values.

Chomsky (1999) takes this line of argument even further by claiming that the new-found enthusiasm for a doctrine of humanitarian intervention in the case of the US primarily reflects the fact that this has become the legitimating ideology to justify the projection of American power necessary to maintain its economic hegemony when the ideology of the Cold War can no longer be used for this purpose.[7]

Whatever the underlying explanation for the Western foreign policy often being inspired by humanitarian impulses and human rights in the absence of an overarching security threat after the end of the Cold War, including if the latter one offered is valid, the prominent presence of 'soft-headed' and 'soft-hearted' ideas, as they are referred to by some, in the contemporary world politics is an undisputed fact (Weiss, 2001: 421). And there are those who argue that ideas, values and norms associated with

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6   The argument that NGOs have been able to pressurise governments which otherwise would be reluctant to act in cases of human rights abuses remains uncertain not least because of the difficulty in measuring the influence of NGOs relative to other factors affecting government policy. Considering that ultimately it is the states that approve international treaties, establish the monitoring mechanisms, decide the foreign assistance budgets and decide troop commitments and priorities, the influence in any case can be only indirect (Chandler, 2002: 59). The claims for qualitatively greater awareness of human rights abuses around the world as a result of the media making headline news of what is happening on the other side of the world which ,consequently leads to a public demand for human rights activism was explored earlier.

7   For a detailed development of this argument see Chomsky (1999).

human rights and humanitarianism matter. For example, Weiss (2001: 422) clearly advocates them by stressing their role in four aspects: helping states to redefine their national interests and identities to include humanitarian values; helping states to choose among priorities when principles like humanity clash with sovereignty; helping to create new coalitions between NGOs and the military, human rights and aid organisations; and lastly, the process of the gradual embededness of human rights and humanitarian ideas in institutions. He even goes further by suggesting that 'abiding strictly by so-called traditional principles in today's unprincipled civil wars is a fool's errand'.

Accepting that when a humanitarian crisis develops, outsiders have three choices – to act to escalate the catastrophe, to do nothing, or to try to mitigate the catastrophe, as Chomsky (1999: 48) suggests, it is beyond any doubt that as soon as the human rights framework is established, there is an inevitable assumption that the external intervention is the only moral solution. New wars are usually seen as worth an international intervention either because their conduct or consequences 'shock the moral conscience of mankind', or because 'state structures and systems of governance are breaking down to a degree that puts the lives of civilians in the war zone at intolerable risk' (Lawler, 2002: 159). Even if we set aside the widespread view that despite common humanitarian pretensions genuine cases of intervention undertaken with humanitarian intent are hard to find, such an approach leaves the door open for additional criticisms: failing to act on behalf of long-standing human rights violations in some areas of the world, or, when there is an action taken, for being too slow to respond or for merely taking half measures (Chandler, 2002: 12). According to many the most serious pragmatic problem posed by humanitarian intervention is the willingness of the intervening country to place its own soldiers lives and resources at risk, which traditionally is dependent on the degree of national interest involved. Then, to quote Krauthammer (1999), 'humanitarian war requires means that are inherently inadequate to its ends', it requires a 'bloodless war'. This is what Shaw (2003, 52, 238–240) labels 'risk-transfer war' or a new form of militarism – very well exemplified in the West's preference for aerial bombing campaigns, which are supposedly more precise and 'collateral damage' to civilian lives is merely 'accidental' and more 'proportional' to the advantages of ending or punishing aggression. 'Risk-transfer wars' supposedly shift the major share of death from enemy civilians to enemy armed forces since precision munitions and such like are intended to distinguish between civilians and military personnel. But at the same time on a different level they deliberately and systematically transfer the risk to civilians more generally since they are exposed to far greater risks than the interveners' military personnel. This is confirmed by the high level of civilian deaths and the limited level of military personnel deaths. However, the direct civilian killing on a scale that could threaten the media-formed legitimacy of the war is avoided since even relatively small massacres can be magnified by the media. In addition, 'risk-transfer wars' presuppose transfer of the risks of ground combat from Western forces to their local allies, wherever possible.

Therefore, the conclusion seems to be that most likely, when the motive is purely humanitarian, national interests vague or nonexistent, and the risks high, humanitarian intervention will not be an attractive option at all (Abrams, 2000).

Or maybe rather than making the war impossible these constrains will help make it late and take forms that do not help victims. So, the unwillingness to contemplate war will help to turn the wars that the West fights into what Shaw (2001a) calls 'bad wars'. As Lawler (2002: 159) observes, there seems to be no case where even well-intentioned intervention has produced anything other than a practically or morally highly ambiguous outcome:

> In most cases any moral legitimacy to the resort to force has been at best tarnished and at worst virtually obliterated by some or all of the following: the effects of mixed motives, bad timing and the failure to exhaust other means first, and the specific character of the application of force itself.

The explanations for the failures of the interventions do not stop at this. The short-termism of politicians, the role of the media which raises public consciousness at particular times and particular places, the lack of coordination of governments and international agencies, inadequate recourses, ignorance about the society in question ,and not allowing the achievement of much more than to keep human rights violators apart from their intended victims for a while are only some of the factors that at the end account for the outcome of the international military effort. Another explanation that comes from a different angle and seems to have quite a lot of merit is the one that links the failure of humanitarian intervention not only to prevent war but possibly help to sustain it in various ways with misperception, the tendency to interpret these wars in traditional terms, the inability to understand the character and logic of the new warfare (Kaldor, 2002: 10, 113). New wars tend to be treated either as traditional wars, in which case the terms 'sovereignty', 'peacekeeping', 'civil war' are difficult to apply in the current context, or, alternatively, they are interpreted as a return to primitivism or anarchy when the most that can be done is to ameliorate the symptoms, hence the use of terms such as 'complex emergencies'.

Conclusion

The foregoing features help to delineate a comprehensive theoretical perspective on the changing nature of security conflicts and international responses to them. The predominate form of warfare currently seems to be the intrastate conflict. Kaldor's depiction of these types of conflicts as new wars, while creating controversy over the novelty that the name implies, is the most widely used label. The defining features of these new wars distinguish them from the traditional interstate warfare in terms of goals, methods of warfare and financing. Western governments when faced with such conflicts seem to demonstrate increasingly a sense of moral responsibility as well as readiness to intervene militarily in order to prevent 'humanitarian catastrophes'. A norm could be emerging – that of new military humanitarianism – based on the redefinition of the threats to international peace and security without, however, effective changes or even questioning of the present status quo.

Overall then, clearly the end of the twentieth century has been marked with changes in the nature of security conflicts and the character of warfare accompanied by changes in news media. In the words of Seaton (1999: 48), 'there may always

have been wars, famines and at times systematic attempts to exterminate populations, but whether we knew, understood, cared or thought that something ought to be done about them has changed'. The news media now have the technological means to cover an increasing number of intrastate conflicts all over the world. The very nature of these conflicts is particularly attractive for the media as well. As Taylor (1997: xxii) observes, 'Civilian involvement in collapsing states makes for shocking television pictures – of starving children, of lines of refugees fleeing a war zone, of bombed market places'. By covering this, the media in effect end up promoting one way or another the controversial concept of humanitarian war. While the precise motivation behind the media interest is not straightforward it still remains the case that instantaneous pictures beamed around the world are believed to pressure those in power to do something. The Kosovo conflict – the case examined here – was no exception in terms of media interest provoked and volume of coverage.

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Chapter 3

The Kosovo Crisis

Introduction

On 24 March 1999 NATO launched air attacks against FRY (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) in an attempt to solve the continuing internal conflict. This air campaign lasted until 10 June 1999. The announced aims of the attacks were three-fold: to demonstrate NATO's resolve; to deter the use of force by FRY against Kosovo's Albanian population; and, to degrade, if necessary, Serbia's military capacity to conduct offensive operations (Bearman, 1999: 114). Why and how this happened is examined in this chapter through an interpretative description with the focus being particularly on the two periods under review identified previously – 24 February –25 March 1999 and 15 April–15 May 1999.

   The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the roots of the conflict and the lead up to the NATO decision to intervene militarily by means of an air campaign against FRY. The second section concentrates on the actual development of the air campaign in its middle stage. The last section assesses the conflict in the context of new wars and new humanitarianism analysing consecutively the case for a 'new' war and the case for a 'new humanitarianism' in practice.

The Background of the Conflict: The Lead up to NATO Intervention

Kosovo is an area situated in Southern Serbia with a mixed population the majority of whom are ethnic Albanians. The Serbian minority has been decreasing over an extended period. According to the available data, in 1912 the Serbs represented over 40 per cent of the population of Kosovo, in 1931 – one-third of the population. In 1998 they comprised less than 10 per cent (Djilas, 1998: 130; Ilic, 2001: 252). This change in the demographics of the area was due both to the very high birth rate of Albanians and to the emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins mainly for economic reasons but also because of harassment and discrimination (IICK, 2000: 38).

   The roots of the recent conflict in Kosovo, described by some as 'the most drawn-out, internationalised and violent part of the Yugoslav conflict', can be traced back to the history of the region (Stevenson and James, 2000: 19). For generations, Kosovo has been a territory disputed between Serbs and Albanians. For Serbia, Kosovo is an integral part of its territory. According to this rationale, the Albanians constitute a national minority and not a nation in the sense of a constitutive nation of the new Yugoslavia with a concomitant right to self-determination. Kosovo is vital both to Serbia's national identity, representing the 'Serbian Jerusalem', as well as its national interest, reflecting Serbian geo-political concerns about the creation

of a 'Greater Albania'. The Kosovo Albanians, on the other hand, claim that they are its original inhabitants, being the descendants of the ancient Illyrians. More important, however, is the long-established wish in the province to unite Kosovo with Albania (Heraclides, 1997: 318–319; Troebst, 1999; IICK, 2000; MccGwire 2000, 3; Ignatieff, 2001).

Until 1989 Kosovo formally enjoyed a high degree of autonomy within the former Yugoslavia. From the mid-1980s, however, an aggressive campaign of ethnic hatred took place. An example of that was the memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts on the plight of the Serbs in Kosovo. It maintained that in that region the Albanians were waging 'open and total war' on the Serbs, who were suffering 'physical, political and legal genocide'. The same theme was followed by the communist-controlled media thus encouraging hatred for the Albanians in Kosovo (Hudson and Stanier, 1999: 266). This verbal campaign was paralleled by a dismissal of Albanians from their posts as well as their exclusion from the state school system by the Serbian minority (Wheeler, 2000: 257).

In 1989 the status of Kosovo was formally altered: its autonomy was restricted and, through a constitutional amendment, was de facto abolished in 1990. The Kosovo Albanians responded by declaring independence and holding a referendum that elected Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (DLK) formed at that time, as President. The international community, through the European Community, acknowledged the smouldering problem. However, determined to produce an agreed settlement with President Milosevic on the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Community abandoned attempts to restore the rights of Kosovo. Following the 'rule' that 'a conflict boiling into violence can capture international attention, but one merely simmering can be put off for another day' the situation in Kosovo made little impact (Freedman, 2000: 345–347). The moderate approach adopted by the Kosovo Albanians – development of a parallel government, economy and welfare state (funded by the Albanian businessmen in Kosovo and among the Albanian Diaspora), without any form of armed confrontation – that predominated from 1989 to 1995 did not lead to any significant results and the conditions of life continued to deteriorate. The rights of people over property, employment, education and the exercise of basic freedoms were steadily eroded. The authority of Rugova began to dwindle. This was especially the case after the Dayton Peace Accords signed in 1995 which ended the war in Bosnia. The conference did not address Kosovan Albanians' demands despite their expectations. As Judah (1999: 12) points out, 'passive resistance has failed as a strategy' allowing for the logical conclusion that if 'non-violent resistance got you nowhere, maybe violence did pay' (O'Neill, 2002: 22). It is in these circumstances that the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), founded in 1991 and initially opposed by most Albanians, attracted serious attention, gained in support and became more active (MccGwire, 2000: 4).[1] The first half of 1998 was associated with a major KLA offensive assisted by the disappointment of Dayton and the sudden availability of weapons from Albania, eventually leading to the control of more than 30 per cent of the territory of Kosovo (Strazzari, 2003: 147). It prompted

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1   The funding for the KLA came from radical Albanians living in Germany and Switzerland (Wheeler, 2000: 258).

the launch of a Serbian counter-offensive, whose human cost is considered to be 800 Kosovo Albanians dead and around 200,000 displaced (MccGwire, 2000: 4).[2]

The international reaction combined a concern for the victims with unease to get dragged further into the Balkan Wars. The first anti-KLA campaign initiated a serious debate in the West as to whether or not force should be threatened and applied. The UN Resolutions 1160 of March 1998 and 1199 of September 1998 defined the situation in Kosovo as 'a threat to peace' and were passed under Chapter VII. Still, neither of the two documents authorised the use of force. Resolution 1160 only demanded an end to violence on both sides. Resolution 1199 acknowledged the continuation of the Serb offensive in the area by determining that the threat to peace and security in the region stemmed from the 'deterioration of the situation in Kosovo'. It demanded that the hostilities were ceased and urgent steps were taken to 'avert the impending humanitarian catastrophe'. In essence, however, the Resolution's demands were not backed up by the threat of military action and it contained only the warning that the SC, in case of a breach by the Serbs, 'would consider further action and additional measures to maintain or restore peace and stability in the region' (SC, 1998a; SC, 1998b). As Steele (1998: 21) points out there were two major difficulties in NATO choosing the military action approach at that stage. The first one was the Alliance's determination not to 'become the [KLA's] air force' in view of the successes it was achieving against Serbian forces. The second was the issue of whether NATO should act without explicit SC authorisation. However, following the deterioration of the situation in the beginning of October, the NATO Council authorised Activation Orders (ACTORD) for Phased Air Operation and Limited Air Operation justified in terms of existing SC resolutions.[3] After further diplomatic initiatives and negotiations President Milosevic agreed to comply and the air strikes were called off. In order to ensure compliance with the 'October Agreement' and to oversee the return of refugees to their homes Milosevic accepted the presence of an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) verification mission and agreed to allow unarmed NATO aircraft to carry out inspection flights over Kosovo. This agreement was predicated on Kosovo remaining an integral part of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanians were not involved in it in any way. The October agreement was followed later in October by the SC Resolution 1203 demanding full and prompt implementation of the agreement and action to improve the humanitarian situation in Kosovo (SC, 1998c).

The continuation of 'unspeakable atrocity' and 'crime [s] against humanity' (W. Walker, the head of the OSCE observer group in Kosovo, cited in Freedman, 2000: 349, making reference mainly to the killing on 15 January 1999 of 45 ethnic Albanians in the village of Racak) renewed international efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict at the beginning of 1999. The six-nation Contact Group established by the 1992 London Conference on the former Yugoslavia met and

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2   It still remains difficult to provide exact figures as different sources offer different numbers of dead and displaced people.

3   This decision was taken not without reservations from some of the NATO members, Greece, Italy and Germany in particular, who were concerned about the legality of threatening to deploy air force relying on SC resolutions.

agreed to convene urgent negotiations between the parties to the conflict, under international mediation.

The suffering of Kosovo Albanians as a direct result of official Yugoslav/Serbian Government policy, however, presents only one side of the coin. According to a number of accounts of the conflict, including the official OSCE/Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) reports, violations by the KLA against Serb and other minorities and also against other Albanians who were suspected of 'collaborating' with the Serb regime were also taking place at the time (IICK, 2000; Ignatieff, 2001; O'Neill, 2002: 26–29; KVM Internal report, 4–13 January 1999, cited in O'Neill, 2002: 34). The KLA committed violations of human rights and international law, reads which leads Ignatieff (2001: 58) to conclude that:

> It is more than possible, of course, that KLA tactics were not a miscalculation, but a deliberate strategy, designed to incite the Serbs to commit massacres that would eventually force NATO to intervene.

Similar conclusions were reached by others as well (see, for example, Shaw, 2001a). In its Kosovo report the Independent International Commission on Kosovo (IICK) (2000) confirms the perception of a KLA strategy directed at the international community, provoking an international intervention. The exact patterns of violence are illustrated in the KVM mission reports (cited in O'Neill, 2002: 24–29). A report from the beginning of March talks about the lack of interest in de-escalating the violence and the need for both sides to adhere to the UN SC Resolution 1199. To quote from the report:

> Unprovoked KLA attacks on police continue and their casualties have increased, while the number of Serbian police deployed outside their barracks has increased (KVM internal report 23 February–11 March 1999, cited in O'Neill, 2002: 28).

On 30 January, NATO supported and reinforced the Contact Group's efforts by agreeing to the use of air strikes if required, and by issuing a warning to both sides in the conflict. These concerted initiatives culminated in initial negotiations in Rambouillet near Paris, from 6 to 23 February, followed by a second round in Paris, from 15 to 18 March. Both of them failed to produce an agreement. The intention was to reconcile respect for territorial integrity of the Yugoslav state with the demand of the Kosovo Albanians for a referendum leading to eventual independence. At the end of the second round of talks, the Kosovo Albanian delegation signed the proposed peace agreement, but the talks broke up without a signature from the Serbian delegation. Under the 'Kosovo Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-government in Kosovo' the Albanians would have had a certain degree of autonomy, including their own police forces, judiciary and democratically elected assembly. Provisions were made for the disarmament of Serbian forces, although there would have been a limited Serbian security presence in Kosovo. Most importantly for the Kosovo Albanians, there would have been a three-year transitional period at the end of which the future status of Kosovo would have been determined. Appendix B of the Rambouillet agreement proposed the presence of a NATO-led international force

in Serbia, which at the end most likely accounts for the Serbian rejection of the deal (Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo, 1999).

Immediately afterwards, Serbian military and police forces intensified their operations against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, moving extra troops and modern tanks into the region, in a clear breach of the October agreement. According to official NATO figures, between March 1998 and March 1999 over 2,000 people were killed as a result of the Serb government's policies in Kosovo. The estimate of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees showed that by the beginning of April 1999 the campaign of ethnic cleansing had resulted in 226,000 refugees in Albania, 125,000 in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and 33,000 in Montenegro. The final attempt to persuade Milosevic to stop attacks on the Kosovo Albanians or face imminent NATO air strikes was the visit of the US Ambassador Holbrooke. With Milosevic refusing to comply on 23 March the order was given to commence air strikes and Operation Allied Force was started the following day (NATO, 2000).

NATO Air Campaign

Operation Allied Force, described as the 'most precise application of air power in history', continued for 78 days – beginning on 24 March 1999 and coming to an abrupt conclusion on 10 June 1999 (Arkin, 2001: 1). It had five objectives which were repeatedly emphasised throughout: a verifiable cessation of all combat activities and killings; withdrawal of Serb military, police and paramilitary forces from Kosovo; the deployment of an international military force; the return of all refugees and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid; and a political framework for Kosovo building on the Rambouillet Accords (Blair, 1999a). Overall during Operation Allied Force the allied pilots flew 37,465 sorties, of which over 14,006 were strike missions. More than 400 Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched and 20,000 'smart' and 5,000 conventional bombs were dropped (Thussu, 2000: 346). As the campaign progressed, it grew in intensity – by the time it was suspended Operation Allied Force had 912 aircraft and 35 ships, which was three times more forces than the campaign started with (Clark and General, 1999: 16–18). Originally, however, it was supposed to be 'short and sweet' with the option of a land invasion categorically excluded from the very outset (Bacevich and Cohen, 2001: ix). NATO started the bombing campaign with the expectation that the Yugoslav government would propose a cease-fire and wish to renew negotiations at Rambouillet after only a few days (IICK, 2000: 92; Ignatieff, 2001: 96). In its early stages the air campaign struck military targets including air defence and communications installations. Though it was successful in grounding the Yugoslav air force, it did not succeed in destroying its air defence. NATO attacks in Kosovo did relatively little damage to FRY ground forces as well. The latter allowed the continuation of successful attacks by these forces on the KLA throughout Kosovo. NATO forces also did not stop the expulsion and killings of civilian Albanians. In effect, after four weeks of bombing the negotiation proposals still did not have any response. At the same time the UN was reporting that almost 600,000 people had reached the border countries, with

another 800,000 displaced people inside the country (Freedman, 2000: 353). This naturally raised the question of whether the bombing in fact made things worse for the Albanians in Kosovo. And it seems to be beyond any dispute now that the situation in Kosovo, as a White House spokesman announced on 26 March, took 'a dramatic and serious turn for the worse' in the days after the bombing commenced (Roberts, 1999: 113). It may not be the case that NATO air strikes prompted the campaign against the Kosovo Albanians, however on 24 March it moved to a 'new and unprecedented level of ferocity' (Freedman, 2000: 352). Overall, the 78-day NATO campaign marked a qualitative escalation in the killings on both sides in the Kosovo conflict.

As the air campaign failed to produce early results, the decision to intensify the air campaign by expanding the targets to include military-industrial infrastructure, media and other targets in Serbia was taken at the NATO Summit in Washington on 23 April 1999. At the end of the month however, the uncertainty as to whether the bombing campaign could achieve the desired result at all mounted significantly raising the question of how to end the war. Planning for a ground invasion began at NATO headquarters despite the strong political resistance against ground troops in several NATO countries (IICK, 2000: 92–95). Eventually, it was never implemented as in the beginning of June President Milosevic accepted the presented peace terms and finally on 10 June 1999 the air campaign against FRY was over. As Cook (cited in Thussu, 2000: 346) acknowledged, NATO 'won' the Kosovo conflict without a single life lost in combat operations on its own side. It was also the first time in the history of warfare that victory was achieved by air power alone. It could be argued that a combination of factors – the escalated bombing campaign, the uncertain but increasing threat of NATO ground intervention, the increased KLA activity together with the withdrawal of Russian political support – forced Milosevic to a settlement (Wheeler, 2000: 273–274). Under the terms of the agreement, two central objectives of NATO were achieved: the withdrawal of Serbian and Yugoslav military and state personnel from Kosovo and the entry into Kosovo of a predominantly NATO force (Gowan, 2000: 45). The NATO intervention led to the return of refugees home and provided them with a substantial measure of political autonomy restoring the civil and political rights that Milosevic's policy of repression had taken away. However, it also failed to stop a new round of ethnic cleansing that followed, as this time thousands of Serbs fled Kosovo and there were concerns about the security of those Serbs who remained in Kosovo (Wheeler, 2000: 275).[4]

The Kosovo Conflict: A New War? A New Military Humanitarianism in Practice?

A New War?

What happened in Kosovo neatly fits into the framework of 'new wars' proposed by Kaldor (1997, 1999: 2002). As outlined in Chapter 2, 'new' wars present a

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4   Concerns about the security of Serbs in Kosovo still remain at the time of writing (summer 2007).

certain number of characteristics that distinguish them from traditional wars. They arise in the context of the erosion of the autonomy of the state and in some cases the disintegration of the state. They have political goals: the aim being political mobilisation on the basis of identity – national, tribal, religious or linguistic. The military strategy for achieving this aim is population displacement and destabilisation in order to get rid of those whose identity is different and establish fear and hatred. Thus, these wars are directed against civilians and civil society. The economic basis for the politics of new wars is what Kaldor calls the 'globalised war economy', referring to the fragmentation and decentralisation of the state and subsequently the national economy, heavy dependence on external resources and high levels of unemployment. In these circumstances the war effort is financed partially through plunder of the assets of ordinary people, the rest coming from external assistance.

While being mindful of the criticisms with regard to the novelty of these new wars and to the extent to which they are seen as a product of globalisation, both of which were addressed in the earlier chapter, it is difficult to dispute that the war inside Yugoslavia waged against Kosovo Albanians represents an example of thus defined new wars. First, the conflict was an intrastate one arising from the disintegration of state structures. It involved ethnic Albanians fighting for greater autonomy or even independence from the rest of Yugoslavia. Second, the claims over the territory of Kosovo by Serbia were based on arguments deriving from a particular manifestation of identity politics. For Serbia, Kosovo is a place of the utmost significance both in terms of Serbian folklore and religion. The position of the Serb minority there and the insistence on the importance of Kosovo to the Serbian nation were central elements in the nationalist propaganda developed by Serbian intellectuals and used to great effect by Milosevic (Kaldor, 2002: 155). Therefore, explaining the subsequent conflict as just a case of 'ancient hatreds' that finally erupted will not be able to account both for the peaceful co-existence and religious cooperation, on the one side, and the conflict, on the other, between Albanians and Serbs at different times of history (see Malcolm, 1998).

Third, a process of ethnic cleansing was taking place in Kosovo. A strategy of controlling territory through population displacement was applied. Civilian Kosovo Albanians were forced from their homes as their houses, villages and crops were destroyed and a number of Kosovo men were reported missing. Before the beginning of the bombing campaign KLA activities were used as a reason for ethnic cleansing. Once it started, the pattern of ethnic cleansing became systematic and organised – both in terms of who carried it out and how (IICK, 2000: 88; Kaldor, 2002: 156). A combination of regular forces and paramilitary groups together with criminals released from prison for the purpose were involved, while logistical arrangements for buses and trains to deport Kosovo Albanians were made. The data available now suggests that 10,000 people were killed in cleansing operations, including children, and that more than a million were forced to leave the country (Kaldor, 2002: 157). On the Albanian side, the KLA itself represented a mixture of paramilitary-type forces and self-defence forces.

Finally, the features of a new war economy can be identified in the conflict. Despite being generally one of the poorest regions in Yugoslavia, the removal of autonomy of Kosovo led to further rapid decline of the formal economy. Extremely

high unemployment levels were coupled with a large grey economy (Pashko, cited in Kaldor, 2002: 158). On the eve of the war illegal activities appeared to become vital for the maintenance of the new separatist entities. A vast amount of information – documented in different countries and at different levels by intelligence reports and journalistic investigations – is becoming available suggesting a close link between heroin trafficking and the financing of the Kosovo insurrection especially after 1997 (Strazzari, 2003: 143–146). With regard to the Serbian side, the paramilitary groups appear to have been paid for their involvement.

Considering the above outlined features, it seems clear that the war taking place inside Kosovo was a classic example of a new war. The international response to this new war was already another type of war. It was presented and defended as an application of new humanitarianism.

A New Military Humanitarianism in Practice?

The international military action against Yugoslavia undertaken by NATO in Kosovo was widely proclaimed as the first international military intervention against a sovereign state for purely human rights purposes. Blair (cited in Chandler, 2002: 9) asserted that this was a war fought 'not for territory but for values'; it was the West's *moral responsibility* to stop the terrible atrocities taking place in Kosovo (Wheeler, 2000: 266; emphasis added). This goal clearly represented an innovation and an important precedent in international politics. It not only illustrated the 'shift in conceptualisation of security' but what is more important it provided a demonstration of the new military humanitarianism (Stevenson and James, 2000: 21). In this case NATO acted militarily not to defend any immediate, territorial national interest of a member state: rather the bombing was justified as a defence of the human rights and individual-level security of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The NATO air strikes were announced as necessary to prevent a 'humanitarian disaster' (Blair, cited in Stevenson and James, 2000: 21). In the words of Solana, the then Secretary-General of NATO (1999b: 114, 117–118):

> For the first time, a defensive alliance launched a military campaign to avoid a humanitarian tragedy outside its own borders. For the first time, an alliance of sovereign nations fought not to conquer or preserve territory but to protect the values on which the alliance was founded.… [N]ot to have acted would have meant that the Atlantic community legitimised ethnic cleansing in its immediate neighbourhood. Having remained passive in the face of a conflict that, as British Prime Minister Tony Blair put it, seemed like 'a throwback to the worst memories of the 20th century' would have undermined the whole value system on which our policies were built. Inaction in the face of Kosovar plight would have undermined our policies, the credibility of Western institutions, and the transatlantic relationship.

Thus, four key rationales were invoked to justify the NATO air strikes: first, that the action was aimed at averting an impending humanitarian catastrophe; second, that NATO's credibility was at stake; third, that ethnic cleansing in Kosovo could not be allowed to stand in a civilised Europe and that it posed a long-term threat to European security; and finally, that NATO's use of force was in conformity

with existing SC resolutions (Wheeler, 2000: 265). These arguments are directly related to the claims that the defence of human rights is moving to the centre of the international policy agenda and that gross violations of human rights and oppression of whole groups become reasons for action by the international community even if this contradicts the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. The significance of these arguments is also illustrated in the claim made by Blair (1999e) in his Chicago speech that there is a mutual compatibility between order and justice. The Prime Minister declared that 'our actions are guided by a… subtle blend of mutual self-interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish… values and interests merge'. At the end, however, the decision to launch an air campaign against Former Yugoslavia appeared to be a very controversial one. As Kaldor (2002: 154) indicates, the methods used were more easily associated with traditional wars and had little connection with the proclaimed goals. Substantial claims were raised as to whether such a military intervention complies first, with the provisions of the international law and second, with that stated in the Charter of the UN principles of non-intervention and prohibition of threat and use of force (UN, 1945). The very nature of the humanitarian intent of the action, the 'new humanitarianism' was questioned. The war was labelled a 'spectacle war' thus making straight implications about its character and goals.

Using the guiding principles for humanitarian intervention discussed in Chapter 2 as a stepping stone and adding Kaldor's interpretation it would appear that a humanitarian intervention, in principle, should be aimed directly at protecting the lives of people. Its goal should be the prevention of gross violations of human rights. It should be defensive and non-escalatory. Its focus should be the individual human being. It should involve respect for the rule of law and if possible should be based on consent (Kaldor, 2002: 163–164). Considering the pronounced goal of the NATO intervention in Kosovo, all these should have been achieved in practice.

What happened in reality was different. With regard to the methods used, starting from the spring of 1998, Western leaders strongly manifested their determination to prevent war in Kosovo. As Madeleine Albright, the then US Secretary of State (cited in Kaldor, 2002: 159), claimed, 'we are not going to stand by and watch the Serb authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with in Bosnia'. However, the diplomacy backed by the threat of air strikes, did not produce any significant results. As Shaw (2001a) points out very well, 'the West's reluctance to confront Serbia left Albanians feeling betrayed' and contributed to the rise of the KLA. The avoidance of the conflict initially and the persistence with negotiations afterwards when it was more or less clear that Milosevic was not very serious about them most likely allowed Serbian forces in Kosovo to be strengthened as well as a number of people to become victims of the Serbian campaign. And it was only in October 1998 that a preliminary deal with Milosevic was negotiated, quite possibly under the pressure of public concern about the emerging humanitarian crisis. The failure of the talks in Rambouillet in March 1999 cleared the last obstacle on the way to the air campaign. The air strikes were started perhaps because of miscalculations about the reaction of Milosevic in the reliance that they will take no more than few days (Kaldor, 1999; Roberts, 1999; IICK, 2000; Wheeler, 2000; Ignatieff, 2001; Kaldor, 2002). But maybe the more important reason was the perception that it will look worse if nothing was

done. Considering the unwillingness to risk lives if ground troops were committed, thus privileging Western lives over the lives of others, including the lives of those who were to be protected, bombing was the best option available. It provided for an 'impressive television spectacle', just like the Gulf War of 1991 did before.

In effect, the utility of the air strikes remains highly questionable. It appears that not much damage was done to the Yugoslav military as already argued in the previous section. NATO did not succeed at the beginning in neutralising the Yugoslav air-defences and therefore its aircraft continued to fly at 15,000 feet. The 'force protection' dimensions were very powerful and they were clearly determining the choice of tactics. As Wheeler (2000: 284) highlights with regard to the means employed and results achieved:

> The humanitarian motives behind NATO's action have to be located in the context of the overriding constraint that the operation be 'casualty free'. … It was this requirement that dictated the selection of bombing as the means of humanitarian intervention, which, in turn, produced results that contradicted the humanitarian justifications of the operation.… The intervention precipitated the very disaster it was aimed at averting.

It also did not succeed in damaging the Serb forces on the ground. Evidently, the air strikes did not prevent operations against Kosovo Albanians. Moreover, it seems to be beyond any doubt that once the air strikes began, even greater acts of brutality against the Kosovo Albanians were taking place.[5] Whether among the forces on the ground in Kosovo the Serbs are the only ones to be blamed for this is not completely clear. It could be the case that placing the responsibility with a single party is not entirely accurate, as there is available information coming from the KLA itself suggesting that it was 'KLA advice, rather than Serbian deportations, which led some of the hundreds of thousands of Albanians to leave Kosovo' (Steele, 1999). Nevertheless, overall according to Roberts (1999: 113) within weeks of the start of the bombing thousands of Kosovo Albanians were killed, over half a million were driven from their homes to become refugees in neighbouring countries, and hundred of thousands more found themselves internally displaced within Kosovo (see also Gowan, 2000). In addition, a huge number of civilian targets were hit – roads, bridges, power stations, oil depots and factories. NATO's selection of targets was not only aimed at destroying the capacities supporting the Serb military machine in Kosovo. It also sought to coerce the government in Belgrade to accept a settlement by attacking key aspects of Serbian state power. Still, targeting civilian installations on the ground that were important for the regime's political control and could have had military applications proved highly controversial. As Wheeler (2000: 272) remarks on the discrimination between combatants and non-combatants, civilian and military:

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5   It is debatable whether there was an underestimation of how far the bombing would lead to an intensification of the campaign against the Kosovo Albanians based on a 'particular reading of the lessons of international intervention in Croatia and Bosnia' (Wheeler, 2000: 16) or if there was an awareness of this possibility that was deliberately downplayed in the calculations over the efficacy of using air force.

…bridges might be legitimate targets but not the buses and trains that happened to be crossing them the moment the bombs struck; … should power stations have been attacked at night, when NATO knew that there would be civilian shift workers inside them? … did the level of force employed by the Alliance exceed the harm that it was designed to prevent and redress?

Arguably, this type of intervention did little to prevent the mobilisation of Serbian national sentiment leading to more freedom for Milosevic to restrict NGOs and independent media during the war thus minimising the domestic constraints for his actions. Together with the flow of refugees, the air strikes also polarised opinion in Macedonia and Montenegro, increasing the risk of a further spread of violence. The strikes also polarised wider international opinion. For many, the claim that this was a war for human rights lost its convincing power and the intervention was interpreted just as a cover for the pursuit of Western interests (Kaldor, 2002: 157–165).

