

Master thesis

The United States and the European Union in post-war Kosovo 1999-2012

an analysis of transatlantic peacebuilding approaches



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Abstract:

After much was made of the transatlantic discordance with regards to foreign policy vis-à-vis Kosovo during the Trump presidency, the question arose how their efforts towards building a peaceful post-conflict state looked like in the years prior. After first looking at the recent history of post-Cold War post-conflict reconstruction (peacebuilding and statebuilding) and synthesizing dominant approaches on the liberal and realist axis, the analysis turns specifically to the cooperation of the United States and the European Union. Though institutionally different with regards to decision-making and military/civilian capabilities, both the moral and strategic importance of post-war stabilization resonated across the Atlantic. A trove of leaked cables illuminate the day to day process of their work in Kosovo, showing a deeply involved, proactive and result-oriented US and a more reticent, process-based and careful EU. Indeed, while sharing similar end goals (Kosovo as a multi-ethnic liberal democracy incorporated within Euro-Atlantic structures), the approaches towards Kosovo and Serbia deviated. Again, this was due to their institutional differences, but also the historical relationship to Kosovo and the proximity of Kosovo to Europe. It becomes clear that academic distinctions between realist and liberal approaches are blurred in practice, as policymakers grasp onto aspects of both to argue for similar policies. Still, as Kosovo's case became marred with problems and dead-locked, the overall aims of transatlantic peacebuilding in Kosovo became decidedly less ambitious and in a sense more realist in character.

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List of abbreviations

CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EC	European Commission
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUHR	European Union High Representative
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
GOK	Government of Kosovo
IBL	Institutionalisation before Liberalization
ICO	International Civilian Office
ICR	International Civilian Representative for Kosovo
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NPE	Normative Power Europe
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation
PISG	Provisional Institution of Self-Governance
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilization and Association Process
SEE	South-eastern Europe
SP	Stability Pact
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	United Nation Security Council
US	United States
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

Introduction: Kosovo internationalized

In roughly the past twenty years, there is perhaps no other country where particularly the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) have become as deeply involved in internal state processes than in those of Kosovo.¹ Kosovo's former Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that "American support in our external and internal affairs has been one of the basic preconditions for a successful state-building process".² Similarly, in a 2019 conversation between former President of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi, and the Council on Foreign Relations, Thaçi described support from first the US, and then the EU, as an indispensable requirement for signing agreements, reforms and development of the country more generally.³ These policies of addressing what are seen as 'root causes' of conflict and instability (for example, statelessness, anarchy, poverty, ethnic hatred), enacted mostly by external actors in a post-conflict setting, are part of what is called 'peacebuilding'.⁴ It typically aims for something more than just the absence of outright war by strengthening structures which consolidate a stable peace. In the US, they tend to prefer the term 'nationbuilding', which is at times used interchangeably with the term 'statebuilding', the latter term being used to describe the process of establishing stable state structures. The language, if not the practice, of these policies have often been characterized as liberal or normative, with emphasis on the just cause of creating multi-ethnic liberal democracies and economic development in once war-torn areas. However, more realist language of stabilization, security and order is also used frequently.

During the presidency of US President Donald Trump, the foreign policies of the US and EU towards Kosovo were said to be contradictory and potentially dangerous to Western Balkan stability.⁵ Most notably, Trump played up the idea of land swaps along ethnic lines in mediation between Kosovo and Serbia, something which the EU (and earlier US

¹ Rok Zupančič and Nina Pejič, *Limits to the European Union's Normative Power in a Post-conflict Society: EULEX and Peacebuilding in Kosovo* (New York: Springer Open, 2018) 41.

² Gëzim Visoka, *Acting Like a State: Kosovo and the Everyday Making of Statehood* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 266.

³ Hashim Thaçi, "A Conversation with Hashim Thaçi," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 5, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-hashim-thaci> (accessed May 14, 2021).

⁴ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping" [ST/DPI/1247 (New York, 1992) 32.

⁵ Una Hajdari, "Trump, the EU and the Kosovo Conundrum," *Aljazeera*, November 27, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/trump-eu-kosovo-conundrum-191126173921274.html> (accessed May 6, 2021); Jasmin Mujanovic, "The US and EU Have Both Failed Kosovo," *Balkan Insight*, July 2, 2020. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/07/02/the-us-and-eu-have-both-failed-kosovo/> (accessed May 6, 2021).

administrations) opposed in principle.⁶ Some wary commentators warned declining Western relevance would cast the Balkans adrift, allowing space for rivals such as Russia and China.⁷ Overall, there is a clear sense that the US and EU are still indispensable for the fate of the newly independent state of Kosovo, and by extension the stability of the region.⁸ After the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) 'humanitarian intervention' in 1999 bombed the Yugoslav/Serb forces out of the region and Kosovo declared its independence in 2008, Serbia to this day still refuses to recognize its former province as a formally independent state. Joining them are world powers such as China, Russia, India, and even five EU states with their own secession movements (Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania, and Greece). This makes things difficult, as 'normalization' with Serbia, alongside internal structural reforms regarding accountable governance, is one of the preconditions of potentially opening talks about joining the EU.⁹ Owing their current state to the US-led coalition that freed them from Serb rule, there is widespread pro-Americanism in Kosovo, and also a significant wish to become part of the EU.¹⁰ However, it is important not to generalize or overemphasize this 'pro-Western' aspect, as there is also discontent (especially among Kosovar youth) with what is seen as an unfair relation with the European and American 'benefactors' and the direction of local political elites.¹¹

Next to the Kosovo war's extraordinary unilateral and 'humanitarian' qualities, the UN's Interim Administration established in 1999 described itself as unprecedented in aims,

⁶ Dimitar Bechev, "Serbia Tensions Reveal the EU's Diplomatic Limits," *Carnegie Europe*, August 25, 2022. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/08/25/latest-kosovo-serbia-tensions-reveal-eu-s-diplomatic-limits-pub-87755> (accessed October 5, 2022).

⁷ Jasmin Mujanovic, "The West's Declining Relevance has Cast the Balkans Adrift," *Balkan Insight*, February 3, 2020. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/03/the-west-s-declining-relevance-has-cast-the-balkans-adrift/> (accessed February 13, 2021).

⁸ Gëzim Krasniqi and Adrian Prenkaj, "US and EU Policy on Kosovo is in Disarray," *Balkan Insight*, June 17, 2020. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/06/17/us-and-eu-policy-on-kosovo-is-in-disarray/> (accessed June 8, 2021).

⁹ Aidan Hehir, "Kosovo is Still Locked Out of the EU Ten Years After Declaring Independence – Why?," *The Conversation*, February 16, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/kosovo-is-still-locked-out-of-the-eu-ten-years-after-declaring-independence-why-91869> (accessed June 8, 2021).

¹⁰ Joanna Kakissis, "Welcome To The Country With the Biggest Crush On America," *NPR*, February 24, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/24/588250164/welcome-to-the-country-with-the-biggest-crush-on-america> (accessed May 5, 2021).

¹¹ Isa Blumi, "Albanian Slide: The Roots to NATO's Pending Lost Balkan Enterprise," *Insight Turkey*, May 31, 2019. <https://www.insightturkey.com/articles/albanian-slide-the-roots-to-natos-pending-lost-balkan-enterprise> (accessed May 21, 2021).

scope and complexity.¹² In July 2007, the controversial issue of resolving Kosovo's status was deemed "front and center" in discussions between US and EU officials.¹³ Critics feared Kosovo's independence would set a precedent for similar secessions, while Kosovo and its Western allies claimed its context in the disintegration of Yugoslavia made it an unique case. Moreover, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the 'flagship' EU mission aiming to strengthen the rule of law since 2008, is by far the largest and most ambitious and extensive EU foreign policy mission.¹⁴ NATO's longest running mission is its Kosovo Force (KFOR), which has gradually reduced its numbers over the years, but still counts some 3500 soldiers to maintain security and train the Kosovo Security Force. Certainly, with regards to efforts to build a state and conditions for lasting peace, Kosovo has been somewhat of a 'laboratory' for international agencies such as the United Nations (UN), NATO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) and a whole host of different non-governmental organizations (NGOs).¹⁵ Per illustration, US aid per capita in Kosovo was significantly higher than in other cases (345 US dollars per capita in sectors of governance compared to \$41 in Iraq and \$62 in Afghanistan in 2014).¹⁶ Granted, Kosovo is relatively small with only about 1,9 million inhabitants, but this shows the extent of material involvement.¹⁷ It is precisely because of Kosovo's internationalized and contested nature, that it offers an excellent case-study for discussions of transatlantic forms of peacebuilding and statebuilding. Despite (or, perhaps because) extensive international engagement over the last 20 years, Kosovo has been diagnosed with all sorts of issues, such as persistent ethnic tensions, state capture by corrupt elites, high levels of

¹² Aidan Hehir, "Microcosm, Guinea Pig or *Sui Generis*? Assessing International Engagement with Kosovo," in *Kosovo, Intervention and Statebuilding: The International Community and the Transition to Independence*, ed. Aidan Hehir (London: Routledge, 2010), 185.

¹³ Embassy Lisbon, "U.S.-EU Political Directors Discusses Kosovo, Russia, Africa, and Middle East," Wikileaks Cable: 07LISBON1858_a . Dated July 18, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07LISBON1858 (accessed June 29, 2022).

¹⁴ European External Action Service, "What is EULEX?" accessed April 23, 2021. <https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?page=2,16>

¹⁵ Arolda Elbasani, "State-Building or State-Capture? Institutional Exports, Local Reception and Hybridity of Reforms in Post-War Kosovo," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 18, no. 2 (2018): 150.

¹⁶ Elbasani, "State-building or State-Capture?," 150.

¹⁷ The EU has been the largest provider of financial assistance to Kosovo, spending almost €1.3 billion in pre-accession assistance since 2007; See: European Commission, "Overview – Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance," accessed October 19, 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near_factograph_kosovo.pdf

corruption and crime, deep poverty and unemployment.¹⁸ The focus here, however, is primarily on the workings of the transatlantic alliance.

Post-war reconstruction and peacebuilding in Kosovo has received a lot of attention and criticism, but not much of it has been specifically on the transatlantic alliance, or the cooperation and tensions between the US and EU approaches. It is often depicted by proponents and critics alike as a pluralistic, multilateral, decentralised, often UN-led project and described in terms of the ‘international community’ or ‘the West’.¹⁹ These terms can be useful, but might also homogenise and simplify the understanding of transatlantic foreign policy approaches. This also underscores how peacebuilding is not just a neutral descriptive term to describe certain policies, but how it also functions as a rhetorical tool to legitimize foreign policies by proclaiming the mantle of building peace. Importantly, this thesis does not aim for more policy-related ‘lesson learned’ or to call for more streamlined integration and cooperation between peacebuilding actors, but rather to critically assess the relationship between two crucial actors and seek to draw out and explain their approaches in a comparative analysis. It came to be particularly indebted to David Chandler’s critically tinged realism (for lack of a better descriptor), his meta-level understanding of peacebuilding, and his overall approach of assessing the changing understandings of peacebuilding by focussing on the discourse of policymakers.

Now post-war Kosovo has been characterized as a foremost case of international statebuilding and peacebuilding, and that both the US and the EU have been pointed out as key actors, how do the approaches to peacebuilding and statebuilding by these actors compare in post-war Kosovo? In other words, the research question of this thesis is: *how and why did the United States and European Union play their respective roles in peacebuilding and state-*

¹⁸ Sylvia Poggioli, “Corruption, Poverty Create Political Gloom in Kosovo,” *NPR*, October 19, 2010. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130664982> (accessed October 26, 2022); The recent flare-ups in northern Kosovo regarding license plates are reminders of the enduring tensions regarding Kosovar status and authority. EEAS Press, “Foreign Affairs Council: Press Remarks by High Representative Josep Borell After the Meeting,” European External Action Service. November 14, 2022. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-after-meeting-2_en (accessed November 16, 2022); A common insider analysis to explain Kosovo’s enduring problems was that the UN transitional administration was ‘too soft’ on the political culture and webs of patronage of the Kosovar Albanian leadership. It is said that because of a limited reactive approach towards basic stability, only the façade of a liberal democracy was created; See: Iain King and Whit Mason, *Peace at Any Price: How the World Failed Kosovo* (London: Hurst, 2006); Andrea Lorenzo Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo: Democracy, Corruption and the EU in the Balkans* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 149-153.

¹⁹ Jan Selby, “Myth of Liberal Peacebuilding,” *Conflict Security & Development* 13, no. 1 (2013): 62.

building efforts in post-war Kosovo? In order to answer that question, this thesis is split up in three chapters with corresponding subquestions. The first chapter asks: *What are the dominant conceptions of post-Cold War peacebuilding and statebuilding?* It briefly outlines the inception of the concepts and deals with the debates and main approaches, drawing on a wide array of secondary literature on the topic to synthesize the dominant readings that come forward. The second chapter poses the question: *What are the American and European or Transatlantic approaches towards peacebuilding and statebuilding after the Cold War?* Here we zoom in on the actors in questions, namely the US and the EU and specify their general approaches towards peacebuilding, different as the actors are in capabilities and institutional structure. Apart from secondary literature on transatlantic approaches, assessments by key officials themselves will also be included. The analysis will be on the American state and on the policies and instruments at the EU-level, but locating decisions made in key European states when necessary. The third chapter asks: *Why did the US and EU play these roles in post-war Kosovo peacebuilding?* First sketching a brief historical context of the problem in Kosovo and the importance of Operation Allied Force in 1999, we describe transatlantic relations first under the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK, 1999-2008), then after independence under supposed European leadership (2008-2012). This last chapter will be the most reliant on primary documents, especially on US cables from Wikileaks. While there is sadly no such alternative from the EU side and the American bias in these cables must not be overlooked, these confidential cables give a uniquely direct impression of what was privately discussed between key American and European officials.²⁰ The period of peacebuilding this thesis will confine itself to is roughly 1999 until 2012, starting with the end of the Kosovo war until the official end of ‘supervised independence’ in 2012. We conclude by tallying up the findings, outlining certain limitations and offering suggestions for further research.

²⁰ Because of their confidentiality and aim to inform insiders, the incentive to greatly misrepresent the situation in these cables is somewhat lessened. While there are almost daily cables in the period concerned, one must be wary of gaps in the collection. As an inspection report on the US Embassy in Pristina stated: “Official reporting via cable has tended to be limited and focuses on reporting events following their conclusion, rather than as they unfold.” See: U.S. Department of State, *Report of Inspection Embassy Pristina: Report No. ISP-I-10-38A* (Kosovo, March 2010) 8. Available at: https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report_pdf_file/isp-i-10-38a_1.pdf

Chapter I: dominant readings of post-Cold War peacebuilding/statebuilding

Introduction

This chapter will assess the literature on modern peacebuilding and zoom in on how the American and European approaches have been characterized in general and specifically in Kosovo. To begin, the origins of modern peacebuilding will be addressed, how ideas of ambitiously addressing the root causes of war gained traction in the post-Cold War period at the UN and certain powerful states. The primacy of the ‘liberal peacebuilding’ debates will be addressed, as well as the adjacent and changing conceptions of statebuilding, nationbuilding, and sovereignty. Because there is a substantial body of literature on this matter (bigger than can be properly addressed here), it will be done in broad strokes. Hereafter we deal with the critiques levelled at these policies, and conceptualize central tenets of the liberal and realist paradigms towards achieving peace.

Origins of modern peacebuilding

While the research question implies both the US and EU do have a foreign policy of peacebuilding towards Kosovo, the term itself is contested and nebulous to say the least, as its ‘original’ definition by Johan Galtung is rather broad. Johan Galtung is widely regarded as the founder of peace and conflict studies and conceptualized the term ‘peacebuilding’ in 1976 as the process of addressing underlying root causes of conflict.²¹ He suggested aiming for a “positive peace”, emphasizing that “*structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur*” [emphasis in original].²² In other words, in order to have a positive peace (as opposed to a negative peace or the mere lack of overt violence), the root causes of war must be addressed. What precisely the root causes of war are, how they differ from one case to the other, and how they are to be addressed are of course all contentious issues. The label of ‘ethnic conflict’, for example, carries a lot of assumptions of what lies at the heart of the issue. Generally, it is agreed that peacebuilding entails dealing with intra-state conflicts (within states) and that outsiders play a central part in

²¹ Erin McCandless and Timothy Donais, “Generations of Constructing Peace: The Constructivism Paradigm and Peacebuilding,” in *Peacebuilding Paradigms*, ed. Henry F. Carey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 132.

²² Johan Galtung, “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding,” in *Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research, vol II* (Copenhagen: Eijlers 1976), 298.

the process.²³

The term peacebuilding truly entered the public discourse and policy circles when UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali used Galtung's conceptualization in his 1992 'Agenda for Peace'.²⁴ In the Agenda for Peace, Ghali stated that the UN "must never again be crippled as it was in the era that had now passed" and fulfil its objectives of social progress.²⁵ For Ghali, the "deepest causes of conflict" that are to be addressed are "economic despair, social injustice and political oppression", but underlying "cultural and humanitarian problems" must also be dealt with.²⁶ Ghali stressed the need to support democratic structures because of the link between a democracy with the rule of law and a true peace.²⁷ In 1996, when new UN missions in Angola, Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda proved problematic, Ghali came with the less high-spirited *Supplement to the Agenda of Peace*, in which he emphasized the 'new' brutal nature of intra-state conflict pestered by collapse of institutions and a breakdown of law and order.²⁸ *An Agenda for Development* and an *Agenda for Democratization* followed, in which Ghali further stressed that "peace, development and democracy are inextricably linked".²⁹ The 2000 'Brahimi report', inspired by concurrent events in Kosovo, went further into peacebuilding, arguing that more long-term transitional administrations and reconstruction were needed.³⁰ Broadly, the UN Charter's formal inviolability of sovereignty made way for a more human centred approach, allowing intervention for human rights to trump legal principles of sovereignty. Furthermore, the reports noted the need to move away from 'neutrality' (equal treatment) towards a more robust 'impartiality' that recognizes who the victims and aggressors are and deals with them

²³ Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostraukaite, *European Union Peacebuilding and Policing* (London: Routledge, 2006), 11

²⁴ "Throughout my term as Secretary-General I shall be addressing all these great issues. I bear them all in mind as, in the present report, I turn to the problems that the Council has specifically requested I consider: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping - to which I have added a closely related concept, post-conflict peacebuilding." Boutros-Ghali, 'An Agenda for Peace,' 2-3.

²⁵ Boutros-Ghali, 'An Agenda for Peace,' 1-2.

²⁶ *Idem*, 8.

²⁷ *Idem*, 33.

²⁸ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace : position paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations," A/50/60S/1995/1 (New York: 1995) 2-5; Meera Sabaratnam, "The Liberal Peace? A Brief Intellectual History of International Conflict Management," in *A liberal peace? The problems and practices of peacebuilding*, ed. Susanna Campbell et al (London: Zed Books, 2011), 15.

²⁹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Democratization," ST/JDPI/1867 (New York: 1996) 52.

³⁰ Lakhdar Brahimi, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," A/55/305S/2000/809 (New York, 2000), 2.

accordingly.³¹ It also recognized the possible dangers of democracy as “tyranny of the majority” if there was no culture of respect for human rights and effective civilian governance.³² In the 2000 Brahimi report the extensive list of UN tasks and challenges of “transitional civil administration” were expounded upon.³³ The report named: enforcing the law, establishing customs, setting up business and personal taxes, attracting foreign investments, dealing with property disputes and the costs of war damage, reconstructing and operating all public utilities, setting up a banking system, collecting the garbage, rebuilding civil society and the promotion of respect for human rights.³⁴ The report suggested there was “evident ambivalence” about transitional civil administration and that they were unexpectedly “flung into the breach” in to take upon them such a wide array of tasks in Kosovo and East Timor.³⁵

Peacebuilding debates

This broad post-Cold War approach to post-conflict peacebuilding has widely been characterized as the ‘liberal peace’ or ‘liberal peacebuilding’, with the democratization and marketization of post-conflict states as its main pillars.³⁶ Here, the so-called democratic peace thesis is central. Based on Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*, and expanded systematically by most notably Michael Doyle, it argues that democracies do not seem to go to war with each other because of constitutional, moral and economic reasons.³⁷ Moreover, it sees economic liberalisation as the best way to sustain the economic growth needed for peace. Crucially, this theoretical ‘liberal peace’ framework was initially a critique to explain peacebuilding’s initial poor track record. The 1990s policy of liberalization to stem conflict reflected, in the words of peacebuilding scholar Roland Paris, “the perceived triumph of liberal market democracy as the prevailing standard of enlightened governance across much of the world”.³⁸ Seeing Western liberal market-oriented democracies as the ultimate direction for societies, Fukuyama famously

³¹ Brahimi, Report, 9.

