

lower level of humanity.”) Strauss apparently echoes the very classical idea that a healthy society must be small enough for all citizens to be able to maintain at least potential links. (“A city is a community commensurate with man’s natural powers of firsthand or direct knowledge . . . with his power of love or of active concern, which is by nature limited.”) Citizens must be friends, Aristotle used to say. At the same time, there is an obvious gap between the third and fourth lessons, between defending the necessity of civil friendship and that of governing one’s fellow citizens by pure deceit or cunning demagoguery. So obviously, Strauss’s closed society does not refer to any contemporary Western societies; he has in mind a particular type of nation whose historical embodiment remains to be determined. And this nation, which embodies the “natural affection that men have especially for their kin,” he intends to defend by all means:

There are no assignable limits on what might be just reprisals: there are situations in which the normally valid rules of justice are justly changed, or exceptions are as just as the rules: justice is mutable so as to be able to cope with the inventiveness of wickedness.

To summarize, modernity is wicked; classical paganism, salutary. The former deprives mankind of all natural notions of human dignity and nobility and ends up giving birth, at best, to a society of lawless pigs and, at worst, to totalitarian societies. The latter extols the essence of man, and, even if it fails to communicate respect for its standards to the masses, it at least gives the wise a chance to rule the unwise, thereby promoting a society in which man can survive.

This much is absolutely clear: To Strauss, what is admirable about classical philosophy is that, in its effort to save mankind from decaying, it does not rely on any notion that is even remotely theological; it manages to “avoid the Charybdis of relativism” without falling prey to the “Scylla of absolutism.” Classical philosophers know that men need rules, but they are reasonable men who do not, like fanatical obscurantists, look up to the skies and wait for these rules to rain down upon them. In other words, the Greeks invented philosophy as the unrelenting effort of human reason to discover those reasonable rules that mankind, by nature,

needs—rules whose authority is none other than that of man’s reason, but is, at the same time, as indisputable as reason itself. That is to say, rules that depend totally on what man is but are totally independent of his essentially mutable and unthinking will, and of the essentially fallible, intellectual grasp of most men; rules that some men have been able to dig up, not because they were supermen—their quest is endless; their sagacity, constantly put to the test; and, after all, they are only men—but because they approximate the essence of man better than others.

Where are today’s Platos and Aristotles?

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## FOREIGN POLICY

### Kosovo and Its Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy

by Joseph E. Fallon

The struggle for Kosovo between Christian Serbs and Muslim Albanians dates back to 1389, when the Serbs were defeated by, and their lands annexed to, the Ottoman Empire. Muslim rule lasted over four centuries and resulted in several waves of forced migrations of Serbs from Kosovo. The current Albanian majority there was achieved more recently—the result of the policies of the Axis occupation (1941-45), which included the killing of an estimated 10,000 Serbs, the expulsion of another 100,000, and the introduction of Albanian settlers. The de-Serbianization of Kosovo continued under Tito’s rule (1945-80), during which the country acquired many attributes of a separate Albanian state—borders, a flag, a capital, a supreme court, an education system that promoted the Albanian language, a university with teachers and textbooks from Albania, as well as cultural and sporting exchanges with Albania. In 1981, after Tito’s death, Albanians in Kosovo demanded that the province be elevated to a republic with the right of secession. This provoked a Serbian reaction that facilitated the rise of Slobodan Milosevic, which, in turn, was cited by Albanians as a justification

for the activities of the Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). A downward spiral of ethnic suspicion and strife ensued, culminating in the Yugoslav wars.

From 1996 to 1999, the war in Kosovo was an internal conflict between the secessionist KLA—which, at one time, was designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department—and the armed forces of the rump Yugoslavia of Serbia and Montenegro.

Citing an alleged massacre of Albanian civilians by Serbian forces in the village of Racak in January 1999, the U.S. government and NATO allies officially intervened. Meeting in Rambouillet, France, that February and March, they drafted a “peace accord,” which offered the KLA *de facto* independence for Kosovo immediately, and *de jure* independence in three years. During that interval, Kosovo would be administered as a NATO protectorate. The U.S. government introduced a military annex to the accord under which NATO personnel would be immune from all legal actions—civil, criminal, or administrative—and NATO forces would have unfettered access to any and all parts of Yugoslavia. And all the costs would be borne by Belgrade. Yugoslavia would have been a virtual colony of NATO.

