Order Code RL30374

CRS Report for Congress

Kosovo: Lessons Learned from Operation *Allied Force*

November 19, 1999

Paul E. Gallis, Coordinator
Specialist in European Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

ABSTRACT

This report, originally prepared as a memorandum for Senator William Roth, examines the "lessons learned" of Operation *Allied Force*, NATO's effort to make President Milosevic of Yugoslavia yield to its demands over Kosovo. The report analyzes NATO's political and military objectives; examines why Milosevic accepted NATO's terms; and evaluates Russia's role in the conflict. The report also assesses European/Canadian shortcomings in military capabilities made evident by the conflict; reviews the performance of the three new allies and the implications of their performance for possible further enlargement of the alliance; and encapsulates the range of allied viewpoints during the conflict and the political importance of maintaining a unified NATO position. Finally, the report analyzes the implications of the conflict for non-Article V missions for NATO, and the conclusions that potential NATO adversaries might draw from the war. This report may be updated as further information on the conflict becomes available. For additional reading, see CRS Issue Brief 98041, *Kosovo and U.S. Policy*; Issue Brief 10027, *Kosovo: U.S. and Allied Military Operations;* and CRS report RL30265, *Kosovo: Review and Analysis of Policy Objectives, 1998-June 1999*.

Kosovo: Lessons Learned from Operation *Allied Force*

Summary

The March-June 1999 NATO war over Kosovo raised questions about many issues affecting the future of NATO. Questions arising from the conflict about political objectives, strategy, command arrangements, NATO-Russian relations, allied capabilities, future enlargement, allied unity, non-Article V operations, and the response of potential adversaries remain under debate. This report provides brief "lessons learned" from Operation *Allied Force*.

NATO had limited political objectives in the conflict, most of which were at least partially met. Key considerations, such as avoiding civilian casualties and losses to NATO forces, affected design of the military strategy supporting these objectives. NATO's restrained escalation of force, with no threat of ground attack and a gradual application of increased air power, violated conventional U.S. military doctrine to maximize shock. A desire to sustain allied unity largely caused this restraint, and ceded time and initiative to Milosevic. Subsequent proposals to streamline allied decision-making, including an "intervention committee," are discussed.

Why Milosevic decided to accept NATO terms and withdraw his forces remains unclear. Damage caused by NATO bombing, sustained allied unity, possible allied planning for a ground war, a desire to preserve his forces, and desertion of Russia as a possible protector were likely principal reasons.

NATO sought to maintain political engagement with Russia, which sharply opposed the air war. Russia sought to undermine NATO's objectives, but in the end acceded to allied desires to assist in achieving a diplomatic solution.

The conflict revealed a significant gap in military capability between the United States and its allies, which were deficient in key areas such as lift, precision-guided munitions, and night combat. These shortfalls may have spurred European interest in developing greater capabilities, an interest not yet reflected in defense budgets. The three new allies gave political support to NATO goals, but did not send combat forces. Their restrained involvement raised issues for a possible next round of enlargement, such as candidate states' military preparedness and political will.

NATO maintained unity, but a range of views was evident in allied governments. Leftist or center-left governments supported the conflict, Britain took a leading role, Italy bore a heavy burden, and the Greek government, despite vigorous popular opposition, maintained its political support for the war. The conflict broke new ground in that the allies went to war in part for humanitarian reasons.

Potential adversaries learned that NATO may no longer regard claims of sovereignty as a shield against allied intervention in their affairs. They may also have learned useful lessons from Milosevic's tactics intended to divide the allies, and that NATO may be more likely to take decisive action to protect interests near Europe, than when interests at a greater distance are affected.

This report, in the form of a memorandum, was originally prepared for Senator William Roth, and is being made available to Congress as a whole with his permission.

Contents

Kosovo: Lessons Learned from Operation *Allied Force*

Introduction*

Operation *Allied Force* ended with the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from and the return of most refugees to Kosovo. The conflict, however, raised many questions about broader issues affecting the future of the NATO alliance. This memorandum examines a number of "lessons learned," with the realization that any conflict is unique and only elements of *Allied Force* may have relevance for future operations.

During the war, there were questions about NATO's strategy, particularly President Clinton's announcement that the use of ground forces was not being considered as an option, and the need for an escalation of air operations. Bringing together 19 allies with disparate histories and interests, and often different political cultures was a formidable task. How did that task affect formulation of political goals and military objectives? Were the allies consistent in those goals and objectives? The first section of the memorandum examines these questions.

In the second section, CRS examines decision-making and command arrangements. Did the chain of command operate as expected by the allies? Was *Allied Force* "war by committee," with a least common denominator determining final decisions, or was greater flexibility in reconciling national sentiments with strategic requirements apparent?

In the third section, Russia's role is examined. NATO has sought for several years to engage Russia in security issues on the continent, without giving Moscow a veto over decision-making. From the allied perspective, did Russia play a constructive role? Does the conflict indicate a need for different ways to engage Russia in the future?

The fourth section examines NATO capabilities and burdensharing. It is clear that the United States bore the brunt of the air campaign. Given this fact, how significant was the role played by European allies in *Allied Force*? What did the war indicate about strengths and shortcomings of NATO's military forces? How did the new member states, which joined the alliance only two weeks before the conflict began, respond to their initial, and undoubtedly difficult, test? Does their performance in the conflict have implications for a possible next round of enlargement?

The final section analyzes the implications of the conflict for NATO's future. Were the allies satisfied with the outcome of *Allied Force*? How well did NATO

---

*Prepared by Paul E. Gallis, Specialist in European Affairs.

tolerate a range of sentiments in allied governments, and how important is consensus-building and unity in such a conflict? Does the war indicate a need for greater European military capability, particularly for non-Article V operations? What insights might potential adversaries have learned about NATO from the conduct of *Allied Force*?

Operation Allied Force: The Strategy

Political Objectives of Operation *Allied Force*[*]

NATO's political goals in first threatening, then engaging, in air strikes against Yugoslavia were limited. In essence, NATO utilized air strikes as a means to compel Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to change his behavior in Kosovo, which was viewed to be unacceptable to the international community on humanitarian grounds and threatening to neighboring states, and to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Outside of Kosovo, NATO also sought to stabilize neighboring countries, maintain allied unity, and limit damage to relations with Russia. The air campaign did not have as stated objectives taking Kosovo away from Serbia by force, providing defense for the Kosovo Liberation Army, or removing Milosevic from power.

NATO first threatened air strikes against Yugoslavia in October 1998 as a means to enforce agreements reached between Richard Holbrooke and Milosevic on a cease-fire and Serbian force levels in Kosovo. The NATO threat theoretically remained in place during the peace negotiations at Rambouillet in early 1999, providing an "incentive" for the parties to reach an agreement. After Yugoslavia rejected the interim agreement, NATO publicly renewed its threat of air strikes in March 1999. At the start of the operation, U.S. and NATO leaders said that the action was intended to stop the killing in Kosovo and compel Milosevic to accept the interim political settlement negotiated at Rambouillet. On March 24, President Clinton outlined three objectives of the mission: to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose; to deter an even bloodier offensive by Yugoslavia against innocent civilians in Kosovo; if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to make war in Kosovo.

Instead of capitulating or reversing course, however, Milosevic immediately intensified his massive ethnic cleansing campaign to drive out most of the ethnic Albanian population from Kosovo. Hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees fled or were driven out to neighboring countries. Although NATO's objective of deterring such violence failed, NATO resolved to continue the air campaign until certain conditions were met. In April, NATO established five core demands on Milosevic: stop all military action, violence and repression in Kosovo; withdraw from Kosovo his military, police, and paramilitary forces; agree to the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence with NATO at its core; agree to the return of all refugees and access to them by humanitarian aid organizations; and provide assurance

---

[*]Prepared by Julie Kim, Specialist in International Relations.

of willingness to work on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords to establish a political framework agreement for Kosovo.

NATO held to these objectives through the rest of the campaign. Some proved to be more controversial than others. Regarding the withdrawal of Serb forces, NATO subsequently specified that all of Belgrade's forces had to leave Kosovo, in contrast to earlier agreements that would have allowed Belgrade to retain some forces in the province. U.S. officials asserted that only a full withdrawal would allow for the return of a substantial number of refugees. In an apparent concession, however, NATO said, at the April 1999 summit in Washington, that it would consider a pause in the air campaign if Milosevic's forces "began" to withdraw.

With regard to the international military presence, NATO asserted that it should provide the "core" of the force. The May 6 statement adopted by the Group of 8 countries, however, referred only to "effective international civil and security presences" endorsed by the United Nations, making no mention of NATO and implying possible U.N. command and control. However, the June 3 statement presented to Milosevic by the Russian and Finnish envoys restored NATO's "substantial participation" and united command in the international security presence. Milosevic's agreement to the statement and the subsequent Military Technical Agreement worked out between NATO and Yugoslav military leaders, with terms meeting NATO's requirements, enabled the alliance to end Operation *Allied Force* on June 10. NATO later reached a de-militarization agreement with the Kosovo Liberation Army.