³² David Chandler, *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1997-2017* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 97; Brahimi, “Report,” 7; Relevant here was the disappointing success of overtly nationalist parties in the 1997 elections in Bosnia.

³³ Brahimi, “Report,” 13.

³⁴ *Idem*, 13.

³⁵ *Idem*, 15-22

³⁶ Roland Paris, *At War’s End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18.

³⁷ Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 205-206.

³⁸ Paris, *At War’s End*, 19.

spoke of the ‘end of history’³⁹. The idea that liberalism leads to peace was not a novel idea, harking back to older Western political and philosophical debates by the likes of Kant, Locke and Hobbes.⁴⁰ It is also very reminiscent of the modernization theory paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s.⁴¹ Because of the centrality of the ‘liberal peace’ framework and the ambiguous nature of liberalism, there was also contention over how ‘liberal’ this peacebuilding actually was.⁴² Indeed, liberalism’s varied, fragmented and contradictory nature allowed it to be used to explain all types of policies. For example, the quick fix operations of the early and mid-1990s were critiqued for their liberal naivety, while the later protectorate peacebuilding projects were attacked for their liberal hubris.⁴³ Many in the critical literature have questioned how ‘liberal’ these peacebuilding operations actually were in practice.⁴⁴ As Michael Barnett et al have done, it is important to note how there is at least widespread consensus over the *symbolic* importance of peacebuilding, and agreement that it entails more than just a ‘negative peace’. Indeed, who would disagree that efforts towards building peace after a bloody war is a bad thing? “Consensus breaks down, however, over the *substance behind the symbol* of peacebuilding [emphasis added]”.⁴⁵ How the concept is actually interpreted and how it should be operationalized – and by whom – is where much of the disagreement really flares up.

Much of the debate in (Northern American) policy circles can be demarcated between the classical distinction between liberals (or idealists) and realists. This so-called first ‘Great Debate’ in the 1930s and 1940s between two seemingly opposing poles, has been a founding narrative (or myth, rather) of the discipline of IR, but should not obfuscate the significant historical overlap between tenets of liberalism and realism.⁴⁶ Indeed, realism and liberalism are “complementary”, having been used in practice to advocate for similar or the same policies.⁴⁷ There are also many radical and critical approaches in academia that are less concerned with

³⁹ Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?,” *The National Interest* 16, no. 16 (Summer 1989): 3.

⁴⁰ Oliver P. Richmond, “A Post-Liberal Peace: Eirenism and the Everyday,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (July 2009): 559.

⁴¹ Roland Paris, “Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism,” *International Security* 22, no. 2. (Fall 1997): 57.

⁴² Beate Jahn, *Liberal Internationalism, Theory, History, Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 26-28; Chandler, *Peacebuilding*, 21-22.

⁴³ David Chandler, “The Uncritical Critique of ‘Liberal Peace’,” *Review of International Studies* 36, SPECIAL ISSUE (2010): 145.

⁴⁴ Selby, “Myth of Liberal Peacebuilding,” 58-59.

⁴⁵ Michael Barnett et al, “Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?,” *Global Governance* 13, no. 1 (January-March 2007): 43-44.

⁴⁶ Matthew Specter, *The Atlantic Realists* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022), 5.

⁴⁷ Jahn, *Liberal Internationalism*, 17-21.

solving problems and providing solutions, therefore these hold little sway in policy circles.⁴⁸ These critical theorists tend to argue that these far-reaching policies represent a hegemonic process which reflect the economic, political and geo-strategic interests of the intervening Western states, often with negative consequences for ‘local’ populations.⁴⁹ Liberals (and adjacent neo-liberals, institutionalists and neo-functionalists) generally tend to be hopeful in the sense that they trust the US and EU (albeit often in differing degrees) to have an overall positive influence, generated for the most part by their commitment to spread the concept of inalienable human rights, the ‘good life’ and a rule-based international order they see as prerequisites for security and stability.⁵⁰ These perspectives often dismiss the ‘traditional’ distinction between interests and values, or realism and idealism, instead presenting this ‘enlightened self-interest’ as inexorably linking the two. Liberals critique realism for banishing values from international politics and creating the practices its theory seeks to explain.⁵¹ While they recognized the process of external peacebuilding and statebuilding is fraught with problems, they maintained these policies can be sequenced correctly and the negative consequences ameliorated. Indeed, these scholars may seem deeply critical of the liberal peace project, not on grounds that it coincides with Western hegemonic interests, but stressing that projecting Western liberal models to non-liberal contexts is deeply problematic.⁵²

On the other end of the spectrum, (mostly American) realists tend to critique liberal internationalism for creating backlash to US hegemony.⁵³ While there is a critical tinge to many current realists preferring restraint and an end to ‘forever wars’, it has historically also serviced the naturalization of expansion, empire and war.⁵⁴ Unlike liberals, realist concepts of ‘anarchy’ and ‘tragedy’ point to the impossibility of international peace. Thus, ‘realist peacebuilding’ might at first seem like an oxymoron, as peacebuilding from its modern inception by Galtung

⁴⁸ Michael Pugh, “The Political Economy of Peacebuilding: A Critical Theory Perspective,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2005): 26-28; Henry F. Carey and Onur Sen, “Introduction,” in *Peacebuilding Paradigms*, ed. Henry F. Carey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 13-14.

⁴⁹ Paris, “Saving Liberal Peacebuilding,” 342-344.

⁵⁰ Giovanna Bono, “EU Police Missions,” in *The Routledge Handbook of International Statebuilding*, ed. David Chandler and Timothy D. Sisk (London and New York: Routledge 2013), 354.

⁵¹ David Chandler, *Constructing Global Civil Society: Morality and Power in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 9-10.

⁵² Chandler, “Uncritical Critique,” 143-144.

⁵³ Stephen M. Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions: America’s Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 35-39. Neorealism put more emphasis on systematic conditions rather than the

⁵⁴ Specter, *Atlantic Realists*, 13-15.

and its popularization by Ghali explicitly dismissed statist conceptions and argued for a more idealistic, positive form of peace. Still, there is a distinct realist approach towards peace and resolving conflict (albeit perhaps less optimistic), which speaks of international stability and the formation of states to provide security and domestic order.⁵⁵ It is a rationalist, positivist, top-down approach more concerned with ‘negative peace’ and stability than with more ambitious national reconciliation or democracy and justice. Realists might argue that nearby failing states or civil war can negatively affect national security, and thus re-establishing stable authority might be in order.⁵⁶ Conversely, realists have argued against wars and rebuilding efforts in far-away lands not on moral grounds, but on grounds that these issues are unrelated to national security and involvement may become a “power drain”.⁵⁷ Current realists often favour American restraint rather than military intervention. Less moralistic than liberalism, it privileges the autonomy of the political sphere, which is ultimately unmoored by things such as international law and norms. Realism has been aptly described as the ‘dark side’ of liberalism, stemming from the internal tensions of the latter.⁵⁸

Statebuilding and sovereignty

In the early 2000s, the academic and political discourse shifted from a focus on peace and reconciliation towards a focus on good governance and statebuilding.⁵⁹ Paris and Timothy D. Sisk noted how in the context of peacebuilding, statebuilding is “a particular approach to peacebuilding”, premised on the idea that realizing security and development depends in part on there being “capable, autonomous and legitimate governmental institutions”.⁶⁰ Put crudely, the way to fix the symptoms of repression, famine or war, is to focus on bad governance as the root cause. The 1992 article titled ‘Saving Failed States’ by Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner (two US State Department officials) is perhaps the first and most explicit iteration of this

⁵⁵ Carey and Sen, “Introduction,” 15-16; For a brief discussion on the differing strains of realism see; Aidan Hehir, *Humanitarian Intervention: An Introduction, Second Edition* (London: Red Globe Press, 2013), 70-73.

⁵⁶ Michael Fowler, “Strategies for Peace,” in *Paradigms of Peace*, ed. Henry F. Carey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 32.

⁵⁷ Fowler, “Strategies for Peace,” 33.

⁵⁸ Jahn, *Liberal Internationalism*, 175.

⁵⁹ Sabaratnam, “The Liberal Peace?,” 15-16.

⁶⁰ Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, *Managing Contradictions: The Inherent Dilemmas of Postwar Statebuilding* (Research Partnership on Postwar Statebuilding, 2007) 1-2.

institutional approach to the state.⁶¹ Historically, attention to the concept of statebuilding grew more when the quick fixes of economic and political liberalisation were seen as destabilizing in practice, leading to an increased focus on the problems of “weak”, “failing” or “fragile” states.⁶² Paris, Simon Chesterman, Francis Fukuyama and Stephen Krasner are some of the authors associated with the shift from peacebuilding to statebuilding.⁶³ In fact, Paris was one of the first to characterize the post-Cold War peacebuilding project as ideologically liberal in character, and he remarked how they were based on the same “flawed logic” of 1950s and 1960s modernization theory.⁶⁴ Paris’ argument was that the policies of rapid political and economic liberalization were not “particularly effective” in consolidating a stable peace, but instead led to social tensions that often had destabilizing consequences.⁶⁵ Instead, interveners would have to act illiberally early on to ensure liberal goals in the future. He advocated for a gradual ‘strategic liberalization’, with more sensitivity to some of the negative impacts of liberalisation, an approach he dubbed the ‘institutionalisation before liberalisation’ (IBL) approach.⁶⁶ This approach of delayed liberalisation and the extension of international mandates was already being implemented in Bosnia (and East Timor and Kosovo several years later) at the time of Paris’ writing, which arguably made his ‘critique’ more like an academic rationalisation of concurrent policy.⁶⁷ Following the classical liberals such as Hobbes and Locke, Paris posited

⁶¹ Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, “Saving Failed States,” *Foreign Policy* 89, no. 3 (Winter 1992-1993): 3-5; Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, “Rethinking Weberian Approaches to Statebuilding,” in *The Routledge Handbook of International Statebuilding*, ed. David Chandler and Timothy D. Sisk (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 4; Helman and Ratner’s work was a continuation of Robert Jackson’s early work on ‘weak’ or ‘quasi’ post-colonial states, in which he envisioned the concept of sovereignty as possibly *distant* from or dangerous for society. This in turn allowed for the external statebuilding of sovereignty; See: Christopher J. Bickerton, “Statebuilding, Exporting State Failure,” in *Politics Without Sovereignty, A Critique of Contemporary International Relations*, ed. Christopher J. Bickerton, Philip Cuncliffe and Alexander Gourevitch (London: University College London Press, 2007), 101-102.

⁶² Paris and Sisk, “Managing Contradiction,” 7-8.

⁶³ Simon Chesterman, *You the People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration, and State-building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 5-6; Paris, *At War’s End*, 5-6; Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building, Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), ix-xi; Stephen Krasner, “Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States,” *International Security* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 85-87; Their publications came out in 2004, shortly after the much contested invasion of Iraq and the subsequent reconstruction efforts.

⁶⁴ Meera Sabaratnam, “The Liberal Peace? An Intellectual History of International Conflict Management, 1990-2010,” in *A Liberal Peace?: The Problems and Practices of Statebuilding*, ed. Susanna Campbell, David Chandler and Meera Sabaratnam (London & New York: Zed Books, 2011), 13.

Paris, *At War’s End*, 176.

⁶⁵ Paris, “Limits of Liberal Internationalism,” 56-60.

⁶⁶ Paris, *At Wars End*, 179-211.

⁶⁷ David Chandler, “The R2P Is Dead, Long Live the R2P: The Successful Separation of Military Intervention from the Responsibility to Protect,” *International Peacekeeping* 22, no. 1 (2015): 1-2; Writing in 2004, Paris described

that the Leviathan had to be brought back in (meaning building state institutions first).⁶⁸ This focus on the importance of state institutions can be regarded as at least in part a realist critique of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm.⁶⁹ Importantly, these authors are not necessarily anti-liberal and would not object to building a liberal democracy, but they highlight the non-liberal context in which these interventions take place. Overall, in the early 2000s, the academic and political discourse shifted from a focus on peace and reconciliation towards a focus on good governance and statebuilding.⁷⁰

‘Bringing the state back in’ did not mean a return to traditional authority or sovereignty, but rather an internationalisation of domestic state processes.⁷¹ Indeed, concurrent to the rise of peacebuilding and statebuilding ideas and practices, lies the concept of ‘sovereignty’ and its post-Cold War critique and redefinition by a wide array of thinkers and politicians ranging from (neo)liberals to critical theorists.⁷² Sovereignty increasingly came to be seen as part of the problem, as it principally allowed rulers to exert total control over their territories. Roughly, sovereignty was being redefined in functional terms as a capacity or a responsibility, rather than as an exclusive political/legal right to self-government as was enshrined in the UN Charter.⁷³ This meant intervention in the form of extensive post-conflict peacebuilding was framed as strengthening some facets of sovereignty, rather than undermining it in principle. Terms such as ‘shared sovereignty’ and ‘guided sovereignty’ were introduced in the statebuilding discourse to indicate the internationalization of these states. The 2005 report *The Balkans in Europe’s Future* of the International Commission on the Balkans (ICB) similarly professed the need for

the more long-term interventionist approach towards Kosovo as substantially more successful than earlier missions, but he still thought more should have been done to embrace the IBL approach; Paris, *At War’s End*, 213-218.

⁶⁸ Roland Paris, “Bringing the Leviathan Back In: Classical Versus Contemporary Studies of the Liberal Peace,” *International Studies Review* 8, no. 3 (September 2006): 425-426.

⁶⁹ Hampson and Medeloff divided the approaches between the optimistic ‘fast-track democratizers’, Hobbesian ‘security-firsters’ (aiming at negative peace), and the preferred ‘slow democratizers’ (building a state before democracy); Fen Osler Hampson and David Mendeloff, “Intervention and the Nation-Building Debate,” in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, ed. Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (Washington: United State Institute of Peace Press 2007), 685-693.

⁷⁰ Sabaratnam, “The Liberal Peace?,” 15-16.

⁷¹ Chandler, *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, 74-75.

⁷² Christopher J. Bickerton, Philip Cuncliffe and Alexander Gourevitch, “Introduction: The Unholy Alliance Against Sovereignty,” in *Politics Without Sovereignty, A Critique of Contemporary International Relations*, ed. Christopher J. Bickerton, Philip Cuncliffe and Alexander Gourevitch (London: University College London Press, 2007), 2-8.

⁷³ Chandler, *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, 76-82.

the Balkans to move towards shared sovereignty with the EU.⁷⁴ Krasner bluntly suggested that “[f]or policy purposes, it would be best to refer to shared sovereignty as ‘partnerships’”, because this would allow policymakers to “engage in organized hypocrisy, that is, saying one thing and doing another”.⁷⁵ This shift in the meaning of sovereignty ties into the 2001 report *Responsibility to Protect*, which first and foremost redefined sovereignty as a responsibility of the state (or other states in case of transgressions) to treat its citizen decently.⁷⁶ Importantly, lines of accountability and responsibility, between outside and inside, were blurred, allowing external peacebuilders to point to local leaders and vice versa.⁷⁷

Local and pragmatic turns

Later in the 2000s, the statebuilding approach was itself put in perspective, with different dilemmas and contradictions highlighted. Scholars such as Charles Call and Elizabeth Cousens have stated that: “[s]tate building processes can [...] undermine peace in a number of ways”.⁷⁸ For example, they remark how enhancing the institutional power of the national state can lead to perceptions of insecurity and alienation in certain disaffected groups. Paris and Sisk, as a reaction to mounting critiques of post-conflict interventions, highlight numerous contradictions and dilemmas inherent to the statebuilding approach in their volume titled *Dilemmas of statebuilding*. Notable contradictions are in using external intervention to foster legitimate self-rule and the problem of short-term imperatives contradicting long term objectives (initial dealings with entrenched illiberal elites, for example, that legitimize their rule). Authors such as Michael Barnett and Christoph Zürcher increasingly started highlighting the important role of powerful local elites in shaping outcomes, and how their interests clashing with internationals compromised the far-reaching goals of statebuilding and peacebuilding.⁷⁹ Local ownership,

⁷⁴ International Commission on the Balkans, *The Balkans in Europe's Future* (Sofia: Centre for Liberal Strategies, 2005) 18.

⁷⁵ Krasner, “Sharing sovereignty,” 108; See also: David Chandler, *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-building* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 42-43; For Krasner’s influential unbundling of sovereignty, see: Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001), 11-15.

⁷⁷ Chandler, *Empire in Denial*, 79-86.

⁷⁸ Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, “Ending Wars and Building Peace: International Responses to War-Torn Societies,” *International Studies Perspectives* 9, no. 1 (February 2008): 10.

⁷⁹ Michael Barnett and Christoph Zürcher, “Peacebuilder’s Contract: How External Statebuilding Reinforces Weak Statehood,” in *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations*, ed. Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 24.

they concluded, is crucial, as it started to seem like internationals did not know what they were doing in many cases.⁸⁰ Paris and Sisk also put forward dilemmas regarding the degrees of footprint, duration, participation, dependency and coherence of statebuilding efforts.⁸¹ While there may have been agreement that the role of state should not be neglected, there was disagreement about what state function the emphasis should be on (such as military capacity, institutions of decision-making and legitimation, or the economic foundations of the state). This has produced a great deal of ‘lesson learned’ reports, which as scholar David Chandler aptly described, “repeat generic nostrums” such as the need for adequate planning, coordination between actors, focusing on civil society etcetera.⁸²

In this peacebuilding and statebuilding discussions, there are also a wide array of critical theorists, post-structuralists and post-colonial scholars (mostly Europeans) who critique the liberal peacebuilding paradigm.⁸³ The critical literature, while quite diverse, generally challenges the underlying epistemic and conceptual assumptions, critiques the power inequalities of these peacebuilding operations and/or often tries to centre the agency and ownership of the ‘local’, as opposed to the perceived top-down nature of liberal peacebuilding.⁸⁴ Western liberal rationality and universal models are dismissed as hubristic and removed from local cultures, while indigenous peace initiatives are where stable lasting peace is to be found. For example, the postcolonial concept of ‘hybridity’ has been used to describe the mixed results from peacebuilding operations.⁸⁵ Focussing on elites was problematized, and lasting reconciliation was to be found in deeper informal and social processes.⁸⁶

Currently, it is widely acknowledged (also by the UN) that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to peacebuilding, and that ‘organic’ local contexts must be taken into account. The critiques of the liberal peace have deeply penetrated the discourse on the viability of external social engineering. The idea that liberal interventionism can only makes things worse was

⁸⁰ Barnett and Zurcher, “Peacebuilder’s Contract,” 48.

⁸¹ Paris and Sisk, “Managing Contradictions,” 5-6.

⁸² Chandler, *Empire in Denial*, 5.

⁸³ Roger Mac Ginty, “The Local Turn in Peacebuilding: A Critical Agenda for Peace,” *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013): 763.

⁸⁴ Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, “Introduction: Liberal Peace in Dispute,” in *Rethinking the Liberal Peace: External Models and Local Alternatives*, ed. Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh (London: Routledge, 2011), 2-3.

⁸⁵ Volker Boege, M. Anne Brown and Kevin P. Clements, “Hybrid Political Orders, Not Fragile States,” *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 21, no.1 (2009): 13-15.

