

# Lessons From Kosovo:

## The KFOR Experience

Larry Wentz  
Contributing Editor



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SECTION 3—AIR WAR  
AND RELATED  
MEDIA CHALLENGES

# CHAPTER VI

## Air War Over Serbia

**Patrick Sheets**

Operation Allied Force, the air war over Serbia, represents the most significant military action NATO has taken in its 50-year history. It also represents an inevitable shift in the Revolution of Military Affairs. For many reasons, not to be discussed in this chapter, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) chose to use military power to project its political will on another sovereign nation. The fact that NATO and the United States, as primary contributor, chose to use aerospace power exclusively will be discussed in depth in this chapter along with several other important indicators about future military operations.

### Why an Air Operation Only?

Imagine taking on the bully in your neighborhood and before the confrontation were to take place, you told him you were not going to use your fists and that he probably would not even see you. Yet you told him you would continue to punish him until he stopped being a bully. This is exactly what the United States and NATO chose to do in its plan to save the Kosovar Albanians. Without debating the connection between the inhumanities taking place in Kosovo and U.S. national interest, we can certainly tie our involvement in the Balkans to our ties with NATO and the European Union and from there, tie them to national interests. But this connection is one politically challenging to sell to the American people as a reason to have our sons and daughters dying in combat. So how do we go about doing both, stopping the bully and not lose sons and daughters while doing it. The choice was aerospace power.

In the evolution of our nation and the revolution in military affairs, air power has become the primary tool of choice. It does not matter whether this power is projected from the CONUS, from deployed bases, from

carriers, or from space; it has been and will always be the most efficient and effective way. It is this inevitability that drove the Nations leadership to choose aerospace power to accomplish its political objectives in the Balkans. The real question is: why tell the bully you are not going to use ground forces to attack him?

The answer might possibly be the fear of threatening him with a military capability we had no will to use. Or it might be we had no intention of exerting the resources required to pose the threat we had no will to use. Either way, we chose not to threaten Milosevic with anything but an asymmetric attack. An aerospace attack that took 78 days to meet the political objectives stated at the beginning. Why it took 78 days and why he capitulated are areas I will discuss later in the chapter. Once the asymmetric decision was made, the next most significant factor in executing the air war was to do so in an alliance.

The difference between a coalition and an alliance is fairly significant and certainly posed many challenges to the execution of Operation Allied Force. In a coalition force, like the one used in Operation Desert Shield and Storm, the relationship between participants is one determined by the task at hand and worked out prior to the members joining. The coalition exists because Nations have agreed to work together to meet a political objective and subsequently, agreed upon military objectives. Coalitions by this definition are temporary in nature and will come and go as the military and/or political tasks are met. Alliances, like NATO on the other hand, are long standing relationships among nations that may or may not have military ties. NATO definitely does because it is an alliance of now 19 nations, originally based on a collective defense relationship. Specifically, after World War II, NATO became an alliance pre-establishing the commitment of the member nations to come to each other's defense in case of attack by any other non-member country. Although there were many other compelling political and economic factors that made up the articles of agreement between the nations, Article 5, the article establishing collective defense, is one most significant to the military.

Collective defense has always been the direction and focus of NATO military equipment, training and sustainment for the past 50 years. For the alliance to choose to go offensive and strike the first blow was a huge paradigm shift for the alliance nations. Additionally, the predetermined relationship of the alliance member nations was one of consensus and equal voice, no matter what the level of contribution.

This too, provided additional coordination and approval challenges to issues of targeting and employment, which would normally not exist in a coalition.

The point to be made is, Operation Allied Force was an extremely frustrating military campaign to wage because of the intricacies of the NATO Alliance and its 19 nations. The political-military structure of this alliance required target approval from 19 separate national capitals. To this end, we must acknowledge the fact that the NATO Alliance was much more challenging environment in which to operate a military campaign than it would have been in a coalition.

## Incrementalism

The word *incrementalism* is not one found in the warfighters dictionary. It falls somewhere near the word *hope* as something you never want to be used in the planning process. To have hope is one thing, to build your plan around it is dangerous. Once a decision is made to use military power to meet the political objectives, the application of this power should not be incremental. Incrementalism is contrary to all the basic principles of warfare, like shock, mass, and momentum. Incrementalism is not contrary to the political decision making processes.

Acknowledging the complexity of the Alliance and the indirect U.S. national interests to the Balkans, it is easy to see why this politically directed military application was so controlled. Incrementalism like any other *ism* can be a double-edged sword that requires tremendous skill to use. The perceived balance to be maintained in this incremental application of military power was the vulnerability of the Alliance to remain intact versus the time required for the use of military power to be effective in meeting the political objectives. This reality manifested itself in many areas of the air war like targeting and the master attack plan. Most would argue it certainly was responsible for the 78 days it eventually took aerospace power to meet the political objectives.

## Command and Control

The strategic to operational command and control structure for Operation Allied Force was centered on the existing NATO chain but had many deviations that produced challenges both nationally and in

force application. The theater U.S. National and NATO chains of command are depicted in Figure 1. The two chains are linked with a common commander, Gen Wesley Clark who is both Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Commander-in-Chief of U.S. European Command (USCINCEUR).

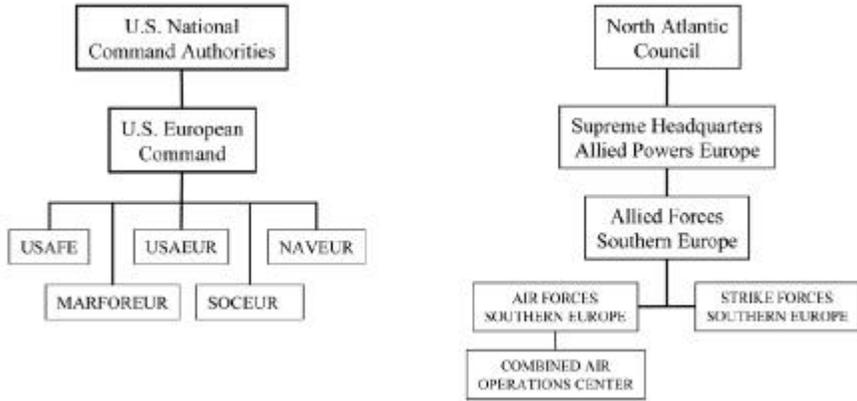


Figure 1. U.S. and NATO Chain of Command

In early 1999 USCINCEUR created Joint Task Force (JTF) Noble Anvil to support the NATO operation. Figure 2 shows the addition of this U.S.-only chain of command that was in place when the bombing started on 24 March 1999. This is a non-traditional arrangement and was new to both NATO and the U.S. Air Force. Additionally, Figure 2 shows the command inputs to the traditional aerospace tasking process that results in the Air Tasking Order.

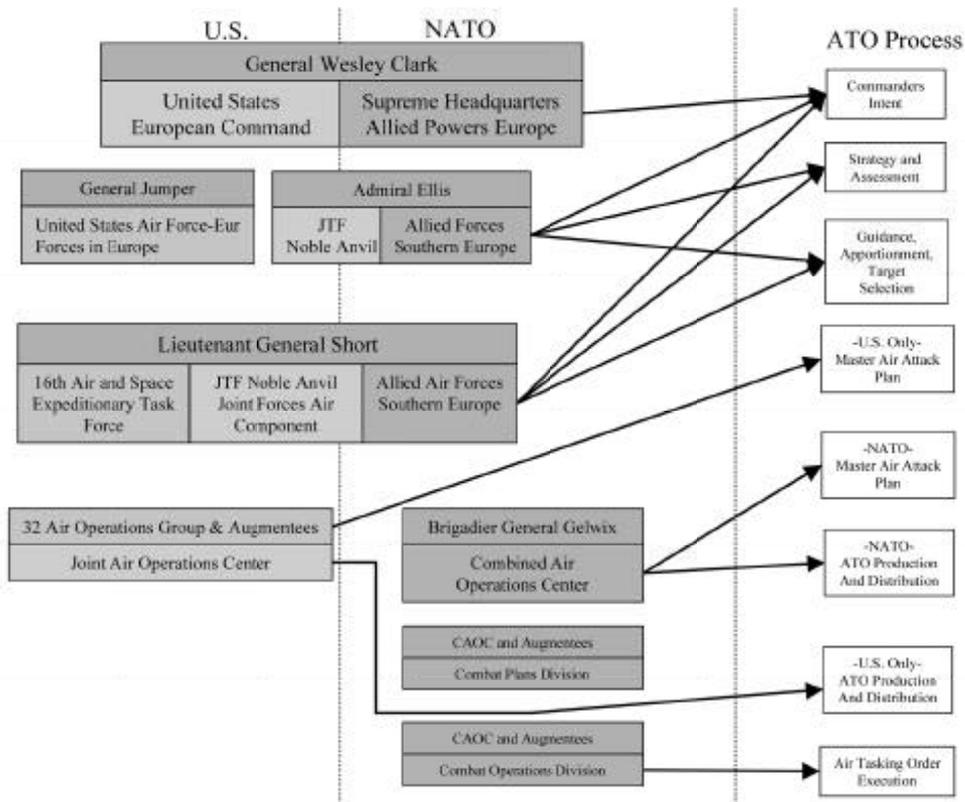


Figure 2. Operation Allied Force Organizational Structure- Planned

The first 2 days of bombing that constituted the U.S. and NATO initial plan failed to produce its desired effect. Not only did Milosevic not stop his systematic operation to cleanse Kosovo of all ethnic Albanians but also he intensified the operation. This was vividly evident in the ensuing refugee crisis facing NATO. With the number of refugees mounting in Albania and Macedonia, USCINCEUR tasked U.S. Air Forces Europe to create JTF Shining Hope to conduct humanitarian assistance operations supporting U.S. government agencies, non-governmental agencies and international organizations. While JTF Shining Hope was beginning to bring needed supplies to the refugees in Albania, USCINCEUR directed the deployment of 24 U.S. Apache attack helicopters and a full command and support element from Germany to Albania, as Task Force Hawk. The addition of JTF Shining Hope and TF Hawk to the U.S. chain of command added additional elements to the already complex command and control structure as seen in Figure 3. This resulted in hundreds of fixed wing aircraft, helicopters, missiles, and unarmed aerial vehicles operating in the same congested airspace over Southern Europe, but not under a single chain of command. Both NATO and U.S. Joint Doctrine call for a JFACC to be both the Airspace Control Authority and the Area Air Defense Commander to ensure coordinated and safe use of the airspace throughout the Joint Operating Area, including Air Defense. By the first of April the lack of unity of command and based on this non-standard and non-doctrinal command structure jeopardized the JFACC's ability to perform these vital missions.

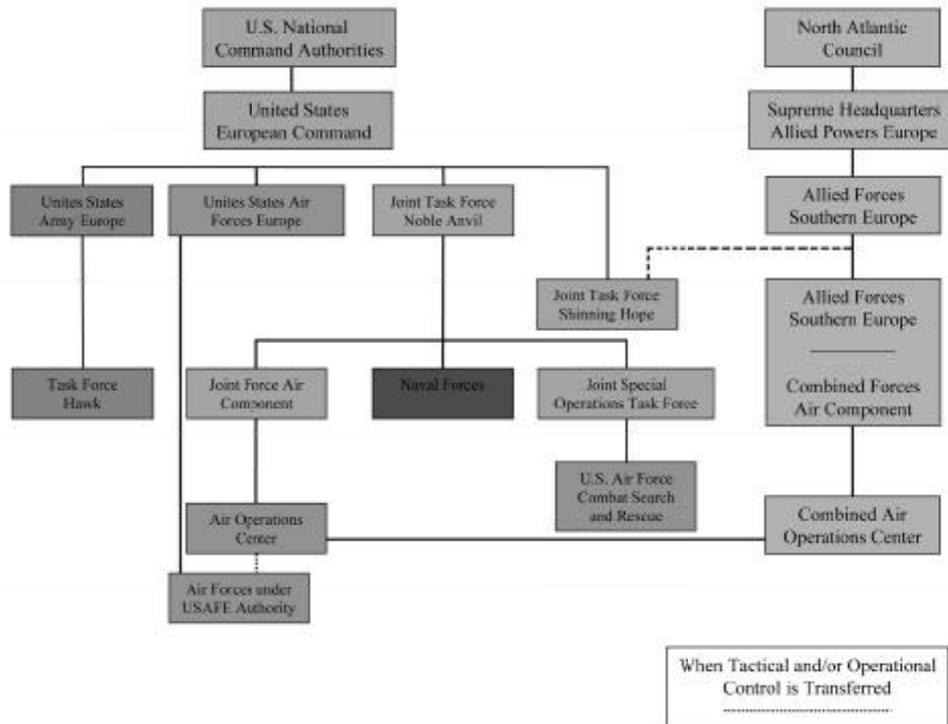


Figure 3. JTF Organizational Relationships

Of greater concern, was the target approval process and this along with separate U.S. and NATO air tasking orders led to the complicated and difficult air tasking order process shown in Figure 4.

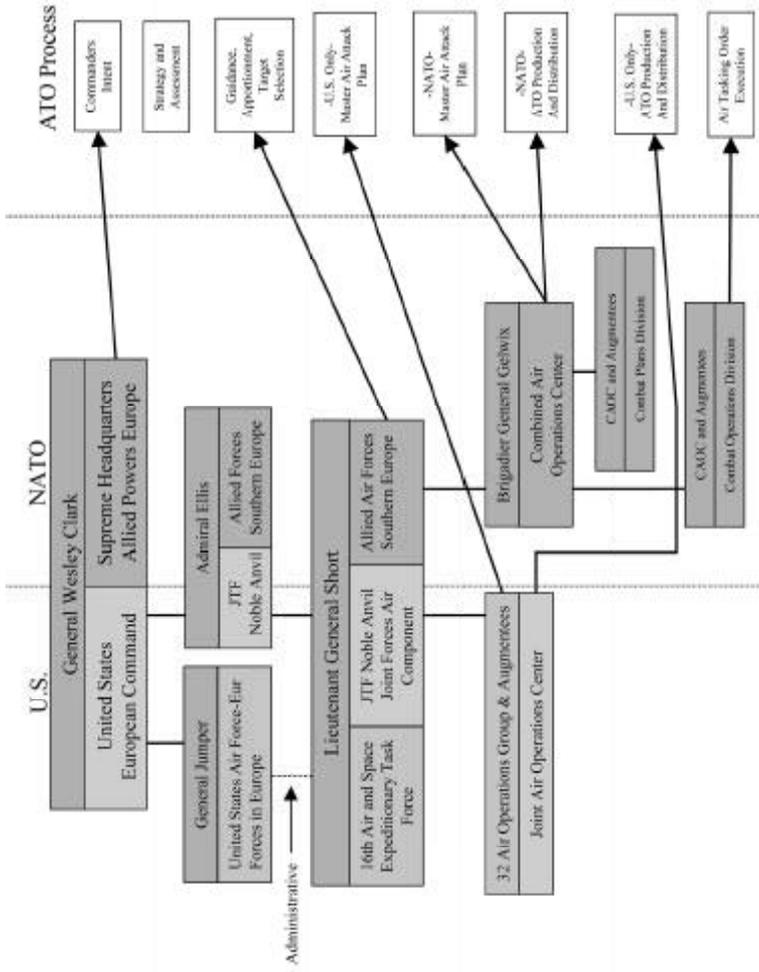


Figure 4. Operation Allied Force Organizational Structure—A Actual

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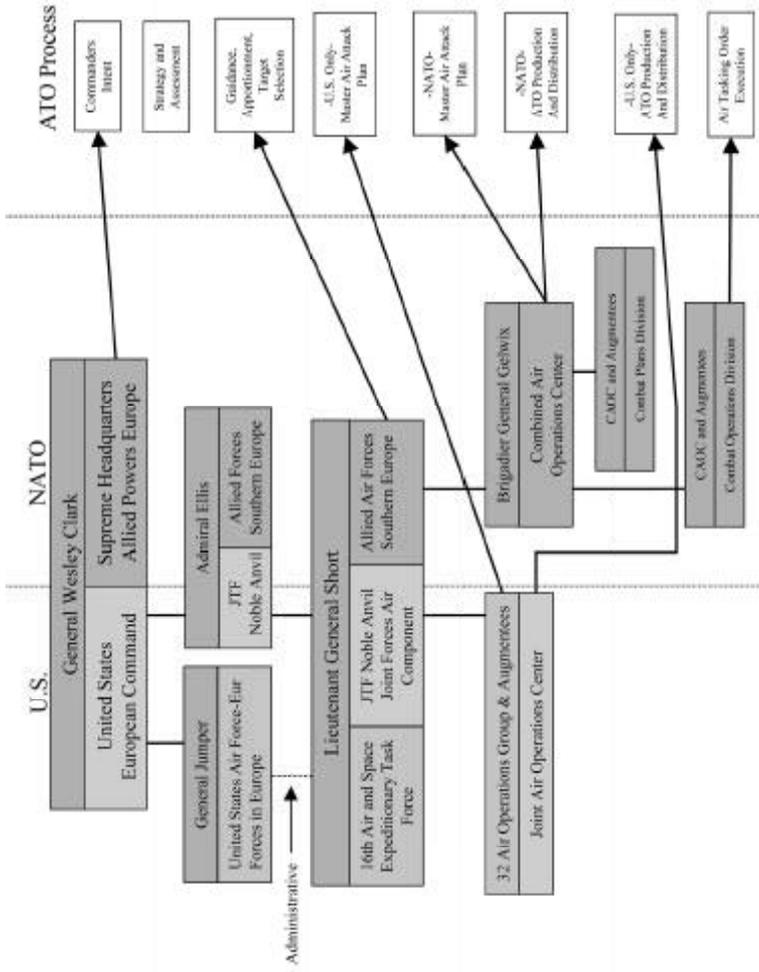