With these agreements and the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 (June 10), NATO claimed that the stated political objectives of the *Allied Force* operation had been met. These objectives, limited in scope, could only provide conditions for peace to take hold in Kosovo. The larger objective of securing peace and security in Kosovo and southeastern Europe would depend on other operations and international efforts.

Military Goals of Operation Allied Force*

Without access to NATO military planning documents, any discussion of military objectives is limited to public statements, and consequently must be generalized. It is impossible to separate the military goals of *Operation Allied Force* from their political context, given that they were crafted and adjusted to maintain a political consensus among the allies. In announcing the onset of the air campaign, NATO Secretary-General Solana stated:

> Alliance military action is intended to support its political aims. To do so, NATO's military action will be directed towards halting the violent attacks being committed by Yugoslav army and security forces and disrupting their ability to conduct future attacks against the population of Kosovo...

---

*Prepared by Steve Bowman, Specialist in National Defense.

From the onset, however, there appeared to be a disconnection between this objective and the conduct of the air campaign. Targeting was restricted almost entirely to air defense and infrastructure facilities, destruction of which appeared not to hamper Serb ethnic cleansing operations in Kosovo. In addition, *Operation Allied Force's* design as a campaign of phased escalation indicated that hopes of "signaling" NATO's resolve took precedence over solely military concerns. As it became apparent that air strikes could not stop Serb operations, public military objectives were brought more in line with what could be achieved. On April 15, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary Cohen stated:

> Our military objective is to degrade and damage the military and security structure that President Milosevic has used to depopulate and destroy the Albanian majority in Kosovo.

Now the military objectives were drafted in relative terms (e.g., "degrading" capabilities), and hence achievable almost by definition. Outright destruction of Serb armed forces and halting the attacks in Kosovo were no longer included as a military objective, because they could not be achieved solely though an air campaign, and a ground offensive was politically unacceptable for the allies.

Though NATO spokesmen emphasized that all targets had military significance, the air strikes were increasingly targeted against economic and political infrastructure (e.g., bridges, power plants, TV stations, presidential residences). These were targets of value to the Milosevic regime, and reflected an intensified effort to force a political capitulation from President Milosevic, rather than an effort to wipe out operating ground forces in Kosovo.

Hence from the outset, *Operation Allied Force* was a unique type of operation, and not guided by normal military doctrine. There appears to have been no confusion on military objectives among NATO military forces. The significant differences in perspective were rather on the national political level, where short-term military objectives were affected by political adjustments in target lists, strong aversion to casualties on either side of the conflict, and concerns over domestic public reactions.

NATO military leaders, including General Clark, General Naumann, and General Short have criticized the extent to which they were unable to conduct the operation based upon military objectives, and have called for an examination of the alliance's decision making processes once a military operation has been undertaken. Gen. Naumann has also noted that while the Yugoslavs prepared for a war, NATO "prepared for an operation"; a distinction marking the inherent constraints on NATO's military leaders.[1]

Application of Military Force: Escalate or Overwhelm?*

NATO's military strategy for forcing Milosevic out of Kosovo, based on the gradual application of military force, received considerable criticism from military

---

[1] *Defense News*, July 26, p. 30.

* Prepared by Edward F. Bruner, Specialist in National Defense.

strategists and others despite the fact that it ultimately did compel his withdrawal at no cost in NATO lives. The use of force was restrained in several dimensions: first, there was no confrontation or serious threat by allied ground forces; second, air power was applied gradually; third, some strategic civilian targets were kept off limits; and fourth, air power was restricted to high altitude delivery in order to reduce danger to allied pilots. This restrained escalation of force appeared to violate conventional U.S. doctrine to apply optimal joint forces for decisive results.[2] It also contradicted U.S. Air Force doctrine to maximize shock with simultaneous effects-based targeting, whether one preferred strategic paralysis of Serbia or destruction of its combat forces as the aim.[3]

The advantages of gradual escalation were primarily political. An over-riding consideration was to sustain allied unity throughout the military campaign against Yugoslavia.[4] Key participants such as Italy and Greece might have been hard-pressed to control public dissent in the face of perceived NATO heavy-handedness, especially if it resulted in sizable Serbian civilian or NATO military casualties; all Western democracies, currently, place a high priority on avoiding casualties. Many Western policy-makers expected that modest air strikes would quickly bring Milosevic to the table — per the precedent of the Bosnian Serb reaction in 1995. As a practical matter, beginning with limited operations demonstrated NATO resolve immediately while avoiding a long, possibly awkward, wait for more massive forces to be assembled. Militarily, the incremental approach allowed a conservative attack and assessment of Serbian air defenses to minimize dangers to allied air crews. Bad weather and Serbian dispersal and camouflage of forces also constrained effective targeting.

The disadvantages of gradual escalation were that it ceded time and initiative to Milosevic. Whereas massive strikes might have damaged Serbian military capabilities and shocked the leaders and public into early capitulation, limited strikes permitted physical and psychological accommodations and adjustments to be made on a daily

---

[2]In 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger set forth six tests for use of U.S. combat forces, including that they should be committed "wholeheartedly." Congress, in the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, underlined that U.S. forces should fight jointly. In 1993, General Colin Powell restated the Weinberger Doctrine as, "... we should always execute for decisive results." See Stephen Daggett and Nina Serafino, CRS Report 94-805, *The Use of Force: Key Contemporary Documents*, October 17, 1994.

[3]Many points on air operations in Kosovo derive from materials presented at an Eaker Colloquy on Aerospace Strategy, Requirements, and Forces held on August 16, 1999 in Washington, D.C., titled *Operation Allied Force: Strategy, Execution, Implications*. (Subsequently cited as Eaker Colloquy.) Theoretical background is described by Howard D. Belote, "Paralyze or Pulverize? Liddell Hart, Clausewitz, and Their Influence on Air Power Theory," *Strategic Review*, Winter 1999, pp. 40-46.

[4]General Clark, "...the cohesion of the alliance was more important than any single target we struck..." Quoted by Erin Q. Winograd, "Clark Says Air Campaign Wasn't Slowed by Coalition Requirements," *Inside the Army*, August 9,1999, p. 2. In a different interpretation, another journalist reported that General Clark said, "...the alliance was hamstrung by competing political and military interests that may have prolonged the conflict." See William Drozdiak, "War Effort Restrained By Politics," *The Washington Post*, July 20, 1999, p.14.

basis and allowed Serbian military and security forces to concentrate on their ethnic cleansing missions. Allied forces *per se* were not under serious threat and could afford to take as long as necessary to prosecute incremental attacks against Yugoslavia; the same was not true, of course, for the Kosovo Albanians — each day of the campaign meant added deaths and displacements for them. Whether an alternative, "overwhelming" strategy could have been mounted and concluded within less than the 78 days of Operation Allied Force will never be known for certain. It is likely, however, that looser political constraints on civilian targeting and operating altitudes would have allowed air strikes to create greater damage sooner to both Serbian infrastructure and combat forces.

Exclusion of a Ground Force Option*

The element of NATO's strategy of force escalation that was most visibly and heatedly debated was the decision to exclude participation of ground forces. Special criticism was reserved for public declarations of that policy, such as President Clinton's statement on March 24 that "I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war."[5] The political justification for such a militarily unwise statement was to reassure any skittish NATO allies that the United States was serious about keeping the Kosovo operation limited and as bloodless as possible. It became increasingly apparent that, should the air campaign fail to compel Serbian withdrawal from Kosovo, NATO would either have to use ground forces or define down its objectives. By May 18, the President said, "I don't think we or our allies should take any options off the table,..."[6] In the end, ground forces were not used, but the debate continues about the efficacy of using or threatening to use them.

The decision to deploy ground forces generally evidences more serious intent than does high-altitude bombing alone. The strategic advantage, in this case, was that Milosevic would have been less able to wait out and ignore NATO air actions — he would lose the initiative; the disadvantage was that all the allies would have to face the risk of military casualties and many other uncertainties and potential consequences flowing from a commitment to invade Yugoslavia. Although NATO unquestionably could have mustered a ground force capable of defeating the Yugoslav Army, geography and politics complicated planning for its insertion.[7] A major effort might have taken many months to prepare. Even without a specific plan, however, had NATO not ruled out ground forces, Milosevic would surely have felt threatened by the strong NATO combat formations already deployed in neighboring Bosnia, Macedonia, and Albania and logistics bases in Hungary. Had Milosevic and his generals not felt safe from ground attacks that could potentially strike from eight

---

*Prepared by Edward F. Bruner, Specialist in National Defense.

[5]See R.W. Apple Jr., "Nimble Security Juggler: Sandy Berger, The Strategist And Politician," *New York Times,* August 25, 1999, p.1.

[6]Ibid.