When Belgrade refused to sign the accord, NATO attacked. The war lasted from March 24 to June 10, 1999. Kosovo became a U.N. protectorate (UNMIK), whose final status—some form of independence from Serbia—would be determined in the future. That future is now, and it is posing political and strategic problems for the Bush administration.

U.S. foreign policy toward Kosovo, which culminated in military intervention in 1999, was a continuation of the policy Washington had pursued in Bosnia and Croatia in 1995. Each of the three wars contributed to a profound transformation in U.S. foreign policy. In Washington’s eyes, the end of the Cold War meant a transition from a bipolar world, which functioned within a set of political, military, and legal restraints, to a unipolar one. The U.S. government was now the world’s hyperpower, without rival or limitation. For Washington, the Yugoslav wars provided an opportunity to demonstrate this to the rest of the world, thereby accomplishing several key objectives.

First, Washington set out to demonize the Serbs in order to discredit and suppress not just Serbian ethnicity but any manifestation of ethnic nationalism,

since such nationalism undermines the legitimacy of the dominant ideology of the virtues of multiethnic states and transnational corporations.

Second, U.S. policymakers sought to dismember an inconvenient state—in this case, one supported by Russia, thereby establishing a precedent. Later, that precedent would be applied to the union of Serbia and Montenegro, then Serbia, and, perhaps, even to Iran. In so doing, Washington hoped to weaken and isolate Russia, both internationally and in Europe.

It also established another precedent, in promoting ethnic cleansing by proxy. The Clinton administration covertly armed, trained, supported, and advised the government of Croatia for the August 1995 military offensive known as Operation Storm. Though it was aimed at the secessionist Republic of Serbian Krajina, it resulted in the expulsion of an estimated 300,000 Serbs from Croatia. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), after ten years, the Serbs still have not been permitted to return to Croatia. The precedent was repeated in 1999 when the Red Cross reported that the KLA had expelled between 200,000 and 250,000 Serbs from Kosovo. It was repeated yet again in 2001 in Afghanistan, in the wake of the U.S. invasion, when our “ally,” the Northern Alliance, consisting mostly of ethnic Tajiks, sought to expel a million ethnic Pashtuns from northern Afghanistan. According to the UNHCR, nearly 100,000 Pashtuns fled, becoming refugees either elsewhere in Afghanistan or in Pakistan. In Iraq, both Kurdish and Shiite militias, whose political parties are members of the national government—another ally of the Bush administration—currently

engage in ethnic cleansing. In Kirkuk, Kurds are reversing the process of “Arabization,” while in Baghdad, Shiites are cleansing Sunni neighborhoods.

By supporting Muslim demands for a united Bosnia and an independent Kosovo, Washington hoped to persuade Muslims, especially in Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey—all key U.S. allies—that they are wrong to regard U.S. foreign policy toward Palestinians, Kashmiris, Moros, and Uighurs as evidence of any hostility toward Islam on our part.

Washington also sought to encourage Muslims in Albania, Bosnia, and Kosovo to promote a secularized, individualistic Islam, in which mosque and state are separate, which would undermine the appeal of traditional Islam, especially in the West.

With the Cold War ended, Washington sought to justify NATO’s continued existence by waging war on Bosnia and Kosovo. These wars required a radical redefinition of NATO’s mission and area of responsibility. These *ad hoc* military interventions became official policy after September 11. NATO’s 2002 Prague Summit Declaration stated,

We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, met today to enlarge our Alliance and further strengthen NATO to meet the grave new threats and profound security challenges of the 21st century . . . so that NATO can better carry out the full range of its missions and respond collectively to those challenges, including the threat posed by terrorism and by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery . . . NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed . . . to sustain operations over distance and time . . . to achieve their objectives.

Thus, NATO is no longer a defensive alliance, and its sphere is no longer restricted to Europe. This enables the U.S. government to maintain, even increase, its Cold War level of influence in Europe and provides Washington with a reservoir of bases and troops from NATO countries to help implement its policy objectives as far away as Afghanistan and Iraq.

In attacking Yugoslavia, Washington also sought to test the ability of the U.S. government to impose political settle-

ments that advance its interests. The more contradictory and arbitrary those settlements are—rejecting national self-determination in Bosnia but championing it in Kosovo—the more our power is projected.

