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IRRESOLUTE FIRMNESS – NATO's KOSOVO AIR WAR

Lieutenant Commander Jay Ballard

CSC 30

Master of Defence Studies

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By /PAR LCDR Jay Ballard

30 APRIL 2004

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IRRESOLUTE FIRMNESS – NATO's KOSOVO AIR WAR

ABSTRACT

Operation Allied Force was plagued by political indecision, which was undercut by a poor understanding of the strategic imperatives that drove Serbian actions throughout the Kosovo crisis. This resulted in a 78-day long consensus war being waged by a leaderless committee.

NATO reluctantly entered into the conflict with Milosevic without any real preparation for anything other than an exercise in coercive diplomacy, backed by the seductive lure of low risk, high precision bombing. While the politicians displayed irresolution on the crisis, NATO's military leadership, plagued by the legacy of Vietnam, pressed to expand the air war from the first night. The disconnect between what the alliance felt it was doing in the war, and what the military leadership was executing in Kosovo, resulted in a series of monumentally poor decisions being made throughout the crisis, and NATO failing to meet some of its pre-conflict objectives.

IRRESOLUTE FIRMNESS – NATO's KOSOVO AIR WAR

“The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”¹ NATO's road to hell began in 1997 with the Kosovo crisis in the Balkans and ended after 78-days of unintended war against Yugoslavian President, Slobodan Milosevic. The alliance arrived at this predicament though the good intention of trying to stop escalating ethnic violence in the province. The following paper will describe how NATO found itself in hell as a result of its civilian and military leadership having pursued diverging policies with regards to the use of force against Milosevic during the Kosovo crisis.

“We're not at war with anybody, and certainly not with the people of Yugoslavia.”² The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) spokesman, Jamie Shea, made this somewhat disingenuous statement at a NATO press conference 13 days after the alliance began Operation Allied Force (OAF) in the province of Kosovo. NATO was not at war with or targeting the Serbian people, but the alliance was certainly at war with the Serbian government and its armed forces, even if NATO refused to admit it.³

Shea's words came during a period of furious escalation by both parties to the war, which at its peak, produced allied sortie rates equal to one-third the total size of the

¹ Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) cited on, “Samuel Johnson Sound Bite Page,” [on-line]; available from <http://www.samueljohnson.com/road.html>; Internet; accessed 29 April 2004.

² Seth Ackerman and Jim Naureckas, “Following Washington's Script: The United States Media and Kosovo,” in *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis*, ed. Philip Hammond and Edward S. Herman. (Padstow: TJ International, 2000), 105.

³ This web page contains excerpts from interviews with some of the key personnel during the Kosovo War. Specifically see the interview with General Klaus Naumann's, remarks relating to “taking too much care of the opponents people.” Public Broadcasting System, “How It Was Fought,” *Frontline – War in Europe*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/fighting/fighting.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 2-5.

First Gulf War's air campaign.⁴ NATO's press conference came just two days after NATO missiles struck central Belgrade for the first time, destroying the Yugoslav and Serbian interior ministries.⁵ And while Shea's denial of war rang hollow to the ears of the international community, the Serbian Third Army in Kosovo was in the process of killing thousands of Kosovar Albanians and forcing over 800,000 ethnic Albanians out of the province.⁶ Shea's statement, while incorrectly conveying the scope of the conflict, did serve to highlight the rampant disbelief within NATO's corridors of power that the alliance was actually engaged in a war against the Serbs.

The denial of war against the Serbian leadership by NATO was for practical political reasons. The alliance heads of state, facing lukewarm public support for war in their own countries, were seduced by the allure of the White House's risk adverse doctrine of 'cruise missile diplomacy.'⁷ They acquiesced to the Clinton administration's coercive diplomatic efforts against Milosevic, in the misguided belief that threats against the Serbian leader, which had worked four years earlier in Bosnia, would work again.⁸ The alliance's senior military members on the other hand, haunted by the specter of the

⁴ Public Broadcasting System. "Facts & Figures." *Frontline – War in Europe*. [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/facts.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 1-2.

⁵ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 27.

⁶ Ivo H. Daalder, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 3-4.

⁷ Peter W. Rodman, "The Fallout from Kosovo," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4, (July/August 1999), 45-47.

⁸ Unfortunately for the alliance, their read on what actually occurred in Bosnia, failed to take into account that the successful combined Croat / Muslim offensive occurred before NATO air strikes and led directly to Milosevic seeking a peace agreement on Bosnia. David Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*, New York: Scribner, 2001, 420. Also see Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 8.

Vietnam War, were determined to apply the level of effort required to bring about a NATO victory.⁹

Just prior to and during the conflict, this civilian and military friction often gave the impression of an organization firm in its resolve to act against the Serbs, but irresolute in how far it would go to achieve victory in Kosovo. This ‘irresolute firmness’ left the alliance mentally and strategically unprepared to respond to Milosevic after he weathered the first three nights of pinprick attacks by NATO.¹⁰ The alliance was now forced to rethink their strategy in the midst of a rapidly expanding air campaign against the Serbs.

This paper will argue that the fundamental disconnect between what the alliance heads of state felt they were doing with regards to coercive diplomacy against the Serbs, and the limited air war that was actually waged in Kosovo, adversely affected the execution of the military campaign and resulted in NATO failing to achieve some of its pre-conflict objectives.

This paper will analyze the negative effects to the execution of the Kosovo air war that resulted from the strategic disconnect mentioned above. The first section will include a short overview of the NATO / Serbia conflict to set the stage for the later discussions. The next section will include the primary reasons for NATO’s intervention in Kosovo, and will help to determine if NATO achieved their goals at the completion of the conflict. To differentiate between coercive diplomacy and limited war, both terms

⁹ “This [OAF] wasn’t going to be like Vietnam.” Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War*, (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002), 204. General Wesley Clark, quoted during a NATO planning conference stated that he didn’t “want to get into something like the Rolling Thunder campaign [from Vietnam].” In fact, he wanted to “steadily ratchet up the pressure [against the Serbs].” Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 26. Also see Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 444-446.

¹⁰ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo...*, 90.

will be defined and then both theories will be briefly explained for clarity of discussion. Now that both theories have been defined, the next section of the paper will contrast the differences between coercive diplomacy and limited war as it pertained to the Kosovo air campaign. The distinction between the two theories will be crucial in proving that NATO's civilian and military leaders had vastly different views on the execution of OAF. Following that, the Serbian viewpoint of the war and its military actions during the war will be examined to demonstrate that, from their perspective, the Serbs were engaged in a war against NATO vice being on the receiving end of coercive diplomacy. NATO's membership will be described next to enhance the understanding of inter-alliance dynamics since the air campaign was waged by an, at times, unwilling alliance. The next to last section will detail how military operations were directly affected by the competing imperatives between coercive diplomacy and limited war. This section will demonstrate that a coherent and consistent strategy is crucial to the successful execution of a war. Kosovo's end state will be reviewed in the last section to determine if NATO met all of its pre-conflict goals. The alliance's pre-conflict goals will be compared to its mid-conflict goals to see if NATO met its desired objective in OAF. The conclusion will underscore the point that beginning a war with widely different perspectives on the effects desired in a campaign will adversely affect the military operations.

OVERVIEW OF THE KOSOVO AIR WAR

...and there Walker came upon a body under a blanket. When he pulled back the blanket, he saw that the body was headless. Up the slippery, ice-filled ravine he climbed, past body after body, farm workers in muddy boots and overalls, their clothing wet with urine and blood and old men with grizzled beards, face down in the snow. At the top of the ravine, a pile of bodies. The observers counted forty-five in all.¹¹

¹¹ Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War*, (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2000), 59.

Ambassador Walker's discovery of the aftermath of the massacre in the small village of Racak on 15 January 1999 was a watershed event for NATO. The murder of 45 male Kosovar Albanians by Serbian forces in Kosovo created an international incident and helped to steel NATO's resolve to halt the Serbian ethnic cleansing occurring in that province.¹² The initial results of the Racak massacre were a flurry of high-level, NATO led diplomatic meetings between the Albanian ethnic majority population in Kosovo and the Yugoslavian Serbs.

The Racak incident, in addition to steeling NATO's resolve, also helped to cast the Serbs as the 'bad guys' in western opinion. This was an opinion shared by one of the key diplomatic players in the Kosovo crisis, the United States Secretary of State, Madeline Albright. Albright had a reputation as an abrasive and aggressive diplomat who would not hesitate to lecture or threaten a country in the process of furthering United States diplomacy.¹³ Her father, a former Czech diplomat, had been forced to flee both the Nazis during World War II and the Soviets just prior to the coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948. The Racak massacre confirmed her view that Milosevic was a reincarnation of Hitler and Stalin, and that the only way to deal with the ruthless dictator was by force.¹⁴ Therefore, it was no surprise that this aggressive diplomat adopted only hard line policies

¹² Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 409-410.

¹³ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 43.

¹⁴ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 386.

against Milosevic, and was vehemently opposed to anything that resembled appeasement towards the Serbian government.¹⁵

With Albright now leading the diplomatic effort against Milosevic, it became quite obvious that the allies were playing ‘hardball’ in the negotiations. Convinced that they saw Milosevic ‘blink’ four years earlier in Bosnia, the NATO heads of states were confident that diplomacy backed by the threat of air power was the most effective means of influencing Milosevic.¹⁶

Therefore, the alliance was surprised when the diplomatic meetings in Rambouillet, France bogged down as both the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbian delegations refused to sign the peace accord. NATO’s hope of achieving a peaceful cessation of the ethnic violence in Kosovo was eventually dealt a deathblow when the Serbian delegation refused to sign the peace proposal at Rambouillet.

Taking advantage of the break down in the peace process, the Serbian army and police forces began moving additional tanks and personnel into Kosovo in clear violation of a previously negotiated agreement between NATO and Milosevic.¹⁷ The Serb Army’s now robust presence in Kosovo enabled them to accelerate the pace of their ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kosovar Albanians (which Milosevic had codenamed “Operation Horseshoe”).¹⁸

¹⁵ Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 61.

¹⁶ L. Edgar Prina, “Air War Kosovo: Lessons Learned and Relearned,” [on-line]; available from http://www.navyleague.org/seapower/air_war_kosovo.htm; Internet; accessed 26 February 2004, 2.

¹⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2001), 126.

¹⁸ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 9.

Milosevic was clearly challenging the alliance over Kosovo. He was committing atrocities in full view of NATO while in defiance of previous agreements between the two parties. NATO's failure to take action against him would have been catastrophic to the alliance's continued moral, political and strategic relevance.¹⁹ Therefore, NATO had to act. However, the alliance had relied solely on 'coercive diplomacy' against the Serbs in Rambouillet. Taking any action less than threatened (such as sanctions) at this point, would have been seen as backing down to Milosevic, therefore, NATO was left with no option but to use the threatened force.²⁰

While the alliance agreed that they must act, there was no stomach to engage in a bloody, all out war with the Serbs. NATO simply wanted to bring all parties back to the bargaining table for a peaceful resolution to the conflict...even if it meant bombing the Serbs to achieve that goal.²¹ In NATO's mind, Milosevic displayed no loyalty to the Serbs that he had betrayed in Bosnia, and the alliance quite naturally expected that he would do the same in Kosovo after a similar show of force.²²

Determined to show the world that NATO sought to exhaust all diplomatic means to arrive at a peaceful resolution to the current crisis, the White House dispatched its Special Envoy to the Balkans, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, to Belgrade on the eve of

¹⁹ Brookings Institute, "Panel Discussion on Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo," [online]; available from <http://www.brookings-institution.org/dybdocroot/comm/transcripts/20000608/panel.htm>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2004, 2.

²⁰ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 65.

²¹ Public Broadcasting System, "Interview – General Wesley Clark," *Frontline – War in Europe*, On-line: available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/clark.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 1-3.

²² Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 50.

the attacks.²³ Holbrooke attempted to convince Milosevic to accept the Rambouillet peace plan instead of deciding on war. His meeting was unsuccessful.