[7]For a discussion of military and geographic planning factors, see Edward F. Bruner, *Kosovo: Possible Ground Force Options*, CRS Report RS20188, May 4, 1999, 6 pp.

different surrounding states, they might have held out less long or have devoted military resources to preparing defenses rather than to ethnic cleansing.[8]

At the tactical level, there were indications that forces on the ground — working jointly with air forces — enhanced the overall operation beyond their direct capabilities. NATO high-altitude, precision bombing seemed quite successful against fixed, infrastructure targets. It was much less successful against Serbian combat forces that were dispersed, hidden, and camouflaged. NATO air operations enjoyed their greatest success against Serbian combat forces in the last days of the campaign when ground incursions by the Kosovo Liberation Army forced the Serbs to mass and move forces, providing lucrative targets. Task Force Hawk, a U.S. Army unit based on Apache attack helicopters and long-range rocket systems, was assembled close to Kosovo in Albania. Although TF Hawk was not committed, it appears that its reconnaissance and surveillance assets, intelligence processing capability, and ground-oriented analysts were effective in providing useful target data for NATO air forces.[9] At both the strategic and tactical levels, therefore, it appears that threatening to use, or actually introducing, ground forces early in Operation Allied Force could have hastened Milosevic's withdrawal from Kosovo and diverted effort from his campaign of ethnic cleansing. Whether all allies and neighboring countries would have supported such a strategy remains uncertain.

Why Did Milosevic Agree to Withdraw His Forces from Kosovo?*

A definitive explanation for Milosevic's decision to withdraw his forces from Kosovo is not possible at present, given that Milosevic has yet to explain publicly the reasons for the withdrawal, and that archives and memoirs that could shed light on the question are unlikely to be available for some time. However, observers have offered several plausible explanations. One factor may have been the damage caused by 11 weeks of allied bombing. According to press accounts, the bombing appeared to be successful in destroying military bases and government installations, as well as dual use infrastructure within Serbia proper, including bridges, oil refineries and power plants. Perhaps most importantly, NATO targeted factories, television stations and other assets of Milosevic's key supporters, including the influential Karic brothers. (Milosevic's cronies may have also been discomfited by an EU travel ban that prevented them from gaining easy access to their overseas bank accounts.) Although Milosevic may have at first received a political boost from public outrage at the NATO bombing, he may have feared that the extensive damage caused by large-scale, open-ended bombing would sharply erode his public support and the loyalty of his inner circle.[10]

---

[8]At one time or another, Macedonia, Greece, and Hungary did state opposition to staging a ground offensive from their territories. They cooperated in all NATO military activities short of that, however, and were never pressured for a definitive decision.

[9]Theodore G. Stroup Jr., "Task Force Hawk: Beyond Expectations," *Army Magazine,* August 1999, pp 8-10.

*Prepared by Steven Woehrel, Specialist in European Affairs.

[10]*Evening Standard* (London), August 19, 1999, 8; *New York Times,* June 6, 1999, 1.

Damage inflicted on Serbian and Yugoslav forces may not have been a key factor in forcing the withdrawal; dispersal of forces and expert camouflage reportedly moderated their losses. However, the allied air presence may well have hindered Yugoslav forces in their campaign to stamp out the KLA, which had been a key objective of Milosevic's ethnic cleansing effort. While the KLA did not seriously threaten Serbian control of the province during the bombing, Milosevic may have calculated that time was not on his side in the long run. The tactical stalemate with the KLA could eventually have turned to his disadvantage, particularly if a NATO ground offensive would have been launched.[11]

It is unclear the extent to which Milosevic took seriously the threat of a ground offensive. NATO countries never began serious preparations for an invasion, in part due to concern about the negative political impact of likely Western casualties. General Clark has said that he believes that Milosevic had received intelligence that the United States and other NATO countries were likely to begin serious consideration of a ground assault in the near future. Milosevic may have calculated that his ability to secure a deal would deteriorate rapidly if that occurred. Clark said that he believes Milosevic's military advisors told him that if NATO ultimately did decide on a ground assault, Yugoslav forces would be defeated.[12] Milosevic may have calculated that such a defeat, and the heavy losses Yugoslav forces would suffer, could be politically fatal for him. Relatives of reservists demonstrated against the war in several towns in southern Serbia in May 1999, after a modest number of bodies were returned from the battlefields of Kosovo. Some reservists in Kosovo abandoned their posts. In addition, Milosevic could not rule out the possibility that NATO forces might not stop at taking Kosovo, and could move on Belgrade in order to oust him from power.

Milosevic may have also been swayed by his increasing international isolation. He believed that NATO countries would not be able to maintain the unity and resolve to carry out military operations of the necessary duration and intensity to force him to quit Kosovo. On April 30, Milosevic said that "we never thought we could defeat NATO...[However,] you are not willing to sacrifice lives to achieve our surrender. But we are willing to die to defend our rights as an independent sovereign nation. The U.S. Congress is beginning to understand that bombing a country into compliance is not a viable policy or strategy."[13] However, the NATO allies remained unified during the conflict, in part due to public outrage in the West over the brutality of the Serbian ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo. Another important factor was the possible concern among many allied leaders that a failure to achieve allied objectives in Kosovo would deal a devastating blow to NATO's credibility. Finally, and perhaps most critically, there were no combat losses among allied pilots, as Milosevic had hoped.

---

[11]Anthony Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile War in Kosovo," Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 3, 1999.

[12]AP news wire dispatch, September 1, 1999.

[13]UPI news agency dispatch, April 30, 1999.

A related consideration for Milosevic may have been his perception that Russia had abandoned him. Perhaps buoyed by the reports of his brother Borislav, who was Yugoslav Ambassador to Russia, Milosevic may have been counting on Russian support to deter allied action against him, or if that failed, for Russia to provide him with concrete military assistance. However, it became clear that no such assistance was forthcoming. Press accounts of the June 3 meeting between Milosevic, Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari agree that Chernomyrdin supported Ahtisaari's insistence that the plan, which was based on the core NATO demands for ending the conflict, was non-negotiable. Given the constellation of international political forces against him, Milosevic may have seen the Chernomyrdin/Ahtisaari peace document as the best offer he was likely to get.[14]

Some observers have raised the issue of whether Milosevic in fact wanted to get rid of Kosovo all along. They speculate that given the unfavorable demographic situation in the province, and continuing Western demands for autonomy for Kosovo, Milosevic may have felt that Serbian control of Kosovo was doomed in the long run anyway, and that having it taken away from him by force at acceptable cost was more politically palatable than to give it up without a fight.[15] Moreover, the Chernomyrdin-Ahtisaari document recognized Yugoslavia's sovereignty over Kosovo, while giving the U.N. the unenviable task of governing the province. Skeptics argue that such a strategy would appear convoluted, even by Balkan standards. They add that if such was Milosevic's strategy, it has not been a great success; the defeat in Kosovo has landed him in the most difficult domestic political situation of his rule.

NATO Decision-Making and Command Arrangements

Performance of the NATO Chain of Command*

Given the generally smooth execution of the air campaign and its favorable outcome — particularly with no casualties to airmen — NATO's military chain of command for Operation Allied Force has suffered little criticism. NATO has a great advantage in its long-standing and often-exercised chains of command and standardized procedures. Coordinating the military efforts of nineteen nations on short notice without that advantage would have been a daunting task.

On the other hand, concern has been expressed about political influence over or within the NATO chain. NATO has the built-in tension of most democratic societies, including the United States: how to insure civilian control over military operations without harmful micro-management of the generals.[16] Questioned on the extent of

---

[14]Interview with JUL party leader Liubisa Ristic, *Il Giornale* (Milan), June 7, 1999, 1; *U.S. News and World Report*, June 14, 1999, 32. ; *Time*, June 14, 1999, 42.

[15]*New York Times*, June 6, 1999, 1.

*Prepared by Edward F. Bruner, Specialist in National Defense.

[16]For distinctive historical reasons, some allies, such as France, have acquired in the 20th century much tighter civilian control over their military establishment than the United (cont.)

political interference, Secretary of Defense Cohen told the Senate Armed Services Committee, "There were restraints placed on ... General Clark." Cohen then noted the difficulty in getting 19 nations to think through their roles without hindering military planning, "... consistent also with making sure there is always civilian control over the military."[17] In discussing the incremental nature of the campaign, General Clark "...acknowledged that he was compelled to sacrifice basic logic of warfare to maintain the political cohesion of the alliance."[18] As an example, he cited the necessity for concern with anti-war pressures felt by coalition governments in Germany and Italy. In the final analysis, however, nineteen sovereign and diverse democracies were able to retain their political prerogatives through to a united military victory. The question is open whether any structural change to NATO could make the process easier.