⁸⁶ David Chandler, “Peacebuilding and the Politics of Non-Linearity: Rethinking ‘Hidden’ Agency and ‘Resistance’,” *Peacebuilding* 1, no.1 (2013): 24-25

mounting. The current development of peacebuilding has been called the ‘pragmatic turn’, which speaks of investing in the “resilience” of the local communities.⁸⁷ This is paired with the acknowledgement of “deep uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity as contemporary conditions”.⁸⁸ The very entire term ‘statebuilding’ has fallen out of fashion on the UN level, as it is regarded as a “supply driven ... overly technocratic focus on capitals and elites” that run the risk of “unintentionally exacerbating divisions”.⁸⁹ Because of its challenge to idealistic liberals, this pragmatism can be seen as a realist response.⁹⁰ Indeed, noted realist Krasner advocated for “good enough governance” aimed at some form of stability and security, as this would be more in line with the interests of national and external statebuilding elites.⁹¹ Generally, from its operationalisation in the 1990s, the theoretical understanding of peacebuilding and interventionism has shifted from universalist and optimistic towards a more localized, pragmatic understanding that eschews universalist emancipatory claims, leading some to proclaim the death of peacebuilding.⁹² This diminishing impulse for extensive peacebuilding tracks with the partial waning of American unipolarity. The 2021 Fall of Kabul in Afghanistan again led to mainstream discussions on the viability of building liberal states, as US President Joe Biden retroactively denied extensive ‘nationbuilding’ was ever the goal, instead arguing the goal was merely to prevent another attack on US soil.⁹³ On the one hand, this can be regarded as a positive development, with more realistic aims and the tempering of Western hubris towards developing countries.⁹⁴ Others, however, see this shift beyond

⁸⁷ Louise Wiuff Moe and Finn Stepputat, “Introduction: Peacebuilding in an Era of Pragmatism,” *International Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2018): 295.

⁸⁸ Ana E. Juncos, “Resilience in Peacebuilding: Contesting Uncertainty, Ambiguity, and Complexity,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 39, no. 4 (2018): 562.

⁸⁹ Quoted in: David Chandler, “Kosovo: Statebuilding Utopia and Reality,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 13, no. 5 (2019): 550.

⁹⁰ Ridvan Peshkopia “A Bottom-Up View at Peacebuilding: Pragmatism, Public Opinion, and the Individual as Unit of Analysis in Postconflict Societies,” in *Peacebuilding Paradigms*, ed. Henry F. Carey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 314; David Chandler, “The Power of Uncritical Critique: Lake’s Pragmatic Apologia for Statebuilding,” *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* IX, no. 15 (2017): 4.

⁹¹ Stephen Krasner, “Seeking ‘Good-Enough-Governance’ – Not Democracy,” *Belfer Center*, September 23, 2013. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/seeking-good-enough-governance-not-democracy> (September 14, 2021).

⁹² Chandler, *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, 14.

John Karlsrud, “From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism,” *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 1 (2019): 1-3.

⁹³ David Luhnow and Gerald F. Seib, “A Farewell to Nation-Building,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 3, 2021. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-farewell-to-nation-building-11630680925> (accessed November 2, 2021).

⁹⁴ David Chandler and Oliver Richmond, “Contesting Postliberalism: Governmentality or Emancipation?,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 81, no. 1 (June 2014): 2-4.

liberalism into what may be called ‘postliberalism’ as less benign, as it entails Western powers increasingly shifting responsibilities unto to local populations while denying the actual power, control and responsibility they continue to hold in a stratified globalized world.⁹⁵

Conclusion

While the concept of liberal peacebuilding, or the liberal peace, has been dominant in understanding, critiquing and shaping post-conflict reconstruction policies in the last twenty or so years, it has not been without detractors or conceptual confusion. Because of internal contradictions within liberal theory and its inherent theoretical flexibility, it allowed room for radical critics, realists, and certain strands of liberals (institutionalists and neoliberals) to attack it from all sides. Generally, for liberals, legitimacy follows from democracy and free markets, leading to social order. For realists, legitimacy follows from social order, with less regard for democracy as a result. These two problem-solving approaches are the dominant conceptions of modern peacebuilding in Western policy circles, as critical theory inspired European approaches (such as post-colonialism) hold little sway beyond academic circles. Having outlined the process of peacebuilding quickly turning into statebuilding and the retreat of the responsibility for peace by outside powers towards local actors, peacebuilding is undeniably in a different state than it was in the 1990s. With US President Joe Biden for instance stating in 2021 that nationbuilding in Afghanistan, contrary to his earlier support, “never made any sense to me”, the ambitious urge to build liberal democracies, civil societies, and solving conflicts by tackling their roots causes seems almost to have vanished.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Chandler and Richmond, “Contesting Postliberalism,” 2-4.

⁹⁶ Glenn Kessler, “Biden’s Claim that Nation-Building in Afghanistan ‘Never Made Any Sense to Me,” *The Washington Post*, August 23, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/08/23/bidens-claim-that-nation-building-afghanistan-never-made-any-sense/> (accessed November 2, 2021); Simultaneously, however, the American urge to talking about ‘freeing’ other nations from repressive governments has not disappeared; Trevor Hunnicutt, “Biden Vows to ‘Free Iran’ in West Coast Campaign Speech,” *Reuters*, November 4, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-vows-free-iran-west-coast-campaign-speech-2022-11-04/> (accessed November 10, 2022).

Chapter II: Peacebuilding, transatlantic divide or congruence

Introduction

As discussed, many scholars see peacebuilding and statebuilding policies as exporting (or imposing) ‘Western’ values into a non-Western context. Having sketched the debates surrounding the concept of peacebuilding and sussed out the dominant conceptions, let us focus on the actors in question, namely the US and the EU. While peacebuilding as a concept was formulated by Ghali and strongly associated with the UN, NGOs and other international organizations, peacebuilding has historically been a field dominated by American and European – what is broadly termed ‘Western’ – practitioners and scholars. Denoting the ‘West’ as being ‘one’, however, runs the risks of overgeneralization and glossing over real differences and transatlantic tensions. Starting by assessing the state of the transatlantic alliance, the divides and congruences, we will assess the general American and European approaches towards peacebuilding. As they are two different actors, one a nation state, the other a collection of nation states, and seeing as they often work in the same environments, we will question what their cooperation looks like. There is no time here to describe all the major cases of post-conflict operations where the US and EU were present, but sketching the different instruments and capabilities of the two actors offers some idea of what they are working with.

The debates in the first chapter between defenders and critics of the liberal peacebuilding process have also indicated a geographical divide. Assessing the scholarly liberal peace debate, John Heathershaw wrote about European scholars trying to “exorcise the spectre of rushed liberal democratisation and capitalist restructuring in post-conflict environments”, without developing much explanatory theory or influencing actual policy.⁹⁷ On the other hand, Heathershaw noted that “Northern America-based academics working in a positivist [and empiricist] tradition” either ignore these critiques or scoff at their lack of solutions.⁹⁸ Similarly, critical scholars Neil Cooper, Mandy Turner and Michael Pugh lamented how, apart from Roland Paris’ attempt at addressing critiques of liberal peacebuilding, radical criticism “predominantly from European academics” had mostly been completely ignored by “mainstream academics and policy circles in the USA”.⁹⁹ In discussing the history and

⁹⁷ John Heathershaw, “Towards Better Theories of Peacebuilding: Beyond the Liberal Peace Debate,” *Peacebuilding* 1, no. 2 (2013): 276.

⁹⁸ Heathershaw, “Towards Better Theories of Peacebuilding,” 276.

⁹⁹ Neil Cooper, Mandy Turner and Michael Pugh, “The End of History and the Last Liberal Peacebuilder: A Reply to Roland Paris,” *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 4 (2011): 1996.

historiography of IR more broadly, Brian Schmidt highlighted a rift between the more positivist, ‘scientific’ American scholarly community, and the rest of the world that were more sceptical of this approach.¹⁰⁰ The question is if this perceived bifurcation between American and European academics in IR (and specifically on the issue of liberal peacebuilding) is also visible in the foreign policies approaches of the US and EU respectively.¹⁰¹

Transatlantic divide or congruence

To assess the American and European approaches, the ‘transatlantic alliance’ must be addressed. After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the common enemy, the Soviet Union, the basis of the transatlantic alliance between the Americans and Europeans was called into question. When the US assumed unrivalled superpower dominance after the Cold War, disagreements flared up between the EU and US repeatedly, with some European foreign ministers openly calling in question America’s hegemonic, unilateral tendency to dictate what other countries could and could not do.¹⁰² For example, some Europeans were frustrated by American sanctioning of so-called pariah states, the extension of US law across the world and the dominance of the dollar. Tellingly, the US also became increasingly irritated with Boutros-Ghali’s vision of the UN’s post-Cold War role, failing to pay its dues and ultimately blocking his second term in 1996.¹⁰³ Without the original rationale, there were widespread calls for the end of NATO, the US dominated security umbrella. As the story goes, because Europeans were not capable of solving ethnic conflict in the Balkans in what was to be ‘the hour of Europe’, the Americans, and thus NATO again proved unmissable on the European continent.¹⁰⁴ These

¹⁰⁰ Brian C. Schmidt, “On the History and Historiography of International Relations,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (London: SAGE Publications, 2012), 19.

¹⁰¹ Importantly, there is linguistic and conceptual difference between American and European meanings of ‘liberalism’, as it denotes centre of left politics in the US and more centre of right politics in European parlance; See: Henry F. Carey, “North America, Peace Studies versus the Hegemony of Realist and Liberal Methods,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace: Second Edition*, ed. Oliver P. Richmond, Sandra Pogodda and Jasmin Ramović (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 4.

¹⁰² William Drozdiak, “Even Allies Resent U.S. Dominance,” *The Washington Post*, November 4, 1997. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/11/04/even-allies-resent-us-dominance/10afe506-7381-485c-9c2e-cd159c9cea2e/> (accessed March 16, 2021).

¹⁰³ Eric Rouleau, “Why Washington Wants Rid of Mr Boutros-Ghali,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, November, 1996. <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/secgen/boutros/1996/11ridboutros.htm> (October 27, 2022);

¹⁰⁴ Josip Glaurdić, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 1-3; For a more critical reading on the Western (particularly US) role during the Yugoslavia wars, see: David N. Gibbs, *First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009).

failures gave a big impetus for the further development of European security structures, but also their post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Crucially, the US was always wary of independent EU security structures that could undermine NATO.

The Iraq war was arguably the most contentious issue with regards to Transatlantic Relations. Notably, Rumsfeld's distinction between 'old' (anti-war) and 'new' (pro-war) Europe showed how the US whipped up a number of states it could in one way incentivize or bully into joining the 'Coalition of the Willing'. Disagreements over Iraq, Afghanistan, trade, the Israel-Palestinian conflict and Iran's nuclear capabilities were far deeper compared to their relatively concordant relationship in the Balkans. Indeed, cooperation in the Balkans, in contrast, was deemed positive for the region and "good for transatlantic relations".¹⁰⁵ As Frank Wisner put it: "US economic and security interests required good relations with Europe ...the Kosovo issue provided an opportunity for the US and Europe to find common ground".¹⁰⁶ Still, there were constant American frustrations with the lack of European unanimity and the resulting "paralysis of the official process" on important cases such as EULEX deployment. They found that second tier member states gained some influence from the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) at the expense of the EU-3 (Germany, the UK, and France). The US had to figure out a "fresh approach" how to make the CFSP work in their interest, for example by engaging EU members early and informally.¹⁰⁷ Of course, there were also divides between EU members with regards to the relationship between NATO and EU security. Centre-left Europeanists tended to see the relationship between NATO and the EU as somewhat conflictual, seeing the more multilateral EU as a counterweight to reduce hegemonic (or even neo-imperialist) US influences in Europe. Centre-right 'Atlanticists', on the other hand, tended to see the EU and NATO as complimentary and latter as an important part of Europe's security.¹⁰⁸ Besides

¹⁰⁵ Embassy Brussels, "US/EU Policy Planning Talks," Wikileaks Cable: 04BRUSSELS4274_a. Dated October 5, 2004. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04BRUSSELS4274_a.html (accessed June 10, 2021).

¹⁰⁶ Henry H. Perritt Jr., *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 106; Similarly, writing a RAND report in 2003, US official James Dobbins argued that Kosovo was the best mix of "US leadership, European participation, broad financial burden-sharing and strong unity of command"; James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2003), 163.

¹⁰⁷ US Mission to European Union, "Getting the Most Out of Foreign Policy Cooperation with the EU," Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS943_a. Dated June 20, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BRUSSELS943_a.html (accessed July 1, 2022).

¹⁰⁸ Embassy Ljubljana, "Slovenia's Divergent Views on NATO/EU Cooperation vs. Competition Mirror Party Cleavages," Wikileaks Cable: 06LJUBLJANA63_a. Dated January 31, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06LJUBLJANA63_a.html (accessed December 20, 2021).

transatlantic disagreements, the Iraq war also further divided the EU on the issue of legitimate military force, which the US sought to quietly shape in favour of independence from the UN.¹⁰⁹

In the peacebuilding literature, there have been broad assessments of peacebuilding approaches from the perspective of transatlantic relations (meaning EU vis-à-vis the US, rather than in NATO).¹¹⁰ Eva Gross, writing for the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), focussed on the respective approaches for a variety of reasons. She stressed the need to “address common security threats ... the need to pool resources in lean economic times ... and concurrent global power shifts that could challenge the transatlantic monopoly on the provision of security”.¹¹¹ These ‘common security threats’ are issues such as the post-Cold War ‘new wars’, the destabilizing consequences of fragile or failed states, terrorism, organised crime etc. However, Gross also stressed the need for a realistic assessment of the persistent differences in approaches between the US and EU. She noted differences regarding the use of diplomacy and development, civilian capabilities, and the “broader strategic considerations as to the value of peacebuilding”.¹¹² In this context, Gross is far from the only one to make a distinction between ‘military’ and ‘civilian’ capabilities, the US more associated with the former, and the EU more with the latter.¹¹³ Institutionally, she rightly points out how in the US, the military is the primary institution with regards to “international engagement, public support, and financial clout”.¹¹⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, for example, discussing the transatlantic tensions caused by the Iraq war, argued for a new transatlantic bargain predicated on Europe’s need for American military might and America’s need for European civilian power.¹¹⁵ This echoes the distinction between ‘hard’ power and ‘soft’ power. For instance, soldiers are military capabilities, while police officers, border patrol and judges fall under civilian capabilities. Regarding these forms of power, it is often assumed ‘civilian’ (or ‘soft’ power more broadly) is in some ways more legitimate, less intrusive, more effective, or even morally superior. With regards to civilian-

¹⁰⁹ Embassy Brussels, “First Steps Toward an EU Use-of-Force Doctrine: [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 03BRUSSELS4143_a. Dated August 28, 2003. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_03BRUSSELS4143 (accessed October 26, 2022).

¹¹⁰ Eva Gross, “EU-US Cooperation in Crisis Management: Transatlantic Approaches and Future Trajectories,” in *Preventing Conflict, Managing Crisis: European and American Perspectives*, ed. Eva Gross, Daniel Hamilton, Claudia Major and Henning Riecke (Washington: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2011), 37.

¹¹¹ Gross, “EU-US Cooperation in Crisis Management,” 37.

¹¹² Eva Gross, *Peacebuilding in 3D: EU and US Approaches*, Chaillot Papers (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2013), 7.

¹¹³ Gross, *Peacebuilding in 3D*, 39.

¹¹⁴ Gross, 39.

¹¹⁵ Andrew Moravcsik, “Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July/August 2003): 75.

military integration, the EU approach has been dubbed ‘the comprehensive approach’, while the US preferred to call it the ‘whole of government’ approach.¹¹⁶ In 2006, Oliver Richmond also associated the US with the ‘conservative’ approach, because of its unilateral and militarized tendencies, while he regarded the EU as more ‘orthodox’ or even ‘emancipatory’ with regards to the liberal peace (more bottom-up process concerned with local needs).¹¹⁷

Writing shortly before the start of the Iraq war, Robert Kagan famously contrasted the strategic cultures of the US and EU as symbolizing Mars and Venus. He saw the former as Hobbesian, realist and based on military might, while the EU, in turn, was described as Kantian, idealist, and shying away from the use of military power.¹¹⁸ For Kagan, Europe could have only developed that pacifist, multilateral condition under the military conditions enacted by the US in the Cold War period.¹¹⁹ Kagan’s controversial thesis was immediately relativized by himself and strongly criticized by some Europeans, who pointed to the European support in US-led military operations (most recently Operation Allied Force) all the while admitting Europe should do more to re-arm itself. This reading on transatlantic differences can not be solely ascribed to American hubris, seeing as Kagan was influenced to write it by Robert Cooper, the advisor of then EU foreign policy High Representative Javier Solana.¹²⁰ Cooper first influenced Tony Blair’s vision of a new liberal internationalism which came to fruition in Operation Allied Force. Cooper wrote about the “postmodern system in which we Europeans live”, where the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs are blurred, borders grow irrelevant, disputes are not settled by force and “security is based on transparency, mutual openness, interdependence and mutual vulnerability”.¹²¹ He pronounced the death of Western imperialism, meaning the need to fight and conquer for national interests.¹²² Cooper pleaded for a “postmodern imperialism” to bring order and organisation to the ‘pre-modern’ and ‘modern’ worlds, but now based on values such as human rights. As such, the “[postmodern]

¹¹⁶ Alice Serar, *EU-US Cooperation in Civilian Crisis Management*, EU Diplomacy Papers (Brugge: College of Europe, 2009), 17-18.

¹¹⁷ Oliver. P Richmond, “A Post-Liberal Peace: Eirenism and the Everyday,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (July 2009): 560-563.

¹¹⁸ Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review*, no. 113 (June/July 2002): 3-4

¹¹⁹ Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” 17.

¹²⁰ José Ignacio Torreblanco, “Mars and Venus, 10 Years on,” *Voxeurop*, April 11, 2012. <https://voxeurop.eu/en/mars-and-venus-10-years-on/> (accessed March 18, 2021).

¹²¹ Robert Cooper, “The New Liberal Imperialism,” *The Guardian*, April 7, 2002.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/apr/07/1> (accessed March 22, 2021).

¹²² Cooper, “The New Liberal Imperialism,”.

imperialism of neighbours” was reflected in the protectorates in Bosnia and Kosovo, where for Cooper it was no coincidence that both High Representatives (appointed by the UN Secretary General to lead UNMIK) were European and aid came primarily from Europe. It was argued that the EU was changing these countries from the inside, rather than the traditional imperial model of outside domination.¹²³ Cooper thought it was a “doubtful case” if the US was also postmodern, since it seemed unclear if the US government or Congress accepted the desirable principles of mutual interdependence, mutual surveillance and openness.¹²⁴ Thus, his reading was not so different from Kagan’s, but more informed by liberalism compared to the staunch realism of the latter.

Nevertheless, it is crucial not to overstate the differences across the Atlantic. With regards to approaches to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the Center for Transatlantic Relations argued how despite the differences in domestic and institutional contexts and its effects on cooperation, underlying strategic motivations were similar.¹²⁵ Peter Niesen, pondering the question of the divide of the West in 2005, wrote: “The important division of the West, therefore, lies not in giving incompatible substantive answers to hard questions, but in sticking to incompatible *procedural* commitments”[emphasis added].¹²⁶ Indeed, many Europeans did not simply oppose the US taking the right to invade Iraq and topple a sovereign state’s leader, but mainly wanted the US to follow the ‘correct’ procedure in doing so – such as approval from the United Nation Security Council (UNSC). The question seemed not to be necessarily one of ends, but primarily one of means.

The American way

When analysing the American approach to peacebuilding, its uniquely hegemonic place in post-Cold War history should first be acknowledged. Next to holding immense political, social,

¹²³ Chandler, *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, 87; British Blairite Mark Leonard, then director of foreign policy at the Centre for European Reform, presented a similar argument in his 2005 book titled *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*. He conceptualized the EU’s form of ‘transformative power’ as a network of integration aimed at societies, contrasting it with American military power which can only change regimes; See: Mark Leonard, *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), 5.

¹²⁴ Robert Cooper, *The Post-Modern State and the World Order* (London: Demos, 1996), 29.

¹²⁵ Eva Gross, Daniel Hamilton, Claudia Major, and Henning Riecke, “Introduction: Changing Scenarios in Transatlantic Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management,” in *Preventing Conflict, Managing Crisis: European and American Perspectives*, ed. Eva Gross, Daniel Hamilton, Claudia Major, and Henning Riecke (Washington: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2011), 5.