Figure 4. Operation Allied Force Organizational Structure— A ctual

The combination of deploying forces from the CONUS, deploying TF Hawk, and providing humanitarian assistance through JTF Shining Hope created tremendous mobility command elements for U.S. air forces. Additionally, there were traditional command elements issuing from both the NATO and U.S. structures which made the execution of the air war over Serbia extremely challenging from the aspect of supported and supporting command elements. The key elements issuing were a Joint Forces Maritime Component Command (JFMCC) and a Joint Forces Land Component Command (JFLCC). Although there were command elements for these forces through the force provider chain of command and under the European Command in the form of U.S. Naval Forces Europe (USNAVEUR) and U.S. Army Forces Europe (USAREUR) and these forces participated in operations within the Joint Operating Area, there was not an established component command relationship within the operational plans or the command structure to provide direct support to the Joint Forces Air Component Command (JFACC) as the de facto supported component command. To exasperate the unity of command and challenges, TF Hawk, although operating as an Army element within the joint operating area, was not even under the command of the JTF Noble Air Force and Noble Air Force. Instead TF Hawk reported directly to U.S. Army Europe and then to USCEUR completely bypassing the tasked warfighters in both the NATO and U.S. chains of command.

## 78 Days of Aerospace Warfare

At 7 p.m. German U-2 on 24 March 1999 NATO forces began air operations over Serbia in Operation Allied Force. NATO's opening attack demonstrated its technical sophistication. The initial target set reflected the Alliance's belief that the war would end quickly. NATO's aerial strike package included aircraft from the 13 nations, including B-2s, B-52s and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles. The incremental approach to this military operation resulted in the incremental flow of assets into theater over the next 2 months. When the air war started, the Combined Air Operations Center, the command and control center for the Joint Forces Air Component Commander, had 214 combat aircraft under its control, of which 112 were from the United States. These aircraft attacked from bases in Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. On the first day of the conflict NATO showed its air superiority by shooting down three MiG-29s, Serbia's most advanced fighter.

As the conflict grew in early April 1999, more than 350 NATO aircraft were engaged with 200 of them being from the United States. At NATO's 50th Anniversary, held in Washington D.C., 23–24 April 1999, national leaders expanded the target categories allowing intensified military actions that increased pressure on Belgrade. Nonetheless, NATO was unable to immediately coerce Milošević to stop Serbia's campaign of ethnic cleansing. On 1 May 1999, as recommended by NATO's leaders at the Washington Summit, the North Atlantic Council approved yet another expanded target set. At this point, the JFACC was flying approximately 200 combat sorties a day. Targets such as petroleum refineries, lines of communication, electrical power grids and dual-use communications structures were now more readily approved and systematically targeted. Striking them greatly increased pressure on the Yugoslavian population and, in turn, the Serbian leadership. A better appreciation was also emerging for what would be required to bring the conflict to a successful conclusion. From this point forward, objectives remained relatively constant for the rest of the war.

With this change in the war's scope, momentum grew at NATO headquarters to increase the number of fighter and bomber aircraft available to Operation Allied Force. SACEUR's guidance called on NATO to intensify the bombing and put pressure on Milošević to withdraw from Kosovo. This also began to accelerate the target nomination and approval process. However, NATO aircraft could still destroy targets faster than targets were developed and approved. By the later stages of the war NATO had enough aircraft in the theater to generate some 1,000 attack sorties per day, but never did—largely because of the limited number of approved targets.

The Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at DelMolin Airfield, Vicenza, Italy, went through a similar metamorphosis based on the incremental growth of the air war. At the beginning, the CAOC was manned at approximately 400 personnel capable of executing a 100–300 sortie a day operation. By the end of the war on 10 June 1999, the command and center manning grew to over 1,400 personnel. In concert with this growth was a parallel requirement to completely reorganize the airspace and associated control procedures, which were originally designed back in 1995, for Operation Deliberate Force, the NATO support to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Because of the dual chain of command, U.S.-only and NATO, the CAOC planned in a similar manner. Additionally, because of this dual planning and perceived Operations and Communications Security breaches, the JFACC approved a two-air tasking order process. This decision to fence U.S. high value combat assets on a separate air tasking order, in retrospect, was not worth the confusion and execution challenges it generated. Here is what Lt. Gen. Short said about this issue in his address to Air Force Association 25 February 2000. "Publish a single ATO (Air Tasking Order). Not doing so was a mistake we made. On the first night of the war, as the F-117 force was forming up in Hungary with its escort, a foreign national was screaming from the NATO AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System), asking the Combined Operations Center 'what were those planes doing in Hungary?' We had a U.S.-only ATO and NATO ATO, and that young man on board NATO AWACS did not have the U.S.-only ATO. Clearly we have concerns for technology, and we have concerns for timing. But you don't ever want to be put in a position where on the first night of the war, sitting at a table of the JFACC, and a flag officer from one of your strongest allies says, 'General, it appears to us we are not striking the SA-6s at location A, B, and C.' And the best you can do is say, 'Air Commodore, trust me.'"

As the character and the direction of the war changed, so did the restrictions on altitudes. Because the war's initial attacks were against fixed targets, at night, using precision-guided munitions, Gen. Short ordered all attacking aircraft to remain above 15,000 feet in order to negate the effectiveness of Serbia's short-range air defense systems. This was consistent with guidance from SACEUR. By mid-April NATO leaders had increased the emphasis on attacking fielded forces. This coincided with an increase in the number of daytime sorties and reduced air defense threat over Kosovo. At the same time, the Serbian military had begun intermingling its forces with the civilian refugees and hiding in urban areas. As a result, airborne forward air controllers requested that altitude limits be lowered to positively identify vehicle types. Gen. Short agreed to allow certain aircraft to fly at lower altitudes. While flying at high altitudes had been cited by some as the reason for the inability to kill tanks and fielded forces, finding, fixing, tracking and targeting dispersed forces proved a challenging task at any altitude.

## Targeting and Suppression of Enemy Defenses

The Joint Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (JSEAD) executed in OAF was effective in allowing freedom of air movement in Serbia meeting the aerospace objective of air superiority, but was not effective in destroying all enemy air defense systems (DEAD), which would have led to air supremacy. There were two overarching reasons for this reality. The first has to do with the concepts and application of effects based targeting and the other has to do with the adversary's integrated air defense system tactics learned from previous U.S. and Coalition operations going back as far as the Gulf War.

The effects based targeting issue is one dealing with the difference between developing a master air attack plan (MAAP) with specific military objectives based on sound warfighting principles or just hitting random targets for the sake of some other effect. The MAAP takes military objectives, derived from the political objectives, and formulates an aerospace attack plan with sequels and branches. This plan is focused on specific effects desired then designating the appropriate targets, to reach the desired effect. The effects based approach uses a complex building block concept where one effect of successfully hit targets flows into the next set of targets. This sequential flow could be measured in hours and/or over days and weeks, based on the size and intensity of the MAAP. The political-military process for targeting and target attack approval generated disconnects between effects based objectives and just servicing a target list based on what was approved. The reality of OAF was, many of the key targets required for the air supremacy objective were not available to be struck, at the beginning of the war. Some of these targets never made it on the cleared list, even by the end of the war. This happened because the initial political objective of NATO was to get Milošević to cave-in and sign the agreement and not the aerospace objective or air supremacy that is well founded in both Joint and Air Force Doctrine. There are some who would say the targets to be struck to meet the effects based concept were too risky in terms of collateral damage or damage to the Serbian national infrastructure. Not to argue this or the adverse effects of collateral damage on the Alliance, the reality is the political effects desired from the incremental entry into the aerospace war with Serbia were not forthcoming, yet the effects based opportunities desired from the initial proposed targets quickly became unavailable due to enemy reaction to the bombings.

As for the adversary integrated air defense system, the Serbs have learned well from previous U.S. and Coalition application of Joint SEAD tactics and techniques. Even though NATO was faced with second generation Soviet built surface to air missiles (SAM), several of these systems still survived and posed a sufficient level of threat to be bothersome to aerospace operations and force the Alliance to allocate a tremendous number of sorties and munitions against them, all because of their tactics. The Joint SEAD concept of operations for OAF consisted of two primary assets, the F-16 CJ, capable of shooting the High-altitude Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM) and the Navy/Marine/Air Force EA-6B Electronic Warfare (EW) jammer. In concert, they provided pre-emptive and real-time missile defense from the F-16 CJs and radar/target tracking denial from the EA-6Bs. The tactics the Serbian SAMs used to survive and continue to pose a potential threat to NATO aircraft are the same tactics that made the Serbian SAMs ineffective. Thus NATO operated at will with air superiority, but required the F-16 CJs and EA-6Bs to do so. Had NATO achieved air supremacy by the total destruction of the enemy air defense system (DEAD) and eliminated all medium and high altitude SAM threats, then the execution of strike packages would not have required continuous SEAD.

## Attacking Mobile Targets

The air war over Serbia presented a complex scenario for an air-only operation to efficiently and effectively target fielded forces. The complexity of targeting both moving and/or mobile targets can be broken down into three interrelated components. First is the tasking process, second is the finding and fixing of the targets and third is the tactical level of command and control to positively identify the targets as enemy and execute the attack.

Whether Milosevic's 3rd Army in Kosovo, was a center of gravity or not, the desire to attack these fielded forces in Kosovo became a military objective. This objective may not have been written anywhere but the tasking of aerospace forces to attack fielded forces in Kosovo was certainly the number one topic in the command video teleconference (VTC) after the initial two days of air strikes did not produce their desired outcome. The tasking of aerospace assets to engage mobile targets requires tremendous flexibility. From the targeting standpoint, this flexibility is not inherent in the standard fixed target planning

process that historically starts 72 hours out from the air tasking order (ATO) day of execution. The assets used to strike mobile targets are dynamically tasked from predetermined strike missions programmed into the ATO. These strike missions may have had secondary targets assigned to them to be hit if a mobile target was not available during their mission. Some missions did not have any secondary targets and if no targets were available for them to strike during their mission then they would return to base with their ordinance. The tasking process for the 78 days of the air war was not a limiting factor to the JFACC's ability to kill mobile targets.

The finding/fixing component of attacking mobile targets on the other hand was the toughest challenge. The environment in Kosovo included unfavorable weather, heavy foliage, variable terrain and lots of buildings to hide armed personnel vehicles (APV), tanks and artillery in. Without an opposing ground force, the 3rd Army in Kosovo did not have to concern themselves with a ground attack other than the small forces of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Mt. Pastric. Thus their maneuver and defensive posture was only against attack from the air. This asymmetric alignment of a fielded Army with an ineffective air defense system and an air force free to roam above them forced the Serbian Army to disperse and hide wherever they could to avoid being attacked from the air. This dispersal would have made the 3rd Army ineffective as a fighting force had they been opposed by a credible ground force. But the reality of their presence in Kosovo was not about defending the area from attack but as a supporting force to the paramilitary police executing Operation Horseshoe, which was the Serbian operation to systematically purge Kosovo of all ethnic Albanians. The asymmetric alignment of a ground force executing an operation of harassment and terror on the ethnic Albanians and an opposing air force attempting to strike them was surreal. But this was SACEUR's expectation when Operation Horseshoe intensified after the second day of bombing and it was evident the ethnic cleansing operation was not going to be stopped.

The JFACC became very inventive and put a tremendous effort into attacking the fielded forces in Kosovo. A combination of flying airborne forward air controllers (FACs) primarily in A-10, F-14, and F-16 aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and a variety of other sensor capabilities were all focused on finding and fixing mobile military targets to be attacked. The concept of operations emulated the doctrinally

founded close air support (CAS) concept that uses aerospace power to support the attack of fielded forces in contact with friendly fielded forces. CAS uses both airborne and ground based forward air controllers (FACs) to provide the attacking fighters situational awareness on the location of their targets and the location of friendly fielded forces. CAS provides close control of air strikes to maximize application of airpower against the enemy and minimize the possibility of fratricide (killing friendly forces). The JFACC and his AOC used air FACs exclusively during the air war because there were no friendly fielded forces in contact with the enemy and subsequently, there were no ground FACs. Without friendly fielded forces in contact with the 3rd Army in Kosovo, the JFACC had to rely on cross cueing a variety of inputs like Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), with its moving target indicator (MTI) radar, UAV video, satellite with high altitude imagery and human intelligence to find and fix enemy fielded forces. Finding the fielded forces was one task, but to geographically fix (pinpoint the exact position on the earth's surface by using Latitude and Longitude in degrees) was even a greater challenge. The air FACs would fly over Kosovo to seek out and target fielded forces. Their ability to do so was only as good as the cross cueing information they took off with or received while airborne from either the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), the Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC), or the JSTARS. Outside of good cross cueing the only opportunity air FACs had to target enemy fielded forces was when the enemy showed itself while an air FAC was in the area. These opportunities were few because of the Serbian Army's situational awareness of the NATO air operations and the asymmetric alignment of air versus ground forces.

The rules of engagement for attacking fielded forces were as restrictive as those we would use for CAS. These restrictions applied because of the possibility of inflicting collateral damage to noncombatants in Kosovo. These restrictions were the primary reason for the perceived success of the 3rd Army in Kosovo. They continually used these rules of engagement to their favor by only moving in mixed formations with noncombatants and locating their military vehicles and armor in populated areas where, if they were attacked, they knew there would be collateral damage. By 1 April, NATO was struggling with 100,000 plus refugees who were being forced out of Kosovo into Albania and Macedonia and 40,000 to 50,000 refugees who were displaced from

their homes and villages, but were not allowed to leave Kosovo. These refugees were referred to as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The whereabouts of IDPs within Kosovo was a continual concern of the JFACC and became an important factor to the process of attacking enemy fielded forces in Kosovo. The inadvertent targeting of a convoy of IDPs on 14 April 1999 near Đakovica was a painful example of the challenges of finding, fixing and attacking enemy fielded forces. Even with all the rules being followed, misidentification can occur.