Following Holbrooke's failed 11th hour diplomacy, the alliance resigned itself to the fact that after months of threats, they would actually have to start 'bombing Milosevic.'²⁴ NATO began air strikes against Serbian forces in Kosovo on March 24th.²⁵ Over the course of NATO's 78-day long exercise in the coercive use of air power, the alliance launched over 38,000 allied sorties of which 10,484 were strike sorties dropping over 23,000 bombs against Serb targets.²⁶ During the aerial campaign the alliance did not lose a single allied life to hostile fire, and only lost two aircraft to the Serb integrated air defense system (IADS).

NATO aircraft enjoyed air superiority over Kosovo, and were continuously tasked to seek out and destroy Serbian targets in the province. They were generally unsuccessful, however, in targeting the Serb forces in the field.²⁷ The difficulty in striking those forces was due in part to stringent Rules of Engagement (ROE) that kept allied pilots above the majority of the Serbian surface to air missile's (SAM) lethal range. The altitude restriction also made it difficult for allied pilots to locate the enemy troops

²³ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 421-422.

²⁴ Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., 181.

²⁵ Public Broadcasting System, "A Kosovo Chronology," *Frontline – War in Europe*, [on-line] available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 8.

²⁶ Public Broadcasting System. "Facts & Figures." *Frontline – War in Europe*..., 1-2.

²⁷ Admiral Ellis highlighted that air strikes against Serbian forces were only effective in the late stages of the war once the KLA forces launched their major offensive in late May. Ellis, Admiral James O. "After Action Report," Power Point Presentation, [on-line]; available from http://www/d-n-i.net/second_level/balkans.htm; Internet; accessed 26 February 2004, Slide number 5. Must be selected from menu, link will not automatically load this file.

from three miles overhead. More disruptive than the altitude restrictions, however, was the generally poor weather over the entire theater of operations that forced many air strike cancellations.²⁸ While the previous concerns caused problems for the allied air war, the most debilitating problem for the NATO aircrew was trying to target the Serb army which was dug in, dispersed and under no obligation to show themselves without a credible NATO ground threat to force them to mass.²⁹

As a result of the largely ineffective allied air strikes, the Serbian Third Army in Kosovo was able to continue their ethnic cleansing operations unhindered. In the early stages of OAF, Serb forces were able to carry out the most successful campaign of population displacement in Europe since World War Two. It was so successful, in fact, that at the completion of hostilities between NATO and Milosevic, it was estimated that over 1.3 million Kosovar Albanians were driven from their homes by Serb forces. Of that staggering number of refugees, over 10,000 ethnic Albanians were killed, 500,000 were internally displaced and over 800,000 refugees were driven outside of Kosovo's borders.³⁰

In an attempt to halt Operation Horseshoe, the allied bombing campaign expanded and continued unabated throughout the war except for cancellations due to poor weather. As the alliance began to receive approval to hit targets of significant strategic value in Belgrade in late April and May, the weather began to clear over Kosovo. This fortunate series of events increased the military and political pressure on Milosevic by causing

²⁸ For a brief discussion on the reason for the allied altitude restriction see Bruce R. Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo*, 1999, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002), 28. Also see Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, xvi-xvii, 137.

²⁹ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 120-121.

³⁰ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 3-4.

widespread disruption of basic services in Belgrade and increasingly accurate targeting of the Third army in Kosovo.

This good news for the alliance was mitigated, however, by some embarrassing collateral damage incidents which occurred in late April and mid May. Despite the fact that Milosevic and his army had forced over a million Kosovar Albanians into refugee status, most of the world's press focused on the alliance's collateral damage incidents as proof that NATO was engaged in an unjust war.³¹ This was moral delicacy that quite frankly bordered on idiocy. The few images that were available of the thousands of Kosovar Albanians who died by Serbian hands were overshadowed by a series of Serb staged images of civilians killed by NATO bombs. These Serbian manipulated images provided the war protesters with ample 'grist for the anti NATO mill.'³² Furthermore, other authentic but unintentional bombing incidents threatened to swing the pendulum of

³¹ Reporting that NATO would "terrorise them [Serb civilians] by occasionally targeting hospitals, apartments, roads and other facilities used by civilians," this quoted Indian reporter used an anti-NATO lens to evaluate the available evidence. See Siddharth Varadarajan, "An Indian View of the Western Media From Iraq to Yugoslavia," in *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis...* 197. Another article of interest by Seth Ackerman and Jim Naureckas, is "Following Washington's Script: The United States Media and Kosovo," in *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis...*, 107-108. This article demonstrates another anti-NATO spin to an accidental bombing incident. Terming the collateral damage incident in the Kosovo village of Korisa as a "mass slaughter" with NATO bombs "not aimed at any obvious military target," the authors chose to disregard the results of a post-war outside study done by the Human Rights Watch in favor of the Serbian supplied story. The Human Rights Watch study pointed out that the Serbs shared the blame for the death of the 87 deaths in Korisa since the civilians killed were used as human shields. For the Human Rights Report excerpt see Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 122-123.

³² Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 121-123. For a perspective on Serb media manipulation with regards to using civilians in suspected targeted buildings see Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 195. The Korisa incident is described with amplifying information on Serbian media manipulation in Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 137-139. Also see Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 441-443. General Clark provided more information about the Korisa incident during an interview with Frontline. See Public Broadcasting System, "Interview – General Wesley Clark," *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 11-12. Additional information is available at Cable News Network, "NATO Says 'Human Shields' Account for Bombing Deaths," On-line: available from <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/17/kosovo.03/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 26 February 04.

world opinion against the alliance. By late May, as a result of this public outcry, alliance cohesion was starting to fracture, especially as NATO renewed talk about a possible ground invasion of Kosovo.³³

Fortunately for the alliance, on 9 June 1999, Milosevic capitulated and signed the Military Technical Agreement (MTA), which ended the conflict, resulted in the removal of all Serb forces from Kosovo and ended the Serb's ethnic cleansing campaign.³⁴ It is uncertain why Milosevic capitulated when he did, but what is very likely is that had NATO not increased the military and political pressure on the Serbs throughout the campaign, Milosevic would never have signed the MTA. Until Milosevic was convinced that his very survival was at stake, he was prepared to ride out the bombing.³⁵

NATO and its member governments viewed Milosevic's capitulation as a successful conclusion to the conflict even though it had gone on much longer than they had planned or hoped for. The alliance had been forced to go to war against the Serbs to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. As pointed out earlier, NATO's only alternative to war would have been to stand by and watch Milosevic empty Kosovo of all ethnic Albanians, either through forced expulsion or death. As it turned out, Milosevic had begun Operation Horseshoe *before* NATO commenced OAF. Had the alliance failed to

³³ Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 193-196. Also see Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 229. For a slightly more positive view on the alliance's cohesion in the face of a ground invasion see Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 164.

³⁴ Public Broadcasting System. "A Kosovo Chronology." *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 12.

³⁵ Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 405-406. Also see Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 67-69.

act, Milosevic would still have expelled the Kosovar Albanians, but would have had to do so at a slower pace.³⁶

When the war's conclusion is viewed from the perspective of the Kosovar Albanians, it is quite clear that their lives are now better after NATO's intervention than under Milosevic's rule. Almost all of the 1.3 million ethnic Albanians returned to their homes in Kosovo by late June and the harassing Serb forces were removed from the country. A sizable NATO stabilization force arrived in Kosovo immediately after the war and will remain there to ensure peace and security in the region for the foreseeable future.³⁷ As an eventual result of his having lost Kosovo and being forced to surrender to NATO, Milosevic was removed from power and is being tried for crimes against humanity.³⁸

While most of the events that resulted from NATO's victory in Kosovo were positive, there were other, less encouraging events that transpired. The first one being that despite NATO's best intentions to stop Operation Horseshoe in Kosovo, the fact remains that over a million ethnic Albanians were forced to flee their homes by Serb forces. NATO did not cause the expulsions, Milosevic and his henchmen did, but the end result is that the very people that the alliance was trying to save ended up bearing the brunt of Milosevic's sadistic policies.

The post-war results for the Kosovar Serbs, unlike those for the Kosovar Albanians, were less than positive. Well over 100,000 of the estimated 200,000 Kosovar

³⁶ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 108.

³⁷ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 360.

³⁸ Robert A. Pape, "The True Worth of Air Power," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (March/April 2004), 125.

Serbians fled the province after the war to return to greater Serbia or sought refuge in Serbian majority areas in Kosovo. Additionally, post-war reprisal attacks by Kosovar Albanians killed at least 200 Kosovar Serbians by early August 1999.³⁹ Ethnic clashes have continued in the region with the Kosovar Albanians attempting to exert control over the province and to push the remaining ethnic Serbs out of Kosovo.

Another less than successful outcome of OAF was that of long-term alliance cohesion. NATO entered into the first offensive war in its history in Kosovo, and the way that war was waged harmed the alliance. There was a great deal of disagreement amongst the allies during the war on everything from the diplomatic effort, to how the war was waged. U.S. / European relations, which since the fall of the Berlin Wall have been cordial but cool, became further strained as a result of NATO's handling of the Kosovo crisis. The post-Cold War European view of the world is that it is ruled by international law and that all things are possible with enough diplomacy. The post-Cold War American view is that there are still despots and dictators in the world that ignore such niceties as the UN and international law, therefore, someone has to be ready to restrain those individuals, not appease them.⁴⁰ Finally, the United States has begun operating outside of the alliance, especially when American national interests are most important. America went as far as not accepting the majority of the military help offered by the alliance in the form of NATO Article V assistance following the September 11th attacks on US soil.⁴¹ Having watched the dilution of its air power in Kosovo by allied

³⁹ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 360.

⁴⁰ Robert Kagan drove this point home quite nicely by stating that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: They agree on little and understand one another less and less." Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power...*, 1.

⁴¹ Ibid, 116-117.

constraints and NATO's unanimous approval process, the US will not likely allow itself to be in that position again when America's vital national interests are at stake.⁴²

As mentioned before, the NATO heads of state envisioned using their air power in Kosovo not as a 'classic' bombing campaign to force total Serbian surrender, but rather as the 'iron fist in a velvet glove' to back diplomacy and force Milosevic to accept the Rambouillet peace plan. The alliance's back up plan if diplomacy failed was to gently let the 'fist' strike the Serbs for two to three nights of attacks followed by a bombing pause to provide Milosevic an opportunity to reconsider his 'evil' ways. In reality, the allies' strategy relied much more heavily upon threats than on diplomacy. Threats that Milosevic rightly saw as only a token show of force to demonstrate that NATO meant business.

The actual military plan executed by General Wesley K. Clark, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), while initially incremental in nature, was nonetheless designed to "attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate, and ultimately destroy" the Serb forces engaged in Operation Horseshoe.⁴³ General Clark realized the essential need to continue the air war against the Serbs until successful while also recognizing that the alliance's European political leaders would seek every opportunity to introduce bombing pauses.⁴⁴ As a result of his concerns for alliance will, General Clark stayed very focused on continuing the air assault while simultaneously working to keep the alliance together.

⁴² Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., xxvii.

⁴³ Ibid, 203.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 204-205.

For their part, the European political leaders failed to realize that incrementalism, under the veil of bombing pauses, are anathema to any US military member following the painful lessons learned from the Vietnam War.⁴⁵ NATO had used a bombing pause during the Bosnia air strikes and Milosevic coincidentally chose this time to request a diplomatic end to the conflict. As a result of the bombing pause having appeared to work, there was concern within the alliance inner circles that bombing pauses were now *de rigueur*. General Clark's Vietnam War experience convinced him to oppose bombing pauses to his utmost ability.⁴⁶

REASONS FOR INTERVENTION AND GOALS

The seeds to NATO's intervention in Kosovo took root following the 1995 Dayton peace accords. The accords, which were a largely U.S. led process, addressed most issues relating to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the majority of the internal conflicts in the region, but failed to deal with the future status of Kosovo.⁴⁷ The Kosovar Albanians had hoped to regain more political autonomy following the Dayton

⁴⁵ Authors Jim Mokhiber and Rick Young deal with the Vietnam War influence on American military thought in Public Broadcasting System, "The Uses of Military Force," *Frontline: Give War A Chance*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/force/>; Internet; accessed 13 April 2004, 1. For a brief discussion of General Clark's early career in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War see Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 431. For General Short's reactions to the alliance's incrementalism also see Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 444-446.