¹²⁶ Peter Niesen, “The ‘West Divided’?,” in *Rethinking Ethical Foreign Policy Pitfalls, Possibilities and Paradoxes* ed. David Chandler and Volker Heins (London: Routledge, 2007), 113.

cultural and economic power, the US pursued a strategy of military primacy over all other countries in the world.¹²⁷ Inherent to the American idea of peacebuilding is that in general, its primacy in coercive military power is a necessary prerequisite to stability and peace, to prevent world from falling into the despotism of rivals.¹²⁸ As of 2020, the US runs about 800 military bases outside its borders.¹²⁹ This idea of American exceptionalism, or the self image of being an “indispensable nation”, underpinned America’s role in the world.¹³⁰ Democracy, peace and human rights promotion had already become the new talking points during the Carter and Reagan era, as explicit anti-communism and containment became increasingly discredited resulting from Nixon’s scandals, the Vietnam War and revelations from the Church Committee.¹³¹ For example, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) was established in 1984. Both a think-tank and a “do-tank”, it later helped in truth commissions, workshops, and training of government officials throughout the Balkans.¹³² While US President Bill Clinton had campaigned on ‘assertive multilateralism’ and US support for UN peacekeeping missions in the 1990s, experiences such as in Somalia turned the US against peace operations when they were not in the US national interest.¹³³ If deemed necessary, the US needed to be able to act unilaterally.

In 2000, Condoleezza Rice, then foreign policy advisor to presidential candidate Bush, published a *Foreign Affairs* piece titled ‘Promoting the National Interest’. It started with stating

¹²⁷ Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop,” *The New York Times*, March 8, 1992. <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/08/world/us-strategy-plan-calls-for-insuring-no-rivals-develop.html> (accessed June 15, 2022).

¹²⁸ Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020), 7.

¹²⁹ David Vine, *The United States of War: A Global History of America’s Endless Conflicts, From Columbus to the Islamic State* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 1-8.

¹³⁰ Micah Zenko, “The Myth of the Indispensable Nation,” *Foreign Policy*, November 6, 2014. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/the-myth-of-the-indispensable-nation/> (accessed June 14, 2022).

¹³¹ David F. Schmitz and Vanessa Walker, “Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (January 2004): 117; Of note is that the American form of democracy (a practically two-party system, where the president is both the head of state and the head of government) is rarely the model exported to post-war countries. Instead, as is the case in Kosovo, the Americans preferred the multi-party system with a president as head of state and a prime minister as head of government.

¹³² Dane F. Smith Jr., *US Peacefare: Organizing American Peacebuilding Operations* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 174; Anthony C. Zinni, “Peace-Building That Pays Off,” *The New York Times*, March 7, 2011. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/opinion/08zinni.html> (accessed April 8, 2021).

¹³³ National Security Council, “PDD – 25 U.S. Policy On Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations, 5/3/1994,” *Clinton Digital Library*, May 3, 1994. Available at: <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12749> In May 1994, Clinton signed President Decision Directive (PDD) number 25 wherein UN participation was restricted, stating that “[p]eace operations are not and cannot be the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy”.

that the “United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its “national interest” in the absence of Soviet power”, and sought to redress this issue.¹³⁴ She was troubled by the Clinton administration replacing ‘national interest’ with ‘humanitarian interests’.¹³⁵ Indeed, Bush was running for president, he levelled a clearly realist critique against what he argued was reckless idealism by the Clinton administration and their disregard for ‘real’ threats by rival superpowers Russia and China.¹³⁶ For Rice, benefiting humanity was explicitly delegated to a second-order effect, after the national interest. In what is often called neoconservatism, good things (individual human rights, freedom, markets, peace) flow from the US pursuing its national interests through interventionism internationally, like it had done after the Second World War. To a unipolar great power like the US at the time, multilateral agreements and institutions were means, not ends. Still, she dismissed the distinction between power politics and policy based on values, stating that this was fine for academic debate, but made disastrous policy. The strategic interests of the Kosovo war were clear for Rice. It was located in the backyard of NATO (their most important strategic allies) and Milosevic threatened the area’s fragile ethnic balance. However, she dismissed using the military for ‘nation building’, saying the military is “certainly not designed to build a civilian society”.¹³⁷ Political liberalization, in China for example, could be achieved partly through trade and economic interaction, because of the supposed link between economic liberalization and democracy.¹³⁸

Two Bush administrations later in 2008, Rice wrote a *Foreign Affairs* piece titled ‘Rethinking the National Interests: American Realism for a New World’. Because of 9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan and what she described as the destabilizing spill-over effects of globalization, policy shifted to “recognize that democratic state building is now an urgent component of our national interest”.¹³⁹ The supposed dangers to national security posed by failed, failing or collapsed states allowed for this shift. Running with the characterisation of the US as a reluctant superpower, the US was said to engage in foreign policy “because we have to, not because we want to”.¹⁴⁰ This newfound affinity for democratic statebuilding involved the need to build

¹³⁴ Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (January/February 2000): 45.

¹³⁵ Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” 47.

¹³⁶ James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States,” *International Security* 28, no. 4 (Spring 2004): 5-6.

¹³⁷ Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” 53.

¹³⁸ Rice, 55.

¹³⁹ Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4. (July/August 2008): 3.

¹⁴⁰ Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest,” 25.

civilian capacity and an inter-agency ‘whole of government approach’, such as through the State Department creation of S/CRS (Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization).¹⁴¹ In meetings, S/CRS chief John Herbst used peacebuilding, stabilization and reconstruction interchangeably, pointing to Kosovo’s transition to independent government as a good example of stabilization work.¹⁴² Again, Rice talked about the American history of trying to combine “power and principle – realism and idealism”, calling it a “uniquely American realism”.¹⁴³ Towards the end of the piece, she situates the uniqueness of this approach in the American “imagination”, and their way of thinking, arguing how this accounts for American’s uniquely powerful role in the world.¹⁴⁴ In a 2010 Foreign Affairs article, her successor US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also professed the importance of elevating “diplomacy and development alongside defense – a ‘smart power’ approach”.¹⁴⁵ Clinton described building peace and stability by building multi-ethnic democratic states, where US diplomats and civilian experts remain after the US troops have returned home.¹⁴⁶ Regardless, self-proclaimed realists such as Stephen M. Walt or John Mearsheimer have been adamant in their criticism of the process of ‘liberal internationalism’, arguing it has had disadvantageous consequences for the US national interest.¹⁴⁷

A late 2009 “face off” between Marc A. Thiessen, a neoconservative former Bush

¹⁴¹ Nina M. Serafino, “In Brief: State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO),” *Congressional Research Service*, October 10, 2012, 2-3. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R42775.pdf>
The S/CRS was created in 2004, but has had tremendous problems with regards to Congressional funding and bureaucratic rivalries.

¹⁴² Embassy Brasilia, “Visit of S/CRS Coordinator John Herbst,” Wikileaks Cable: 09BRASILIA735_a. Dated June 10, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BRASILIA735_a.html (accessed July 20, 2022).

¹⁴³ Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest,” 3; This stemmed from the refusal to accept “that our national interest and our universal ideals are at odds”; The Trump administration’s National Security Strategy of 2017 would later describe a similar approach as ‘principled realism’. White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 1.

¹⁴⁴ Rice, 25; Interestingly, this line of reasoning is chiefly constructivist in nature, showing how the notion that ideas are socially constructed, structure political identities and therefore determine policy-making have seeped into practically all IR approaches.

¹⁴⁵ Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Leading Through Civilian Power, Redefining American Diplomacy and Development,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (November/December 2010): 13.

¹⁴⁶ Clinton, “Leading Through Civilian Power,” 22.

¹⁴⁷ Stephen M. Walt, “The World Wants You to Think Like a Realist,” *Foreign Policy*, May 30, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/30/the-world-wants-you-to-think-like-a-realist/> (accessed 12 April, 2021); For a response from inside the US foreign policy establishment (the so-called ‘Blob’), see: Jake Sullivan, “More, Less, Or Different,” *Foreign Affairs* 98, no. 1 (January-February 2019): 170. Interestingly, in this article Sullivan makes reference to Kagan’s Mars-Venus distinction. He argued policymakers (from Mars) have to make hard decisions and deal with the consequences while scholars (from Venus) are busy making rosy prescriptions from a distance without having to take in account the costs.

speechwriter and the aforementioned Mark Leonard, showed some of the prevailing differences across the Atlantic in their approaches towards achieving democracy and freedom across the world. The former railed against the “globalists” seeking to restrain the self-government of freedom-loving Americans with their undemocratic supranational institutions, the latter pleading for increased international cooperation, international law and multilateralism in dealing with transnational problems.¹⁴⁸ To be sure, both can be characterized as liberals in that they explicitly plead for a liberal world order, but they differ greatly in the question of how to achieve this and how it may look like. Thiessen wants “principled power projection” by an America unrestrained by undemocratic international lawyers, while Leonard thinks this is an outdated balance-of-power mindset and urges the US to abide by a rules-based order. Thiessen is more of a laissez faire, neoconservative type liberal, while Leonard is more of a welfare liberal. When Obama came to power in 2009, and the bellicose neoconservative Bush, some Europeans thought the transatlantic alliance would be restored. US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland’s leaked ‘fuck the EU’ with regards to the 2014 Ukraine crisis, however, illustrates the enduring US tendency to decide for itself when to disregard allied concerns.¹⁴⁹

Overall, the American approach to peace has been more militarized because of its outsized military capacities, although with repeated calls for more civilian capabilities since the 1990s. Post-Cold War US policy aimed at worldwide primacy, using liberal/neoconservative language and a view of American exceptionalism to blend values and interests. However, bringing in the EU and UN for ‘burden sharing’ gives the US access to certain capacities and broader legitimacy, as well as less responsibility for the consequences of its actions. So while the US repeatedly highlighted EU weaknesses in their divisions and stovepiping of its institutions, the US still saw benefits in the using the EU for its own purposes. As a US cable stated, “we need not wait for the EU to complete its institutional restructuring and implementation to begin harnessing EU resources to support U.S. interests”.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Marc A. Thiessen, Mark Leonard and Jesse Helms, “Debate: When Worlds Collide,” *Foreign Policy* 123 (March/April 2001): 64-68.

¹⁴⁹ Doina Chiacu and Arshad Mohammed, “Leaked Audio Reveals Embarrassing U.S. Exchange on Ukraine, EU,” *Reuters*, February 7, 2014. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-ukraine-tape-idUSBREA1601G20140207> (accessed May 17, 2022).

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU Making the “Comprehensive Approach” Its Trademark in Crisis Response,” Wikileaks Cable: 09BRUSSELS1561_a. Dated November 20, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BRUSSELS1561_a.html (accessed April 14, 2021).

The European way

First of all, the EU is institutionally different from the US with regards to its intra-governmental nature, in which the member states hold influence over the external policy making process. The EU is an actor comprised of different bodies that carry out different facets of peacebuilding, sometimes leading to bureaucratic rivalries (or ‘turf battles’) between the Commission and the Council on areas where their roles overlap, compete or are unclear.¹⁵¹ In this case, the crisis-response missions are a mix between the humanitarian and financial assets of the Commission and the security assets and manpower of the Council.¹⁵² The ‘engine’ of the EU is arguably in its two most powerful states, Germany and France, and key decisions are made in capitals, not necessarily in Brussels.¹⁵³ Accordingly, the US privately lamented the lack of a coherent strategy in ensuring a European future of the Western Balkans, locating the key to critical decisions with regards to the region in powerful member states, not in Brussels.¹⁵⁴ For the purpose of this thesis, we will mainly focus on policy at the European level, but if needed also focus on the policies of singular EU states. The EU historically sees itself as a successful project of building peace on the once divided European continent, and enlargement is often pictured as an external extension thereof. Certainly, from the 1950 Schuman Declaration onwards, the very birth of European integration, the project of mutual interdependence was legitimized above all in the name of peace between France and Germany and by extension the whole world.¹⁵⁵ While Solana stated in 2006 it had become less fashionable and a terrible cliché to describe the European project as a peacebuilding project, he maintained it to be true.¹⁵⁶ Since 2003, the EU

¹⁵¹ Hylke Dijkstra, “Commission Versus Council Secretariat: An Analysis of Bureaucratic Rivalry in European Foreign Policy,” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2009): 432-433.

¹⁵² Embassy Brussels, “S/CRS Assesses the EU’s Crisis Response Capabilities,” Wikileaks Cable: 05BRUSSELS379_a. Dated January 27, 2005. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05BRUSSELS379_a.html (accessed July 20, 2022).

¹⁵³ Ulrike Franke and Jana Puglierin, “The Big Engine that Might: How France and Germany Can Build a Geopolitical Europe,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, July 14, 2020. https://ecfr.eu/publication/the_big_engine_that_might_how_france_and_germany_can_build_a_geopolitical_e/ (accessed April 5, 2021).

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU and W. Balkans: Carrots Not Always Effective: Sticks Largely Unused,” Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS3192_a. Dated October 19, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07BRUSSELS3192_a.html (accessed July 19, 2022).

¹⁵⁵ Robert Schuman, “Schuman Declaration May 1950,” *European Union*, May 9, 1950. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en (accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁵⁶ Javier Solana, “Mediating Today’s Conflicts for Tomorrow’s Peace,” *Speech at Oslo Forum*, June 27, 2006. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/discours/90420.pdf (accessed May 18, 2021).

deploys civilian and or military mission through its developing Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). It was supposedly the failure of the ‘hour of Europe’ during the 1990s Yugoslav wars that led to the need for a more common approach towards foreign policy.

There has been a long debate over what kind of actor the EU is and what form of power it exudes. For its seemingly non-military character, emphasis on economic means and multilateralism, Europe was already described by François Duchêne as a ‘civilian power’ in the 1970s and later as a ‘soft power’ (to describe its power of attraction and co-optation) by Joseph Nye.¹⁵⁷ Partly because of the rise of its military capacities and coherent foreign policy approach after the St. Malo agreement between France and England, Ian Manners famously put forward the term ‘normative power Europe’ (NPE) in 2002 that perhaps resonated the most in EU circles.¹⁵⁸ Manners, from a social constructivist standpoint, explicitly sought to shift the debate away from talking about civilian (or military) power in the sense of empirical capabilities, as he saw these as too linked with the nation state, direct physical power and the notion of the national interest. Instead, he sought to highlight the “ideational impact of the EU’s international identity/role as representing normative power”.¹⁵⁹ Manners followed the aforementioned Johan Galtung, who talked about the European Community having ‘ideological power’ to shape perceptions of the recipient and define what ‘normal’ is.¹⁶⁰ Thus, Manners concluded the most important factor shaping the EU’s global role “is not what it does or what it says, but what it is”.¹⁶¹ Naturally, Europeans like to see themselves engaging in something different than traditional *realpolitik*. Four years later, however, Manners reconsidered the applicability of NPE to some extent by highlighting the further militarization and securitization of the EU’s normative power with the aims of becoming a great power.¹⁶² This idea of normative Europe can easily be read as being a response to the ‘unipolar moment’ of post-Cold War idealism/liberal internationalism contrasted against an increasingly unilateral America, the

¹⁵⁷ Jan Orbie, “Civilian Power Europe: Review of the Original and Current Debates,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 41, no. 1 (2006): 123-125; Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 76-79.

¹⁵⁸ Hartmut Behr and Yannis A. Stivachtis, “European Union: An Empire in New Clothes?,” in *Revisiting the European Union as Empire*, ed. Hartmut Behr and Yannis Stivachtis (London: Routledge, 2015), 11-13.

¹⁵⁹ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 238.

¹⁶⁰ Manners, “Normative Power Europe,” 239.

¹⁶¹ Manners, 252.

¹⁶² Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe Reconsidered: Beyond the Crossroads,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 183-185; To Manners, this was the EU thinking it could have its cake and eat it too.

latter being evidenced by the key contrasts between the American and European security strategies that came out in 2002-2003.¹⁶³ Again, while both documents stressed the export of democracy as a strategic imperative, the 2002 American security strategy reflected a more militarized, unilateral approach to security, stemming from its unprecedented worldwide strength and influence.¹⁶⁴ When the EU as a whole released the European Security Strategy for the first time in 2003, it stressed how no single country (not even the US) could tackle the multi-faceted, complex problems of the day. The newly identified threats of terrorism and failed states needed more than just military instruments, the report said, instead they may also require intelligence, policing, judicial and economic instruments which the EU thought it was particularly well-equipped to deal with.¹⁶⁵

While the EU has not clearly defined an explicit peacebuilding strategy, preventing conflicts and building peace is routinely said to be one of its main concerns.¹⁶⁶ Some have argued that because of its internal characteristics, most notably the need for a common consensus, the EU is unable to act as an “strategic actor”, meaning the ability to clearly identify political, economic and geo-strategic interests when making foreign policy.¹⁶⁷ As said by a top EU official, “EU unity is only achieved by being ambiguous”.¹⁶⁸ The need for consensus might explain the particular risk-averting approach, as somewhat of a “lowest common denominator”

¹⁶³ Lisbeth Aggestam, “The World in Our Mind: Normative Power in a Multi-Polar World,” in *Normative Power Europe in a Changing World: A Discussion*, ed. André Gerrits (The Hague: Clingendael, 2009), 31.

¹⁶⁴ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2002), 29.

¹⁶⁵ Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in A Better World* (Brussels: Publication Office, 2003), 8-9. Available at: <https://www.statewatch.org/media/documents/news/2003/jun/SECURE%20EUROPE.pdf> The 2009 report on the development of the European Security Strategy further underlined how “[p]eace-building and long-term poverty reduction are essential to [conflict prevention]” and that each case requires the coherent use of all possible instruments (political, diplomatic, development, economic, humanitarian etc.); Council of the European Union, *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* (Brussels: Publications Office, 2009), 21. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ Ana E. Juncos and Steven Blockmans, “The EU’s Role in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: Four Key Challenges,” *Global Affairs* 4, no. 2-3 (2018): 131.

¹⁶⁷ Giovanna Bono, “The European Union and ‘Supervised Independence’ of Kosovo: A Strategic Solution to the Kosovo/Serbia Conflict?,” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 15, no. 2 (2010): 252.

¹⁶⁸ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU Discusses Concerns, Future of EULEX Kosovo Mission,” Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS714_a. Dated May 14, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BRUSSELS714_a.html (accessed July 14, 2022); A Romanian official aptly described European policy formulation as trying to “herd ... 27 cats”. Embassy Bucharest, “Romania Pledges Support on Kosovo Independence,” Wikileaks Cable: 06BUCHAREST881_a. Dated May 30, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06BUCHAREST881 (accessed July 15, 2022).

on how to project power and influence.¹⁶⁹ Shortly after the end of the Kosovo War in the summer of 1999, the EU led the initiative of the Stability Pact (SP) with 28 other countries, aimed at integrating South-eastern Europe towards ‘Euro-Atlantic’ institutions to prevent the region from being an “exporter of instability, refugees, and, increasingly, crime”.¹⁷⁰ However, the Commission and several important member states were not too eager to grant potential membership status to South-eastern European countries, as the existing waiting list was already deemed too long.¹⁷¹ For this reason, the EU also started engaging *bilaterally* through the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), allowing the EU to stipulate different demands for different countries. After Croatia’s accession, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations were added to the Copenhagen criteria for joining the EU. The EU and proponents in general present this process of enlargement as being *consensual* and a unique way of transforming societies towards greater freedom, prosperity and security.¹⁷² The 2001 Gothenburg Programme (‘EU Programme on the Prevention of Violent Conflict’), highlighted that conflict prevention “implies addressing the root-causes of conflicts ... It is an important element of all aspects of the external relations of the European Union”.¹⁷³ According to the 2001 programme, the main responsibility of conflict prevention lies with the local parties concerned, underscoring the importance of regional capacity building and local ownership.¹⁷⁴ The reason for this approach towards “well-governed” neighbour states who uphold certain values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, are located in the security and development nexus.¹⁷⁵ In their words: “The goal is to strengthen the prosperity and stability of these countries, and thus the security of the EU”.¹⁷⁶ This was the time of the ‘big bang’ Eastern expansion of EU membership, or “the definite end of the Cold War” in the words of German

¹⁶⁹ Embassy Brussels, “S/CRS Assesses the EU’s Crisis Response Capabilities,” Wikileaks Cable: 05BRUSSELS379_a. Dated January 27, 2005. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05BRUSSELS379_a.html (accessed July 20, 2022).

¹⁷⁰ Marti Ahtisaari et al., *Democracy, Security and the Future of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe: A Framework for Debate* (Berlin: European Stability Initiative, 2001), 6.

¹⁷¹ Lykke Friis and Anna Murphy, “Negotiating in a Time of Crisis: the EU’s Response to Military Conflict in Kosovo,” EUI Working Papers (Fiesole, European University Institute, 2000), 12.

¹⁷² John O’Brennan, “The EU in the Western Balkans: Enlargement as Empire? A Response to David Chandler,” *Global Society* 22, no. 4 (October 2008): 508.