The final status of Kosovo is to be decided by the U.N. Security Council. Its special envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, a former president of Finland, is reportedly recommending independence in all but name. (See [www.unosek.org/unosek/index.html](http://www.unosek.org/unosek/index.html).) The Serbs have rejected this plan, and, while Moscow has stated that it will veto this recommendation unless both the Serbs and the Albanians agree to it, Washington favors it. Such a plan, if implemented, would fail to bring peace or justice to that region of the Balkans.

Any U.N. Security Council decision is expected to reflect “The Guiding Principles for a Settlement of Kosovo’s Status” set out in 2005 by the United States, England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia—collectively known as the Contact Group. Principle Six declares that “There will be no changes in the current territory of Kosovo, i.e. no partition of Kosovo and no union of Kosovo with any country or part of any country.”

The current proposal for Kosovo independence violates international law while claiming to uphold it; it institutionalizes ethnic and religious discrimination and seeks to sanction both in law, denying the Christian Serbs of Kosovo the legal right to national self-determination, while granting *and* denying that right to the Muslim Albanians of Kosovo.

If national self-determination under international law forbids the partition of a territory, then U.N. member-states Bangladesh, Ireland, Israel, Moldova, Pakistan, and all the successor states of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are illegitimate. So, too, are the western borders of U.N. member-states Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, which were shaped by the post-World War II partition of Germany.

The plan both allows Albanians in Kosovo the right to secede from Serbia and denies them the right to unite with Albania. If the U.N. Security Council insists this restriction is in accordance with international law on the right to national self-determination, then it should also insist that the unifications of Germany, Vietnam, and Yemen were illegal, and future unifications of Ireland or Korea would have to be prohibited as well. Conversely, it would have to consider the Republic of Somaliland, which



Aaron D. Wolf

seceded from Somalia, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which seceded from Cyprus—states the United Nations refuses to recognize—to be, in fact, legitimate.

The plan advocates multiethnic statehood while dismembering a multiethnic state. The push for Kosovo independence is predicated upon it being a multiethnic state. As part of Serbia, however, it is already in one. By championing the concept of multiethnicity, the proposal undermines not only its own justification for Kosovo's independence but the legitimacy of all the successor states to the former Yugoslavia: Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Slovenia—none of which are as multiethnic or as multireligious as was the former Yugoslavia.

Both Bosnia and Serbia constitute federal republics. Bosnia consists of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska. Serbia has two autonomous provinces: Kosovo-Metohija and Vojvodina. Both Bosnia and Kosovo are U.N. protectorates. Yet, Muslim Kosovo is to gain independence, while Christian Republika Srpska faces abolition and consolidation in a unitary Bosnian state. Such a policy is nothing short of institutionalized ethnic and religious discrimination.

The Security Council claims that Kosovo is an exception in international law. The legal principles announced for it are deemed to have no applicability to other disputes. This maneuver is an attempt to deny the protection of international law to parties in three specific conflicts—Transnistria in Moldova, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. Such an arbitrary claim of exceptionality undermines the moral authority of international law, making it nothing more than a law of the jungle defined and enforced for the benefit of the more powerful states.

A just and enduring political settlement for Kosovo requires that Bosnia be treated in an identical manner. If Kosovo has the right to secede from Serbia, then the Republika Srpska must have the right to secede from Bosnia.

An independent Kosovo must have the right to unite with Albania. Similarly, an independent Republika Srpska must have the right to unite with Serbia.

To resolve the Serbian refugee crisis, there should be a population exchange between Serbia and Montenegro, on the one hand, and Kosovo and Albania, on the other. Serbian refugees would

agree not to return to Kosovo, while the Serbs still there would agree to relocate to Serbia. In exchange, Albanians in Serbia and Montenegro would relocate to Kosovo and Albania. There is a legal precedent for this in the "Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations" (1923). With the approval of the international community, it successfully transferred over a million Greeks from Turkey to Greece and 400,000 Turks from Greece to Turkey. Other examples of successful population transfers include those between Bulgaria and Turkey in 1913 and 1950-89; Bulgaria and Greece in 1919; Poland and the Soviet Union in 1945; and Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1946.