## Why Did Milosevic Capitulate?

This is the million-dollar question every analyst of the Kosovo conflict has been pondering. If you retrace the sequence of events starting with the previous bombing of the Serbs in 1995 over the atrocities taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then recognize Milosevic backed down in the fall of 1998 to the imminent threat of bombing which led to the Ramboulet talks. It is easy to see why NATO and the United States expected a short conflict again. Milosevic proved to be much more complicated and calculating this time. Without hearing the facts from Milosevic, one can only attempt to rationalize the factors and try to theorize why he capitulated to a more stringent agreement than he would have had at Ramboulet, after 78 days of bombing by NATO. To think it was just the bombing would be as foolish as thinking he would have capitulated after the second day of bombing. To focus on centers of gravity like the national infrastructure, external political support and internal political support would be more realistic. Or look at in the reverse, where our primary center of gravity the Alliance, which Milosevic targeted in every way possible, did not break. With NATO's resolve intact, Milosevic had only two options: continue to absorb punishment, or accept NATO's demands. He chose the latter.

## The Future

The true challenge of lessons learned from such a geopolitical military operation is to visualize the way forward and not make it out to be an extension of what you just experienced or worse, to use the previous experience as self-justification. The flight path of the Air Force is based on a global perspective outlined in *Joint Vision 2010* and expanded by the services *Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air*

*Force.* The operational concepts within this vision will lead to the ability to find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess anything of importance in the world in 1 hour or less.

# CHAPTER VII

## Operation Allied Force: Air Traffic Management

Paul Miller

### Introduction

The conduct of the NATO Operation Allied Force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), coupled with associated air operations, including humanitarian airlift, highlighted the necessity of close civil-military Air Traffic Management (ATM) coordination at all levels of command and control. For the first time since the formation of NATO, large-scale offensive and combat support air operations were conducted in Europe that had a significant impact on civil air operations on a scale that far exceeded those of the Bosnian campaign. There have been some significant lessons learned in terms of operating procedures that will hopefully be applied in the future.

### Background

The 1990-1991 Gulf Crisis represented the first post-Cold War large-scale movement of reinforcement and combat traffic crossing Europe in significant quantities. Given that this occurred a short time after the fall of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and coincided with the relatively low levels of civil air traffic during the war interperiod, the impact on the civil route structure of Europe was minimal. In addition, the area of operations for the coalition forces was outside Europe and the military traffic flow consisted of strategic air assets en route to and from the area of operations. While there were extra demands on the ATM system across Europe, they managed to absorb the extra traffic satisfactorily.

In the mid-1990s, the Bosnian crisis generated a general increase in military traffic over southeastern Europe. In 1994, in support of the

United Nations Security Council Resolutions establishing a no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina, NATO forces were committed to combat air operations over the Balkans, which also entailed closing portions of Italian airspace over the Adriatic. These operations naturally disrupted the flows of civil traffic and for the first time saw significant shifts to the traffic flows through the nations of the former Warsaw Pact. In addition, the involvement of non-NATO nations in this form of operation was evident for the first time in post-Cold War Europe.

As far as ATM was concerned, the Bosnian conflict demonstrated the growing requirements for closer international cooperation and coordination. In 1994, the EUROCONTROL Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU) became operational and, in due course, enabled a coherent plan to be drawn up to coordinate both the re-routing of the civil traffic and the sequencing of the military support airlift into the region. This capability was to prove invaluable.

## **Operation Allied Force**

Operation Allied Force was conducted as a non-Article 5 Operation, which precluded the full implementation of the NATO Precautionary System that is planned and intended for Article 5 situations covering only direct threats or attacks on NATO member nations. The operational contingency planning that was initiated in the middle of 1998 took little account of the requirements of the complex civil air route structures that have evolved in Europe since the end of the Cold War. As the planning progressed to match the political mandates that were being established, the NATO International Staff, in particular the Air Defense and Airspace Management Directorate (ADAM), emphasized to the NATO Military Authorities that it was essential that coordination mechanisms were put into place to ensure that:

- military forces had access to the required airspace to conduct operations; and
- civilian route operations experienced the minimum of disruption commensurate with flight safety.

To further complicate matters, a large-scale humanitarian airlift operation was put into effect at a very early stage of the operation against the

FRY . Since this airlift took place within the area of combat operations, an already complex air situation was complicated even further.

Finally, the activities of aircraft operating into and out of Belgrade on political VIP and humanitarian missions required a great deal of additional coordination to prevent any unnecessary air interception and possible engagement. While it would appear that the provision of this kind of operational support should be relatively straightforward, there were several organizational constraints. Above all, the way in which civil ATM has evolved in Europe during the past decade, especially with the centralization of air traffic flow management, has meant that the traditional concepts of a completely national or NATO militarily controlled air environment are no longer valid in the context of such operations.

## **Participants in Civil/Military ATM Coordination**

The civil-military coordination required to integrate all the airborne participants in the operation was not clear-cut. As a first step, the organizations involved in the planning and subsequent implementation of the procedures had to be identified and then the information flows and respective responsibility centers could be established.

### ***Civil Organizations***

The civil organizations involved in the civil-military use of airspace are placed at two levels, international and national.

Within the general framework established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the principal European ATM organization at the international level is EUROCONTROL, whose Headquarters is located in Brussels. The Flow Management Division (FMD) of the EUROCONTROL CFMU has the responsibility for maintaining the coherence of the civil air route structure and traffic flow throughout some 39 European countries and consequently, any impact on that structure has to be analyzed at the pan-European level. As an example, if a nation requests a relaxation to the restrictions on its airspace or routings as agreed with NATO, the request would be examined by the FMD to assess the impact on the overall route structure. EUROCONTROL also coordinates with the ICAO European

Regional Office in those cases where civil-military airspace or route issues may need to be addressed.

Arrangements concerning the use of sovereign airspace of non-NATO Partnership for Peace Nations by NATO forces were negotiated on a bilateral basis between NATO and the country concerned. The resulting impact of these activities on the airspace for other airspace users naturally had an effect on the overall international ATM environment.

### ***Military Structures***

The military structures that needed to be involved in ATM coordination were, once again, both multinational and national. In a NATO-led operation, the NATO Air Command and Control (NA C2) organization at all levels must interact within the planning and coordination processes. It is inconceivable that any future operation will not have an impact on the civil aviation environment and both the initial planning and the execution of operations will require appropriate degrees of cooperation and coordination. This cooperation required dialogue at both political and operational levels with national civil and military authorities.

## **Legal Aspects**

The importance of political and legal advice at all levels of planning and during the operation was crucial. From NATO HQ came the political guidance necessary for the application of legal contacts with those nations involved in the operation. This was highlighted by the bilateral agreements that were necessary between NATO and non-NATO nations to establish a legal basis for the use of facilities and airspace. It is also apparent that nations have very different mechanisms and timelines within which to ratify any agreements reached with NATO. These factors became an essential element of the development of any modifications of the overall international ATM airspace/routing scheme during Operation Allied Force.

Legal advice was necessary at all levels of these negotiations from the Legal Advisor at NATO HQ, through SHAPE and subsequently the commander in theater. Consistency in this advice was crucial and had to reflect the substance of international agreements affecting civil aviation.

## Procedures for Civil-Military Coordination

In initial planning, the political and military planners needed to be aware from the outset of the importance of involving not only the nations directly affected, but also the international civil aviation community through either EUROCONTROL or ICAO. This relationship was included into the pertinent operations orders and subsequently in the more detailed operational planning phases. Additionally, direct contact was established with these organizations to permit examination of existing contingency arrangements and to initiate any necessary refinements on a case-by-case basis at short notice. Also, representatives of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) were contacted to provide a liaison, when appropriate, with the major civil operators.

As operational planning progressed, the involvement of the various levels of the NATO C3 chain relating to air operations and the impact on ATM needs were continuously examined. These entities included the NATO Air Traffic Management Center (NATMC) structure, the International Staff (particularly the ADAM Directorate), the International Military Staff, and the NATO Military Authorities down to the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC). The interrelationships between the entities required a review of the definition and action checklists. It was obvious during the operation that the personal relationships developed between the eight or so players in the civil-military ATM coordination roles were more important than the minimal procedures then in place. The pace of the operation, combined with the dynamics of the overall air situation, called for continuous crisis management actions to be implemented.

The NATO, particularly the NATMC, structure has given evidence of its flexibility and responsiveness during the Kosovo crisis. It has to be said that as in most crisis situations, it is the personal relationships between the key players that influence events. In the case of the airspace management during Operation Allied Force this was crucial. No individual can be singled out because the entire team was crucial to the success of Operation Allied Force. The team included individuals within the ICAO office in Paris, the EUROCONTROL Flow Management division including IATA, NATO NATMC staff, the International Military Staff, SHAPE, AIRSOUTH, and the CAOC. The team would not be complete without the involvement of the civil aviation representatives

from the nations in the overall AOR. It was from this team that the lessons learned for ATM have emerged and are being addressed by all concerned.

As a rule, the involvement of the NATO International Staff should include reacting to requests from the IM S for assistance at the policy level on matters relating to ATM issues. The more tactical day-to-day ATM issues should be conducted at the IM S/SC level with EUROCONTROL/CFMU/CEU. To facilitate this tactical coordination, the necessary task relationships must be defined between the staffs involved. Appropriate communications need to be established between NATO and EUROCONTROL, taking all security implications into account. It is a fact, however, that until Operation Allied Force the Alliance has, generally, left ATM as a national responsibility, at least from the military perspective.

Operation Allied Force demonstrated that the necessary command and control relationships, together with the appropriate communications, are vital to the effectiveness of civil-military ATM coordination. Failure to recognize this requirement will inevitably cause confusion and could well compromise flight safety for both military and civil operations, or in fact on the efficient prosecution of military operations in the future.

Experience has also highlighted the need for close civil-military coordination during the de-escalation phase of a military conflict and the normalization of airspace management arrangements. There were many requests at the end of the operation from nations and the civil aviation community regarding the status of airspace. The necessarily imprecise wording in international agreements and protocols at the conclusion of operations such as Operation Allied Force does little to aid the normalization of the ATM situation. Ongoing military operations, the pressure from the civil aviation community to resume employment of previously established air route structures, and the extreme pressure of nations within southeastern Europe to resume revenue earning civil overflights created conflicting priorities and frequent heated debate.

## **Lessons Learned for Air Traffic Management**

In the aftermath of Operation Allied Force, NATO conducted a comprehensive lessons-learned study to identify those changes in doctrine and new procedures required to conduct the next operation.

The impact of military operations such as Operation Allied Force on the civil aviation environment was highlighted during the studies for the first time and received acknowledgement that it was an extremely important issue. The importance of involving the civil aviation organizations at an early stage, with the obvious security caveats, is considered vital to preserving operational freedom and flight safety for all participants.

There has to be a set of procedures that establishes the framework of how to conduct an operation of this kind, but those procedures cannot cover all eventualities. Nevertheless, the NATMC presented a set of recommendations to the North Atlantic Council in the chairman's report of 2000 and they were accepted. These actions should now have been adopted and incorporated into NATO and NATMC procedures.

Briefly, the components of the ATM lessons learned resulted in a contingency checklist to guide air operation planners during and after a period of crisis together with an illustrative set of recommendations for implementing ATM crisis cells. They highlight the requirement to involve the EUROCONTROL CFMU at the outset of the airspace management planning phase. Additionally, they also identify a need to select military ATM experts to be deployed at the earliest opportunity to augment liaison teams in affected nations.

It has to be hoped that there is never again the need to mount another operation such as Operation Allied Force. However, there has to be a fundamental understanding that Air Traffic Management is a civil-military issue and, certainly in the greater European geographic area, will remain so for the foreseeable future. Acknowledging the sovereign rights that individual nations have over their airspace, the overall management of the route structure and the major civil traffic flow now lies with international institutions including NATO.

From a long-term system perspective, developments are under way within the EUROCONTROL European Air Traffic Management Program and NATO's Air Command and Control System that are designed to ensure that the necessary interoperability is established and maintained. As these operational and technical enablers are gradually fielded to support their own, differently defined command and control environments, their interactions will become increasingly crucial during periods of tension and crisis. This will enable civil-military systems

coordination to be effective instead of the ad hoc arrangements that were used in Operation Allied Force.

The relationships that have been built up over the last few years within the civil and military ATM communities and subsequently reinforced by the experiences of Operation Allied Force should ensure that we continue to operate a safe and accident-free air environment throughout Europe.

# CHAPTER VIII

## The Forgotten Echelon: NATO Headquarters Intelligence During the Kosovo Crisis<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Duecy

This chapter focuses on intelligence at NATO Headquarters, before and during the Kosovo crisis. As the chapter title implies, NATO Headquarters intelligence was, and in many ways remains, the forgotten echelon of NATO's intelligence structure.

NATO is somewhat of an abstract construct, generally conjuring images of a military force. In reality, NATO is a political and military alliance with precisely defined structures and echelons each with specific authorities and responsibilities. Before focusing on crisis intelligence functions in Brussels, it is important to briefly describe what NATO is, where it is, how it works, and its intelligence functions.

### The Fundamentals of NATO

NATO is not a coalition and it is not a supra-national organization. It is an alliance established by treaty for the collective defense of its member nations. By treaty, NATO member nations are pledged to the principle that an attack on one of its members is an attack on all. This requires NATO member nations to rally to the collective defense.

Among its provisions, NATO's founding treaty established the North Atlantic Council, the highest political body of the Alliance. All member nations are represented in the Council on an equal basis. The Council is the ultimate forum for political consultation and decision making concerning collective defense and other matters of common interest. The Council is given the authority to create subsidiary bodies and virtually all NATO Headquarters structure flows from this treaty provision.

The founding treaty also made provisions for the Council to create a Military Committee composed of national military representatives of the member nations. Among the Military Committee's various functions are formulating NATO Military Strategy, ensuring that command structures are in line with NATO strategy and, most importantly, providing military advice to the North Atlantic Council. Both the Council and the Military Committee, and virtually all other NATO Headquarters bodies and subsidiary groups, operate and take all decisions on the basis of consensus. Exceptions are the Strategic Commands.

## **NATO Headquarters Organizational Structure and Authorities**

NATO's most important echelons and their interrelated structures are shown in Figure 1. The Alliance's highest political authority is the North Atlantic Council. It is the principal body described in the Washington Treaty. Almost all other NATO authorities and structures are creations of the Council. The Council itself is composed of representatives of the member nations. Day-to-day national representation is vested in ambassadorial level permanent representatives, but Council meetings are convened at the levels of Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers, and Heads of State when appropriate. Presiding over the Council is the NATO Secretary General who is appointed by the nations. The Secretary General speaks and acts for NATO within the guidance and authorities extended by Council. An International Staff of civilian personnel, organized as shown in Figure 2, supports the Council.