In a war limited to air strikes, many questions were raised about NATO target selection and approval. Secretary Cohen testified that President Clinton did not select targets, although he did review recommendations and target lists. It was also clear that Air Force generals would have preferred to receive political guidance on the effects desired by bombing, and then select appropriate targets and timing, rather than simply servicing an approved list of targets. For maximum effect, a number of targets might be attacked near-simultaneously; a political veto of just a few of those targets could disrupt the whole plan. Air Force generals were allowed to make their case for preferred strategies, but accepted political judgements. As the campaign progressed, it appeared that nations became more comfortable with the targeting and the perception was that nations tended to veto only sensitive targets assigned to their own pilots. It is claimed, however, that governments did from time-to-time intercede and urgently request postponement or withdrawal of selected targets; their wishes were usually — but not always — respected.[19]

To streamline decision-making over targeting, some have suggested a small "intervention committee" representing the governments in a "coalition of the willing."[20] Such a proposal might well sacrifice allied unity. In the Kosovo conflict, for example, key allies such as the German and Italian governments were urging restraint in attacking targets that they believed might cause high numbers of civilian casualties. Exclusion of such governments from the decision-making process would have robbed NATO of the important tool of a united political front. And in a comparable parallel, small countries such as the Netherlands — an important

---

States.

[17]Secretary of Defense William Cohen before the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 20, 1999.

[18]Drozdiak, op.cit.

[19]Eaker Colloquy. Stated by Dr. Edward Luttwalk and neither rebutted nor criticized. On the same subject, General Clark reportedly said, "I didn't always defer to those who wanted targets withheld." See "NATO faced deep splits over Kosovo conflict," *Agence France Presse*, August 20, 1999. A more serious problem was an admission by CJCS General Shelton to the SASC on July 20, 1999 that there were occasions when targets apparently were leaked to the Serbs.

[20]James Kitfield, "A War of Limits," *National Journal* (July 24, 1999. P. 2154-2161.

participant in both the Kosovo conflict and the Gulf War — have strongly objected to ideas floated in the European Union that larger countries should have greater weight in decision-making.

Some critics have suggested that the surprise Russian occupation of the Pristina Airfield in advance of NATO peacekeeping forces in Kosovo (KFOR) was an indicator of weakness in the NATO chain of command. A force of 180-200 Russians painted KFOR on their vehicles and dashed from their station in Bosnia to Pristina before KFOR entered Kosovo. It is alleged that SACEUR Clark ordered British Lieutenant General Jackson, Commander of KFOR, to intercept or preempt the Russian occupation of the airfield. He did not, or perhaps could not, carry out the order (if it was indeed an order). In any event, NATO treated the Russian stunt as a political rather than a military problem.[21] Even from a purely military perspective, no harm was done and neither NATO nor U.S. interests would have been served by an armed confrontation with Russian troops. The United States has not criticized LTG Jackson's judgment in this matter. According to President Clinton's policy, a U.S. commander in a multilateral force retains the option of not acting on an order exceeding the agreed mandate for that force, and could refer his action to the President for review; he could also act to protect his forces if they were endangered.[22] It could be presumptuous to reserve such safeguards to the United States and deny them to other nations; and, it is unlikely that such policies will be reviewed by NATO.

Russia

Russia's Goals During the Kosovo Conflict*

NATO's air campaign during the Kosovo conflict aroused intense opposition across the entire political spectrum in Russia as well as in the general public.[23] It also posed a serious dilemma for Moscow: how to oppose NATO's military action without provoking a confrontation with the U.S. and NATO Europe. The two prongs of this dilemma encompass Russia's apparent goals during the conflict — and the tension between those goals seriously weakened Moscow's position.

---

[21]Toni Marshall and Bill Gertz. "Subordinate Quashed Clark's Orders," Washington Times, August 3, 1999, p.1.

[22]Presidential Decision Directive 25. A declassified version is contained in Mark M. Lowenthal, *Peacekeeping in Future U.S. Foreign Policy*, CRS Report 94-260. A general discussion can be found in Edward F. Bruner, *U.S. Forces and Multinational Commands: PDD-25 and Precedents*, CRS Report 94-887, updated September 2, 1998, 6 pp.

*Prepared by Stuart D. Goldman, Specialist in Soviet Affairs.

[23]This may have been due partly to the extremely one-sided coverage of the conflict by Russian news media. See below.

Russia's cultural, religious, and historical affinity with Serbia[24] was mistakenly highlighted by most western media as the prime factor behind Moscow's opposition to NATO's bombing. Other factors were almost certainly more important. Until recently, the Russian public had been largely unconcerned with foreign policy issues such as NATO enlargement, despite the agitation of political elites. NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, however, stirred deep popular anger,[25] to the delight of communists and ultranationalists who capitalized on it, and to the chagrin of the government and moderate politicians who were/are threatened by this development. Besides emotional and domestic political factors, some Russian leaders are worried by what they perceive as a growing NATO military threat approaching their borders while Russian conventional armed forces are in ruins. Particularly alarming, from this perspective, is NATO's decision to use military force without U.N. or OSCE approval (where Russia would have veto power), to address a human rights situation in Kosovo that reminds many Russians of their own recent conflict in Chechnya (or Dagestan).[26] "Russia could be next," warn the hardliners. Other Russian leaders probably realize that NATO does not pose a threat of military aggression against their country, but are concerned that NATO will act militarily elsewhere without Russian consent and possibly against its interests.

From this it follows that Russia's goals in the conflict were substantially, though not entirely, at variance with NATO's. Russia wanted to bring about a halt to NATO military action and have the alliance accept the principle that out-of-area military operations require U.N. approval. Moscow tried to use the Kosovo conflict to divide and weaken NATO and to strengthen its own ties with China on an anti-U.S. basis. These all contradicted U.S. and NATO objectives and policies. Russia also tried to use the conflict to demonstrate that it too is an "indispensable" world power. At the same time, Moscow absolutely wanted to avoid being drawn militarily into the conflict and to prevent escalation or expansion of the conflict that would increase military risks to itself — goals shared with NATO. Finally, Russia wanted to avoid having the Kosovo conflict lead to a crisis in relations with the United States and NATO Europe that would deny Russia the economic assistance it so urgently needed. NATO also wanted to maintain stable relations with Russia. Russia's warnings to NATO about Kosovo were blunted by its military weakness and its continuing pleas for economic assistance and debt relief. As NATO unity over Kosovo continued to hold, Moscow shifted emphasis from its maximal goals (directed against NATO) to the more modest ones (of avoiding worst-case outcomes), through active diplomacy. In the end, Moscow became a significant player in the diplomatic maneuvering that brought an end to the conflict, ultimately distancing itself from Belgrade's positions (and

---

[24]Although Russia was central to Serbia's winning independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and they were allies in both world wars, throughout the most of Cold War Moscow and Belgrade were enemies. After 1948, the Tito regime viewed the U.S.S.R. as its main military threat. Yugoslav military doctrine was based on organized small unit and partisan warfare in response to a Warsaw Pact invasion.

[25]This too was largely due to inflammatory anti-NATO reporting by Russian media.

[26]The comparison between Chechnya and Kosovo is strained. Although Russian conduct in Chechnya, was brutal, it did not involve deliberate "ethnic cleansing" of the local population.

abandoning many of its own loudly proclaimed "principles"), and perhaps thereby contributing to Milosevic's decision to withdraw his forces from Kosovo.[27]

There is ample evidence of Russian cooperation with Serbia. In the early weeks of the NATO air campaign, Russian news coverage was almost indistinguishable from Serbian — which helped inflame Russian public opinion in ways that the governing elites probably soon regretted. (Russian news coverage later became less stridently one-sided, although it was never objective.) There are conflicting accounts as to whether Russia's electronic intelligence vessel in the Adriatic provided information to Belgrade, or only to Moscow.[28] Two Russian truck convoys of "humanitarian aid" to Yugoslavia were mainly symbolic. But its diplomatic support of Belgrade (until the end game) was quite significant. U.S. and NATO sources accused Russia's Balkan envoy and purported intermediary,[29] Viktor Chernomyrdin, of colluding with Milosevic until the final stage of negotiations, leading to Finnish President Ahtisaari being brought in by the West as a more reliable intermediary.

There is debate and uncertainty in Russia and the West over the June 12 "dash" of Russian paratroopers to the Pristina airport. Russian accounts differ as to whether Yeltsin specifically authorized the move in advance.[30] Seizing the airport may have been aimed at exerting pressure on NATO to agree to Russian terms for participation in KFOR, an issue then in heated dispute. Some say the Russian military launched the dash to the airport as an expression of disgust at the government's diplomatic abandonment of Belgrade. The move may reflect a struggle for control among factions in Moscow under a weak and disengaged President Yeltsin. Some U.S. and Russian sources claim that the 200 paratroopers were the vanguard of a much larger Russian force meant to "dictate facts on the ground," that was headed off at the last minute by Washington persuading Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria to cancel or deny overflight permission for Russian troop transport planes.[31]

---

[27]Some might argue that the above assessment attributes more coherence to Russia's policies than is warranted. Yeltsin may have made Chernomyrdin his special envoy primarily to undercut Premier Primakov, who was viewed increasingly by the Kremlin as an enemy. Chernomyrdin's acquiescence in NATO's key demands appeared to contradict the Primakov government's policy.

[28]See, for example, "Russia ... Verifying Yugoslav Intelligence Reports?" *Jamestown Monitor*, April 8, 1999.