¹⁷³ Council of the European Union, “Draft European Union Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, Brussels,” 9537/101 (Brussels, June 7, 2001), 2. Available at:

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9537-2001-REV-1/en/pdf>

¹⁷⁴ European Union, “Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts,” 2.

¹⁷⁵ Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy*, 8-19.

¹⁷⁶ Council of the EU, 23.

Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.¹⁷⁷ Chandler described the SP or the ‘contractual’ relationship of the EU and South-eastern European (SEE) states in more stark terms: “In effect, the SEE states are expected to sacrifice domestic policy-making for the promise of financial aid and integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures.”¹⁷⁸

In a document proposed by European foreign policy chief Solana, he outlined three reasons for ‘A Human Security Doctrine for Europe’. The first reason being moral, based on the value of a common humanity and that all life is equal. The second reason is legal in nature, as the EU stressed there is also a legal responsibility to concern themselves with human rights issues worldwide. The third reason in ‘enlightened self-interest’, as Solana argued Europeans cannot be secure if others around the globe are not secure. For Solana “this approach should now be considered a form of realism, not just idealism”.¹⁷⁹ He furthermore outlined the special responsibility towards Europe’s neighbouring countries by arguing that combating disorder and insecurity close-by is in Europe’s self-interest. Beyond that, he argues, the moral responsibility to help those in Europe’s neighbourhood is simply felt more strongly. Reflecting on the increased dissolution with European politics, Solana argued how “an imaginative, forward-looking contribution to global security could turn out to be the most effective way to mobilise political support for the European project at this point.”¹⁸⁰ In other words, EU foreign policy is also intended to be deeply inward-facing and concerned with projecting European values and power on its own population. In this regard, peacebuilding and statebuilding works both ways.

Conclusion

Sussing out general peacebuilding approach is tricky as contexts differ greatly with regards to invested interests and historical background. Because of its gigantic military, however,

¹⁷⁷ Ainius Lašas, *European Union and NATO Expansion: Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 120-121; For Fischer, however, the Cold War is back in 2022; Joschka Fischer, “The Cold War Is Back,” *Project Syndicate*, October 3, 2022. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/return-of-cold-war-europe-power-political-security-integration-by-joschka-fischer-2022-10?barrier=accesspaylog> (accessed October 10, 2022).

¹⁷⁸ David Chandler, “Governance, the Unequal Partnership,” in *Prospects and Risks Beyond EU Enlargement*, ed. Wim van Meurs (Berlin: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2003), 97; In contrast, China has very little conditionality attached to their economic loans.

¹⁷⁹ Study Group on Europe’s Security Capabilities, *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe* (Barcelona: September, 2004), 9-10. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/human_security_report_/human_security_report_en.pdf (accessed October 11, 2022); The concept of ‘human security’ aims at the security of individuals, rather than traditional notions about state security.

¹⁸⁰ Study Group, *A Human Security Doctrine*, 13.

America's peacebuilding approach is more militarized than the EU with its civilian capabilities. Armed supremacy, often through NATO, is seen as a crucial factor in keeping the peace. American and European policymakers both explicitly reject an academic distinction between realism and liberalism (or realism and idealism), instead combining the two approaches into their stated policies. The amoral language of realist IR is seldom found in policies post-war reconstruction, as the Clinton, Bush and Obama all employed neo-Wilsonian language once in office.¹⁸¹ The European project is also one of enlightened self-interest, as they proclaimed the times of strictly realist power projection to be over.¹⁸² Why interests and values merged so strongly during this time is another question, but the case of Kosovo should give us a lens through which we can further dive into these claims and interrogate the US and EU approaches towards post-conflict situations.

¹⁸¹ The concept of 'peacebuilding' is arguably inherently normative (statebuilding less so).

¹⁸² This has changed with the current 'geopolitical turn' in the EU. In 2020, for example, Josep Borell (the current EU foreign policy chief) said Europe had to relearn a more geopolitical, realist way of using power in the context of world increasingly geared towards more raw power politics. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine was another clear impetus for this shift. Josep Borrell, "Embracing Europe's Power," *Project Syndicate*, February 8, 2020. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/embracing-europe-s-power-by-josep-borrell-2020-02> (accessed May 18, 2022).

Chapter III: Peacebuilding/statebuilding in Kosovo

Introduction (Operation Allied Force)

This final chapter will assess the US and EU in post-war Kosovo. Starting with the transatlantic alliance at the end of Operation Allied Force in 1999, it will then deal with the US and EU under UNMIK until Kosovo's independence in 2008.¹⁸³ Afterwards, it will address Kosovo from 2008 until 2012, when Kosovo was 'supervised' by international actors. It will be shown that despite supposed European leadership in their 'backyard', the US remained exceptionally influential in the post-war processes of peacebuilding and statebuilding. As we will see, while generally "playing the same tune on different instruments", the US and EU were often 'offbeat' due to their different approaches.¹⁸⁴ The US was more eager and able, powerful as it was, to move quickly and follow their goal of a pro-American Kosovo independent from Serbia. The EU, due to its supranational nature and proximity to Kosovo, was comparatively more cautious and more interested in long-term peace and stability through EU integration. As illustrated by several key events throughout the period, it was usually the Americans that urged the EU to unite, follow suit, and take on the responsibility for the foreign policy outcomes.

While there is no room for an extensive discussion of this 'humanitarian intervention' on behalf of the Kosovars here, some points are relevant.¹⁸⁵ Bypassing the UN Security Council, the intervention was later famously deemed "illegal but legitimate", as human rights concerns trumped traditional claims of sovereignty.¹⁸⁶ Highlighting Kosovo's symbolic importance, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO General Wesley Clark, later stated that the conflict was not necessarily about Kosovo or ethnic cleansing, but that it was rather "a battle about the future

¹⁸³ For a more thorough history of Kosovo: Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); The Independent International Commission on Kosovo (IICK), *The Kosovo Report* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); For Kosovo in a Yugoslav perspective: Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2019), 251-318; For a discussion on Albanian and Serbian nationalism: Dejan Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova, Could it be Both? The Case of Interlocking Serbian and Albanian Nationalisms," in *Understanding the War in Kosovo*, ed. Florian Bieber and Židas Daskalovski (London/Portland, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 29-49.

¹⁸⁴ Embassy Rome, "US-Italian Goals for Balkans: "Playing the Same Tune on Different Instruments," Wikileaks Cable: cables/05ROME989_a. Dated March 22, 2005. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05ROME989_a.html (accessed September 16, 2022).

¹⁸⁵ For a short and relatively even-handed account of the debates surrounding Operation Allied Force, see: Aidan Hehir, *Humanitarian Intervention: An Introduction, Second Edition* (London: Red Globe Press, 2013), 223-243.

¹⁸⁶ IICK, *The Kosovo Report*, 4.

of NATO, about the credibility of the United States as a force in world affairs”.¹⁸⁷ There were initially voices in the Pentagon wary of striking Kosovo, fearing that it would entangle them in a complicated post-conflict stabilization process. This changed when the Contact Group (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia) met in January 1999 and the Europeans agreed on generating troops and resources for the post-conflict stabilization.¹⁸⁸ In the words of Kagan, America would make dinner, while Europe was expected to do the dishes.¹⁸⁹ As the US carried out about 60% of all sorties and 80% of all airstrikes during the 78 day bombing campaign in Europe’s backyard, it laid bare the strong military unevenness across the Atlantic.¹⁹⁰ There were big transatlantic disagreements, most notably over the issue of ground troops and the preferred US risk-averse “bomb-and-pray” campaign, which caused a “crossfire within NATO”.¹⁹¹ Ultimately, the US learned to dislike allied interference with the use of their own military force, while the EU would have preferred more input on a conflict directly impacting their interests.¹⁹²

The June 10th UN Security Council Resolution 1244 that eventually ended the war established the ‘United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo’ (UNMIK).¹⁹³ While some in the US government wanted an ad hoc group like in Bosnia, the Europeans did not want an alternative to UN rule.¹⁹⁴ Then Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) leader Thaçi, had

¹⁸⁷ Aidan Hehir, “Continuity or Change?: Intervention and Statebuilding after Kosovo,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 13, no. 5 (2019): 583-584; Critics have pointed to NATO inaction in similar concurrent crises (such as in East-Timor) to highlight the continued importance of more interest-based concerns.

¹⁸⁸ Michael Beckley, “The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of U.S. Pacts,” *International Security* 39, no. 4 (Spring 2015): 44-46.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” 8. That said, some within the economic sector of the US government thought American companies should be able to compete in the reconstruction market, as “we believe that we have earned it”; Committee on International Relations House of Representatives, *The Future of Our Economic Partnership with Europe* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 14.

¹⁹⁰ Hehir, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 230.

¹⁹¹ Frontline Interviews, “Samuel “Sandy” Berger,” *PBS*, February 20, 2000.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/berger.html> (accessed February 23, 2021).

Ivo H. Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2001), 160.

¹⁹² Stanley R. Sloan, “Transatlantic Security Relations from Kosovo to Iraq,” in *The Transatlantic Divide: Foreign and Security Policies in the Atlantic Alliance from Kosovo to Iraq*, ed. Osvaldo Croci and Amy Verdun (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 12; Alex J. Bellamy, *Kosovo and International Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 161-162.

¹⁹³ United Nations Security Council, S/RES/1244 (June 10, 1999). Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/172/89/PDF/N9917289.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁹⁴ John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia and Kosovo* (Westport: Praeger, 2005), 297; Still, the military aspect of peacebuilding, the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR), was placed outside the civilian framework of UNMIK. The NATO military presence in Kosovo was consolidated by the creation of Camp Bondsteel, the largest military base built by the US in Europe since the Vietnam war. This extensive base was built partly by Kellogg, Brown & Root, a subsidiary of Haliburton – then headed by Bush’s later Vice President Dick Cheney; David Vine, *Base*

proclaimed the Prime Minister role in a Provisional Government in Kosovo during the 1999 war, and defied UNMIK's authority for six months after the war ended.¹⁹⁵ After a compromise, the US-funded Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) was created, supposedly turning former KLA fighters into a civilian force.¹⁹⁶ The international presence took over the administration of government and the task of establishing a process for "substantial self-government for Kosovo", while taking into account "the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity" of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).¹⁹⁷ Thus, addressing the legitimate authority over Kosovo, arguably the issue at the heart of the conflict, was delayed in this remarkable compromise between the powers on the Security Council.¹⁹⁸

1999-2008, From UNMIK to independence? The American approach

Bush came out strongly against post-conflict 'nation-building' during the election campaign in 2000, pledging to take US troops out of the Balkans and "hold them ready for wars in other regions", while making Europe take over responsibilities.¹⁹⁹ Earlier in 2000, however, Bush had already opposed a bipartisan proposal for a deadline on US troops in Kosovo, seeing it as a "legislative overreach on the powers of presidency".²⁰⁰ Important to note is that American troops were a minority in the KFOR mission, with 'only' 5400 of the total 36,000 troops being

Nation: How the U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2015), 218-220.

¹⁹⁵ Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo Bio: Prime Minister Hashim Thaci," Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA13_a. Dated January 10, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08PRISTINA13_a.html (accessed May 24, 2022). That the international community allowed the initial power grab by KLA structures is what ICO employee Andrea Capussela called "the original sin of state-building in Kosovo"; Andrea Lorenzo Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo: Democracy, Corruption and the EU in the Balkans* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 36.

¹⁹⁶ International Crisis Group, *What Happened to the KLA, ICG Balkans Report No88* (Pristina/Washington/Brussels: 3 March 2000), 1-2. Available at: <https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/88-what-happened-to-the-kla.pdf> See also: Iain King and Whit Mason, *Peace at Any Price: How the World Failed Kosovo* (London: Hurst, 2006), 57-59.

¹⁹⁷ UNSC, S/RES/1244, 5; Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "The Politics of International Trusteeship," in *Kosovo Between War and Peace: Nationalism, Peacebuilding and International Trusteeship*, ed. Tonny Brems Knudsen and Carsten Bagge Laustsen (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2006), 6-7.

¹⁹⁸ Gëzim Visoka, *Shaping Peace in Kosovo* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 33-34.

¹⁹⁹ Bush said "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building, I think our troops ought to be used to fight and win war". Quoted in: Francis Fukuyama, "Nation-Building 101," *The Atlantic*, January/February 2004. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/01/nation-building-101/302862/> (accessed January 24, 2021); Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice similarly spoke of not wanting to use the 82nd Airborne to escort children to schools; Fritz Stern, "Bush's Road Out of the Balkans," *The New York Times*, October 25, 2000. <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/25/opinion/1-bush-s-road-out-of-the-balkans-844284.html> (accessed January 26, 2021).

²⁰⁰ Helen Dewar, "Bush Tells Hill of Doubts on Kosovo Deadline," *The Washington Post*, May 17, 2000. (accessed April 28, 2021).

American (limited to 15 percent), but this was still a major deployment for the US in 2000²⁰¹ More than two thirds of the post-war aid flowing into Kosovo came from the Europeans, because US Congress decided no more than 15 percent should come from the US, which had carried most of the war-effort.²⁰² Once Bush became President, however, he committed to a US presence in Kosovo until he deemed the job to be finished.²⁰³ The answer to the problem of Kosovo, US Ambassador Christopher Dell told Bush early on, was eventual independence without it becoming a precedent.²⁰⁴ In the spirit of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm, the stated goals in Kosovo were to “create civil society, to create democratic institutions and a market economy.”²⁰⁵ The continued US presence was more, as the Wilson Center put it, “a reflection of its global power, rather than clear regional interests”.²⁰⁶ As early as 2001, in light of enduring (political) violence and organized crime in Kosovo, then chief of US Mission in Kosovo Dell underlined the limits of what the ‘international community’ could do, stressing Kosovars themselves were responsible and needed to cooperate.²⁰⁷

Kosovo was not by any means a primary concern for the Bush administration compared to Iraq or Afghanistan, and as long as there was no violence, the uneasy status quo was

²⁰¹ Kelly Wallace, “Bush Retrenches on U.S. Mission in Kosovo,” *CNN*, July 25, 2001.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/07/24/bush.kosovo/> (accessed at April 14, 2021); In 2022, the remaining 635 US troops are the largest single contingent of the total of 3746 KFOR troops.

²⁰² King and Mason, *Peace at Any Price*, 87-91.

²⁰³ Wallace, “Bush Retrenches on U.S. Mission in Kosovo,”; While this shift away from staunch opposition to ‘nation-building’ is often chalked up squarely to the events on September 11, his retrenchment on a Balkan presence came before the attacks and was also due to the spill-over unrest by separatist Albanians in Macedonia. See: David L. Philips, *Liberating Kosovo: Coercive Diplomacy and U.S. Intervention* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2012), 136-137.

²⁰⁴ Philips, *Liberating Kosovo*, 125; Logically, the US realized carving up a foreign country by international imposition could potentially give hope to similarly aggrieved separatist groups or be used by the likes of Russia to legitimize independence in pro-Russian regions; Embassy Moscow, “Russia and Kosovo: The Politics of Delay,” Wikileaks Cable: 06MOSCOW10438_a. Dated September 19, 2006.

https://wikileaks.jcivignoli.com/cable_06MOSCOW10438 (accessed October 24, 2022).

²⁰⁵ USIA, “Rubin, Hill on Kosovo at U.S. Institute of Peace March 23: Discuss their Upcoming Trip, Upcoming Elections, Continuing Violence,” *ReliefWeb*, March 23, 2000. <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/rubin-hill-kosovo-us-institute-peace-march-23-discuss-their-trip-upcoming-elections> (accessed May 23, 2022).

²⁰⁶ “Meeting Report 297: European and US Policies in the Balkans,” *Wilson Center*, May 23, 2004.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/297-european-and-us-policies-the-balkans> (accessed May 10,

2022); Per illustration, Defence Secretary William S. Cohen predicted the US retrenchment under Bush, stating Powell and Cheney were “internationalists”; Fisnik Abrashi, “Balkan Exit Not Likely, Cohen Says; secretary Visits Troops in Kosovo,” *The Washington Post*, December 19, 2000.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/12/19/balkan-exit-not-likely-cohen-says/84254be7-1b0f-4636-8cbd-8bcd09db5e17/> (accessed May 23, 2022).

²⁰⁷ US DOS, “Interview with Chief of U.S. Mission in Kosovo,” *ReliefWeb*, February 21, 2001.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/interview-chief-us-mission-kosovo> (accessed November 1, 2022).

permitted.²⁰⁸ In early 2003, the US privately chided former KLA leader Ramush Haradinaj for “grandstanding on independence” at a time “when USG’s focus is out of Europe” and told him the Provisional Institution of Self-Governance (PISG) should focus on “the business of government” and the “essential if mundane groundwork necessary to privatization and economic development”.²⁰⁹ As many scholars have noted though, there was perhaps little interest in reform for the clientelist Kosovar elites.²¹⁰ While some form of early local ownership was unavoidable in statebuilding practice, PISG decisions could still be legally overturned by the UN. This was part of the so-called ‘standards before status’ approach, where Kosovars had to ‘earn’ their independence by carrying out the necessary reforms. Much to the dismay of many Kosovar Albanians who feared partition, decentralization became a key policy to protect Kosovar Serbs and was, in the words of the US, “a critical part of the most important issue: majority-minority relations”.²¹¹

As time went on, Kosovars became increasingly dissatisfied with UNMIK and the unresolved status of Kosovo. While standards before status remained the “operative vision”, the widespread anti UN/NATO and anti Serb riots in 2004 further proved for the US that the status process had to be “advanced more rapidly”.²¹² As US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried put it, “We didn’t want to reward bad behaviour, but deal with its *underlying causes*” [emphasis added].²¹³ As the lack of Kosovar Albanian statehood was seen as root cause of conflict, building peace would come by building a (formally) independent state. However, Fried

²⁰⁸ Philips, *Liberating Kosovo*, 140-141.

²⁰⁹ Embassy Pristina, “AAK Adamant on Independence Declaration,” Wikileaks Cable: 03PRISTINA177_a. Dated February 6, 2003. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/03PRISTINA177_a.html (accessed June 1, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Last Chance for UN to Fix Kosovo Telecom Market,” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA219_a. Dated March 10, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06PRISTINA219_a.html (accessed June 22, 2022). After local elections in 2000 and national elections in 2001, the PISG was elected and some competencies were shifted towards local leaders.

²¹⁰ Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo*, 54-56.

²¹¹ Embassy Brussels, “EU-US Balkans Troika: Growing Impatience on ICTY Compliance, Looking Ahead on Kosovo,” Wikileaks Cable: 04BRUSSELS4352_a. Dated October 8, 2004. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04BRUSSELS4352_a.html (accessed July 25, 2022). Decentralization would give more autonomy to Kosovar Serb communities.

²¹² Embassy Brussels, “EUR/DAS Bradtke’s Security Consultations with EU,” Wikileaks Cable 04BRUSSELS2381_a. Dated June 3, 2004. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04BRUSSELS2381_a.html (accessed July 18, 2022); Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs had remarked before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations how previously “the U.S. led the way to convince the UN to initiate a review of its Standards”, which led to the ‘Kai Eide report’ conclusion that the hazy status quo impeded the progress on standards. See: R. Nicholas Burns, “Hearing Kosovo: A Way Forward?,” Remarks as prepared before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, November 8, 2005. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/us/rm/2005/56602.htm> (accessed July 19, 2022).

²¹³ Philips, *Liberating Kosovo*, 146.

also communicated that “Kosovo’s status was not the end, but rather the beginning of its path towards the EU”.²¹⁴ The US stance was to resolve the status issue as soon as possible, lest the status quo would cause wider instability.²¹⁵ Importantly, the Americans sought a broad coalition, stating “every stone needed to be turned” to mend transatlantic relations after tensions over issues like Iraq.²¹⁶ Yet the goal was clear, “geopolitical realities dictated that Kosovo would be independent”, and this was not “a matter of debate”, it was said to a wavering Ukrainian Foreign Minister in 2006.²¹⁷ This US insistence on Kosovar independence as the only realistic option led some wary Europeans to think the US would destabilize Serbia by “moving too quickly”, accusing them of “trying to influence the status process” and “railroading independence”.²¹⁸ The Serbs would be outraged if the international community recognized Kosovar independence, the US thought, but would concede in the end.²¹⁹ Thus, the US pushed the EU to be tough on Belgrade, expecting that European concerns about pace and imposition would ultimately be trumped by their goal of Contact Group unity.²²⁰ After many rounds of

²¹⁴ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: A/S Fried Tells Serbs and Albanians to [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA194_a. Dated March 13, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07PRISTINA194_a.html (accessed September 27, 2022).