# NATO HEADQUARTERS PRINCIPAL BODIES

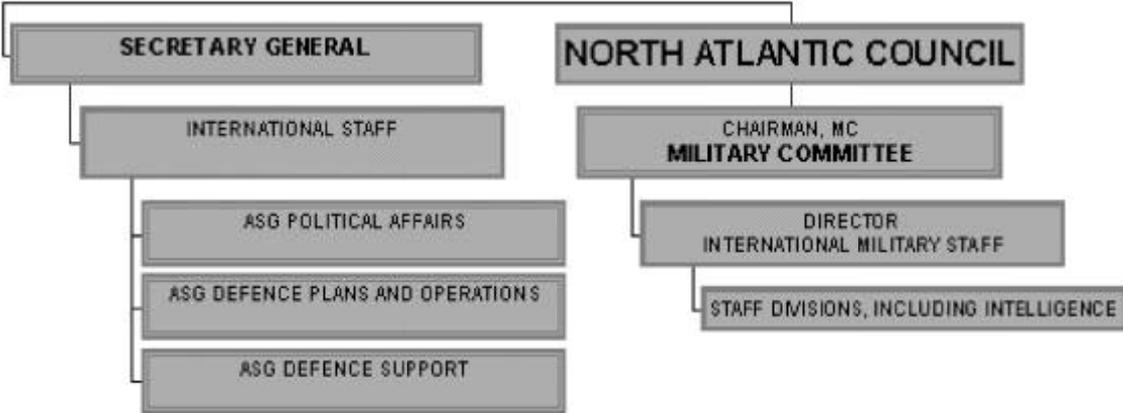
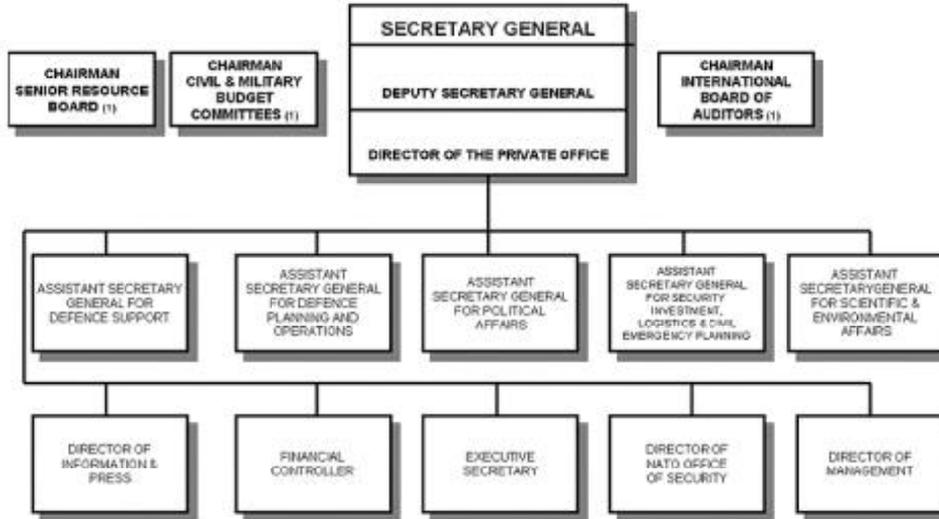


Figure 1. NATO Headquarters Principal Bodies

## The NATO International Staff

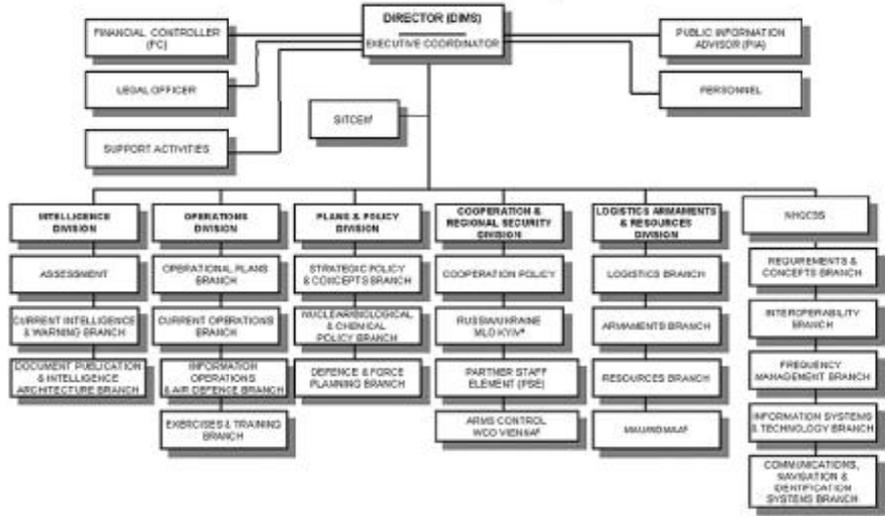


(1) These positions are not filled by members of the International Staff but by national chairmen appointed by the Council.

Figure 2. The NATO International Staff

NATO's senior military echelon is the Military Committee. Like the Council, the Military Committee is composed of national three star flag and general officer representatives meeting in permanent session. The Military Committee routinely provides military advice to the North Atlantic Council and conveys Council guidance and decisions on military matters to NATO's Strategic Commanders, SACEUR, and SACLANC. The Military Committee periodically meets at Chiefs of Defense Staff level. The Military Committee Chairman is a four star officer appointed by the nations. He represents the Military Committee in Council meetings and speaks and acts for the Committee within the guidelines and authorities extended to him. The international military staffs support the Military Committee, which includes the Intelligence Division as shown in Figure 3. Neither the Secretary General nor the Chairman Military Committee have executive powers, but speak and act for NATO on the basis of consensus in their respective bodies.

### The International Military Staff



(1) The Situation Centre (SITCER) reports to the Assistant Secretary General for Defence Planning & Operations but is divided on a day-to-day basis by the Director of the International Military Staff.  
 (2) The Information Systems and Technology Branch serves both the International Staff and International Military Staff.  
 (3) The NATO Headquarters Consultation, Command and Control (C3) Staff is managed jointly by the Director (DIMS) and the Assistant Secretary General for Defence Support.  
 (4) MLD: Military/Joint Chiefs.  
 (5) WCO: Weapons Consultation Office.  
 (6) Management Advisory Unit/NATO Defence Manpower Authority.

Figure 3. The International Military Staff

The Council's decisions, based on Military Committee advice, are conveyed to NATO's Strategic Commanders— Supreme Allied Command Europe (SACEUR) and Supreme Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT)— normally through the Military Committee or on certain occasions, the Secretary General on Council's behalf. The Strategic Commanders are responsible for operational planning, assembling, and structuring forces and executing operations authorized and directed by the Council.

SACEUR exercises his command authority over Allied Command Europe through Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) located in Casteau, Belgium. ACLANT is located in Norfolk, Virginia, and is supported by a headquarters for Allied Command Atlantic. Both SACEUR and ACLANT have various subordinate commands.

## NATO Strategy

In the immediate post-Cold War period, NATO articulated a new strategy which advocates a broad politico-military approach to security. Its key objectives are maintaining stability, fostering the adoption of NATO's common values, and managing crises that threaten stability and peace in Europe and adversely impact NATO interests. The strategy calls for NATO's active engagement in cooperation and dialogue with non-NATO nations, including Russia, Ukraine, and other former members of the Warsaw Pact and former republics of the Soviet Union.

NATO, as part of its stability enhancing strategy, offered these former adversary nations membership in a cooperative association with NATO in pursuit of common objectives of peace and stability. This association is known collectively as the Partnership for Peace, and is an important feature of NATO's strategy and day-to-day political-military operations. Both Russia and Ukraine have unique relationships with NATO through separate agreements. New forums were established to facilitate dialogue and consultation with Partner nations, Russia, and Ukraine. The overarching body for NATO and Partner nation meetings is the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). The EAPC and separate forums for Russia and the Ukraine take place in at both political and military levels.

NATO documents, including the NATO Strategic Concept and details of the organization may be accessed through Internet site <http://www.nato.int/>

## **Intelligence at NATO Headquarters**

*Organization* : A single staff drawing upon the intelligence contributions of the NATO nations and NATO commands provides Intelligence support of NATO Headquarters. Because intelligence is a function of military command within NATO, the Headquarters' intelligence staff is integrated in the International Military Staff subordinate to the Military Committee (see Figure 3).

*Mission* : Although it is a military staff, the International Military Staff's Intelligence Division has a mission of supporting the requirements of the Secretary General, the Council, and all Headquarters' staffs and committees, whether military or political.

*Intelligence Functions* : In general, the intelligence staff performs the generic functions common to all intelligence staffs. Intelligence functions include strategic indications and warning, situation reporting (current intelligence), strategic estimates, managing intelligence requirements, intelligence reporting, and dissemination. In recent years the intelligence staff has expanded its support to take account of NATO's strategic dialogue with Partnership for Peace nations and its interaction and cooperation in crisis management operations with non-NATO nations in coalition with the Alliance. This has been done without resource augmentation.

*Indications and Warning* : NATO manages the military indications and warning function interfaces with the nations and contributes its own analysis to maintaining a warning status. NATO warning is both strategic (long-range estimates) and, in recent years, includes instability warning and warning of imminent threats to Alliance personnel and facilities, normally from terrorist groups. The warning function is federated among the nations, the IM S Intelligence Division, the NATO Office of Security, which manages NATO Counter Intelligence, threat warning, and the NATO Commands.

*Collection and Requirements Management* : NATO has no intelligence collection resources of its own. It relies entirely on the nations for contributions of intelligence for NATO's common use. NATO intelligence authorities can request intelligence from the nations, but the nations are not obligated to provide it. During recent years, some nations have transferred operational and tactical authority for the direction of some of their intelligence collection resources to NATO field commanders. This however, is not doctrine nor are NATO nations

obligated to declare intelligence collection resources to NATO. A legacy of NATO's reliance on nations for intelligence is a lack of staffs trained and equipped to manage complex, multidiscipline intelligence collection operations. In reality, NATO staffs and Commands are end users of finished intelligence products provided by the nations and NATO's operationally deployed Commands.

*Management of the NATO Intelligence Production Program*: This is a key function through which NATO nations participate in a cooperative production program to provide the Alliance with strategic estimates and other basic intelligence documents on aspects of military capabilities and risks. Most production under this program is NATO agreed intelligence, which means the formal agreement among all nations to the content of products with subsequent approval by the Military Committees.

*Special Intelligence*: NATO nations contribute special intelligence to the Alliance to complement other reporting. The Special Intelligence function is an adjunct to the normal collateral source contribution of the nations and requires extraordinary handling and dissemination procedures.

*Partner Dialogue and Consultation*: As noted, the Intelligence Division has new tasks in providing a basis in intelligence for dialogue and consultation between NATO and the Partner nations.

*Intelligence Staff*: The staff is multinational with an average strength of 25 military and civilian personnel. Some members of the staff are intelligence professionals, but most are posted to the staff with no prior intelligence experience. Staff tasks include the production of intelligence reports, briefings and assessments, the management of the NATO intelligence production program (performed in coordination with the NATO Nations), management of information systems, maintenance of an intelligence registry and management, reporting, and dissemination of NATO Special Intelligence.

*Intelligence Information Architecture*: Dissemination, handling and management of intelligence information is now almost exclusively conducted through secure digital information systems interconnected with other headquarters staff elements through a local area network. External intelligence connectivity with NATO Commands and national capitals is through an interoperable system of systems, all of which are secure and offer basic electronic mail and Web services. These NATO

wide area networks extend from the strategic to the tactical echelons. Intelligence core data and exchange transactions with the nations and commands are protected from general NATO access by firewalls. During the Kosovo crisis most mainline intelligence information communications connections were limited to a 64kbps capacity. The basic software standard is commercially available Microsoft applications. Owing to NATO and national security boundaries, there are no direct, digital connections between NATO communications and intelligence information systems and those of the nations.

## **NATO Headquarters Intelligence and Kosovo Crisis Operations**

NATO's first operational combat engagement was in Bosnia, but with the exception of limited combat air operations, deployment and subsequent operations were predominantly permissive in nature. Kosovo was a full spectrum test of NATO's capabilities and strategy beginning with instability evolving to a crisis with an intensive preventive diplomacy overlay, followed by a major air intervention and deployment of a stability and security restoration ground force.

As in the Gulf War, the strategic, operational, and tactical military capabilities and technological art demonstrated by the United States component of NATO's forces during Kosovo was a shock to European NATO. Much was experienced, but it remains to be seen how much was learned. At this writing it is clear that the Kosovo experience compelled Europe to at least demonstrate a unified political intent to remedy the many strategic capabilities shortfalls made evident during Kosovo crisis management and combat operations. It is not yet clear whether political intent will be translated into meaningful investment and restructuring to advance Europe's military capabilities, including national or collective strategic intelligence capacities.

NATO's institutional intelligence functions— that is, all the capacities to manage, produce and report intelligence within the framework of the NATO institutional military structure— were also tested. Kosovo revealed a number of important findings:

First, NATO command and staff intelligence has not kept pace with advances in communications, computing technology, information management or strategic and operational intelligence art.

NATO intelligence functions and capabilities have not sufficiently adapted to effectively support the politico-military strategy first articulated by NATO in 1991 and refined in 1999.

Improvements in NATO intelligence capabilities, such as they are, have been driven by operational necessity, not by programmed investment in response to NATO guidance and statements of required intelligence capabilities.

To illustrate the impact of these shortfalls on strategic intelligence in the Brussels politico-military headquarters, a brief synopsis of the intelligence challenges encountered is provided in succeeding paragraphs. NATO's intelligence lessons learned are provided in the chronological order in which they emerged, that is, during the phases of instability, crisis, conflict, and peace support operations. The reader should keep in mind that the following narrative is strictly from the perspective of NATO Headquarters, Brussels and does not take into account broader intelligence implications for the Alliance's commands or forces which planned and executed Operation Allied Force.

*Emerging Instability*: Kosovo was on NATO's Balkans agenda well before the crisis of 1998-1999. But, its visibility as a potential crisis area was well below the Alliance's concern threshold until nearly the end of 1997. Other issues were dominating the Alliance's time and energy when the Kosovo stability equation began to change late that year. Even though the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) had announced itself some two years earlier, November 1997 marked the beginning of a visibly activist KLA program characterized by a series of small armed attacks on Serbian police and civil officials in Kosovo. Those early incidents were recognized for their potential to generate broader problems and were reported in Headquarters intelligence briefings and assessments.

*Initial NATO Intelligence Challenges*: In the fall of 1997 little about the KLA was known or discoverable. Likewise, NATO's knowledge of the dispositions and strengths of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) military and its other security forces in Kosovo, particularly the various categories of Serbian Interior Ministry police or MUP, was also slim.

*Recognizing An Emerging Crisis*: In keeping with experience in Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia's past record of repression in Kosovo, there was an expectation that Serbian security forces would react to KLA provocations forcefully and, by internationally accepted norms,

disproportionately. An escalation of tensions and a destabilizing spiral to communal violence was a central scenario that NATO headquarters staff intelligence officers began to stress in their reporting and analysis.

*Establishing an Intelligence Foundation* : In the early days of escalating tensions and incidents, the first priority of NATO Headquarters intelligence staff, aside from situation reporting, was to build a base of data to draw upon to form a context for unfolding events and developments. The sketchy results of NATO's requests to the nations for gap filling intelligence data suggested that the nations too were operating from a slim intelligence information foundation on Kosovo. This marked the first signs that the doctrine of NATO depending on its member nations for all of its strategic intelligence needs would eventually prove unsound. For example, the NATO baseline for FRY order of battle and military facilities in Kosovo for example, was initially derived from Yugoslav CFE declaration data through the initiative of an enterprising SHAPE intelligence officer. However, data on the most important Serbian security instrument in Kosovo, the MUP, was singularly lacking in scope and detail. Despite their central and notorious role in Bosnia, even less was known about the unofficial instruments of the Belgrade regime, the *paramilitaries* .

*Providing a Strategic Intelligence Baseline for Decisionmaking* : Given the potential for Kosovo's destabilization to internal conflict and the implications for the region, the NATO intelligence Director initiated a request for the production of an intelligence estimate on Kosovo to serve as a policy and strategic decision baseline for NATO's senior political and military authorities. In keeping with NATO's consensus business practices, such intelligence estimates must be NATO agreed if they are to be accepted as authoritative. NATO agreed means an intelligence product that has the full concurrence of all nations and the approval of the Military Committee. In this instance, a draft was quickly produced that was substantively agreed to by all national Balkans experts.