[29]Neither Washington nor Brussels were pleased with Moscow's self-intrusion as an intermediary, but apparently felt obliged to accept a diplomatic fait accompli.

[30]"Yeltsin Knew of Army's Kosovo Plan," UPI, June 15, 1999; Gennady Charodeyev "Vladimir Lukin: Order Could Have Been Given By One Man Only — President," *Izvestia*, June 15, 1999.

[31]Robert Kaiser and David Hoffman, "Russia Had Bigger Plan In Kosovo; U.S. Thwarted a Larger, Secret Troop Deployment," *Washington Post*, June 25, 1999, p. A1; "Russian Intentions in Kosovo Questioned," *Jamestown Monitor*, July 6, 1999.

The Kosovo Conflict and NATO-Russia Relations*

From NATO's perspective, aspects of Russia's role in the Kosovo conflict were both hostile and helpful. Russia's harsh criticism of the NATO air campaign and its veiled threats almost certainly increased apprehension of some NATO allies and weakened alliance cohesion (though probably less than Moscow expected, adding to Russian frustration). This was likely one of Moscow's objectives. On the other hand, Moscow's decision to participate in NATO/EU diplomacy as an intermediary with Belgrade tended to dampen those fears among allies. Assessments vary as to the importance of Russia's role in bringing Milosevic to accept NATO's terms, but there seems little doubt that Russia's active diplomatic engagement enhanced NATO solidarity as the bombing campaign continued and collateral damage and civilian casualties increased.

The Kosovo conflict laid open a key contradiction in NATO's relationship with Russia, i.e., although the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the Permanent Joint Council create the veneer of treating Russia and NATO as equals, in reality, NATO does not regard or treat Russia as its equal. As the Kosovo conflict continued, it further damaged already strained relations between NATO and Russia. On one side, years of NATO efforts to convince Moscow that the alliance was not a military threat to its security were undermined. On the other side, western concerns about Russian intentions and reliability were reinforced. Russian political leaders assert that the country must increase defense spending and preparedness to counter the alleged NATO threat.[32] Russia has "frozen" most military relations and cooperation with NATO.[33] Russian officials state more baldly than ever, their intention to try to use the NATO-Russia Joint Council as a means of expanding Russian influence over NATO military decisions, and failing that, to withdraw from the Joint Council. Russian participation in KFOR, if it follows the Bosnian model, could over time help ease some of the tension in military cooperation. Also, in recent weeks the Putin government seems to have toned down Moscow's rhetoric about a "red line" that NATO dare not cross by admitting former Soviet republics such as the Baltic states to alliance membership.[34]

Some would argue that Russia's response to the Kosovo conflict raises larger questions about the compatibility of Russian and U.S./NATO interests and the long-term prospects for cooperation with Russia in bringing stability and reconciliation to Central and Eastern Europe. Advocates of this view maintain that there were strong elements of Soviet-style "old thinking" in Moscow's approach to the conflict.

---

*Prepared by Stuart D. Goldman, Specialist in Soviet Affairs.

[32]It is unclear whether Moscow has the financial means to implement these plans at this time, given its economic weakness, heavy debt burden, and need to satisfy IMF conditions to continue receiving urgently needed credits.

[33]In late July, Russia's Ambassador to NATO returned to Brussels and resumed Permanent Joint Council meetings, primarily to deal with KFOR issues. Most other Russia-NATO contact is still on hold.

[34]Moscow still strongly opposes the accession of former Soviet states to NATO.

NATO Capabilities and Burdensharing

Gaps in U.S.-European Military Capabilities*

Many military leaders, both U.S. and European, have pointed out significant gaps in the capabilities between the U.S. and allied military forces. Lieutenant General Michael Short (USAF), who commanded the air operation over Kosovo, and both the current and former Chairmen of NATO's Military Committee, Italy's Admiral Venturoni and Germany's General Naumann have all warned that NATO is in danger of becoming a "two-tiered" alliance. Gen. Short has noted that capability shortfalls affected targeting assignments in *Operation Allied Force*, and necessitated greater reliance on U.S. assets — particularly for accurate night bombing runs.[35] Both General Naumann and Admiral Venturoni have stated that, given their current military capabilities, the European members of NATO could not have undertaken the Kosovo mission without U.S. participation. This is an assessment that places the viability of the European Joint Combined Task force, and indeed the concept of a European Security and Defense Identity, in question.

The shortfalls that have been identified in the initial assessments of *Operations Allied Force* include:

- Precision-guided munitions;
- Laser-designator capability;
- Secure interoperable communications;
- High-fidelity Identification Friend or Foe systems;
- Electronic warfare capabilities;
- Air defense threat warning systems;
- Intelligence collection and dissemination (operational and tactical);
- Heavy airlift;
- Aerial refuelers;
- Night-vision capability.

During its 50th anniversary Summit in April 1999, NATO undertook the Defense Capability Initiative (DCI) to identify capability shortfalls and recommend remedies. NATO headquarters intends to feed the Kosovo after-action assessments into this effort. Looking at the areas the DCI was directed to examine, it is clear that many of the shortfalls had been identified before *Operation Allied Force*, but it is not clear that the European allies will be able to correct them, if current defense budget trends (flat or declining) continue. At present, the combined defense procurement for Canada and NATO's European allies is about one-half the U.S. procurement budget, while defense research and development is only about one-third of the U.S. investment. European defense investments also suffer inefficiencies owing to duplicative national programs, the failure to harmonize national defense requirements, and differing approaches to defense industry ownership and investment. A recent General Accounting Office report does not offer an optimistic assessment of the NATO allies'

---

*Prepared by Steve Bowman, Specialist in National Defense.

[35]"Allies Need Upgrade, General Says," *Washington Post,* June 20, 1999, p. 20.

ability to improve military capabilities without significant national budget restructuring.[36]

Speed of U.S. Ground Force Deployments and Employments*

The only major deployment of U.S. ground combat units during *Operation Allied Force* was Task Force Hawk. The deployment was initially announced April 4, 1999 and was expected to take 10 days. It took, however, until April 21st to complete, and its offensive core — AH-64A Apache helicopters and the ATACM missile systems — were never employed. Once announced, the Task Force's deployment and activities became a focus of the press, and a subject of controversy. Gen. Wesley Clark, SACEUR, requested the AH-64s shortly before the air campaign began, and initially their deployment time was estimated at 10 days. It eventually took almost three weeks for the unit's full deployment to Tirane, Albania. The Apache pilots then underwent an intensive training program to familiarize them with the terrain and the combat load for their aircraft. The order to employ the Apaches was never given, and *Allied Force* ended without their participation.

A variety of reasons have been offered for the delays in Task Force Hawk's deployment. The AH-64s alone were capable of deploying from Germany to Albania within 72 hours, however they were only a portion of the task force. Gen. Clark reportedly requested the AH-64s prior to the onset of the air campaign.[37] They were to be based in Macedonia along with other NATO ground forces preparing for KFOR. The Macedonian government, however, objected to the presence of attack helicopters, and the deployment was changed to Albania. This change had several consequences. First, force protection became a more important consideration. Albania was judged a less secure environment than Macedonia, and consequently Task Force Hawk was beefed up to include mechanized infantry, armor, and the Army's ATACMS surface-to-surface missile system. This, in turn, increased the assembly time, and increased the number of air transport sorties required three-fold. The inadequacies of the Tirane, Albania airport created a major chokepoint. The airport could accommodate only one C-5 or two C-17 transport aircraft on the ground at one time, and Task Force Hawk required over 150 aircraft sorties. Initially, it was also unable to handle night landings or take-offs. Then hardened helipads had to be constructed because heavy rains had turned the base area into a sea of mud. Further complicating the situation, the flow of refugees from Kosovo into Albania had made refugee assistance the first priority for Tirane's limited air cargo capacity.

With the press closely following Task Force Hawk's deployment, its arrival in Albania led to the expectation that it would be immediately employed. It was assumed that the Apache's would move against the Serb ground forces in Kosovo which had proven difficult for the Air Force to locate and destroy. Here again the last-minute decision to base the helicopters in Albania rather than Macedonia played a role. The

---

[36] *Implications of European Integration for Allies' Defense Spending",* General Accounting Office, June 1999, NSIAD99-185.

* Prepared by Steve Bowman, Specialist in National Defense.

[37] *Defense News,* August 23, 1999, p. 1.

pilots had not been training for operations at the mountain altitudes encountered on the Albanian-Kosovo border. Helicopters become much more difficult to fly at higher altitudes, particularly with the additional fuel tanks that would be required for missions into Kosovo. Consequently, several weeks of intensive training were undertaken. Also, more experienced pilots from U.S.-based units were added to the task force. It should be noted that in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Brig. Gen. Cody of Task Force Hawk, acknowledged that only Army Special Operations helicopter pilots are trained to operate "from a standing start," so that Task Force Hawk's training period was not necessarily unusual.[38]

Even with the completion of this training, the AH-64s were not employed, and press reports indicate that resistance within DOD and the Army staff was a factor.[39] Reportedly, Pentagon officials were not convinced that Gen. Clark's intended mission for the Apaches — to attack dug-in Serb ground forces — was appropriate or worth the risk. There had been some resistance to the mission from the first, indicated by DOD's agreeing to the deployment, but insisting the AH-64s not be employed without Pentagon approval. The mountainous terrain, the fact that Serb forces knew where the helicopters were based and which approaches they would have to use, and the density of air defenses in the region, all contributed to this caution. The ATACMs had been included in Task Force Hawk to suppress air defenses prior to Apache missions, but there was a concern that significant collateral casualties could result from their use, which further complicated the employment decision.

