

# University professors compare Kosovo situation to WWII

Scholars conducted a forum Wednesday to examine the issue

By Felicity Ayles  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Although the crisis currently unfolding in Kosovo is centered in Yugoslavia, University professors likened the conflict to World War II in a forum at the School of Law Wednesday before an audience of about 300.

"Prior to the 20th century, the use of military force was a legitimate way of exercising foreign policy. The world wars of this century supposedly brought lots of lessons to us," law professor Jon Jacobson said.

Four professors specializing in the areas of geography and law expressed their understanding of the legal and geopolitical aspects of the crisis in Kosovo.

Jacobson spoke about the conflict and how it affected international law. He spoke primarily of the U.N. Charter, established when the organization was founded in 1945, and cited the Security Council of the United Nations as the "international police."

"The United Nations charter established a system for maintaining public order in the international community and learned from the lessons of the world wars," Jacobson said.

For collective and anticipatory

self-defense, the United States is using NATO rather than the United Nations as the policing agent in Kosovo, he said.

"Is this intervention a new expanded concept of self-defense or a substitution of the security council in response to threats of national peace?" he asks. "NATO continues to expand and is taking the role of a police agency in Kosovo."

Geography professor Ronald Wixman has spent much of his life studying the Balkans. He has visited Kosovo eight times and Yugoslavia 25 times and said he feels somewhat distressed about what is currently happening in that area.

But unlike other critics, Wixman is most concerned about propaganda and inaccurate information.

"I accuse the U.S., England and France of manipulating the facts to justify nonintervention," Wixman said.

He said reports from Kosovo are not always true and that people in the Western Hemisphere shouldn't always believe what they hear.

The West doesn't go to Kosovo to verify the reports, he said. "The New York Times prints it, and we believe it."

Wixman criticized NATO for waiting too long to get involved with the conflict.

"In the eyes of the West, this is an internal matter," he said. Croatia and Slovenia were attacked, and the West did nothing because it was an "internal matter."

Above all, Wixman said, he can't understand how the United States and NATO could have turned a blind eye to these problems for so long. The United States has powerful satellites that can see the smallest images clearly, but they couldn't see the bombing going on in that part of the world, he said.

"Over and over, the U.N. was blind," he said. "Legal does not always mean moral."

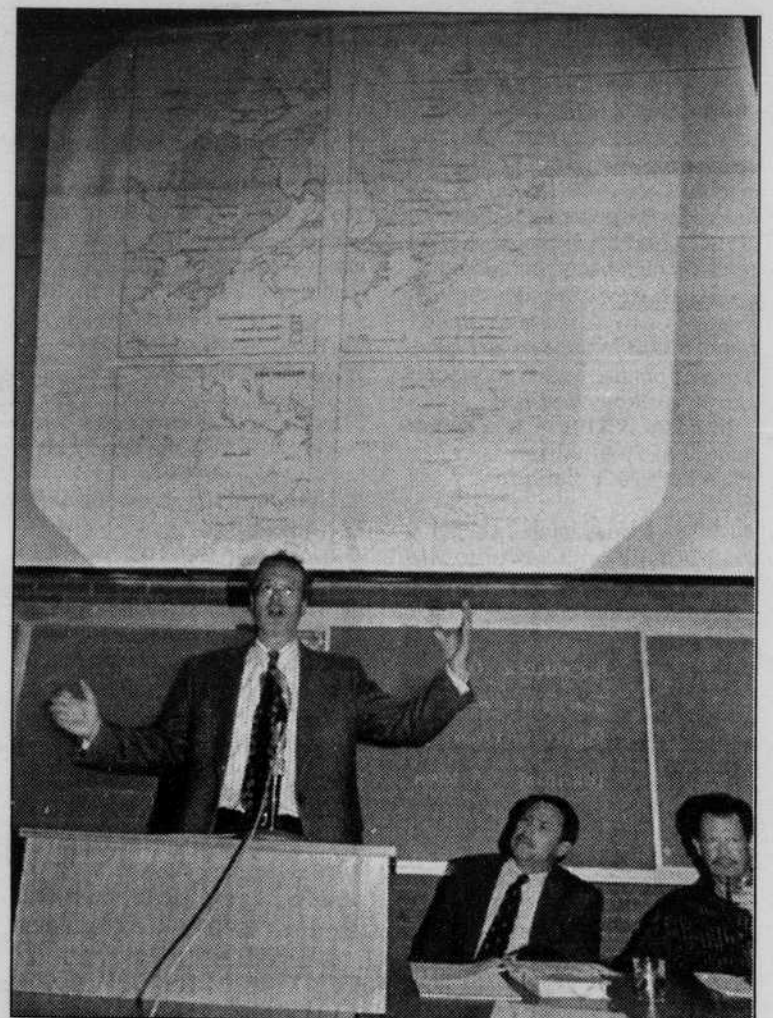
In addition to Wixman and Jacobson, geography professor Alexander Murphy explained the way the geography of Eastern Europe has changed since World War II.

He said this conflict is more between empires than it is between individual countries, because the former German and Ottoman empires encompassed that area of Europe. But now, he said, the empires are divided into all the individual states that comprise the countries in the Balkans.

Law professor Ibrahim Gassama ended the talks by asking the audience to think of the refugees and innocent victims of the conflict.

"There is something deeply disturbing about bombing a country to get its leaders to agree to human rights," he said. "We must reach out to the victims of this conflict with understanding."

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Geography professor Alexander Murphy was one of four speakers Wednesday afternoon at the Law School to address the growing conflict in Kosovo.

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