



**BOOK REVIEWS
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**MISHA GLENNY, THE BALKANS 1804 - 1999,
NATIONALISM, WAR AND THE GREAT POWERS,
GRANTA, LONDON, 1999. ISBN 1 86207 050 4**

**TIM RIPLEY, OPERATION DELIBERATE FORCE: THE
UN AND NATO IN BOSNIA 1995, CENTRE FOR
DEFENCE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
STUDIES, BAILRIGG STUDY 3, 1999.
ISBN 0 9536650 0 3**

Events in the Balkans over the last decade have generated a veritable rain forest of books, articles and theses from the full spectrum of society. When this reviewer first started work as an analyst attempting to specialise on this fractious part of the world, background material was very thin on the ground. Fred Singleton's *A Short History of the Yugoslav Peoples*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985) provided a much needed historical backdrop and James Gow's *Legitimacy and the Military: the Yugoslav Crisis* (Pinter, London, 1992) gave a useful overview of the military aspects. Care then had to be taken with the flood of material that inevitably followed as much of it had been written with the highly audible sound of axes being sharpened in the background. This was typified by the horror experienced when a young diplomat recommended, as an excellent foundation reader, an extremely partisan academic paper that had been prepared by a formal adviser to the Bosnian Serb leadership! Fortunately, neither of the two books that are the subject of this review fall into this category. Both provide valuable additions to the literature, albeit from opposite ends of the spectrum.

One of the first reliable studies to hit the streets, that was worthy of positive recommendation, was Misha Glenny's *Fall of Yugoslavia* (Penguin, first published in 1992) which was updated several times as events unfolded in the Balkans. Glenny has now gone on to produce a masterly history of the region from 1804 to present day. Although his earlier work retained some element of the journalistic tone, this latest offering very much falls into the category of genuine narrative history. Glenny's theme throughout his book centres on the balance between nationalism and great power intervention – with the inevitable outbursts of violence. It is essential reading for anyone wishing to get beyond the banal generalisations of 'religious divides' and 'ethnic conflict'. Visitors who have conducted formal talks in the region will be aware of the propensity for all discussions to be preceded by selective renderings of history accompanied by dubious

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