Some elements of Task Force Hawk, however, did participate in offensive operations. Artillery/ATACMS support radars and ground intelligence assessment elements were able to pinpoint Serb artillery positions for Air Force strike aircraft. The AH-64s and other elements of Task Force eventually transferred to Macedonia and Kosovo to participate in *Operation Joint Guardian* (KFOR).

In sum, Task Force Hawk's experience was affected by political concerns that altered basing arrangements, inadequate transhipment facilities at its destination (and competing priorities for those facilities), severe terrain challenges, and concerns within DOD over the risk/benefit analysis of their intended mission.

NATO's New Members*

Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic became full members of NATO on March 12, 1999. Less than two weeks later, NATO embarked on Operation *Allied Force* against Yugoslavia, catching some of the new members' governments and populations by surprise. Although the three new members provided only modest material support to the U.S.-dominated air operation, their positions and roles during the NATO operation have been viewed by many as their first test as new NATO members, with possible consequences for NATO's further enlargement. None of the three countries contributed combat forces or support aircraft to the air campaign. All

---

[38]House Armed Services Hearing, June 29, 1999.

[39]*Army Times*, August 16, 1999. P. 18.

*Prepared by Julie Kim, Specialist in International Relations.

are contributing forces to NATO's peacekeeping missions in Bosnia (SFOR) and Kosovo (KFOR).

The level of support for *Allied Force* expressed by the governments of the three new members ranged from effusive to wary, reflecting differences in perceived national interests (and risks to these interests), in domestic political circumstances, and in public opinion. Of the three, Poland was arguably the most enthusiastic, but also the most removed from the Kosovo conflict. The Polish government gave strong support to the NATO mission, backed by strong public approval ratings (ranging from about 50% to over 60%)[40] and consensus across the political spectrum. The Polish government stated that NATO's military action was justified, after diplomatic efforts had been exhausted, in order to stop the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo and halt Serbian aggression. In April, Poland deployed a unit of 140 troops to NATO's humanitarian operation in Albania. The Polish government offered full access to Poland's airports by NATO aircraft participating in *Allied Force*.

Hungary, the only NATO member sharing a border with Yugoslavia and having direct national interests at stake, had a mixed response to NATO's action against Yugoslavia. After some hesitation, Hungary provided NATO with use of its airspace and air field facilities, which NATO used to launch some of its air strikes. During the June standoff between NATO and Russian peacekeepers at the Pristina airport, Hungary was the first country to deny Russia overflight rights to reinforce its peacekeepers. At the same time, the Hungarian government remained highly concerned about the fate of the substantial ethnic Hungarian minority in the northern Serbian province of Vojvodina. It objected to (but did not block) NATO's air strikes against Serb targets located in the Vojvodina. It has appealed for NATO protection of the Vojvodina Hungarians and for the issue of autonomy for Vojvodina to be addressed at an international level. Beyond air strikes, the government and parliament remained openly opposed to participating in or approving a possible NATO ground invasion of Yugoslavia, part of which was expected to be launched from Hungary. A majority of Hungarians supported the NATO air campaign in public opinion polls, although a majority also opposed a NATO ground invasion of Yugoslavia and feared that the conflict could spill over into Hungarian territory.

Political leaders in the Czech Republic expressed conflicting views of the NATO air campaign. In April, the Czech government publicly rejected the possibility of Czech army participation in a possible NATO ground operation in Yugoslavia. In May, Foreign Minister Jan Kavan and his Greek counterpart proposed a Kosovo peace initiative that included, among other things, a pause in the air strikes before all of NATO's demands were met. Some NATO officials reportedly viewed that initiative as counter-productive.[41] Within the opposition, former premier and current parliamentary leader Vaclav Klaus was outspokenly opposed to the NATO air campaign. Opinion polls showed the Czech public to be either divided equally for or against, or with a majority against, the NATO operation during the course of the air campaign. In contrast, President Havel expressed strong support for the NATO

---

[40]Opinion surveys showed that Poles were more divided on the question of introducing NATO ground combat troops into Yugoslavia.

[41]CTK news agency, in FBIS-EEU, May 26, 1999.

campaign and criticized the government for creating an ambiguous impression of Czech support. In June, Havel became the first head of state to visit Kosovo after the end of the NATO operation. Notwithstanding the wobbly political rhetoric, the Czech Republic granted NATO use of its airspace, transit through its territory, and airports and other transportation facilities during the air campaign. It also contributed a field hospital to Albania in response to the refugee crisis in that country.

In contrast to the air campaign, the three new NATO members fully expected to participate in an eventual NATO-led peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. Three and one-half years of experience serving a similar mission in NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia, prior to attaining full NATO membership, provided a key precedent. To KFOR, Poland offered an 800-strong landing battalion, Hungary a 320-man engineering battalion, and the Czech Republic a company of 150 personnel. KFOR contributing nations each assume the costs of their deployments. Some or all of the three may also contribute personnel to the international police force or to other international civilian missions. In addition to the troop and personnel contributions, all of the new NATO members accepted Kosovar refugees (either directly or through organized evacuations from Macedonia), and have provided humanitarian aid. Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek has urged a concerted and massive international effort to reconstruct and transform southeastern Europe.[42]

Operation *Allied Force* offered several possible lessons to the new NATO members. The operation demonstrated to the new allies the risks, obligations, and expectations, not just the security benefits, associated with alliance membership. Levels of political and popular support for the operation varied, a phenomenon similar to the experience of other NATO member states. The governments of the new allies may consider doing more to prepare their populations in advance of future such operations. They may consider developing combat forces that could participate directly in similar campaigns. The new NATO members appear to be better prepared politically and militarily for peacekeeping missions, as demonstrated by their participation in KFOR as well as SFOR in Bosnia. In turn, many observers consider that the participation of these countries and other NATO partner countries in such operations enhances their military integration into the alliance. However, some observers question whether future new members should have already developed additional capabilities that could contribute to NATO's future missions.

NATO and Future Threats

The Implications of *Allied Force* for U.S. NATO Leadership*

The Kosovo conflict evoked a range of responses from the European allies, which nonetheless remained unified during the operation. Each of the 19 allies endorsed the objectives of the war. All the key allies — Britain, France, Germany, and Italy — have left or center-left governments, which until recently might have been

---

[42] "How to Rebuild Bridges," *The Financial Times*, June

*Prepared by Paul E. Gallis, Specialist in European Affairs.

reluctant to engage in allied combat operations for any purpose other than collective defense. At the same time, unease over U.S. leadership was apparent in some governments, and a European security and defense identity (ESDI) received measured impetus.

Continuing Importance of Unity. Despite the end of the Cold War, NATO members continue to view the alliance as central to their security, given the inability of the European Union (EU) to build a credible defense and foreign policy capability. The European allies saw the threat from Kosovo, as with the conflict in Bosnia and Croatia in the early and mid-1990s, to be instability caused by virulently nationalistic ideas emanating from Yugoslavia, and by refugee flows that have caused social tensions and exacted significant budgetary outlays. A moral dimension — revulsion to ethnic cleansing — also caused them to act. Even governments leading countries with the luxury of geographic distance from Yugoslavia, or with populations unsympathetic to NATO's objectives, maintained a unified front over Kosovo because the alliance remains central to their security.

A Range of Viewpoints.[43] Among the allies, questions abound over U.S. leadership of *Allied Force*. Some allies had raised questions about U.S. leadership over Balkan issues in the early 1990s. Then, French and British officials criticized U.S. reluctance to place peacekeeping forces on the ground in Bosnia to prevent violence against the civilian population, and the U.S. decision to use air power alone against Yugoslav forces to achieve allied objectives. For some European countries, the potential repercussions of instability in the Balkans are sufficient justification for sending ground forces for peacekeeping into the region.

Among governments strongly supportive of *Allied Force*, the perception is common that British Prime Minister Blair's government, and not the Clinton Administration, provided the key political leadership. As the air campaign wore on without clear results, the Blair government pressed for an introduction of NATO ground forces. While most allied governments may not have supported the use of ground forces, they gave high marks to Blair and his foreign and defense ministers for forceful articulation of European interests at stake in the Balkans. Blair also carried his message to smaller NATO countries, where he spoke on a number of occasions to bolster several governments, a step that raised his profile as a leader. In Britain one influential strategist who has long supported the alliance contended that the war demonstrated that Europeans are "far too dependent on the United States." He noted that while the United States was supplying the strategy and firepower, "America does not have the same interests in the outcome of a European war as those living in the region." The Clinton Administration, in his view, had become a "hesitant" leader, not fully sharing its allies' long-term risks, and would not send the ground forces essential for victory. If the war failed in its objectives, the Europeans would be left with over one million refugees and a highly destabilized region.[44] The Blair government remains strongly committed to NATO, but Blair, unlike his predecessors, has become a

---

[43]See also Library of Congress. CRS. Karen Donfried (coordinator), *Kosovo: International Reaction to NATO Air Strikes*. RL30114. April 21, 1999.