The Bush administration favors the current proposal for Kosovo's independence without appreciating the problems, political and strategic, it presents to U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, the White House is behaving as if the United States, as the world's hyperpower, can overcome any problems that may arise—a notion that Afghanistan and Iraq should have dispelled.

The immediate problem is that Kosovo, perhaps more than Bosnia, has become a haven for Islamic militants and for organized crime. Both pose direct threats to Europe, and independence will only make it worse—for Europe and for the "War on Terror."

If the Security Council proposal is implemented, the secessionist regimes of Transnistria in Moldova, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, will demand international recognition of their independence. Such official recognition would likely begin with Russia and then snowball. Since the Bush administration opposed independence for these regions, this would be viewed by many, including many Americans, as a political victory for Moscow and a political defeat for Washington.

Next would be Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenians there will also insist on international recognition of their independence from Azerbaijan—something that both Turkey and Azerbaijan oppose. Armenian-Americans, however, support it, and they constitute an influential ethnic lobbying group. The Bush administration would be caught in the middle, and any decision would displease an important ally.

The strategic prize, however, is the Crimea, which has been part of Russia since 1783. With the Bolshevik Revolu-

tion, it became an autonomous republic, then an oblast of the Russian SFSR. In 1954, jurisdiction was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR as a symbolic gesture honoring the historic unity of the two Slavic peoples. When the Soviet Union fell, the Crimea reluctantly agreed to remain part of the Ukraine, but as an autonomous republic. Ethnically, linguistically, and culturally, the Crimea is Russian. It is home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet. If the U.N. Security Council votes on independence for Kosovo, the government of the Crimea would likely call for a vote on Crimean independence, which would easily pass, then demand international recognition. This would be followed by a vote on union with Russia. And Moscow would certainly accept the return of the Crimea to Russia.

This would be a major defeat for U.S. foreign policy. Since the Yugoslav wars of the 90's, Washington has assumed that Russia, because of her size, natural resources, and nuclear weapons, has the potential to reemerge as a rival. To prevent this, the U.S. government has pursued a policy of containment. It supported the expansion of NATO eastward to include former Soviet republics, in violation of promises made to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The anticipated impact of NATO enlargement, however, was trumped by Russia's emergence as a principal supplier of oil and natural gas to Europe. Washington used the war in Afghanistan to displace Russia from the former Soviet Central Asian republics. After its initial success, which culminated in Kyrgyzstan's "Tulip Revolution," the U.S. government has seen its influence decline, while Russia's has grown. In the Ukraine's "Orange Revolution," Washington supported the overthrow of a pro-Russian government and its replacement with a pro-American one. The new government soon announced its intention to join NATO and to expel Russia's Black Sea Fleet from the Crimea—to humiliate Moscow and disrupt its naval operations. Then, a general election replaced that government with another pro-Russian one. If independence for Kosovo results in the return of the Crimea to Russia, U.S. foreign policy will have come full circle since the Yugoslav wars. The world would no longer be unipolar, and the U.S. government would no longer be the world's hyperpower.

*Joseph F. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.*

## In the Register of *Ka-ching!*

With *The Hoax*, Swedish director Lasse Hallstrom and his screenwriter, William Wheeler, have at long last given Clifford Irving his due. They have done so by portraying their subject with about as much honesty as Irving did Howard Hughes when he concocted his infamous fake autobiography of the billionaire. They have altered, misshaped, abridged, and invented. In short, they have lied, exuberantly. While I've frequently chided directors and writers for such shenanigans, I cannot stir myself to moral indignation in this case. By thumbing their noses at the facts, Hallstrom and Wheeler have aspired to a higher truthiness, as Stephen Colbert might say. Their narrative method can be understood as a gloss on Irving's own fusion of reckless imagination and shameless chutzpah. As such, it pays fitting tribute to a literary scoundrel while exposing the dunces in high places who allowed him to get as far as he did.

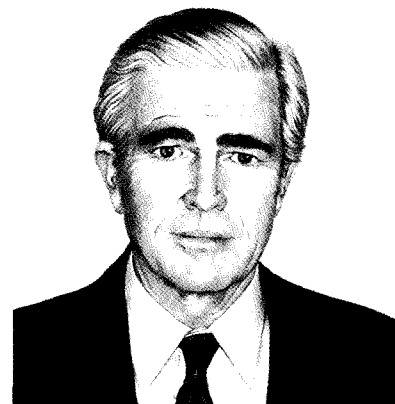
Playing Irving, Richard Gere sets the tone of this satire when he explains to his friend and accomplice Richard Suskind (Alfred Molina) how he conned the editors at McGraw-Hill and *Time*. His technique is simplicity itself. "The more outrageous I sound," he gleefully confides, "the more convincing I am!"