National senior intelligence approval authorities in capitals however, could not reach consensus and the estimate was not published. This was the only time NATO attempted to produce an agreed intelligence estimate on Kosovo as a formal basis for Alliance planning and decisionmaking. All other intelligence concerning Kosovo was staff intelligence. Staff intelligence is produced by NATO's own institutional intelligence staffs based on the intelligence contributed to them by the nations and NATO commands. Staff intelligence is used for day-to-day

NATO deliberations and decision making, but does not carry the weight and authority of a NATO agreed product.

*Strategic Warning of Crisis and Conflict:* In December 1997, NATO Headquarters Intelligence, based on national contributions and its own subsequent assessments and analyses of the developing situation, issued a formal intelligence warning to all nations and NATO commands that Kosovo was evolving from crisis toward conflict. NATO's warning pre-dated all other warning by any individual nation. At the time, the NATO warning was disputed and rebutted by several NATO nations.

*The Beginning of Crisis and Conflict:* In February 1998, Serbian security forces undertook an anti-KLA operation against the prominent Kosovar Albanian Jashari clan. The Serbs' disproportionate use of force was widely reported by the press. This incident ignited Kosovar Albanian popular sentiment filling the ranks of the KLA. It was in many ways the point of no return for the Serbs, Kosovar Albanians, the KLA and NATO. In gauging the impact and portent of these developments, NATO intelligence was heavily dependent on open source information, principally the media in and around Kosovo and on the conflicting claims of the antagonists. This was to remain the case throughout the spring and summer of 1998.

*NATO Intelligence Challenges, Summer of 1998:* Because Kosovo was a denied access area for NATO, monitoring and assessing the developing situation in Kosovo depended heavily on open source media and strategic collection resources. Although strategic collection resources were employed, they did not prove particularly well suited to monitoring and reporting the ebb and flow of small armed actions by paramilitary groups, special police, and KLA forces. Major challenges during this period included assessing the severity of fighting, the methods, strengths and dispositions of FRY main forces, Serbian Special Police and the KLA, the effects of the intensifying fighting on the civilian population, and gauging the KLA's support and resupply infrastructure.

*Humanitarian Dimensions of the Crisis:* Growing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons became a matter of great concern as the winter of 1999 approached. NATO reliance on national intelligence contributions did not prove adequate to form an accurate appreciation. Technical intelligence collection proved only marginally productive in quantifying the humanitarian dimensions of the crisis. This was not a surprise, but a known shortfall learned from similar attempts to monitor

displaced persons in Rwanda using otherwise highly capable tactical airborne imagery collectors.

*Assessing the Fighting*: Strategic technical collection continued to prove inadequate for monitoring and assessing the dispositions, deployments, and operations of the opposing forces. The principal impediment, as discovered earlier in Bosnia Herzegovina, was the unsuitability of strategic sensors for searching out, identifying, and tracking the small armed units employed by both sides. Some overt multinational human intelligence was extremely valuable during this period, but too limited in volume and scope to enable NATO to form a comprehensive, dynamic picture.

*Assessing Strategy and Intentions*: Reporting from nations and commands concentrated for the most part on the military aspects of events in Kosovo, not on assessing intentions, strategies, or future prospects. As a consequence, NATO's insight into Kosovo internal groups, events and developments, and those in the FRY at large, particularly in Belgrade during this period, was extremely limited. The lack of politico-military assessments and short-term forecasts from the nations was a shortfall throughout the evolution of the crisis to active conflict when NATO forces were committed. As a consequence, NATO Headquarters intelligence produced its own assessments and near term forecasts throughout the crisis and conflict.

Finally, it was also clear during this period that the KLA, surprised by the large influx of volunteers to its then thin ranks, was desperately seeking arms, supplies, and the means to organize and train its new forces. NATO Headquarters staff, with good input from many nations, undertook an in-depth study of KLA financial networks and arms procurement and trafficking methods. A credible result was achieved, but efforts to implement practical countermeasures proved not within the NATO nations' capacity to organize and execute.

*Intelligence Challenges During Late 1998—early 1999*: With the approach of winter in 1998, international community concerns with the humanitarian consequences of large numbers of persons displaced in the Kosovo countryside became acute. Belgrade, pressured with the threat of NATO punitive air strikes, acceded to a cease-fire, a partial force withdrawal from Kosovo, a NATO air surveillance regime and the deployment of an OSCE monitoring mission. The cease-fire was also nominally agreed to by the KLA.

*The OSCE Contribution to Crisis Management:* Once the OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was in place, the OSCE began routinely reporting on compliance of the parties with the cease-fire and the provisions of implementing U.N. Security Council Resolutions. OSCE compliance observations provided firsthand insights to the situation and were a marked improvement over media and sketchy human intelligence source perspectives. Although intense diplomatic efforts to reverse the course of the crisis were ongoing at the turn of the New Year (1999), the picture emerging from Kosovo was uniformly discouraging in terms of prospects for a peaceful settlement.

In the beginning, FRY Federal and Serbian Republic forces were largely in compliance, but increasingly sensitive to the KLA's expansion into areas vacated by VJ and MUP forces. Early in 1999, the situation, as reflected in OSCE observations and media, was one in which the KLA had established a presence on much of the key terrain and along lines of communications in the province and were challenging the MUP.

At the same time, Belgrade's forces were not blameless in contributing to the deteriorating ceasefire and force withdrawal agreement. In late December and early January, they began a series of sorties from garrisons under the guise of spring military training, conducting provocative live fire exercises. The Special Police in the meantime were continually rotating personnel in and out of the province on the basis of resting their forces. This was in part a cover for the introduction of larger numbers of MUP, some of which were specialized in counterinsurgency and counter-terror operations. FRY military training grew in intensity in conjunction with MUP elements near key areas of KLA concentrations measurably increasing tensions and exchanges of fire. NATO intelligence concluded that both sides were fully committed to resumption of fighting in the spring of 1999, and that the Serbs were conducting reconnaissance and probes to shape and fix KLA forces.

The major intelligence challenges and tasks during this period included:

- Credible compliance reporting to NATO authorities;
- Crafting reports to the United Nations on behalf of the NATO Secretary General;

- Providing the KVM with intelligence support for the protection and safety of the mission; and
- Maintaining an appreciation of trends and events on the ground and forming a strategic assessment of the intentions of Belgrade and the KLA.

*Compliance Reporting*: NATO compliance reporting was almost exclusively based on the OSCE KVM monitoring supplemented by NATO intelligence data. OSCE, operating under extremely difficult conditions, provided a steady stream of extremely helpful monitoring reports, although KVM monitors were rarely able to directly observe a compliance or cease-fire violation. KVM was almost often on the scene after a violation was reported by one of the parties and therefore became hostage to the conflicting claims of the adversaries. NATO intelligence staff, in coordination with SHAPE intelligence staff, compared the KVM reporting with other available information and produced composite, evaluated compliance assessments for NATO political and military authorities. Periodic NATO reports to the United Nations drew directly from the NATO body of compliance reporting although in some cases the lack of a UN information security regime complicated and impeded transparency. This was the case when NATO intelligence sources formed portions of compliance assessments, precluding some information being shared with the United Nations.

*Force Protection Support of the KVM*: The lack of information security arrangements between NATO and non-NATO organizations were to prove a recurring and intractable problem throughout the Kosovo crisis.

It first became a major issue when the OSCE took to the field in Kosovo. OSCE's fully transparent information doctrine, like the United Nations's, meant there were no provisions for OSCE protecting any classified information NATO might otherwise be willing to release. Therefore, in the absence of a security agreement between NATO and OSCE, sharing classified information between NATO and the OSCE's Vienna staff, the KVM staff in Pristina, and with KVM field observers was not possible. The most serious aspect of this procedural and legal shortfall was NATO's inability to provide classified information directly to the KVM to enhance the safety and protection of KVM personnel. The solution was a NATO request to individual NATO nations to provide force protection intelligence directly to the KVM on a bilateral basis. This produced some results in that relevant information was conveyed

directly to certain NATO member nations' personnel within the KVM mission. This enabled some KVM headquarters personnel to make informed choices in directing security measures and operational plans for the KVM mission overall. Complicating the effectiveness of KVM security and protection measures further, the only secure communications with KVM Headquarters was through a secure telephone and facsimile in Pristina under the control of nation staff members from NATO nations.

*Strategic assessment of the intentions of Belgrade and the KLA:* Crafting dynamic NATO assessments of events and trends on the ground in Kosovo remained problematic during the KVM mission, but discerning the intentions of Belgrade and the KLA proved even more difficult. NATO nation reporting provided few insights on developments in Kosovo beyond those offered through the KVM. NATO Headquarters intelligence was left largely to its own devices to assess Belgrade's and the KLA's intentions from a political and military perspective. NATO nations provided current military intelligence reports to the headquarters, but very little in the way of integrated, strategic politico-military assessments. In this respect, NATO's senior politico-military echelon was singularly reliant on its own staff resources for strategic assessment and forecasting.

A key aspect of the NATO Strategic Concept specifically underscores the role of preventive diplomacy in defusing crises and finding political solutions. During the entire period of intense diplomatic efforts to resolve the Kosovo crisis, NATO as an institution, certainly at the staff level, had very little insight to the dynamics of negotiations or prospects for a political solution. NATO had no institutional representation at the Rambouillet conference and at the NATO staff level, insights to the progress at Rambouillet were obtained only through individual NATO nations involved in the meetings. No national contributions of intelligence to the Alliance included any details of preventive diplomatic activity. This was a serious intelligence gap in NATO's politico-military strategic level to fully assess prospects for peace or conflict. In this respect, NATO Headquarters intelligence was not only a forgotten echelon, but an isolated echelon.

*NATO Intelligence Challenges, Winter and Spring of 1999:* Although extremely valuable in observing and monitoring, it was evident that the KVM was increasingly a bystander in the face of the determination of the adversaries to pursue their strategies in Kosovo. Fighting continued

to escalate with incidents initiated and provoked by both sides. The killings of Kosovo Albanians at Racak and the KVM 's judgment that the Serbian special police were responsible was a watershed after which Belgrade clearly considered the KVM as hostile to its interests. Serbian harassment and threatening behavior toward KVM monitors increased but remained short of outright violence. Meanwhile, intense diplomatic efforts continued at the Rambouillet Conference in an attempt to find a political solution to the building crisis. The FRY and NATO were steadily progressing from crisis to confrontation and conflict.

*Intelligence, Spring—Summer 1999:* The KVM withdrew from Kosovo quickly and without incident on 20 March. Coordinated FRY offensive operations against KLA strongholds began immediately with special police in the vanguard and the VJ, for the most part, in a security and supporting role. Paramilitary forces were also at work in the province. Despite senior VJ and special police predictions that the KLA would be swept from Kosovo in a matter of a few short weeks, this proved not to be the case. On 23 March 1999 the NATO order was given to commence NATO Operation Allied Force.

*NATO Headquarters Intelligence Challenges During Operation Allied Force:* The principal staff intelligence focus during the course of Operation Allied Force was strategic situation reporting to NATO 's senior political and military authorities in the Headquarters Brussels. However, a variety of other functions were also performed.

*Situation Reporting:* Keeping NATO seniors and staffs informed of events, trends, and expected developments was the IM S Intelligence Division 's primary task. As Operation Allied Force began, the tempo of Headquarters military and political consultation had already reached a high level, but again increased by an order of magnitude.

With the initiation of the air campaign the Council met once per day, everyday. The Military Committee endeavored to do the same. In addition to preparing separate daily situation briefings for Council and the Military Committee, a combined operations and intelligence situation report was produced twice daily (beginning and end of day) providing amplifying details of current issues and developments not covered in situation briefings. Other intelligence requirements included information and current situation briefs for Partnerships and separate briefings for Partnerships in immediately bordering the conflict zone.

*Council Situation Reporting*: Approximately 10 minutes of combined, highly aggregated intelligence and operations information, were personally delivered by the Chairman of the Military Committee as a narrative without graphics aids, as is the usual practice in NATO Headquarters. In addition to coverage of key developments, the intelligence portion included a short outlook on expected trends and potential developments in both political and military sectors. The Council was intensely interested in air campaign trends, force protection and indicators of Belgrade's bending to the pressure of the air campaign. Collateral damage and civilian casualties were critical interests owing to the potential political impacts. As large numbers of Kosovar Albanians began pouring into Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the stability of those nations became a key political issue. Displaced persons inside Kosovo also drove efforts to quantify, locate, and describe the conditions of displaced persons.

*Military Committee Situation Reporting*: Reporting to the Military Committee was in the form of briefings. Intelligence and operations presentations were separate, each usually about 10 minutes in duration, with accompanying graphics. Briefings concentrated on the impact of the air intervention on strategic targets in Kosovo, the FRY and Montenegro, the effects of tactical strikes in Kosovo, the status of air defenses, dispositions and aspects of the adversaries' operations in Kosovo and the VJ in FRY at large and, as the campaign wore on, the status of displaced persons and refugees. Battle Damage Assessment, including progress toward isolating FRY forces in Kosovo, was among the high interest issues.

*Strategic Assessment Tasks*: Assessing the totality of political, military, and economic aspects and impacts of the conflict presented NATO Headquarters intelligence staff with tasks not previously envisioned.

*Military Assessment*: Assessment of military aspects of the NATO intervention was bounded by the classic challenges encountered in any military campaign; measuring the residual capacities of the enemy to conduct defensive and offensive operations, gauging intentions, estimating adversary sustainment and logistics and other well known factors. Owing to the nature of the NATO intervention, the status and residual capabilities of FRY air defense was of key importance. In the case of Kosovo itself, NATO was keenly attuned to assessments of the ebb and flow of fighting between FRY and KLA forces and the effects on

the civilian population and infrastructure of the province. Assessment was also complicated by FR Y information denial and deception and the vagaries of weather, impediments to intelligence collection access and the national limits on the intelligence reporting made available to NATO. Overall, the Headquarters intelligence staff's military assessment tasks, although by no means easy, were relatively straightforward. In the main, they were accomplished in a manner commensurate with needs at the strategic echelon, although a higher level of resolution would have been welcome by political and military authorities.

*Political Assessment*: Political assessment was the critical factor in NATO senior authorities' calculus of the trends in the intervention, in that the military operation was a means to a political end, not an end in itself. During peacetime operations, political analysis, assessment, and reporting in NATO Headquarters are the domain of the International Staff. Military Intelligence is expected, and reminded from time to time, to remain centered on military and related security factors. During Operation Allied Force two factors combined to severely challenge the intelligence staff's capacity. First, nations did not contribute strategic political reporting or assessments to NATO. Second, the International Staff evidently became so burdened with managing NATO's own political tasks, that it could not provide political situation reports or assessments in support of the Alliance's senior political body. The International Military Staff Intelligence staff quickly filled this strategic intelligence vacuum to the best of its abilities relying on its own resources for gathering and analyzing political factors and intentions. Virtually every International Military Staff intelligence situation report to Council and the Military Committee contained some assessment of political factors bearing on the conflict. It was later revealed that there was a great deal of sub-rosa politico-diplomatic activity into which NATO intelligence did not have adequate insight to evaluate and factor into its assessments. In a conflict uniquely characterized by application of military power to force a favorable political outcome, the lack of sophisticated political assessment was a singular shortfall.