⁴⁶ In his book, General Clark denies that he used a press conference early in the war to paint himself into a corner that would make an early bombing pause virtually impossible, however, it was a very advantageous position for a Rhodes Scholar to accidentally find himself in. Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., 203-205. "In the military we had always been skeptical of the notion [bombing pauses], a skepticism reinforced by its ineffectiveness against North Vietnam in the 1960s." Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., 177.

⁴⁷ Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo*..., 13.

Accords, but the Serb delegation's refusal to discuss the Kosovo problem removed the question of the province's status from the discussions.⁴⁸

As a result of the Kosovar Albanian's disaffection with being ignored in Dayton, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formed in 1996. The KLA began an escalating terror campaign against ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. The Serbs responded to the KLA's terror attacks, by violently repressing both the KLA and Kosovar Albanian political demonstrations.⁴⁹

For the next two years the attacks and reprisals continued with the frequency of both accelerating.⁵⁰ This cycle of violence rose to a level that required NATO to become involved in mid-December 1997, at which time they expressed "concern over escalating ethnic tension in Kosovo and called upon the parties to find a mutually acceptable solution."⁵¹ Shortly after NATO became involved in the Kosovo crisis, Secretary of State Albright elevated Kosovo to a high level of concern for the Clinton administration. In March 1998 she was quoted as saying, "We are not going to stand by and watch Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia."⁵²

⁴⁸ Milosevic is quoted in General Clark's book as saying, "This [Kosovo] is internal matter for Serb people and Albanians." Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 65.

⁴⁹ James George Jatras, "NATO's Myths and Bogus Justifications for Intervention," in *NATO's Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter (Washington: CATO Institute, 2000), 23-24.

⁵⁰ Christopher Layne, "Miscalculations and Blunders," in *NATO'S Empty Victory*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter, (Washington: CATO Institute, 2000), 12-13.

⁵¹ Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo...*, 13.

⁵² Public Broadcasting System. "A Kosovo Chronology." *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 3.

The United States' high-level interest in the Balkan region combined with the close proximity of Kosovo to many of the European NATO governments, forced the alliance to attempt to broker a peaceful solution. Political pressure to cease the fighting was brought to bear against both the KLA and Milosevic with increased pressure against Belgrade following the Racak massacre.⁵³ Following the collapse of the Rambouillet talks, NATO found that in following their coercive diplomacy strategy that "they had made too many threats and took too little action."⁵⁴ The alliance was backed into a corner and was forced to act.⁵⁵

NATO's initial stated reasons for intervention in Kosovo were, "aimed at halting the violence and bringing to an end the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, preventing the spread of instability in the region and securing a political settlement."⁵⁶ President Clinton's speech to the nation, on the evening NATO commenced OAF, had a slightly different emphasis on the alliance's objectives in the air campaign.

...to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course [in ethnically cleansing Kosovo], to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo.⁵⁷

⁵³ Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo...*, 13.

⁵⁴ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 17.

⁵⁵ In President Clinton's speech to the nation on the eve of the start of OAF, he highlighted the need to act in Kosovo. "Imagine what would happen if we and our allies instead decided just to look the other way as these people were massacred on NATO's doorstep. That would discredit NATO, the cornerstone on which our security has rested for 50 years now." Associated Press. "President Clinton's Speech From Wednesday Night." [on-line]; available from <http://www.state.com/daily/03-99/03-25-99/d08wn132.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2004, 3.

⁵⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook...*, 495.

⁵⁷ Associated Press, "President Clinton's Speech From Wednesday Night,"..., 3.

The reason that the alliance's objectives in Kosovo differed slightly from what was released by NATO headquarters and what President Clinton said during his speech, was that NATO, in its rush to attempt to halt Operation Horseshoe, began OAF without formal, agreed upon objectives.⁵⁸ Three weeks after the start of OAF, NATO met to adopt formal objectives for a desired end state in Kosovo. During the Extraordinary Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), held at NATO headquarters on 12 April 1999, the NAC adopted a collective set of objectives with five main points. Those five objectives were reaffirmed by the alliances' heads of state two weeks later in Washington during NATO's fiftieth anniversary summit. The objectives were as follows: First, NATO wanted all violence and repression halted in Kosovo and a verifiable cessation of all military action. Second, NATO wanted all Serb military, police and paramilitary forces withdrawn from Kosovo. Third, an international military presence was to be installed in Kosovo. Fourth, all refugees and displaced persons were to be allowed the unconditional and safe return along with unhindered access to them by humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGO's). Fifth, that a political infrastructure be established in Kosovo that would conform to the spirit of the Rambouillet talks, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.⁵⁹

Once the NAC had adopted formal objectives with which they could measure success against in Kosovo, they were ready to set their military strategy for their conflict with Milosevic. The only problem, of course, was that NATO was already three weeks into its war with Milosevic.

⁵⁸ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 29.

⁵⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook...*, 126.

An additional, unstated objective was to maintain alliance cohesion throughout the entire Kosovo crisis. If the alliance fractured, which is what Milosevic hoped for, then NATO would not have been able to complete the war and force a settlement on Milosevic. All of the glacially slow and painful decisions taken within NATO were designed to arrive at a consensus and maintain alliance cohesion. General Clark was fairly forthright after the war on how and why decisions were made within NATO. “Our plan was to escalate as rapidly as possible, to do as much as we could. But we also recognized that no single target, no set of targets, and no bombing series was more important than maintaining the consensus of NATO.”⁶⁰

COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND LIMITED WAR DEFINED

Having reviewed the alliance’s overarching strategy as it pertained to their diplomatic efforts in the Kosovo crisis, it will now be helpful to define coercive diplomacy and limited war.

“The general idea of coercive diplomacy is to back one’s demand on an adversary with a threat of punishment for noncompliance that he will consider credible and potent enough to persuade him to comply with the demand.”⁶¹ The basic tenets of coercive diplomacy as described by Alexander George are that the ‘threat’ of punishment must be credible and potent enough to “offer [the coercing party] an alternative to reliance on military action.”⁶² There is no mention in George’s description of his theory of the use of

⁶⁰ Public Broadcasting System, “Interview – General Wesley Clark,” *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 9.

⁶¹ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 4.

⁶² *Ibid*, 5.

force since coercive diplomacy seeks to avoid war by the use of diplomatic and coercive means up to, but short of warfare.

Another critical element of coercive diplomacy is that the coerced party must be rational so they are capable of determining if the punishment threatened will outweigh anything to be gained from opposing the threatening party.⁶³ Rationality in this instance will be defined as “an ability to receive all relevant information, evaluate it correctly, make proper judgments as to the credibility and potency of the threat, and see that it is in his best interest to accede to the demand made on him.”⁶⁴ It would be futile to attempt to coerce an irrational opponent, since that opponent would be incapable of determining the most rational course of action in the face of credible and potent threats. Of note, while rationality on the side of the threatened party is a prime element of coercive diplomacy, the coercing party must make sure that the threat is unambiguously portrayed to the threatened party. This is to preclude the possibility that the message will be misinterpreted through ambiguity, language or cultural differences. A rational threatened party may not be able to make a logical choice if presented with a confusing threat.

Another important concept of coercion is that the enemy must be able to comply with the coercer’s demands, or the threats will be useless. For instance, “if the stakes are very high for an enemy, for example when surrender is likely to mean certain death for the enemy leadership, it may be very difficult or even impossible to make the adversary give up short of utter defeat.”⁶⁵ In other words, “coercion can succeed only when the

⁶³ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁵ David E. Johnson, Karl P. Mueller and William H. Taft, V., *Conventional Coercion Across the Spectrum of Operations: The Utility of U.S. Military Forces in the Emerging Security Environment*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002), 10.

costs of surrender are lower than the costs of resistance...When the costs [of surrender] equal or exceed the costs of continued resistance, coercion will fail.”⁶⁶

Additionally, one must distinguish between the two different types of coercion available for use: deterrence and compellence.⁶⁷ Of the two, “deterrence seeks to dissuade the target from doing something the coercer wishes to avoid, compellence attempts to make the target change its behavior in accordance with the coercer’s demands.”⁶⁸ The two concepts are closely related, but different. Deterrence will usually be employed before an adversary has had a chance to act, seeks to prevent that action on their part, and is preemptive in nature. Compellence is used to force an adversary to act a certain way; quite often this occurs after the adversary has already acted. Of note, if the coercing party was unsuccessful in deterring his enemy’s actions, then the coercive threat will have to be increased in cost to the enemy. This is a required escalation since the coerced party obviously chose to ignore the deterrence threat and would likewise continue to ignore the same threat if it were now forwarded as the compellence threat.

George’s coercive diplomacy theory uses coercion through a combination of credible threats (economic, military and political) to achieve a goal or influence an adversary in lieu of war. Some theorists, such as Robert Pape in Bombing to Win argue against limiting one’s options to coerce short of employing military force. To do so would remove many options available to the coercing party’s leaders “since war fighting

⁶⁶ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 18.

⁶⁷ David E. Johnson, Karl P. Mueller and William H. Taft, V., *Conventional Coercion Across the Spectrum of Operations...*, 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 13.

itself can also be an effective coercive strategy.”⁶⁹ Pape’s assertion is valid when discussing coercion in the context of the coercive use of air power in limited war. However, his argument falls outside the bedrock principle of George’s theory, which hinges upon avoiding war in the first place, vice coercing an opponent through the use of military attack. In other words, as soon as a military attack is launched against an opponent, the coercing party has abandoned coercive diplomacy for the coercive use of military force.

Things would be fine if George’s theory stopped here, however, as in most theories, this one has a caveat. That caveat deals with the use of force. He states that, “If force is used in coercive diplomacy, it consists of an exemplary use of quite limited force to persuade the opponent to back down. By ‘exemplary’ I mean the use of just enough force of an appropriate kind to demonstrate resolution.”⁷⁰ The biggest problem for George in this line of reasoning is how much force is ‘just enough’ and at what point do you cross over the line into warfare? Major H. R. McMaster, author of Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam, answers this question quite lucidly:

There is a grave danger associated with calling the bombing of another country anything but war. During the period in which Vietnam became an American war, Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara created the illusion that attacks on North Vietnam were alternatives to war rather than war itself. Bombing, particularly from the perspective of the receiving end, is not ‘communication.’ Bombs result in death and destruction.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War...*, 14, footnote 3.

⁷⁰ George, *Forceful Persuasion...*, 5.

⁷¹ Public Broadcasting System, “Lessons of Vietnam: A Conversation With Major H. R. McMaster,” *Frontline: Give War A Chance*, [on-line]; available from

The exemplary use of force falls outside of the constraints of coercive diplomacy. The reason for that is because coercive diplomacy's primary tenet is the avoidance of warfare, and the exemplary use of force, regardless of how limited, is warfare.

Having just demonstrated that coercive diplomacy does not involve actual attack, what are the options available to a country once the decision has been made to actually go to war? The two types of existing warfare are 'limited' and 'total' war. Total warfare is actually quite rare due to their devastating nature. Total wars "were fought to annihilate, to completely defeat or completely dominate the adversary."⁷² The first two World Wars fit into the total war category and were a driving impetus behind a renaissance in limited war theory.

War theorists came to describe limited war in post World War II terms as war limited in "both the means and ends."⁷³ War waged for objectives that are limited in scope, that fall well short of "overthrowing the entire power of the enemy."⁷⁴ Limited wars are fought "using means that involve far less than the total military resources of the belligerents and leave the civilian life and the armed forces of the belligerents largely intact."⁷⁵

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/etc/lessons.html>; Internet; accessed 13 April 2004, 3.

⁷² Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War Revisited*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), 1.

⁷³ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁴ William R. Hawkins, "The Man Who Invented Limited War," *Military History Quarterly (MHQ)* 4, no. 1 (Autumn 1991): 108.

⁷⁵ Osgood, *Limited War Revisited...*, 3.