[44]Lawrence Freedman, "Prepare possible ground war, with Europe in the lead," *International Herald Tribune* [henceforth *IHT*], May 27, 1999. p. 12.

leading advocate of ESDI to share the defense burden more equitably with the United States.

France strongly supported pursuit of *Allied Force's* objectives, but Socialist Prime Minister Jospin's government reportedly considered introduction of ground forces as an option. The conflict evoked a candid assessment in France of the country's distinctive relationship to NATO. France, not a member of NATO's integrated command structure and long critical of aspects of U.S. leadership of the alliance, nonetheless placed its forces under SACEUR. French government officials and journalists alike acknowledged that the United States provided the military capability key to successful resolution of the conflict. The French altered a longstanding view that a U.N. mandate was necessary for all non-Article V NATO actions. At the same time, some concluded that France's effective participation in the conflict proved that the country need not join the integrated command structure, and that U.S. hesitancy in leading the alliance demonstrated the need for ESDI.[45]

Germany's participation in NATO air strikes marked the first time since World War II that German forces have engaged in combat operations. Of central concern in Germany was the flow of refugees and moral issues raised by ethnic cleansing. At substantial expense, Germany housed over 300,000 refugees during the conflict in Bosnia; their presence caused social tensions. Today, of particular importance, Chancellor Schröder's government includes the traditionally pacifist Greens, whose leader Joschka Fischer, now foreign minister, vigorously supported *Allied Force*. German leaders strongly opposed the use of ground forces in Kosovo. The German government also claims substantial credit for involving Russia in mediation efforts and the resulting peace accord. A clear consensus in Germany continues to view both NATO and the EU as indispensable to a stable and prosperous Europe.

The Italian government faced difficult issues in participating in *Allied Force*. The center-left government of former communist Massimo D'Alema had within it elements sharply critical of the United States and of the use of military force; at the same time, Italy's geographic position made it highly vulnerable to refugee flows. After wavering early in the conflict, the D'Alema government strongly supported *Allied Force*, participated in the air campaign, and took a leading role in the care of refugees in Albania and Macedonia. The defense minister stated during the war that Italy would support a NATO decision for a ground campaign, even at the cost of losing coalition partners. D'Alema ultimately saw resolution of the conflict as a key to ensuring integration of the Balkans into a democratic, stable Europe, and NATO (and the EU) as important instruments in that process.[46]

---

[45]Jean-Michel Boucheron (rapporteur), "Le Coût de la participation de la France aux opérations menées en vue du règlement de la crise au Kosovo," Committee for Finances, Economy, and Planning. National Assembly. July 5, 1999; and Jacques Isnard, "Les Limites de la participation française à la 'Force alliée'," *Le Monde*, July 6, 1999, p. 4.

[46]"Massimo D'Alema: ce que sera notre victoire," (interview) *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 10-16, 1999, p. 37-38; "L'Italie devait appuyer une éventuelle opération terrestre de l'OTAN," *AFP*. April 19, 1999.

The Greek government, despite strong popular opposition and historic and religious ties to Serbia, repeatedly endorsed NATO's objectives in the conflict. At the same time, Greek officials warned that the war raised the broader implication of "changing borders on behalf of minorities," should Kosovo ultimately seek independence. In the Greek government's view, such a development could spur instability in Europe.[47]

ESDI. While some governments were quietly critical of the Administration for not providing more public, forceful leadership of *Allied Force*, there remains a clear consensus that the campaign could not have been carried out without the United States formulating a strategy and leading allied militaries. The United States remains, alone among the allies, both capable and willing to undertake large-scale military conflicts. Nonetheless, U.S. hesitancy to use ground forces has left some allied governments — most clearly Britain, France, and Italy — with the sentiment that the United States does not share equally European concerns about such destabilizing developments as the flow of refugees and ethnic nationalism. A clear impetus for ESDI is the recognition among European governments that there is a gap in capability between their militaries and that of the United States, and that they must improve their capability in the event that U.S. forces may not join them in a future conflict. Several countries are building multinational units and more mobile forces both for NATO and for possible use by the European Union.

Significant obstacles to ESDI remain. The Europeans have no clear leaders in foreign and security policy. Most smaller NATO and EU members, concerned about domination by one of the larger member states, greatly prefer U.S. leadership from afar to political elbowing from a neighbor. Several EU countries, are not in NATO, are non-aligned, and oppose close coordination of defense policy. A commitment to greater defense spending or to a convergence of defense industries to build more capable mobile forces is lacking; the defense spending of all European allies amounts to only 60% of the U.S. defense budget. Finally, the EU decision-making process remains cumbersome, given the weight provided to smaller states and the absence of consensus over a leader.[48]

Allied Force and Non-Article V Missions[*]

A clear consensus in the alliance supports collective defense, enshrined in Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, as NATO's central mission. In the new Strategic Concept, adopted at the NATO summit in April 1999 in the midst of the Kosovo conflict, the allies also expressed support for new (or "non-Article V") missions, such as humanitarian assistance and crisis management. The post-Cold War emphasis on

---

[47]"A call for bolder vision in the Balkans," (interview with Foreign Minister George Papandreou), *IHT*, May 22-23, 1999. p. 5.

[48]"A Maastricht approach to EU defense," *IHT*, July 21, 1999, p. 6; Alexander Nicoll, "Seeking a level battlefield," *Financial Times*. June 3, 1999, p. 11; Senator Xavier de Villepin (rapporteur), "Opération 'Force Alliée' en Yougoslavie," Foreign Affairs Committee, Senate of France. July 5, 1999.

[*]Prepared by Paul E. Gallis, Specialist in European Affairs.

new missions raises the issue of whether the allies will be as committed to supporting them as they have been in support of collective defense.

Non-Article V Missions. In the year preceding the summit, Administration officials raised the possibility that NATO should undertake missions in the Middle East and elsewhere beyond Europe to combat international terrorism or meet the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This viewpoint was also expressed in the U.S. Senate during the NATO enlargement debate in the form of the Kyl Amendment, which passed by a wide margin.[49] In general, the Europeans oppose missions beyond Europe, fearing dilution of NATO's original purpose and voicing concern that NATO might become the "global instrument" of the United States. They prefer to confront such issues as terrorism and proliferation through political initiatives rather than military action. The Strategic Concept ultimately reflected the Europeans' more guarded view of the alliance's new missions. To most European governments, the Kosovo conflict underscored that principal threats to security come from close at home, in the form of instability in the Balkans. European governments joined *Allied Force* due to concern over instability and in response to the "moral" issue of stopping ethnic cleansing.

Consensus-building. While consensus over collective defense remains strong, it is more difficult to achieve for missions such as crisis management. Defense Secretary Cohen has said that there was no consensus in the alliance for anything more than an air campaign to contain ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and that any effort to launch a ground war would have led to a "fractious debate," with a possible loss of allied unity.[50] Milosevic's inability to split the allies in waging the air campaign was likely a key factor in his government's decision to abandon the conflict.

From a military perspective, allied unity was clearly important for winning the war. That unity allowed NATO to stage most of its air strike missions from Italy, to send air support missions from Hungary, and to prevent Russian forces from securing overflight rights into Kosovo at the end of the war from states friendly to the alliance.

Italian, Czech, and Hungarian leaders expressed early reservations about the conflict, and Greek public opinion remained critical of NATO. While a supposition that cannot be proven, it is possible, should the air campaign have failed to achieve allied objectives, that an absence of unity fostered by a need to send ground forces under a "coalition of the willing" would have seen countries such as Italy deny the use of its air bases, and Greece the use of its ports — both close to the area of operations. Further, such opposition might have made more difficult NATO's effort to secure overflight rights from Bulgaria and Romania, which proved of significance during *Allied Force*. In missions short of collective defense involving combat forces, consensus may prove difficult to achieve, but if achieved its corresponding political effects could be central to success.

---

[49]See Library of Congress. CRS. *NATO: Senate Floor Consideration of the Accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland*, by Jonathan P. Robell and Stanley R. Sloan. CRS Report 98-669F, Aug. 10, 1998, p. 4-5, 35-37.

[50]Hearing of the Armed Services Committee. U.S. Senate. 106th Congress, 1st sess. July 20, 1999. Unpaginated manuscript.