*Economic Assessment*: The shortfall in political assessment was compounded by lack of insight into the complex economic factors in pacting Operation Allied Force and NATO's strategy. Again, the lack of nations' reporting to NATO and an initial lack of appreciation of economic factors, in general, was a challenge for the Headquarters' intelligence staff. It soon became important to have basic information

and understanding of FRY electrical power capacities, petroleum supplies and sources, military POL storage (strategic and tactical), the politico-economic vulnerabilities of the Milošević regime and the impacts of the conflict on regional markets and economies. Even the legal aspects of energy commerce with the FRY came to thwart efforts to impose what was intended to be a strict energy blockade near the end of the conflict. As a military Alliance, not yet adapted to the Post-Cold War nature of complex political-military conflicts, NATO was not well prepared for the politico-economic dimension of new era conflict. NATO intelligence was reactive in its consideration of economic factors throughout the conflict.

*Integrated Military, Political, and Economic Assessment:* While most capable in performing military assessments, it is evident that NATO intelligence was far less capable in political and economic sectors. As noted, the intelligence staff moved into previously out-of-bounds political and economic areas, but it was largely a reactive, patch-and-paste effort. These new challenges, combined with the high tempo of politico-military consultations and military operations, left little capacity to perform a full range of military, political, and economic analysis and in-depth assessment. More importantly, the skills, subject expertise, and staff depth to integrate these analytical disciplines into a seamless whole was not sufficient. This is a significant shortfall, which is now being examined with nations and within the NATO staff.

*Informing NATO Partner Nations and Front-Line States:* Briefings to partner nations, and especially the front-line states bordering the conflict zone, became a key component of NATO's consensus building and crisis containment efforts. The front-line states were of immediate and critical importance owing to NATO's needs for airspace access, overland transport, staging areas for the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) and for various aviation and logistics operations. The mission of informing partners was an especially difficult task for intelligence owing to the lack of national intelligence contributions releasable to them. The solution was the use of open source material validated by what was known in intelligence channels. Although not directly drawing on intelligence sources, the briefings were accurate and timely reflections of the situation.

*NATO Public Media Campaign:* One of NATO's most critical strategic political challenges was coping with the skillful information campaign mounted by Belgrade. NATO information and press officers were

confronted with the need for extremely current, accurate, comm and-validated military information. This was especially the case when rebutting Belgrade's various false claims of collateral damage, civilian casualties, and NATO aircraft losses. NATO intelligence and the Headquarters bureaucracy did not have sufficient mechanisms to quickly sanitize and release intelligence data for use in daily public media briefs. Only SACEUR, taking advantage of his authorities as U.S. European Commander (USCINCEUR), had the mechanisms to produce daily military operations updates based on sanitized operational and intelligence reporting. NATO headquarters intelligence requests to the nations during the course of the air campaign for sanitized data to support the NATO media effort produced little response. This included the NATO nations presenting detailed daily media briefings in their own national capitals. Understanding and providing for the media campaign needs of NATO headquarters during the air campaign was a key shortfall, although the NATO press and information officer bridged NATO's initial vulnerability with great skill and personal forcefulness. Ultimately, key nations provided expert support and inputs to improve and add depth to the NATO public media campaign. The limitations on intelligence contributions are recognized and are high among the post-conflict priorities for media work.

*Information Operations:* NATO Headquarters intelligence had no role in information operations in the context of more esoteric and high technology forms. The closest NATO intelligence came to involvement in information operations were its attempts to support the Alliance's public media campaign. As noted, NATO intelligence could not respond adequately in the form of publicly releasable intelligence facts, figures or data to help counter Belgrade's aggressive media campaign. NATO intelligence is no more and no less than what the nations provide for NATO to use. Sanitizing contributed intelligence and releasing it for public dissemination is within the authority of NATO, but the coordination mechanisms and staffing requirements satisfactory for deliberate, planned Cold War requirements, were totally inadequate in the face of compressed time frames and high operational tempos during the Kosovo crisis and intervention. Information operations is one of NATO's priority areas for improvement, especially media operations. Developing NATO capabilities to perform more complex information operations missions, given the legal and political sensitivities, the technical complexities and NATO's lack of organic intelligence collection capacity, is problematic.

*Release of Intelligence to NATO*: Almost all NATO nations improved upon their intelligence contributions during the crisis and air intervention, but the intelligence most responsive to NATO Headquarters' needs was contributed by a very small percentage of nations. In addition, many partner nations and NATO's three new estimation establishments were extremely generous and helpful in sharing their regional insights and expertise with the Alliance. Overall however, the United States was by far the main contributor of intelligence relevant to the needs of Headquarters. Even U.S. intelligence tended to focus most reporting on military and operational aspects. With the exception of U.S. strategic battle damage assessments, which had both technical and some strategic politico-military-economic dimensions, U.S. intelligence contributions did not include integrated military, political, and economic assessments and forecasts. Aside from the obvious need for military intelligence reporting, which was largely met by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Establishment, strategic assessment and forecasting was not a strong suit of any contributing nation. NATO headquarters benefited greatly from reporting on the military aspects of the crisis, but was essentially on its own in the key task of politico-military and politico-economic assessment and forecasting.

*Requirements Management*: The volume and content of intelligence flowing to NATO obviated a heavy NATO Headquarters effort in levying intelligence requirements on the nations. Although there were gaps and NATO registered requests for information, nations for the most part did not readily respond to the requirements levied, especially in the short time frames required. In any event, requirement management within NATO is not centrally managed nor does NATO yet have modern tools for managing a high volume of requirements. The NATO nations' slow or lack of responsiveness to requirements cannot yet be fully explained.

It is possible that the demands of Kosovo simply left little capacity within many national intelligence organizations to respond to NATO requirements. It is also possible that priorities in the more capable nations were directed exclusively to the execution of the military campaign. For example, among some nations' intelligence organizations, particularly the Combat Support Agencies comprising the U.S. Defense Intelligence Component, the understanding of the differentiated roles of the NATO military commands and the NATO Headquarters in Brussels is not well understood. In addition, U.S. Combat Support Agencies regard warfighting support of national forces as their *raison d'être*. Therefore, it can be imagined that support of the NATO politico-

military strategic echelon in Brussels ranked at least third in priority after support of SACEUR/CINCEUR as force commander and national and NATO forces engaged in combat missions.

*Open Source Exploitation*: NATO intelligence had neither the staff capacity nor the expertise to rapidly assimilate, analyze, and exploit open source information. This was a key shortfall owing to the wealth of information available through media and other sources. Within staff resources, NATO Intelligence made maximum use of the Internet to monitor and incorporate open source into its products, but true NATO exploitation of open source has yet to be achieved. The most impressive contributor of open source information to the Alliance was, and remains, the Multinational Intelligence Coordination Cell (MNICC) manned by a select number of NATO nations on a bilateral basis at the U.S. European Command's Joint Analysis Center.

*Headquarters Intelligence as a Function of Planning*: Intelligence at NATO Headquarters only indirectly supported planning for Kosovo contingencies and operations. Detailed operational planning was performed at SHAPE in conjunction with the air, ground, and maritime component commanders. In reality, the U.S. European Command in cooperation with staffs in the continental United States performed a great deal of planning support. The intelligence contribution to planning was almost exclusively from the United States with data released to NATO for drafting of plans. Significantly, USEUCOM's Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Malesherbes, France, was officially designated in NATO operational plans as the NATO intelligence fusion center for Operation Allied Force. NATO Headquarters intelligence role was for the most part one of reviewing SHAPE risk assessments underpinning operational planning. Owing to the lack of depth in intelligence information available and staff expertise, NATO Headquarters intelligence reviews were at best very broad.

## **Some Final Observations**

It is useful to keep in mind that mission functions performed satisfactorily tend to generate little comment. Conversely, less than fully satisfactory performance rightfully gets the most attention in the form of criticism and lessons learned analyses. On that basis, NATO intelligence staff, on balance, successfully performed all the tasks assigned to them and took a great deal of initiative in filling needs not

normally within their charter. In too many instances however, NATO depended on staff flexibility, adaptability, and extremely hard work as the formula for meeting unprecedented mission challenges. NATO intelligence staff was simply not trained or equipped for complex politico-military crisis management and an equally complex, high tempo military campaign with major political and economic dimensions. Therefore, the final observations and conclusions presented below are a critique of deficiencies in NATO Headquarters intelligence doctrine, structure, and its enabling infrastructure and tools. As noted, the headquarters intelligence staff bridged these shortfalls with imagination, team commitment to the mission and hard work. It is because the Alliance and its intelligence staffs need and deserve better that this chapter was written, and it is in that spirit that final observations are offered.

*NATO Strategic Indications and Warning*: NATO Headquarters intelligence warned of impending crisis and conflict in December 1997. There is no question that NATO intelligence strategic warning was timely. However, it is questionable whether it was effective. A key issue with warning's relevance and effectiveness is its impact on stimulating a political or military response. It is extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness of early strategic warning in terms of NATO's subsequent planning, decision making, and force execution. Strategic politico-military warning is far different than warning of attack or immediate threats and is therefore much less likely to generate a prompt politico-military response that can be directly correlated to the warning given. Nevertheless, in the wake of the Kosovo experience, NATO intelligence has restructured its warning doctrine and procedures to focus not only on traditional and asymmetric threats, but instability and crisis. Furthermore, NATO intelligence is engaged with political and military authorities to establish linkages between warning and precautionary measures to be taken by Alliance authorities upon warning.

*Strategic Estimates*: As noted at the outset of this chapter, NATO produces two grades of intelligence. One is *agreed intelligence* which has the full concurrence of all the NATO nations. The other is *staff intelligence* which is produced by NATO Headquarters and Command and intelligence staffs and does not necessarily represent the views of all NATO nations. NATO intelligence could not produce a strategic estimate at the early stages of the Kosovo crisis because national defense intelligence senior authorities could not formally agree on the substance

of an estimate produced by a multinational working group of subject matter experts.

There is no solution to producing crisis management strategic estimates absent the will of nations to move quickly and decisively to agreement, which implies accepting the expertise of their intelligence experts and perhaps sacrificing some precision in the interests of responsiveness. Nations also must understand that, while such estimates are indeed strategic, the nature of crisis and conflict today is fundamentally different from that of the Cold War period. Today, events and factors driving strategic estimates have a major political component and are, therefore, volatile. During crisis management operations, estimating will probably have to be a rolling process with frequent reassessment required. The NATO estimates culture, established during the Cold War, must give way to a new intelligence culture responsive to the dynamics, ambiguities, and uncertainties of the new security environment.

*Strategic Situation Reporting:* NATO Headquarters intelligence performed this function satisfactorily, supported by the reporting of SHAPE JOC J-2, the NATO and selected Partner nations and ACE operational command echelons. Managing, processing, and compressing high volumes of data into highly aggregated, strategically relevant, political and military assessments with short-range forecasts was a major challenge. The high demand for situation reporting, the pressure of time and the necessary internal staff and command element coordination were additional factors making this a high stress endeavor. All of these considerations demanded a high degree of consistency in all staffs meeting their time windows for reporting up echelon with progressively higher degrees of data aggregation. This was only possible through the use of highly reliable digital information systems capable of handling large volumes of textual and graphical information for multiple consumers. A relatively high level of technical expertise in the use of digital information systems by all personnel, including flag and general officers, was essential to the management, coordination, and responsive delivery of briefings and reports.

*Strategic Assessment:* NATO Headquarters intelligence ability to produce strategic assessments was impacted by a number of factors; (a) insufficient staff with regional political and economic subject matter skills, (b) the time demands of accessing and managing high volumes of information (intelligence and open source), (c) the high tempo headquarters situation briefing and reporting regime, (d) the lack of an

intelligence basis in the form of integrated strategic assessments contributed by the nations, and (e) the lack of culture and experience in strategic crisis management campaign planning and management in NATO's senior political and defence staffs to drive intelligence requirements and effectively use intelligence as a management instrument.

*Information Architecture and Intelligence Information Management:* Although seemingly contradictory, NATO Headquarters intelligence was concurrently starved for intelligence and plagued by a glut of intelligence. From this contradiction arises the central issue of how to structure and manage high volumes of intelligence information, reporting, and dissemination using digital information systems and networks. Despite the challenges posed by digital system information management, the use of such systems was absolutely central to NATO's success in maintaining high tempos in operations, coordination, crisis management, and politico-military consultation at all echelons. Unlike NATO's analog and new er digital record communications systems, the digital wide area networks in use during Kosovo were not governed by any hierarchical reporting responsibilities or dissemination management scheme. Consequently, dissemination of intelligence reporting was too often on the basis of who one knows, not who needs to know.

The amount of duplicate reporting and circular addressing was excessive, creating a burden for users and communications capacities. There were no standards for textual and graphical data keeping and access across NATO echelons. Intelligence homepages often duplicated data holdings and reporting. Proliferation of intelligence homepages was, and continues to be, a problem. The number of homepages available to NATO and NATO nation intelligence officers is now in excess of 40.

It is a fallacious and dangerous assumption on the part of intelligence producers that once a report is posted on a homepage that it has been disseminated to those in need of it. In crisis operations especially, time does not permit searching Web pages for needed data. Key reports must be pushed to those who need them by e-mail. Pushing intelligence by e-mail however, is a slippery slope toward information overload, especially if there are no applications available for profiling and filtering e-mail into a coherent dissemination scheme at the user end of the chain.

Perversely, the most significant impediment to effective crisis information reporting and dissemination operations during Kosovo was posed by the nation contributing the most intelligence to the

Alliance, the United States. U.S. intelligence producers persisted in using U.S.-only intelligence information systems to disseminate intelligence released to NATO. Therefore a great deal, if not the bulk, of U.S.-produced and released intelligence resided and continues to reside in the electronic mail queues of U.S.-only information systems such as JD ISS and SIPRNET. And, the bulk of U.S. released documents and products posted to home pages can only be accessed through U.S.-only systems such as INTELINK and INTELINK-S. Only one NATO nation has access to these holdings. It is the same nation who produced and released them and does not need them. There was, and remains, no way to digitally and automatically move released products across national and NATO security boundaries into NATO systems. During Kosovo, some U.S. personnel had the sole task of printing out NATO releasable material, digitally scanning the paper product, and loading the re-digitized document into a NATO information system. The awareness of this problem is now growing and hopefully will be less of a factor inhibiting future U.S. support of NATO operations.

Finally, NATO needs information tools. Kosovo was a Microsoft war. The most sophisticated information management tools available across most of the Alliance information structure were those found in the Microsoft Office application. Clearly, NATO needs more capable information management applications. NATO Headquarters intelligence requirements in this sector are documented, but by no means satisfied or necessarily agreed across the Alliance as the way forward.

## **Conclusions and Prospects**

In the end, NATO achieved its objectives through Operation Allied Force. But, it is clear that the strategic intelligence contribution could have been much more sophisticated, effective, and helpful to NATO strategic military and political authorities. And, as noted, it is arguable that the NATO planning and crisis management culture was not sufficiently mature to direct or take maximum advantage of intelligence as a crisis management instrument.

In the decade following the Cold War, NATO Headquarters intelligence was indeed the forgotten echelon and was not restructured or adapted to implement the changing strategy of the Alliance or to meet the demands of the changing information technology or security environments. Consequently, NATO Headquarters intelligence was not

well postured for Kosovo crisis and intervention operations. A n intelligence reform and modernization strategy has been adopted and approved by the Military Committee. It holds some promise for reforming and restructuring the Headquarters intelligence component, but the future of the Alliance's intelligence capability is ultimately in the hands of its member nations.

There are no professional or technical reasons preventing NATO intelligence from developing the capacity to support complex political, economic, and military intelligence operations. Given the wealth of regional, functional, and technological expertise available across the Alliance there is every reason to believe that NATO intelligence could achieve a level of collective excellence and synergy exceeding that of any single member nation. There are however, very serious reasons to believe that there is insufficient national and NATO institutional will to reform, invest in, and modernize the Alliance's intelligence capability to meet the demands of the NATO Strategic Concept and the dynamics of the strategic environment. Meanwhile, as the debate on the future of NATO intelligence continues, national intelligence restructuring, intelligence technology and military art march on and strategic environment challenges continue to change and develop.