²¹⁵ Embassy Skopje, “Macedonia: Prime Minister on Elections, NATO Accession, ICTY and Kosovo Final Status”, Wikileaks Cable: 06SKOPJE118_a. Dated February 6, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06SKOPJE118_a.html (accessed June 22, 2022); As such, Balkan officials worried about destabilizing Serbia by a quick and imposed solution were told by Wisner that “time will breed anger and violence; it is our enemy”; Embassy Moscow, “Russia and Kosovo: The Politics of Delay”, Wikileaks Cable: 06MOSCOW10438_a. Dated September 19, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06MOSCOW10438 (accessed October 24, 2022).

²¹⁶ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo Final Status: Special Envoy Wisner Finds [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA477_a. Dated June 19, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA477 (accessed June 14, 2022); Embassy Brussels, “EU and Kosovo: Moving Toward Reality”, Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS3120_a. Dated October 10, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07BRUSSELS3120_a.html (accessed June 14, 2022).

²¹⁷ Embassy Kyiv, “Ukraine: FM Tarasyuk Warns Kosovo Independence Destabilizing, Fans Separatist Flames Elsewhere”, Wikileaks Cable: 06KIEV382_a. Dated January 30, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06KIEV382_a.html (accessed June 15, 2022).

²¹⁸ USUN New York, “Ambassador Wisner Discusses Kosovo Status Process”, Wikileaks Cable: 06USUNNEWYORK882_a. Dated 27 April, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06USUNNEWYORK882_a.html (accessed June 23, 2022). Embassy The Hague, “Netherlands/Kosovo: Response to U.S. Kosovo Policy”, Wikileaks Cable: 06THEHAGUE895_a. Dated April 21, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06THEHAGUE895 (accessed June 23, 2022); Embassy The Hague, “Netherlands: Dutch Agree Kosovo Not a Precedent”, Wikileaks Cable: 06THEHAGUE2361_a. Dated November 2, 2006 https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06THEHAGUE2361 (accessed June 23, 2022); Embassy Brussels, “EU and Kosovo: Moving Toward Reality”, (accessed June 24, 2022).

²¹⁹ Embassy Vienna, “Kosovo: U.S. Special Representative Wisner Briefs [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 06VIENNA1173_a. Dated April 24, 2006 https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06VIENNA1173 (accessed June 24, 2022).

²²⁰ Embassy Rome, “Rome Visits Highlight Balkan Issues”, Wikileaks Cable: 06ROME1851_a. Dated, June 22, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06ROME1851?amp=1 (accessed June 24, 2022); USUN New York,

status negotiations, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari proposed a US and EU backed plan for ‘supervised independence’, which was ultimately rejected by Serbia (and Russia).²²¹

Especially during status negotiations, the US was deeply concerned with the broader image of Kosovo and routinely exerted pressure to, most commonly, halt the victimisation of Kosovar Serbs.²²² Next to infrastructure and business projects for Serb communities, they also funded and organized many events aimed at inter-ethnic reconciliation, either directly or through NGOs.²²³ The Kosovar Albanian negotiation team (“Unity Team”) was constantly pressured by the US to focus on issues of decentralization, protection of Serbian Orthodox sites and minority returns.²²⁴ According to US Ambassador Tina Kaidanow, decentralization was the “core element of our strategy to maintain peace and stability” and the “sine qua non” for the Ahtisaari plan.²²⁵ US officials, especially Wisner, repeatedly scolded Kosovar Albanians

“Ambassador Wisner’s Meeting with UNMIK SRSG Soren,” Wikileaks Cable: 06USUNNEWYORK1035_a. Dated May 19, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06USUNNEWYORK1035 (accessed June 24, 2022).

²²¹ The Ahtisaari Plan (Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement) focussed on multi-ethnic democracy, rule of law, open market, minority rights and, crucially, the decentralization of government (to protect Kosovar Serbs). According to Wisner, Ahtisaari was a friend in that he “understood the United States as a force for good in the world”; Philips, *Liberating Kosovo*, 159; See also: Embassy Belgrade, “Serbs Defend Kosovo Status Proposal to EUR/SCE Director,” Wikileaks Cable: 07BELGRADE1435_a. Dated November 22, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BELGRADE1435?amp=1 (accessed September 7, 2022).

²²² Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: USOP Intervention Stops Serb Property [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA694_a. Dated September 19, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA694 (accessed June 29, 2022) By phone or through face-to-face meetings, the US intervened in practically all matters of government. For instance, intervening in numerous property disputes where remaining Kosovo Serbs would be disowned or setting the boundaries on what could be said by Kosovar politicians. Embassy Pristina, “The Road and the Wall: Getting the Government to [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA407_a. Dated, May 22, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA407 (accessed September 8, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Kurti Trial Opens Before Packed Courtroom, [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA706_a. Dated September 26, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA706 (accessed September 8, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: UNMIK KPC Coordinator Offers Thoughts on [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA728_a. Dated September 2, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA728 (accessed September 15, 2022).

²²³ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: On the Hustings for the Package: All [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA186_a. Dated Mach 12, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA186 (accessed June 27, 2022). When a US-organized inter-ethnic children’s choir holiday performance was cancelled because of Serb hardliners, it was stated that “USOP is one of the few institutions in Kosovo that can bring Serbs and Albanians together; it is a vital tool of our diplomacy and a critical lifeline between two estranged communities”. Embassy Pristina, “‘Tis the Season ... Serb CCK Obstruction Forces [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA1053_a. Dated December 9, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA1053 (accessed June 23, 2022).

²²⁴ Embassy Pristina, “Scenesetter for April 14-15 Visit of Special Envoy Representative Frank Wisner,” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA310_a. Dated April 10, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06PRISTINA310_a.html (accessed June 23, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: UNMIK KPC Coordinator Offers Thoughts on [...],” (accessed June 23, 2022).

²²⁵ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Unity Team Under Mounting Pressure [...],” Wikileaks Cable 07PRISTINA490_a. Dated June 22, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA490 (accessed June 28, 2022).

leaders when they demurred or did not ‘perform’ well in talks.²²⁶ In this process, the US minimized their own role, privately insisting to the Kosovo leadership that the “keys” to realizing the end of the status process were all “held by the Kosovo Albanian leaders”.²²⁷ Kosovo leaders often acquiesced to the wishes of their American benefactors, but not always.²²⁸ A Kosovo Serb bishop feared that the informal American approach of “calling a few phone numbers” to influence Kosovo’s elite, rather than institutionalizing legal measures, was inherently fragile.²²⁹

While the Kosovar Albanians were warned independence was not inevitable, Serb leaders received the unambiguous message that Kosovo would in fact be independent regardless.²³⁰ The US communicated to Belgrade that Kosovar Serbs would be protected, and the US would support Serbia’s future in Euro-Atlantic structures.²³¹ The status negotiations were regarded as absolutely central to peacebuilding. It was stated that by “[u]sing the leverage of the status process, we have kept this house in order”, pushing moderate Kosovar leadership “in the direction of inter-ethnic cooperation and democratic institution-building.”²³² The US thought that without this prospect of timely settlement, moderate Kosovar unity would make

²²⁶ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: COM to Unity Team Members: Time’s Up,” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA664_a. Dated November 8, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA664 (accessed June 23, 2022).

²²⁷ Embassy Pristina, “Ambassador Wisner Tells Kosovo Albanians Their Work is Just Beginning,” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA457_a. Dated May 26, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06PRISTINA457_a.html (accessed May 31, 2022).

²²⁸ To illustrate an exception, the US called Kosovar officials to cancel a rally for the former PM Ramush Haradinaj who was indicted by the ICTY for war crimes, telling them it would negatively impact Kosovo’s image abroad. The rally went ahead regardless, indicating both how involved the US was in shaping day-to-day Kosovar politics, and how certain local Kosovar interests at times overrode the wishes of the US; Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: 3,000 Rally in Pristina for Former PM and [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA349_a. Dated May 3, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA349 (accessed July 25, 2022).

²²⁹ Embassy Pristina, “Ambassador Wisner Urges Kosovars to Bear Down on [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA336_a. Dated April 20, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA336 (accessed June 29, 2022); Within the transatlantic alliance more generally, the US generally favoured “informal and early consultations” to avoid big disputes at NATO or US-EU meetings which could be exploited by Russia. Moreover, KFOR-EULEX cooperation often had to be informal due to the issue between Turkey and Cyprus; See: Embassy Paris, “EUR A/S Fried and German Political Director [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 05PARIS6113_a. Dated September 9, 2005. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_05PARIS6113 (accessed June 6, 2022).

²³⁰ Embassy Belgrade, “Tough Message on Kosovo Independence and Belgrade,” Wikileaks Cable: 06BELGRADE632_a. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06BELGRADE632 (accessed September 7, 2022).

²³¹ Embassy Belgrade, “A/S Fried’s Sept 25 Meetings with Serbian Leaders,” Wikileaks Cable: 06BELGRADE1566_a. Dated September 28, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06BELGRADE1566_a.html (accessed June 23, 2022).

²³² Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Why a Speedy Resolution of Status Matters,” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA788_a. Dated September 19, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA788 (accessed June 23, 2022).

way for radical elements, which would be out of US control.²³³ When the status settlement was ultimately delayed, the Unity Team, in the words of Kaidanow, “remained pasted together if only by a mixture of tough messages and cajoling”.²³⁴ Thaçi, ’s price for continuing in the Unity Team was elections in late 2007, which Wisner agreed to as a good way to keep the Kosovars busy and provide some overall legitimacy.²³⁵

During 2007, one of the main concerns of the US in Kosovo was how the EU would react to Russian opposition in the UNSC and the lack of a UN mandate on moving forward.²³⁶ The US realized “theologically, ‘EU unity’ is a compelling political message that no member state can ignore”.²³⁷ As the EU was divided, (with some staunch opponents to recognizing Kosovo), the US focussed more on working with EU Quint members and Solana to forge a stronger EU policy.²³⁸ The Quint, consisting of the Contact Group minus Russia (meaning the US, UK, Germany, France and Italy), thus increasingly became the locus of actual decision-making.²³⁹ Late 2007, much to the chagrin of the US, France and Italy agreed to further delay past January 20th of the next year to take Serbia’s upcoming elections into account.²⁴⁰ In a

²³³ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: UNMIK Police Apply Lessons Learned in the[...]”, Wikileaks Cable: cables/07PRISTINA142_a. Dated February 26, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA142 (accessed June 27, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Case Emerging Against Albin Kurti for [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA164_a. Dated February 3, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA164 (accessed June 27, 2022); Vetëvendosje (Self-determination Movement) and their protests were deemed extremist and wholly contrary to the Ahtisaari Plan, and the US urged Kosovo’s political leadership to publicly denounce the movement to undercut its appeal. Albin Kurti, its leader, is currently Prime Minister of Kosovo.

²³⁴ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: COM Urges Calm, Caution Among Kosovar [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA847_a. Dated October 8, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA847 (accessed June 23, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Kosovar Albanian Leadership Accepts Delay”, Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA952_a. Dated November 13, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA952 (accessed June 23, 2022).

²³⁵ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo Final Status: Special Envoy Wisner Finds [...]”, (accessed June 28, 2022).

²³⁶ Embassy Berlin, “German Views on Kosovo”, Wikileaks Cable: 07BERLIN1216_a. Dated June 18, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BERLIN1216 (accessed June 28, 2022).

²³⁷ U.S. Mission to European Union, “Getting the Most Out of Foreign Policy Cooperation with the EU”, Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS943_a. Dated June 20, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BRUSSELS943_a.html (accessed July 1, 2022).

²³⁸ U.S. Mission to European Union, “Solana to Press EU FMs on Need for Realistic Planning on Kosovo”, Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS2765_a. Dated September 4, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07BRUSSELS2765_a.html (accessed June 29, 2022).

²³⁹ Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo*, 149-150; For example, the US credited Germany’s “strong managerial hand” for keeping the internal Kosovo debate moving; Embassy Brussels, “Scene-setter for U.S.-EU Summit”, Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS1380_a. Dated April 24, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BRUSSELS1380 (accessed September 27, 2022).

²⁴⁰ Embassy Brussels, “Fried and EU PolDir on Bosnia, Kosovo, Iran, Other [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS3465_a. Dated December 6, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BRUSSELS3465 (accessed June 29, 2022).

January 2008 discussion with EU officials, the US fervently pushed back against suggestions for further delays by some non-Quint EU states, arguing this would damage US and EU credibility, shake up Kosovar leadership and signal to Serbia and Russia that Europe “was irresolute and could be bullied”.²⁴¹ These delays led US officials to lament how mid-tier EU states successfully slowed down the Kosovo recognition process.²⁴² Ultimately, the new plan went through, and the Kosovo Assembly declared their independence on February 17th.

The US expected the EU to “play the lead role” after final status, but stated that the US would “also continue to play a key role there”.²⁴³ EU planning for the post-status mission was described as “snail-like”, Secretary of State Rice regarding such a mission as “a band-aid, not a cure”, like EU enlargement would be.²⁴⁴ Thinking the shift towards more local policing would impact the adequacy of crisis planning, the US emphasized the need to frequently intervene in the Kosovo police and their European mentors to ensure their preparedness if there was to be a thaw in the frozen conflict.²⁴⁵ The US planned to continue their heavy-handed approach during the upcoming period of ‘supervised’ independence, reassuring Romanians worried about US disengagement that the US “would not walk away lightly”.²⁴⁶

The European approach

As discussed in the previous chapter, the regional context for European peacebuilding and statebuilding was the Stability Pact. These reforms were aimed at economic reforms (regional free trade agreements), security issues and democratization, centring regional cooperation and

²⁴¹ Embassy Ljubljana, “EU Political Directors Lunch Focuses on Kosovo,” Wikileaks Cable: 08LJUBLJANA20_a. Dated January 15, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08LJUBLJANA20_a.html (accessed June 30, 2022).

²⁴² U.S. Mission to European Union, “Getting the Most Out of Foreign Policy Cooperation with the EU,” (accessed July 1, 2022).

²⁴³ Embassy Brussels, “U.S. and EU Discuss W. Balkans,” Wikileaks Cable: 06BRUSSELS774_a. Dated March 7, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06BRUSSELS774 (accessed June 22, 2022).

²⁴⁴ Secretary of State, “Engaging EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn in Helsinki,” Wikileaks Cable: 07STATE35309_a. Dated March 20, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07STATE35309_a.html (accessed June 27, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Evolving EU Police and Justice Planning,” Wikileaks Cable: 06PRISTINA965_a. Dated November 14, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA965 (accessed July 21, 2022); To their surprise, the US was initially not included in the talks planning for a post-independence police and law mission; Embassy Brussels, “DAS DiCarlo and EU Discuss W. Balkans,” Wikileaks Cable: 05BRUSSELS4315_a. Dated December 7, 2005. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_05BRUSSELS4315 (accessed June 22, 2022).

²⁴⁵ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Evolving EU Police and Justice Planning,” (accessed July 21, 2022).

²⁴⁶ Embassy Bucharest, “Romania Pledges Support on Kosovo Independence,” Wikileaks Cable: 06BUCHAREST881_a. Dated May 30, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06BUCHAREST881 (accessed July 19, 2022).

ownership with eventual EU and NATO integration as a long-term goal.²⁴⁷ While the European Commission (EC) was eager for integration, EU consensus was needed to move forward.²⁴⁸ As said, the EU took upon them the brunt of the costs for post-war reconstruction, funding Pillar IV of UNMIK. Paris had reacted to critiques of peacebuilding as self-serving and of an ‘imperial’ or colonial nature by pointing out the immense flow costs incurred by Western peacebuilding actors.²⁴⁹ Critical insiders such as Raul Cunha, Chief Military Liaison Officer of UNMIK, pointed to how in 2008 the “European Union has spent in Kosovo 4.000 million euros” of which “80% was spent in capacity building and consultancy, which means that 3200 millions went back to the base”.²⁵⁰ Cunha went on to say that the EU “pays as whole, but there are 2 or 3 countries that are making profit here in Kosovo So maybe prolonging this situation is in their interest”.²⁵¹ To be sure, this is not to indicate that self-interested, economic factors are paramount in Kosovo, but to emphasize that this side of the equation cannot be dismissed either.

The EU agreed with the US on Eide’s report in that doing nothing was not an option.²⁵² After the 2004 riots, the report called for a European economic development strategy, but it was said “most economic competencies” were already transferred to the PISG, which was deemed “totally ineffective”.²⁵³ Generally, Kosovo has had a huge trade deficit for decades, importing vastly more (mainly from EU countries) than exporting.²⁵⁴ Establishing some forms of customs in Kosovo to generate revenue from these imports was crucial, the US found, as Kosovo’s

²⁴⁷ Embassy Brussels, “The Stability Pact: Pressing Reform through Regional Cooperation,” Wikileaks Cable: 04BRUSSELS4181_a. Dated September 30, 2004. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04BRUSSELS4181_a.html (accessed June 2, 2022).

²⁴⁸ Embassy Brussels, “EU: Trying to Forge Consensus on European Path [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS294_a. Dated February 22, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcivignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS294 (September 27, 2022).

²⁴⁹ Paris, “Saving Liberal Peacebuilding,” 349.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in: Nicolas Lemay-Hebert, “The “Empty-Shell” Approach: The Setup Process of International Administrations in Timor-Leste and Kosovo, Its Consequences and Lessons,” *International Studies Perspectives* 12, no. 2 (May 2011): 191-192.

²⁵¹ André Cunha, “EULEX Inside UNMIK, too Late?,” *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa*, April 23, 2008. <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Kosovo/EULEX-inside-UNMIK-too-late-41332> (accessed March 22, 2021).

²⁵² Embassy Brussels, “EUR/DAS Bradtke’s Security Consultations with EU,” (accessed June 14, 2022).

²⁵³ Embassy Brussels, “EU-US Balkans Troika: Growing Impatience on ICTY Compliance, Looking Ahead on Kosovo,” (accessed July 13, 2022).

²⁵⁴ Mason and King, *Peace at Any Price*, 232; See also: Directorate-General for Trade of the European Commission, *European Union, Trade in Goods with Kosovo* (Brussels: August 2, 2022). Available at: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/details_kosovo_en.pdf Importantly, remittances from Kosovar Albanians living abroad were, and still are, a significant income base.

budget was to some extent dependent on it.²⁵⁵ However, CEFTA, the regional free-trade agreement signed in 2007, and the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) signed with the EU in 2015, annulled many of these customs revenues.²⁵⁶ These statebuilding aspects of strengthening borders and state budgets were eventually replaced by processes of European integration which in turn undermined certain powers of the state.

Under UNMIK, the EU favoured the “Bosnian model”, meaning some competencies were transferred to local authorities, but decisions could be overruled by the High Representative.²⁵⁷ Ahtisaari described Kosovo as a 30 year old bachelor living with his mother, and that it was time for more responsibility.²⁵⁸ Even so, some voices in the European Commission were privately “pessimistic about Kosovo’s capacity for self-governance” as the Unity Team seemed uninterested in governance and policy issues, which were essential to donors.²⁵⁹ Therefore, institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank were to assess the situation and determine policy priorities.²⁶⁰ EU officials stressed the importance of Kosovo for the EU, “as it won’t be the fifty-first state of the U.S. but will be part of the EU like the rest of the Balkans”.²⁶¹ During the lead up to independence, Kosovo was repeatedly front and centre in the discussions between US and EU diplomats, emphasizing the need to create a common EU position.²⁶² At times, EU officials appreciated the US keeping a low public profile and letting Europeans debate among themselves, as this helped bringing certain reticent EU states

²⁵⁵ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Signs of Financial Crisis Surfacing,” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA356_a. Dated August 20, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA356 (accessed July 12, 2022).

²⁵⁶ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Avoiding Customs Administrative Gaps if [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA243_a. Dated May 14, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08PRISTINA243 (accessed July 12, 2022). The Kosovo report had already noticed this contradiction between these policies of boosting regional free trade and increasing custom revenue in the early stages; IICK, *The Kosovo Report*, 256.

²⁵⁷ Embassy Brussels, “Gymnich Results on Burma, Sudan, Middle East and [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 04BRUSSELS3772_a. Dated September 8, 2004. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_04BRUSSELS3772 (accessed June 2, 2022).