Role of the U.N. As in the conflict in Bosnia and Croatia in the early 1990s, the Europeans have sought a U.N. imprimatur for non-Article V missions. The recent history of two world wars in which flimsy rationales were given for crossing borders has led the European allies to be extremely cautious in approaching issues that might require violation of another country's sovereignty. Hence, "legitimization" by the U.N. for a military operation in a sovereign country has been important to the allies. In addition, the U.N. is a forum where NATO countries may engage Russia in matters of European security, yet another interest of the allies. The United States has opposed any requirement of U.N. approval for non-Article V missions, in part due to concern that Russia or China might veto actions intended to protect critical allied interests.

The Kosovo conflict saw the European allies step away from their insistence of U.N. approval for non-Article V missions. The French government, for example, strongly supported U.N. resolutions in the fall of 1998 condemning the FRY's violence against civilians in Kosovo, but reportedly concluded that returning to the Security Council at a later point for endorsement of NATO military action would have led to a Russian veto. Prime Minister Jospin, in explaining the French decision to go to war in March 1999, said: "Since the Security Council was not able to act, we must act on our responsibilities." Similarly, a French parliamentary report after the conflict dismissed the U.N. as an "old" institution once useful in maintaining the Cold War balance, but now tied up by political maneuvering and bureaucratic delay. The report gave its guarded approval to the "political revolution" allowing NATO to intervene in a sovereign country to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe.[51] Such sentiments were noticeable in several other key NATO states.

At the same time, an interest remains among the allies in securing U.N. involvement in international issues that may not require a rapid response to a crisis, for example in the administration of post-war Kosovo.

Future Missions. While military action against the FRY was unlikely without U.S. leadership, the Kosovo conflict did signal that most European allies were willing to use their militaries on the continent to prevent "humanitarian catastrophes" such as ethnic cleansing. However, it remains unclear that there is a consensus in the United States that engagement in Kosovo was in the U.S. interest. Increased discussion in Europe of ESDI is a manifestation of the allies' recognition that significant elements of U.S. political leadership are hesitant about the use of American combat forces for such a mission, and that Europeans must be prepared to act alone.

A political result of the Kosovo conflict may be that consensus in the alliance is strengthened over the need to develop Combined Joint Task Forces, where a "coalition of the willing" might borrow NATO (primarily U.S.) assets such as lift and satellite intelligence to fight a military engagement, perhaps without involvement of U.S. combat forces.[52] Still lacking in Europe is the political will to marshal the

---

[51]Claire Tréan, "Les résolutions de l'ONU donnent une base légale à l'intervention," *Le Monde*, March 28-29, 1999, p. 2; and Boucheron, op. cit., p. 4.

[52]Lt. Gen. Mario da Silva, "Implementing the Combined Joint Task Force Concept," *NATO Review*, Winter 1998; "Blair now backs EU defense arm," *IHT*, Oct. 22, 1998, p. 6; "Kosovo

resources sufficient to build capable mobile forces, and to forge a coalition, absent U.S. involvement, able to undertake a campaign on the scale of the Kosovo conflict.

Lessons that NATO's Possible Future Adversaries Might Take from Operation *Allied Force*[*]

Experts can only speculate over the lessons that potential adversaries are likely to draw from the outcome of Operation Allied Force. Since the last chapter in Kosovo and Yugoslavia has not been written, any current perceived lessons might not be the final ones.

NATO is in transition and its future role is still being defined. Therefore, NATO's performance is likely to have been watched with keen interest by potential adversaries. The lessons drawn are important, especially since other countries in the Balkans, Europe, and the world have volatile mixes of racial and ethnic groups living in uneasy coexistence. The combination of ethnic tensions, competing historical claims and grievances, and economic problems makes many countries and regions susceptible to potential strife that could severely undermine regional stability and international security. One of NATO's seeming aims in Yugoslavia was to discourage other potential perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The alliance has achieved its primary objectives in Yugoslavia. Ethnic cleansing has been reversed by NATO's military action. Yugoslavia has been forced to pay a high price for the actions of the Milosevic regime. If the alliance had not prevailed in Yugoslavia, many observers believe that this would have seriously damaged its credibility with friends and foes alike. If NATO had failed to muster the political will to prevail over a relatively small and weak opponent, other potential adversaries might have calculated that NATO would not act against future serious challenges.

NATO's success and the overwhelming condemnation and isolation of Yugoslavia by the world community (only China, Russia, and India sought to block military action against Milosevic) could give pause to any regime that might be tempted to challenge significant NATO interests, especially any regime attracted to the notion of dealing with racial and ethnic problems along the Milosevic lines.

Potential adversaries may no longer feel safe behind a shield of sovereignty, free to carry out any actions in violation of international norms inside their own borders. NATO took military action against Yugoslavia without ever disputing its claim to sovereignty over Kosovo, thereby reinforcing an emerging consensus against viewing sovereignty as a single overriding international principle.

Potential adversaries are likely to be deterred by the fact that NATO was able to agree on military action and maintain unity throughout the campaign despite different perspectives and interests among member nations and hesitancy by most to

---

spur to military role for EU," *IHT*, April 30-May 1, 1999, p. 2.

[*]Prepared by Francis T. Miko, Specialist in International Relations.

use military force. They are also likely to be impressed by NATO's ability and willingness to bring in massive air power once the decision was made.

However, the deterrent effect of Operation Allied Force is likely to be uneven. The impact is likely to be greatest in and perhaps even limited to Europe where NATO is most willing and able to act. NATO's success may make less of an impression in other parts of the world, especially where significant U.S. or allied interests are not perceived to be at stake. The alliance has not acted in the face of humanitarian tragedies in Africa and elsewhere and potential adversaries probably would not expect any different NATO reaction as a result of Kosovo.

Some potential adversaries might be encouraged by the difficulty that NATO had in building the political consensus to act, its hesitancy to escalate the war, and its extreme reluctance to commit ground forces. Some countries might calculate that given the difficulty NATO faced in carrying out the Yugoslav operation, the alliance would be even more reluctant than before to take military action outside of Europe.

Future adversaries may study the tactical successes Milosevic gained because NATO adopted tactics emphasizing casualty avoidance. He was able to preserve Yugoslav air defenses and to hide many other weapons systems. They may wonder if Milosevic could have used other asymmetric measures to weaken allied unity, such as threatening attacks or the use of weapons of mass destruction against other nations.

Finally, the notion that the international community can take action against governments for their acts inside their own territory when they involve crimes against humanity are not universally shared. Russia, China, and India opposed NATO's action primarily on sovereignty grounds. India actually used the example of Yugoslavia as justification for its own decision to develop nuclear weapons. Some have suggested that NATO's action could be an impetus for nuclear and chemical warfare proliferation by other countries seeking to deter outside interference.

Conclusion*

NATO members clearly placed a high priority on political unity in the effort to achieve the objectives of *Allied Force*. Political unity limited Milosevic's freedom of action, put pressure on Russia's capricious leadership structure to accede to allied demands, and helped to build a network of support among non-allied states bordering Yugoslavia. At the same time, the emphasis on preserving political unity meant that U.S. military leaders could not fight the war in a manner that would have followed U.S. military doctrine, in hopes of bringing about a rapid resolution of the conflict.

NATO fought the Kosovo war as a limited conflict, in which measured objectives and operational restraint gave the adversary freedom to maneuver for time,

---

*Prepared by Paul E. Gallis.

exploit openings, destabilize neighboring countries, and brutalize Kosovo's civilian population.

The allies fought for a diversity of interests, of greater importance to some than to others. The moral issue of preventing, then reversing, a humanitarian catastrophe was a new interest, at least in the sense of one prompting military action. But it was a limited interest, one that did not seem to require to most allies the need to risk casualties by engaging ground forces or fighting the air war at lower altitudes. For European allies, concern over refugee flows and instability was also clearly an interest, but again not one that demanded more than a measured military response. Critics from within NATO countries of the way the war was fought were troubled that the passion of allied rhetoric was not matched, in their view, by an intensity of military tactics and degree of risk. Some concluded that NATO's strategy and tactics allowed President Clinton to engage the United States in a conflict without clear, preliminary support of Congress and the American people.[53]

NATO's decision to attack Yugoslavia signalled that the allies would consider military action in response to a government's violence against its own people. Most allies, led by Britain, clearly no longer regard a claim of sovereignty as a shield against a military response by other states. This principle is far from universally accepted, particularly in countries such as Russia, China, and India that have restive populations within their territory, and which demand U.N. approval for NATO action.

Potential adversaries were clearly put on guard by *Allied Force*. While some adversaries may be deflected from aggressive action that challenges NATO interests, others, especially states more powerful than Yugoslavia, may have gathered lessons of their own about how to weaken NATO unity, or to build on Milosevic's military tactics to protect forces, or even be encouraged to obtain weapons able to deter the alliance. States beyond the European region may be less intimidated by *Allied Force*.

The conflict left the allies with a range of military needs and political challenges. More clearly than before, some allies acknowledged the need for more sophisticated weaponry and more mobile forces, and even called for a commitment to a stronger European security and defense identity as an imperative to ensure greater burdensharing and to permit European military engagement in crises in which the United States might not wish to engage combat forces

[53]Freedman, op. cit.; Heisbourg, op. cit.