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<sup>1</sup>The observations, judgments, and conclusions expressed in this article are the author's alone and do not necessarily represent those of NATO or the author's national intelligence authorities.

# CHAPTER IX

## The Kosovo Crisis and the Media: Reflections of a NATO Spokesman<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Jamie P. Shea<sup>2</sup>

It has often been pointed out that today wars of interest, today which countries fight because their vital interests are at stake or because they are directly threatened, or because of territorial or dynastic disputes, are less frequent. They are being replaced by wars of conscience. These conflicts arise not because a country has any vital national interest in fighting, but because it feels a duty to uphold certain human rights and societal values against states that abuse those values vis-à-vis their own citizens. Indeed, it is because of the fact that in today's conflicts 90 percent of the casualties are civilians, compared with only 5 percent in World War I and 48 percent in World War II, that liberal democracies feel the need to become involved in order to save lives by putting a stop to persecution on grounds of ethnicity or religion. Wars of conscience pose considerable problems for the western democracies vis-à-vis the media. These new types of humanitarian interventions are allegedly conducted in the name of moral values and higher standards of civilization. As a result, the media increasingly expects that the military campaigns themselves should also be conducted in a more civilized way. This is clear in the growing demand that military interventions be legitimized through a U.N. Security Council Resolution or other grounding in international law. It is also manifest in the media's expectation that the extreme character of the use of force be recognized by liberal democracies and that they try to limit its effects as much as possible. Democracies expect them to attain political results from the minimum use of force. As a result, at the end of the 20th century the principles of the just war dear to Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas are making a comeback.

There are four principles of the just war. The first is that the conflict itself must be a last resort. The second is that the means used should be proportionate to the ends pursued. The third is that there should be

an aximum degree of discrimination between military and civilian targets. The fourth and final principle is that the good that is procured by the conflict should outweigh the costs that inevitably have to be paid in arriving at that end. In other words, that the end justify the means. Conflicts are always measured in terms of the quality of the peace that they help create. The problem here is that even conflicts conducted to the most exacting standards of civilized behavior dear to liberal democracies cannot conform entirely to those four principles of the just war. It is the inevitable gap between expectation and reality that fuels much of the media's anxieties regarding modern-day warfare.

## The Theory of the Last Resort

Obviously democracies want to be able to demonstrate that they have exhausted all possible diplomatic means to solve a crisis before they resort to arms. In the case of NATO's involvement in Bosnia, this meant hesitating for the better part of 3 1/2 years before engaging decisively in September 1995 when the Alliance bombarded Serbian artillery positions around Sarajevo to bring about an end to the siege of that city. More recently, in Kosovo it meant hesitating for the better part of a year before finally agreeing to launch Operation Allied Force, the 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. During that time much suffering occurred, and it is a fair point to argue that had the Alliance acted immediately, both in Bosnia and in Kosovo, much less force would have been needed to secure the objective and many lives would have been saved. Many experts today point out that had NATO sent gunboats to immediately respond to the Serbian artillery shelling of the city of Dubrovnik in 1991, the misery and destruction of the subsequent break up of Yugoslavia could potentially have been avoided. There would perhaps not have been 350,000 deaths, 2 1/2 million refugees, and untold disruption to the social and economic life of an entire region.

A last resort, whereby the international community exhausts every conceivable diplomatic means and sends innumerable envoys to the target region before concluding that force is necessary, often means that much more force has to be used, in a more decisive way and in more difficult circumstances later on to make up the lost ground caused by allowing the conflict to exacerbate while diplomacy runs its course. It can also mean forgoing the opportunity to strike an adversary when he is at his most vulnerable and when surprise will have its greatest

in fact. A last resort policy gives an adversary more time to prepare—for instance in dispersing forces, hiding military assets, and deploying decoys. Nonetheless, an immediate military response is unlikely to be acceptable either to politicians or to public opinion. Diplomatic efforts are necessary to acclimatize public opinion gradually to the necessity of the use of force. Liberal democracies cannot justify the use of force on grounds of punishment or retribution alone. Force has to be another way of achieving the same overall political objective. Failure of diplomatic efforts also lends further legitimacy to the use of force. Conflicts are never popular with public opinion. The uncertainties that they cause can be countered only by the argument that there is no other choice.

## The Principle of Proportionality

The same problems apply to the principle of proportionality, or the requirement that only minimum force be used to achieve a certain objective. These problems are all the more acute where, as in the case of NATO's conflict with Yugoslavia, war had not been formally declared and the Alliance stated that it was intervening not against the people of Serbia, with whom it had no quarrel, but against a rogue regime which was using unacceptable levels of violence to solve its internal problems. Regimes that acted in this way did as much a disservice to the interests of their own people as to the interest of a rival or adversary group, in this case the Kosovar Albanians. The Serbs in Kosovo also suffered under Milosevic's campaign of repression, both because of the violence that the campaign engendered and as a result of the widespread desire for vengeance following the return of the Kosovo refugees. Such double hazard gives the international community all the more justification for intervening as dictatorships tend to be a threat to their own citizens as well as to their neighbors. But once the decision to use force has been made, the pressure has to be decisive. Force has to make a significant impact and be effective to make a difference. If force is used in too gentlemanly a way, then it could convey the opposite impression to an opponent, that is to say of weakness, of lack of resolve, of a definite limit to the amount of force that the Alliance is prepared to use. It can therefore even encourage the continuing defiance and resistance of the opponent. The proportionality debate also extends to the choice of weapons. Cluster bombs, for instance, are highly effective against airfields and fielded

forces, but 10 percent do not function and if they go astray they can inflict much harm on civilians. Should we use them?

Conflicts presuppose the willingness to inflict a considerable level of damage to be effective. In the Kosovo conflict, Milošević showed an unexpected willingness to tolerate a very high degree of damage before being prepared to meet the essential conditions of the international community. As with other dictators, he did not have to worry about serious political opposition, and he could exploit his control of the media to hide his military losses in Kosovo from his domestic public opinion. So it was essential for the Alliance to be ready to escalate beyond the point at which Milošević was willing to surrender. This involved the intensification of the air campaign over 78 days during which a number of strategic targets in Yugoslavia were destroyed, targets which were chosen specifically for their military rationale but which also had a major relevance to the civilian community, such as roads, railways, bridges, electricity switching stations, radio relay sites, and petroleum refineries. The irony here is that force has to create disorder in order to ensure order. Often the situation has to get worse before it gets better. The media seizes on this aspect of conflicts. It is easy to argue that the decision to intervene has actually made matters worse, for instance in turning a humanitarian crisis into a catastrophe. During the Kosovo conflict, a frequent question was: "Hasn't NATO bombing only provoked Milošević into expelling hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians? Instead of stopping a humanitarian disaster, haven't you caused one instead?" The media is more interested in short-term consequences than long-term objectives. Yet all military interventions are based on the premises that you have to exacerbate a crisis in order to solve it. The problem is that the media wishes to have it both ways. Before the military intervention it focused on the risk of inaction. It accused NATO of making empty threats and of allowing Milošević to act with impunity. After the intervention had begun, it concentrated instead on the risks of action.

Every refugee arriving in a camp in Macedonia or Albania said that it was not NATO which was the cause of their leaving, but rather Milošević's soldiers. But it proved difficult to make the case that NATO's action had not made an already bad situation far worse. What policy makers needed to get across to the media and public opinion at large was the message that sometimes the situation even for the victim may have to get worse before it can get better. Not to do anything would

not have been to save the lives of Kosovo Albanians, but rather to abandon them to perhaps a slower, but at the same time equally relentless campaign of persecution and denial of basic human rights. Now, after some months of disorder, the refugee exodus has been reversed. Indeed over 650,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees have returned to their homes with unprecedented speed.

## The Next Principle Is That of Discrimination

There has been spectacular progress over the past decades in refining weapons to make them increasingly accurate against military targets. We now have precision-guided munitions, weapons guided by lasers, and better mapping and computer technology to ensure that weapons are delivered to their targets with an accuracy that would have been unheard of just a few years ago. Computers now calculate the precise aim points of munitions to ensure that collateral damage is kept to a strict minimum. For instance, attacking the building from one side to ensure that on the other side civilian buildings are left as intact and as unaffected as possible or that the blast damage is kept to a minimum by precisely calculating the angle and the speed of the impact of the munitions. This has become a genuine science and with very impressive results. In Operation Allied Force, NATO dropped 23,000 bombs, whereas only 30 were misdirected and failed to hit the intended target accurately. This is a fraction of 1 percent, a degree of accuracy that has never been achieved before. The paradox here is that as the weapons become more accurate, the media and public opinion in general are all the more shocked when things go wrong, as inevitably they do in warfare. The incredible 99.9 percent success story is ignored; the 0.1 percent or failure, statistically insignificant, becomes the central drama of the conflict and the yardstick for judging NATO's military and moral effectiveness.

## Even the Best Training and Technology Cannot Prevent Accidents Occurring

We had in Operation Allied Force the very impressive video footage of an aircraft attacking a railway bridge. It was clear that at the moment the pilot released his bomb there was no train on the bridge but a split second after the bomb had been launched, what happened? A passenger

train suddenly appeared with the tragic results that everybody knows. That was really something that could not humanly or technologically have been prevented. And so as public opinion becomes increasingly used to the idea that there can be effective discrimination between military casualties and civilian casualties in modern conflicts, the loss of innocent lives becomes all the more scandalous and unacceptable. It increasingly carries with it the risk that an international coalition like NATO, because it arguably cannot avoid spilling a certain amount of civilian blood during a conflict, will be seen as just as bad as an authoritarian regime like that of Milosevic which has been deliberately killing its own civilians. Discrimination simply cannot be 100 percent effective, unless countries refrain from sending their armies into battle in the first place. All the more so as certain military targets have a civilian use, such as bridges or roads or rail ways. Even limited force will be inevitably disrupting the civilian economy causing unemployment or shortages of electricity in schools and hospitals. This can at best cause inconvenience to civilian activity and at worst lead to civilian deaths or suffering. During the Kosovo crisis I was impressed by an article in *Le Monde* by Claire Tréan in which she said, "So far the problem with this conflict is that the only people who are dying are civilians." What she meant was that NATO pilots were not being shot down in the judgment of the media because they were flying at an excessively high altitude. On the other hand, NATO was not seen to be successfully attacking the Serbian units in the field in Kosovo. The media demanded that the Alliance focus its air strikes on those responsible for the killing and the mayhem, which were the Yugoslav fielded forces in Kosovo. In any conflict, carrying convictions does not only mean having a convincingly superior moral cause but equally being militarily effective in pursuing that cause. Morality without effectiveness is as bad in the eyes of the media as effectiveness without morality.

But to my mind it would have been wrong to place the lives of our pilots at greater risk by forcing them to fly at 10,000 or 5,000 feet, simply to demonstrate that they were facing the same risks of casualties as the Yugoslav soldiers in the field of Kosovo or even civilians. Creating an artificial equality of suffering would have been absurd, not least for psychological as well as military operational reasons. Had we lost six planes a night as Milosevic boasted before the campaign that he would be able to achieve, public support would have rapidly disintegrated in the Alliance member states for the continuation of this conflict. The price would simply have been seen as too high. At the same time,

Milosevic would have no doubt been encouraged to continue to defy the international community on the safe assumption that he was inflicting unacceptable military losses against us. Ultimately one of the factors that must have made life miserable for him was the fact that every morning his generals would visit him and tell him that during the previous night no NATO aircraft had been shot down, despite their very intensive anti-aircraft fire from SAM 3 and SAM 6 missiles and other types of anti-aircraft that NATO pilots were subjected to on practically every mission that they flew. Nonetheless the media in the liberal democracy find it difficult to accept that increasingly the military forces on either side can protect themselves through decoys or tactics or training or technology, whereas no such protection is afforded to the civilians that continue to suffer disproportionately. This criticism is all the more acute when the sole purpose and rationale of an intervention by the NATO Allies in a crisis like that of Kosovo is a humanitarian one. The media finds it difficult to accept that sometimes civilian lives will be put at risk or even expended in accidental strikes in order to save the lives and the wellbeing of the overwhelming number.

Finally I come to principle number four of the Just War: the notion that the end justifies the means or that the good, which results from the conflict, is greater than the price that had to be paid. Here I think nobody could deny today that this result has been achieved in Kosovo. Kosovo is now free even if formally it is still part of Yugoslavia. The Kosovar Albanians are now able to go about their lives without fear of persecution or at least mass persecution, even if we are still not in a position to prevent individual acts of revenge, inflicted by one side against the other, attacks which are understandable even if lamentable after the terrible experience that Kosovo has been undergoing over the past decades. The international community is committing itself to a major program of reconstruction, not simply of Kosovo but indeed through the Stability Pact of the entire region of the southeastern Europe. The Yugoslav security forces have been forced to leave Kosovo. The problem here is that while NATO's campaign was still ongoing, it was difficult to prove to the media that this result would in fact be achieved. This is rather like the analogy of an insurance policy. You pay your money every month whereas the benefits occur only in the future. In other words, you feel the pain but you don't yet perceive the gain. During Operation Allied Force the costs every day of the conflict could be palpably felt. They could be filmed by the international

media and transmitted in real time by satellite to TV audiences across the world. We saw multiple images of suffering, of refugees in camps having lost everything, of families being separated, of women who had been raped or badly abused. And we saw of course what Milosevic wanted Alliance public opinion to see: the NATO mistakes, the incidents in which bombs had hit the wrong target, causing loss of life and injury to many innocent civilians. Milosevic was the aggressor but he used the Western media to portray himself as the victim. The public was clearly aware of the conflict and of the immediate price that was being paid. But we could not film the future. We could not present the result that now we see which was at that moment still hypothetical. Public opinion in modern conflicts is much more likely to be critical because it is presented by the media only with the short-term side effects or the short-term consequences or the short-term costs of military action. It is not presented with the long-term benefits. Conflicts in other words are justified only in retrospect and in light of the final results. Nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure. You can only convince the media by winning. A conflict is deemed just only if it succeeds. Results in press the media more than reasons.

The media in liberal western democracies expect standards of perfection in the conduct of civilized warfare that reality cannot really match, notwithstanding the enormous efforts of NATO politicians and NATO military commanders to take every conceivable precaution to minimize the harmful consequences to civilians and to the civilian economy of their opponent. Notwithstanding the fact that it was the opponent who was the first to resort to arms and to break the code of civilized behavior. There is in short a perception gap between what is feasible and what is desirable and it is into the gap that the media pour with the results that we saw on many occasions in Operation Allied Force. This can take several forms particularly in an age where the media, via satellite and cable TV and 24-hour news channels can have the story in real time. The media no longer need spokesmen to present them with the facts. They are fully able to find out those facts themselves and often much faster than spokesmen even can. 24-hour TV means that every event, every incident can be dissected, analyzed, and commented upon almost ad nauseam. After watching a conflict 24 hours a day on TV even the shortest conflict in human history (and with 78 days I believe Operation Allied Force will go down in history as one of the shortest conflicts) can seem to the average viewer to be lasting an eternity.