As already pointed out above NATO states justified the recourse to armed force without the explicit sanction of the UN SC as having taken place within the terms of the SC resolutions and with reference to the principle of humanitarian intervention. The UN SC Resolution 1199 of September 1998 (SC, 1998b) while not actually authorising the use of force, in effect put Kosovo under Chapter VII and therefore established it as a threat to international peace and security. The subsequent Resolution 1203 of October 1998 reconfirmed that (SC, 1998c). Simultaneously, it was widely claimed that 'armed intervention was needed to prevent further humanitarian catastrophe' and therefore military intervention against another state in cases of overwhelming humanitarian necessity can be justified (Ronzitti, 1999: 46). A United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office note of October 1998, circulated to NATO allies (cited in Roberts, 1999: 106), is a clear illustration of this argument:

…force can also be justified on the ground of overwhelming humanitarian necessity without a UNSCR. The following criteria would need to be applied.

a. that there is a convincing evidence, generally accepted by the international community as a whole, of extreme humanitarian distress on a large scale, requiring immediate and urgent relief;
b. that it is objectively clear that there is no practicable alternative to the use of force if lives are to be saved;
c. that the proposed use of force is necessary and proportionate to the aim (the relief of humanitarian need) and is strictly limited in time and scope to this aim, that is it is the minimum necessary to achieve that end.

There is convincing evidence of an impending humanitarian catastrophe (SCR 1199 and the UNSG's and UNHCR reports).…Military intervention by NATO is lawful on grounds of overwhelming humanitarian necessity.

These two arguments are the main ones used to justify the NATO action. However, they are subject to criticism: the lack of an existing international legal instrument providing explicitly for forcible military intervention on humanitarian grounds allows contestation of any basis for NATO action; the appropriateness of the military means

chosen and their conformity to the laws of war (a point discussed earlier); the right of a regional alliance to act as 'vigilante' for UN SC resolutions; and the selectivity of the action (Roberts, 1999: 108). This could arguably be a law in the making, nonetheless the detailed examination of the legality of the decision to military intervene and a discussion of arguments in favour and against is beyond the scope of this analysis. The literature on the topic currently abounds both in the field of international relations and international law.[6] The aim here is to illustrate the controversies this intervention triggered that at the end questioned the proclaimed new humanitarianism. The high moral language of the cause was rather different from the limited character of the war itself. The language of ultimate commitment was accompanied by a practical warfare of minimum risk (Ignatieff, 2001: 111).

The human rights notion behind the Kosovo War and the ethical nature of the international involvement were clearly articulated throughout by different political figures. Havel's speech in April 1999 (cited in Chandler, 2002: 68) provides a very good example of the overall Western rhetoric:

> …[T]here is one thing no reasonable person can deny: this is probably the first war that has not been waged in the name of 'national interests,' but rather in the name of principles and values. If one can say of any war that it is ethical, or that it is being waged for ethical reasons, then it is true of this war. Kosovo has no oil fields to be coveted; no member nation in the alliance has any territorial demands on Kosovo; Milosevic does not threaten the territorial integrity of any member of the alliance. And yet the alliance is at war. It is fighting because no decent person can stand by and watch the systematic, state-directed murder of other people. It cannot tolerate such a thing. It cannot fail to provide assistance if it is within its power to do so.

Everybody who could have advised caution and consideration of consequences of ethical coercion simply would have been seen as an opponent of the human rights cause. The argument goes that by not intervening the Western governments would be 'bystanders to evil' (Freedland, cited in Chandler, 2002: 81). As Chandler (2002: 81) points out, the emphasis is put on the nobleness of the cause rather than the policy results.

The actual motivation behind the international involvement is most likely not as straightforward as the argued military activism in the cause of human rights. Humanitarian concerns were no doubt part of the reasoning. But for sure they were considered together with factors such as Kosovo's geographic location, the prevention of negative consequences, that is the destabilisation of the whole Balkans following the flows of refugees including NATO key allies like Greece and Turkey, the maintenance of the cohesiveness and credibility of NATO, guilt over past inaction regarding Bosnia, reluctance to accept large number of refugees on a permanent basis (Daalder, 1999a, 1999b; Roberts, 1999: 108; Cohen, 2001: 46–47. Which one dominated is difficult to establish without speculations and without falling into the trap of 'for' and 'against'. It does seem that there is not enough ground for a complete denial of any humanitarian intent, as suggested by some (see Chomsky, 1999; Ali, 2000). Nonetheless, Daalder's (1999a) claim that America will intervene militarily
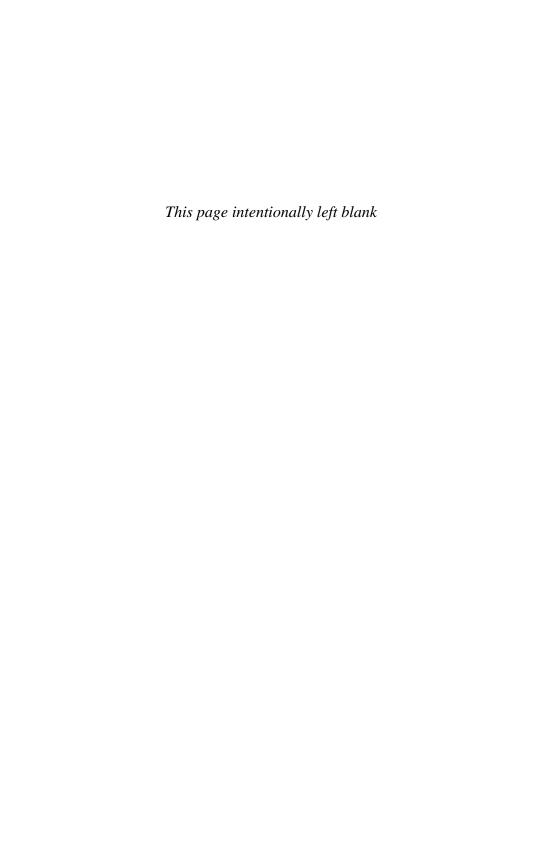
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6   For a discussion see Jakobsen and Knudsen (1999); Leurdijk (1999), McCoubrey (1999), Ronzitti (1999), MccGwire 2000, Wheeler (2000).

in the future, but 'only if the killings have been shown on television, if the country is located in an area of strategic significance, and if air power alone can do the job at acceptable cost', most likely holds true. As far as Kosovo is concerned – these conditions were in place. However, what the Kosovo conflict highlighted is how difficult it actually is to pursue such a course despite the wide pronouncement of the 'new military humanitarianism'.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the Kosovo crisis became an emblematic example of new wars. It was an internal armed conflict that involved processes of ethnic cleansing and destruction of homes, economic centres, and religious and historic monuments. Identity politics were central to the claims over the territory of Kosovo from both sides. As such, the Kosovo crisis was recognised by the international community (or at least part of it) as a threat to international peace and security and thus as an object of concerted international action. It was claimed to have been undertaken with a new aim: the defence of a party to a conflict within a state – a humanitarian and ethical aim, driven by moral imperatives rather than national self-interest. As Ignatieff (2001: 5) puts it, the Kosovo war 'broke new ground'. It carried the marks of the new military humanitarianism. It was a war fought for a new goal – the protection of human rights. It was fought without ground troops with the expectation that there will be no casualties at all on the side of the intervening alliance. The technological supremacy allowed death to be removed from the equation at least for one of the participating parties. The final recognition of the crisis, however, came only after the conflict acquired a very violent dimension. The action undertaken was the NATO air campaign launched on 24 March 1999 and continued until 10 June 1999.

Throughout this time period the conflict received considerable attention from the news media and secured itself a constant place in television news bulletins and on the pages of newspapers. The type of human tragedy that the Kosovo conflict produced – the lines of refugees, ethnic conflict and even genocide (according to some), together with the contradiction provoked by the international military involvement was potentially the type of news that would attract media attention. This raised questions about the possible media role in the *exposure* of the conflict and on the *development* of policy responses. Was the news media an agenda-setter for the policy-makers? Or did it have a more passive influence? Or was it reflecting rather than shaping responses? Addressing these questions requires familiarity with the specificities of the Bulgarian media and the following chapter provides some important insights.

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Chapter 4

Bulgarian Media

Introduction

The main function of the media is to inform. In the classical liberal model informing is always linked with the notions of neutrality, objectivity and truth in the media context. The media system is meant to deliver accurate information and informed analysis and give space to the broadest possible range of voices, opinions and perspectives (Deacon et al., 1999: 34). To what extent media are really neutral, objective and truthful is open to debate. In the particular context of media objectivity, the criticism is two-directional. First, it can be argued that journalism tends to be biased, falling short of normative standards of objectivity, since journalists themselves are not sufficiently autonomous from economic, political and other elites in society. The second criticism follows from the claim that there can be no objectivity in general. Accordingly, journalism is not and cannot be a neutral, value-free representation of reality. As Willis (cited in McNair, 1999: 36) maintained way back in 1971, 'once an item of news has been selected for transmission to the public there is already bias, some selective principle, some value, quite apart from the way it is presented'. In this sense, news and journalism are social constructions:

> News is never a mere recording or reporting of the world 'out there,' but a synthetic, value-laden account which carries within it the dominant assumptions and ideas of the society within which it is produced (McNair, 1999: 37).

Next to this primary role of informing, with probably the same amount of importance attached to it, stands the role of media as a watchdog: the media ought to control and limit the power of state authorities or at least adequately bring to the attention of the public any mishandling of authority, allowing the public to sanction (positively, negatively or neutrally) such behaviour. To achieve this, following the liberal model, the media need to be autonomous from the state and therefore need to be functioning in the conditions of a free market. Any state or public regulation essentially limits the critical role of the media.[1]

The chapter looks at the news media in Bulgaria. The main focus is on the print media as they are the subject of the subsequent analysis. In addition, some brief remarks are provided on broadcasting, mainly to establish a more comprehensive picture and understanding of the emerging post-communist media market. It needs acknowledging that the available resources on Bulgarian news media in general are

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1   For more on the liberal model of media see Boyer (1981); McQuail (1992); Splichal (1994); Weymouth and Lamizet (1996); Jones and Jones (1999); McNair (1999); McQuail (2001).

extremely limited. This limitation is equally valid for both Western and Bulgarian research in the field. However, while the British media market is well-developed and has established traditions, the Bulgarian one is currently undergoing significant changes. An understanding of these changes is vital for any analysis of media texts, hence the need to explore the Bulgarian media on its own.

In view of the above, this chapter considers the nature of the Bulgarian media exploring the distinctive features of the 'new media' as opposed to the communist predecessors. It also assesses the developments that have taken place in the media field after 1989 up until 2000 and their implications for both press and television in Bulgaria. Overall, it allows a comprehensive picture of the Bulgarian media to be delineated. This picture is to be used as a basis for the subsequent analysis of the interaction between the print media and Bulgarian foreign policy regarding the Kosovo crisis. In the end, some conclusions are drawn out with regard to the similarities and differences between the media markets in Bulgaria and Britain.

'Old Media'

With regard to the Bulgarian media a distinction can be made between the so-called 'old media' and the 'new media'. The latter term was introduced for the first time in 1990 by Znepolski to refer to the qualitative change in the social, economic and political status of the media. The new media are to be distinguished, he argued (Znepolski, 1997: 5), from the old centrally controlled and ideologically manipulated party media in the communist era. New media appeared as the exact opposite – under the labels of private initiative, lack of censorship, pluralism of interests, being more dependent on market realities than on ideological bias (see also Kamburov, 2000).

This was possible because of the complete transformation and reinterpretation of the freedoms of communication. The three main media principles that were valid for all socialist countries were the link between media freedom and the socialist political system in terms of media content, the acceptance of collective rather than individual freedoms, and the full control of the media by the state (Dimitrov, 2000: 25). In the new Bulgarian Constitution freedom of opinion, information and thought are established together with the explicit prohibition of censorship (Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria 1991).

A close look at the media in Bulgaria before the late 1980s shows a rather straightforward picture typical for all communist states. The responsibility for print and broadcast media was entirely in the hands of the state, in this instance the state being identical to the ruling Communist Party. The latter encompassed in principle all of the leading positions in society and persecuted those who did not meet its criteria of loyalty. The media were an exceptionally important focus of attention of the Communist Party. This was legitimised in terms of the political, educational and cultural importance of the media to society. In effect, the media through their educational and propaganda functions represented a means of transmission of an 'authoritative definition of reality'. As Splichal (1994: 27) puts it, they were a means of popularising the ruling ideology and state policy. All of the media needed to be directly subordinated to the political goals of the ruling party. Their material needed

to be produced in conformity with the Party's ideological needs (Sparks, 1998: 26–27). By following this, the media were creating an illusionary or assumed, and therefore ideal, reality. The facts were constructed. Those that did not contradict the official doctrine were stated relatively truthfully. Those that obviously conflicted with the doctrine were simply ignored. As a result, a realistic sounding of statements was provided. Thus, in a way the communist media represented an abstract, unreal creation (Znepolski, 1997: 100).

Broadcasting was severely limited by state restrictions and control, justified as being necessary because of technical standardisation, scarcity of frequencies and national priorities and interests. National, regional and local radio and television stations were directly controlled by the state and/or Communist Party and were financed by licence fees, advertising and direct state subsidy. Although state control of newspapers was not so rigorous as that of broadcasting, newspapers opposing the existing power structures were marginalised. Preventive censorship and penal legislation were used to repress dissenting by the press from official attitudes and opinions. Thus, according to the legislation an author of opinions criticising constitutional order, political institutions and leaders or stimulating public disorder could be punished for publishing such criticisms (Splichal, 1994: 27; Spasov, 2000a: 145). Therefore, conformism and auto censorship were common practices (Rajcheva, 1995: 69).

The newspapers were owned mainly by the ruling parties, rather than by the state, but they often received state subsidies just like television and radio. The journalists themselves were civil servants with relatively high occupational prestige. As Splichal (1994: 69) argues, in their role as publicists, journalists were seen not as journalists, but as public relations persons for the state and the party. Znepolski (2000: 63) defines the television news person as a 'reader of official statements'. He maintains that the visual material showing the life in the country was extremely scanty and strictly genre-regulated – party forums, national holidays and anniversaries, construction sites, and so on. This material, whenever available, was always filmed, edited and checked in advance. The function of journalists was to explain, to educate and to help by their reporting to win support for the construction of the new socialist world. The deliberate selection and construction of material in order to demonstrate a particular view of the world was the organising principle of journalistic practice. Naturally, this completely contradicted the perceived duties of journalists in Western media – to record events and to be objective and fair in their reporting (Sparks, 1998: 43). In addition, quite often a person had to have good relations with the party *nomenklatura*[2] to work in a high position at national newspapers or radio and television stations.

Another important aspect of the media in socialist times was their huge insulation from both internal and external competition. This was mainly due to a centrally planned economy, the absence of a market economy and political pluralism, and the lack of possibilities for importing foreign programmes because of the political/

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2   The term *nomenklatura* refers to the organised and integrated ruling group within the Communist Party, to become a member of which one needed to be a both party member in a good standing and to be nominated by the appropriate party committee.

ideological restrictions and financial limitations (Splichal, 1994: 107). The media did not operate with a commercial dynamic. Quite on the contrary, their prime determinant was the political interest of the nomenklatura. The media were run according to the logic of a central command economy meaning in practice that there was little to be gained by commercial success. Cover prices were set by political criteria rather than economic calculation and advertising was rather limited or non-existing. The basic costs in the case of newspapers were agreed in advance and any shortfall was covered by some form of state subsidy. As the media answered directly to the nomenklatura rather then their readers or advertisers they were not particularly concerned with the public mood. As Sparks (1998: 41) puts it, '…to the extent that they attempted to achieve certain kinds of effects, these were decided from above and their characteristic rhetoric was that of the nomenklatura'.

According to the data from the National Statistic Institute, in the years before 1989 there were around 400 newspapers in Bulgaria – quite a significant number for a country with around 8 million population. Their circulation figure was approximately 1 billion copies a year. In addition, around 300 magazines were being published, their circulation reaching several millions (data cited in Rajcheva, 1995: 68). How these figures compare with the post-communist data as well as with the British market is explored later on in the chapter.

Bulgarian National Television (BNT) was founded in 1959 and from 1975 it already had two channels, the first one covering the territory of the whole country. However, television did not pose any sort of threat to the development of the press. The main socialist newspaper *Rabotnichesko Delo* and the main news programme on BNT's Channel 1 existed as media analogues rather than media competitors without any competition with regard to their content (Spasov, 2000a: 145).

'New Media'

The collapse of communism in 1989 had a major impact on the media in Bulgaria. The changes that took place were in two main directions – first, a break with the former media policy based on party-state subsidies as the main economic strategy and second, a break from the party-state control (and censorship) of the media as the main issue-orientated strategy (Splichal, 1994: 28). In practice, processes of media democratisation were undertaken alongside a substantial shift in the form of property ownership from collective/state to private/individual, from a centrally-directed command economy to a market-driven one. Two distinct trends could be observed in the nature of changes. In the case of the press, the policies of liberalisation and privatisation had a speedy effect – the old media system fragmented very quickly and was replaced almost immediately by a new, market-orientated system, which rapidly began to integrate itself into the world media market. In the case of broadcasting, mainly television broadcasting, a degree of continuity remained. The political change in 1989 did not have an immediate transformative effect upon the existing broadcasting institution – BNT. There were some changes, but BNT remained

fundamentally unchanged (Sparks, 1998: 103–104).[3] The television remained very close to its former state-controlled formula. In a way this was predetermined by its status outlined in a Parliamentary decision from 6 March 1990. It announced BNT as a national broadcaster, above party political organisation, which was to be funded by the state budget. BNT's managing director was to be elected by the Parliament following the suggestion made by the Parliamentary Commission on Television and Radio. In this Commission the structure and the main problems of the television were to be discussed (Rajcheva, 1995: 76). Alterations in these regulations came with the Law on Radio and Television adapted in 1998, which is addressed later on in the analysis. No doubt by its very definition the television is very attractive to the political elites. By demonstrating its power during the period of change, it stimulated ambitions to gain control over it. Despite all the aspirations for neutrality and the downplaying of varying interests, Bulgarian television in fact began to fall into a deeper dependency. By 1997, as Znepolski (1997: 13) claims, it has become an instrument of the political status quo. More often it functioned to cover certain events or to present them in a certain way, rather than sticking to the idea of objectivity. There are a number of cases when television has been subjected to criticisms from an affected political party who was unable to recognise in the TV reporting its own version of reality (Spasov, 2000a: 146). Therefore, it is not surprising that the national television service became one of the most critical in terms of significance and unstable in terms of constant changes in political control institutions in the years after 1989.

Before analysing the processes that took place in the Bulgarian media after 1989 it is necessary to outline the main facts that marked them and thus allow discussion about changes in the media and about the appearance of a new media. In 1990 the first issue of *Demokracia* newspaper was published. It was linked to the newly established oppositional party Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) and was therefore the first and, for a certain period of time, the only oppositional newspaper in Bulgaria. *Demokracia* offered a synergistic model of independent and party press that was to break down in the years to come. From the spring of 1990 *Rabotnichesko Delo* newspaper – the newspaper of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the most influential in the communist era – renamed itself *Duma*. For a short period of time the fight between *Demokracia* and *Duma* was the illustration of the two-party political model dominating in the country. From the spring of 1990 the establishment of cable television networks also began. Gradually and mainly in the big cities, they started to offer a real alternative to national television. This process happened within the framework of private initiatives but to a great extent 'outside the law' as out of 400 cable operators in 1997 only 94 had a license to transmit (Dimitrova, 2000: 49). In the spring of 1991 the first issue of the *24 Chasa* newspaper was published – an independent newspaper that quickly became dominant in terms of circulation figures. In the autumn of 1993 the *Kapital* newspaper was published for the first time and it became one of the very few papers in the Bulgarian media market which was trying to introduce a model of a quality press. In the spring of 1995 the TV station Nova Televisia received a licence and became the first private TV station in

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3   These trends were typical for all Central and Eastern European states.

Bulgaria. Since 2002 it has achieved national coverage, although at its inception it covered only the territory of the capital Sofia. In the summer of 1996 the German corporation Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) bought 70 per cent of the Press Group 168 Chasa which in a way was the beginning of the falling apart of the myth of an 'independent' press. From the autumn of 1996 *Egoist* magazine was published – a magazine that became the first platform of the 'new generation'. In the winter of 1997 the National Council on Radio and Television (NCRT) conducted its first working meeting which raised the hopes that the political control over the electronic media will be replaced by legal regulation. In the spring of 1999 the first satellite programme 'Bulgaria' was launched. At the end of the same year Murdoch's News Corporation received a license for a private national television broadcaster which led to the appearance of bTV as the first national commercial TV broadcaster in 2000. Currently the latter together with the national state BNT and the national private Nova Televisia are the three television channels that cover the territory of the whole country.

The above facts are being interpreted differently and seem to give grounds to completely opposite claims. On the one side is the argument that nothing has changed much in the Bulgarian media. This is firstly because the potentially most influential contemporary media, the television, which has the biggest capacity to influence the public opinion and attracts the biggest advertising resources is still state-owned. Secondly, the licensing of electronic media is still not completed and, finally, the real expression of individual viewpoints in the media is highly hypothetical because of the existence of economic pressure from the state, the lack of a well-developed advertising market and the presence of direct or indirect party influence. The opposite argument claims that real changes have taken place in the Bulgarian media. The justification comes from the number of available information sources – 150 published newspapers and magazines and around 200 private, mainly cable television stations. Whereas at face value the figure for the print media looks as a reduction compared with the communist period with its 400 titles, the numbers should be assessed within their specific context. Clearly, in the past the overall number of publications was immaterial since all of them sounded exactly the same. With this in mind, the 150 titles and especially 200 television stations do strike as a surprisingly large number and provide evidence of the variety on the market as well as of the opportunity for the reader/viewer to choose. The growth in the number of media has led to competition among them, to the appearance of an increasingly diversified and stratified audience and to the inevitable diversification and specialisation of the media themselves in accordance with different political, economic, cultural, and social criteria (Dimitrova, 2000: 46–47, 56). The media have gradually developed as an institution serving the tastes and preferences of a certain category of consumers and in this sense they have become less universal than used to be the case before. The following analysis helps to assess these two claims.

The changes that took place in Bulgarian journalism can be identified on four different levels: system organisation and structure; information content; writing and presentation style; and social effects (Alfandari, 1995: 113). As already indicated these changes were more visible and quicker to affect the press than the television and are addressed in that order here. The main change and determining the others

were organisational and structural developments emerging out of privatisation. Thus, the press has changed its form of dependency – from being state-controlled to being driven by the information market, by the reader. Many former newspapers have stopped being published, others have changed their titles and a large number of new publications were established during the early period of democratisation. It is interesting to look at the speed with which new titles have appeared. In the last months of 1989 two new newspapers appeared, in 1990 – 108, in 1991 – 201, in 1992 – 444, in 1993 – 322, decreasing to the 150 previously noted for the period under review here (Rajcheva, 1995: 74). By October 1994 around 80 per cent of the daily press already belonged to the private sector. And although, as this figure illustrates, most of the newspapers and magazines were strictly private businesses, some were still in limbo between state ownership and privatisation and some remained firmly in state hands (Splichal, 1994: 31). The high number of titles achieved by 1994 has steadily decreased since. This was accompanied by a greater penetration of the market by foreign owners as the shift towards an advertising-dominated model continued. Therefore, the trend in the daily newspaper market towards a reduction in the range of titles, concentration of ownership and market stratification is the same as that observed in the developed capitalist media systems (Sparks, 1998: 115). The biggest foreign owner is the German WAZ who currently publishes the two dailies with the highest circulation figures – *24 Chasa* and *Trud*. According to the existing legislation Bulgaria regulates the registration of new newspapers by granting licences and limits the concentration of ownership deeming anything above 33 per cent a monopoly. However, considering the WAZ 70 per cent control, it is obvious that the criteria on what is a monopoly are not very clearly laid out. The market position of the WAZ group has been under review and the matter has been with the monopoly commission for over two years, prompting other newspaper owners to claim that the authorities and WAZ are looking after each other's interests (SEEMO, 2002). In addition, there is no restriction or prohibition of foreign capitals, the cross-media ownership is allowed, the requirements for capital transparency are extremely limited (Dimitrov, 2000: 30).

Initially the most dominant newspapers were based in political parties, although this meant that they lacked the prestige of autonomy from them. One would suspect that a post-communist audience would be innately suspicious of any paper still formally connected to a political party. This was quickly to be reflected in the readership figures. For example, the former leading communist newspaper *Rabotnichesko Delo*, renamed *Duma*, was initially the most influential daily with a circulation of around 500,000 copies. Among the significant new newspapers to first to be established, oppositional in their nature and linked to oppositional parties, were *Demokracia* with only half that figure – 250,000 copies and *Svoboden Narod* with even less – 70,000 copies. The standings of these newspapers by 1998 in terms of readership already placed them way behind the non-party ones (see Table 4.1).

The close ties with political parties of some newspapers and the explicit presentation of their political credo in their coverage and commentaries remains nowadays as well. It is the case though that the party newspapers, unlike before, are also aiming at increasing their profits, at conforming to market mechanisms without this making them independent from their party (Splichal, 1994: 114). Therefore,

both party and private non-party newspapers are alike in their market orientation, which of course does not exclude the possibility for the latter to be engaged with a certain political line as well (Alfandari, 1995: 117). The only difference probably is the claim made by private newspapers that they are independent[4] and above party politics.

Overall the independence of the press can be judged in terms of its non-identification with a single political party, in terms of its oppositional positions, or in purely economic terms (Znepolski, 1997: 125–133). The first is easy to identify – currently the newspapers with the biggest circulation in Bulgaria are not published by or directly linked to any party and therefore are considered independent. Despite all the rumours about the source of their initial financial capital, they cannot be strictly identified in any political sense at least by the general reader. There is an attempt to offer on their pages more balanced information, to present different viewpoints and interests even when the actual position of the newspaper is already voiced and contradicts them. It is significant, however, that journalists themselves have frequently questioned the level of transparency of Bulgarian society. In a February 1999 poll over half of the journalists asked said that they did not receive enough information from the Interior Ministry. Thirty-two per cent said that the information they receive is never sufficient in providing background for stories (SEEMO, 2002).

The second aspect of the press independence is its oppositional character. Those newspapers who represent the views of the oppositional political formations or the general oppositional mood label themselves independent with regard to those in power.[5]

The third dimension of independence refers to the economic status of the newspapers after the quick withdrawal of the state in 1990 from publishing and assisting the daily press. Taking these three aspects into consideration, it would appear that the main dependence that still exists with regard to the press is the dependence on the market. This, however, does not change the dependency of both party and non-party newspapers on the nature of their ownership, on the views and goals of their owners, on the political system, on the forms of censorship and auto censorship together with journalism's understanding of professional ethics, freedom, influence and trust (Manliherova, 1998: 40). It is still the case in Bulgaria that ownership and financial control are not separated from the responsibility for the editorial line of the newspaper. There is no division between the functions of the owner, publisher and editor of a paper and even when it exists it is mainly formal (Znepolski, 1997: 142). Then it is plain to see that the common perception (not very far from reality) is that the owner sets the tone and the line of the newspaper.

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4 The term 'independent' with regard to the new Bulgarian press is very often used with a sense of irony. It is not surprising considering the automatic link with a controversial set of questions – how have the newspapers been established, who is financing them, what interests do they defend, and so on?

5 The key here is being 'oppositional to those in power'. If the make up of the government changes these claims to independence by virtue of opposition no longer hold up. Another set of newspapers become oppositional at that time.

A further insight into the issue of dependency is offered by Dimitrov (2000: 358) who claims that there are no independent media. In his opinion, there are unilaterally and multilaterally dependent media. Political dependency is a unilateral dependency on politics. In the conditions of market economy the dependency of the media is at least three-directional: on the owner, on advertising, and on the public.

Generally, it is accepted that the press could not be directed by a single centre since it is designed to express different viewpoints and is financed by groups with different interests. Znepolski (1997: 15) even claims that the newspapers have won themselves a certain level of freedom from their publishers as their financial dependence interplays with the readers' interests, the latter at the end of the day guaranteeing the publisher's interest. That is why there is a predictable non-consistency in their positions. As the journalist Najdenov claims (cited in Znepolski, 1997: 56):

> Our power actually belongs to the reader. To make a newspaper is the same as to make shoes. If they are comfortable, you buy them…The place of the text is determined by the reader. If the reader wants to know about a particular meeting, we will put it on page one. We are readers' slaves…

Overall then it appears that the new press is simultaneously independent and dependent. It is independent in the sense that it itself defines the character and nature of its dependency when the latter is inevitable (Znepolski, 1997: 144). This independence stems from the fact that it is no longer dependent on externally imposed rules and factors as used to be the case.

The issue of dependency is closely linked to the question of competition in the newspaper market. The competition began after 1989 on the basis of the normative and professional positions of different publications, when winning signified somebody being better. This has gradually transformed into a competition the way it is known in the Western world – lowering of the production costs and a process of financial exhausting and elimination of competitors. Of course, this is something that not all newspapers can afford to do. The newspapers owned by WAZ could do it and it is no accident that *24 Chasa* was accused twice of using dumping prices (Znepolski, 1997: 147). There are claims that the Bulgarian financial organisations who own the private newspapers are in effect the political centres of power in the country (Alfandari, 1995: 120; Dimitrov, 2000: 359). They have transformed themselves into economic centres of power and subsequently conduct their information activities under the shape of privately owned and market-orientated ones. Therefore, as it is claimed quite often, it might be the case that they are not overly concerned with the level of ultimate profit; neither are they particularly worried and restrained from using dishonest methods, such as announcing higher than the actual circulation figures for example, to attract advertising. Their purpose is to create a good image for their owners whoever they might be.

The introduction of private ownership nonetheless opened the doors for economic pluralism and market competition together with information pluralism. The press quickly demonstrated freedom of information and political pluralism. To a degree this was confirmed by external media observing institutions. Thus, according to the Freedom House's *Press Freedom Index* the Bulgarian media in 1999 was partly free.

This evaluation is based on the following criteria: legal environment for the media, political pressures that influence reporting, and economic factors that affect access to information. The corresponding index allocated to the country was 39, where the range from 1 to 30 signifies free media, 31–60 – partly free, and 61–100 not free (World Resources Institute, 2004).[6] Different political and social discourses were displayed on the pages of newspapers; previously forbidden political commentaries and analyses reappeared. Currently, the majority of newspapers are denationalised or privatised and printing facilities and distribution systems are owned or controlled mainly by various private organisations. This is in sharp contrast with the first years after 1989 when as a result of its monopoly over distribution and printing facilities the state controlled the size of the private sector and the nature and amount of publications. Alfandari (1995: 115) claims that in this way what existed in fact was an allowed private sector, whose further expansion was prevented. He goes even further by arguing that through its economic tools the state determined which private publications would remain in the market and which would be removed from it. Gradually, this has changed and now the state has lost its influential role over the majority of publications. Rather the control is in the hands of publishers, who can be linked to different political and economic interests. Some of the established newspapers possess their own distribution network (which is the case with *Standart* newspaper for example) or have announced plans for acquiring own printing facilities.

With regard to writing and presentational style – the private press introduced the style of 'easy reading' as Alfandari (1995: 120) calls it. The label 'easy' refers both to the form and to the content as the overall language of the press livened up; it was enriched with everyday language and jargon, the word sequence was updated to an unrecognisable level, topics that were not allowed at all before were brought into the pages, completely opposite viewpoints started to co-exist next to each other, fact was separated from commentary. This is not to say that the actual newspaper language was balanced and moderate. In comparison to the previous disciplined language, the new press language looked arrogant and aggressive. The former used to package, cover up and veneer the realities, the latter claimed to uncover reality completely, to destroy all ideals and to demolish all taboos (Fotev, 2000: 238; see Kiosev, 2000; Mitev, 2000). The newspaper pages contained a multitude of voices; they were sensitive to what was going on around (Znepolski, 1997: 14).

Despite this, however, the data obtained from interviewing the public discloses a finding that is seemingly illogical at first. For example, the newspaper *24 Chasa* in 1994 was read by 60 per cent of the interviewed, but only 33 per cent of them actually approved it and trusted it (Znepolski, 1997: 35). There appears to be a paradox here. On the one hand, Bulgaria boasts – due to the emergence of a private press – a pluralistic model of mass communication. On the other, the information that reaches the audiences seems to be directed, at least initially, to a homogenous

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6   Interestingly, the index for 2004 for Bulgaria's press freedom is 35, which still according to the Freedom House, keeps the print media in the partly free category. For comparison purposes, the index for British press in 1999 was 20 and in 2004–19. For more on the press freedom in 2004 see Freedom House (2004).

group. In terms of quality and contents most of the media products were standardised, aimed at a collective, rather than individual choice and increased uniformity and conformity on the consumer side (Splichal, 1994: 97). And the reality was exactly the opposite. Gradually, Bulgarian audiences have developed their taste for variety and have started searching for those sources of information and entertainment that come close to their taste and understandings. Their information necessities have diversified. To an extent the strictly party newspapers always knew who they were addressing and offered exactly what was expected from them. At the same time, however, they struggled to increase their audiences and to attract more readers. The so-called independent newspapers reflect the audiences. They face a multi-faced, difficult to identify reader. But most of the readers are also unable to recognise the newspaper orientation and read several newspapers simultaneously. Therefore, unlike the Western world, were reading a certain newspapers is a clear indication of personal views, in Bulgaria this cannot be used as a social, psychological or political identification. The explanation for this trend might lie in the readers' interest in different perspectives and the attempt to build a complex and objective viewpoint using complementing and rival information (Znepolski, 1997, 16–17). Znepolski (1997, 22–24) contrasts the old press, where the 'truth' was non-existent, with the new press, where it is lost somewhere in the 'non-organised' information flow and everybody has to find it for themselves. This already asks the reader for more commitment, for ability to judge on their own, for selectivity regarding the news together with selection of both the sources of information and the interpretations of events offered by them.