²⁵⁸ Embassy Pristina, “Ahtisaari’s Kosovo Visit: Progress on [...],” Wikileaks Cable; 06PRISTINA211_a. Dated March 10, 2006. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_06PRISTINA211 (accessed June 22, 2022).

²⁵⁹ U.S. Mission to European Union, “U.S.-EU Western Balkans Troika Consultations,” Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS1130_a. Dated April 3, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07BRUSSELS1130_a.html (accessed August 23, 2022).

²⁶⁰ U.S. Mission to European Union, “U.S.-EU Western Balkans Troika Consultations,” (accessed July 16, 2022).

²⁶¹ Embassy Brussels, “EU “Gymnich” Meeting: Future of W. Balkans Is in the EU but Road Will be Long,” Wikileaks Cable: 06BRUSSELS886_a. Dated March 14, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06BRUSSELS886_a.html (accessed June 15, 2022).

²⁶² Embassy Lisbon, “U.S.-EU Political Directors Discusses Kosovo, Russia, Africa, and Middle East,” Wikileaks Cable: 07LISBON1858_a. Dated July 18, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07LISBON1858_a.html (accessed March 23, 2022).

along.²⁶³ In 2005, the EU was pursuing a “double track” in Kosovo, namely “supporting final status talks while simultaneously planning for an EU role in post-final status Kosovo”.²⁶⁴ Some European states, such as Italy, were wary, complaining that the US and UK’s message about the inevitability of independence prior to the negotiations was counterproductive and could cause backlash in Serbia and beyond.²⁶⁵ In the status process, the Swedish FM Carl Bildt tellingly lamented that “the U.S. approach seemed to be that international law does not count”.²⁶⁶

In 2007, the EU Foreign Ministers outlined four (not easily reconcilable) major goals regarding Kosovo: preserving regional stability, strengthening EU engagement, resolving Kosovo while keeping Serbia on the European path, and maintaining EU unity.²⁶⁷ The EU was eager to start SAA talks with Serbia with the aim of eventual EU integration, but Serb unwillingness to work with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on war crimes (so called ‘conditionality’) and its nationalistic approach to Kosovo made it difficult.²⁶⁸ Despite staunch non-recognizers in the EU, it was clear no EU state would ultimately block EULEX from deploying, as a outwardly united Europe was deemed of crucial importance to their stature.²⁶⁹ As a Portuguese diplomat privately put it in 2007: “We need to solve this problem now, because Kosovo is not worth damaging the EU, and Kosovo is not worth damaging transatlantic relations.”²⁷⁰

²⁶³ U.S. Mission to the European Union, “EU FMs and Kosovo: Getting to a “Genuine” Debate,” Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS3382_a. Dated November 21, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BRUSSELS3382 (accessed July 21, 2022).

²⁶⁴ Embassy Brussels, “DAS DiCarlo and EU Discuss W. Balkans,” (accessed June 22, 2022).

²⁶⁵ Embassy Rome, “Kosovo: Italian MFA Concerned About Lack of Contact Group Unity in Messages to Belgrade,” Wikileaks Cable: 06ROME383_a. Dated February 9, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06ROME383_a.html (accessed June 22, 2022).

²⁶⁶ Embassy Stockholm, “Bildt on Kosovo,” Wikileaks Cable: 07STOCKHOLM1453_a. Dated December 12, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07STOCKHOLM1453 (accessed June 29, 2022).

²⁶⁷ U.S. Mission to European Union, “U.S.-EU Consultations on W. Balkans: Concern Over [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS3248_a. Dated October 26, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BRUSSELS3248 (accessed June 29, 2022).

²⁶⁸ Embassy Belgrade, “Is the EU Tiring of Serbia?,” Wikileaks Cable: 07BELGRADE716_a. Dated May 22, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07BELGRADE716 (accessed June 28, 2022).

Embassy Brussels, “EU-US Balkans Troika: Growing Impatience,” (accessed September 13, 2022).

²⁶⁹ Embassy Pretoria, “DFA UN Directorate on Kosovo, Lebanon Tribunal [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRETORIA1801_a. Dated May 17, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRETORIA1801 (accessed July 21, 2022).

²⁷⁰ Embassy Lisbon, “Portugal: Special Envoy on Kosovo Discusses GoP Efforts to Build EU Consensus,” Wikileaks Cable: 07LISBON2200_a. Dated August 29, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07LISBON2200_a.html (accessed December 20, 2021).

2008-2012, Continued American engagement

After 17 February 2008, independence was supervised by Kosovo's international backers in accordance to the Ahtisaari Plan. Legally, the International Steering Group (ISG), headed by the special representative of the EU, could annul decisions deemed contrary to the plan.²⁷¹ The Americans kept in close contact with Kosovar officials, telling them to keep their moderate course, pass the minority rights aspects of the Ahtisaari legislation and focus on building state institutions. The US would in turn focus on "the business of the international community", such as lobbying for the recognition of Kosovo and managing the transition from UNMIK to EULEX and the ISG.²⁷² They also literally focussed on 'business', seeing as a crucial aspect of the post-independence US approach was addressing the economic problems by further pushing for economic reforms, specifically through codifying "fiscal discipline" (meaning a "path of privatization" and the reduction of social welfare and other public expenditures).²⁷³ At this time, the US described its own role as the "political muscle to make certain the GOK (Government of Kosovo) keeps to this reform agenda", which was developed by the World Bank and the EC.²⁷⁴ A US Embassy inspection report from 2010 boasted that the "Embassy Pristina exerts a wide and unusual influence" over Kosovar policies and action, "the cause and effect of this

²⁷¹ Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo*, 149-151; With his ICO hat on, Pieter Feith recognized Kosovo's independence, but with his EUSR hat on he could not. The ISG was side-lined as it only met about three times a year, compared to the more US-dominated Quint which met at least weekly.

²⁷² Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Acting U/S Fried Tells Kosovars to Stay [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA147_a. Dated March 19, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08PRISTINA147 (accessed June 30, 2022).

²⁷³ Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: On the First Anniversary of Independence [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA63_a. Dated February 16, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA63 (accessed July 6, 2022); Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: UNMIK/PISG Select New Winner of Second [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA204_a. Dated March 16, 2007. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA204 (accessed June 6, 2022); Regarding business, companies linked to familiar names such as Madeleine Albright and Wesley Clark have been trying to enter the Kosovo market as it was privatized. Perhaps most infamously, Ambassador Dell was deeply involved in pushing through a highway tender awarded to a US-led construction firm, which eventually ended up costing about 25 percent of Kosovo's GDP. Despite EC, World Bank and IMF protestations about the legitimacy of the tender and the economic viability, Thaçi listened to the US. Dell started working for Bechtel a few years later. As we saw with the Europeans, there definitely is money to be made in these peacebuilding operations; Matthew Brunwasser, "That Crush at Kosovo's Business Door? The Return of U.S. Heroes," *The New York Times*, December 11, 2012.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/12/world/europe/americans-who-helped-free-kosovo-return-as-entrepreneurs.html> (accessed June 14, 2022); Aubrey Belford, "Kosovo: Company Linked to Wesley Clark Granted Coal Rights," *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*, September 13, 2016. <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/5639-kosovo-company-linked-to-wesley-clark-granted-coal-rights> (accessed June 14, 2022). Matthew Brunwasser, "Steamrolled: A Special Investigation Into the Diplomacy of Doing Business Abroad," *Foreign Policy*, January 30, 2015. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/30/steamrolled-investigation-bechtel-highway-business-kosovo/> (accessed July 28, 2022).

²⁷⁴ Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Promoting Reform and Rationality in [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA639_a. Dated December 12, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08PRISTINA639 (accessed July 22, 2022).

influence is the embassy's access to all levels of government".²⁷⁵ In interviews with EULEX officials, they similarly considered the US Embassy in Pristina to be "the boss".²⁷⁶ As such, early proactive consultations on a US-EU level, rather than on a US-NATO level, would make sure the US could leverage EU assets in their interest, while avoiding the brunt of responsibility for potential failures.²⁷⁷ With increasing EU defence capabilities through the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, now the CFSP) the US wanted to make sure that NATO was not weakened, but instead supported from the outside. In 2008, the US and EU agreed on US participation in EULEX, which was hailed as a precedent, but many in Washington saw it only as a pragmatic solution (lending credibility) and preferred to work through NATO.²⁷⁸

When EULEX was launched, US officials repeatedly pressed it for more political outreach and visibility, as well as the need to "respect Pristina's redlines".²⁷⁹ Broadly, the Americans recognized the roots of conflict as political in nature, which to them could logically be addressed only through overt political means. Again and again, the US criticized the EU's technical approach and encouraged EULEX to "adopt a broader and expansive understanding

²⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Report of Inspection Embassy Pristina: Report No. ISP-I-10-38A* (Kosovo, March 2010) 3-8. Available at: https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report_pdf_file/isp-i-10-38a_1.pdf The report further speaks of "officers spend[ing] much time with government ministers[...] who consult them on a daily basis on actions, large and small."

²⁷⁶ Kosovar Stability Initiative (IKS), *Discussion Paper: Who's the Boss?* (Pristina: IKS, 2008), 13; "We have a strong influence on the EU thinking – and spending", a US cable stated: U.S. Mission to European Union, "Engaging the EU on Defense Issues," Wikileaks Cable: 09USEUBRUSSELS552_a. Dated April 9, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USEUBRUSSELS552_a.html (accessed July 6, 2022).

²⁷⁷ U.S. Mission to European Union, "Third States Leveraging ESDP to Pursue Their," Wikileaks Cable: 09USEUBRUSSELS554_a. Dated April 9, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USEUBRUSSELS554_a.html (accessed July 6, 2022). Fried warned Europeans that "Europeans will bear the blame for the baleful consequences of loss of international support if Kosovo falls apart". Secretary of State, "(U) EUR A/S Fried's September 25, 2007, Meeting With Dutch Political Director Pieter de Gooijer," Wikileaks Cable: 07STATE138413_a. Dated October 1, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07STATE138413_a.html (accessed July 22, 2022).

²⁷⁸ U.S. Mission to European Union, "A/S Fried Meeting With EU Director General Robert Cooper," Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS1641_a. Dated October 24, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BRUSSELS1641_a.html (accessed July 25, 2022); Mission USNATO, "'Friends of Kosovo' Meet in Brussels," Wikileaks Cable: 08USNATO254_a. Dated July 18, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08USNATO254 (accessed July 25, 2022); U.S. Mission to European Union, "EU Hosts Inaugural Committee of Contributors," Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS808_a. Dated May 29, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS808 (accessed September 19, 2022).

²⁷⁹ Secretary of State, "U.S.-EU Task Force Readout," Wikileaks Cable: 09STATE45229_a. Dated May 4, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09STATE45229_a.html (accessed December 12, 2021).

of its mission in Kosovo”.²⁸⁰ “[P]rogress, not process, is key”, the Americans said as they lamented how certain European officials tended to worship process, rather than actual results.²⁸¹ Fried strongly urged EU officials to continue integrating Kosovo into the Euro-Atlantic sphere by transitioning from UNMIK to EULEX, criticizing their hesitancy in the face of Russian (and Serbian) resistance. In urging the EU to be more proactive, they invoked the potential damage to European credibility or security. The issue of administrative and ‘security gaps’ opening up during the transition was a real concern.²⁸² Emphasizing that “nature abhors a vacuum”, these concerns betray a chiefly realist line of reasoning with regards to security and great power politics in the region.²⁸³ Again, EU officials were more worried about UN approval and especially the radicalization of Serbian politics, about which the Americans were less anxious and asked how much worse a radical Serbia could be.²⁸⁴

With regards to the ‘six points’ agreement, the Kosovo Albanian leadership felt it was presented with a fait accompli by the US. This agreement with Belgrade and the UN allowed EULEX to be deployed in Serb-majority areas, albeit as a status-neutral mission, much to the dismay of many Kosovar Albanians who saw this as legitimizing partition.²⁸⁵ Ultimately, as said by Kaidanow in a cable, “[a]gain, the fear of angering the US and the risk of isolation from

²⁸⁰ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: EULEX Deployment Going Well Enough, But [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA646_a. Dated December 30, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08PRISTINA646 (accessed June 21, 2021).

²⁸¹ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Belgrade Refuses to Discuss KEKE Sub-Contract”, Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA428_a. Dated November 4, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA428 (accessed May 31, 2022); See also: Perritt, *The Road to Independence*, 137-138.

²⁸² Embassy Brussels, “A/S Fried Urges Rapid EU-UN Transition in Kosovo”, Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS1137_a. Dated July 25, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS1137 (accessed July 13, 2022); In 2009 too, several NATO allied signalled they wanted to reduce their troops in KFOR, to which the US countered with the multilateral language of “in together, out together” and repeated the danger of “security gaps”; Secretary of State, “NATO KFOR Mission: In Together, Out Together”, Wikileaks Cable: 09STATE26179_a. Dated March 19, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09STATE26179_a.html (accessed July 12, 2022).

²⁸³ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo – Getting KFOR Drawdown Right”, Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA509_a. Dated November 17, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA509 (accessed July 13, 2022).

²⁸⁴ U.S. Mission to European Union, “U/S Fried Urges EU to Support Kosovo, Georgia, Despite Russian Pressure”, Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS700_a. Dated May 9, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BRUSSELS700_a.html (accessed June 30, 2022). Noting the non-aligned “Titoist” history of Serbia’s leadership and their anti-NATO outlook due to the 1999 bombings, the US Ambassador to Serbia stated that “Serbs need to be treated with tough love” as they “crave American respect”. Embassy Belgrade, “Serbs and Russians”, Wikileaks Cable: 09BELGRADE98_a. Dated February 3, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BELGRADE98_a.html (accessed July 19, 2022).

²⁸⁵ Visoka, *Shaping Peace*, 125-126; Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, “Kosovo Protests UN Six-Point Plan for EULEX”, *Balkan Insight*, December 2, 2008. <https://balkaninsight.com/2008/12/02/kosovo-protests-un-six-point-plan-for-eulex/> (accessed September 27, 2022).

the EU forced the GOK to lean forward”.²⁸⁶ In early 2010, the US was sceptical about the so-called “pragmatic engagement” by Belgrade in Northern Kosovo, seeing their actions on electricity, customs and elections as illegal parallel structures leading to de facto partition. The Europeans, on the other hand, were more optimistic about the prospects. Interestingly, what Americans saw as Belgrade’s clearly illegal violations of Kosovo law or UNSCR 1244, the Europeans approached more pragmatically, perhaps even less legalistically. As such, Washington was frustrated with the EU’s non-hostile stance towards Serbia’s demands and the resulting alienation of the Kosovars.²⁸⁷ EULEX was of course concerned about the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo, but more reluctant to outwardly confront Belgrade, instead focussing on the gradual EU accession process to leverage a more constructive Serbia.²⁸⁸ Eventually in 2010, the US and EU agreed on a ‘Northern Strategy’ of extending Kosovar authority, which would above all allow a drawdown of the deterrent NATO force. This was intended to move beyond stability “defined as merely the lack of conflict” (negative peace) to stability more “properly defined” as addressing the frozen conflict in Northern Kosovo.²⁸⁹ Ultimately, did this not materialize and the issue of northern authority remains today.²⁹⁰

Looking forward to the November 2009 municipal elections, the US was the only Quint power in the ICO of the opinion that quick elections in certain new Serb-majority municipalities would risk Kosovar Albanians winning due to Serbs abstaining to vote, which would the image of a multi-ethnic Kosovo. In this “sequencing debate” as outlined in chapter one, the US favoured more gradually building credibility and legitimacy with Kosovo Serbs, arguing these

²⁸⁶ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Visit of EUR A/S Fried November 17-18,” Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA582_a. Dated November 23, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08PRISTINA582_a.html (accessed June 21, 2021).

²⁸⁷ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo/EULEX: At Full Operating Capability, But Not Without Problems,” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA148_a. Dated April 8, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09PRISTINA148_a.html (accessed July 29, 2022).

²⁸⁸ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Developments in Northern Kosovo Point to Partition Not Pragmatic Engagement,” Wikileaks Cable: 10PRISTINA12_a. Dated January 11, 2010. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/10PRISTINA12_a.html (accessed July 8, 2022); U.S. Mission to European Union, “Balkan Political Directors Discuss Kosovo and [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 10BRUSSELS85_a. Dated January 26, 2010. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_10BRUSSELS85 (accessed July 8, 2022).

²⁸⁹ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Success in the North Key to a Successful KFOR Drawdown,” Wikileaks Cable: 10PRISTINA44_a. Dated January 27, 2010. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/10PRISTINA44_a.html (July 8, 2022); Interestingly, the US framed this KFOR stance as conforming to status neutrality, but explicitly rejected “value neutrality”. Value neutrality, the US stressed, was never a NATO policy, nor in the US interest.

²⁹⁰ Conversely, one could argue the enduring conflict justified the continued existence of Camp Bondsteel and all the military spending to subcontractors that entails.

new municipalities were not ready and elections premature.²⁹¹ In contrast, the Europeans were more optimistic about Kosovo Serbs turnout and saw extended elections as a way to signal their seriousness about decentralization and Kosovo Serb integration.²⁹² Ultimately, they settled on elections in four of the six new municipalities.²⁹³ Again, the US focus was on results and thus favoured a more careful democratization, while the EU was more concerned with the process.

Despite supposed European leadership, the Obama administration thought that relying too much on Europe to integrate the Balkans into Europe was perhaps a mistake, stating US leadership was needed.²⁹⁴ Especially noteworthy is US Ambassador Dell's hands-on approach in dealing with Kosovar politics in the years 2009 to 2012. Described by EUSR and ICR Pieter Feith as someone who portrayed himself as "the man behind the throne", Dell practically handpicked Atifete Jahjaga to become president during the 2011 political crisis, which prevented another election.²⁹⁵ After texts between the then Kosovar president and his advisor leaked, Dell was criticized by the EU parliament's rapporteur on Kosovo for "trying to influence the vote in parliament".²⁹⁶ Still, during the scandal, the EU looked the other way and wanted to focus on the Kosovo-Serbia talks which would otherwise be delayed. This was a bitter reminder for the Europeans of the strong influence the Americans continued to hold,

²⁹¹ Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Decentralization Sequencing and Timing," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA345_a. 09PRISTINA345_a. Dated August 14, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA345 (accessed May 31, 2022); Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Keeping Decentralization and the November [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA323_a. Dated August 4, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA323 (July 7, 2022); Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Toward Reframing the Debate on Decentralization and [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA357_a. Dated August 20, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA357 (accessed May 31, 2022); The Americans stressed that "the goal is a successful outcome to the elections rather than the process for its own sake; Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Assessing Likely Election Participation [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA379_a. Dated August 28, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA379 (accessed June 1, 2022); Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Local Elections an Opportunity for Ethnic Serb [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA470_a. Dated November 28, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA470 (accessed July 8, 2022).

²⁹² Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Decentralization Sequencing and Timing," (accessed July 7, 2022).

²⁹³ Dismally low voter turnout and general apathy towards the municipal elections in the post-independence period was understood by the US as a result of a weak economy, poverty and the lack of job prospects, rather than as a result of their own deep involvement in shaping the political process; Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: Election Predictions," Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA497_a. Dated November 13, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA497 (accessed July 7, 2022).

²⁹⁴ Embassy Ankara, "US-Turkey Policy Planning Talks Identify Common [...]," Wikileaks Cable: 09ANKARA982_a. Dated July 9, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09ANKARA982 (accessed July 12, 2022).

²⁹⁵ Nate Tabak, "Dell: A Clever Political Animal – with Bite," *Balkan Insight*, January 12, 2015. <https://balkaninsight.com/2015/01/12/dell-a-clever-political-animal-with-bite/> (accessed June 15, 2021).

²⁹⁶ Andrew Rettman, "MEP Criticises US Ambassador in Kosovo SMS Affair," *EUobserver*, March 4, 2011. <https://euobserver.com/world/31926> (accessed June 15, 2021); Dell actually accused the media publication who broke the story of breaking the law and threatened jail time.

despite being constantly reminded Kosovo was a European responsibility.

2008-2012, EULEX and European leadership?