Additionally, “limited war is not only a matter of degree but also a matter of national perspective.”⁷⁶ Robert Osgood argues that, an outside belligerent may see its use of force as limited and measured, while the local belligerent may view the war as total, in which the nation’s very survival hangs in the balance.⁷⁷ This can be demonstrated in the real world example of the Korean War. The governments of both North and South Korea viewed the Korean War in terms of national survival. When its forces thrust south of the 38th parallel on June 25th 1950, the North Korean government sought the destruction of the South Korean government. The South Korean government was in a total war, and they had rightly concluded that they were in a fight for their very lives. After General Douglas MacArthur’s amphibious landing at Inchon and his push north of the 38th parallel, the North Korean government correctly perceived that they were in a fight to avoid their extermination.⁷⁸ The additional participants in the war, mainly the United States and China, while very interested in the outcome and execution of the war, stood to lose much less than the Koreans did, unless, of course, the conflict went nuclear.

Limited war encompasses all forms of military coercion, which involve the destruction of things and the death of people as long as the coercion falls short of the total destruction of the enemy. Additionally, in the exercise of coercive diplomacy, a coercing party may threaten to wage a limited war against the threatened adversary to achieve his goals. However, as soon as the threatened military force is actually brought to bear on

⁷⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁸ After Inchon, the White House and the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave General MacArthur the green light to operate north of the 38th parallel to destroy the North Korean armed forces. William Manchester, *American Caesar*, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1983), 697-699.

the coerced party, coercive diplomacy is dead and the two parties can be considered to be at war.

COERCIVE DIPLOMACY VS. LIMITED WAR IN KOSOVO

The alliance never viewed OAF as a war.⁷⁹ NATO's view of their strategy in Kosovo was revealed in the comments of General Klaus Naumann, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee when he said that, "Our politicians wanted to use the military instrument to more or less to convince him [Milosevic] that it's better to continue to negotiate and seek a peaceful solution."⁸⁰ NATO heads of state were not 'going to war' in their eyes, rather they were exercising coercive diplomacy for the limited objective of forcing Milosevic back to the bargaining table.⁸¹

The alliance's military leadership, for their part, understood that all military decisions made in NATO came from the civilian leadership, and they had to respond to those decisions even if they did not agree with them.⁸² At the behest of the alliance's civilian leaders, NATO's military planners developed over 40 different war plans for possible military action prior to the kickoff of OAF. Those plans were eventually distilled

⁷⁹ "This was not, strictly speaking, a war." General Clark made this statement during a press conference on September 16th, 1999. His statement succinctly described NATO's view of its air strikes against Milosevic. Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 3.

⁸⁰ Public Broadcasting System, "How It Was Fought - General Klaus Naumann," *Frontline – War in Europe*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/fighting/fighting.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 2.

⁸¹ Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 418. Also see Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 208-210. For "too many threats...too little action," see Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 17.

⁸² Public Broadcasting System, "How It Was Fought – General Wesley Clark," *Frontline – War in Europe*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/fighting/fighting.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 6.

down to two types of air operations. The first was to be a five-phased air operation that would, over time, lead to the elimination of significant portions of Yugoslavian military and security forces. The second plan was a Limited Air Response, relying on cruise missiles, to respond to a particularly heinous Serbian act in Kosovo.⁸³ Neither of these plans envisioned a major strategic bombing campaign along the lines of Operation Desert Storm. In fact, NATO's initial air options were so limited that both the United States Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "repeatedly cautioned allied leaders that the limited duration options would not guarantee success, and that NATO should not initiate these strikes unless the alliance was willing to escalate, if necessary, and persist until victory was secured."⁸⁴ General Clark's Joint Forces, Air Component Commander (JFACC), General Michael Short, was particularly incensed at the alliance's lack of planning for a more robust war. In his opinion, the air war started too slowly, his aircraft were sent to bomb targets that Milosevic had little reason to care about, and this resulted in a much longer war than was necessary.⁸⁵

So the military leadership was directed to execute a plan during the war that they neither believed in nor liked. The only option available to them to increase the military pressure on Milosevic during OAF was to continuously press the reluctant alliance heads of state to "raise the threshold for NATO attacks."⁸⁶

⁸³ The two air plans are detailed in Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 18-19.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 21.

⁸⁵ Public Broadcasting System, "Interview – General Michael Short," *Frontline – War in Europe*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/short.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 1-2.

⁸⁶ Public Broadcasting System. "Interview – General Wesley Clark." *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 8.

With two approved plans to back up the alliance's coercive diplomacy, NATO felt comfortable pursuing their hard line diplomatic efforts against Milosevic before the war. The main problem for NATO was that coercive diplomacy left no alternative once diplomacy failed. The alliance had put so much political capital into halting the ethnic cleansing going on in Kosovo, that inaction in the face of Operation Horseshoe was politically impossible.⁸⁷ Inaction would have left NATO irrelevant in the world's eyes. So NATO began its air war with two competing and divergent visions on how to carry it out. The NATO heads of state were looking to apply minimal force against Milosevic, wielded gently to show resolve and restart diplomacy. The military leaders wanted to execute a limited war, coercive air campaign to force Milosevic to stop the ethnic cleansing and accept the Rambouillet peace agreement.

The initial start to the air war was anemic since the allies began OAF with approval to attack only a small number of targets during the first three nights of the war. General Short recalls being told, "Mike, you're only going to be allowed to bomb two, maybe three nights. That's all Washington can stand, and that's all some members of the alliance can stand. That's why you've only got 90 targets. This will be over in three nights."⁸⁸ General Clark also understood that the alliance's air options were lacking and went against the basic principles of war. Speaking to a BBC news crew after the OAF,

⁸⁷ For an explanation on how "the alliance was on the political and strategic hook to follow through on its frequent threats to use force to end large-scale violence in Kosovo," see Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 68. Additionally, had the United States backed away from NATO, especially the alliance's prime "pro-interventionist allies, it would have produced a NATO crisis on the scale of Suez in 1956." Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Redefining the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (July/August 1999): 34.

⁸⁸ Public Broadcasting System, "Interview – General Michael Short," *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 8.

General Clark had this to say, “Once you begin to use force, you should use it as decisively as possible, as rapidly as possible.”⁸⁹

Proof that the alliance heads of state, influenced by a reluctant Washington, had no intention of engaging in a major war in Kosovo, can be seen by its movement of forces prior to the start of the war.⁹⁰ The United States moved the *USS Enterprise* carrier battle group (CVNCG) out of the Adriatic region, thus leaving SACEUR without any aircraft carrier support for OAF. Additionally, the United States reduced its number of U.S. Air Force aircraft in Europe within range of Kosovo from 410 in October 1998 to only 350 for the start of OAF.⁹¹ NATO failed to mass sufficient forces in theater to support sustained combat due to its lack of resolve to engage in a major campaign in the Balkans.

Of course, the biggest indication that NATO was only considering OAF as a very limited operation, was that they steadfastly refused to consider the use of ground troops to force Milosevic to accept their terms. In fact, not only did the alliance refuse to consider using ground troops to invade Kosovo, they publicly ruled that option out even *before* the start of OAF.⁹² In addition to this having been a “colossal strategic mistake,” it sent out an unmistakable signal as to NATO’s resolve in the conflict.⁹³ Ruling out the use of ground troops, even before the fighting started, demonstrated to Milosevic and the

⁸⁹ British Broadcasting Corporation. “NATO Leadership Splits Revealed.” [on-line]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/671420.stm>; Internet; accessed 27 November 2003, 2.

⁹⁰ Daalder and O’Hanlon referred to this as “a textbook case of how *not* to wage war.” Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo...*, 18-19.

⁹¹ Ibid, 103.

⁹² Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 166, 206.

~~world that the force to be applied against the Serbian leader was going to be very limited~~
and one-dimensional.⁹⁴ OAF was to be an air war only. NATO had proclaimed their intention to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, but they lacked the stomach to actually apply the necessary force to physically halt Milosevic.⁹⁵

The first weeks of the OAF air war were ineffective at best and counter productive at worst.⁹⁶ The Clinton administration, with Pentagon backing, left SACEUR with insufficient aircraft in theater to prosecute any real hard-hitting operation. This situation left no doubt within the alliance that U.S. backing to the war was lukewarm at best.⁹⁷ Few actual targets of significance were struck in Kosovo. Alliance resolve was immediately called into question as European nations “favored a pause in the bombing after a few days...to give Milosevic a chance to end the crisis.”⁹⁸

their targets.⁹⁹ When not calling for a bombing pause, most European heads of state were forcefully opposing any significant escalation to the bombing campaign.¹⁰⁰ This allied friction allowed Milosevic to accelerate Operation Horseshoe with little hindrance from NATO aircrews. Additionally, NATO's bombing, far from causing a popular uprising against Milosevic, actually stirred Serbian nationalism and increased Milosevic's popular support in Serbia.¹⁰¹ The alliance's belief that a limited operation to support coercive diplomacy was going to physically stop the ethnic cleansing and bring Milosevic back to the bargaining table were dead.

Once NATO recognized that Milosevic was not going to respond to their anemic show of force, plans were rapidly put in place to increase the military pressure on the Serb government. The *USS Theodore Roosevelt* carrier battle group was brought into theatre to increase the combat power available to SACEUR.¹⁰² The number of NATO aircraft in the theater of operations was increased from 350 to over 1031.¹⁰³ Strike sorties launched against Serbian targets by NATO aircraft eventually approached one-quarter the number of those flown during Operation Desert Storm with over 20,000 bombs being dropped. Concurrently, overall sorties flown during OAF were slowly increased and came close to one-third the size of the First Gulf War's total air campaign.

⁹⁹ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 444.

¹⁰⁰ Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power...*, 47.

¹⁰¹ Michael Mandelbaum, "A Perfect Failure: NATO's War Against Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (September / October 1999): 4.

¹⁰² Prina, "Air War Kosovo: Lessons Learned and Relearned,"..., 6.

¹⁰³ Public Broadcasting System. "Facts & Figures." *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 1.

Along with the alliance finally ‘getting the picture’ that they were involved in a war with Milosevic, they began to slowly come to the realization that they may actually have to invade Kosovo and Serbia with ground troops to end the conflict.¹⁰⁴ General Klaus Naumann, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, and SACEUR had repeatedly broached the subject of ground troops prior to the start of the conflict as well as during it.¹⁰⁵ Each time it was met with a cool response from Washington, the Pentagon as well as the majority of the allied heads of state.¹⁰⁶ This situation, however, began to change after NATO’s fiftieth anniversary summit in Washington.¹⁰⁷ British Prime Minister Tony Blair, convinced that NATO would have to use ground troops, met with President Clinton before the summit started, to broach the subject of an invasion.¹⁰⁸ Clinton initially rebuffed Blair’s proposal, but Blair’s activism on the subject had planted a seed in the President’s mind.¹⁰⁹ That seed began to take root as the air war continued to drag on with no immediately foreseeable positive conclusion for NATO. Blair’s activism

¹⁰⁴ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 469.

¹⁰⁵ Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., 166, 290.

¹⁰⁶ Even during NATO’s fiftieth anniversary summit in Washington, with the allies worried about losing in Kosovo, Clark was ordered by the US Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, to mention “nothing about ground forces [during the summit]... or we’ll both be writing our resumes.” Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., 269. For an example of Clark’s continued activism on the use of ground troops and the Pentagon’s steadfast refusal to authorize their use see Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 426.

¹⁰⁷ During NATO’s fiftieth anniversary summit, Javier Solana, NATO’s Secretary General, had issued a press statement authorizing General Clark to “do an ‘assessment’ of its ground intervention plans [for Kosovo].” This was the first time since the Kosovo crisis had begun, that any high ranking official in NATO, or any of the alliance’s heads of government had publicly mentioned the possibility, however remote, of actually using ground troops in Kosovo. Clark, *Waging Modern War*..., 268.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 268.