While the political changes had an almost immediate effect on the press in the form of newly established private newspapers and/or privatisation of formerly state-owned ones, the impact on broadcasting and subsequent changes there have been very slow to take place. As already mentioned above, the status of BNT was established in 1990 and it kept the television within the state budget. From that point on the debates have mostly been over how far and in what ways broadcasters whose ultimate owner is the state can be made independent of the immediate political and economic pressures of the government. It is worth pointing out, however, that the pressures originated not so much from the 'state' as such but rather from different existing economic and political formations. As far as the privately owned broadcasters were concerned the question was how far can they be obliged to behave in publicly responsible ways (Sparks, 1998: 108). The broadcasting law in Bulgaria followed the traditions and ideas of public service broadcasting. It approved the existence of both public and commercial radio and television broadcasters while stating clearly the difference in their functions:

> S.5. Commercial radio and television broadcasters shall be commercial companies holding licenses for radio and television activities and working mainly with the object to distribute profits among their owners…

> S.6 (1) Public radio and television broadcasters shall be natural and legal persons holding licences for radio and television activities whose main object is to contribute to the realisation of the right of information proclaimed by the Constitution (Radio and Television Act (RTA), 1998).

Public broadcasters were to cover the entire national territory, to present news and current affairs fairly and impartially, to represent the views of minority groups, to carry out educational tasks, to entertain their audiences, and so on (RTA, 1998). The law also constructed a system of indirect control which distanced the broadcaster from the government. The NCRT was charged with overseeing the whole system and administering the granting of licences (NCRT, 1999). According to the Law, the NCRT was to be 'an independent specialised collegiate body which shall protect the freedom of speech and the independence of radio and television broadcasters, as well as the interests of viewers and listeners'. Four of its members were to be appointed by the President and five – by the Parliament. The Council's regulation functions involved supervising the activities of radio and television broadcasters in view of the observance of this law, that is checking whether they include in their programmes all aspects of social life and adhere to the principles of political pluralism together with following the requirements of the law on advertising and sponsorship. In addition, the NCRT was to elect and remove the managing directors of the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) and BNT and approve, following a proposal from the managing directors, the members of the managing boards of BNR and BNT (RTA, 1998). The NCRT's licensing functions referred to making decisions concerning the grant, modification and termination of a license for radio and television activities.

The actual privatisation of sections of broadcasting became an extremely lengthy and complicated procedure. According to Sparks (1998: 109), this demonstrated clearly the 'extent to which the post-communist governments saw the restructuring as a mechanism for empowering the political elite rather than establishing the control of civil society over society'. The key problems were whether to privatise and who should be granted the franchises. It was generally accepted both in theory and in legislation that it is good to have some degree of privatisation, however, there was in reality an obvious reluctance to award any private franchises due to the convenience offered by the state-controlled broadcasting and the actual control over it.

As a public media the BNT is aiming at comprehensiveness, versatility and objectivity. The findings of a comparative research observation of national media in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania conducted between August 1997 and February 1998 showed that the information presented by the national television in Bulgaria (as far as topics were concerned) to a great extent matched the criteria of comprehensiveness – there were no significant events that avoided the media publicity and the media representation (this is valid for the press as well) (

    1998). In order for it to be versatile and objective, however, it is not only important what the list of covered topics is, but also what are the internal proportions among different thematic circles. The data with regard to the latter suggested that in general political and economic issues dominated the programmes. Always present were the activities of state institutions, internal affairs, Bulgarian foreign policy and economic problems. At the same time, topics such as environmental problems for example, occupied less than 1 per cent of the contents of news bulletins. The same applied for issues associated with science and education, culture and art, problems of individuals and the civil society. In addition, quite extensive coverage was given to the problems of television itself. The above results were further confirmed when the actual amount of time devoted to these topics was measured, clearly illustrating

that these were not only the topics that were discussed most often, but also they were discussed at considerable lengths. On the contents side, the official viewpoints tended to predominate in the BNT's output. The number of journalist commentaries and analyses overall was small. The amount of journalist forecasts and investigations was basically nonexistent (1998, 239–249).

Similar are the results from another analysis of the Bulgarian television stations in 1998 that compared BNT (its two channels: Channel 1 and Efir 2), Nova Televisia and 7 Dni (cable television station that covers only the Sofia region), and made claims with regard to all of them. The findings showed that most of the television time – 85 per cent – was devoted to statements by politicians and the members of the executive branch of the government. Ten per cent of the time was given to non-governmental and citizens' organisations and 4 per cent – to regional organisations. Only 1 per cent of the whole news time was occupied by individual opinions and citizens positions, thus ascertaining the complete disregarding of the individual viewpoints on the television screen (Spasov, 2000a: 148). In other words, there was not much pluralism in either the viewpoints presented or the information sources. The presence of representatives of official institutions and politicians was overwhelming. Unofficial opinion was almost non-existent; the viewers' positions and opinions were simply not present.[7] This might suggest that both the medium and the journalists were cautious in taking a personal stand and voicing it. The picture of the television stations is completed by a look at the sources of disseminated information and it seems to be the case that in a large number of cases the media did not name the source of their information – the percentage varying from 22 per cent to 53.6 per cent in different months of the study. A possible explanation is the lack of a habit of announcing the source of every piece of information as well as the desire not to quote other competitive media. A considerable amount of the information was directly taken from the press centres or the spokespersons of different governmental institutions – on average 7 per cent. Still, it is possible to note a new development – a certain number of the reports were broadcast live, there were direct links with the studio and interviews with people in the streets (Znepolski, 2000: 63). Overall, however, the vision in the news bulletins of the television stations remained mainly static and dominated by official and political faces.

Up to 2000, only the BNT had de facto monopoly positions and universal profile in the media environment, even though the Council of Ministers abolished the state media monopoly in 1991 with its Decision No 114 (Dimitrova, 2000: 48). In 1998 the viewers of Channel 1 of BNT were 85–89 per cent of the total viewing population (Lozanov et al., 2000: 5).[8] Still, changes were taking place even there despite the general concept of television serving the interests of the whole population. The exact form of these changes was the growing audience for cable operators, which inevitably lead to an increase in competition, to a breaking of the

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7   It is important to highlight that there is a trend to alter this practice. The television is 'opening' to the public in the recent two years, allowing on the screens even too many individual viewpoints.

8   Since 2000 there have been changes with regard to audience figures and advertising revenues with bTV overtaking Channel 1 in some time slots, days and parts of Bulgaria.

audience into smaller segments and the logical specialisation of television channels (Ianova, 1998: 144). The success of the private television station – Nova Televisia – that initially covered only the capital Sofia has to be acknowledged. It managed to increase its average daily audience twice within three months in 1998 achieving the figure of 12 per cent by June. Nonetheless, it lost ground to cable operators. The latter confirming their strong positions in the market throughout the early stages of the media market's formation. Despite this, the television audiences remained monopolised by BNT's Channel 1. The move of viewers towards private regional, cable or satellite TV stations has happened mainly at the expense of BNT's Efir 2 that saw its audience significantly reduced. Therefore, in 1998 and in the beginning of 1999 BNT's Channel 1 was the definite television leader in terms of monthly audience, average daily audience and market share (Ianova, 1998: 146).

With regard to newspapers – 10 big national dailies were being published at the time of the Kosovo conflict in Bulgaria: *24 Chasa*, *Trud*, *Standart*, *Sega*, *Demokracia*, *Duma*, *Zemia*, *Kontinent*, *Novinar* and *Pari*. Among the weekly newspapers *Kapital* is by far the most influential one and interestingly is the main representative of the quality press in Bulgaria. Purely quantitatively this is a considerable amount of newspapers and the circulation figures of some of them are really impressive. For example, *24 Chasa* at times had a circulation of 300,000 copies. According to available data for 1997 the average number of newspapers per 1 million people was 5.13 which comes very close to the average for Western Europe of 6.86 (Dimitrov, 2000: 31). Only *Duma* and *Demokracia* are party newspapers. All other party publications that appeared immediately after the changes in 1989 gradually disappeared from the market. The rest of the above listed titles are not formally party politics newspapers, which does not mean that they are entirely unaligned with parties and in that sense without a position, own viewpoint or preferences, rather it means that they declare themselves against confrontation, against state bureaucracy, against tax burden, in favour of private initiative, in defence of middle class, in favour of individual freedoms, in defence of certain economic interests. As Znepolski (1997: 32) puts it, these are claims that provoke the approval or disapproval of one or another party at different times, and therefore, it cannot be claimed that these newspapers have a consistent political standpoint.

In terms of belonging to a particular category of newspapers – either serious, quality press, directed towards specialised, highly defined audiences, or popular, tabloid press, aimed at the general public, the Bulgarian daily newspapers seem to come closer to the latter. This does not suggest, however, that they lack any serious commentaries and viewpoints. According to Znepolski (1997: 34) they are popular out of necessity as in Bulgaria there are no sufficient well-established elites on which a serious publication can rely financially. In addition, in Bulgaria the social division is not that significant and developed so to allow clear differentiation between different social groups. Most of the newspapers could only survive in the shape of popular press and its different individual interpretations. Two levels of tabloid press can be distinguished. The first one is formed by the best-selling dailies *24 Chasa* and *Trud*. They combine the qualities of serious and tabloid press. The second level is represented by also commercially successful but more typical tabloids such as *Nosten Trud* and *Zult Trud*. The former category newspaper occupies the space of

the serious press and to a great extent has adapted to its standards. The general level is significantly higher than that of the tabloid press as the popular and the serious are joined together. This in reality means that these titles do not possess much of the characteristics of tabloids in Western Europe. They are being read by an extremely wide circle of readers and are not oriented towards the audience in accordance with its social status. These newspapers are being used by the intellectuals as a platform for their analyses, commentaries and interviews and as a result the presence of serious analyses is one of the distinctive features of this press (Spasov, 2000a: 111). International news and commentaries are also offered together with sensations and personalisations and a focus on the sexual and criminal, albeit in a rather softened form. The news and the commentaries sometimes are separated, but are also often mixed. They are open to entertainment. A direct comparison between Bulgarian and British press would suggest that the serious quality British newspapers do not have an exact equivalent in Bulgaria (Mitev, 2000: 288).

The second level of the Bulgarian tabloid press has the qualities of a typical Western tabloid. The language used is aggressive, sexual and criminal stories dominate, politics receives only little attention, sensation is the main way of presenting information. No interest is expressed towards foreign news except in cases when some kind of sensation is involved. There are no serious analyses; the commentaries are usually sensational (Mitev, 2000: 112).

On the information side it has to be acknowledged that the serious-tabloid press puts a considerable stress on the pressing political news, sometimes even showing a degree of inventiveness to get to them. Contrary to the old press, the new press is after facts. It gives information about many more aspects of life following the actual rhythm of them taking place. It does not always manage to separate fact from fiction. Rather, it often allows the mixing of the two: the emotional and the sentimental overtake the rational, the information that claims to be factual and the one that freely combines fact with fiction compete with each other on the pages. As Spasov (2000a: 67) observes, 'the news today more often use the entertainment form, use dramatic and melodramatic codes in order to mark their stories'. In that sense, it could be argued that the developing trends observable in the Bulgarian media are similar to the ones already existing and quite established in the Western equivalents. In addition, it is also the case that often the patient search, the waiting and the trustworthy and thoroughly checked sources are being replaced with the overheard by accident, the mentioned, and sometimes even the intuitive. In delivering the news usually no hierarchy is followed – the important, not so important and the completely irrelevant for political life co-exist; the accidental and the regular, the short-lived and the lasting are offered as equal just because they happen at the same time. In addition, political, economic or cultural news are generally not contextualised, all the preceding details of a story are reduced to the minimum (Nedelchev, 2000: 81). The journalism is focused on the personalities on the political scene, their personal qualities and relationships, and the political games behind closed doors. The opinions, commentaries and assessments of political events are present to a lesser extent (Znepolski, 1997: 41). Thus, the huge amount of facts distracts the efforts of the press from another of its functions – 'ordering' everyday life, conceptually clarifying and following the hierarchy of events as not everything that happens is equally important. So, if for the old press it

is possible to say that it presents what it presents claiming that it is the whole reality, the new press reduces the reality, in the sense that it gives up its pretensions to offer the complete representative picture (Znepolski, 1997: 102). Having identified all of the above characteristics and features, it has to be acknowledged that they in effect refer to a new press without serious traditions and lacking appropriately trained journalists. Therefore, it can be expected that there will be developments and further changes that could be observed at a later stage.

The newspapers that are currently most influential are the ones owned by the German WAZ who maintained their dominant positions in the market. At the same time, some other newspapers managed to break through. Already in 1998 (the year of specific interest here), particularly significant was the improvement in the readership figures for *Sega*, which according to the available data were in fourth position among the daily press very close to *Standart*. This progress though has not diminished even slightly the positions of *Trud* and *24 Chasa*. The readership increase is at the expense of smaller newspapers (Ianova, 1998: 146). The following table illustrates the readership of the main national daily newspapers (data are taken from the MBMD Institute for Marketing and Social Research, cited in Ianova, 1998: 144).

Table 4.1   Readership figures of the main print outlets in Bulgaria (percentage of the total)

Newspaper	July 1998	October 1998
Daily Trud	44.7	47.8
24 Chasa	33.1	34.4
Standart	4.3	4.5
Sega	2.8	3.8
Demokracia	2.9	3.4
Duma	3.3	2.8
Nosten Trud	3.3	2.7
7 Dni Sport	3.1	2.3
Novinar	2.9	2.1
Zemia	1.2	1.0
Kontinent	0.5	0.7
Pari	0.7	0.5

Interestingly, when asked about the influence or the control of the executive branch of the government over the information sources in the country public opinion is by far not united. According to the data from a research conducted by Vitosha Research in July 1998, 49 per cent of participants thought that the government should not exercise control over the radio, the television and the press. Thirty-six per cent, however, claimed that the executive should have a direct influence over the media (Manliherova, 1998: 39). When it comes to the actual situation, by far the largest group believe that the government is trying to manipulate the national media – 43 per

cent of those asked expressed this opinion. Twenty-two per cent thought that there is no interference from the government, with one third being unable to judge. Similar are the results with regard to the censorship in the media – 45 per cent of the interviewed believed that there is a censorship, 21 per cent that there is not and around one-third did not have an opinion. The data for 2000 does not differ considerably. Fifty-one per cent of Bulgarians queried in a national opinion poll conducted by the MBMD Research Institute for Marketing and Research said that they do not think the media is independent (SEEMO, 2002). The respondents identified political restrictions as the main reason, followed by economic, moral and legislative obstacles. The distrust shown towards the media is also prevalent among media professionals. Forty-eight per cent of the journalists polled believed that only part of the Bulgarian media is independent, while 45 per cent said that there are almost no independent media. Journalists pointed to economic factors as having the most cumbersome effect on freedom of the media. In addition, according to the journalists, the most pressure was exercised over the BNT, followed by the BNR. But the audiences/readers do not seem to believe in the professional correctness and braveness of the journalists themselves – according to the figures the percentage of non-believers is 36. Only 23 per cent were convinced that the media are guided by 'the truth and only the truth'. Forty-one per cent could not judge (Bratovanova, 1998: 100).

The newspaper market continues to be dominated by the German Group WAZ. The two WAZ-owned dailies have circulation between 10 and 50 times higher than any other newspaper. And, in general, it is believed that the group dominates 80 per cent of the print media market in Bulgaria. An important characteristic of the print media in the country is the further decline of the party-affiliated newspapers.

According to the 2002 Annual Report of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Bulgarian government has attempted to seek editorial and financial control of the state-owned BNR and BNT (SEEMO, 2002). This was possible because they both continue to rely heavily on state subsidies. Although the Radio and Television Law mentions that financing should be by way of a license fee, no mechanism has yet been developed to implement this law. Moreover, the way the Broadcasting Regulator – the National Council on Radio and Television, is elected allows for political nominations and interference. As a result, still there is no distinctive public broadcasting in the country.

Self-censorship remains a serious problem in Bulgaria, especially in the broadcasting field. According to the 2003 *World Press Freedom Review* (SEEMO, 2003) the behaviour of some programme makers is still shaped by the cautionary reflexes inherited from the communist past. For this reason, journalists have been forced to sacrifice professional values and principles for the sake of 'being on the safe side'. As a result, the news broadcasts tend to reflect the views of official spokespersons, rather than considering what the general audience has the right to know. Topical media production is still under-developed and information programmes rarely treat targets and topics in-depth. The current stage of programme management is limited to the establishment of a very uniform pattern of content, as well as human resource change. The latter means that if something in the programme was assessed as unsuccessful it would call for changes to journalistic personnel rather than to the programme strategy.

The *World Press Freedom Review* also reported on the existing in Bulgaria fear of prosecution that has direct link with the self-censorship (SEEMO, 2003). The lack of regulation, the non-existent ethical code and the insufficient general legal culture among journalists has become reasons for libel and slander cases. For example, during 2003 one newspaper publisher and 10 print journalists were prosecuted for defamation. As a result, many journalists choose not to dig deeper into the facts, preferring to limit their reporting to harmless matters. For this reason, investigative reporting is still an underdeveloped field. Sensationalism remains a problem within the Bulgarian print media. Another problem confronting all journalists in Bulgaria is that they are often paid low salaries and do not have the equipment they need to work.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the main trends in the development of the Bulgarian media after 1989 drawing a comparison between their characteristic features and the ones of the so-called old media. This overview illustrates clearly the differences in the media cultures in Bulgaria and Britain. On the surface, the privatisation of newspapers and the disappearance of state press, the adoption of an advertising-dominated model, the establishment of a competitive market, the modified writing and presentation style, the diversification and stratification of the audiences would suggest that the Bulgarian print media have moved towards the practices existing in the Western world if not caught up with their Western counterparts. The notion of independence, the freedom of information and the political pluralism are all present in the Bulgarian print market. Their actual interpretation and subsequent implementation, however, seem to be different and very much context specific and determined. In addition, Bulgaria has kept the format of the party newspaper established during the communist era (although it is in gradual decline at the moment), unlike Britain where the press is extremely careful not to be seen as a mouthpiece of any political party. With regard to the broadcasting, in its broad outline it does seem that Bulgaria has moved to a model similar to the existing one in the UK – public broadcasting. Its practical functioning, however, does differ significantly and leads to questioning of the implementation of the principles of public service.

The following two chapters use the conclusions from the above analysis to assist the understanding of the nature of the relationship between the print media and the foreign policy-making first in Bulgaria and then in Britain in the context of the Kosovo crisis.

Press/Foreign Policy Interaction
in Bulgaria

Introduction

Before the conflict in Kosovo erupted into large-scale violence, it attracted almost no international media attention. As 'simmering conflicts are less worthy than boiling ones' (Freedman, 2000: 345–347) the major Western media coverage of the Balkans tended to focus on the situations in Bosnia and Croatia. The number of journalists in the field was rather small, not allowing much attention to be paid to Kosovo. The increase in the reporting of abuses against individuals in Kosovo came only in the beginning of 1999 and this is when this war entered the living rooms of the international public.

From that point on the Kosovo crisis, and in particular the NATO air strikes against the FRY, became a central theme for the international media. This was the case in most countries around the world that have an influence on the international political scene, but more so in the countries directly involved in the conflict. The FRY, the NATO member states and the Balkan states demonstrated very active political and media interest, not least provoked by their proximity in some form to the conflict. The media's interest was particularly intense and diverse in the countries neighbouring the FRY, such as Bulgaria. The country was in the extreme situation of being a neighbour to a country in which an internal conflict followed by an international involvement in the form of a NATO operation was taking place. This entailed a great number of expected and unexpected implications for the country and for the region as a whole.

For the purposes of this study the strong presence of different aspects of the Kosovo conflict in the Bulgarian media is examined consecutively during two periods – first, in the period preceding NATO's military involvement and second, in the middle of the NATO air campaign. As already indicated the focus of this study is on the print media and the assessment of the press influence is conducted through the application of the policy-media interaction model developed by Robinson (1999a, 1999b: 2000b, 2002a). It needs noting that while Robinson's model was closely followed, some modifications became necessary in view of the findings. First, the subject of the news reports was established and those making reference to the policy towards the conflict were coded as supportive (regard the variable in a mainly positive/approving way), neutral (do not express any specific attitude, just inform about a particular event or policy), or critical (demonstrate a rather negative attitude towards the variable). Reports making significant reference to the war, refugees and peace talks were coded as empathy, neutral or distance framed.

Second, a set of keywords that could be expected to be associated with each of the above identified frames was predicted. With regard to empathy/distance framing the key issue is how news reports label the population involved in the humanitarian crisis. Keywords suggested by Robinson (2002a: 137–139) were used here with slight variations reflecting the specific case study. Thus, words such as *refugees*, emphasising the status of the population as victims, *people*, reminding the reader of their essential similarity to the victims of the humanitarian crisis, as well as *women* and *children*, representing connotations of innocence and vulnerability, were expected to be used to describe populations in an empathy frame. As Robinson (2000b: 621) points out, these empathising descriptors encourage an audience to identify with the plight of refugees. Conversely, the keywords *rebels*, *Muslim/ Kosovo* and *men/soldier* were identified as a way of defining the population as 'other' and highlighting the difference. In that sense, these distancing descriptors do not encourage close identification or sympathy from the reader but rather suggest maintaining an emotional distance. They help frame the crisis as a distant civil war, defining the population of Kosovo as an 'other' and representing connotations of responsibility and power, therefore tending to minimise the sympathy of the audience (cf. Robinson, 1999b: 26; Robinson, 2000b: 621).

With regard to critical/support framing, as Robinson (2002a: 138) acknowledges, the keyword choices are conditional on the particular case as it is necessary to establish which aspects of the policy could have been subjected to criticism as well as what the actual policy debates that could have taken place were. In view of this, he does not offer a general set of keywords that can be used to determine the news media stand on the official policy in every instance. In the current study, the keywords selected for Britain and Bulgaria are different. This reflects the differences in the policy debates in the two countries with regard to the Kosovo crisis. Therefore, keywords used for establishing critical/supportive framing are detailed in the corresponding chapters – 6 and 7 – dealing with the Bulgarian and the British print media coverage of the Kosovo conflict.

In counting the keywords the same procedures are followed as the ones established in the original application of the policy-interaction model. To avoid 'unnecessary contamination' (Robinson, 2002a: 139) of the results when counting the keywords not every occurrence of a keyword in a news report was quantified. The keywords were counted only if they were used within the meaning of the particular frame; the context of use was read in order to prevent the counting of words preceded by a negative; and formulations of the keywords, such as *refugee* and *flee* were counted. Still, a degree of interpretation and judgement is involved when deciding if the appearance of a keyword in a news text is associated with a particular frame or not. When applying the policy-media interaction model, Robinson makes clear the existence of these 'weaknesses' in establishing framing, but nevertheless argues that 'the approach to measuring framing meets stringent methodological standards' (Robinson, 2002a: 140). The application of the model in this study strictly follows its original use which allows the findings to be equally valid as the ones resulting from previous usages.

Thus, this chapter looks at the relationship between the print media and policy-making in Bulgaria at the time of the Kosovo conflict. First, it analyses the print media coverage of the Kosovo conflict during the two time periods – 24 February–25 March 1999 and 15 April–15 May 1999. It investigates and analyses consecutively the press attention and the press framing and draws conclusions regarding possible press influence. In parallel to the media-policy interaction model, additional research strategies are used in order to cross check the inferences based on it. These include primary interviewing, secondary data as well as the establishment of the precise timing of the governmental decision-taking on the Kosovo conflict. The next section concentrates on the Bulgarian government's policy towards the conflict establishing the presence of either policy certainty or uncertainty. The last section assesses the possible media effects by bringing together the findings of the press and policy analyses.[1]

Press Coverage

Press Attention: 24 February 1999–25 March 1999

Undeniably, Bulgarian media responded to the challenge presented by the Kosovo conflict and assigned a leading place to the topic. In fact, the conflict was spotted immediately after its beginning – the appearance of the KLA on the political scene triggered even more the interest as it lead to the intensification of the conflict. The angle which was applied in the coverage was the extent to which Bulgaria could be involved in the potential conflict and the impact it could have on Bulgaria.

In purely quantitative terms the Kosovo crisis enjoyed extensive media coverage in the period directly prior to the NATO military involvement. Between 24 February and 25 March 1999 725 articles in *24 Chasa*, *Trud*, *Demokracia*, *Duma*, *Pari*, *Sega*, *Standart* and *Kapital* made significant reference to the situation in Kosovo.[2] Four of these newspapers – *Sega*, *Standart*, *Demokracia* and *24 Chasa* – circulated a special issue, in addition to the regular one, on the 25 March 1999 devoted to the Kosovo crisis and the beginning of the air strikes. On the whole, *Standart* (third in readership figures, but significantly behind the leading two and considered an independent publication) was the newspaper that offered the most extensive coverage with 125 articles making reference to different aspects of the conflict over the 30-day period. This averages to 4.16 articles per issue on the Kosovo crisis. Not many of those made it to the first page, though. Only 11 articles appeared on the front page of the newspaper.

Trud (the best-selling daily and German WAZ-owned) offered the second most extensive coverage with a total of 104 articles, which comes to 3.46 articles per day. An impressive number of these articles – 20 all in all – were placed on the first page

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1   An earlier version of some of the analysis presented in this chapter has been published in Perspectives on European Politics and Society (see Balabanova, 2004).

2   *24 Chasa*, *Trud*, *Demokracia*, *Duma*, *Pari*, *Sega* and *Standart* articles were obtained from the paper editions of these newspapers. *Kapital* articles were obtained online at http://www.capital.bg.

of the newspaper either in their entirety or at least partially with the continuation of the article on the inside pages.

Next in the volume of coverage came *Sega* (fourth in readership figures, significantly behind the leading two and very close to the third; considered an independent publication) with 100 articles dealing with different aspects of the Kosovo conflict. Thus, it managed to average 3.33 articles per issue and position 16 of those articles on the front page.

The attention paid by *24 Chasa* (the second best-selling daily and German WAZ-owned) was slightly less as it ran 91 articles on the topic. This translates into 3.03 articles per day. Nine of them were on the first page. The two party newspapers *Demokracia* and *Duma* did not differ significantly in terms of the size of the coverage. Understandably, *Demokracia* – the governing coalition's voice – could have been expected to be more devoted to the topic. The number of articles touching upon Kosovo was 96, which is 3.2 per day. However, the distinction is not that impressive as the opposition *Duma* covered the topic in 88 articles or 2.9 a day. The divergence is more obvious in the location of those articles – in the case of *Democracia* the impressive number of 29 was on the first page, *Duma* placed slightly less – 20.

The coverage by the economic daily *Pari* was also extremely extensive considering the subject area of the newspaper. It run 94 articles with regard to Kosovo or 3.13 a day. Only 11 of those, however, were displayed on the front page. The weekly *Kapital* covered Kosovo in 27 articles in five issues during the examined period. This signifies an average of 5.4 articles per issue. Thus, it appears that although *Standart* offered the most extensive coverage of the situation in Kosovo and the conflict itself and devoted considerably more space to the topic than any other newspaper judging by the total number of articles; it was *Kapital* that featured the highest amount of articles per issue. Table 5.1 illustrates the total distribution of articles among the examined newspapers.

Table 5.1   Press attention by newspaper: 24 February–25 March 1999

Newspaper	Number of articles	Percentage of the total
Standart	125	17.24
Trud	104	14.34
Sega	100	13.8
Demokracia	96	13.24
Pari	94	12.97
24 Chasa	91	12.55
Duma	88	12.14
Kapital[*]	27	3.72

[*] Kapital's figure in this table should be interpreted taking into consideration the weekly character of the newspaper.

Overall, these results showing substantial coverage suggest that Kosovo was already identified and treated by the Bulgarian print media as an important event worthy of attention even before the NATO air campaign. The leading slot allocated to the topic is obvious from the exact location of the articles – 16 per cent of them are

published on the front page, the majority of the rest being at the top of the internal and international pages. It is also relevant to note that in the recent years in 'normal situations' the very short information texts tended to dominate in the Bulgarian press (Nejkova, 1999: 21). With regard to the Kosovo conflict and the NATO air campaign this changed. The newspaper texts over 130 lines outnumbered the very short ones.

Press Attention: 15 April 1999–15 May 1999

Quite similar conclusions can be drawn regarding the media attention during the second observation period – 15 April 1999–15 May 1999. In the middle of the NATO air campaign the media coverage was vast with a total of 3,286 articles making significant reference to the Kosovo crisis in the eight newspapers selected for analysis. This translates into 106 articles per day on the topic in the main print media and clearly speaks of the absolute dominance of the issue in the news agenda. Some differences are observable here among the dailies in terms of location of articles – only *Standart* places a slightly higher amount than in the previous period on the front page. All other dailies decrease the share of front-page articles. Overall, the coverage remains quite heavy in the weekly newspaper *Kapital* compared with the dailies similar to the 24 February–25 March period.

The most extensive coverage on the whole again was offered by *Standart*. This time, however, the number of articles on its pages dealing with various aspects of the conflict over the 31-day period was significantly more than that in the other print media. *Standart* covered the Kosovo crisis in 607 articles which averages to 19.6 articles per issue. Compared with the previous period, slightly more of them made it to the first page – 58 altogether, which is 9.6 per cent of the total (the figure for the 24 February–5 March 1999 period is 8.8 per cent). Unlike before, sometimes the first page contained only a picture while the actual text started on the inside pages. This was the case in five instances.

The second, in terms of volume, coverage came again from *Trud*. Its 545 articles during the observed period translate into 17.6 articles per day. Seventy-six of these appeared on the first page of the newspaper either in their entirety or their beginning sections. However, despite the apparently high number of articles placed on the front page overall there was a drop in comparison with the February–March period as the percentage of these articles of the total decreased from 19.2 to 14.

Trud's coverage in quantitative terms was followed by the one in *Duma*. Whilst the extensive coverage in *Standart* and *Trud* is no surprise as the newspapers continued the trend set in the earlier period, the number of articles in the opposition newspaper devoted to different aspects of the Kosovo conflict is at first surprising as it represents a huge change from the rather limited attention previously. The figures for *Duma* in the April-May period were 514 articles in total or 16.6 per day. This significant interest in the issue at the time could be attributed to a number of factors. In view of the fact that at exactly that point of time Bulgaria faced a very important decision regarding its involvement in the conflict next door – that is the decision whether to allow NATO planes to use Bulgarian air space or not and under what conditions – the concentration on the topic is most likely due to the opportunities it presented for political debates and speculations. As the subsequent section on the Bulgarian

foreign policy towards the Kosovo conflict demonstrates, the governmental position on the issue differed notably from the one of the opposition. *Duma* managed to position both the biggest overall number of articles among the analysed newspapers on the front page – 77 and the highest proportion of its own articles – 15 per cent. Still, this was much less than in the February–March period when the newspaper placed 22.7 per cent of its articles on the first page and was exceeded in this respect only by one other newspaper – *Demokracia*.

Sega's coverage was similar to Duma's without this being surprising. *Sega* was consistently extensive in its coverage of the topic. The total number of articles discussing the Kosovo conflict was 506 which averages to 16.3 per cent articles per day. Seventy-four of them were placed on the first page which was slightly less than previously – the number of articles making it to the front decreasing from 16 per cent to 14.6 per cent.

Demokracia, *24 Chasa* and *Pari* covered the topic in 384, 359 and 303 articles respectively. For *Demokracia* this meant that 12.4 articles per day made significant reference to the Kosovo conflict and 99 articles were positioned on the first page of the paper. Thus, *Demokracia* had the highest percentage of articles placed on the front page – 25.8 per cent which was still not as much as the newspaper achieved in the February–March period – 30.2 per cent. Considering that this is the governing coalition's print outlet, the high number of articles on the first page concentrating on the issue that dominated the foreign policy agenda of the country is expected and in that sense unsurprising. *24 Chasa* devoted 11.6 articles per day to different aspects of the Kosovo conflict, but placed only 34 of all articles on the first page. This corresponds to 9.5 per cent of all articles being on the front page which is not significantly different from the 9.9 per cent in the previous period. With regard to *Pari* its total of 303 articles covering the conflict translates to 9.8 articles per day and only nine articles on the first page. Thus, while *Pari* obviously devoted serious attention to the Kosovo crisis, as a financial daily it gave priority in terms of the location in the paper to purely economic and financial issues.

In comparison to the dailies, the only weekly newspaper included in the analysis *Kapital* ran 67 articles on the topic in its five issues during the observed period. This equals to 13.4 articles per issue. Clearly, this confirms the conclusions drawn on the basis of the February–March coverage suggesting that in terms of attention devoted to the topic in a single issue of any of the newspapers *Kapital* is appreciably ahead of the others. The character of the newspapers obviously needs to be taken into account when acknowledging this trend. Table 5.2 demonstrates the total distribution of articles among the examined newspapers.

In sum, the enormous attention given by the main Bulgarian print media to the Kosovo conflict and its various dimensions and aspects is apparent. Evidently, the topic dominated on the pages of the newspapers regularly making it to the first page – 13.3 per cent of the articles were located on the front page. Most of the newspapers introduced new section headings reflecting the topics covered, 'the war', 'the Balkan storm', 'the reactions in Bulgaria' being among the most used. In addition, the standard location of the material in the papers was radically rearranged to correspond to the agenda at the time. The articles dealing with the Kosovo conflict appeared on the first pages, gaining priority over domestic news in terms of location.

Table 5.2   Press attention by newspaper: 15 April–15 May 1999

Newspaper	Number of articles	Percentage of the total
Standart	607	18.47
Trud	545	16.59
Duma	514	15.64
Sega	506	15.4
Demokracia	384	11.69
24 chasa	359	10.93
Pari	303	9.22
Kapital	67	2.04

Press Framing: 24 February 1999–25 March 1999

The potential political impact of the above identified coverage can be understood once the actual media content is examined. The next section looks at how the Bulgarian media dealt with the Kosovo War in terms of what matters were emphasised and what attitudes were adopted with regard to the war. For this purpose, the subject matter of selected news reports relating to Kosovo is assessed. This provides the interpretative aspect of the media analysis. The critical examination of the framing of the media content is the second stage of the application of the policy-media interaction model used in this research. The analysis is conducted consecutively for both analysed periods.