Of course, compared to Irving, Hallstrom and Wheeler are pikers in the lying department, but they have tried admirably. They portray Irving in 1971 as a financially strapped novelist about to be evicted from his Upstate New York home. Undaunted by looming indigence, he dons a tuxedo to attend Truman Capote's masked Black and White Ball at the Plaza Hotel, where he meets his editor, played by the winsomely elegant Hope Davis. She takes the festive occasion to inform him that his latest manuscript, *Rudnick's Problem*, has been rejected. She doesn't say why, but we are left to infer that it is because it's such a transparent attempt to cash in on Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*. To add to Irving's gathering gloom, he glimpses his former and still ominous mistress Nina von Pallandt, the singing baroness, across the celebrity-crowded room. All this is presented in a skillful marshaled montage orchestrated to

make Irving's plunge into charlatanism seem all but inevitable. There is a slight difficulty, however: None of it is true. As of 1971, Irving had been residing on the Mediterranean island of Ibiza for nine years, and he was reasonably well off. As for Capote's party, it was held five years earlier, in 1966. Furthermore, as far as I can discover, Irving never tried his hand—his literary hand, that is—at Portnoy's enthusiasm.

Why these deviations from the truth? I can only think that Wheeler was impatient with the reality. He wanted an Irving driven by economic desperation and goaded by being just outside the literary world's magic showroom, his nose flattened against its glittering pane. This would seem to make for a better story. But, as so often happens, the truth is far more interesting. Irving had been publishing with McGraw-Hill for 12 years, had cultivated good relations with his editors, and had recently signed a four-book contract. He had every reason to expect a successful future. Yet he preferred to gamble these enviable prospects on a lunatic criminal venture that promised shaky odds at best. Why?

I recall being puzzled by the affair when the news first broke in. How, I had wondered, did Irving expect to get away with it? Prompted by the film, I've done a little research and now see how a clever but fatally self-absorbed New York wise guy could be mightily tempted to perpetrate such a scam. First, the mysterious Hughes was hot, profitable copy. There were three biographies of the aviator turned womanizing showman written between 1967 and 1971, each woven from generally available information, tabloid gossip, and sordid speculation. Second, Hughes hadn't made a public appearance or statement since 1957. Only an inner circle of his upper-echelon employees knew with any certainty where he was living, and many of his factotums hadn't seen him face to face for over a decade. Third—and this is crucial—Irving had hit the mother lode of genuine Hughesiana. He had stolen the unpublished memoirs of Hughes' former chief executive officer, the 80-year-old Noah Dietrich, who had worked for the



### *The Hoax*

Produced and distributed  
by Miramax Films

Directed by Lasse Hallstrom  
Screenplay by William Wheeler

great man for 32 years and knew where the bodies were buried. Fourth, Hughes was rumored to be near death. This last detail almost certainly clinched the matter. Irving must have calculated that, once Hughes had taken off on his final flight, there would be no one who could convincingly debunk his as-told-to autobiography.

Let's not overlook the fabulously foolish executives at McGraw-Hill. On this score, Wheeler's script shines with a wicked sheen. Despite initial doubts and ongoing suspicions, these ladies and gentlemen became the unwitting—or is that witless?—co-conspirators in Irving's fraud. The first to fall under Irving's spell was his editor, a Chinese-American woman whom the film has unaccountably transformed into a disconcertingly round-eyed Davis. When she learns that Irving has reeled in the Big Kahuna, she chortles hyperbolically that "this book will sell more copies than the Bible." Like so many in her industry, she's clearly convinced that sales volume is the only criterion for a book's worth. Harold McGraw, aging grandson of the McGraw who founded the house, has doubts about the project, however. Although a professional handwriting analyst has certified the authenticity of Irving's forged letters from Hughes to himself, he's put off by the fictional Hughes's supposed demands for more and more money. (Once Irving thought he had the publishing house hooked, he couldn't resist having his imaginary Hughes escalate his original demand for \$400,000 to