¹⁰⁹ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 469, 475-476.

finally resulted in President Clinton being ready to authorize a ground invasion just as Milosevic capitulated.¹¹⁰

OAF grew in conception and planning from a very limited operation in support of diplomacy to eventually become a sizable air war. The number of aircraft used in OAF tripled over the 78-day war. The sorties flown per day went up “from just over 200 [per] day at the beginning of Operation Allied Force to over 1,000 per day by the end of the conflict.”¹¹¹ It strains believability to refer to OAF as just an exercise in coercive diplomacy when one looks at the eventual size of the forces employed in Kosovo and the scope of the bombing campaign. OAF was a limited war fought at a pace and scope that none of the leaders liked. It was far too robust for most of NATO’s civilian leaders liking, and far too incremental in the eyes of the alliance’s military leaders.¹¹²

KOSOVO AND THE SERBIAN PERSPECTIVE

As shown in the previous section, NATO’s perspective of its air war was initially quite limited in means and scope, but the Serbian perspective of the war was quite different. The stakes involved for Milosevic and the Serbs were much higher in Kosovo than for the alliance, so therefore the means and scope of the war were different. Additionally, instead of just a single war against NATO, the Serbs viewed themselves to

¹¹⁰ Lambeth outlines the steps authorized by NATO and the White House for road improvements, which would have led up to an invasion. Additionally, the information on NATO plan B-minus provides illumination into the eventual size of the invasion envisioned by NATO. Also, informative, is the description of President Clinton’s meeting with his service chiefs to resolve the question on a ground invasion in Kosovo. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 73-74.

¹¹¹ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 43.

¹¹² Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power...*, 48-49. Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, xxxvii-xxxviii.

actually be embroiled in two separate wars.¹¹³ The first was their war against the Kosovar Albanians, fought for possession of the disputed province with very high stakes for both parties. The second was the reluctantly fought war against NATO. It was a war Milosevic would rather have avoided because he stood little chance to win a military victory against NATO, and more importantly, it interfered with his plans for Kosovo. Therefore, his war against NATO was largely an asymmetrical fight. He attacked the alliance's cohesion through defiance and the refugee problem. Moreover, he launched an effective public relations campaign to discredit NATO by appealing to the international community for a halt to the NATO assault.¹¹⁴

The province of Kosovo was tied much closer to Serbian nationalism than Bosnia ever was, therefore, Milosevic had no intention of being bombed into a diplomatic solution on it.¹¹⁵ Prior to the start of the air war, the Serbians and Albanians both had long standing claims to Kosovo. Claims, which dated back to the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, in which Serbian forces vainly attempted to hold off the invading Turks with ethnic Albanians most likely fighting for both sides. More recently, Kosovo changed hands from the Turks, back to the Serbs, before finally being absorbed into Yugoslavia post World War I. While Kosovo's sovereign status has changed over the centuries, it wasn't until the political leadership in Yugoslavia changed that Kosovo's status became a crisis.

Following the death of the long serving President Tito, the question of Yugoslavian leadership came into question. Seeing the power vacuum left behind

¹¹³ Brookings Institute, "Panel Discussion on Winning Ugly," ..., 4-5.

¹¹⁴ What the international community "...was soon watching was a big, rich, technologically advanced nation bombing a poor little country." Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 460. Also see Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*..., 79-80.

¹¹⁵ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*..., 92-93.

following Tito's death, the opportunistic Milosevic rushed to fill the void and began his political campaign to wrest control of Yugoslavia.

In 1989 Milosevic, in an attempt to consolidate his power base, stripped Kosovo of its 1974 constitutionally granted autonomy. Following that, he began oppressing the majority ethnic Albanian populace in an attempt to force them to leave. This oppression, which was well-established practice on the Serbs part, failed to shift the ethnic dynamic in the province of Kosovo from majority Albanian to majority Serbian.¹¹⁶ In fact, by 1991 Kosovo was 90 percent Muslim and only 10 percent Serb.¹¹⁷

Despite the fact that the Kosovar Serbs were minorities in the province, most Serbs held the view that Kosovo was of almost religious importance to them due to its history.¹¹⁸ Therefore, Milosevic's hard line policies against the Kosovar Albanians were widely supported back home in Serbia.¹¹⁹ Kosovo was a central part of Milosevic's rise to power and he was determined to maintain his grip on that province.

As mentioned earlier, the allies felt that Milosevic had capitulated in Bosnia after "12 days of NATO attacks over a 20-day period."¹²⁰ The only question for NATO was how quickly Milosevic would capitulate. The logic with the alliance's view that Kosovo would be just like Bosnia was wrong on four main points.

¹¹⁶ Michael Mandelbaum, "A Perfect Failure,"..., 3. Also see Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*..., 7.

¹¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 260.

¹¹⁸ Ignatieff, *Virtual War*..., 50-51. Also see British Broadcasting Corporation, "Milosevic's Statement: 'Defend the Country,'" On-line; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/302775.stm>; Internet; accessed 2 March 04.

¹¹⁹ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*..., 260.

¹²⁰ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*..., 92.

First off, Kosovo had an almost religious importance to the Serbians and was a focal point for Serb nationalism. Bosnia was much less important to the Serbian national psyche and therefore easier to release control of, especially with all of the internal ethnic fighting taking place in the republic. Second, Kosovo was an internationally recognized province of Serbia, unlike Bosnia, which was an independent republic of the former Yugoslavia. Letting go of Kosovo for the Serbs would have been the equivalent of the United States releasing control of California to a foreign alliance. Bosnia did not enjoy the same special legal bond as Kosovo.¹²¹ Third, Kosovo was vital to Milosevic's rise to power and continued political future. Bosnia held no such personal importance for Milosevic, therefore, it was not difficult for him to release control of the republic. Fourth, the Serbs were forced to the bargaining table over Bosnia because the Croatian ground offensive of early August was successful in greatly rolling back the Serbian areas of control in Bosnia. It is certainly true that NATO air power assisted the Croat and Muslim offensive in Bosnia, however, alliance air strikes occurred after Milosevic announced that he was willing to sign a peace deal over Bosnia. The results on the ground were what drove the Serb delegation to sign the peace accord, not the threat of air strikes.¹²² In Kosovo, NATO was threatening Milosevic with air power alone, without the aid of ground troops, which was a much weaker threat.

¹²¹ For excellent background information on Bosnia and the differences between it and Kosovo see: Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 91-93.

¹²² The Serbs went from controlling 70 percent of Bosnia to only 50 percent in just a few weeks. Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 350. Pape describes that the Dayton accord boundaries are "almost to the kilometer, the front lines controlled by the Croat and Muslim armies at the moment the peace agreement was signed in the fall of 1999." Pape, "The True Worth of Air Power."..., 122-123.

The coercive diplomacy theory, mentioned earlier, stated that the coerced party must have the ability to comply with the coercer's demands or the threats are useless. Since so much of the reason that Milosevic had risen to power and maintained it was tied to his control and repression of Kosovo, he could not have simply complied with NATO's demands for the province or his government would have crumbled.¹²³ NATO's inability to understand the importance that Kosovo held for Milosevic and how far he would go to keep control of it were catastrophic failures.¹²⁴

Once the air campaign began, quite contrary to the allies' hopes, Milosevic gave an unequivocal demonstration that he was 'underwhelmed' by NATO's show of resolve. He accelerated Operation Horseshoe at a frightening pace and waged a de facto total war against the Kosovar Albanians.¹²⁵ Milosevic adopted this strategy to unhinge the alliance's cohesion and to arrive at a "fait accompli, to change the demographics of Kosovo," into an ethnically pure Serbian Kosovo.¹²⁶ Milosevic's actions of forcing almost all of the Kosovar Albanians from their homes, while enduring the alliance's

¹²³ Milosevic, in a conversation with Ambassador Holbrooke, said that it would be "his neck if he lost Kosovo." Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 420, 452. Additionally see Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 50-51. For the proof that Milosevic was right about his political career being over after having lost Kosovo see Robert A. Pape, "The True Worth of Air Power," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (March/April 2004): 125.

¹²⁴ Arguing that negotiations between NATO and Milosevic were doomed from the start, Daalder and O'Hanlon explain that "only NATO troops could have protected the Kosovar Albanians reliably enough to convince the KLA to disarm, but such troops were anathema to Milosevic, as well the idea of Kosovo's autonomy or independence." Also, describing that the Serbs would not have accepted partitioning of Kosovo as "too high a price for Milosevic, who viewed Kosovo as key not only to his own rise to power a decade before but also to the territorial integrity of the Serb nation." See Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 15.

¹²⁵ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 24.

¹²⁶ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 112. Also see Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 24.

ineffective air strikes, let NATO know that their current level of airpower was powerless to stop him.¹²⁷

The acceleration of Operation Horseshoe was strong evidence that the Serbian army was prepared for a protracted alliance air campaign, but so was their use of innocent civilians as human shields. The Serbs realized the valuable nature of maximizing collateral damage in any target area that NATO struck.¹²⁸ They would routinely force innocent civilians to stand on or near valuable Serb military targets in Kosovo. This was done to either protect the target in the event the NATO forces could see the shields, or as a means of producing maximum civilian deaths if the target were hit.¹²⁹ The devastating consequences that resulted from the allies collateral damage bombing incidents convinced the Serbs that NATO would not be able to sustain the air war if enough civilian deaths were generated.¹³⁰

The initial impression that one might form from Serbian actions described above is that they considered their war with NATO not in limited terms, but in the same total terms as their war with the Kosovar Albanians. They had used all asymmetrical means available to them to counter NATO during the opening weeks of the conflict. Serb forces were responsible for the deaths of over 10,000 innocent civilians, they had greatly

¹²⁷ Layne, "Collateral Damage in Yugoslavia," ..., 54.

¹²⁸ Ignatieff, *Virtual War*..., 193.

¹²⁹ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo*..., 239. Also see Cable News Network, "NATO Says 'Human Shields' Account for Bombing Deaths," [on-line]; available from <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/17/kosovo.03/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 26 February 04.

¹³⁰ For a description on the focus of international public opinion on what NATO was doing, vice what Milosevic had done, see. Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*..., 468. Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo*..., 102.

disrupted the lives of over a million ethnic Albanians and had put thousands more innocent civilian lives at risk as human shields.

It is certainly true that Serbian atrocities committed during the early stages of the conflict were of a horrific nature, but they fell short of total war against the alliance. To gauge the overall level of intensity of the Serbian government's interest in its conflict with NATO, one needs to examine the complete Serbian military response to the alliance's attacks.

The first military indication that the Serbs were limiting the scope of its conflict with NATO is that Milosevic's army, while aggressive in its ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo, was not as bloodthirsty as they could have been. The deaths of over 10,000 Kosovar Albanians by Serb forces, while appalling, could have been much worse. The fact that Milosevic did not order the deaths of thousands more ethnic Albanians, demonstrated that his war against the allies had some limits.

Further evidence that Milosevic adopted the limited war concept against NATO can be seen in how the Serb military fought. If the Serbs were involved in a total war against NATO, then they would have used all military means available to them in that war. One would have expected a more robust Serb response to the allied aircraft's penetration of Kosovar and Serbian airspace. In fact, the Serb responses to NATO aircraft's violation of their airspace were quite feeble.

The Serb's regionally robust integrated air defense system (IADS), in the form of surface to air missile (SAM) batteries and fighter aircraft, remained largely underused during the conflict. The Yugoslavian air force had generally older, but capable, air defense weapons of Soviet manufacture. The most capable SAM in the air force's

arsenal was the SA-6 ‘Gainful’ radar guided missile. During OAF, Serb SAM sites fired over 800 known missiles against allied aircraft, which sounds like a significant number, however very few of those missiles were actually guided by radar.¹³¹ Given the altitude at which allied aircraft were operating over Kosovo, there was very little chance that those missiles would actually hit an aircraft unless radar guided.¹³² The ballistic firing of their SAMs by the Serb operators demonstrated that they were using a strategy of asset conservation vice active defense. The end result of this strategy was that only two allied aircraft were shot down during the entire campaign. An analysis of the total number of Serb SAMs launched per allied sortie equates to a Serbian shoot down rate of one-sixth that enjoyed by the Iraqis during Operation Desert Storm.¹³³ That number hardly equates to a robust air defense.

The results of the Serbian air force, flying aging, but functional aircraft were not much different. The majority of the aircraft in the Serbian inventory were of Soviet design, with a limited long-range air-to-air missile capability. The Serbs did have 20 fairly modern MiG-29 ‘Fulcrums’ in their inventory, but the pilots were undertrained and outgunned when compared to the NATO onslaught. After the first two nights of the conflict, when allied pilots shot down five Serbian aircraft, the Serb air force showed little further desire to directly challenge the allies.¹³⁴ The Serb fighter aircraft spent the

¹³¹ Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 108.