Out of the 725 articles identified to have made substantial references to the situation in Kosovo in the period 24 February 1999–25 March 1999 105 were selected for the subsequent analysis.[3] The news material was classified in 21 different content categories and the quantitative shares were compared among the entire material. Most news concerned two subjects – the air strikes against the FRY and Bulgarian security (considering the immediate proximity of the country to the conflict) with 22 articles containing significant references to each of the issues. They were closely followed by the references made in 20 articles to the Bulgarian position with regard to the conflict as a whole and the air strikes in particular. The other identified content categories were as follows: Bulgarian involvement and participation in the conflict and the peace talks; the implications and consequences for the Balkans; international diplomatic efforts preceding the war, the Yugoslav position; the justification and legality of the international involvement; Bulgarian diplomatic efforts preceding the war, general Western policy towards the Balkans; the area's history; events preceding the war and the preparation for the war in the region; the devastation of the war; possible scenarios for the development of the crisis; the Russian position and direct clashes between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. References to the issues of refugees,

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3   As already indicated the total number of reports relating to Kosovo in the period 24 February–25 March was 725. This number of articles was cut to a more manageable number for reading. The articles were listed chronologically and every seventh article selected for analysis. That gave a sample of 105 articles. The method used was systematic random sampling.

peacekeeping, economic and environmental costs for Bulgaria, the role of the media and the ground intervention at that stage remained minimal in the material.

It can be stated then that the news material devoted the most attention to dramatic events such as the air strikes and the security and safety of the country and people in Bulgaria as well as the actual position of Bulgaria. Table 5.3 offers a look at the quantitative shares of the above identified categories.

Table 5.3   Content categories: 24 February–25 March 1999

Content category	Number of references[*]	Share of the total
Air strikes	22	12.15
Bulgarian security	22	12.15
Bulgarian position	20	11.05
Bulgarian involvement and participation in the conflict	14	7.73
Peace talks	14	7.73
Implications and consequences for the Balkans	12	6.63
International diplomatic efforts preceding the war	11	6.08
Yugoslav position	9	4.97
Justification and legality of the international involvement	8	4.42
Bulgarian diplomatic efforts preceding the war	7	3.87
Western policy towards the Balkans	6	3.31
Area's history, events preceding the war and preparation for the war in the region	6	3.31
Devastation of war	5	2.76
Possible scenarios for the development of the crisis	5	2.76
Russian position	5	2.76
Direct clashes between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians	4	2.21
Refugees	3	1.66
Peacekeeping	3	1.66
Economic and environmental costs for Bulgaria	3	1.66
Role of media	1	0.55
Ground intervention	1	0.55

[*] The total number of references is 181 as some of the articles made references to more than one content category.

The above clearly demonstrates the importance assigned by the print media to different issues and their coverage preferences. It is obvious that no matter how significant the

NATO air campaign against the FRY was seen by the press and as a consequence considered as a key event that needed to be covered, it could not match the overall attention devoted to the Bulgarian position, security and involvement. This interest is quite understandable in a country geographically located next to the conflict zone. This choice of topics will be looked at in detail and carefully analysed in comparison with the British print media coverage in the concluding chapter.

The sources of these articles were many and of a different nature. It could be argued therefore that with regard to them a pluralistic picture was in place. In the first place a vast number of international information agencies were used as a source of information. The most often quoted one was Reuters (eight times), followed by Associated Press (AP) (5), France Press (3), ITAR TASS (2) and TANJUG (2). On the Bulgarian side the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency – BTA was a source of several articles. Electronic media were also used very often with CNN and BBC heading the list. Western-European (mainly German) and American (for example *Washington Post*) newspapers were drawn upon as well as a source of information or even their arguments were quoted or complete articles translated.

However, around 34 per cent of the articles had only one information source and approximately 23 per cent had no source indicated at all. It is a common tendency in the majority of the Bulgarian press to sign the articles with the name of the newspaper rather than to specify the actual person who wrote it. In addition, it is striking that the reports that had an institution as a source of information seemed to have transmitted more often the messages of foreign institutions rather than those of Bulgarian ones. When in different circumstances media turn into an extension of the governing institutions, in terms of the messages on their pages, serious questions are raised about their professionalism, independence and objectivity. In this instance, this kind of accusations could not have been entirely appropriate. The lack of information emanating from the Bulgarian institutions of government led to a vacuum that needed to be filled with something else. In reality, in a situation when the public might naturally expect more and more timely statements from government officials, these statements were almost absent. So what happened was that instead of Bulgarian politicians telling Bulgarians what is happening very close to the country's Western border and the implications that this had, the messages were coming from Javier Solana, the NATO General Secretary, The Pentagon, or Jamie Shea, the NATO speaker.

The identification of the 'tone' of media reports was the next stage of the analysis which involved categorising the news material on the basis of the attitudes adopted. Only references to the NATO air strikes and/or ground intervention, the Bulgarian position and Bulgarian security, refugees, peace talks and the devastation of war were used as these are the topics that, first, received the most coverage, and, second, allow conclusions to be drawn about the media framing of the war. As such two categories of reports – the ones making significant reference to the decision to deploy peacekeeping ground troops and/or launch air strikes against FRY as well as the ones referring to the Bulgarian position and policy on the conflict and air strikes, in particular, and the security of the country are coded as supportive, neutral or critical. Reports making significant reference to the war, refugees and peace talks are coded as empathy, neutral or distancing.

References to the NATO air strikes and to the Bulgarian position and security tend to be rather neutrally framed. They inform about the air campaign as the option considered and subsequently chosen by the NATO countries. They inform about the Bulgarian position on the military intervention next door. They indicate the different opinions among the Bulgarian political elite and they also offer information on the various aspects of the security of the country. However, this is done in a primarily informative and neutral way. Table 5.4 contains a list of descriptors associated with the neutral framing. Overall, of the 90 articles making significant reference to the military intervention and the Bulgarian position 49 are neutral, 26 are critical and 15 – supportive of the decisions of NATO to launch an air campaign and of Bulgaria to support the Alliance in this. An example of the predominant neutral framing are the following texts from *Kapital* and *Pari*:

> After the consecutive failure of Richard Holbrooke to convince Milosevic to accept the Kosovo plan, the NATO General Secretary Javier Solana ordered the beginning of the military operation against Yugoslavia. The Western allies stressed the necessity to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. While during the Paris talks the Serbs were threatened with a NATO attack in order to sign the offered agreement, now the air strikes already are interpreted as an alternative to the inaction. The truth is that there exist certain grounds for an international action based on the UN Security Council's resolutions. The most known of them is Resolution 1199 of 23 September 1998 which underlines the necessity to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. The document urged Yugoslavia to stop the repressions against the civilian population and it declared the situation in Kosovo a threat to the peace and security of the region. However, NATO does not possess the authority to undertake military action to enforce the resolutions of the international organisation and due to the Chinese and Russian obstructions it will not receive this authority either. The problem is that there is a gap in the international law that does not allow NATO strikes to be legally motivated. Therefore, the arguments are primarily notional and interpretative. Western politicians continue to highlight mainly the moral obligations towards the humanitarian disaster in Kosovo. But there exists another question of considerable importance. The North Atlantic Alliance risks too much by carrying out international actions without having the right to do so. Legal experts claim that such a precedent is rather political in its nature and is far from the international legislation (*Kapital* 27 March 1999).[4]

> Our country will participate in the peacekeeping operation Joint Guardian. This is envisaged in the Draft Framework Agreement for assistance to NATO approved yesterday by the Government. The assistance involves logistic help and transit crossing through Bulgarian territory. The decision is a sign of the Government's political willingness to participate in the peacekeeping operation (*Pari* 26 February 1999).

The interesting element is not only the neutrality of the coverage. Rather the curious aspect is that this 54 per cent neutral, 29 per cent critical and 17 per cent supportive coverage does not at all mean that the – critical attitude towards the NATO operation is at the same time equal to a support for Milosevic or that NATO is this way rejected as the most viable perspective for Bulgarian national security. Considering that the press generally tends to display more of the public attitudes and opinions in any

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4   All quotes from Bulgarian newspapers are presented in their English translation.

given period of time in comparison with the electronic media, then this coverage is indicative of the moods and interpretations of the situation among the public. It can be explained with the approach to the conflict taking place next door. The government and subsequently the Bulgarians were concerned mainly with the implications of the conflict for the country: the security of the state, the political, economic and environmental costs, and the possible impact on the eagerly sought membership of the European Union (EU) and NATO. Seen through this prism, therefore, it makes sense why the air strikes did not receive significant support and even did not provoke that much of a debate along the lines of legality/illegality of the involvement. They were seen mainly as a very realistic threat to Bulgarian national security, as a dangerous endeavour to get involved in considering its environmental, political and economic price, but at the same time as a clear way to demonstrate the belonging of Bulgaria to Europe and Europe's ideals.

In terms of the location of the critical, neutral and supportive articles in newspapers, in quantitative terms both the biggest number of articles among newspapers and the biggest proportion among its own articles critical in their nature was offered by *Duma*. As the paper of the opposition party – the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) – it generally opposed the government policy and position, stressing the negative implications of the conflict and Bulgaria's involvement in it. At the other end of the spectrum was *Demokracia*. It was the most supportive among the newspapers; on its pages the supportive articles considerably outnumbered the critical ones. The paper of the ruling coalition tended to support the decisions taken by the government and to question them as little as possible. In this sense, as far as the discussions, that is different positions covered within one newspaper, are concerned it became apparent that there were no opposing each other opinions voiced on the pages of any one newspaper. Whenever commentaries and analyses were offered they were either written by journalists from the same media or by specially invited authors/ commentators and the final texts did not contradict the chosen by the media line of behaviour. The discussion remained on a political level among the politicians representing different parties.

The coverage by *Duma* and *Democracia* reveals the main characteristic feature of the media dividing line between a pro-Milosevic attitude and a pro-NATO one. It ran along the traditional lines of the domestic political opposition (Milev, 1999: 373). The Left – media close to left wing liberals, the former Communist Party or business sectors that came out of either of these – gauged NATO's mistakes and the Alliance's propaganda policy and elevated the negative consequences for Bulgaria following the government's stand on the conflict. Some print media sympathetic with Belgrade in one way or another also created an atmosphere of panic amongst the public by stressing how the war was going to protract endlessly, spread over to the neighbouring countries, lead to an economic and ecological catastrophe. On the other hand, the Right – the more conservative or liberal-conservative orientated media – showed their sympathy with Western politics over the regime in Belgrade. There were, however, those media who tried to maintain an equidistant position to the two poles, that tried to print opposing journalistic commentaries, who aimed at presenting possibly an objective or at least multi-coloured picture. Examples of such

a position, it could be claimed, are the two German WAZ-owned high circulation dailies *Trud* and *24 Chasa*.

The second aspect of the analysis – the framing of the reports referring to the war, the refugees and the peace talks – showed that these articles tend to be empathy framed, although the empathy frame was all but dominant. The neutral and distance framing followed very closely. Again, a list of descriptors characterising the empathy frame is presented in Table 5.4. Overall, of the 37 articles analysed 14 are empathy framed, 12 are neutral – simply informing and 11 are distancing. Therefore, the domination of the empathy frame is not very convincing. An example of the empathy frame is contained in the following passages from *Standart* and *Kapital*:

> Special units set on fire whole villages, the ethnic Albanians run in panic to the covered with snow mountains…The army and the special units of the police yesterday ravaged Done Prekaz village. The population is driven away, thick clouds of smoke from the set on fire houses cover the sky (*Standart* 22 March 1999)

> .…Nearly quarter of a million Kosovo Albanians are left homeless, the victims of the conflict exceed 2000 people… (*Kapital* 27 March 1999)

Table 5.4   A selection of the descriptors used in relation to the NATO air strikes and the Bulgarian position/security as well as people in Kosovo: 24 February–25 March 1999

Neutral Descriptors	Empathy Descriptors
NATO rockets hit the airport in Podgoriza	Human victims
The war has started	Families of military personnel dead
There is no immediate threat to the Bulgarian security	Hundreds Albanian refugees cross the border
Three scenarios for bombing	Bloody war
We are ready for 5000 refugees from Yugoslavia	Cleansing of Kosovo from the Albanians
Second strike against Serbia at 4 am	Thousands ethnic Albanians have left their homes
Airplanes can fall on our territory as well	Many camp under the open air
Milosevic announced martial law	Civilians are injured
The army is in constant alert	Enormous number of human casualties
Serbia threatens us with war	Women and children have died in the ruins
Kosovo crisis is a battle between the US and Russia	Houses are burning in villages

It is worth noting that the empathy was spread out not only to the Kosovo Albanians but also to the Serbians both in Kosovo and in Serbia thus further complicating the understanding of the press coverage of the conflict. Some even

argue that sympathy in predominantly Orthodox countries like Bulgaria[5] could only be stirred up for one of the affected parties, namely the Serbs, thus suggesting that a solidarity was felt with the Serb population and hence the tragedy of the Kosovo Albanians was downplayed (cf. Milev, 1999: 373). This sentiment was probably of some significance for the Bulgarian government when determining its stand on the Kosovo conflict and on the acceptance of Kosovo refugees on the territory of the country, in particular. Most likely the pro-Serb feelings of some parts of the Bulgarian population could not have been ignored.

In sum, the interpretative part of the framing analysis shows that the reports are framed in a neutral way with regard to the NATO air campaign against the FRY and simultaneously they empathise with the suffering people in Kosovo. The significance of these findings is analysed in the final section of this chapter.

The validity of these interpretative inferences is verified by applying a systematic test of the neutral and empathising frames. This involves analysing the media texts for keywords predicted to be associated with both the neutral and empathy frames and the alternative critical or supportive and the opposite distancing frames. For the keyword search the same news reports as in the previous part are examined. For the empathy/distance frames the keywords *refugees*, *people* and *women and children*, associated with empathy framing, were counted. Conversely, the keywords *rebels*, *Muslim/Kosovo* and men/soldier were quantified for distance framing.

Regarding the neutral or supportive/critical framing the validity test is more complicated. The actual policy-media interaction model which is used here does not provide for the option of a dominating neutral coverage. Therefore, it does not offer a mechanism for verifying its presence. The neutral framing could be understood either as a lack of position and attitude expressed in the text limiting itself to the information function or as a rather balanced and even-handed presentation of both critical and supportive arguments. But it could also combine both of these aspects which makes it even more difficult to prove it via a keyword test. If neutrality is to be taken as pure information then no attitude-coloured words should be expected to appear in the press material. If on the other hand it is to be interpreted as a balanced coverage of both sides without taking any stand, then a mixture of both critical and supportive descriptors should be expected to be discovered. Either way, the keyword analysis in a suspected case of neutral framing will lose some if its systematic nature at the expense of the element of interpretation even more so than in the instances of supportive/critical framing. Therefore, the model's framework is slightly modified to accommodate for a neutral framing. Rather than comparing the ratio between critical and supportive coverage which was the case in all applications of the model so far, here the three frames are compared. This is done by using keywords for the supportive and critical framings and expressions for the neutral framing as this allows a claim for the real presence of neutrality in the texts to be made. Therefore, first, the number of times the words *prevent*, *no danger/threat*, *Bulgarian/national interest* and *support* are used to refer to the situation in Kosovo are counted. It could be expected that these terms should dominate the reports that supported the NATO decision to launch air strikes against FRY and the Bulgarian position to back the

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5   The claim is made also with regard to Romania and Macedonia in the Balkans.

alliance in its military actions as they tend to emphasise the positive and worthy dimensions of first, intervening and second, supporting the intervention. Secondly, the keywords *danger/threat*, *do not support*, *not legal/illegal* and *against Bulgarian/ national interest* are counted. These terms could be expected most frequently in reports that opposed the NATO military intervention and Bulgarian support for it as they highlight the dangers and negative consequences of such a position, the lack of perceived national interest at stake as well as the absence of legal justification for the alliance's action. Thirdly, for the check of the neutral framing a selection of clearly neutral expressions reflecting the keywords in the previous two frames are used as descriptors – *NATO hits Serbia*, *Bulgaria signs agreement with NATO*, *NATO is to undertake a military campaign* and *Bulgaria will not participate in a war.*[6] The results of this analysis are shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5   Media coverage: 24 February–25 March 1999

Empathy Frame		Distance Frame	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Refugee/flee	13	Rebels	8
People	13	Muslim	11
Women	3	Men	2
Children	4	Soldier	5
Total	33	Total	26

Supportive Frame		Critical Frame		Neutral Frame	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Prevent	4	Not legal/ illegal	7	NATO hits Serbia	10
No danger/ threat	12	Danger/ threat	8	Bulgaria signs agreement with NATO	7
Support	10	Do not support	10	NATO is to undertake a military campaign	8
Bulgarian/ national interest	4	Against Bulgarian/ national interest	6	Bulgaria will not participate in a war	10
Total	28	Total	31	Total	35

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      6   These expressions were counted only when they were part of a neutrally framed message just like all the other keywords were quantified only if their understanding in the corresponding context was within the researched frame.

The results of the keyword analysis seem to confirm the inferences of a neutral and empathising frame being predominate in the press reports that were made during the interpretative section of the framing analysis. As the Table 5.5 demonstrates with regard to empathy/distance framing the humanising, empathy encouraging descriptors were used 33 times, while the distancing descriptors occurred on 26 occasions. It should be noted that the difference between the two is not considerable, as was established in the previous stage of the analysis. With respect to the neutral – supportive/critical framing the descriptors associated with a neutral frame outnumbered the ones associated with both critical and supportive frames individually – the numbers being 35–31 to 28.

In sum, the findings of the analysis show that an empathy frame prevailed in media reports which encouraged empathy with the victims of Kosovo as opposed to emotional distance. They also indicate that a neutral frame predominated in reports that served to inform about the developments of the war either without taking a position on them or presenting all the existing arguments in search of a balanced coverage.

Press Framing: 15 April 1999–15 May 1999

An identical sequence analysis was conducted with regard to the second period under review – 15 April 1999–15 May 1999. Out of the total number of 3,286 articles making significant references to various aspects of the Kosovo conflict 109 were selected.[7] The news material on this occasion was classified in 27 different content categories[8] and the quantitative shares were compared among the entire material. Most of the articles concerned the Bulgarian position on the conflict and the NATO air strikes and the use of the Bulgarian air space. The predominance of this issue was overwhelming with 25 articles discussing the political stand that the country should adopt, the correct legal procedures for taking it and its implications for the country's security. The second most frequently referenced topic were the air strikes – they were discussed on 17 occasions. Twelve references were made to the economic and environmental costs of the conflict for Bulgaria. Next, in quantitative terms came the issue of ground intervention. It was the subject of 11 articles. The rest of the content categories included the issues of Bulgarian security, refugees, Bulgarian involvement and participation in the conflict, reconstruction of the region, legality and justification of the NATO involvement, and NATO mistakes. Less attention was given to the devastation of the war, the role of the media, the implications and the consequences

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7   The total number of reports relating to Kosovo in the period 15 April – 15 May as already indicated was 3,286. This number of articles was cut to a more manageable number for reading. The articles were listed chronologically and every 32nd article selected for analysis. That gave a sample of 109 articles. The figure of 109 was aimed at in order to achieve a balance in terms of the number of articles used to draw conclusions on the nature and the potential influence of the press coverage in the two analysed periods. Again, the selection was in line with the method of sampling outlined in the methodological discussion and applied to the first period under review.

8   Four of the content categories were discovered only on single occasions but were left on their own not to distort what the overall analysis represented.

for the Balkans, scenarios for the further development of the crisis, ethnic cleansing, public opinion in Bulgaria and the American position on the conflict (separately from the NATO stand). Among other topics were the Yugoslav/Serbian position, the implications of the conflict for Bulgarian political life, the Russian position on the conflict, the return of refugees, the use of uranium bombs and direct clashes between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. The attention devoted to the peace plans for Kosovo, the area's history and the events preceding the war, the petrol embargo and the US prisoners of war was minimal.

It can be concluded then that in the middle of the NATO air campaign against the FRY the main issue that preoccupied the Bulgarian press was the national position on the conflict. As 19 April 1999 was the day when NATO officially requested access to the Bulgarian airspace (despite the matter being already discussed in the country for a significant period of time before that) it is quite natural that Bulgaria's reaction to this formal request became the central focus of attention for the press. The print media engaged with the different aspects of the issue and noticeably allocated huge amounts of space to it, the majority of which was on the first pages. Table 5.6 presents the quantitative shares of the above identified categories.

The table makes very clear the preferences of the print media with regard to the Kosovo conflict in the middle of the NATO's air campaign. Just as in the previous period the greatest attention is devoted to the Bulgarian position. The immediate proximity of the country to the conflict zone and the implications this has for it most likely explain this predominance. The start of the air strikes pushed forward the issue of economic and environmental costs the conflict had and would have in the future for Bulgaria. The matter of a possible ground intervention in Serbia also moved significantly up among the various content categories. It is worth noting, however, that the context in which it appeared in the Bulgarian press was the one of what this possible ground intervention means for Bulgaria. Thus, when discussing the possibility of NATO ground troops entering the FRY the issue of concern was whether these troops will ask to enter Yugoslavia from Bulgarian territory which would involve the actual crossing of national territory by foreign troops.

As far as the sources for the press reports are concerned the extensive drawing on foreign sources was very obvious during this period. Compared with February–March, the amount of information coming from international agencies, foreign print and electronic media was significantly more. This was especially the case with *24 Chasa*. This could be read as an attempt by the Bulgarian press to present various viewpoints and interpretations of the events taking place at the time. However, it is also a way of compensating for the limited Bulgarian journalistic presence in Belgrade and in the main Kosovo Albanian refugee destination, Macedonia. Therefore, the public as well as private media relied on information from foreign press agencies and in television on the television footage of the destruction censored in Belgrade (Milev, 1999: 380). Thus, the articles were using information from various international agencies, in this instance Reuters again being the leader with eight references, followed by France Press (5), TANJUG (4), AP (3) and ITAR TASS (2). The majority of the pictures displayed on the pages of the Bulgarian newspapers also came from the above information agencies. On the Bulgarian side, the BTA was again used as a source of information in several cases. The presence of complete articles from Western

Table 5.6   Content categories: 15 April–15 May 1999

Content category	Number of references[*]	Share of the total
Bulgarian position	25	13.89%
Air strikes	17	9.44%
Economic and environmental costs for Bulgaria	12	6.67%
Ground intervention	11	6.11%
Bulgarian security	10	5.56%
Refugees	10	5.56%
Bulgarian involvement and participation in the conflict	9	5.0%
Reconstruction of the region	9	5.0%
Justification and legality of the international involvement	9	5.0%
NATO mistakes	9	5.0%
Devastation of war	8	4.44%
Role of media	6	3.33%
Implications and consequences for the Balkans	6	3.33%
Possible scenarios for the development of the crisis	6	3.33%
Ethnic cleansing	5	2.78%
Public opinion in Bulgaria	5	2.78%
American position on the conflict	5	2.78%
Yugoslav/Serbian position	4	2.22%
Implications of the conflict for the Bulgarian political life	4	2.22%
Russian position	3	1.67%
Return of refugees	3	1.67%
Direct clashes between the Serbs and Kosovo Albanians	2	1.11%
Use of uranium bombs	2	1.11%
Peace plans for Kosovo	1	0.56%
Area's history and events preceding the war	1	0.56%
Petrol embargo	1	0.56%
US prisoners of war	1	0.56%

[*] The total number of references is 180 as some of the articles made references to more than one content category.

newspapers during the April–May period was wide. *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *New York Times*, *Die Zeit*, *Zuddeutsche Zeitung*, *The Observer*, *The Washington Times* were quite often either cited or complete articles from them were republished. Interestingly, the Russian   (Red Star) and the Macedonian   (Diary) were also used as a source of information.

Still, the reliance on a single information source or the lack of indication of any source remained the case for a large number of articles – 18 articles out of

109 did not mention a single source for their report. It could appear, however, that Bulgarian institutions of government had improved their communication policies as the previously noted predominance of the messages of the foreign institutions was no longer apparent now. The ratio this time was in favour of the Bulgarian institutions although not very decisively – only 12–10.

As with the 24 February–25 March period, the selected 109 articles for the 15 April–15 May period were next read in order to establish their tone and the attitudes they adopted. With regard to the news items making significant reference to the Bulgarian position, the air strikes, the NATO mistakes and the possibility of ground intervention the coding used was for supportive, neutral or distance framing. With regard to the reports referring to the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war an analysis for the identification of empathy, neutral or distance framing was conducted. All the codes were used as previously defined.

The findings suggest that references to the NATO air strikes, including the bombing mistakes of the alliance, and to the Bulgarian position and possible ground intervention tended to be critical. The reports seriously questioned the rightness of the decision taken by the Bulgarian government to allow NATO planes access to the country's air space and to support the international military campaign overall. The implications of this decision for Bulgaria were carefully albeit at times quite emotionally considered stressing their negative impact as well as the lack of support among the public. The issue of ground intervention was seen through a Bulgarian lens assessing if initiated what a ground invasion will entail for the country. Consequently, the idea of letting foreign troops, most likely Turkish, to enter Bulgarian territory was portrayed as extremely dangerous for the country. NATO's bombing mistakes (as they were labelled by the Alliance itself) were stressed and highlighted every time they were occurring. To the list of mistakes on the territory of the FRY were added the mistakes on the Bulgarian territory. The economic disadvantages to the country, such as the destruction of bridges over the Danube, were not overlooked either. Table 5.7 contains a list of descriptors associated with the critical framing. Overall, of the 70 articles making significant reference to the international military intervention – air and ground – and the Bulgarian position 28 are critical, 25 are neutral and 17 – supportive of the decisions of NATO to carry on with the air campaign and of Bulgaria to support the Alliance in this. However, as this illustrates it would be incorrect to speak about a clear dominance of the critical framing, as neutrally framed reports were almost equal in number. Still, an example of the predominant critical framing are the following texts from *Duma* and *Kapital*:

> …And again pilots' 'mistakes' led to tens of innocent victims.… In the Kosovo town of Luzane a bridge was bombed while an overcrowded bus was crossing it…, between 34 and 60 people died. The survivors are only four.… Around the bus on the television screen were seen the bodies of the many killed 15 of who are kids.… Native villager told Reuters that during the attack only the bus was hit while the bridge remained intact.… NATO's initial reaction from Brussels was that they have no evidence of the bombing of the bridge. Only yesterday from Brussels admitted that a NATO pilot has hit the bus 'by mistake' – '… unfortunately the bus appeared on the bridge after the rocket was fired' (*Duma* 3 May 1999).

Isn't the desire to be a NATO member driven primarily by concern over the Bulgarian national interest, compatible with the preservation of good neighbourly relations, which is also prompted by the concern over the national interest? Is the Bulgarian strategic choice incompatible with a position of reserve, a declared willingness to stop the military actions and search for a peaceful solution? Bulgaria has the real possibility and the right to have a much more independent and flexible political position that to contain both its strategic orientation as well as the specific concerns and consequently the price of one or another political decision. Moreover, NATO leaders can make mistakes as well, to change their goals and to correct their mistake. According to Kolev NATO is changing its official goals already for a sixth time. Does Bulgaria have to follow them in every single moment? Do the Bulgarian experts who form the public opinion have to simply copy the Brussels viewpoint without expressing the particular situation of our country? Aren't they doing us a misfavour by repeating foreign arguments and in this way mislead about the real situation (*Kapital* 17 April 1999).

Critical articles appeared less often on the pages of *Demokracia* (the publication close to the governing party) and *Standart* (government-friendly overall) and much more regularly – probably naturally – on the pages of *Duma* and *Sega* who were quite sarcastic and full of hard judgements. The WAZ dailies *Trud* and *24 Chasa* remained open to different points of view and tried to include a neutral and diverse position. For the most part on their pages a criticism could be read against the NATO airstrikes and against the Bulgarian support for them together with a simultaneous negative judgement of Milosevic's policy. Still, in comparison with the February–March period between 15 April and 15 May the print media overall became much more critical in their reports. This, however, apparently did not happen at the expense of the informing style which was kept for a significant number of articles. Rather the supportively framed ones decreased in number.

The analysis of the framing of the reports referring to the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war showed that these articles tend to be empathy framed. And on this occasion this type of framing was significantly more than any other. Overall, of the 23 articles analysed 15 are empathy framed and an equal number of four each are neutral – simply informing and distancing. Again, a list of descriptors characterising the empathy frame is presented in Table 5.7. An example of the empathy frame is contained in the following passages from *Standart* and *Trud*:

Kosovo Albanians are dying from hunger and are forced to eat dogs and cats…The camps in Macedonia are overcrowded and there is no more room for new refugees. Most likely they will have to sleep directly on the ground on nylons (!!!). A train with 3000 people arrived in Blaze yesterday and tens of thousands driven away from Kosovo are nearing the border (*Standart* 26 April 1999).

Serbian soldiers tortured and killed over 200 people in the area of the Kosovo town Drenitza.… Yugoslav army units forcefully rounded-up 150 peaceful residents from the villages Vegroz, Kirez, Stukiz and Glaznele. The ill-fated ones were shot and thrown into previously dug mass graves. Another 30 people were tortured to death close to the village of Shavarina. At the same time the Serbs separated the men from a refugee column that

they surrounded near Vuchitran. There another 30 people were executed (*Trud* 6 May 1999).

Table 5.7   A selection of the descriptors used in relation to the NATO air strikes and the Bulgarian position as well as people in/of Kosovo: 15 April–15 May 1999

Critical Descriptors	*Empathy Descriptors*
NATO violates the UN Charter	Barefooted, dirty and gone through hell refugees
The military solution of the conflict is becoming pointless	Cholera and typhus burst out in Kosovo
Bulgarians don't give their sky	Left without a roof
A broken dollar for our sky	Miserably living
NATO was aiming at Pirot but hit Sofia	Thousands hungry refugees
Journalists become targets	Set on fire houses
The President chose NATO, and you?	The bodies were set on fire
NATO is not going to remove Serbia from the Balkans – we will always be neighbours	6-month old babies killed
The rulers failed to motivate reasonably...	Hundreds thousands driven away from their homes
The rulers do not defend well Bulgarian interests	Fleeing an ethnic cleansing
There is no single war won from the air	Innocent people

All in all then the interpretative part of the framing analysis indicates a critical framing of the press reports dealing with the NATO's air strikes and the Bulgarian position on the conflict and an empathy framing of the material referring to the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war.

As before the validity of these interpretative inferences is verified by applying a systematic test of the frames. This involves analysing the media texts for keywords predicted to be associated with both the critical and empathy frames and the opposite supportive and distancing frames. On this instance, the frames identified are the ones which the policy-media interaction model operates with most often, therefore its practical application is not problematic. The question of the validity of the conclusions drawn on the basis of the application of this model remains however and is addressed in the subsequent section. For the keyword search the same news reports as in the interpretative analysis – 109 in total – are examined. For the empathy/distance frames the number of times the keywords *refugees/flee*, *people* and *women and children* (as empathy keywords) were used is quantified. Conversely, the keywords *rebels*, *Muslim* and *men/soldier* (associated with the distancing frame) are counted. For the supportive/critical frames, the use of descriptors *national/Bulgarian interest*, *help*, *support* and *give the sky* with regard to the NATO air strikes and the Bulgarian position was calculated. On the other hand, the use of *do not support*, *do*

not give the sky, *against national interest* and *mistakes* was measured. The selection of the above keywords reflected the main aspects of the policy debate in Bulgaria: whether Bulgaria should give access to its sky to the Alliance or not, whether this is in the country's national interest or not, whether NATO's air campaign is to be supported or not in the face of the number of bombing mistakes. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8   Bulgarian print media coverage of the Kosovo conflict: 15 April–15 May 1999

Empathy Frame		*Distance Frame*	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Refugee/flee	32	Rebels	0
People	19	Muslim	13
Women	5	Men	1
Children	13	Soldier	5
Total	69	Total	19

Supportive Frame		*Critical Frame*	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
National/Bulgarian interest	7	Do not support	8
Help	3	Do not give the sky	8
Support	6	Against national interest	2
Give the sky	6	Mistakes	12
Total	22	Total	30

As illustrated above the number of descriptors associated with the empathy frame is significantly larger than the number of descriptors associated with the distance frame – 69–19. This supports the interpretive conclusion that the news reports dealing with the issues of refugees, ethnic cleansing and devastation of the war tended to be empathy framed. With regard to the interpretive finding that critically framed reports were the majority in the press during the April–May period, it was also confirmed by the systematic test. The descriptors associated with the critical frame were 30 and 22 were associated with the supportive frame.

   Thus, the application of both parts of the policy-media interaction model: the interpretive and the systematic tests lead to identical conclusions regarding the framing of the print media content. It appeared that during the time from 15 April to 15 May 1999 a critical framing of the text dominated in the news reports when the issues of the NATO air campaign, the Bulgarian government's support for it and the decision of the latter to allow the alliance to use the Bulgarian air space for its attacks on the FRY were discussed. In similar vein, an empathy frame prevailed when the focus of the print media were the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war.

**Bulgarian Foreign Policy towards Kosovo: Measuring Policy Certainty/
Uncertainty**

The crisis in Kosovo was perceived by the Bulgarian government as the main
challenge to the security of the country in 1999 as it had a direct impact on
fundamental – above all economic – components of Bulgaria's national security.
Since their inception, the crises in the FRY have been isolating the Balkan region
from the political and economic processes of integration and blocking the extremely
important investment process. This new crisis in the FRY threatened the region with
new economic sanctions. Not surprisingly then, in its *Annual Report on Bulgarian
National Security – 1999* the government stated that '…in the conditions of an active
conflict next to the borders of Bulgaria, the main goals are to regulate the conflict
in Kosovo, to prevent the occurrence of new tension spots and to strengthen the
security in the region' (Council of Ministers, 2000: 7).

