**Type of Article:** Opinion Piece/Essay/Journal Article

**Title:** NATO Operations in the Balkans

**Author:** Lord Robertson, Secretary General of NATO

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**Synopsis:** Even though the author is British, this article is relevant because a). it was published in a Canadian journal and b). it gives insights into Anglophone attitudes towards nation building and peacekeeping.

While the article is an overall assessment of peacekeeping operations in the Balkan peninsula, it does provide a variety of rich insights into the attitudes of the peacekeeping forces, Canada included.

Lord Robertson blames the disintegration of Yugoslavia on the “darkest elements of Europe’s past: ethnic nationalism, often based on paranoid national mythologies.” He goes on to say that “In Yugoslavia, it would seem, time had truly stood still.”

In continuing his assessment, he goes on to write that “While strongmen in Bosnia and Yugoslavia promoted ethnic hatred and xenophobia, newly independent states across Central and Eastern Europe have embraced the common values of peace, liberty, tolerance, and human rights.”

These assessments are interesting, especially when compared with prevailing attitudes towards Afghanistan. It is revealing, particularly that while the Afghan conflict has been unanimously attributed to primitive tribalism, the peacemakers are willing to attribute the troubles in Bosnia, a European Muslim state, to something deeper, more “civilized”—paranoid national mythologies.

Further, there is almost an irritation in Lord Robertson’s tone at the inability of the peoples of the Balkans to adopt the very same common values mentioned above—values that should come easily to a civilized society.

This is the tone adopted throughout the article, as is reflected in some of the quotes below.

**Quote: “**The slow disintegration of Yugoslavia throughout the past decade embodied so many of the darkest elements of Europe’s past: ethnic nationalism, often based on paranoid national mythologies.”

“While strongmen in Bosnia and Yugoslavia promoted ethnic hatred and xenophobia, newly independent states across Central and Eastern Europe have embraced the common values of peace, liberty, tolerance and human rights.”

“But these conflicts also had to be stopped because they represented a challenge to the progress being made right across the Euro-Atlantic area in building a true community of shared values, shared responsibility and shared prosperity.”