

public policy over a full era," Ceaser says. And no longer was it just one set of ideas. Instead, writers often spoke of public philosophies, successive "sets of transforming ideas, whatever those ideas might happen to be."

In the 1980s, Ceaser continues, the term was widened in scope, coming to refer generally to ideas that shape how people think about the political world. But by becoming "so large and all-embracing," the concept "all but disappears," he observes. In the 1990s, intellectuals such as Michael Sandel and Richard Rorty got into the act, seeking to design new public philosophies. Sandel views American history as a struggle between

two "public philosophies": republicanism (or communitarianism) and liberalism. Rorty plumps for a postmodern public philosophy that will sustain a new Left.

Proposals for new public philosophies have multiplied, Ceaser says, in the absence of a clear idea of what a public philosophy is. Political scientists cannot create a public philosophy, in his view, but they could help thinkers striving to create one. By using their analytic powers "in a neutral or scientific way" to refine the general concept, he concludes, political scientists could make "the whole enterprise of public philosophy thinking" more realistic.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

A Shameful Necessity?

"The Lesser Evil" by Richard K. Betts, in *The National Interest* (Summer 2001),
1112 16th St., N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

During the Cold War, the United States was often wrongly accused of neo-imperialism. "Today, however, we are engaged in *real* neo-imperialism" in the Balkans, says Betts, director of the Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University. He calls for "a modified bug-out."

When President Bill Clinton sent troops to Bosnia in 1995, he said they would be out within a year. Today, there are 5,700 U.S. troops in Bosnia and 5,400 in Kosovo.

Reluctant to face "an unpalatable choice between the much stronger efforts that cultivating political stability would require and a withdrawal that might reignite war," the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the United Nations have "drifted toward open-ended occupation," says Betts. But that has seemed the path of least resistance only because the costs thus far have been low, with no U.S. casualties. The odds that the costs will remain low indefinitely are poor, especially in the event of further economic decline, he says. Rumbings can already be heard—Croat rioters have disturbed the calm in Bosnia, for example.

"Contrary to the implicit logic of enthusiasts for limited intervention," Betts says,

"there is no evidence that a liberal, tolerant, de-ethnicized political order is the natural default option once a peaceful truce is attained." Re-establishing civic trust among the ethnic groups whose members have been killing one another in large numbers is no easy task. "To create secular liberalism in the Balkans amounts to remaking the societies—nation-building and state-building," he says. Even if the United Nations, with Russia and China in the Security Council, did sanction an effort to impose Western-style democratic liberalism, neither the United States nor the European Union would be likely to undertake it, Betts says.

What about partition? "To make states both ethnically homogeneous and territorially defensible . . . would require revised borders and forced population transfers," he observes. "This would contravene international law and Western moral sensibilities to a degree that makes it a fanciful option."

That leaves, says Betts, the least bad option: Plan for an American withdrawal in, say, six months, and turn the policing of the Balkans over to the European Union, which has been groping for an independent "defense identity." If the Europeans refuse, then the United States still should get out but also should arm "the weaker of

the local states” in the region to give them a chance of survival. An American withdrawal would be “rather shameful,” Betts

says—but it could be no more disastrous than what continued temporizing may bring.

Lessons of the Purple Heart

“Half a Million Purple Hearts” by D. M. Giangreco and Kathryn Moore, in *American Heritage* (Dec. 2000–Jan. 2001), 90 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

In 1999, as the American-led bombing campaign in Kosovo was being stepped up, news broke that the Pentagon had ordered 9,000 new Purple Hearts, the decorations awarded to troops wounded or killed in action. Some observers read that as an indication that the United States planned to send in ground forces. In fact, the run of Purple Hearts—the first large-scale production of the medal in more than half a century—told a very different story, write Giangreco and Moore, the authors of *Dear Harry. . . : Truman’s Mailroom, 1945–1953* (1999).

That order for new medals, they explain, cast light not on the war in Kosovo, but on the end of World War II: So many American casualties were averted by the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan that only now, three wars and many Cold War incidents later, was the United States running out of the stockpiled Purple Hearts.

In all, some 1,506,000 Purple Hearts were produced for use in World War II, say Giangreco and Moore, “with production reaching its peak as America geared up for the invasion of Japan.” The Navy ordered 25,000 Purple Hearts in October 1944, and then

50,000 more in the spring of 1945, and “borrowed” 60,000 more from the Army when it feared that delivery would be delayed.

“And then the war ended,” the authors write. “The most wonderful of all its surplus: 495,000 unused Purple Hearts.”

That’s not the only tale the medals tell. The evolving nature of modern warfare can be glimpsed through the debates over what constitutes a wound and who deserves the medal. When a powerful laser was directed briefly at a helicopter taking part in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia in 1998, the pilot and his crew chief were temporarily blinded, suffering “mild to moderate” burns—but neither was awarded the Purple Heart.

But undoubtedly the most significant tale involves the World War II surplus. Its sheer size, say the authors, undermines critics’ continuing attacks on President Harry Truman’s decision to drop the atom bomb on Hiroshima. Such critics contend that the U.S. military’s own secret estimates of the alternative, an assault on the Japanese home islands, predicted relatively light casualties for American forces. The unused Purple Hearts, say the authors, give the lie to that.

People Do Matter

“Let Us Now Praise Great Men” by Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, in *International Security* (Spring 2001), Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Univ., 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Political scientists striving for a theoretical explanation of international relations are inclined these days to pooh-pooh the significance of individual leaders. Of what importance could “Cleopatra’s nose” be in shaping history, they ask dismissively, compared with the anarchic system of nation-states, the weight of domestic politics, or the dynamics of institutions? It’s impersonal forces such

as those, they insist, that determine the course of international events.

How strange, then, that makers of foreign policy in the world’s capitals expend so much time and effort trying to fathom the goals, abilities, and idiosyncrasies of leaders such as George W. Bush, Vladimir Putin, and Jiang Zemin. Are the policymakers daft? No, argue Byman, research director of RAND’s Center for