    The policy towards the conflict in Kosovo followed this line. From its very
beginning Bulgaria supported the use of political efforts to reach a peaceful solution
capable of guaranteeing the basic rights and freedoms of all people in Kosovo
regardless of their ethnic origin. Such a solution should have been based on broad
autonomy for Kosovo within the framework of the internationally recognised borders
for the FRY. This was seen as the only way to preserve the territorial status quo of the
region. For this reason Bulgaria was against both the official policy of Belgrade, as
well as the extreme one of some of the Kosovo Albanians.

    This Bulgarian policy with regard to the crisis in Kosovo reflected the common
position coordinated between the government and the president and according to
the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nadezda Mihajlova, it was clearly in support of the
policy pursued by the EU and NATO. She argued that:

> there is no doubt that the decisions with regard to the Kosovo crisis were difficult as they
> had to be formulated very clearly and definitely. It was important to identify clearly the
> Bulgarian national interest in the policy that was to be implemented by the Bulgarian
> government, the majority in the Parliament and the Bulgarian President (interview with
> the author).

Latchezar Toshev – a member of the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign
Affairs and Head of the Bulgarian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of
the Council of Europe at the time of the events – explained the motives for the
adopted policy line by saying that '…if Albanians are forced out of Kosovo, this
will, first, destabilise Macedonia, and second, with the likelihood of the process
continuing, the whole region' (interview with the author). This was perceived as the
worst possible development – the situation to get out of control and the refugees to
remain somewhere outside of their home territory – for the whole region, and for
Bulgaria, in particular. The government policy was guided by the clear intention to
prevent that from happening, to limit this conflict and not to allow it to spill over into
neighbouring countries which could lead to a radical destabilisation of the whole
Balkans region.

    At the same time the policy of the Bulgarian government towards the conflict has
to be understood in the context of the overall foreign policy priorities of the country,

which were clearly stated and agreed upon as membership of NATO and EU. Having in mind these priorities of Bulgaria the statements of the politicians throughout the campaign seem less surprising and easier to predict and explain. Thus, it was repeated on a number of occasions that a position different from the support for NATO action would have been not only against the national interests of the country but also would have meant lack of solidarity with the rest of the world. It was vital for Bulgaria to prove that it was an integral part of the international community and a loyal partner; that it does not serve any Russian interests. This was perceived also to be the way of overcoming the negative consequences of the conflict for the region, such as its destabilising effects, that would reinforce the image of the Balkans as an unstable and problematic area and would prevent the integration of the region into the Western part of Europe. As the following analysis will demonstrate this position was clearly and consistently argued throughout by the government, giving no reasons to assume that at any stage there was a hesitation or lack of certainty as to what needs to be done.

Bulgaria became actively engaged with the conflict already in 1998. The foreign policy acts and statements of the country reflected the way the issue was framed for discussion in political circles. The situation was presented as one that offers two possible policy options: either to support the international pressure over the FRY in order to achieve a peaceful resolution, or, Bulgaria to distance itself from it, back the FRY and this way allow for the escalation of the crisis and military actions on Yugoslav territory. The latter was identified by the prime minister as the biggest threat for Bulgarian national security as the risks then for Bulgaria, in his words, 'would be comparable to the ones for Yugoslavia' (Kostov, 1998: 2).

A brief overview of the policy in 1998 follows. It was at Bulgaria's initiative on 10 March 1998 in Sofia that a joint declaration had been adopted by the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. Later, Slovenia and Albania also joined. In April 1998, Foreign Minister Mihajlova sent a letter to the US, France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain and Russia proposing that the Contact Group develop a framework mechanism to start a dialogue between the authorities in Belgrade and the leaders of the Kosovo Albanians. At the June 1998 meeting of foreign ministers of Southeast Europe, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, the Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey adopted a declaration on the situation in Kosovo. At Bulgaria's initiative this had also raised the question of the return of the Kosovo Albanians. In a joint declaration adopted in October 1998 in Antalia, the countries of Southeastern Europe – including the FRY – expressed a common position on the situation in Kosovo. The solution was based on broad autonomy for Kosovo without the internationally recognised borders of the FRY being changed. Prime minister Kostov insisted at the time that the Bulgarian government was demonstrating a real support for the government of the FRY by opposing clearly and categorically the introduction of a new embargo against the FRY and by categorically rejecting any claims for changing the borders in Southeastern Europe and thus supporting the territorial integrity of the FRY (Kostov, 1998: 1).

Similar messages were contained in the Parliament Declaration on Kosovo from 23 October 1998. While declaring Bulgaria's commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the FRY, it confirmed that in the case of peace operations, 'Bulgaria

will support them, but will not participate either directly or indirectly in military activities in the FRY' (NS, 1998). It also supported in principle the possibility for NATO forces to use Bulgarian airspace in the context of a peacekeeping operation in accordance with the Bulgarian constitution, Bulgarian laws and the Framework Agreement from 5 April 1996 'Partnership for Peace'. This is the first official document making reference to the possible use of force against the FRY and expressing the Bulgarian position on that. This declared position remained in its essence unchanged throughout the whole conflict.

The subsequent analysis of government press bulletins, speeches, interviews, and news items during the observed periods – 24 February–25 March and 15 April–15 May supports this. Initially the main focus of the official statements was twofold: Bulgarian participation in the conflict and the actual risks for the country. As far as the Bulgarian involvement is concerned there was no deviation from the position announced with the Parliament declaration from October 1998 when Bulgaria declared itself firmly in support of the NATO plan. Following the NATO question to partner countries in February 1999 to declare their interest in participating in a possible NATO operation in Kosovo[9] by stating their intentions, as well as the exact forces and means they are ready to commit, Bulgaria decided to render non-military support to NATO troops in case of a peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. The prime minister confirmed the Bulgarian commitment to allow NATO troops to pass through the country and to be supported logistically. Still, he made it clear that 'nothing else was asked from Bulgaria' (Kostov, 1999a). In an interview for the national television programme *Panorama* on 28 February 1999 he clarified that 'NATO still had not planned what exactly is expected to pass through Bulgaria. In any case, though, in accordance with the Constitution of Bulgaria and the decisions of the Constitutional Court, the approval of the Parliament will be needed for these transits' (Kostov, 1999a). What was extremely important at that stage was the issue of guarantees NATO could provide for the Bulgarian national security together with the possibility of the support for NATO to be interpreted by the FRY as an aggressive act. In response to that Kostov (1999a) claimed that:

> If an agreement is signed, then the entry of those forces will be in accordance with it. In this case there will be no risk for Bulgaria from its neighbour FRY. Still, there will be guarantees. These guarantees are already given and we expect them to be reconfirmed in the future agreement and explicitly included in it.

With regard to the second big concern for the Bulgarian foreign policy at the time – the risks to the country – the government took a very clear stand. The development of the conflict in the FRY was assessed as a source of instability creating direct danger for Bulgaria. In these circumstances the only way to protect the country and its national security was to carry out a policy of preventive diplomacy with active diplomatic moves that to block the appearance of direct threats to the country. This policy was already in place in 1998 as the number of Bulgarian initiatives outlined above illustrate. The worst possible scenario for Bulgaria remained the domino effect – a further disintegration of the FRY, a separation of Kosovo and consequently

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9   The reference is to the operation 'Joint Guardian'.

refugee flows to Bulgaria. Therefore, quick and active moves were made in attempt to stop this effect at the border with Macedonia (Kostov, 1999a).

March 1999 did not bring any serious alterations to the position of the country. It was stressed that the Kosovo crisis still posed the biggest problem for Bulgaria and badly jeopardised its economic and political reforms; that the country would suffer more if the conflict in the Serbian province just 300 km to the west of the capital Sofia was not resolved peacefully. In an interview for Reuters on 1 March the Prime Minister (Kostov, 1999b) argued this view:

> We do not want Yugoslavia's borders changed. We are for a peaceful solution and are even willing to suffer some inconveniences in connection with the servicing of the passing troops for the sake of peace in Kosovo. On the other hand, however, we cannot but support pressure on Belgrade to reach an agreement in Rambouillet. Belgrade must reach an agreement with the international community and with the Kosovo Albanians in Rambouillet. There can be no peace without such an agreement. For Bulgaria the biggest nightmare is strikes against Serbia. Because that would mean a new embargo, a new severing of links between Bulgaria and Europe.

An interesting element of the Bulgarian perception of the conflict confirmed by most of the politicians in the country including the Prime Minister himself is the belief that the possible eruption of the Kosovo conflict was evident years before. In 1995 when Kosovo was not included in the Dayton Accords the conflict in the area was already foreseeable, the crisis in Kosovo was talked about as the next one after Bosnia. Despite this nothing was done. The involvement of the international community started only after the beginning of the crisis in Kosovo. Asked directly whether the war could be evaded Kostov (1999b) claimed:

> I am convinced that the international community should have a plan for action both in the case of a successful completion of the talks in Rambouillet and in case of their failure. If there is a clear plan what should be done, a plan leading to lasting success, we will all back it and implement it. The absence of such a plan will have tragic consequences.

When the air campaign was actually launched – on 24 March 1999 – Bulgarian government was informed of the beginning of the strikes against the FRY and was provided with a justification for this action. A NATO General Secretary Solana's (1999a) declaration maintained that:

> …at this moment NATO Air Operations against targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have commenced. In the last months the international community has spared no efforts to achieve a negotiated solution in Kosovo. Clear responsibility for the air strikes lies with President Milosevic who has refused to stop his violent action in Kosovo and has refused to negotiate in good faith.… NATO is not waging war against Yugoslavia.… Our actions are directed against the repressive policy of the Yugoslav leadership. We must stop the violence and bring an end to the humanitarian catastrophe now taking place in Kosovo. We have a moral duty to do so.

What mattered to Bulgaria more, however, was the letter sent by Solana to the Prime Minister on the same day. In it he declared that the security of Bulgaria is of direct

and material concern to the Alliance. He pointed out that NATO has repeatedly made clear that the security of NATO Member States is inseparably linked to that of all Partner countries (GIS, 1999a: 1). This letter addressed one of the main concerns of the country. It demonstrated the categorical commitment of the Alliance to the security of the Republic of Bulgaria in the event of a possible NATO military operation. It was immediately used by the Prime Minister in his interview on the national radio to reassure the public – 'NATO has strengthened its security guarantees for Bulgaria, as indeed for all neighbouring countries, since one of its goals is to avoid any possible spill over effect as a result of the military operation'. He also confirmed that:

> [T]here is no reason to fear the conflict spilling over into Bulgaria. Bulgaria has not been called on to participate in the conflict in Kosovo, neither directly nor indirectly. The only thing required of Bulgaria is to show its solidarity for a quick resolution to the conflict, to take a principled position for a peaceful settling of the problem (GIS, 1999b: 1).

An emotional element was brought into the picture as well. 'As people from the region we cannot ignore this human catastrophe. These people can not stay out on the mountain slopes, in the woods, this is no solution', the PM Kostov concluded (GIS, 1999b: 1).

Solana's letter was also referred to by the Bulgarian Ambassador to NATO Noev who in his interview for the same radio stated that 'it is unacceptable for the Alliance the FRY to threaten the territorial integrity, the political independence and the security of Bulgaria' (GIS, 1999c: 3). The press centre of the Ministry of Defence as well issued a special statement, declaring that there is no direct military threat for Bulgaria (GIS, 1999c: 5).

The start of the air campaign provoked also a series of consultations among the leaders of the Parliament parties discussing the reaction of the Bulgarian Parliament to the NATO decision and working on a common national position that to defend the Bulgarian national interests. With regard to the latter the President Stoyanov (GIS, 1999c: 3) declared:

> Bulgaria has to express its clear position on the conflict. This is not a time to play on people's fears, but rather to adopt a united position in defence of Bulgarian interests… Our country will not participate in military operations, if there are such, and Bulgarian soldiers will not be sent to take part in military activities. I'd like to make that absolutely clear for everybody, especially the Bulgarian mothers. They have absolutely no reasons to worry about that.

These initial reactions to the NATO air campaign were followed by a set of official declarations and statements on 25 March 1999 after the detailed assessment of the implications of this policy on Bulgaria and the analysis and consultations on the Bulgarian position. The Prime Minister spoke before the Parliament informing the National Assembly of the current state of affairs following the first air strikes carried out by NATO in the FRY. He again reiterated the goals of the operation, to prevent the spread of further military activities in the Kosovo region, to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, and to compel Serbia to sign the peace agreement. On the essential point of implications of the conflict for Bulgaria the conclusion of the Council of

Ministers was that the present situation exposed Bulgaria to three different types of risk: political, military and economic. The assessment of each one of them showed no immediate danger to the security of Bulgaria:

> Under the worst possible scenario, Serbia would view Bulgaria as a participant in the military operation while Bulgaria would receive no additional guarantees for its security from NATO. This scenario had proved fully unjustified… Bulgaria was exposed to no military risks. This had clearly been a very precise military operation, against military targets.… at present no rail, road or water routes through Yugoslavia which link Bulgaria with Europe were blocked (Kostov, 1999c).

This statement stressed once again that Bulgaria had not been required to provide either a transport corridor or logistical support.

Following this statement, the Bulgarian position on the Kosovo crisis was clearly stated in the Declaration of the National Assembly adopted 25 March. This declaration was not supported by the opposition BSP who insisted that the document state that the Bulgarian authorities would not allow Bulgaria to be drawn into the conflict by letting its territory and air space to be used for military operations. They also refused to support the expression of solidarity with the NATO strikes. The FM Mihajlova backed the government position as the one that will defend Bulgarian national interests. The actual text stated:

1. The Republic of Bulgaria will not participate either directly or indirectly in any military activity in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
2. The Republic of Bulgaria sharing the principles of a democratic, legal state, the defence of human rights, and humanitarian values and ideas expresses its solidarity with the Euro-Atlantic community in its efforts to prevent the further deepening and spreading of the crisis in Kosovo and appeals for a new policy of sustainable development for South-east Europe.
3. The Republic of Bulgaria appeals to the government of the FR Yugoslavia to sign the peace agreement and with this to prevent further casualties and destruction.
4. The Republic of Bulgaria confirms its strategic civilisational choice for full membership in NATO (National Assembly 1999a).

In addition, a practical move was undertaken to secure the flow of information on Kosovo. The government established a Temporary Inter-institutional Situation Centre in order to monitor and analyse the crisis in Kosovo. It was supposed to collect, summarise and analyse the information on the situation in Kosovo received by different institutions, to draw conclusions and make suggestions to the Council of Ministers, and to prepare a daily bulletin for the media on the situation in the conflict zone. The information distributed included an update on the NATO air strikes, on the refugee flows – their directions and in particular the number of refugees in Bulgaria, on the economic losses for Bulgaria, on the ecological situation in the country, on the transport links with Europe and on the condition of the Bulgarian army.

Overall, the most important message of the government during this first observed period was that Bulgaria was not participating in the conflict – neither directly, nor indirectly. This is what most of the journalists wanted to know. This is what provoked

the debate among different parties in the Parliament. The government managed to maintain that this is the position of the country in all its official statements.

The second period under observation – 15 April 1999–15 May 1999 – involved a step further, in political terms, from the declared earlier commitment in principle to allow NATO forces to use the Bulgarian airspace. The debate on signing a formal agreement on that became the focus of attention for most of the time. On the 19 April 1999 the Prime Minister spoke in front of journalists in the National Assembly. This public statement was provoked by the formal request from NATO for Bulgaria to provide access to its airspace. According to the Constitution, a decision on that needs to be approved by the Parliament after a recommendation by the government. Kostov did not leave any doubts as to what the position of the government on the matter was as well as to the assessment of this position as the only one possible and correct in the current circumstances:

> [I]s it possible to say 'no,' to refuse access to the Bulgarian air space? Will the dangers be less for Bulgaria, if we refuse and take a 'neutral' position like this? If we refuse, first, we do nothing to stop the destabilisation of Bulgaria, which will inevitably follow the destabilisation of Macedonia due to the huge number of refugees, the extremely difficult economic situation, the political controversies inside the country. Second, if we refuse, we help the crisis to deepen and continue longer because we do not allow to close the circle around Milosevic. Third, a refusal means a revision of the Bulgarian position which has been declared many times so far (Kostov, 1999d).

A key element of the motivation for the Bulgarian position was, as already pointed out above, the foreign policy priorities of the country – European integration, membership in the EU, participation in the system for collective security guaranteed by NATO. Therefore, the Prime Minister argued that a negative answer will leave the country in a vacuum (Kostov, 1999d). The tricky issue of whether allowing access will mean Bulgarian involvement in military activities, as was argued by the opposition party, was also addressed. The government maintained that there is no change in the initial position of the country, that is support for the military activities, but no direct or indirect participation. 'Bulgarian military forces will not be involved in any way in military operations in the FRY' (Kostov, 1999d).

A further clarification of this position came the following day in the Prime Minister's interview on the Bulgarian National TV. In it he stressed the economic consequences of a prolonged military conflict next to the borders of the country and introduced a new element to the Bulgarian position – the non-acceptance of the deporting of refugees to the territory of the country. This decision was justified as a 'humanitarian position that presupposes that there will be no new pressure on people to change their location again and to be sent to a third country', as a stand against Milosevic by not allowing him to disperse the Kosovo Albanians outside of the FRY (GIS, 1999d: 3). Confronted with the issue of public support for the government policy (at the time two-thirds of the public was against giving NATO access to the Bulgarian air space), Kostov (GIS, 1999d: 4) replied:

> I think that the reason is fear. People are afraid. People today are afraid of what they see as a danger. People can not know all the dangers associated with every decision as they

are not informed. My job is to give maximum information, so Bulgarians can come to the right conclusion by themselves.

He then carried on:

People will understand that Bulgaria is not getting involved into the conflict, that there is no immediate danger, that this is the right strategic choice for the country. At the end we chose whether to be with the European countries or to be with the local archaic regime. This is what we are choosing between.

Following talks in Brussels in the NATO headquarters, there was more clarity as to what exactly the agreement between NATO and Bulgaria will involve. The Bulgarian government reiterated there the official position of the country and was able afterwards to offer more details on the proposed agreement. It was to have a technical character specifying the air zone which will be used by NATO and the regime for using this zone. The point which attracted the most attention though was the one relating to possible passing through the country of ground troops. The Prime Minister argued that NATO did not yet have such a plan. Therefore, this was again a question which was not facing Bulgaria at the moment (GIS, 1999e: 4–5).

On 22 April the government approved a draft-agreement between NATO and Bulgaria for transit use of the territory of Bulgaria by NATO aircrafts as part of the operation 'Allied Force'. This draft was the basis for subsequent negotiations between the two sides and the final agreement. With a Note Verbale from 28 April 1999 NATO proposed the provisions for adequate arrangements regarding the access and transit through the airspace of the Republic of Bulgaria of NATO aircraft within the framework of the Operation 'Allied Force'. The same day the Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied to this note confirming the agreement of the Republic of Bulgaria to the terms specified. This Agreement was subject to ratification by the National Assembly and was to enter into force on the date that the Republic of Bulgaria had notified the fulfilment of all its constitutional procedures. The most important point of the agreement was Article 2, stating:

The Republic of Bulgaria shall allow in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and the annexes and appendixes as provided for in paragraph 11 thereof, free and unimpeded transit through the airspace of the Republic of Bulgaria of NATO aircraft, including those transporting personnel and cargo, equipment, articles and material, required by NATO for the execution of the Operation (MFA, 1999).

The Parliament ratified it on 29 April 1999. Upon the ratification, the Prime Minister spoke in front of the National Assembly:

This choice has no alternative. This is a choice of certain humanitarian values…. At this stage to say 'yes,' to allow the air space to be used, means to take the risk of possible incidents. But there are always risks around a fighting country…. The biggest risk, however, the biggest challenge is Milosevic…. This decision is morally and politically justified and is the only correct one for Bulgaria at the moment. It is directed towards the maintenance of the Bulgarian national integrity (Kostov, 1999e).

Meanwhile, a number of interviews appeared in different media. On 23 April, speaking on national television, the prime minister argued that 'the cause for the peacekeeping activities in Kosovo which Bulgaria supports is Milosevic's policy of ethnic cleansing of Kosovo' (Kostov, 1999f). On 26 April in an article in *Standart*, Kostov claimed that he relied 'on the common sense of the people, on their ability to understand, to assess what is the least evil in the current situation and to accept a very difficult choice' and that '(p)eople should not surrender to panic and fear' (Kostov, 1999g). He also expressed his belief that the overall level of understanding is increasing: 'after the initial stress over the bombs and the deported people the feelings and emotions are giving way to rational decisions'. In the interview were also brought up some accusations against the government for 'selling the country and conducting a secret diplomacy'. Claims like this reflected the general debate in the political and public space on the correctness of the government's decision. However, according to the Prime Minister the parliamentary procedures in the country ensure that the National Assembly ratifies the documents and all the members of the parliament are aware of them.

The continuation of the air strikes and their lack of success in terms of achievement of the stated goals were grasped by the government. This led to slight shifts in the emphasis of official statements. In the beginning of May in an interview for *Trud* the Prime Minister already needed to defend more vigorously the decision to support NATO as well as to answer criticisms about the effectiveness of the policy. He maintained that Milosevic had started the ethnic cleansing before the NATO intervention, that the current situation was such that there could not be a solution without NATO, that Bulgaria was not supporting the wrong cause (Kostov, 1999h). The second significant new detail was related to the possibility of a NATO ground force operation and the likelihood of a request for a land corridor through Bulgaria. The talks about ground operations were already taking place in Europe and Bulgaria. The reaction of the Prime Minister was again quite definite. He stated categorically:

> I have said in the National Assembly that allowing land access will mean for Bulgaria to get involved in military activities and to go against the Declaration of the National Assembly (Kostov, 1999h).

Thus, the initial commitment of Bulgaria was confirmed again despite the latest developments in the NATO operation.

While the support, albeit reluctant in a way, as demonstrated above, prevailed among the ruling political elite in Bulgaria, solidarity with Serbia was dominant in public opinion. This difference between the pro-Western political elite and the rest of the population was a striking feature of the overall Bulgarian reaction. According to polls conducted at the beginning of the NATO intervention, 70 per cent of the population of Bulgaria was against the air strikes and Bulgaria's support for them (IICK, 2000: 243–244). This hostility became stronger as the intervention progressed. This reaction was not due to sympathy with Milosevic and his regime. Rather it can be seen as a result of a widespread perception of the intervention in Kosovo as 'big powers imposing their might on a small country' or because of the influence

of the pro-Serb feelings within elements of the population, especially amongst the traditional socialist party voters (Milev, 1999: 380; IICK, 2000: 244). Most plausible, however, seems the explanation that the scepticism or criticism of the majority of Bulgarians of the NATO airstrikes was provoked by the fear of Bulgaria getting involved in the conflict and of a slip in the standard of living (Milev, 1999: 380). The government itself sensed the population's attitude and the decision to support the NATO intervention was perceived to have been taken against the public opinion in the country. As the Prime Minister (Kostov, 1999i) insisted:

> Yes, they are against the war. But who is in favour of the war? If the question is asked: Is there another way? I think that 60 per cent will say that there is not. Simply, the question is asked incorrectly.

On her side, the foreign minister claimed that it is very difficult to justify a similar political decision considering the circumstances in which it has to be taken. And this is the case regardless of how strong politically the arguments presented are, as they inevitably would clash with the fate of human beings:

> We cannot simply observe when a genocide is taking place. It does not matter that it is against people who are Muslim. We have to learn to defend human life, to follow considerations of principle (interview with the author).

As for Toshev the general disapproval of the supportive policy was a natural consequence of the fear among people that this act could be interpreted by Yugoslavia as an aggressive one (which in reality was the case) and could lead to Bulgaria getting directly involved into the conflict with all the negative implications this might have (interview with the author).

Nonetheless, the government maintained that 'this is the sensible choice for Bulgaria, which does not have an alternative'; that 'the government position was not accepted only at the very beginning but afterwards, following a debate not so much in public, but rather within family, among friends and colleagues, the people have accepted the decision (Kostov, 1999h; Kostov, 1999i).

Overall, in view of the policy certainty analysis and the interviews data, it could be concluded that the Bulgarian government was certain in its support for the NATO action in Kosovo and the non-involvement of Bulgarian troops either directly or indirectly in the conflict next door. It is obvious that the general debate in Bulgaria differed from the one in Western Europe. It was not addressing the issues of whether there should be a NATO involvement or not and the suffering of people in Kosovo, although mentioned by the officials, never became the focus of any arguments. The stress was on possible implications for Bulgaria following the position the country chose to adopt. Still, despite the difference in the framing of the debate, once taken the government position was maintained throughout regardless of political and public debates in the country and the lack of support for this position among the majority of the population.

Assessing Causation

According to the policy-media interaction model, if policy uncertainty and critical media coverage are observed, combined with evidence of a change in policy, then it could be expected that media coverage would be a factor in the policy outcome. Alternatively, if policy certainty is noted and no evidence is found of a policy change, then it should not be expected that the media are a factor in the policy outcome (Robinson, 1999b: 28; Robinson, 2000b: 631). Hence, if the print media were a factor in causing the decision of the Bulgarian government, first to support the NATO air campaign against the FRY and, second, to allow NATO planes access to the Bulgarian air space, one would expect to identify substantial amounts of critically framed media coverage and uncertain policy preceding both decisions.

Conversely, if the government was certain in its policy to back the NATO military intervention and to open the Bulgarian sky to the Alliance's aircrafts and this certainty was combined with supportively framed press coverage, then a case of manufacturing consent might be present. In addition to the strong CNN and the manufacturing consent effects, the possibilities of a weak CNN effect, enabling, impediment, accelerant, potential or agenda-setting effects need to be looked at as well. Considering that the findings of the press framing analysis already identified a case not accounted for in the media-policy interaction model, that is the dominance of a neutral coverage, the following section sets out to determine what possible effects the Bulgarian press coverage could have had on the Bulgarian government's decision regarding the Kosovo conflict. The two examined periods are looked at consecutively.

Overall, the findings of the press framing and policy certainty analyses during the first observed period – 24 February–25 March 1999 – showed neutral and empathy-framed coverage together with a policy certainty in the Bulgarian government that the country should support the NATO military intervention. In terms of assessing the impact of the press coverage these results do not provide convincing evidence for any possible influence. The press extensively covered the debate about supporting or not supporting the NATO strikes but seemingly failed to put serious pressure on the policy-makers because reports were primarily neutrally framed. It questioned the government's position and presented arguments against it; it showed empathy when covering the refugees' fate and the devastation of the war. On its part, the government never altered its firm commitment to support the international community in its policy on FRY. Thus, by choosing the neutral frame for its reports – either by concentrating on the information function: facts, facts and facts, or by presenting all the contradicting arguments without taking a position on them – the print media would seem to have left itself without a chance of influencing the policy-making in the country.

This interpretation of the media role cannot be straightforwardly derived from the application of the policy-media interaction model considering its main hypotheses since the possibility of neutral coverage is underexplored in them. The domination of neutrally framed news reports over a period of time also has not been discovered in previous tests of the model by the model's author himself (see Robinson, 2001). This allows scope for questions and speculations. The model generally highlights

three frames of coverage – critical, supportive and neutral. It also identifies mixed coverage in some instances, the implication of it being that during a certain time frame there was a period of critical framing followed or preceded by a supportive one (see Robinson, 2002a). As these are the featured options it could be expected that the possibility of a neutral coverage dominating over the critical and supportive is analysed and hypotheses are drawn out with regard to the cases when this happens. However, this is not the case with the model. This absence could be first of all a result of the assumption that if the media reports are neutrally framed than they have no potential whatsoever of influencing the policy-making in any direction. By omission and implication this interpretation of the potential influence of neutral media coverage most likely is the one incorporated in the policy-media interaction model. Another interpretation could be the perceived impossibility of the media in general to be neutral in their coverage of any topic. Even more so in times of war when for them taking a certain stand is assumed to be quite natural. Therefore, the media-policy relationship is not hypothesised in the case of occurrence of a neutral framing.

This in a way is justified in view of the findings of the case studies in which the media-foreign policy interaction has been explored so far (see Robinson, 2002a). As already noted they all have produced evidence of either critical or supportive coverage. Still, even if we accept that the Western media cannot be neutral in their coverage in the analysed circumstances, it would appear that working with the same presumption outside of the Western context might not be very accurate. Could it be that the assumptions on the basis of which the policy-media interaction model is built are not necessarily equally valid for Eastern Europe? Why did the findings for the Bulgarian media coverage of the country's involvement in the conflict next door in Kosovo show predominant neutral frame? What does this say about the media in Bulgaria and the role it plays in the political life? What does it also say about the nature of the policy-making process in the country?

The policy-media interaction model hypothesises the relationship between media and policy-making in the context of a particular policy/media culture. This culture exists in developed societies and is characterised by well-established policy-making processes and media institutions. Within this context media are understood to play the role of a watchdog and are perceived – rightly or wrongly – to be participants in the political process one way or another, while remaining balanced, independent and objective. The policy/media culture that exists in a post-communist country like Bulgaria, undergoing far-reaching political, economic, cultural reforms is very different. Both the policy-making process and the media in the country are changing and coming into being; they are trying to establish themselves and to differentiate and distance from their communist era predecessors. Nonetheless, the legacy of communism is still a factor that shapes the general scepticism towards the policy-making and the media. The perception of influential and powerful media that exists in the Western world, shared by some politicians, journalists and the general public, is nowhere to be seen in Bulgaria. Whether the media are really that influential – as discussed before this remains a highly contended issue – is to a degree of lesser significance here. What matters is that the very nature of the policy-making process presupposes accountability and responsibility on behalf of the politicians

for their actions. The existence and successful functioning of this model in the post-communist setting offered by Bulgaria is all but certain. Therefore, whatever the findings of the application of the policy-media model in Bulgaria are, they cannot be interpreted straightforwardly without taking into consideration the specific context within which the examined relationship is taking place.

As the analysis of the case study material has discovered during the February–March period the dominating coverage of the decision to support the NATO air strikes against the FRY was neutrally framed. The easiest conclusion is that by being neutral in its nature it had no chance of an impact over the policy-making. The interesting question is why it was neutral. It could be that this type of coverage reflected the attempt of the Bulgarian media to achieve the standards of Western journalism the way they were perceived. It is also possible to assume that the neutral coverage demonstrated an already formed commitment to the values of balanced reporting. Or it could be that the particular context dictated this frame. The Bulgarian media could have reflected the tensions in the country's position, struggling to find the right way of reporting on a decision that clearly split the country. Or it might be the case that the tradition of directly challenging the government has yet to evolve in Bulgaria – a media culture hangover from the past? Obviously, in this instance highlighting only one of the above explanations involves a degree of speculation and risks oversimplifying the reality. A much more plausible claim could be the one that sees the appearance of a neutral media coverage by the press of a highly sensitive and important topic as a result of the working together of more than one of the identified factors.

The above conclusions were drawn out on the basis of the predominantly neutral frame of reports referring to the NATO intervention in the FRY and the Bulgarian government's decision to support this action. The presence also of an empathy framing with regard to the refugees and the broader issue of devastation of the war, would suggest that even though the print media could not influence significantly the policy-makers in terms of altering their position, it might have played a different role. By providing an emotive coverage of the refugees it could have offered an enabling factor by helping the politicians to justify their decisions. However, as the print media managed to cover not only the suffering of the refugees but also the suffering of the Serbian people (as discovered in the press framing analysis) the presence of this kind of enabling effect is questionable. The suffering was interpreted as a human suffering no matter what the nationality and ethnicity of the individuals was. It could be even argued that by putting the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbians suffering next to each other the print media indirectly put pressure on the government, despite maintaining a neutral coverage with regard to the Bulgarian position.

The findings for the second period under review – 15 April–15 May 1999 – fit better into the framework of the policy-media interaction model in terms of the dominant frames they reveal. They show a prevailing critical coverage of the NATO air campaign, the Bulgarian government's support for it and the decision of the latter to allow the alliance to use the Bulgarian air space for its attacks on the FRY. In parallel, an empathy frame dominated when the focus of the print media were the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war. On the part of the policy-makers a policy certainty was present throughout the whole period. Thus, it can be argued that

a considerable amount of pressure to change its position was put on the government by the print media. Nonetheless, the government was not moved even slightly from its determination that this might be a bad decision but it is the only correct one in the current circumstances. In the policy-media interaction model language critical coverage coupled with a policy certainty indicates an absence of a strong CNN effect. The government being as convinced as it was in the rightness of its decision could not have been swayed from its position. The print media highlighted the debates in the political sphere and provided analyses of the different viewpoints, but no matter how critical they were they were not in a position to alter the government's stand.

Thus, the print media played an oppositional role to the government leaving it with the perception that its decision was taken against the public opinion in the country. In the words of the Channel 1 journalist, Boiko Vassilev:

> There was a crisis between the media and those in power. This is because the media were on the side of populism, of the public expectations. On the other side, the ruling team had a consistent policy which did not coincide with public attitudes. In a situation like that a crisis appears. And this crisis was most clearly exposed in the conflict between the newspapers, on one side, and the government, on the other.

The public itself was, as correctly perceived by Vassilev, strongly divided on the issue and more critical than supportive. To what extent this conflict was dangerous for Bulgaria and to what extent the country was making another mistake in supporting NATO – these were the main issues in the public debates. Public opinion polls illustrated the divisions in the society. They asked different questions and their results differed somewhat, in accordance with which they were published in different newspapers. The huge amount of scepticism and criticism were clearly obvious in all of them. For example, according to a poll conducted by *24 Chasa* on 26 March 1999, 76 per cent of the participants were against the NATO air strikes, 56 per cent were convinced that the position of the Bulgarian government was wrong and 90 per cent were worried and scared of the war. A poll published in *Democracia* two days later announced that 58 per cent of the participants think that the government is doing everything necessary in the existing situation, 46 per cent doubt the success of the NATO operation and 75 per cent are against Russia's involvement. According to poll results, appearing in *Duma* in the middle of April, between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the Bulgarians were against the decision to give NATO access to the Bulgarian air space (*Duma*, 21 April 1999). In political terms this meant that even some of the supporters of the governing coalition, UDF, were against the government's decision. Thus, the standard division along political lines in the country, between communists and democrats, was reshaped by the Kosovo conflict. Just as many democrats, contrary to the UDF's position, opposed the war and Bulgaria's support for it, so too many ordinary communists disagreed with the war but acknowledged that supporting it is the only way for Bulgaria to become part of NATO and Europe. The mixed reaction the conflict provoked in the public is very well presented by the Channel 1 journalist Vassilev who claimed that:

> …with my heart I understood that 70 per cent of people wanted to tear Solana into pieces whenever they see him, they hated NATO, they hated the bombs, the war, America. This

is what I could understand with my heart. With my mind, however, I understood that the Bulgarian position at the time was right. And it would bring certain benefits to the country as it happened afterwards. And I was constantly torn between these two: my consciousness that this position is right and my duty as a journalist to show the other viewpoints (interview with the author).