¹³² The practice of firing SAM’s skyward without radar guidance is an attempt to scatter inbound strike packages while keeping the SAM site’s radar from being targeted by allied high-speed anti-radiation missiles (HARM). This practice is widely considered to be one of asset conservation vice active defense. Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo...*, 27-30. Also see Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 111.

¹³³ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 203.

¹³⁴ Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 23.

remainder of the air campaign hidden in bunkers in an attempt to limit their losses.¹³⁵

The Serbian military's unwillingness to aggressively engage NATO during the war demonstrated that Milosevic had limited the means and scope of his war with the alliance.

Of course, the final indication that Milosevic had adopted a limited war strategy against the allies is that he 'blinked' on June 9th. Had Milosevic been engaged in a total war against NATO it is doubtful that he would have capitulated and signed the MTA unless he were staring down the barrel of a NATO rifle in downtown Belgrade. When Milosevic decided to sign the MTA his fielded forces in Kosovo were largely intact.¹³⁶ Of greater concern to him was his own political and personal survival. The damage being inflicted on his country by allied bombs was causing him a great deal of concern and was a direct threat to his power base.¹³⁷ Milosevic's countrymen and supporters were now watching their country being dismantled before their eyes and were pressuring him to capitulate. General Clark concluded that Milosevic's basic objective at the completion of the conflict was "to preserve his own power and authority," and that "Milosevic hadn't gone all out in the conflict with NATO."¹³⁸ The Serbs still had intact infrastructure and forces capable of harming NATO's invading ground troops when Milosevic opted to sign the MTA.

¹³⁵ Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 194.

¹³⁶ Stating that the evidence "overwhelmingly indicates that the damage [done to the Serb fielded forces in Kosovo] was relatively modest." See Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo...* 48-49.

¹³⁷ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 70-71.

¹³⁸ Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 405.

One cannot help but draw the conclusion that despite the horrific ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo during the war, that the Serbian national perspective of the conflict with NATO was limited in scope and means. Milosevic murdered thousands of Kosovar Albanians, but refrained from ordering the murders of tens of thousands more. He conserved his military forces that were in direct contact with alliance forces, and finally capitulated at the end of the war. Despite his pre-conflict statements to the contrary, his goal of staying in power was more important to him than maintaining control over Kosovo.

ALLIANCE MAKEUP AND DYNAMICS

During OAF, NATO was very focused on presenting a unified front to the international community, especially to Milosevic. Any sign of fracture within the alliance would have been a reassurance to the Serbs and could have potentially made the war unwinnable. Unfortunately for the alliance, the political dynamics inherent within NATO as the alliance went to war, were anything but unified.¹³⁹ Each NATO member nation had independent national interests, and sometimes those interests conflicted with those of the alliance.¹⁴⁰ It was a real testament to the strength of NATO that the alliance was able to stay together throughout the entirety of OAF.¹⁴¹

The nations with the greatest stake in the conflict, from the standpoint of being on the firing line, were the three nations closest to the conflict. Those nations were, Greece,

¹³⁹ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 228-229.

¹⁴⁰ Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 206. Additionally, the 19 NATO member nations at the time of the conflict were: Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook...*, 3.

¹⁴¹ Brookings Institute, "Panel Discussion on Winning Ugly," ..., 6-7.

Hungary and Italy. Hungary, one of NATO's newest members, shared a border with Serbia, while Greece and Italy were within reach of the Kosovar Albanian refugees flooding out of the country as a result of Serbian atrocities. NATO along with these three governments, were concerned that hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding into neighboring countries, could possibly destabilize those governments.¹⁴²

Greece, in addition to its close proximity to Yugoslavia, also shared a close cultural bond with the Serbs. The Greeks and Serbs shared a common Orthodox Christian religion. The close relationship between the two governments extended to Greek political backing of the Serbian government during the previous Yugoslav wars.¹⁴³ For internal political reasons, the Greeks had tried to distance themselves from NATO's stance on the region, especially during the alliance's military intervention in Bosnia.¹⁴⁴

Once OAF started, there were massive demonstrations throughout the country against NATO, in which the most popular "slogan shouted was 'Foniades' ('murderers')." ¹⁴⁵ During OAF, the Greek public opinion overwhelmingly opposed the bombing of their fellow Orthodox Christians in Serbia.¹⁴⁶ In addition to the demonstrations, there were instances of NATO convoys in Greece being physically interfered with.

¹⁴² Associated Press. "President Clinton's Speech From Wednesday Night," ..., 2.

¹⁴³ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*..., 284.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 284.

¹⁴⁵ Nikos Raptis, "The Greek 'Participation' in Kosovo," in in *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis*, ed. Philip Hammond and Edward S. Herman. (Padstow: TJ International, 2000), 16.

¹⁴⁶ "Two surveys conducted 25 days into the air war showed that Greeks were 96 percent to 98.6 per cent against the bombing." Ibid, 16.

Despite all of the internal turmoil within its country, the Greek government remained in the strategic framework of NATO. The Greek's allowed the basing of a small number of aircraft that were involved in OAF, but refused to allow their country to be used as a staging base for any possible invasion.¹⁴⁷ In the end, the country's leaders recognized the strategic importance of remaining committed NATO allies, despite widespread disapproval from their citizens.¹⁴⁸

Italy, much like Greece, did not strongly back OAF once the bombing began, and actually called for an end to aerial bombardment on March 26th.¹⁴⁹ Italy's direct participation in the air war, however, unlike the Greek government's, was critical to the success of OAF. With Italy's close geographical proximity to Kosovo, it was a prime location for the basing of NATO aircraft and the alliance's Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) for directing the air war.¹⁵⁰ In a poll conducted two days after the start of OAF the Italian populace generally opposed the bombing campaign, with only 25 percent of the respondents feeling that NATO's attack on Serbia was justified.¹⁵¹ However, 75 percent of the same respondents also felt that Italy should honor its commitments to

¹⁴⁷ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 204.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 129.

¹⁴⁹ The motion, which was passed by the Italian parliament, called for "an end to the air attacks as soon as possible and for diplomatic initiatives to be pursued immediately, and insisted that Italian forces should not participate directly in offensive air operations against Serbia." Maurizio Cremasco, "Italy and the Management of International Crises," in *Alliance Politics, Kosovo, and NATO's War: Allied Force or Forced Allies?*, ed. Pierre Martin, and Mark R. Brawley. (New York: PALGRAVE, 2001), 171.

¹⁵⁰ Demonstrating that Italy's close proximity to Kosovo was ideal for basing NATO aircraft can be seen by the number of aircraft that flew out of Italy during the war. "NATO based nearly half of its aircraft – about 500 planes, including helicopters – at sixteen bases in Italy; without them, NATO's tactical air campaign would not have been nearly as effective or ambitious." See Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 149.

¹⁵¹ Cremasco, "Italy and the Management of International Crises," ..., 170.

NATO and “collaborate at some level with its NATO partners.”¹⁵² These numbers highlighted the reasons behind the somewhat chaotic actions of the Italian government during OAF. And despite the fact that there was nothing approaching overwhelming support for the alliance’s actions in Kosovo, Italy remained committed to the allied cause.

Great Britain’s actions during OAF can be summed up as ‘leading the pack’ when it came to the use of force in Kosovo. British Prime Minister Tony Blair was “not only an enthusiastic supporter of the NATO action in Kosovo, but...soon assumed the role of the leading hawk in the West.”¹⁵³ Enjoying popular political support for halting the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, Blair could follow his convictions with regards to the Kosovar Albanians and stopping Milosevic.¹⁵⁴ In Blair’s eyes the cost of halting the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo immediately would be less than the cost of a much larger campaign later.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, he leveraged his country’s special relationship with the United States, and pressed a reluctant White House to use the necessary force in Kosovo to win.¹⁵⁶ Blair did not initially succeed in convincing the White House that victory in Kosovo might very well mean using ground troops. In fact, President Clinton and other

members of the White House were frustrated with Blair's activism on the subject until it became blindingly obvious that ground troops might be necessary to ensure a NATO victory.¹⁵⁷ British pressure on President Clinton to reconsider the use of ground troops in Kosovo finally achieved results by late May as the White House began giving indications that they would soon be authorizing an invasion.¹⁵⁸

In the end, the British were aggressive, but steadfast NATO allies. With insufficient forces to take the military lead from a reluctant Washington, Prime Minister Blair was still able to apply pressure on the White House to defeat Milosevic. In the end, Blair realized that an allied victory in Kosovo was an absolute necessity for NATO.¹⁵⁹

Since OAF would not have been possible without America's participation, it makes sense that US interests and internal political dynamics had a critical impact on alliance dynamics and the prosecution of the war.¹⁶⁰ The United States involvement in the Balkans during the Clinton administration was marked largely by indifferent and

¹⁵⁷ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 462.

¹⁵⁸ The British position on Kosovo was that NATO had to win. During the May 27th meeting in Bonn of the defense ministers of the U. S., U. K., France, Germany and Italy met to decide if a ground invasion of Kosovo was required. The British representative, George Robertson was asked how many troops the U. K. was ready to commit. The reply by Robertson was, "Fifty Thousand," [essentially Britain's entire army]. Robertson was asked a follow up question of, "For how long?" Robertson's reply, "For as long as it takes." Four days after this meeting, President Clinton authorized SACEUR to prepare for a ground invasion. Richardson, "A Force for Good in the World?....", 150. Also see Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 330-331.

¹⁵⁹ Richardson, "A Force for Good in the World?....", 152. Also see Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 138.

¹⁶⁰ The United States "flew around 80% of all demanding strike-attack missions, and many European air forces lacked the technology and training to carry out demanding attack missions in power [sic] [poor] weather, at night, and using precision-guided weapons." [Obviously, the US needed NATO support to base their aircraft in the region, so the support of the various alliance members was critical as well, but having air bases with no aircraft to fly from them would have left NATO, without American participation, unable to project any meaningful power.] Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 73.

reactionary policies.¹⁶¹ In the early 1990's, the White House was loath to become involved in Bosnia. The Balkans were perceived as a 'European problem' and a quagmire that would require a much higher level of commitment to solve than the Clinton administration was willing to put forth.¹⁶² Despite their misgivings of entering into conflict in the Balkans, the White House and NATO were forced to act out of humanitarian concerns in Bosnia. Three years later, President Clinton found himself right in the middle of the Monica Lewinski scandal while trying to deal with another showdown with Saddam Hussein over U.N. weapons inspections. It was during this troubling and chaotic time for the White House that Serbian forces in Kosovo "killed over 50 people, including women and children."¹⁶³ This event, along with the press coverage of it, let the Clinton administration know that they would soon have to deal with the problems in Kosovo.¹⁶⁴

The White House in the mid to late 1990's became increasingly enamored with the habit of bombing a hapless opponent to "send a message" or to "degrade a capability" then would declare victory regardless of the actual outcome of the strikes.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately for NATO, when the Clinton administration finally became involved in

¹⁶¹ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace*, 163-164, 195-196.

¹⁶² Ibid, 199.

¹⁶³ Jeffrey Smith, "Clark's Role in Kosovo Exemplifies His Traits," On-line; available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A6340-2003Dec16>; Internet; accessed 17 December 2003, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 376.

¹⁶⁵ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 208-209.

Kosovo, it brought with it overwhelming military superiority which was handicapped by the White House's "cruise missile diplomacy" mindset.¹⁶⁶

Since the NATO European allies were unable to deploy a substantial military presence to Kosovo, they were forced to acquiesce before American military power.¹⁶⁷ The substantial mismatch in military strength between the U.S. and Europe, therefore, resulted in the US taking the lead on the diplomatic front as well.¹⁶⁸ The White House largely left Secretary of State Albright and Ambassador Holbrooke to handle the crisis in Kosovo without substantial interference. This left Albright with a large amount of freedom to act, which she used.¹⁶⁹ Having decided that Milosevic was evil personified, and that he would respond to nothing but force, the State Department adopted the strategy of coercive diplomacy in their dealings with Milosevic.¹⁷⁰ The allies, left with no other viable diplomatic alternative, followed Washington's lead in adopting this bargaining tactic.