Through policing and rule of law monitoring by EULEX, post-independence peacebuilding and statebuilding was aimed at ensuring “accountability and to enhance administrative capacity in Kosovo”.²⁹⁷ This mission in Kosovo was the “historic” flagship of the EU, by far its most extensive and ambitious by date, and thus EU officials said failure would be “especially shameful”.²⁹⁸ Launching a mission without UN approval would be messy, but in any case necessary, as no mission at all was deemed even more detrimental to the EU’s credibility.²⁹⁹ Due to possible security concerns and the unprecedented mandate, the EU capitals chose a more robust presence of about 1,800, not significantly less than UNMIK’s numbers.³⁰⁰ Its mandate involved advising Kosovo authorities and investigating serious crimes, but also executive power through the possibility of annulling their decisions if necessary to protect the rule of law.³⁰¹ Despite the EU supposedly taking care of the judiciary, the US took upon them the task of “building the capacity of the upper echelon” of Kosovo’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kosovo Police, while the EU would focus on mentoring and training the operational levels.³⁰² The relevant question of applicable law (usage of Yugoslav, Serb, UNMIK or Kosovo law), and the EU’s wariness to apply Kosovo law, especially in Kosovar Serb regions, was unpopular with Kosovars. Therefore, the US complained about the “political insensitivity” of EULEX

²⁹⁷ U.S. Mission to European Union, “Administrator Fore Discusses Kosovo, Post-Lisbon [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS1072_a. Dated July 16, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS1072 (accessed July 4, 2022).

²⁹⁸ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EULEX Kosovo Police Staffing Gaps and Transition [...]”, Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS997_a. Dated July 1, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS997 (accessed July 4, 2022); Andrea Capussela, “Eulex Report Exposes EU Failure in Kosovo,” EUobserver, April 16, 2015. <https://euobserver.com/opinion/128343> (accessed June 16, 2021). At its peak, EULEX employed three times the number of officials than the other 11 concurrent missions combined.

²⁹⁹ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU and W. Balkans, Carrots not Always Effective; Sticks Largely Unused,” Wikileaks Cable: 07BRUSSELS3192_a. Dated October 19, 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07BRUSSELS3192_a.html (accessed November 22, 2021).

³⁰⁰ Hylke Dijkstra, “The Planning and Implementation of the Rule of Law Mission of the European Union in Kosovo,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 5, no. 2 (2011): 198-200; Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Follow-On Rule of Law Mission Taking Shape,” Wikileaks Cable: 07PRISTINA113_a. Dated February 12, 2007 https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_07PRISTINA113 (accessed October 5, 2022).

³⁰¹ Council of the European Union, “Council Joint Action 2008/124CFSP of February 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX Kosovo,” Article 3, point (b).

Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008E0124&from=EN>

³⁰² United States Department of Justice, *International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP): Program Management Plan for Kosovo*, 3. Available at: [https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/2129/18476/US%20DoJ%20ICITAP%20programme%20for%20Kosovo%20\(2009\).pdf](https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/2129/18476/US%20DoJ%20ICITAP%20programme%20for%20Kosovo%20(2009).pdf)

justice.³⁰³ The US wanted EULEX to take upon them the tough political, tasks of borders, police and customs. Clearly, the EU was less eager to deploy in the north “under conditions of conflict or confrontation”, while the US continually warned the Europeans that this would damage their relationship with the Kosovar Albanians.³⁰⁴ The EU retorted to US calls for a tougher approach by stressing the advisory core of the mission and its lack of means for overt control.³⁰⁵ Because of the internal institution-building aspect of the mission (meaning these missions develop European security architecture), the EU had at least some incentives to provide resources and make sure it does not wither away and fail.³⁰⁶

A Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) was signed with Serbia shortly after Kosovo’s declaration of independence as a way to offer Serbia something in return and to bolster pro-European parties in Serbia.³⁰⁷ Mirroring the SAA in the context of Kosovo’s disputed status, there was a “low-key” informal process of building administrative capacity.³⁰⁸ This bi-lateral process entails adopting EU legislation, such as establishing free trade agreements and strengthening regional Western Balkans networks, paired with financial assistance with the aim of eventual EU membership. For the EU Commission, “[e]nlargement is one of the EU’s most powerful policy tools. It serves the EU’s strategic interests in stability,

³⁰³ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo/EULEX: At Full Operating Capability, But Not Without Problems,” (accessed July 28, 2022); Many scholars and commentators have remarked on how corruption and crime have been tolerated to maintain the veneer of a liberal democracy in service of a successful peacebuilding and statebuilding story, or a negative peace; see: Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo*, 89.

³⁰⁴ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: EULEX Deployment Moves Forward, but [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA453_a. Dated August 25, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08PRISTINA453 (accessed July 4, 2022); U.S. Mission to European Union, “A/S Fried Discusses Kosovo with EU Officials,” Wikileaks Cable: 08BRUSSELS1377_a. Dated September 4, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS1377 (accessed July 4, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: Handover Planning for the Police Mission [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 08PRISTINA348_a. Dated July 5, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08PRISTINA348 (accessed July 4, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: GoK Opposes EULEX Agreement with Serbia [...],” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA362_a. Dated August 21, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA362 (accessed July 7, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: EULEX at the Six Month Point,” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA256_a. Dated July 4, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA256 (accessed July 7, 2022).

³⁰⁵ U.S. Mission to European Union, “A/S Fried Discusses Kosovo with EU Officials,” (accessed July 4, 2022).

³⁰⁶ U.S. Mission to European Union, “Engaging the EU on Defense Issues,” Wikileaks Cable: 09USEUBRUSSELS552_a. Dated April 9, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USEUBRUSSELS552_a.html (accessed September 19, 2022).

³⁰⁷ U.S. Mission to European Union, “U.S.-EU Consultations on Western Balkans Issues,” Wikileaks Cable: 08USEUBRUSSELS748_a. Dated May 19, 2008. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_08BRUSSELS748 (accessed June 30, 2022).

³⁰⁸ U.S. Mission to European Union, “Administrator Fore Discusses Kosovo, Post-Lisbon [...],” (accessed July 4, 2022).

security, and conflict prevention [and secures] vital transport and energy routes.”³⁰⁹ However, EU officials privately communicated to the US that “the EU’s leverage is not terribly strong” with regards to tying Serbia to the EU. In the words of the US, the ineffective “carrot” of EU accession, “should serve as a wake-up call [...] on the tough nature of Balkan politicians and their unwillingness to be kowtowed by EU bureaucrats”.³¹⁰ The US complained about how the EU’s “sticks”, such as potentially withholding the millions of pre-accession funds, were rarely used to pressure officials to adopt EU political views, but rather for infrastructure, free markets, and administrative capacity through trainings. Instead, EU officials preferred a slow procedural process of building a foundation for so-called “European identity”, fixing problems before admitting “non-quite-ready candidates” such as Romania and Bulgaria.³¹¹ The fact that Kosovo is still denied EU visa liberalisation to this day underlines this approach of keeping Kosovo at bay³¹²

EUSR and ICR Pieter Feith analysed the different foreign policy approaches during a meeting. According to him, Americans prioritize stability in the Kosovo and the region, while European officials view it through a European lens, prioritizing the creation of civil institutions which would at some time qualify the countries for EU membership.³¹³ As former ICO employee Andrea Capussela noted accurately, the EU certainly had more of an interest for Kosovo’s long-term sustainable peace and development than the US due to their proximity and connectedness.³¹⁴ EULEX had a self-described “step-by-step approach” of not pushing too hard with organized crime, corruption and Kosovo’s northern (Belgrade-controlled) structures, lest its engagement would come to a standstill.³¹⁵ Indeed, as Feith said: “I avoided using my powers

³⁰⁹ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009* (Brussels: Publications Office of the European Union, 2008), 2. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008DC0674&from=EN>

³¹⁰ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU and W. Balkans, Carrots not Always Effective; Sticks Largely Unused,” (accessed June 14, 2022).

³¹¹ *Ibid.* (accessed July 19, 2022).

³¹² David Chandler, “Kosovo: Statebuilding and Utopia,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 13, no. 5 (2019): 546.

³¹³ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU Officials on Next Steps in Kosovo,” Wikileaks Cable: 09BRUSSELS809_a. Dated June 11, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BRUSSELS809_a.html (accessed July 6, 2022).

³¹⁴ Capussela, *State-Building in Kosovo*, 226-227.

³¹⁵ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU Officials on Next Steps in Kosovo,” (accessed July 7, 2022).

as final authority”.³¹⁶ Still, EULEX became frustrated with the lack of cooperation on reforms by Kosovo officials, who tended to point to the issue of the north.³¹⁷ While EULEX was formally deployed as a status neutral mission, the US argued it “had to support Kosovo’s institutions and combat partition”, which meant statebuilding in practice.³¹⁸ Because Kosovo at times opposed the Serb agreement the Europeans needed for a status-neutral EULEX, the EU often looked towards the US to leverage their power and credibility with the Kosovars.³¹⁹ When EULEX was seeking to sign agreements with Serbia on hot button issues such as police and customs, Kosovars felt “acted upon” and some protested and rioted.³²⁰ The US had significant input in making these plans more acceptable to Kosovars and tried to avoid alienating Kosovars from EULEX and the international community more broadly.³²¹ Perhaps tellingly, French FM Kouchner privately told Secretary Clinton in 2009 that there was success on the ground in Kosovo “as the two sides were not killing each other”, signalling his limited (negative peace) definition of success as preventing outright bloodshed.³²² The aforementioned Robert Cooper was similarly jaded, stating privately that “decentralization in Kosovo will not succeed”.³²³

Finally, it was in 2009 that the US that urged the EU to take the leading role in “establishing a dialogue with the two capitals” to resolve the political issues, and not to rely on

³¹⁶ Pieter Feith, “Overseeing Kosovo’s Conditional Independence,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, February 9, 2018. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_overseeing_kosovos_conditional_independence/ (accessed December 15, 2022).

³¹⁷ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU Officials on Next Steps in Kosovo,” (accessed September 14, 2022).

³¹⁸ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: DAS Stuart Jones Discusses Practical Issues with Kosovo and International Leaders,” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA25_a. Dated January 22, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09PRISTINA25_a.html (accessed July 6, 2022); Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: EULEX at the Six Month Point,” (accessed July 7, 2022).

³¹⁹ U.S. Mission to European Union, “EU Council Wants U.S. to Support EULEX Protocol with Serbia,” Wikileaks Cable: 09BRUSSELS1196_a. Dated August 28, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BRUSSELS1196_a.html (accessed July 7, 2022).

³²⁰ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: EU(LEX)-Serbia Customs Agreement Presents Potential For Another EU-GoK Political Imbroglio,” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA447_a. Dated October 13, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA447 (accessed July 12, 2022); During this time in August 2009, a last-minute direct call by Christopher Dell to Prime Minister Thaçi prevented a direct confrontation between Kosovo paramilitary police and EULEX police, as the former sought to move into majority Serb Mitrovica; Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: KP Paramilitary Police Sent North,” Wikileaks Cable: 09PRISTINA378_a. Dated August 28, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09PRISTINA378 (July 11, 2022).

³²¹ Embassy Pristina, “Kosovo: EU(LEX)-Serbia Customs Agreement Presents Potential For Another EU-GoK Political Imbroglio,” (accessed July, 12, 2022).

³²² Secretary of State, “(U) Secretary Clinton’s February 5, 2009 Expanded Meeting with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner,” Wikileaks Cable: 09STATE11937_a. Dated February 10, 2009. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09STATE11937_a.html (accessed May 30, 2022).

³²³ Embassy Stockholm, “EUR A/S Gordon’s July 3 Meetings with the EU [...]” Wikileaks Cable: 09STOCKHOLM418_a. Dated July 9, 2009. https://wikileaks.jcvignoli.com/cable_09STOCKHOLM418 (accessed September 28, 2022).

the US for Kosovo's support as before.³²⁴ In 2011, the EUHR Baroness Ashton started mediating talks between Hashim Thaçi, and Ivica Dačić to achieve progress on their respective paths to Europe. Two years later in April 2013, Belgrade and Pristina concluded – not signed – the so-called 'Brussels Agreement' aimed at 'normalisation of relations'. After which, a SAA was initiated with Kosovo and Serbia moved further towards EU accession talks. Whether these 'typically' European Belgrade-Pristina talks in Brussels constitute actual progress or mere process (as they continue to this day) is another discussion, but the US role in their inception is remarkable.³²⁵

Conclusion

Operation Allied Force was characterized as Americans making dinner, with the Europeans doing the dishes. Doing the dishes meant paying for the reconstruction of Kosovo and nominally taking on the responsibility of its future. Due to American power being the primary reason for the end of Serb occupation in 1999, their influence on the Kosovar elite was extensive. For the Americans, concerned with their credibility and reputation, Kosovo could not fail. The stated end goals were democratization and marketization, or creating a multi-ethnic liberal state which would ultimately integrate with NATO and the EU. Generally, the US approach to managing crises was informal. Different from the EU, the US wanted to resolve issues quickly, the sooner the better. The EU, being a collection of divided states, tended to move more slowly. As the EU was located much closer to the possible export of instability and criminality from Kosovo, they had a much stronger interest in a long-term sustainable peace and a developed state. The Americans began favouring a fast track towards independence as the best way to bring peace and stability, but spent significant time and effort on negotiations to bring the Europeans along, who were more concerned about destabilizing Serbia. Kosovo's independence could not be delayed indefinitely however, as this risked renewed violence and instability, which would damage Kosovo's (and by extension its Western backers) image. As the tranche of Wikileaks documents illustrate, closely curating Kosovo's image was a primary task of the US Embassy, who let their presence and influence be known daily. During post-

³²⁴ Embassy Pristina, "Kosovo: DAS Stuart Jones Discusses Practical Issues with Kosovo and International Leaders," (accessed July 6, 2022).

³²⁵ These mediation talks are often seen as a major example of a European approach to peace; Zupančič and Pejič, *EULEX and Peacebuilding in Kosovo*, 73-75.

2008 'supervised independence', the status-neutral EULEX was constantly urged by the US to take executive action on difficult political issues, especially in the north, and stop its supposed favourable treatment regarding Belgrade. Compared to the Europeans, the Americans were far removed from concerns about Serb buy-in, and as such bemoaned the gradual, process-based, technical EU approach. While the US favoured using the 'stick', the EU tended to dangle the 'carrot'. Despite their deep involvement in domestic and international politics, the US constantly portrayed Kosovo as ultimately a European (or to Kosovars local) problem and responsibility. Nevertheless, the private lack of optimism about the prospects of solving the conflict by adequately addressing its root causes is noteworthy.

Conclusion: Playing the same tune on different instruments?

Peacebuilding, from its inception, meant addressing the root causes which were believed to have caused conflicts. As said by Boutros-Ghali, however, his Agenda for Peace “was a great success, an academic success; unfortunately, not a practical success”.³²⁶ While peacebuilding was originally a principally multilateral and somewhat progressive concept, Boutros-Ghali’s vision of an expanded UN was stymied by American unilateralism in the late 1990s. The concepts and rhetoric of peacebuilding and statebuilding, and their perceived importance for preventing conflict in an increasingly globalized world, did thoroughly penetrate to American and European upper echelons. They were ultimately diminished by the dilemmas of external peacebuilding and ideas about the responsibility of local actors. Across the Atlantic, there were convergences over certain issues (such as the principled support for liberal reforms), and mostly procedural disagreements over others. Even many European Atlanticists were at times irritated by American unilateralism, but often did not oppose American goals per se. The American’s approach to peacebuilding (or ‘nationbuilding’ in their case) was primarily built upon armed supremacy to dissuade any rival powers to fill what the Americans saw as the dreaded ‘power vacuum’. In this time, both US and EU policymakers publicly rejected the distinction between liberalism and realism. Instead, they professed an enlightened self-interest, whereby addressing conflict and instability elsewhere in turn protects oneself of the possible spill-over consequences at home. In this way, their foreign policies are both morally and strategically justified. The 1999 military intervention in Kosovo was famously justified by mostly humanitarian language, but there were also strategic claims. The EU footing the bill and taking responsibility for the eventual reconstruction and EU integration of Kosovo was a crucial aspect in the US military carrying the initial intervention in the first place. This did not mean the US would let the EU simply set the post-conflict agenda or pace, as they were still using their influence on the Kosovar Albanian elite and being heavily involved in day-to-day business. Vice versa, the US also strongly encouraged the Europeans to accept certain Kosovar Albanian red lines. Overall, American views tended to outweigh those of the Europeans, but sought ways to use European resources to further their interests. A friendly, nominally independent Kosovo was crucial for the US (and they lobbied intensely for further recognition across the world),

³²⁶ Frontline Interviews, “Interview Boutros Boutros-Ghali,” *PBS*, April 1, 2004. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/ghali.html> (accessed November 22, 2022).

while the EU's policy was more complicated due to their official status-neutrality. The 'tune' they were playing on different instruments at times sounded dissonant and offbeat. Early on, the US thought rapid formal Kosovar independence and eventual EU integration would be the only way forward, but also sought ways to accommodate the more hesitant Europeans. The EU, on the other hand, approached the issues more process-based and on technical grounds, seeking to coax Kosovo and Serbia using the carrot of financial assistance rather than overt political means. This is due to the institutional difference between the US (a single state) and the EU (a supranational organization) and their divergent capabilities. Another factor is the proximity of the EU to the region in question and their interest in keeping an eye on the long-term, rather than stirring things up. While at least rhetorically informed by liberalism's focus on economic reforms and building (liberal) state institutions in the long run, overt concerns about stability, security gaps and the continuing disregard for the autonomy of the local democratic system, highlight how realist approaches were never far off.

All in all, it seems like David Chandler's contention about peacebuilding's gradual transformation from ambitious project into pragmatism is clearly visible in Kosovo's case. The prospects for 'solving' the conflict and creating a 'positive peace' by addressing its roots diminished as time went on, instead managing crises as they happened to prevent outbreaks of overt violent clashes. This is not to say the peacebuilding in Kosovo was initially quick-track, 'laissez-faire' liberal, or would make the Kosovars decide for themselves. From its beginning, the case of Kosovo was peacebuilding as statebuilding (or Paris's IBL approach), with the transitional administration tasked with practically every function of state. Managing ethnic relations between the majority and minorities became a central function of the US Embassy specifically. As time went on, forms of nominal local ownership abdicated the US and EU of their responsibility for Kosovo's administration, but continued their influence in its future. While the US can aptly be characterized by its tendency towards unilateralism, the Americans did not do as they please regardless of reaction. As the record shows, the US put substantial effort into getting others to accept their policies, and were willing (albeit grudgingly) to slow down their preferred process to accede to allied concerns.

Peacebuilding, despite the theoretical work that has been done in the past twenty years, remains an illusive categorical framework which is arguable on its way out. Notwithstanding, these concepts were elucidated in the first chapter, hoping it provided some conceptual grounding for an analysis of the transatlantic alliance in Kosovo in chapters two and three.

Overall, this thesis is limited by its narrow view on readings of peacebuilding dominant in policy circles and the realist/idealist divide, thus leaving out many other interesting approaches to analyse internationalized post-conflict situations. It tried to view the processes on ‘their’ terms, or analyse the perspectives of the policy-makers themselves. In this sense, this thesis turned out to be more narrowly concerned with the changing American and European policymaker’s understanding of their policies in Kosovo, rather than explaining the actual missions. Identifying distinctly realist and liberal peacebuilding approaches in practice was harder than imagined, also because much of the literature dealt with is so strongly concerned with prescription and solving problems (which was purposely avoided here). Balancing abstract, explanatory IR theory and a tangible historical perspective thus proved to be difficult.

While Kosovo offers a lens to look at the inner workings of the transatlantic alliance, this relationship is shaped by a long history and too many political, economic and ideological factors to properly address here. Furthermore, as was stipulated in the introduction, there is no similar European variant of the Wikileaks documents used, so the American bias of these cables are inherently limiting. Having used many (admittedly US-centric) Wikileaks cables to sketch a picture of day to day peacebuilding, there are still thousands of cables from this period that can potentially be used for further research. This thesis ended its analysis with the formal end of international tutelage in 2012, but obviously history has not stopped in Kosovo since then. It could be said the post-Cold War period of far-reaching US preponderance is over and we are now in a ‘post-post-Cold War’ time of increasing great power tensions. One could look at the rise of other powers in Kosovo, most notably China or Russia, or the Transatlantic tensions under the Trump administration or look at the enduring crisis in North Kosovo. Other big events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the Fall of Kabul and the War in Ukraine have also impacted the West’s relation with Kosovo in recent years.

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PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS

STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:


- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or

the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.	
Name:	Jelmer van Emous
Student number:	5524873
Date and signature:	3-3-2023 

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.