The print media reflected the existing differing opinions and covered them on their pages. They covered both the debates on the political level and among the public. Bennett's indexing theory (Bennett, 1990) might be of use here and might shed some additional light into what happened in Bulgaria. The elite dissensus on Parliamentary level was always present with regard to the Kosovo conflict. It could have been noticed clearly in the Parliament debates on the issue. Outside of the Parliament, the problem was used by the different political parties as a way of gaining more votes and popularity. Noticing the discussion, the print media could not have ignored it on their pages. However, as far as those in a position to make the decision regarding Bulgarian position on the Kosovo conflict are concerned – the government, the President and the ruling coalition, they never showed any signs of dissensus or hesitation as to what political decision needs to be adopted. All of this leads to the conclusion that in spite of being critical in their coverage the print media could not do much in terms of moving the government from its position.

Adding to the analysis the East European perspective and context might further facilitate the understanding of the policy-media interaction in Bulgaria. Being independent – as most of the media in Bulgaria are currently (apart from the state radio and television – Channel 1) – the media choose what topics to cover and in what way to cover them. This naturally depends on their position in a pluralist environment of opinions, on their official biases, political commitments and the lobbying of their publishers. In that sense the media are politically independent to an extent but, as *Kapital* journalist Ivanov argued, they are 'very much economically dependent' and this economic dependency is much stronger than political dependency (interview with the author). In reality, the pro-government political line is followed only by the national TV and radio allowing all the others to follow their own agendas.

It is therefore understandable that the print media took different positions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, but nonetheless, the position of the leading weekly *Kapital* according to one of its journalists was:

…all in all one of the most objective (it is difficult to use the word objective as there is no such a thing as objective truth or opinion), but we tried to be both as analytical and critical as possible at the same time. That is, to put (the arguments) for and against on a single plane and to identify what were the implications of the conflict and of what was happening in general to us [Bulgaria] (Ivanov, 2002, interview with the author).

Naturally, at the beginning of the bombing, the conflict and its implications for Bulgaria was the number one topic, as with all wars, as during the war in Bosnia. Close to the end, the publications and the information in the electronic and print media reached the level of a military field chronicle: killed, injured, hits, dramas, and so on.

Despite this political independence of the media, most of the journalists do not believe in any media influence on the government policy in situations like the Kosovo crisis. According to Ivanov (interview with the author), the media and government almost exist in two parallel worlds:

> The media follow their own interests and the government does whatever it has decided to do. Nobody is listening; nobody is capable and willing to listen. There is no co-ordination, no interaction between the two.

And maybe this is the key to understanding why the media coverage had no practical chance of influencing the governmental line on the crisis next door. Naturally, the official line of the government was covered. The government, however, did not formally dictate the focus of the reports especially when they were coming from Belgrade. Nonetheless, as Vassilev (interview with the author) interestingly acknowledged, the reality is that journalists do not work in a vacuum – they are always aware of the government's policy and are always taking into consideration on which side their country is. His personal perception was that there existed a freedom to argue, to discuss the various issues associated with the Kosovo conflict. In his words:

> …governments are like any big company, like the advertising campaign of any big company. You let them go as far as you decide. Of course, every government will be interested in journalists who will definitely and clearly take its position. But at least this government was accepting balanced and level-headed discussions. The other point of view was always present.

It would appear from the above that media reported what they felt was needed to be reported. They framed their reports in line with their personal position on the Kosovo conflict, this position as already pointed above being determined by a number of issues. However, due to the specificity of the political life in a country like Bulgaria – in transition to a market democracy – the media world never seemed to come close enough to the political world to be able to influence it in whatever direction.

Thus, the media generally didn't have any special role in deciding what the country will do, on which side it will be. The political line taken by the Kostov government and by the President was more than clear. As the main concern for the UDF government was the orientation towards the NATO and the EU a specific position and style of behaviour was followed entirely in accordance with the priorities of the NATO and respectively the EU. The policy line was clear, the decisions were taken in a very disciplined way. In this sense, the media didn't have any special involvement. As Ivanov (interview with the author) maintained, 'they played the role of an observer – reflecting, covering what is happening and what decisions the government is taking'.

Journalists themselves never believed at any time that with their articles or television reports they could have an impact on the policy-makers. This scepticism regarding the power of the Bulgarian media to influence the policy-making in the country is probably totally justified and a result of years-long experience during the communist era. Rather, the journalists saw their power in shaping public opinion. As Vassilev (interview with the author) argued:

…the media influence, they form attitudes, but their role should not be exaggerated. There are stereotypes, there are previously formulated viewpoints, and when you show something that does not correspond to them it is simply rejected, the channel is changed, people argue with it, hate you, condemn you. This makes the role of the journalist very difficult and responsible. I personally think that the journalist's job is to destroy stereotypes rather than to establish them and follow public opinion. A journalist has to be led by what he/she has seen. There is a very important distinction here. And the journalist always walks on the edge. This distinction exists because just as he is influenced by the people, by their expectations, so they could be influenced by him in a particular moment and it is very important what he is going to reveal.

It might be the case, then, that the print media did not strongly push for a specific policy direction perceiving little prospect of success.[10]

This was confirmed in a way by the press coverage and government reaction to the NATO bombing mistakes on the Bulgarian territory. Three NATO missiles landed in Bulgaria, including in the suburbs of the capital, without taking human lives but destroying property. The print media reacted immediately showing pictures of the incidents and questioning the government's position and the guarantees for Bulgarian security. In spite of the incredible pressure, the government maintained that these were mistakes – as NATO itself labelled them and apologised for making them – and did not reconsider its position at all. Therefore, there are no grounds to claim that an impediment media effect or a potential CNN effect existed either.

Still, the door is open for a possible accelerant media effect. It is difficult to prove its existence, but the fact that the Kosovo crisis was on the front pages of the main newspapers in the country can be expected to put some temporal pressure on the politicians to react, to come up with responses as quickly as possible, perhaps before the media speculations had gone too far.

The assumptions made about the possibility of an impediment, potential and/or accelerant media effect become less convincing however if they are assessed in the context of the policy-making process in Bulgaria. Their validity depends on the presence and effective functioning of a democratic responsiveness mechanism in the foreign policy-making. While the goal of achieving this model is beyond any doubt in the case of Bulgaria, whether it was already in place during the analysed period of media-policy interaction is less certain. Establishing with absolute confidence the presence or lack of democratic accountability and responsiveness would obviously require a different type of analysis to the one conducted in this book, one that could allow shedding additional light to the above identified findings.
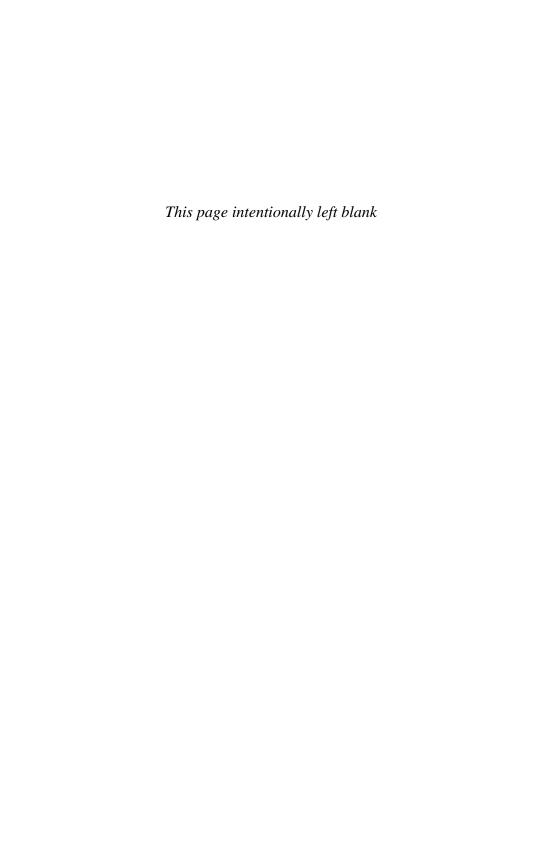
Conclusion

The analysis of the press coverage has clearly demonstrated the vast amount of attention and interest the print media in Bulgaria showed towards the Kosovo

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10 Of course, it might be also argued that media are generally reluctant to acknowledge and tend to downplay their agenda-setting role, as well as their effects on framing and political influence. The media try to emphasise their neutrality and audience-driven motives as a necessary myth to maintain their role and position.

conflict and the importance it assigned to the topic. However, it was also the case that the strong quantitative focus did not translate into any substantial influence on the Bulgarian government's position on the conflict. No evidence was discovered of a strong or weak CNN effect, or of an impediment or a potential CNN effect. The possibility of an enabling media effect was also questioned. And, as the country-specific interpretation showed, maybe it is not possible to expect any media effect on policy-making, even an agenda-setting one. At the same time, however, the other extreme possibility of media manufacturing consent for the governmental policy was also not clearly evidenced. Furthermore, although the models developed for the Western media obviously can be applied in an East European context and be useful to an extent, this analysis has demonstrated the resulting findings will not necessarily capture all the peculiarities of the context and offer a convincing case for either media influence or non-influence. A conclusion like that questions the effectiveness of the general use of models like the policy-media interaction one which might be helpful but apparently only in certain contexts. Which media under which circumstances clearly makes a difference. Similar speculation can be made with regard to the policy-making model, which seems to be able to account for the possibility or its lack of media influence. Hence, the policy certainty or uncertainty can be of significance in a democratic accountability model, but maybe its significance is less in the cases where the policy-making has not achieved the Western liberal standards. It would appear then, that the model inevitably is formed on the basis of certain cultural assumptions and hence is very much context bound.

Building on this, the next chapter offers an application of the same media-policy interaction model to the British press coverage of the Kosovo conflict and the British government's policy towards the conflict providing the second part of the comparative analysis undertaken in this study.

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Press/Foreign Policy Interaction in the UK

Introduction

The Kosovo conflict was recognised by the British press as a highly newsworthy event. It found its way to the pages of the newspapers regularly and consistently. This was more the case once the NATO air campaign started and was significantly more noticeable on the pages of the broadsheets as compared to the tabloids. Considering the direct involvement of Britain in the conflict as part of NATO this interest and attention are quite understandable. In covering the Kosovo conflict the British media had to face the already identified for all Western media problem of access to information when both sides to the conflict made verification difficult and journalists were expulsed in late March from Kosovo by Milosevic. In addition, the UK media was also challenged by the Blair government over reporting from the capital of the 'enemy' Belgrade.

This chapter proceeds along similar lines to the preceding one with the only alteration of the country in focus. It considers the interaction between the print media and foreign policy-making in Britain during the Kosovo conflict. In doing so it offers a symmetrical analysis to the one conducted in Chapter 5 with regard to the relationship between print media and foreign policy-making in Bulgaria. Therefore, it first addresses the print media coverage of the conflict during the established already two time periods – 24 February–25 March 1999 and 15 April–15 May 1999. Again, the analysis concentrates on the press attention and the press framing. Second, the chapter examines the policy of the British government towards the Kosovo conflict in view of ascertaining the presence of a policy certainty or uncertainty. Finally, the last section measures the possible media effects by combining the results of the press and policy analyses.

Press Coverage

Press Attention: 24 February–25 March 1999

The Kosovo conflict was clearly present on the pages of the British newspapers immediately before the beginning of the NATO air campaign against the FRY. This presence, however, was by no means overwhelming. The newspapers acknowledged the conflict taking place in the Balkans but did not really treat it is an extremely important event worthy of substantial media attention. Overall, between 24 February

and 25 March 1999, 360 articles in the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Financial Times*, *Economist*, *Daily Mail*, *Mirror* and *The Sun* made significant reference to the situation in Kosovo.[1] The newspaper that offered the most extensive coverage was the *Guardian*. It covered different aspects of the conflict over the 30-day observed period in 99 articles. This averages out to 3.3 articles per issue on the Kosovo crisis. However, only seven of these articles made it to the front page and this happened in the last few days before the NATO military involvement. Every week Kosovo was included in the features: 'main stories of the week' and 'the top ten world stories of the week'. Second, in quantitative terms, comes the coverage of the Kosovo conflict by *The Times* with 72 articles, which translates to 2.4 articles per day. Five articles were placed on the first page, the majority of the rest appearing in the Overseas News section further back on the newspaper pages. The *Daily Telegraph* devoted relatively less attention with 57 articles on the topic, which is 1.9 articles per day. Only two of these articles were on the first page. The financial daily *Financial Times* devoted 39 articles to the conflict on the Balkans, two of them were on the front page and six – on the second page. This signifies an average of 1.3 articles per day. The figure has to be understood in the context of the general subject area of the newspaper and this makes it more noteworthy than it first appears. Unlike the broadsheets, the tabloids were significantly less concerned with the conflict in Kosovo. The following figures clearly illustrate that. The figures for the *Mirror*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun* are quite similar. The *Mirror* made reference to various aspects of the Kosovo conflict in 34 articles, managing to average slightly more than an article per day – 1.13 articles per issue to be precise. Both on 24 and 25 March Kosovo conflict articles were placed on the first page. The *Daily Mail* published 28 articles on the conflict or 0.93 articles per day. It also gave the stories from Kosovo a front page on 24 and 25 March 1999. *The Sun*'s coverage amounted to 22 articles or 0.73 a day. The tabloid also highlighted the conflict by dealing with it on its front pages only in the last two days of the examined period. It is worth mentioning that *The Sun*'s articles were actually rather short – the majority of them being around or less than 100 words per article. Finally, the weekly *Economist* in its five issues for the period ran nine articles on the Kosovo crisis. This averages to 1.8 articles per issue. One of these articles was included in the Leaders' section. Table 6.1 illustrates the total distribution of articles among the examined newspapers.

Overall, these results show the clear division between broadsheets and tabloids in their coverage of the Kosovo conflict. While the broadsheets spotted the conflict and devoted relatively extensive attention considering the little relevance of the event to the British public at the time, the tabloids only rarely mentioned what was happening in the Balkans. It is also evident that the volume of the coverage differed only along the

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1   *Daily Mail*, the *Mirror*, *The Times* articles were obtained via Lexis-Nexis at http://web.lexis-nexis.com/professional/. The *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sun* articles were obtained online at respectively http://www.guardian.co.uk, http://www.telegraph.co.uk and http://www.thesun.co.uk/. Articles from the *Financial Times* and the *Economist* were obtained via the John Rylands University Library electronic resources information, online at http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk/eres/newspaper.html.

Table 6.1   Press attention to the Kosovo conflict by newspaper: 24 February–25 March 1999

Newspaper	Number of articles	Percentage of the total
Guardian	99	27.5
The Times	72	20
Daily Telegraph	57	15.8
Financial Times	39	10.8
Mirror	34	9.4
Daily Mail	28	7.8
The Sun	22	6.1
Economist*	9	2.5

* *Economist*'s figure in this table should be interpreted taking into consideration the weekly character of the newspaper.

type of the print media lines, the political orientation of the newspapers not having an influence on the size of the coverage.

Press Attention: 15 April–15 May 1999

The press attention dramatically increased in the second analysed period. 15 April–15 May 1999 was marked by the continuation and intensification of the NATO bombing campaign accompanied with debates about its inadequacy and the use of ground troops instead. The print media coverage this time was extensive with a total number of 1654 articles making significant reference to the Kosovo crisis on the pages of the eight reviewed newspapers. This averages 53 articles per day on the topic in the British press which suggests that the issue was treated as a major news event. The most extensive coverage again was offered by the broadsheet *Guardian*. The number of articles on its pages dealing with various aspects of the conflict over the 31-day period was 470 which amounted to almost one-third of the overall coverage, a striking figure both on its own and in comparison with the rest of the British press. The *Guardian* averaged 15.2 articles per issue. Again, *The Times* came the closest in terms of the volume of the coverage. The total number of articles on the newspaper's pages was 292 or 9.4 a day. Unlike the previous period, however, the mass market tabloid *The Sun* took a bigger interest in the topic and overtook quantitatively one of the broadsheets. The tabloid run 201 news items on the Kosovo conflict throughout the period, which averages to 6.5 articles per day. Fifteen of these articles were placed on the front page, but still the length of the articles remained extremely short – around the 100/200 words per article. This is important to acknowledge as then the figure of 201 articles and the third by volume coverage of the topic acquire a different meaning. *The Sun*'s coverage was followed by that of the *Daily Telegraph*. 11.3 per cent of the overall coverage of the Kosovo conflict was on its pages, which is 175 articles or 5.6 per issue. This figure represents a drop in comparison with the previous period under review by 5 per cent. The *Mirror* kept its standing at around 10 per cent of the overall coverage. The total number of articles it ran on the topic was 166. This translates to 5.4 articles per day. Only nine of them made it to the

first page of the newspaper. Quite similar quantitatively in terms of overall attention devoted to the Kosovo conflict was the *Daily Mail* with 153 articles altogether, 4.9 per day and 10 on the front page. Finally, among the analysed daily newspapers in terms of the volume of the overall coverage came *Financial Times*. It published 145 articles or 4.7 a day. An impressive number of 19 articles were placed on the front page and nearly half of the rest were on the second page. In comparison to the dailies the weekly *Economist* offered 52-article coverage of the crisis in the Balkans. This was spread over six issues and therefore meant 8.7 articles per issue, which again highlights the significance allocated to the topic by the newspaper. Leaders' section in every issue contained an article discussing some aspect of the Kosovo conflict. The following Table 6.2 shows the total distribution of articles on the Kosovo conflict among the examined newspapers.

Table 6.2   Press attention to the Kosovo conflict by newspaper: 15 April–15 May 1999

Newspaper	Number of articles	Percentage of the total
Guardian	470	28.4
The Times	292	17.7
The Sun	201	12.2
Daily Telegraph	175	10.6
Mirror	166	10
Daily Mail	153	9.3
Financial Times	145	8.8
Economist*	52	3.1

* *Economist*'s figure in this table should be interpreted taking into consideration the weekly character of the newspaper.

The above data leaves no doubt that the British press picked the Kosovo conflict among the array of international news available at the time and concentrated on it by devoting a considerable amount of space to the topic. This was true both for the serious press and for the tabloids. What is interesting is the predominant concentration of the coverage on the pages of one single newspaper – the *Guardian* clearly leading in quantitative terms the rest of the British press.

Press Framing: 24 February 1999–25 March 1999

The subsequent interpretative part of the analysis follows the line already established in the analysis of the Bulgarian press coverage of the Kosovo conflict. Both the subject matter of the news articles and the adopted attitudes towards aspects of the war are assessed. The analysis consecutively concentrates on the two examined time periods. The aim here is to assess the potential political impact of the already identified in quantitative terms coverage by examining the print media content.

Out of the total number of 335 articles discovered to have made significant reference to the various aspects of the situation in Kosovo in the period 24 February

1999–25 March 1999 112 were selected for the subsequent analysis.[2] The news material was classified in 17 different content categories and the quantitative shares of every category among the entire material were compared. The results showed that the news concerned primarily one topic – the air strikes against the FRY with 50 articles making significant reference to this issue. A distant second place was occupied by the direct clashes between the Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians and the situation in Kosovo. References made to this were 29. Almost the same amount of attention was devoted to the peace talks/negotiations – 26 articles dealing with this topic. These three topics clearly dominated the subject matter of the news reports. With the exception of two more content categories, that is the justification and legality of the international involvement and the refugees with 17 and 13 references respectively, the remainder of the topics appeared on less than 10 occasions each. These topics were as follows: British military involvement and the use of ground troops, Yugoslav position, Serbs military build-up before the air strikes, area's history and events preceding the war as well as the personality of Milosevic. Minimum attention was registered to the security of the Balkan countries, the information on NATO and NATO commanders, the KLA, the Russian position, the celebrities' involvement in the conflict and the Serbian and Albanian communities in Britain. The overwhelming presence of one particular topic was evident.

Table 6.3 demonstrates the quantitative shares of all above identified categories. It clearly shows the importance that the British print media assigned to different issues related to the Kosovo conflict and the subsequent coverage preferences. It is obvious that once the question of air strikes came on to the agenda it received the biggest attention by all the press outlets. The majority of the topic coverage came in the last several days of the period under review reflecting the overall increase in Kosovo conflict coverage with the nearing of the start of the NATO air campaign. Despite the fact that the NATO threat to use force in case of non-compliance on the Serb side was announced for the first time way back in September 1998, the print media started reflecting on this point to any significant extent only in the days actually preceding the air campaign. An expected presence on the pages of the newspapers, in particular of the tabloid press, was the issue of the British involvement in the conflict. The UK military participation was highlighted and looked at in detail rather than as a part of the NATO machine. It is interesting that the KLA, in particular its links with drug trafficking and consequently being financed by drug money, became a topic of two of the articles during the observed period, thus deviating from the main rather uncritical way of looking at the organisation observable on the whole.

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2   The total number of reports relating to Kosovo in the period 24 February – 25 March as already indicated was 335. This number of articles was cut to a more manageable number for reading. The articles were listed chronologically and every third article selected for analysis. That gave a sample of 112 articles.

Table 6.3   Content categories: 24 February–25 March 1999

Content category	Number of references*	Share of the total
Air strikes	50	28.6%
Direct clashes between the Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians and the situation in Kosovo	29	16.6%
Peace talks/negotiations	26	14.9%
Justification and legality of the international involvement	17	9.7%
Refugees	13	7.4%
British military involvement	8	4.6%
Ground intervention	8	4.6%
Yugoslav position	5	2.9%
Serbs military build-up before the air strikes	4	2.3%
Area's history and events preceding the war	3	1.7%
Milosevic	3	1.7%
Security of the Balkan countries	2	1.1%
NATO and NATO commanders	2	1.1%
KLA	2	1.1%
Russian position	1	0.6%
Celebrities' involvement in the conflict	1	0.6%
Serbian and Albanian communities in the UK	1	0.6%

* The total number of references is 175 as some of the articles made references to more than one content category.

Most of the newspapers had their journalists on the spot in Kosovo or in Serbia and used these journalists as a main source of information on the situation on the ground there. This was especially the case for the broadsheets, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. At the same time, the majority of the photographs related to the Kosovo conflict were on the pages of the tabloids – the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*.

The next stage of the analysis involved the identification of the 'tone' of the media reports. This required categorising the news material on the basis of the attitudes adopted. This was done along the same lines already established in the analysis of the Bulgarian press coverage of the conflict. In particular, only the articles making references to the NATO air strikes and/or ground intervention, the justification and legality of the international involvement, the British military involvement, the refugees, the peace talks/negotiations and the combats between the Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians were used as these are the topics that first, received the most coverage, and second, allow to draw conclusions about the media framing of the war. As such two categories of reports – the ones making significant reference to the decision to launch air strikes against the Former Yugoslavia and/or to use ground troops, or the British military involvement as well as the ones referring to the justification and legality

of the overall international involvement – are coded as supportive (that is regard the variable in a mainly positive/approving way), neutral (that is do not express any specific attitude, just inform about a particular event or policy) or critical (demonstrate a rather negative attitude towards the variable). Reports making significant reference to the war, the refugees and the peace talks/negotiations are coded as empathy, neutral or distance framed.

References to the NATO air strikes, the use of ground troops, the justification and legality of the international military involvement and to the British military participation as highlighted among the overall NATO effort tended to be supportively framed. A list of descriptors associated with this frame is presented in Table 6.4. The predominance of the supportive frame was substantial – more than 60 per cent of the references demonstrated support to the topic discussed. Overall, of the 83 articles making significant reference to the above issues 53 were supportive of the decision to launch an air campaign against the Former Yugoslavia, 19 were critical and 11 – neutral. Examples of the supportive framing are the following texts from the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*:

> The only honourable course for Europe and America is to use military force to try to protect the people of Kosovo.… (T)he crisis is upon us and we must respond. All that the democracies can do is to weigh, as best we can, the consequences of different approaches. Put aside considerations of the credibility of NATO, the rationale of our expensively maintained armed forces, and even the coherence of our newly proclaimed 'ethical' foreign policies. The question which takes precedence is what will best serve the interests of the people of Kosovo and, in a more indirect way, the people of Serbia (*Guardian* 23 March 1999).

> …could the West live with itself if it stood tamely by and allowed mass slaughter in Kosovo? And dare we risk the possibility that the conflict will spill over into Macedonia and Albania? Such is the case for armed intervention (*Daily Mail* 24 March 1999).

This primarily pro-war line on the pages of the British newspapers had some variations. Although in their editorial columns the press maintained their support for the air strikes and the British involvement in them, it is possible to identify two types of support for the NATO attack. Politically conservative newspapers, such as *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* expressed what Hammond (2000: 124) labelled 'customary stout support for the British military'. At the same time, however, these newspapers showed a level of caution about the wisdom and the goals of the NATO action in the very beginning of the air campaign. Thus, while *Daily Mail* (25 March) emphasised the 'unequivocal support' for the British and NATO armed forces, it also claimed it was 'difficult to contemplate the way this conflict has lurched from threat and bluster to outright war with anything but the deepest unease'. In comparison, for the more liberal section of the press, in this case mainly the *Guardian*, NATO's proclaimed moral mission was the basis for the support. In that sense, the liberal press ended up being much closer to the government's line of reasoning that the Kosovo conflict is a war fought for humanitarianism and values and not plainly national interest (Hammond, 2000: 124).

In parallel to these differences, run the differences between the broadsheets and the tabloids not in terms of their support for the air campaign, which was beyond doubt for both of them, rather in terms of the actual language and arguments used to announce this support. These follow from the characteristic features of the popular press. What happens on the pages of the tabloids is that the 'personal' not only interferes with the 'political' as an explanatory framework for the observed behaviour, but completely overtakes it. The language and the overall situation are extremely simplified; analogies with familiar events are made. Even if the general arguments do not differ significantly from the quality press in their essence, their actual presentation and interpretation is significantly distinct. An illustration of the above is the following from *The Sun*:

> Few of us know where Kosovo is. Probably even fewer care. But young British servicemen are about to risk their lives there. So will our allies, the Americans. Why is it any of our business what happens in Kosovo? For the same reason it mattered when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939. Because countries like Britain, some of our European partners and America are the guardians of liberty and democracy. We fight for the oppressed.

> The Serbs are slaughtering innocent men, women and children in Kosovo. That cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. And we have to consider what could happen if NATO forces did NOT act. The Balkans is a powder keg with a short fuse. Neighbouring countries like Turkey and Greece are of great strategic importance. Air strikes will hit the Serbs hard. But they are no pushover, with highly-equipped air defences. Ground troops will probably have to go in, too. That means more lives in jeopardy. But Nato cannot make noises and do nothing. With its 50th anniversary approaching, the alliance must act boldly and decisively.

> NATO won the Cold War without firing a shot. Ever since then it has got bogged down in red tape.… It's time to act. And when we do we must back our troops to the hilt (*The Sun*, 24 March 1999).

With regard to the framing of the reports referring to the combats on the ground, the refugees and the peace talks/negotiations, the results suggest that these articles tended to be empathy framed. Again, a list of descriptors characterising the empathy frame is offered in Table 6.4. Overall, of the 68 articles analysed 41 were empathy framed, 14 were distancing and 13 neutral. This suggests a clear case for empathy framing. Examples of the predominant frame are the following extracts from the pages of *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*:

> …villagers struggle to survive winter onslaught. Faith in the West is melting with the winter snow for the civilians of Gjare. Stranded by fighting on the steep slopes above the Llaka river, the 350 ethnic Albanian villagers, 170 of whom are younger than 18, are scratching an existence in the open and freezing in the sub-zero night temperatures (*The Times*, 2 March 1999).

> International observers reported Serb forces shelling ethnic Albanian villages, forcing thousands of women, children and old people to flee into the snow… Earlier in the week the army reduced several villages in southern Kosovo to rubble with shellfire.… Hundreds of civilians had abandoned their homes in fear of being attacked after Serbian

forces arrived in the area south of Prizren and began shelling villages. They were huddled on trailers and lorries on back roads waiting for the fighting to stop. More fighting was reported in the north (*Daily Telegraph*, 12 March 1999).

Table 6.4   A selection of the descriptors used in relation to people in Kosovo and NATO policy: 24 February–25 March 1999

Supportive Descriptors	*Empathy Descriptors*
It's time to act	Terrified families
To curb Serb repression	3,000 refugees were forced to flee shelling
If Mr Milosevic is not ready to make peace, we are willing to limit his ability to make war	Men, women and children … butchered, raped and tortured
Noble job	Tuberculosis but …no means of diagnosing it
It is Britain's strategic interest to work for the stability in the region	The ghost village of Racak
Not allow war to devastate a part of our continent	A young girl of nine sobbed
NATO has a duty to uphold its promises to the Kosovo population	The slaughter of more than 2,500 ethnic Albanians
The crisis is upon us and we must respond	A murderous policy of "ethnic cleansing"
We cannot allow ethnic cleansing again in Europe	A village empty except for the dogs
No option but military action	Families hiding in woods from fighting
Attacks … essential to stop murderous Serb leader	Innocent Kosovo men, women and children fleeing from bloodthirsty Serbian troops

To sum up, the interpretative part of the framing analysis shows that the reports were framed so as to support the decision to begin an air campaign against the Former Yugoslavia and the British direct participation in it and empathise with the suffering people in Kosovo.

The next stage involves applying a systematic test to the interpretative inferences of the supportive and empathy frames in order to verify their validity. Similar to the analysis of the Bulgarian press coverage, a set of keywords predicted to be associated with both the supportive and empathy frames and the opposite critical and distancing frames are located in the media texts. The same news reports as in the previous part are analysed for keywords. For the empathy/distance frame the keywords used are the ones established already and used in the case of the Bulgarian press coverage, that is the empathising keywords: *refugees*, *people* and *women and children* and the distancing descriptors: *rebels*, *Muslim*, *men*, and *soldier*. The number of times any of these keywords is used is quantified.

Regarding the supportive/critical framing the number of times the words *prevent*, *help*, *protect* and *save* are used to refer to the situation in Kosovo are counted. It is to be expected that these terms should dominate the reports that supported the decision to launch air strikes against the FRY as they tend to emphasise the positive

and worthy dimensions of intervening. Conversely, the keywords *not legal/illegal*, *UN Charter*, *no success* and *no national interest* are counted. These terms could be expected most frequently in reports that opposed the NATO military intervention as they highlight the absence of legal justification for the Alliance's action as well as the lack of perceived national interest at stake and chances for success of an aerial operation. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5   Media coverage: 24 February–25 March 1999

Empathy Frame		Distance Frame	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Refugee/flee	68	Rebels	36
People	67	Muslim	3
Women	23	Men	32
Children	30	Soldier	34
Total	188	Total	105

Supportive Frame		Critical Frame	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Prevent	13	Not legal/illegal	3
Help	16	UN Charter	2
Protect	19	National interest	4
Save	10	No success	7
Total	58	Total	16

The results of the keyword analysis confirm the inferences of a supportive and empathising frame to predominate the press reports that were made during the interpretative section of the framing analysis. As the Table 6.5 illustrates with regard to the empathy/distance framing the humanising descriptors were used 188 times as opposed to the occurrence of distancing descriptors on 105 occasions. It is interesting to note, that the majority of the distancing descriptors, in particular the term 'rebel(s)', appeared in the beginning of the observed period. Towards the end of the period and the start of the air strikes the use of these descriptors dramatically decreased. With respect to the supportive/critical framing the descriptors linked with a support frame significantly outnumbered the ones associated with the critical frame – 58 to 16.

    In sum, the findings of the above analysis demonstrate that an empathy frame prevailed in the newspaper articles. This obviously encouraged empathy with the people in Kosovo rather than emotional distance. A supportive frame dominated in the press reports that highlighted the worthy dimensions of the NATO air campaign and justified its beginning. The next section of this chapter looks at the second observed period and conducts an identical in both nature and sequence analysis.

Press Framing: 15 April 1999–15 May 1999

The search conducted for articles making significant reference to the Kosovo conflict on the pages of the eight newspapers under review here in the period 15 April – 15 May 1999 returned 1654 articles. Out of this total number 119 were selected for the subsequent analysis.[3] The news material in this instance was classified in 26 different content categories. Their quantitative shares were compared among the entire material and the results produced were as follows. Most of the articles dealt with the issues of air strikes and refugees. The predominance of these topics was significant with 24 reports each making significant references to various dimensions of the air strikes and the situation of the refugees. The third most referred to topic were the NATO mistakes which were subject of articles on 21 occasions. Almost identical number of references was made to the justification of the international military involvement. Twenty news reports focused primarily on this placing the issue mainly in the context of the increasing number of mistakes and the lack of visible success of the NATO operation. Next, in quantitative terms came the question of ground intervention with 19 references to it on the pages of the analysed newspapers. The rest of the content categories included the issues of Kosovo Albanian refugees in the UK and the ethnic cleansing on the ground in the FRY during the war, the devastation of the war, the peace plans/future of Kosovo. Less attention was devoted to the possible scenarios for the development of the crisis and the direct clashes between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, the role of the media, the NATO/Russia relationship and the economic costs for NATO and/or the UK. Only twice each were mentioned the implications of the conflict for the whole region, the sacking of Vuk Draskovic (the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister at the time), the implications of the conflict for the NATO, the petrol embargo, the KLA and the American position. The attention devoted to the British casualties, the return of refugees, the situation of children in Kosovo, the Yugoslav deserters, the Russian position and the chemicals in Yugoslavia was minimal. It has to be noted, however, that one of the last indicated topics – that of the British casualties – is obviously of direct interest to the media analysed since it has an impact on the UK. The discovery of only limited references to the issue could most likely be explained by the lack of justifiable concerns with regard to casualties, which is not to say that the issue was not played with by the tabloid media to invoke support for the UK participation in the military campaign.