Had President Clinton taken it upon himself to lead the alliance in Kosovo and have made the case within NATO for the decisive use of force to stop the ethnic cleansing, the coercive diplomacy strategy might have worked, but that wasn't the case.¹⁷¹ The White House, seeing no consensus amongst the European allies on how to

¹⁶⁶ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 179.

¹⁶⁷ "All in all, the Kosovo war was a peculiarly American show...In military terms, Kosovo underscored that Europe is a dwarf to America's giant." Ivo H. Daalder, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Unlearning the Lessons of Kosovo," *Foreign Policy* no. 116 (Fall 1999): 136-137.

¹⁶⁸ Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 47.

¹⁶⁹ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 376-377.

¹⁷⁰ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 18.

¹⁷¹ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 249.

handle Milosevic, saw the issue in Kosovo as potentially divisive to NATO, therefore, they chose to not push the issue.¹⁷² One is left to wonder if it ever occurred to the White House that the European allies would have found a single voice had they been presented with decisive American resolve to end the crisis.

Perhaps even more divisive to the alliance and the prosecution of the war was the resistance of the Pentagon and the Secretary of Defense to any involvement in Kosovo, especially with regards to ground troops.¹⁷³ General Clark's relationship with US Secretary of Defense Cohen had gone from bad to dysfunctional during the escalating crisis.¹⁷⁴ Clark could get no support from Cohen when it came to breaking through the internal resistance within the Pentagon to Clark's repeated requests for support in the war against Milosevic. Clark, seen as an activist for an unpopular war, routinely came into conflict with General Dennis Reimer, the Army Chief of Staff, as well as General Henry Shelton, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, over support to OAF. The Pentagon, not seeing any vital US national interests in the Balkans, were reluctant to authorize or endorse any operation that they felt had the potential to become another Vietnam.¹⁷⁵ This internal feuding between the Pentagon leadership and SACEUR was noticed by the alliance and caused the European nations to call into question the US commitment to the war. NATO, as a committee, works best when strongly led by Washington. In the case

¹⁷² Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 31, 35-37.

¹⁷³ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 422.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 456-457.

¹⁷⁵ Secretary of State Albright noticed the Pentagon resistance to involvement in Kosvo during an interview. "...it was very clear to me that the Pentagon did not want to move on this issue [Kosovo]...Wes [General Clark] and I thought it was worth doing." Jeffrey Smith, "Clark's Role in Kosovo Exemplifies His Traits," On-line; available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A6340-2003Dec16>; Internet; accessed 17 December 2003, 4. Also see Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 164-165.

of OAF, “NATO was a committee without a chairman, particularly in the conflict’s early going.”¹⁷⁶

France’s interests during OAF were potentially the most complex of all NATO members. France had been a long-time partner with the Serbs dating back to World War I. The French government felt that this long-standing partnership granted them a freedom to maneuver outside of NATO norms in both political as well as military matters.¹⁷⁷ French President, Jacques Chirac, was initially opposed to launching air strikes against the Serbs since UN authorization had not yet been forthcoming, therefore, he “clashed directly with the United States over this question.”¹⁷⁸ However, once the NATO led diplomatic efforts failed at Rambouillet for a second time, the French government was left with no choice but to agree with the commencement of OAF.

When the air war began in earnest, the French government sought to reign in the alliance’s application of force at every turn.¹⁷⁹ French resistance to approve any robust targets of strategic value during the first several weeks of the war, adversely affected the

¹⁷⁶ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo...*, 20.

¹⁷⁷ Ignatieff, *Virtual War...*, 206.

¹⁷⁸ France was torn by NATO’s decision to bypass the UN Security Council in Kosovo. French President Jacques Chirac realized that Russia, a long time Serbian ally, would veto any attempt by the UN Security Council to authorize the use of force against Milosevic. Therefore, UN approval to intervene in Kosovo would not be forthcoming. Chirac also recognized that NATO’s failure to act in the face of Serb ethnic cleansing would have been catastrophic to the alliance. He also wanted to be able to have some form of control over the United State’s wielding of power in Europe, therefore, he was forced to go along with NATO’s decision to bypass the UN. However, this didn’t stop him from decrying that decision and lecturing President Clinton that this was a one time occurrence and not a precedent. See Alex Macleod, “France: Kosovo and the Emergence of a New European Security,” in *Alliance Politics, Kosovo, and NATO’s War: Allied Force or Forced Allies?*, ed. Pierre Martin, and Mark R. Brawley. (New York: PALGRAVE, 2001), 118-119.

¹⁷⁹ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 468. Additionally, Macleod described how “President Chirac boasted after the conflict [OAF] that “there was not one single target that was not agreed upon by France beforehand.”” Macleod, “France: Kosovo and the Emergence of a New European Security,”..., 122.

air campaign. General Short was especially blunt about French interference. “Targeting was a problem to us...and as you know, the red card [veto] was played by France in particular...There were targets in Belgrade, which I believed were strategic, that the French forbade us from striking.”¹⁸⁰

If the French government’s public actions during OAF called into question their commitment to the war, their actions behind the scenes showed a blatant disregard for their responsibilities as a NATO member. During the previous October, “one of the French officers working at NATO headquarters had given the key portions of the operations plan to the Serbs.”¹⁸¹ Had this been a one-time incident, it would have been difficult to characterize the French transfer of secrets to the Serbs as a plot by the French government. Unfortunately, this was not the only French episode of its kind within NATO. General Clark was very concerned with operational security in all phases of OAF. His biggest concern was the Paris to Belgrade information flow that resulted in many plans and target sets generated in NATO secure spaces winding up in Belgrade almost immediately. Clark’s worries resulted in all sensitive pre-conflict planning being moved to US only channels.¹⁸² During the war, the US was forced to withhold significant amounts of Serbian target information from the French, out of concerns for

¹⁸⁰ British Broadcasting Corporation. “US General Condemns French ‘Red Card.’” [on-line]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/482015.stm>; Internet; accessed 27 November 2003.

¹⁸¹ Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 175-176.

¹⁸² General Short and his staff were developing a pre-war strategic bombing contingency plan for SACEUR in June 1998. At the end of the briefing, General Clark told Short that he was going to move Short’s plan to US only channels out of concerns for operational security. Clark was concerned that “the essence of our planning will end up in the Paris or Belgrade papers.” Public Broadcasting System, “Interview – General Michael Short,” *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 3.

leaks.¹⁸³ This manifested itself when the Pentagon chose to task its high-value assets (F-117's, B-2's and cruise missiles), on a separate U.S. only ATO, to protect against "leaks from any allies who might compromise those operations."¹⁸⁴ So French actions both in public and behind the scenes, demonstrated that the country viewed its own national interests to be more important than the alliance's. Therefore, they could be considered a reluctant NATO ally while at the same time colluding with the alliance's enemy.

HOW MILITARY OPERATIONS WERE AFFECTED

NATO's military operations in Kosovo were adversely affected by the lack of any real understanding amongst the governmental heads of state that coercive diplomacy ended when NATO bombs began raining down on Belgrade.¹⁸⁵ By three weeks into the conflict thousands of tons of ordnance had been dropped on Kosovo and Belgrade. People had died and all manner of things were being blown up. If this was still coercive diplomacy, it was of a particularly kinetic and violent strain.

The most detrimental effect to the entire military campaign was the lack of a coherent military strategy among the allies on how to deal with Milosevic.¹⁸⁶ For political reasons, the alliance's heads of state were unwilling to back the decisive use of

¹⁸³ During the war the Serbs were able to gain access to certain portions of NATO's Air Tasking Order (ATO), which lists aircraft type, ordnance, attack altitudes, and most importantly, the targets to be attacked. In early April, a close Clinton confidant confirmed that France was receiving limited NATO target information out of concerns that those targets would be leaked to the Serbs. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 206-207.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 185.

¹⁸⁵ It took over a month after OAF started before the NATO planners were "given enough freedom of action to begin to apply decisive force." Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 30. Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 208. On April 9th, in a meeting with Javier Solana and Klaus Naumann, Clark and the others came to the conclusion that "the nations of NATO had not really accepted that we were at war." Clark, *Waging Modern War...*, 252.

¹⁸⁶ Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 16-17.

force to stop Milosevic and were, in fact, attempting to “prevent the use of force [against Milosevic].”¹⁸⁷ In addition to a lack of will on the use of force, the alliance was also uninterested in planning for the possibility that coercive diplomacy just might not work.¹⁸⁸ This mindset of diplomacy backed by only a limited air threat resulted in NATO’s military planning committee being tightly constrained in the planning process leading up to OAF.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, since the military planning committee was not presented with NATO’s goals for the campaign, they were unable to come up with militarily achievable objectives in Kosovo.¹⁹⁰ Military campaign planning at the strategic level requires that the civilian leadership’s strategic goals for the upcoming campaign be delivered to the military leadership who then develop militarily achievable objectives. NATO never did this.¹⁹¹ The military planning committee would have simply been guessing as to the alliance’s goals in Kosovo, so they did not try. Also, since NATO’s coercive diplomacy was based on a very limited two or three days bombing ‘display’, the alliance never envisioned the need to develop campaign objectives for an operation.

¹⁸⁷ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo...*, 17. Also see Public Broadcasting System, “How It Was Fought,” *Frontline – War in Europe*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/fighting/fighting.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004, 2. Also see Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Public Broadcasting System, “How It Was Fought,” *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 3-4.

¹⁸⁹ As an example of the restrictions placed on the military committee from mid-1998 onward, they were not able to plan for, or even consider, the possibility of ground troops for a joint campaign. Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo...*, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Lambeth was able to get some quite frank assessments on NATO’s preparations going into OAF. One officer in particular was critical of NATO’s plan, “nobody ever said, ‘no fooling, what we want to accomplish in this country is X.’” Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 201. Also see Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo...*, 18.

¹⁹¹ “I know you won’t believe this, but we don’t have a plan.” Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 200.

Therefore, once it became obvious that Milosevic was going to ‘hunker down’ and take NATO’s bombing, the alliance was in trouble. The military result was that NATO ended up “throwing bombs around, hoping that objectives would materialize.”¹⁹² Had the NATO heads of state been planning to go to war with Milosevic from the start, it is certain that an adequate campaign plan would have been developed. In fact, a cohesive campaign plan already existed. General Short’s team had developed a robust, Desert Storm style plan that still existed, but had been disregarded as too aggressive by the

number of aircraft operating over Kosovo, there was little they could do. The simple fact was that Serbian troops in the field were difficult to hit.¹⁹⁶ When they were in the towns forcing out the ethnic Albanians, the Serb troops were usually intermingled with innocent civilians and could not be targeted. When the Serb forces were dispersed in the field they were dug in and had no reason to move. Had NATO not publicly ruled out the use of ground troops before the conflict even began, the Serb army would have had to treat the threat of a ground invasion seriously. This would have required the Serb commanders “to position their tanks to cut off roads and other avenues of attack,” thereby massing their forces to repel a possible invasion and making them more susceptible to attack.¹⁹⁷

The lack of any credible ground threat to the Serb forces in Kosovo gave them complete freedom to remain hidden during the NATO attacks, then reemerge after the alliance aircraft had left to continue on with their mission. Even if NATO had no intention of using ground troops from the outset, there was no reason to broadcast that fact before the conflict even began. Admiral Leighton Smith, former commander of NATO forces during Operation Deliberate Force, was exceptionally forthright when he said, “that telling the enemy beforehand what you are *not* going to do is ‘the absolutely dumbest thing you can do.’”¹⁹⁸ NATO had ‘bet the farm’ on coercive diplomacy backed by ‘immaculate coercion.’ They lost that bet, and 1.3 million Kosovar Albanians were forced out of their homes at gunpoint. Had the alliance civilian leadership been resolved

¹⁹⁶ Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 29.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 120.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 222.

to use sufficient force in Kosovo, they would not have made the catastrophic blunder of ruling out ground troops pre-conflict. Even if there had been no intention to land troops in hostile conditions, NATO would still have seen the benefit of keeping Milosevic guessing by maintaining a credible ground threat.