In view of the above, it can be concluded that in the middle of the NATO bombing campaign against the former Yugoslavia the main concerns of the British press were the shape and the justification of this military involvement, that is the air strikes and/ or ground intervention, the mistakes made by the Alliance in conducting them along with the question of refugees. These were the topics that quantitatively dominated on

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3   The total number of reports relating to Kosovo in the period 15 April – 15 May as already indicated was 1654. This number of articles was cut to a more manageable number for reading. The articles were listed chronologically and every 14th article selected for analysis. That gave a sample of 119 articles. The figure of 119 was aimed at in order to achieve a balance in terms of the number of articles used to draw conclusions on the nature and the potential influence of the press coverage in the two analysed periods.

the pages of the newspapers and the Table 6.6, below, presents their relative shares in comparison with those of the rest of the identified content categories.

Table 6.6   Content categories: 15 April–15 May 1999

Content category	Number of references[*]	Share of the total
Air strikes	24	12.8%
Refugees	24	12.8%
NATO mistakes	21	11.2%
Justification of the international involvement	20	10.7%
Ground intervention	19	10.2%
Kosovo Albanian refugees in the UK	12	6.4%
Ethnic cleansing	11	5.9%
Devastation of the war	10	5.4%
Peace plans/future of Kosovo	8	4.3%
Possible scenarios for the development of the crisis	5	2.7%
Direct clashes between the Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians	5	2.7%
Role of the media	4	2.1%
NATO/Russia relationship	3	1.6%
Economic costs for NATO/UK	3	1.6%
Implications for the region	2	1.1%
Implications for NATO/Europe	2	1.1%
Vuk Draskovic's sacking	2	1.1%
Petrol embargo	2	1.1%
KLA	2	1.1%
American position	2	1.1%
Yugoslav chemicals	1	0.5%
Russian position	1	0.5%
Yugoslav deserters	1	0.5%
Children in Kosovo	1	0.5%
Return of refugees	1	0.5%
British casualties	1	0.5%

[*] The total number of references is 187 as some of the articles made references to more than one content category.

The above illustration of the British print media focus and preferences with regard to the Kosovo conflict in the middle of the NATO's air campaign highlights the dominance of the air strikes as a subject of the news reports for all the press in the country. This continues the importance assigned to the topic from the previous period under review. Compared with before, however, the question of refugees moved significantly up the media agenda to gain the same amount of attention as the air strikes.

Similar to the analysis conducted for the 24 February–25 March period the next step in this instance involved reading the selected 119 articles for the 15 April–15 May 1999 period in order to establish the tone and attitudes they have adopted. Again, the news reports making significant reference to the air strikes, the ground intervention and the NATO mistakes were coded as supportive, neutrally or critically framed. The reports referring to the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war were examined to identify empathy, neutral or distance framing. The codes were used as defined earlier in the chapter.

References to the NATO air strikes, including the bombing mistakes of the Alliance, and to the possible ground intervention tended to be critically framed. The media reported the mistakes made by NATO bombers and stressed the failure of the bombing campaign to prevent ethnic cleansing on the one side and civilian deaths, on the other. They were even accusing the Alliance of triggering the human catastrophe it was initially meant to avert. They also covered the doubts of some military experts whether the air power alone could work. The moral imperative behind the war effort was questioned as well. At the same time, the news reports backed the idea of using ground forces to bring the conflict to an end. The majority of the supportive articles dealt exactly with this issue. Accordingly, of the 84 articles making significant reference to the international military involvement – its air and ground forms and its mistakes – 39 are critical, 31 are supportive and 14 – neutral. Table 6.7 offers a list of critical descriptors and the following texts from the *Daily Mail* and *The Times* are examples of the predominant critical frame:

> The air attacks did not bring Milosevic promptly to his knees.… And the Alliance is no nearer ending Serbian persecution of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians today than it was when the first bombs and missiles were launched nearly four weeks ago. Indeed, NATO's plan triggered the human catastrophe it was supposedly meant to avert.
>
> Worse, despite hits on Serbian targets, there is no sign that Milosevic has any intention of stopping his killing machine. On the contrary, he doubtless calculates that it makes sense – from his perverted point of view – to ensure that the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo is a fait accompli before any end to the conflict. So where, then, do we go from here?
>
> Even now, when scarcely a soul believes that anything close to an acceptable outcome will be possible without the deployment of ground forces, London and Washington still insist that this is not on the agenda, and that air attacks will do the job.
>
> What is not pointed out, however, is that by the time the air campaign achieves its goal supposing it does every last ethnic Albanian Kosovar is likely to be either displaced or dead (*Daily Mail*, 19 April 1999).

> The Balkans may no longer seem so faraway, but these are still countries of which our Government knows little and cares less. So what did Tony Blair mean when he told Parliament that the war is being fought 'for a moral purpose as much as a strategic interest'? What moral purpose moved Mr Blair to become the first Labour Prime Minister to lead Britain into a major international war, involving democratic socialist airstrikes on passenger trains, TV transmitters and homes? … The 'moral purpose' of Mr Blair's war is not to be found in the Balkans, but at home. As ever, foreign policy is an extension of domestic politics. The war against the Serbs is primarily about giving Mr Blair's Government an aura of moral authority and a sense of mission. It is about projecting a self-image of the ethical new Britain bestriding the world. It is a crusade (*The Times*, 15 April 1999).

These quotations clearly evidence the varieties in the criticism. The *Mail*'s criticism is different in important respects to that of *The Times* as the *Daily Mail* alludes to cowardice in the decision not to send in ground troops, taking a moralistic conservative stance, whereas *The Times* is casting general doubt on the moral credentials of the UK, reducing them to a domestically-focused political strategy and in that sense being quite realist in its outlook. Interestingly, the majority of the supportive articles were on the pages of the *Guardian* and *The Sun*. It has to be remembered, however, that on the pages of all of the analysed newspapers the editorial line remained pro- or anti-war regardless of the opinion expressed in the comments and analytical pieces.

These results while showing more articles being critical in effect do not demonstrate overwhelming dominance of the critical frame over the supportive one during the April–May period. Rather, after a close look at the issues that were criticised, it would appear that the British newspapers on the whole supported the government and presented Tony Blair as a 'hawkish hero' against his 'wobbling alliance partners' (Trelford (1999: 59). Of course, there was opposition to the NATO bombing of Kosovo, but the main significant point by far that attracted criticism during the observed period related to whether the air strikes could win the war, that is the effectiveness of the government's strategy was questioned. There was more criticism of the NATO action for being ill-thought out and ineffective, rather than for being morally wrong.

With regard to the framing of the reports referring to the refugees, including the ones already on British territory, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war a domination of empathy was discovered. This type of framing clearly outnumbered any other. Overall, of the 57 articles analysed 37 are empathy framed, 11 are distancing and nine are neutral. A list of descriptors characterising the empathy frame can be found in Table 6.7. An example of the empathy frame can be seen in the following extracts from the *Mirror* and the *Daily Telegraph*:

> A NEW Serb bloodbath sent thousands of terrified refugees pouring out of Kosovo yesterday along 'corridors of terror'.… They were forced to walk along a narrow track through minefields and left in filth and squalor as border guards delayed letting them in. Refugees from Urosevac told how Serb thugs drove them out of their homes at gunpoint, then shelled them as they sheltered in woods and villages (*The Mirror*, 17 April 1999).

> In the border town of Kukes, Galani Cuni, 51, told how Serb police stopped her family's tractor and demanded their men. 'My husband, Muharrem, tried to stay but they dragged him away. I do not know what happened to him. They took my son Sutki. I have heard from others that they were all killed. I'm terrified' (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 1999).

Thus, the interpretative part of the framing analysis for the British press coverage of the Kosovo crisis during the 15 April–15 May 1999 period suggests a critical framing of the media reports dealing with the NATO air/ground campaign and its mistakes together with an empathy framing of the material referring to the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war.

The validity of these interpretative inferences is verified by applying a systematic test of the frames. Again, in doing this the analysis follows the steps already established and applied first to the Bulgarian press coverage and second to the

Table 6.7   A selection of the descriptors used in relation to people in Kosovo and NATO policy: 15 April–15 May 1999

Critical Descriptors	*Empathy Descriptors*
NATO blunder	Driving people from their homes
Kosovo the biggest gamble of Clinton's career	Separating families
How on earth we made an error on such a massive scale	All 900 houses have been burned down
We failed to face up to the harsh reality	Young, skinny boy
who really won?	Homes are smoking ruins
Bombing Serbia is just a half-measure	Another holocaust is happening in Serbia
The alliance remained on the defensive	Carnage and destruction
The situation in Kosovo has worsened since the start of Nato's bombing	Thousands of terrified refugees pouring out of Kosovo
Results of Nato's military intervention in Yugoslavia … appalling	Two teenage sisters … are beginning to rebuild their lives in Britain
NATO underestimated … Mr Milosevic	Misery has returned to the infamous Blace camp
NATO urged to err on the side of caution in its bombing of Yugoslavia and not to inflict undue suffering on civilians	Young children and elderly men and women were left to sleep on plastic sheets and blankets

British press coverage during the first period under review. Hence, media texts are studied to identify keywords predicted to be associated with both the critical and the empathy frames and their opposites – supportive and distancing frames. For the keyword search the same news reports as in the interpretative stage of the analysis are examined – 119 in total. For the empathy/distance frame the keywords used are the ones already established for the previous period, that is the empathising keywords: *refugees*, *people* and *women and children* and the distancing descriptors: *rebels*, *Muslim*, *men*, and *soldier*. The use of these keywords is quantified. For the supportive/critical framing the number of times the words *succeed*, *win* and *work* are used to refer to the international air/ground campaign in Kosovo are counted as these words could be expected to appear in texts supportive of the NATO's policy. Conversely, the keywords *fail/not succeed*, *lose/not win* and *not work* are counted. The selection of the keywords reflected the main lines of the policy debate in Britain: whether the air campaign was working and succeeding in achieving the set objectives, whether the Alliance was winning and whether a ground intervention was needed as opposed to whether the bombing campaign was a serious failure for NATO. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 6.8. They reconfirm the findings of the interpretative analysis both with regard to the empathy frame prevailing in texts referring to the refugees, the devastation of thewar and the ethnic cleansing and with regard to critical frame dominating in texts dealing with the NATO air/ground campaign and its mistakes. In particular, the empathising descriptors were used on a total 471 occasions as opposed to the distancing ones – 82 times. The descriptors associated with the critical frame were 61 and the ones associated with the supportive – only 12.

Table 6.8   Media coverage: 15 April–15 May 1999

Empathy Frame		Distance Frame	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Refugee/flee	287	Rebels	7
People	103	Muslim	1
Women	21	Men	35
Children	60	Soldier	39
Total	471	Total	82

Supportive Frame		Critical Frame	
Descriptor	*Frequency*	*Descriptor*	*Frequency*
Succeed	6	Fail/not succeed	42
Win	4	Lose/not win	14
Work	2	Not work	5
Total	12	Total	61

Thus, the findings of both the interpretative and the systematic sections of the media side of the analysis suggest identical conclusions with regard to the framing of the British press materials. During the 15 April–15 May 1999 period the news reports dealing with the refugees, the ethnic cleansing and the devastation of the war tended to be empathy framed. In parallel, a critical framing prevailed when the focus of the articles were the NATO air strikes, the Alliance's mistakes and the possible use of ground troops.

UK Policy Towards Kosovo

The policy line that military force would be used against Yugoslavia was consistently articulated by NATO. Military options had been considered by the Alliance since 1998 to be one part of the wider effort of the international community to find a solution to the Kosovo conflict. Because of the potential humanitarian and regional implications of continued or accelerated repression in Kosovo in June 1998, NATO military planners were obliged to produce a range of options, both ground and air, for military support to the diplomatic process. On 24 September the North Atlantic Council approved the issue of an Activation Warning Order (ACTWARN) for Limited Air Option and Phased Air Operation with the code name 'Operation Allied Force' (MOD, 2000: 56–58). On 13 October NATO agreed that air strikes could begin by actually issuing Activation orders. The Application instruction – ACTORD – was effective from then on with simultaneous approval and preparatory exercises. The decision by NATO to maintain the ACTORD was taken on 27 October 1998, with execution dependent on a further NATO Council decision. It should be noted, however, that the use of force remained merely a threat for a considerable period of time, though one constantly repeated by different representatives of NATO. It is likely that this tactic actually diminished the meaning and potency of the intention to use force.

As far as the British foreign policy line is concerned, a first key point seems to be the mere fact that Kosovo and the conflict taking place there entered the foreign policy agenda of the country. The explanation for that most likely lies in the concept of the 'ethical foreign policy' pioneered by the Blair government, particularly its Foreign Minister Robin Cook (see Cook, 1997), together with the prime minister's personal conception that built a case for a decisive humanitarian intervention – the 'doctrine of the international community'. Both these notions were discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and 4. Official documents maintained that 'Kosovo matters to Britain' although 'it is clear that there is no direct and immediate threat to Britain's own national security from the situation in Kosovo' (UKSCD, cited in Chandler, 2002: 65). Therefore, the claims that actually the British involvement was a 'moral crusade' fought for moral values, for a 'just cause', as Tony Blair himself put it, followed (cited in Blair, 1999f; Chandler, 2002: 65). Very often throughout the whole campaign the Prime Minister felt the need to use this kind of language – 'this is not a battle for NATO, this is not a battle for territory; this is a battle for humanity, it is a just cause, it is a rightful cause' (Blair, 1999i). His conviction was portrayed as the conviction of the whole British public:

> The British people are engaged in this struggle because they see it as more than a fight for justice and fairness for the victims of Milosevic's policies in the former Yugoslavia. They see that our values are being abused. They see that the stability of our continent is at stake (Blair, 1999j).

In similar vein, the Foreign Secretary (Cook, 1999d) claimed making analogies with the Second World War that:

> We cannot tolerate the return of the doctrine of ethnic superiority to Europe, nor can we tolerate the aggression that has been practised by President Milosevic's forces, without conveying a clear signal of encouragement to dictators around the world. That is why it is so important that we make a stand in Kosovo.

Not everybody was thoroughly convinced though, to quote Hume (1999) who wrote in *The Times*:

> The war against the Serbs is primarily about giving Mr Blair's government an aura of moral authority and a sense of mission. It is about projecting a self-image of the ethical new Britain bestriding the world.

This statement is quite dismissive of the notion of ethical foreign policy implying that Kosovo 'mattered' not at all because of the importance of the situation on the ground in Kosovo and the level of public support for the Kosovo Albanians. This scepticism on the pages of *The Times*, already identified in the analysis of the press coverage, started only a few days after Cook's 'mission statement' for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in July 1997 that itself appeared a few days into the Blair government. *The Times* was the first British newspaper to comment on the announced ethical foreign policy.

One way or another, an engagement with the crisis in Kosovo was present even before the direct international military involvement as Britain was a member of the

six-nation Contact Group. The Secretary of State for Defence at the time George Robertson (cited in Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 136) even insisted that the United Kingdom has been 'at the forefront of efforts to bring about a resolution to the crisis in Kosovo from September 1997 onwards'. The country's position, though, at that stage was clearly 'we do not support independence and we do not support the maintenance of the status quo' (Contact Group, 1998). When the issue of military involvement topped the agenda, the British government firmly backed the threat of use of force that was to lead to a resolution of the conflict. It also firmly supported NATO as the institution associated with these threats as it 'represented the only credible threat of force' (Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 137). The subsequent decision to launch air strikes received strong support from the very beginning as well. Indeed, the international military response both during and after the Kosovo crisis was driven mainly by the US and Britain. The British government was the most assertive proponent of the military intervention strategy and it took the position that 'defeat could not be countenanced under any circumstances' (Brown, 1999: 9). Moreover, in indicating its willingness to use air power if necessary to enforce the demands of the international community, it has stressed that it is unwilling to permit a situation similar to Bosnia to re-occur (Youngs, Oakes and Bowers, 1999: 40). The Prime Minister, Tony Blair (cited in Youngs, Oakes and Bowers, 1999: 40), repeatedly expressed the British government's commitment to the conflict as a moral imperative, outlining what he perceived to be the main flows of the Western policy during the Bosnian conflict:

> NATO was slow to become engaged in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. We tried to bring peace to Bosnia through the UN and with political good offices, but without the willingness to use force… In Kosovo, we will not repeat those early mistakes in Bosnia. We will not allow war to devastate a part of our continent, bringing untold death, suffering and homelessness.

The subsequent analysis of daily bulletins, speeches, news items and background briefings of the FCO during the observed periods – 24 February–25 March and 15 April–15 May indicates this. At the beginning the main focus of the official statements was the deployment of a ground peacekeeping force in Kosovo as a mechanism to ensure that any agreement that was reached could work, rather than the actual use of military force that to secure compliance. At that stage the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, spoke of placing very strong pressure on the Serb side to recognise that it had to have an international military presence if a cease-fire was to be guaranteed. Parallel to this ran the threat that the situation was under close surveillance and that 'there are those red lines that we set in October, they are still in place, the military presence is still in place' (Cook, 1999a). This position was expressed by the Foreign Secretary in front of the House of Commons on 24 February 1999, specifying the exact circumstances under which action could be undertaken:

> I made clear the willingness of Britain to provide ground troops to underpin the interim settlement, but that there could be no question of us or our Allies doing so without a clear commitment to such a cease-fire and to the withdrawal or disarmament on both sides necessary to make it a reality.… Last night Javier Solana confirmed that NATO

expects both sides to respect the cease-fire, and remains ready to use whatever means are necessary in support of it (Cook, 1999b).

The argument that an invited international military force was an integral part of any agreement continued to be emphasised by the British government at the core of its policy. It was maintained that the presence of such a force, to ensure successful implementation, was in the interest of both parties (Cook and Vedrine, 1999).

The beginning of the second round of talks in Paris on 15 March did not alter this position. It was stressed that, as far as NATO was concerned, 'things remain unchanged and everyone knows that' (Cook, 1999c). Asked about the position of Russia on implementing a peace agreement with NATO forces in which Russian soldiers would be included, Cook asserted that in the event of an international military presence in Kosovo 'we would welcome Russian participation and I am hopeful that if we get agreement Russia will wish to be present in just the same way as it works alongside NATO in Bosnia' (Cook, 1999c).

With the Kosovo Albanians signing an agreement and the refusal of Serbs to do so, the air strikes became the core issue of the official statements of the British government. They were certainly the main focus of interviews given to different media. For example, on 20 March 1999 the Foreign Secretary, answering a journalist's question on whether there was a reconsideration of the decision to use air strikes, replied:

> If there is no progress then we are looking at a time scale of a matter of days in which action would begin, and those preparations are now underway, as indeed can be seen on the ground at present with the withdrawal of the (international monitors) (Cook, 1999d).

Britain's position was further clarified by Blair in his statement in the House of Commons on 23 March 1999, a day before the beginning of air strikes. He not only confirmed the readiness of Britain, together with its NATO allies, to take military action on the assumption that there was no change in Milosevic's position and the repression in Kosovo by Serb forces continued. He also provided the justification for this position. The argument focused on a number of factors including the need to avert a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo; the desire to avoid a spill over of instability and civil war from one part of the Balkans over the whole of it and as a consequence affect the rest of Europe too; and the necessity to defend the strategic interests of Europe as a whole. To quote Blair:

> We must act: to save thousands of innocent men, women and children from humanitarian catastrophe, from death, barbarism and ethnic cleansing by a brutal dictatorship; to save the stability of the Balkan region, where we know chaos can engulf all of Europe. We have no alternative but to act and act we will, unless Milosevic even now chooses the path of peace (Blair, 1999a).

An interesting element of the policy line at that point is the reference made to the British people. The responsibility of the government to justify such action was stressed when putting its forces into battle. Blair (1999a) defended the official

position by arguing that the consequences of not acting were more serious for human life and for peace in the long term.

British government's position had the full backing of most of the members of the House of Commons including the representatives of the oppositional Conservative and Liberal Democratic Parties. William Hague, the Leader of the Conservatives at the time (cited in Youngs, Oakes and Bowers, 1999: 40; Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 137), declared on 23 March his party's 'wholehearted support' for the British forces 'who might have to take part in the NATO action'. He went even further than simply supporting the government's action by actually expressing support for the use of ground troops. However, he did note that:

> Although we support the use of ground troops to implement a diplomatic settlement, we shall not support their use to fight for a settlement.

A hint of warning about the potential risks of military action came from Menzies Campbell, Foreign Policy spokesman for The Liberal Democrats (cited in Youngs, Oakes and Bowers, 1999: 41), who while declaring his support insisted on not underestimating the risks of casualties: 'If air strikes prove to be necessary, those who advocate them and those who support them – as I do – might have to live with some extremely painful consequences'.

Still, some opposition to the proposed use of force by NATO against the FRY has been expressed inside the House of Commons on the grounds of breaking the international law. An example of that is the statement made by Tony Benn (who has long had connections to the Serbian left dating from the Second World War) again on 23 March (cited in Youngs, Oakes and Bowers, 1999: 41):

> An ultimatum has been announced amounting to an all-out air war and possibly a ground war against a member state of the United Nations which under Article 51 has the right to self-defence. By doing so, the British government and other NATO governments are defying the charter, to which we are committed and breaking international law.

Nonetheless, voices like that remained a minority and seemed to have represented not a serious challenge to the government's position reiterated by Tony Blair and his ministers. According to the Prime Minister, the FRY was in breach of the UN SC Resolutions 1199 and 1203 and in view of that NATO had to act to avert a humanitarian disaster (Youngs, Oakes and Bowers, 1999: 41). According to Robertson (cited in Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 137):

> We are in no doubt that NATO is acting within international law and our legal justification rests upon the accepted principle that force may be used in extreme circumstances to avert a humanitarian catastrophe.

In effect, this position was nothing new. It followed the logic of a Foreign and Commonwealth Office note of October 1998 circulated among the NATO allies which announced the UK's view. It clearly indicates that the military option was seriously considered and approved by the UK long before it was officially announced as an accepted policy line:

…as matters now stand and if action through the Security Council is not possible, military intervention by NATO is lawful on grounds of overwhelming humanitarian necessity (cited in Roberts, 1999: 106).

Apart from the humanitarian logic of the air strikes a geopolitical one was identified and articulated as well. This meant the recognition of, to quote Blair (cited in Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 137), 'the possibility of re-igniting unrest in Albania, of a destabilised Macedonia, of almost certain knock-off effects in Bosnia, and of further tension between Greece and Turkey'. Therefore, it was argued that 'strategic interests for the whole Europe are at stake'.

On the day of the launch of the air campaign both Blair and Cook gave interviews to various sections of the media while John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, addressed the House of Commons. Understandably, the main stress was the air campaign and the policy line was exactly the same. For example, Cook (1999e) in an interview for *Sky News* asserted that '[w]e cannot allow that humanitarian disaster to continue and we cannot allow President Milosevic to shatter the credibility of NATO'. Blair (1999b) continued the line of argument developed by him the previous day and highlighted the participation of British troops in the NATO forces handling the air strikes:

> I can confirm that NATO air strikes against Serb forces have begun and that UK forces are engaged in this action. Any political leader thinks long and hard before committing forces to action and the inevitable risks that are attached to it. I would not take this course if I did not think it was the right thing to do.

A much more detailed explanation for the decision to support the beginning of the air strikes was provided by Prescott in his speech to the Commons. To illustrate this, here follows an extract from it:

> The NATO military action, which has the full support of all 19 member states, is intended to support the political aims of the international community. It is justified as an exceptional measure to prevent an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe.… Two United Nations Security Council resolutions, 1199 and 1203, underpin our actions.… I would remind the House that the decision to initiate air strikes was taken last night only after it became clear that the final diplomatic effort in Belgrade had not finished with success and that all efforts to achieve a negotiated political solution to the Kosovo crisis had failed.… Military force is now the only option.… NATO's position is clear, and was set out in statement of 30 January. We seek to bring an end to the violence in order to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and support the completion of negotiations on an interim political settlement.… Neither NATO nor the United Kingdom is waging war against the people of Yugoslavia. We will make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. Our objective is to reduce the human suffering and violence against the civilian population of Kosovo. We seek to bring to an end the human tragedy now unfolding (Prescott, 1999).

It was only after the commencement of the air strikes that the possible use of ground forces to follow up the action from the air appeared in the media. The question of fighting a ground war was touched upon in an interview with Cook on 24 March 1999. To a journalist's question, 'Is it not the case that after any air campaign, ground

forces will need to go into Kosovo, perhaps into battle?', the Foreign Secretary offered a very clear answer: 'No – we have made it quite plain that there is no prospect of us committing ground forces to invade Kosovo, to fight their way in' (Cook, 1999e).

This political stand, however, did not last long as eventually the British government was among the very few to seriously entertain the idea of a ground intervention, a question that became a party political issue in the country itself (Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 145). Blair was clearly determined to get involved on the ground and as Duke (Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 144) puts it, the willingness to 'push the envelope' and to use whatever was necessary to get the job done' emerged from London.

The following look at the government's policy in the period from 15 April to 15 May 1999 provides the details. Almost a month after the beginning of the air campaign and after a number of bombing mistakes the British government remained unmoved in its position. Even on the day after the bombing by NATO of a refugee convoy on the road from Prizren to Djakovica, the UK officials were not prepared to back off. The apparent mistake leading to the loss of human lives on the side of Kosovo Albanians – the ones who were supposed to be protected – was used to attack Milosevic rather than admit their own responsibility and consider altering the military approach. At a press conference given in the Ministry of Defence on 15 April the Foreign Secretary (Cook, 1999f) vigorously argued that:

> If NATO planes were responsible for civilian loss of life, that is something that would cause us deep concern. But I have to say that I will not accept the criticism that has been emanating loudly from Belgrade, from the very people who organised the mass ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, who have caused thousands of civilian deaths in Kosovo and who have displaced from their homes hundreds of thousands of people in Kosovo, not through any miscalculation or misjudgement, but by deliberate programmed intent. How dare they now produce crocodile tears for people killed in the conflict for which they themselves are responsible.

This opportunity was also used to declare the continuation of commitment to the military campaign until five objectives are met – that the killing stops; that the troops are withdrawn; that the refugees are allowed to return; and that they are protected by an international security force that will give them the confidence of their own safety. No compromise was envisaged on these objectives. They were the same ones that were approved by the G8 foreign ministers at their meeting in Bonn and afterwards repeated in response to the Yugoslav proposal of withdrawal of troops in the beginning of May (FCO, 1999; Cook, 1999n; Cook, 1999o). The grounds for that were again based in the notions of morality and ethics, to quote Cook once more (1999b):

> Any compromise would be a betrayal of the refugees, and would leave them a dispossessed people without a home, without a state and without hope. And any compromise would be a reward to President Milosevic's brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing. I have heard it argued that the problem should have been resolved by dialogue and not by military action. I can only say to them that every opportunity was given for dialogue to work.

In an interview for NBC answering a question on possible negotiation with Milosevic, Blair (1999g) advocated the same stand:

> if you are asking 'Is it possible to have a political and diplomatic solution,' it's always possible – but it's possible only on the basis of the demands of NATO being met. But, you know, we tried for months to get a peaceful political solution to this, we tried time and time again but we found every time Milosevic broke his word, carried on with this ethnic-cleansing policy.

Still, it was acknowledged that despite the efforts to avoid civilian casualties, 'it is simply not possible to conduct a military campaign of the intensity needed and at the same time guarantee that there will be no civilians killed. To pretend otherwise would be dishonest' (Blair, 1999g). Similar was the response to the 'mistaken attack on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade' (Cook, 1999m). Again, to quote Blair (1999l), '…though we regret mistakes, when they are made they will not deter us from the path we are set on, the strategy that is working'. In addition, however, he had to make the point that despite these deaths of innocent people following NATO mistakes 'our approach is in stark contrast to that of Milosevic and his military and para-military thugs'.

Nonetheless, the resolve to continue with the military action until the conditions of NATO were met was in place and the government ministers used every opportunity to announce it. For example, in an address to Serbian people from 27 April Cook (1999h) put further pressure on Milosevic by outlining the options in front of him – either to continue to fight or to call a cease-fire – and by claiming that as 'Milosevic gets weaker, NATO gets stronger. Every passing day brings more NATO planes into action'.

The daily briefings of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) (2000) kept on informing about the situation in Kosovo, including the latest figures on the number of refugees, the condition of the refugee camps and the plans for military assistance to the refugees. Cook in the House of Commons addressed all these issues and did not miss to stress that it was the desire of the refugees to return back to Kosovo and to re-build their homes there rather than being dispersed to different parts of the world (Cook, 1999b). In effect, this was the actual British position on the subsequent fate of refugees. In an interview for SKY TV in May the Foreign Secretary was confronted with the issue of the actual number of refugees to enter the UK. While denying any change of policy assumed from the change in the actual numbers of refugees to be taken – from 320 in total up until that point to 1,000 a week – he insisted on Britain willing to take 'some thousands of the Kosovo Albanians' (Cook, 1999k). Blair also devoted considerable attention in all his speeches, interviews and press conferences to the situation of the refugees (Blair, 1999k; Blair, 1999m). Parallel with the issue of refugees was run the issue of war crimes committed in Kosovo and the British determination to bring the responsible ones to justice was reiterated on every occasion (Cook, 1999c). The Prime Minister used very emotive language when addressing the brutality in Kosovo and expressing the UK's commitment – '…history will not forget the terrible crimes of this regime. We know who the killers are. They will not escape justice. They will be called to account' (Blair, 1999k).

An interesting issue which was quite often brought to the foreground was the one of information that is reaching the people in Yugoslavia and the propaganda used by Milosevic. British politicians asserted on numerous occasions that the 'truth' was not available to Yugoslav people. As Cook (1999f; 1999g) put it, the British government was engaged in a 'struggle to get the truth into Yugoslavia'. An essential part of this was the increase in the Serbian programming of the BBC World Service, decided towards the end of April – in effect, a BBC action prompted by the government concerns:

> The truth is feared as much as bombs by the Belgrade government. President Milosevic has a long history of suppressing independent media, of making TV and radio a family business, and of starving his people of the truth by feeding them a diet of lies. The only thing that has changed since the conflict began is the intensity of the oppression and the desperation of the lies.… Britain has made a great effort to combat these lies and get the truth into Yugoslavia.

Cook (1999i) clearly accused Milosevic on a number of occasions of covering-up the truth, of sacking people who were telling the truth, of having 'the same contempt for freedom of speech that he has shown in his contempt for every other basic human right in Kosovo'.

However, the question of the truth was addressed and handled by the British government not only in the Serbian propaganda context. Blair (1999m) brought into play the national media as well by highlighting the present reality of 'the media age, the era of 24-hour news, in which events are subject to instant and relentless analysis and commentary'. While asserting that he was not attacking the media, the Prime Minister actually engaged with the very logic of the news process and the very essence of the news when making the point that the Kosovo Albanians are overlooked by the media:

> (O)nce you've reported one mass rape, the next one's not so newsworthy. See one mass grave, you've seen the lot. This is a dangerous path, and it is one that benefits the Serbs. The reporter said the story told by the refugees became repetitive. That is because the Serbs follow a pattern. News doesn't like patterns. It likes news.… we must resist the notion that unless something is on film, it's not news. No pictures, no news.

This way, the government's perception of the way the media did their job in the Kosovo conflict became apparent. Despite the attempt to avoid criticisms and accusations, the very fact that Blair felt it necessary to engage with the issue indicates the concerns on behalf of the officials with regard to the media – both TV and print – coverage. The Prime Minister blamed the media for failing to give prominence to atrocity stories supplied by British ministers and in that sense to the overall government line. He put this down to 'compassion fatigue' (Blair, cited in Trelford, 1999: 58). His press secretary, Alastair Campbell, attacked the British media much stronger. He criticised journalists for allowing themselves to be influenced by propaganda from Belgrade and letting NATO bombing errors to dominate the news agenda rather than the brutality inside Kosovo:

The Serb lie machine required us to be aggressive too, when the Western media got itself into a mindset that the only show in town was "NATO blunders" (Campbell, cited in Lynch, 1999: 50).

Thus, Campbell (cited in Trelford, 1999: 57) accused the media of promoting a 'moral equivalence between ethnic cleansing and a stray bomb that accidentally killed civilians'. The most vivid example of the reaction of the British government to reports it found unfavourable was the response to John Simpson's reports from Belgrade. In a way his column in *The Sunday Telegraph* in early April, casting doubts on the effectiveness of the bombing campaign, initiated a government campaign, first against him personally and then against the media in general. In his article Simpson (cited in Tait, 1999: 40) claimed that 'so far, at any rate, NATO is not winning this war'. The official response was quick. The Foreign Secretary advised journalists remaining in Belgrade, referring primarily to Simpson, to consider whether they should not leave, 'because censorship prevents them from telling the truth about what is happening in Kosovo', while the Prime Minister told the House of Commons that Simpson's reports 'were compiled under the instruction and guidance of the Serbian authorities' (Cook and Blair, cited in Goff, 1999: 25). This indirectly allows to draw conclusions regarding the government's perception of the media and their coverage of the different aspects of the conflict in Kosovo. During the April–May period the British government clearly interpreted the media coverage as undermining the war effort and a degree of tension between the politicians and the media was to be seen.

Towards the end of April the idea of an invasion by ground troops started entering the public sphere and a number of discussions on it began appearing. Naturally, it was featured in the press conferences and in the interviews with government ministers and understandably with the Prime Minister himself. Up to that point in time two main themes were present – the resolve of NATO to complete its task and the confidence that the campaign is proving effective. On 21 April Blair (1999d) was still defending the air campaign claiming that 'it is working and will work'. Robertson (1999a) two days earlier maintained 'that our cause is right and that we are winning. NATO's air campaign is succeeding in severely weakening and disrupting Milosevic's repressive capability and we are exacting a heavy price for his ethnic cleansing activities'. The Minister for Armed Forces, Doug Henderson (1999), also asserted on 22 April that 'our actions have been effective. NATO power has severely weakened and disrupted the military machine and we will continue to intensify the air strikes'. However, the Prime Minister was already hinting at what might follow by suggesting that '…we of course keep all options under review'. And this statement of his was repeated almost word for word by his government ministers in their public appearances. In an interview in Washington on 23 April Blair had to answer questions regarding the possible use of ground troops. He did not commit himself to any definite response but simply repeated himself from several days previously by saying:

The position, as I have set it out in the last few days, is the same as the Secretary-General of NATO, Mr Solana, which is that we should plan and assess all options, but the air campaign continues and it is important that we make it effective (Blair, 1999f).

The necessity of defending the air strikes was already present as their apparent lack of success in achieving the goal they were intended to achieve – the end of ethnic cleansing – was evident. That is why questions of the sort 'The air campaign has essentially not worked, has it?' were coming from different directions forcing the government to respond accordingly. These criticisms were even more important considering the time when they became really powerful – the NATO's 50th Anniversary summit in Washington, 23–25 April 1999. This summit effectively became a tribune for defending the NATO action in which Blair, Cook and Robertson played their part (Cook and Robertson, 1999a; Cook and Robertson, 1999b; Cook and Albright, 1999). Upon their return to the UK, statements were made to the media which brought to the front the issue of the use of ground force. Robertson (1999b) not only re-confirmed the success of the campaign so far and the British commitment to provide additional support:

> NATO's air campaign has been highly effective. Milosevic's forces of repression are being taken apart bit by bit, faster and faster, and at Washington we agreed to provide the Supreme Allied Commander Europe with the additional tools and authority that he requires to finish the job, and we in Britain will look positively at any request from Saceur for additional air assets he may require, and with additional air power, NATO can attack the Serbian war machine 24 hours a day.

He also publicly commented on the ground invasion option:

> The decision by the Secretary-General to up-date the ground options is a sensible contingency measure. There is no intention to mount a wholesale organised opposed invasion of Kosovo, but it is sensible to re-examine our existing plans for a ground deployment in the light of changing circumstances in the region, and that is what the Supreme Allied Commander is doing.

In his statement on the NATO's 50th Summit the Prime Minister re-affirmed the demands that were already formulated and supported by Britain: Milosevic must withdraw his troops and paramilitaries; an international military force must be deployed and the refugees returned in peace and security to their homeland (Blair, 1999h). Britain approved the intensification of the air campaign through expansion of the number of aircraft and targets, as well as increasing the economic measures against Belgrade. In particular, an embargo on oil was agreed. The Prime Minister could not avoid the issue of ground troops and he firmly reconfirmed his previous position:

> As I said to the House of Commons last week, the difficulties of a land force invasion of Kosovo against un-degraded Serb resistance remain.… It was agreed at the Summit that the Secretary-General of NATO and the military planers should now update their assessments of all contingencies. Meanwhile the build-up of forces in the region continues.

While making clear its stand on the Kosovo conflict the British government also had to clarify its position with regard to the neighbouring to the conflict countries as well as, and even perhaps more significantly, with regard to Russia. The position of Russia – non-interference in the Balkan crisis and opposition to the NATO air

campaign – was noted by the UK. However, the British position remained within the frame of 'not allowing in Europe a policy of ethnic cleansing to go unchecked on our borders', despite the Russian disagreement (Blair, 1999c). This is not to say that possible ways of collaborating with Russia were not sought. Quite on the contrary, acknowledging the importance of the country on the international scene and the 'considerable, significant part to play in bringing this dispute to an end' efforts were made to achieve agreement. Cook (1999h) elaborated on this by indicating the move in the Russian position towards accepting an international military presence in Kosovo:

> We are very keen for Russia to be part of the solution to the Kosovo crisis, and we have throughout the last five weeks made clear that we want Russia to join us in trying to find a way to enable the refugees to return under international protection, which is our key objective…They are now willing to recognise that that international presence, to be credible, had to be a military presence.

A 'breakthrough' with Russia – an agreement on common grounds: the principles on which any settlement of the Kosovo conflict must be based – was announced on 6 May when British officials were quick to send the message to Belgrade that 'Russia is now working with us to find solutions that secure our objectives and Belgrade will now understand that it cannot continue to stand alone against the rest of the world' (Cook, 1999l); Cook, 1999n).

As far as the neighbouring countries are concerned, it was the Prime Minister who visited the capitals of Romania, Macedonia and Bulgaria in order to declare his country's support and commitment to the region (Blair, 1999j). For example, on 3 May in the Stenkovec Refugee camp in Macedonia Blair (1999i) insisted that

> We [the UK] are doubling the amount of money, British aid, that we will give from 20 million to 40 million pounds, and we are also making arrangements to help by taking more refugees from here to our own country as well as helping in making arrangements for these camps to be stabilised and improved here.

And as with any other official British message throughout the bombing campaign the messages to the Balkan countries reiterated the humane and ethical dimensions:

> …our commitment to defeating this policy of ethnic cleansing, our commitment to allowing these people to return to their homes in peace – that commitment is total, and we will do whatever we can to make sure that these people, innocent people, who have been driven from their homes at the point of gun, are allowed by the world community acting together back to their homeland, back to Kosovo, back into their towns and their villages and then we will help them to rebuild their future in the way they need (Blair, 1999i).

Towards the end of the observed period with the bombing campaign going on for almost two months the questions of its length and justification, of the mistakes during it, of the civilian casualties on the side of the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs but not among the NATO troops were more and more on the agenda. The Prime Minister had to respond to journalists' questions which he did without any hint of hesitation in his position and without any alternations of this position. In essence, he claimed

again that the war was 'expected to take some time because Milosevic has got a fairly large army inside Kosovo, and he is prepared to use any methods at all in order to drive the people out'; that he 'personally find(s) no difficulty in justifying it [the war] at all'; that 'if people want a war without any mistakes, any civilian casualties, any errors that are made, then that is not a very realistic assessment of war'; that 'when our pilots go and fly these missions night after night, they are taking their lives in their hands'. The determination 'to carry on until we see it through' was as clearly and resolutely manifested as ever before (Blair, 1999n).

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that British policy never deviated significantly from the line that the air strikes should be launched if Serbian repression in Kosovo continued in order to avert a humanitarian disaster. Britain had little doubts about the legality of its actions or about the political necessity of bypassing the UN SC. Overall, there were no indications of policy uncertainty at any single stage (that is wavering, inconsistency or no policy line). Rather, the policy line that the air campaign should be initiated was consistently articulated. This indicates the existence of a high level of policy certainty.

Once the air campaign started, the support for it by the British government was overwhelming. It was defended on every possible occasion on the grounds of morality and humanity. The Prime Minister (Blair, 1999m) took full responsibility for his decision, claiming that he has thought it through and believed it to be right and that 'the longer it goes on, and the more we hear of the nature of the Milosevic regime and the atrocities committed, the more convinced I become of the rightness of our course'. There was never hesitation as to what the government's stand should be. It was repeated continuously using every opportunity to do so. This policy certainty was coupled with a consistent strong public support for military action against the FRY. Only at the times of mistaken bombings of civilian targets did the support drop. According to a poll conducted between 6 and 22 May 1999, 54 per cent of the asked were in favour and 33 per cent were opposed to the military action. Even the idea of a ground intervention managed to receive a 51 per cent support (Duke, Ehrhart and Karadi, 2000: 138).

Assessing Causation

When brought together, according to the policy-media interaction model used here, the media and policy stages of the analysis allow the drawing of conclusions about possible media effects. Before assessing the causal links between print media coverage and foreign policy-making, however, a brief reminder of the main predictions of the model is needed. Thus, if policy uncertainty and critical media coverage are observed together with an evidence of a change in policy, then it could be expected that media coverage would be a factor in the policy outcome. On the other hand, if policy certainty is observed with no evidence of a policy change, then it should not be expected that the media are a factor in the policy outcome (Robinson, 1999b: 28; Robinson, 2000b: 631). Hence, if the print media were a factor in causing the decision first, to begin the air strikes against the Former Yugoslavia and then to continue with the air campaign regardless of the number of mistakes and the

arguments for ground intervention, one would expect to identify substantial amounts of critically framed media coverage and uncertain policy preceding the decisions in question. However, if the relationship between the media coverage and the decisions to launch and continue with the air strikes is to be described as one of manufacturing consent, the likelihood is that a certain policy line was supplied to the media after the decision to intervene militarily and this was combined with supportively framed media coverage. Then, what do the findings for the two analysed periods suggest for the media-foreign policy relationship in Britain? A look at the two periods follows.

The findings of the foregoing analysis for the period 24 February–25 March 1999 indicate the co-existence of a clear policy, a supportive media coverage and a NATO decision to launch an air campaign against Yugoslavia, one fully supported by Britain. Policy certainty existed throughout the whole period under scrutiny and there was no evidence that policy changed. NATO began assessing and developing a full range of options for operations that 'might become necessary to reinforce or facilitate efforts to achieve a solution' to the conflict in Kosovo long before the actual decision to use force against the FRY was taken (MOD, 2000: 56). However, the threat that force would be used in case of non-compliance was articulated from the very moment when the Kosovo conflict appeared seriously on NATO's agenda. Of course, it took NATO months to transform this threat into a real decision and action and this may account for the fact that air strikes became an obligatory part of the journalists' agenda only in the lead up to the launch of the air campaign. Before that they were only mentioned in passing and not as the focus of reports. But because NATO could afford neither to lose credibility nor to have its adherence to humanitarian norms called into doubt, the policy line in favour of air strikes was never questioned. As the analysis makes clear, the British posture followed the official position of NATO. The statements of Blair and Cook confirm this.

British print media coverage of the Kosovo conflict during this period – both that of the quality and of the tabloid press – followed the official agenda. Journalists framed reports in a particular way. The reports were overwhelmingly in support of the decision to intervene militarily. This was not necessarily undertaken by arguing overtly in favour of the intervention. Rather news reports generally empathised with the suffering people in Kosovo and thus produced somewhat more nuanced coverage that favoured the policy to intervene in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, which was in any case the official explanation of the policy line. This is not to say that there was no reporting of views both for and against the intervention as critical articles did appear on the pages of the newspapers. But in general, as the findings indicate, the news media did not function very effectively as a watchdog and certainly did not seriously challenge the government's policy.

The theoretical insight of the policy-media interaction model suggests that policy-makers, in the presence of policy certainty, would have been resistant to media influence (Robinson, 2000b: 631). As such, the findings here support that aspect of the model which predicts that when there exists policy certainty media coverage is unlikely to influence policy outcomes. In short, rather than helping cause the decision to launch air strikes in the case of Kosovo, media coverage actually seems to have manufactured consent for the policy of intervention.

It is also possible to argue the existence of a media enabling effect since the presence of empathy framing of the Kosovo Albanians on the ground could have assisted the policy-makers in their justification of the air campaign undertaken to avert a humanitarian disaster.

The second analysed period showed critical and empathy-framed coverage combined with a policy certainty in the British government that the air campaign should continue despite the mistakes and a ground intervention should be considered and undertaken if needed. In terms of assessing overall media effects these findings indicate a serious criticism of the air involvement and a pressure to use ground forces from the print media that were met with strong commitment to the chosen policy line. The print media stand was against the official policy and its criticism of the air war-only strategy reached its height in the second half of April. The press questioned whether the air war was working and whether there should be an escalation to the use of ground troops. Mermin's (1996: 191) 'norm of journalism' could be applied here and allows for interpretation of this coverage. According to him:

> when conflict is not found among official sources, reporters try to fulfil the ideal of independent, balanced coverage by finding conflicting possibilities in the efforts of officials to achieve the goals they have set.

Faced with a policy consensus, the British media questioned the effectiveness of the government policy and the likeliness of it to work. This way the central principles of Western journalism – independence, balance and objectivity – would have been fulfilled. This interpretation sits easily with the general image that British newspapers strive to maintain – to be seen as independent, balanced and objective is highly important for them. They are very careful not to be seen as a mouthpiece of any political party or government, regardless of their obvious political orientation. This explains the presence of varying opinions on their pages with regard to the conflict and Blair's government policy on it.

On the policy side, whatever the pressure coming from the media coverage the policy-making did not give in to it. During the examined time period the air campaign stayed at distance, displaying the already identified contradiction between two ethical commitments: saving own lives and humanitarianism, and the option of deploying ground forces, although considered, was not pushed to the front of the policy agenda. In the language of the policy-media interaction model the presence of critical coverage coupled with policy certainty would suggest that a strong CNN effect could not have occurred. This highlights the limited potential of the CNN effect whenever there is a policy certainty among the policy-makers.

Nonetheless, although the print media obviously were not in a position to drive the policy, with their empathy framing of the refugees and the ethnic cleansing they helped provide the policy-makers with a 'visible and compelling justification for Western air power intervention in Kosovo' (Robinson, 2002a: 109). The style of reporting on Kosovo Albanian refugees was highly emotive; the accounts told by refugees were described by journalists as 'credible and consistent'. As Swift (cited in Hammond, 2000: 128) commented, the refugees 'became more a symbol for

continuing the war than real people'. This was spotted even before the start of the bombing campaign. Thus, on the pages of the *Guardian* Hugo Young wrote:

> This will be a television war. What will the people say? I heard policy-makers musing, when thousands of Kosovars are seen torched by Serbs? … That's why we can't stand idly by (*Guardian*, 23 March 1999).

This was also hinted by the British Defence Secretary at the time, Robertson, who speaking on the *Newsnight* television programme months later claimed that:

> So we went from one week when people were saying 'why are you bombing?' to the following week when people were saying 'you're not bombing enough'. We did it with the knowledge that the blood was not pouring down the screens of CNN and *Newsnight* in the first week, but we knew what was going on and that pretty soon there would be visible proof that would consolidate public opinion (cited in Robinson, 2002a: 108).

It is also beyond any doubt that the press focus on the Kosovo conflict in its various dimensions assisted in keeping the topic on the policy agenda. In that sense the agenda-setting role of the media can safely be assumed here as well. Still, going as far as claiming that the media kept the issue on the agenda would be a serious exaggeration.

Another media effect that could be argued to have been present in certain form is the impediment effect – the possibility of potential negative coverage influencing the policy decisions. However, the British government was initially willing much more than its rather reluctant ally the USA to undertake ground intervention in Kosovo. In that sense, it is difficult to establish to what extent the possibility of future casualties was a factor in the governmental decision-making. It could be claimed with a degree of credibility, however, that this was less of a concern for the British than for the US policy-making elites.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated the Kosovo crisis attracted a significant amount of attention from the British print media. The volume of this attention varied at different stages of the conflict, arguably increasing at times of 'exceptional violence'. Not surprisingly, the periods analysed here also demonstrated vast media coverage.

The analysis of the tone, character and framing of the coverage points to a pervasive empathetic response to the suffering people in Kosovo during both analysed periods. However, during the 24 February-25 March 1999 period an overwhelming majority of the reports also supported the official policy line towards the crisis. The British government was a strong proponent of the military action, justifying the use of force and the interference in internal affairs of another country with the need to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and save the lives of thousands of people. As such, the policy-media relationship in this particular moment of the Kosovo crisis reveals the existence of policy certainty with regard to the decision-making processes leading to the air campaign and near consensual support for this policy in the media coverage. The application of the policy-media interaction model indicates

that a direct influence of the news media on the general policy line is unlikely to have occurred. Rather, media coverage followed executive decisions to use force. In this case consent was, in part at least, 'manufactured'.

15 April–15 May 1999 findings differed somewhat. The empathy frame applied to refugees was again overwhelmingly present, and in a way even more so than in the previous period. But the coverage of the air campaign and the actual foreign policy line of the British government was critical without being overwhelmingly so. What was questioned was the effectiveness of the chosen strategy. The commitment to continue with the air strikes from very high altitude while considering the possible use of ground troops was less than approved by the print media. The NATO mistakes were clearly highlighted whenever they occurred; the lack of success of the adopted strategy of air war only was constantly pointed out on the pages of the newspapers. As the application of the policy-media interaction model has indicated in the presence of a clear policy line, strongly supported by the officials even critical media coverage is unable to have any serious influential let alone detrimental effect on the subsequent policy choices. However, by being critical of the effectiveness of the selected policy the British media fulfilled their ideals of balanced, independent and objective coverage while being on the whole supportive of the war effort.

What does the above suggest about the media-policy relationship in the UK as compared with the one in Bulgaria? What about the usefulness of the policy-media interaction model and the conclusions drawn on the basis of its application both in Britain and Bulgaria? Where do these findings leave us and in what direction can they be taken in future? These are the questions that are addressed in the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

'[T]he press has become the greatest power within the Western countries, more powerful than the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary'. It is hardly surprising that the opinion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn highlighting the power of news media (cited in Edwards, 2002) is one shared by many. With global media networks, such as CNN, broadcasting throughout much of the world, the media now are seen to possess an unprecedented amount of power and influence. Their enhanced global reach, speed and capacity to transmit follow from the remarkable advances in communication technology. The availability of portable satellite equipment allows instantaneous coverage from virtually anywhere. And as wars are 'good for the media business' (Taylor, 2000b: 183) by being dramatic, eventful, dangerous, unpredictable and emotion-laden events, they are one of the topics that gets regular attention, albeit not without a strong element of selectivity. The consequence of the considerable media coverage of wars in recent years has been the concern that the media have increased their ability to affect the foreign policy-making. Thus, the term 'CNN effect' has appeared to refer to the alleged influence of real-time news coverage on the foreign policy-making process. However, what exactly this influence is, when it is likely to be seen, even whether it at all exists still remains subject of debate. A significant amount of literature has emerged that evaluates and analyses the media-foreign policy relationship.

It is within the context of these debates that this book has positioned itself. Engaging with the general topic of media-policy interaction it has aimed at expanding the debates by adding a post-Communist, Eastern European perspective. By concentrating on the print media in Bulgaria it has raised questions about the validity of the claims, made on the basis of the research conducted so far, outside of the Western developed world as well as more specifically about the nature of the media-policy relationship in the former socialist block countries. By utilising a comparative perspective this book has allowed to draw parallels and make a comparison between the media-state relationships in Britain and Bulgaria. It has also assessed the suitability of models developed for the American media and policy-making in a different political, economic and social context. This concluding chapter brings together the overall findings and highlights the central arguments put forward in the book.

The end of the Cold War rather than bringing the end of war as part of international politics, in effect started a period in which wars became central to the international agenda. Their type, however, differed from the traditional understandings of interstate warfare and in that sense required a re-definition of the term war to reflect its goals, predominant forms, methods and financing sources. These wars became widely associated with the term 'new wars' coined by Kaldor (2002). While the

absolute novelty implied by the label is rightly contested, the characteristic features outlined by Kaldor as well as their presence in the conflicts taking place around the world currently is beyond any doubt. The new wars blur the distinctions between war, organised crime and large-scale violations of human rights. Their goals are about identity politics; in terms of methods and forms they tend to avoid battle and to control territory through political control of population, achieved by instilling fear and hatred; the financial resources for the new wars come from 'plunder, the 'black market' or from 'external assistance' (Kaldor, 2002: 9). The consequences of the new wars are particularly severe for the civilians, who are direct targets of the violence. A novelty here is the unprecedented levels of public visibility that civilian suffering is acquiring. The virtual revolution in communication technology has allowed the news media to cover the new wars and bring them to the attention of a world audience. In parallel, a key development in the foreign policy arena has been the increased willingness on behalf of Western governments to use force for allegedly humanitarian purposes. A strong claim is being made that the humanitarian motivation and intent, the idea to protect basic human rights are guiding the humanitarian interventions of today. Blair's Doctrine of the International Community, proclaimed in his Chicago Speech of 1999, is a prime example of that. It clashes with a rather more radical interpretation of the new humanitarianism that sees in it nothing different from the traditional continuation of power politics.

New wars, new military humanitarianism and news media in their interaction provide the general theoretical context of the book, within which the main findings are interpreted. The exact link between media and foreign policy-making in times of humanitarian interventions is by no means precise, easily verifiable and agreeable. The claims for a CNN effect, while numerous, do not provide irrefutable evidence of its existence. The research conducted so far on the media role in cases of humanitarian intervention and the effect on foreign policy-making has produced controversial findings. The term CNN effect itself has been used differently and in effect includes a number of conceptually distinct understandings of the media effect. The view accepted here is that it is hardly questionable that the emotive coverage of human suffering around the world when displayed to a global audience changes significantly the context of foreign policy-making. However, to claim that foreign policy now is made in response to 'impulse and image' is most likely inaccurate. The presence or absence of media attention is not the key variable in determining the media influence. Rather a combination of political leadership and lack or presence of policy certainty and a specific type of framing of the media reports can account for the influence that news media can have on foreign policy-making. On the policy-making side, 'only in occasional moments of policy panic', when there is a policy uncertainty in the executive news media can have an influence (Gowing, 2000: 204; Robinson, 2002a). On the media side, when the media frame their reports in a critical way of the official government policy and in an empathy way towards the suffering victims of the particular conflict, they potentially can exert influence on policy-making.

It is important to highlight here again that these findings follow from research conducted on the nature of the media-policy relationship mainly using the context of American media and policy-making. In that sense, it could be argued that they are

valid in the specific context that produced them. How universal they are has been the main research focus of this study. It has expanded the geographical scope of the research on the media-foreign policy relationship to include different political and media systems and to draw conclusions on the validity of the existing claims. This is achieved through the analysis of the Kosovo conflict print media coverage and the possible influence this coverage could have had on the policy-making in Britain and Bulgaria. The Kosovo conflict, analysed here, represented an example of both the new wars as defined by Kaldor and of the new military humanitarianism put into practice. The international military involvement was hailed as the first war for human rights. This proved to be a highly controversial decision and all but straightforward and convincing case of the supremacy of moral considerations in foreign policy-making. The methods used – high altitude bombing – and their utility remain questionable, as does the right to undertake a forcible military intervention on humanitarian grounds considering the lack of an existing international legal instrument explicitly providing for it. What is undisputable, however, is the amount of media coverage that the Kosovo conflict received from the international media once the NATO air campaign began. In the words of Goff (1999: 28), '[t]he Kosovo story was widely established as the story of the season to the wilful neglect of many other potential major stories'. The media interest in the countries neighbouring FRY or the countries that were part of the international coalition undertaking the humanitarian intervention was particularly huge and intense. The two countries that are central to this study – Bulgaria and Britain – belong to these two categories.

What was the interaction between the print media coverage of the Kosovo conflict and the governments' foreign policy in Bulgaria and Britain? A direct comparison suggests the following. The analysis of the Bulgarian press coverage was based on an understanding of the peculiarities of the country's media systems established post-Cold War. There has been a considerable shift in Bulgaria from communist 'old' media to what is now labelled 'new' media that aspires to the Western liberal model. While the changes have been under way since 1989, it is still not possible to observe the appearance of a qualitatively different print and broadcast media and it is clearly too early to speak of Western practices in the functioning of the Bulgarian media. A comparative look at the findings with regard to Britain's and Bulgaria's media-foreign policy relationship suggests that the Kosovo crisis enjoyed substantial amount of print media coverage both in Britain and Bulgaria during the two examined periods. In both countries there was a build-up of attention on the Kosovo issue – the number of reports at the outbreak of the war was considerably less than in the middle of the NATO air campaign in April and May. However, the articles on the pages of the eight Bulgarian newspapers significantly outnumbered those on the pages of the eight British newspapers. The exact figures are as follows: for the February/March period the ratio of articles is 725 to 360 and for the April/May period – 3286 to 1654. These figures can be safely interpreted as an indicator of the importance assigned to the topic in Britain and Bulgaria. The direct proximity to the conflict in the Bulgarian case most likely accounts for the greater proportion of attention to the coverage of the Kosovo conflict.

As far as the covered topics are concerned, there seems to be a different focus in both countries. For Bulgaria initially the air strikes and the Bulgarian position on

them, as well as the country's security were the primary focus of the news reports. Later on, however, the Bulgarian position and the decision on the requested air corridor by NATO clearly overtook all other topics. On the other hand, for Britain the initial focus was on the air strikes, while in the second period the issue of refugees gained in prominence and equalled the attention devoted to the air campaign. It can be concluded that for the Bulgarian press the most important aspect of the Kosovo conflict was the country's position on the crisis, its involvement in it and the overall security of the state. The questions surrounding the air strikes – their legality and effectiveness, did not preoccupy the print media to a considerable extent. They were covered, but only carried secondary importance. On the contrary, these were the issues that attracted the most attention in the British press, with the obvious exception of the tabloid press, for which the British involvement and the fate of 'our boys' deserved the biggest coverage.

The framing of these topics in Britain and Bulgaria differed again. During the February/March period Bulgarian print media framed its reports in neutral and subsequently, during the April/May period, critical way when the questions discussed related to the governmental position on the Kosovo crisis and the NATO air strikes. the Reports referring to refugees and the devastation of the war were empathy-framed. In the British press the empathy frame when dealing with the issues of the refugees and the consequences of the war was also dominant. The framing of the air strikes was first, in February/March, supportive and then, in April/May critical of the effectiveness of the governmental strategy, while supportive of the overall involvement. Both governments – the British and the Bulgarian – had a clear policy line on the Kosovo conflict and demonstrated policy certainty in all their decisions with regard to the conflict. Hence, the result of the application of the media-policy interaction model to the Bulgarian press coverage and foreign policy-making suggests that the print media did not have any substantial impact on the Bulgarian government's position on the Kosovo conflict during both examined periods. During the first analysed period, there was no evidence of a weak or strong CNN effect, impediment or potential CNN effect, including the existence of an enabling effect was highly questionable. The possibility of a manufacturing consent was also ruled out. During the second period under review, following from the theoretical insights of the media-policy interaction model, the critical media coverage must have created pressure for the policy-makers; however, as the policy line to support NATO and give access to the Bulgarian air space was firmly decided, even this critical and empathy-framed coverage could not have influenced the policy. What is of more interest here, however, especially during the first analysed period, was the discovery of neutral media coverage on a topic of extreme importance for Bulgaria – the country's position on the Kosovo conflict, in particular its support for the NATO air campaign against the FRY. This fact, unobserved in any previous application of the media-policy interaction model, does highlight the specificity of the context in which models are used and allows to speculate not only about the use of models across borders, but also about the particular conditions that allow neutral coverage to be produced. This sheds different light on the findings for the April/May period as well, despite them fitting into the model's framework.

The identical application of the policy-media interaction model to the British press coverage and foreign policy-making with regard to the Kosovo crisis displays

a much easier case of application of the model. The findings sit unproblematically with the categories and hypotheses of the media-policy interaction model. As they indicate a predominantly empathy-framed coverage of the suffering people in Kosovo with a clearly supportive coverage of the official UK policy during February/March period and a critical, without being overwhelmingly so however, coverage in April/May. In the latter case, what was observed was a case of support for the government policy of intervening in Kosovo together with a questioning of the effectiveness of the chosen strategy – the high-altitude bombing. In both periods a policy certainty on behalf of the British government was discovered. In terms of the media-policy interaction model, in the first instance there is a clear case of manufacturing consent, while in the second the media even by being critical to a degree had no real chance of influencing the policy-makers. Nonetheless, it could be the case that by being critical of the effectiveness of the selected policy the British media fulfilled their ideals of balanced, independent and objective coverage and at the same time remained supportive of the general war effort.

What does this say with regard to the key analytical assumptions established and previously tested in the West regarding media effects on foreign policy-making when a 'humanitarian' intervention is undertaken? What conclusions can be reached with regard to the applicability of the policy-media interaction model developed by Robinson and applied by him to cases of humanitarian intervention using the American media and foreign policy-making? As the last two chapters have illustrated, using models across borders is not a risk-free exercise. The model used here – the policy-media interaction model – indirectly implies universality. In reality it was developed with a view to the American media, as were all the existing models that engage with the issue of media-foreign policy relationship. It does offer a more nuanced understanding of the media-policy relationship than the simple manufacturing consent/CNN effect categorisation. It accommodates cases both of influence and non-influence and in this sense offers a bridge, a way beyond the dualism. It helps to determine the extent to which media coverage drives humanitarian intervention and to explain the conditions under which this occurs. But it proved to be less helpful when applied to a case study such as Bulgarian press coverage of the Kosovo conflict. This leads to the conclusion that models are highly context-specific and most likely carry certain cultural assumptions. It might be the case that media make the model and hence which media under which circumstances makes a substantial difference in terms of the set of predictions of any model. The danger of generating universal models comes from the contextual circumstances that determine any model. This was the case with the Bulgarian press coverage that was framed in a neutral way towards the NATO decision to launch air strikes against the FRY and the Bulgarian government's position to support this decision. As already highlighted in Chapter 5 the policy-media interaction model allows for the existence of neutrally-framed coverage, but does not necessarily draw conclusions about its relationship to policy-making, neither does it indicate possible ways of measuring it. According to the model's hypotheses in the case of elite consensus, media are 'unlikely to produce coverage that challenges that consensus' (Robinson, 2002a: 30). Does this mean that the media will be supportive of the governmental policy line? Can they be neutral in this instance? By suggesting that the media will remain uncritical, no direct answer

is given to these two questions. Alternatively, again in accordance with the policy-media interaction model in the case of elite dissensus, the media can be expected to offer a variety of critical and supportive framing in news reports. Can they frame their reports in a neutral way in this case? Why did the application of the policy-media interaction model to the British press coverage and foreign policy-making not trigger similar questions as did the Bulgarian case study?

Apart from this more general observation on the nature of modelling the specificity of the East European context is also worth commenting on. The actual setting there – of both government and media trying to find their way and establish themselves – adds further complication to the relationship and the possibilities of analysing it. Bulgaria offers an example of the countries in a period of transition from communism to market democracy. Obviously, these countries are at a different level of development; hence different patterns of interaction exist there. Most probably they still carry the legacy of communism while at the same time are trying to adopt and develop the Western notions of journalism and policy-making. The media in Bulgaria are undergoing substantial changes. Similar trends are evident in the policy arena with the establishment of a democratic form of government. This mix of old legacy and new aspirations determines how the policy-making and the media behave generally and interact with each other. It is contended in the book that the policy environment has implications for the media effects on the policy process. The findings of the research conducted to date are based on analysis of policy-making processes in large, powerful and well-established states where the standards of democratic responsiveness and accountability are in place. These states' media also can be categorised as well-established and following the principles of Western liberal journalism. Therefore, it is argued here the policy-media interaction model itself has proven to be specific to certain types of media systems, journalistic cultures and models of policymaking and democratic responsiveness and as such it is not automatically transferable across countries.

In light of the above, how can the predominant neutral press coverage on such a sensitive issue as the Bulgarian position on the Kosovo conflict and the NATO airstrikes be interpreted? Does the neutrality, in the sense of no clear standpoint expressed, mean the same thing in Bulgaria and in Britain? It is argued here that the answer to this is more likely no. Bulgarian government was very careful in formulating its position on the crisis next door mainly due to the link between this position and the foreign policy priorities of the country. Since they were defined as membership in NATO and the EU, Bulgaria's stand on Kosovo inevitably could have had implications for the achievement of these goals. This clearly was part of the equation determining the choice of the policy as well as the level of certainty in this policy. This restricting role played by outside factors is obviously by no means specific only to the Bulgarian foreign policy at the time. What is country specific, however, is the position in which the media found itself. It can be speculated that the media could not have afforded itself to express a view that would uncritically support the government, as this could have been seen as a view determined by the government. The similarities with the communist media would have been far too apparent. The media are driven by the desire to appear to be genuine post-communist media, to adhere to the same principles of balance, pluralism, objectivity

and independence that characterise the Western liberal model. They have to protect themselves. Should a case of manufacturing consent become widely perceived on the pages of a particular newspaper, the risk is that this paper will lose trust and respect of its audience. In the context of the general scepticism towards the media – both print and electronic – in Bulgaria because of the communist legacy, as noted in Chapter 4, this inevitably is a rather dangerous endeavour. Clearly the Western European media, in particular the British media, are not faced with this type of dilemmas. By already being well-established and developed, they have gone beyond the point of need to prove themselves to the wide audience.[1]

The role of perceptions of policy-makers and journalists needs to be highlighted as well. Rightly or wrongly, it is believed by many among politicians, journalists and the general public in the West that the media have the power to pressurise the policy-makers, that media are an important factor in the political life. There is no such a perception in the case of Bulgaria. The interviews conducted with both politicians and journalists, however vulnerable the conclusions drawn on their basis might be, have provided some evidence of the interpretation of the media role in Bulgaria. They have clearly disclosed a high degree of scepticism regarding the power of the Bulgarian media to influence the policy-making in the country. Indirectly, the lack of belief in any power and influence conditions the way media and foreign-policy makers relate to each other.

This study has also highlighted the dilemmas of comparing media across borders. British print media picture is quite diverse and complicated both in terms of political orientation and quality/tabloid distinction. On the one hand, when conducting comparative research it is obviously necessary to categorise the media in order to identify similar counterparts. On the other, it is questionable to what extent it is possible to successfully find analogues across borders. The British print media offers a significant range of titles, including tabloid press which remains unique in Western Europe. It is difficult to provide an exact match and analogue to the British newspapers on the Bulgarian newspaper market. Whether this is reflective of a general peculiarity of the market or of a particular stage of development of this market remains to be seen.

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1 Nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that the BBC, whose mission is impartial investigation and reporting in the public interest, is sometimes challenged exactly on these grounds. A telling example is the death of the weapons of mass destruction expert Dr David Kelly and the accusations the BBC faced for being responsible for his suicide. The BBC was criticised both for the original Radio 4 report by Andrew Gilligan, who was claimed to had gone to air with an 'unfounded' allegation that was unsupported by his notes and unchecked by the BBC editors, as well as for the subsequent handling of the affair. The Blair government directly accused the BBC of having an antiwar bias that had led to sensationalist reporting.

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