In addition to the previously mentioned problems, coercive diplomacy resulted in an incremental and ineffective start to the air war. There were many reasons for this. The prime reason was that there were severe political constraints on the prosecution of the air war.¹⁹⁹ The phased air campaign that NATO employed, was designed to be incremental, and let NATO's civilian masters dictate the scope and escalation of the conflict.²⁰⁰ Additionally, the U.S. bearing the brunt of the air effort during the Kosovo crisis, felt that it had planned for sufficient aircraft in theater to prosecute two or three days of bombing.²⁰¹ However, as soon as the air war started, it became apparent that the war would have to be greatly escalated in size if they wanted to defeat Milosevic. General Clark and his JFACC, hoping to execute a more robust air effort early in OAF, would still have not have been able greatly increase the pace of the attacks since they

¹⁹⁹ "NATO targeting and operations were so tightly constrained by individual European countries that they exerted a veto power over both the targets that could be attacked, and even over individual missions." Cordesman, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo...*, 66. Also see Prina, "Air War Kosovo: Lessons Learned and Relearned,"..., 3.

²⁰⁰ Public Broadcasting System, "Interview – General Wesley Clark," *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 2.

²⁰¹ In October 1998, General Short was informed that there "was concern back in the United States that the US contribution [of aircraft] was much too large." General Short was ordered to 'massage' the numbers of US aircraft in the region. He and his staff discounted the presence of the Carrier Battle Group to arrive at a number that Washington would be happy with. So far from asking for more aircraft prior to OAF, the US was actually trying to decrease the numbers in theater. See Public Broadcasting System, "Interview – General Michael Short," *Frontline – War in Europe...*, 4-5.

only had enough aircraft in theater to prosecute an incremental war.²⁰² Had the alliance discarded its coercive diplomacy strategy after the Rambouillet talks collapsed, they would certainly have moved more aircraft into theater prior to commencing OAF.

The target approval process was chaotic, random and micromanaged at the highest levels. President Clinton, Secretary Cohen and General Shelton personally reviewed individual targets that were attacked the first night. Some NATO leaders removed targets outright from the approved target list for fear of collateral damage incidents, and others dictated lowering the size of the bombs to be dropped.²⁰³

A systematic target selection process was not in place at the start of the war. With the allies expecting a short demonstration bombing campaign, they saw no reason to fully man the support staffs, which were eventually required for target production.²⁰⁴ Because the staffs were so undermanned there was no attempt to link actual targets and target sets with the effects desired on the enemy. Without the list of higher level military objectives to focus on, the alliance targeting officers often defaulted to tasking aircraft to hit a target simply because it showed up on the approved target list for the day. Once the targets were developed and submitted for approval, the alliance political machinations would normally delay those targets from immediately making it onto the ATO for attack.²⁰⁵ Additionally, it was not only certain targets, but also specific target areas that were especially sensitive. The allies were reluctant to authorize bombing strategic Serb

²⁰² At the start of the war the alliance only had about a third of the total aircraft in theater that would be required. Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo...*, 117.

²⁰³ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment...*, 22.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 186.

²⁰⁵ Nardulli et al, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo...*, 5.

targets, especially in Belgrade, until 11 days into the war.²⁰⁶ There was general consensus that bombing Serb targets in Kosovo was fine, but going ‘downtown’ to strike strategic targets in the Serb capital was problematic.

The alliance’s coercive diplomacy strategy resulted in NATO commencing a war without a plan, committing massive strategic blunders, and badly under resourcing its air campaign at the start of hostilities. Had the alliance gone into OAF with the intention of going to war, these problems would have been addressed prior to the start of the war.

FINAL TALLY

OAF ended on June 9th when the Serbs signed the MTA. The end result of Milosevic having signed the agreement was that NATO achieved some, but not all, of its pre-conflict objectives. The alliance’s pre-conflict goals were “aimed at halting the violence and bringing to an end the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, preventing the spread of instability in the region and securing a political settlement.”²⁰⁷

The alliance’s mid-conflict goals, which were reaffirmed during the Washington summit on April 23rd, will provide a good measure of effectiveness with which to compare how well NATO succeeded in fulfilling its pre-conflict goals. Since the mid-conflict goals were adopted once NATO realized that it was at war with Milosevic, those goals were not directly affected by NATO’s coercive diplomacy mindset. In fact, the alliance’s mid-conflict objectives, sought to ‘clean up’ the mess that was created by the

²⁰⁶ Halberstam, *War In a Time of Peace...*, 451-452.

²⁰⁷ NATO’s pre-conflict objectives were taken from the NATO handbook. These objectives will be quoted in this section in different places, but will not be footnoted again in the section for simplicity. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook...*, 495.

incrementalism and poor pre-conflict planning brought about by NATO's irresolute firmness in dealing with Milosevic.

NATO's first mid-conflict objective was the "end of military action and repression."²⁰⁸ A comparison with the pre-conflict objective shows that they are similar, but differ in one major aspect. The MTA's signing brought about the end of military action and halted the violence, however, NATO never stopped the humanitarian crisis precipitated by Operation Horseshoe. Despite the best efforts of the alliance's aircrews, the ethnic cleansing grew to such overwhelming proportions as to become the largest forced expulsion on the European continent since World War II. Therefore, at the completion of hostilities, one must conclude that NATO failed to meet its pre-conflict objective of "bringing to an end the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo."

NATO's second mid-conflict objective was the "withdrawal of all Serb forces." There was no corresponding pre-conflict objective, which dealt with the removal of the Serb forces in Kosovo. Those forces were to be dealt with in the diplomatic efforts, which were to be brought about by the alliance's coercive diplomacy. Three weeks into the conflict, when NATO realized it just might be at war vice engaged in 'kinetic diplomacy', the NAC was forced to include this militarily achievable objective in the alliance's goals. The alliance succeeded in achieving this mid-conflict objective when Milosevic signed the MTA and was forced to remove all Serb forces from Kosovo.

The alliance's third mid-conflict objective was the "acceptance of an international military presence." This objective, much like the previous one, was not in NATO's pre-

²⁰⁸ All five of NATO's mid-conflict objectives were taken from the NATO handbook. The other four quotes in this section, which deal directly with the five mid-conflict objectives, will not be footnoted for simplicity. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook*..., 496.

conflict objectives. The presence of international troops in Kosovo was one of the main points of contention for the Serbs in Rambouillet. Milosevic was, quite simply, not going to accept their presence, especially well armed NATO troops, on Serb ‘holy land.’²⁰⁹ Seeing what had occurred in Bosnia after the Dayton Accords, Milosevic feared that NATO troops would remain in the province, and he would effectively lose control of Kosovo. NATO, for their part, remembering what had happened in Srebrenica four years earlier, would not allow anything but well-armed troops into Kosovo. This was to ensure that they could protect themselves as well as prevent another genocidal attack on a defenseless Muslim enclave by Serb forces.²¹⁰ With NATO troops on Serb soil being a diplomatic ‘show stopper’ at Rambouillet, this objective’s inclusion in the alliance’s mid-conflict objectives, demonstrated that they were willing to militarily win this objective.

The fourth mid-conflict objective was the “return of refugees.” This was not an alliance pre-conflict objective since they had hoped to halt the humanitarian crisis before there were a large number of refugees. The alliance had the stated pre-conflict goal of “preventing the spread of instability in the region,” which they directly tied to halting a flood of ethnic Albanian refugees that could destabilize the region. While the flood of refugees were disruptive to OAF, the over 800,000 Kosovar Albanians forced outside Kosovo did not topple any governments. Therefore, NATO achieved its pre-conflict objective of “preventing the spread of instability in the region,” even if they failed to halt the humanitarian crisis. Additionally, the majority of the Kosovar Albanian refugees

²⁰⁹ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Milosevic’s Statement: ‘Defend the Country,’” ..., 1-3.

²¹⁰ For a short history of the fall of Srebrenica, see Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*..., 293-296.

returned to Kosovo by the end of June, therefore, NATO achieved this mid-course objective as well.

The fifth mid-conflict objective, without a stated corresponding pre-conflict goal, was arriving at “a political settlement based on the Rambouillet Accords.” However, NATO’s entire coercive diplomatic strategy was designed to force Milosevic into accepting the Rambouillet peace agreement, therefore, the alliance backed this pre-conflict objective with deeds if not words. After the war, the U.N. Security Council adopted UN Resolution 1244, which dealt with Kosovo’s interim status. It called for “Promoting the establishment, pending a final settlement, of substantive autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, taking full account of Annex 2 and of the Rambouillet accords.”²¹¹ Kosovo’s final status is still to be determined, but the spirit of the Rambouillet accords is encompassed in the current situation. Therefore, one can conclude that NATO met this mid-conflict objective, even if the alliance’s pre-conflict actions failed to achieve this goal.

CONCLUSION

When Marcus Antonius uttered, “Cry Havoc, and let slip the dogs of war,”²¹² in William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, he conveyed the image of a general, in command of overwhelming and vicious forces that, once turned loose, would savage the enemy without quarter. That was certainly not the result of NATO’s air war. OAF was plagued by political indecision, which was undermined by a poor understanding of the strategic

²¹¹ Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo...*, 276.

²¹² William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Stamford: Longmeadow Press, 1990), 828.

imperatives that drove Serbian actions throughout the Kosovo crisis, resulted in a 78-day long consensus war being waged by a leaderless committee.

The alliance reluctantly entered into the conflict with Milosevic without any real preparation for anything other than an exercise in coercive diplomacy, backed by the seductive lure of low risk, high precision bombing. Hampered by irresolution on what to do about Milosevic and the ethnic violence in Kosovo, NATO was unable to present a unified and resolved front to the Serbian leader. This resulted in a series of monumentally poor decisions being made throughout the crisis which ultimately led up to war.

The first bad decisions involved the diplomatic efforts in Rambouillet. The alliance badly misread recent history in two instances. NATO failed to understand the fundamental importance that Kosovo held for both Milosevic's political career as well the people of Serbia. NATO was not going to be able to threaten Milosevic to release Kosovo without a significant and credible threat, and even then, it would likely have ended in war. The other missed history lesson for the alliance was the mistaken belief that NATO airpower had forced Milosevic to capitulate in Bosnia. Not understanding that the losses on the ground from the Croat offensive is what drove Milosevic to seek a settlement, convinced the alliance that they could bomb their way to victory in Kosovo without a credible ground invasion threat. Seeking to limit political fallout in their countries, many alliance heads of state publicly ruled out the use of ground troops in Kosovo, which had a devastatingly crippling effect on the allied air war.

In the United States, the Pentagon was steadfastly opposed to any involvement in the Balkans and looked to limit US military involvement in Kosovo out of fear that a

conflict there could turn into another Vietnam. General Clark's requests to increase American troop strength in the region were consistently undercut by the reluctant US military leadership. The resistance from the Pentagon left NATO without the capability to wage an effective war until the allies decided that they had to escalate the air campaign.

All of the above decisions came about as a result of the alliance's civilian leadership's blind faith in coercive diplomacy. This rampant belief that NATO was only engaged in coercive diplomacy as tons of bombs fell on Kosovo and Belgrade resulted in the alliance escalating to war with no cohesive plan on how to do it. As a result of the politician's faith in coercive diplomacy, the military campaign that SACEUR was directing was tightly constrained and one-dimensional. Nevertheless, General Clark bristled against the shackles of incrementalism to advocate the use of decisive force.

This fundamental disconnect between what the alliance civilians felt they were doing in Kosovo and the limited war that General Clark pressed to fight, adversely affected the execution of the war, and resulted in the alliance failing to meet some of its pre-conflict goals. The use of force is not without risks, even when one has a good plan. NATO, with no plan at all, stumbled into war ill prepared mentally, strategically and militarily.

Which leads us to the final point. Despite all of the alliance's mistakes and miscalculations, they acted with good intentions to stop the ethnic violence in Kosovo. There can be no doubt that had NATO not acted, the Kosovar Albanians in the province would either be dead or huddled in a refugee camp in some other country. By this measure, NATO's intervention in Kosovo should be viewed in a positive light.

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