## The Media Likes Conflicts

The media are attracted to conflicts because they are larger than life events. They generate dramatic pictures that speak for themselves and maximize the appeal to the emotions of viewers. They also contain a variety of different stories. There is the story of the titanic struggle between nations, there are the human-interest stories of individual tragedies, and there is the opportunity to show extremes of human experience. And conflict, fortunately for Western liberal democracies, is sufficiently rare these days to be different and newsworthy. When it happens it excites enormous interest. Even the battle of the airwaves can become a media story in its own right as we saw during Operation Allied Force; and as we see in the desire now of some TV channels to make programs entirely devoted to the media war. Conflicts increase the ratings and give many foreign and defense correspondents a temporary upper hand over their more visible rivals covering domestic affairs. On the other hand, policy makers do not like crises. Crises bring anxiety, tension, and uncertainty. None of us know how we are going to perform, whether we are going to have a *good war* or a *bad war*, whether we will be up to the challenge or be found to be deficient, whether our decisions will prove to be the right ones or the wrong ones, and how the whole thing is going to end. Above all, we never feel fully in control of events. It's not surprising that policy makers do whatever they can not to find themselves caught up in running a conflict. That is another reason for them to exhaust all the diplomatic means of resolving a conflict first.

The ability of the media to dramatize events and create a global audience for a conflict puts policy makers under pressure to take decisions faster and with less time for reflection than at any previous time in human history. This increases the chances of those decisions being the wrong ones. Because in today's liberal democracies the use of force is seen as the ultimate extreme option available to governments and because conflicts are rare, even just wars do not explain or justify themselves. They have to be sold to public opinion much more than the wars of imperial conquest of the past. Humanitarian interventions are more controversial and public opinion— not to mention the press— is less deferential. This is particularly true when the conflict is against another European state at the end of the 20th century. In today's conflicts political leaders spend as much time explaining or justifying a conflict to their

public opinion and to the media as they actually do running them. A very senior British defense official complained to me that he spent most of his time preparing for his daily press briefing and trying to anticipate the difficult questions he would be asked. He had less time to be involved in his primary role of running the conflict as a result.

Despite all this effort, Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers, or serving Chiefs of Defense are at a disadvantage in that they can be portrayed by the media as biased or unreliable witnesses because they have to say that, don't they? And as soon as the conflict is not terminated in 48 hours, outcome the talking heads to say: well it hasn't worked with the speed of instant coffee, therefore it is not going to work. And after 3 days to a modern media that dissects, analyses, and comments extensively on every single incident an air campaign is already too long. If you haven't yet succeeded, you must have failed— although any air campaign is obviously a work in progress which will take some time to produce its full effects. During Allied Force clearly it was going to take some time to substantially degrade the Yugoslav fielded forces in Kosovo and generate the military pressure on Milosevic to pull them out. Even if the air campaign had been more instantly effective, Milosevic would still have held out to test Allied resolve and to see if Russia would cooperate with the Alliance against him or not. But the fact that Milosevic did not give in on day one did not mean that he was not going to give in the future.

The media is primarily interested in the instantaneous image, which becomes the reality of the day. In other words they are interested in news and the problem here is that news is often not important or rather because it is news does not mean to say that it is always important. The Djakovica convoy incident in which perhaps 10 to 20 people died became the dominant news story for five days. During those five days 200,000 people were expelled from Kosovo. Was that not more newsworthy than the 10 to 20 people who died because of a NATO accidental strike against a convoy? I would argue that it was. It was much more intrinsic to the real story of what was going on inside Kosovo. But why did the media not report that? A answer— no pictures. And this is a fundamental lesson that we are going to have to learn. It is quite simple: no pictures, no news. In other words I, as NATO spokesman, everyday was using thousands of words to explain what was going on. I was talking about atrocities, about summary executions, about lootings, about house burnings, about rapes; I was talking about

identity thefts of people's documents. None of that was believed because I could not present the photographic evidence. In much of the press it was called rumor and speculation, even though now journalists are coming up to me and saying: "Sorry, if anything you were far too conservative in your estimates of what was going on." The International Criminal Tribunal has already discovered 200 mass graves and crime sites and my estimate of 4,600 Kosovar deaths at the hands of the Yugoslav security forces is less than half of the current conservative estimate. But I didn't have any pictures and if you can't provide a picture, there is no story, even though you are describing the fundamental reality of what is going on. But if TV can provide a picture of a tractor, which has been accidentally struck by NATO aircraft, that becomes the reality of war. The individual incident is played up and the general trend is played down. Context suffers. The conflict is portrayed by the media as a series of individual newsworthy incidents, some of which are decisive to the outcome of the conflict, others of which are totally irrelevant. There is little sense of fundamental dynamics, of underlying currents or of probable outcomes.

## Pictures Are Believed

In sum, pictures rule in these situations. Pictures are believed, even if they are atypical or distorting; words are distrusted even if they are true. I remember many times urging the Pentagon (and other Allied countries that had satellite photography) to give me a picture of a mass grave, or of villages that were burning, or of internally displaced persons inside Kosovo to show at my daily briefing. Otherwise nobody was going to believe me. I could even be accused of propaganda.

Essentially this means that your adversary has an advantage over you, at least initially. Why? Because Milosevic controlled the pictures. There was a group of western journalists in Belgrade. He gave them their visas. If they did not behave, he took away their visas. In fact over 50 western journalists were expelled by the Serbs during Operation Allied Force because they refused to be docile, or asked too many embarrassing questions. That is the big difference between their system and our system. Any journalist can come to one of the NATO press conferences and ask every embarrassing question he likes and still be welcomed back the next day. If a journalist had asked the same question at one of the non-existent daily briefings in Belgrade of the Yugoslav

official, the visa would have been removed. So in other words, in order to be able to stay in Yugoslavia and be able to report, journalists had to play by the rules and accept certain restrictions.

That meant that Milošević, who controlled the pictures, could show the western media the pictures that he wanted them to see of NATO's collateral damage and make sure that none of the pictures that would have embarrassed him, the real pictures of the war, the atrocities, the mass graves, the burning houses, were never filmed or were never released because of censorship. Yugoslavia treated this as a war and played by the rules of war— censorship, control of the media, pooling— whereas we treated it as a conflict and played by the principles of transparent open democracy in posing no restrictions whatever. It meant that we were dependent on a brave Kosovar Albanian who made a video film of one particular massacre and managed to smuggle it out. When that played on CNN, after about 5 or 6 weeks after the beginning of Allied Force, it was the very first pictures that anybody had seen of what was actually happening inside Kosovo. He who controls the ground controls the media war, even though he who controls the air controls the military strategy for winning. One of the key challenges during the Kosovo crisis was to convince journalists that we were not losing the media war while we were in fact winning the military conflict. Milošević's control of the pictures lent credibility to this— ultimately wrong— perception.

I would have asked many of those journalists in Yugoslavia to have reported openly that when they were taken in a closed bus to the site of a tractor attacked by NATO that they couldn't film all of the burning houses that they saw on the way, or why they could not film Pristina, or Pec, or the other places emptied or decimated by Serbian forces. There were some limp attempts by many TV stations to put a kind of health hazard warning at the beginning of the news saying: "Our reports from Yugoslavia are subject to certain restrictions." But it was said in a pro forma way that did not convey the reality of the censorship particularly forcefully.

This brings us back to another problem in dealing with the media in times of conflict. The media believes that objectivity requires a debate. If you do not present contradictory views, you are not being objective. However, logically objectivity is not simply criticizing your own side all the time. But for the media it is often precisely that. The media have a tendency to believe that every time a NATO spokesman appears there

has to be a Yugoslav Foreign Ministry spokesman on at the same time. As if it is somehow unhealthy to have only me giving my view without the rebuttal appearing alongside me to ensure objectivity, or as if an official view has to be immediately contrasted with its opposite or else the media are not doing their job. This lends credence to the notion that official views are automatically suspect; at the minimum, partial.

Sometimes this sense of truth (as the systematic questions and challenging of official views) can be taken to extremes. I was invited on to a program on the ITV channel in the UK called *NATO on Trial—NATO On Trial—* as if what we were doing for a humanitarian cause was equivalent to a criminal action which had to be judged by putting the NATO spokesman literally in this program in the dock. I found myself in a kind of artificial studio court being cross-examined by lawyers as to the morality of our action. Again, this reflects a kind of increasing distrust among many media of government officials, or spokesmen, as if somehow our views are automatically suspect and have to be either cross-examined by lawyers or opposed by Yugoslav Foreign Ministry spokesman who, incidentally, came out with far more outrageous statements than I ever did.

So how are we going to deal with this? We have to develop what I would call a compensation strategy for dealing with the way in which the media selects its stories and presents them as the whole truth, confuses the symptoms and the causes (i.e., the refugees pouring out of Kosovo are the result of NATO air strikes, not the reason why NATO felt obliged to become involved in the first place) and constructs the story from the picture, rather than the other way around. We have to confront head on the tendency to use the concepts and language of moral equivalence, or to present the views of the adversary-aggressor as somehow just as important or worthy of attention as those of western democracies themselves.

The answer is to use two types of argument and to use them all the time. The first one is to stress repeatedly that we are morally right. Even if we haven't been able to spare all civilian lives that does not in any way detract from the moral superiority of what we are doing. We have right on our side that is clear. All the time we must return to the fundamentals. Why are we there? Because Milosevic is a certain type of individual. Because he has been running his campaign of ethnic cleansing for a long time. Because he has expelled so many people.

Ultimately, NATO's greatest embarrassment also proved to be its salvation. In expelling hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians, Milosevic cruelly exposed NATO's strategy to prevent a humanitarian disaster; but he also highlighted the barbaric nature of his regime and solidified Western media and public opinion pressure against him. It is essential to continue to restate all the time why you have right on your side and to continue to reiterate all the time what your objectives are, and that you are not going to give up until those objectives are met. This may be extremely repetitive. It may be even boring. My colleagues used to laugh when every time in a briefing I would repeat NATO's objectives. They would say: "Don't you get tired of saying that?" The answer is no because the more often you say it the more the media believe that you are not going to back down. And the greater the media's belief in your overall resolve and determination, the more all of your messages and statements will be judged as credible and reported at face value.

It is equally important to use people like me, or at least to rely exclusively on people like me. This may strike you as somewhat ironic because you have invited me here today because you think I played a role in NATO's media operations. My role was very modest. The important thing is that government leaders go on TV and reach out to their public opinions. They are the elected people. They are the people who have the voters' trust. They are not paid communicators like myself. Some of their performances were absolutely critical. President Clinton, Prime Minister D'Alema, and Chancellor Schroeder all engaged their national audiences on a constant basis. Virtually every Alliance leader became involved in this effort. They were on TV practically every day. This is important because visible leaders inspire public confidence. Invisible ones suggest that something is going seriously wrong. Leaders have to dominate the media and not be dominated by it. Successful conflicts cannot be media driven. Too many decision makers wake up in the morning and if the editorials and columns in the newspapers are critical they think they are losing the media war. It matters to us because newspaper columnists write columns for us mainly, not to influence public opinion but to influence politicians, opinion leaders and not the least of all each other. The op-ed page of the International Herald Tribune is where elites communicate with each other. Nobody else reads it. It is very interesting in terms of debate. But one advantage of TV over

newspapers is that we write the script and millions more listen to it than is the case with newspapers.

The channels are now international, 24-hours-a-day channels, which repeat their news at least every hour. And one advantage of 24-hour TV is that they have a lot of space to fill, and they want to do it cheaply. The best way of filling an hour virtually cost-free is to put NATO's daily briefing on the box. It suits CNN or BBC World perfectly to have a daily show. They don't have to make an Elizabethan costume drama and spend millions to entertain the viewers. If you give that briefing at 3 p.m. in Paris, it is 9 a.m. in New York, in Hong Kong 9 p.m., and in Sydney people may be having a whisky toddy nightcap at 11 p.m., and still tune in. At 3 p.m. Paris time it is 6:30 p.m. in Calcutta and across most of India when most people are awake in the world. 3 p.m. is the time when the largest number in the world is watching TV. So you achieve a world audience. In other words, concern yourself principally with TV and radio. The written press will always be the written press. Treat it with respect but in a crisis or war situation do not wince unduly about what it says. TV is the medium of wars like newspapers are the medium for peacetime debates. So use your leaders and use TV and radio first and foremost. That is the recipe for success.

Winning the media campaign is just as important as winning the military campaign. Why? Because you keep your public opinion behind you; secondly, you convince your adversary that you are not going to give up. If you are taking the media campaign very seriously, it means that you take winning seriously. That is a very important part of the psychological battle in convincing your adversary that under no circumstances are you going to back down. Milosevic did not see at first hand NATO's military campaign in Kosovo and perhaps was not being told the truth from his own generals as to what was going on. But he watched CNN every day and he saw our battle damage assessment. He saw the pictures of all of the bridges and factories that had been damaged in his country and for Milosevic watching every day this must have been very depressing stuff indeed. Ultimately we were more successful in using the media to intimidate him by presenting reality, than he was able to use the media to intimidate us, by presenting propaganda.

It is very important to take the media as seriously as the military campaign. You need therefore a proper organization. Why would you have a sloppy organization in which you allow President Clinton to

give a major address at exactly the same moment when President Clinton is giving his address? If you can deconflict these events because you have a good organization and persuade President Clinton to give his address at 4 p.m., and President Clinton at 6 p.m., you achieve double the aim. You can also try to advertise these speeches in different countries to maximize their impact. Part of being convincing is to saturate the airwaves. Our credo at NATO was just to be on the air the whole time, crowd out the opposition, give every interview, and do every briefing. It helps to have recognizable faces on the air that consistently symbolize the Alliance. The Yugoslavs, in my view, were less effective because they did not have a recognizable Spokesman of their own. Their leader Milosevic rarely appeared.

We had an MOD briefing from London late in the morning and just as the audience was switching off from that, on came the 3 p.m. briefing, and as soon as the 3 p.m. briefing was off the air up jumped the Pentagon, the State Department and the White House. We occupied the whole day with our information. And the more we did, the less the media put on talking heads and others who could be nullifying our effort.

And finally, why do you need a media organization? Because basically you have to help other Allies who might have difficulty with their own media, with their own public opinion. If you are running a coalition military campaign, if one country has a problem it soon becomes your problem. By having an organization in which you are in close coordination with capitals you can work out what kind of message can help a particular government through a difficult period.

At the end of the day what is important? The criteria for success are threefold. First of all, have you convinced your own public opinion? The answer is, in Allied Forces we did. Our publics were not enthusiastic—who is about a military conflict after all? But they did basically believe that ultimately, despite the problems and the ups and downs, we were justified in doing what we did. Because we told them and we kept on telling them that. And even if the media was not particularly convinced by NATO's operation, we used the media to communicate to the man on the Clapham omnibus. He is the person who counts in these types of operations through his support in opinion polls.

Secondly, did we convince our adversary? Clearly we did because the fact is, whether you like it or not, Milosevic gave in; that is the fact, that

is the bottom line and clearly I would like to think that our media operations had a minor role in bringing him to that.

And then finally let me tell you the best thing of all. Did we convince the victims, the Kosovar Albanians, to stay the course? We did. When I was in Pristina with the Secretary General a lady came up to me and said: "Mr. Shea, you were our lifeline to optimism"— Lifeline to optimism. Every day as the Kosovar Albanians were hiding in their apartments, too frightened to come out; they could watch TV and listen to the radio. The one thing that Milosevic could not take away from them was their satellite dishes and their TVs. And what did they watch every day? At 3 p.m. the NATO briefing. People came up to and told me that those briefings, not just mine but the briefings by the Secretary General, and other Alliance leaders, has all convinced them that they should not despair, they should hold on, that NATO was going to come and help them. In fact Veton Surroi, one of the most important political leaders whom I met briefly, told me that he was hiding in a basement with 19 others and every day after the briefing he had to translate every single word I spoke except, he said, from my terrible jokes that he couldn't manage to translate. We managed through our briefings to morally sustain those Kosovar Albanians through what must have been an ordeal for them, to give them hope, to make them trust western democracy.

And therefore despite the problems that the Kosovars may be having at the moment with the transition to a new society, the fact that we were able to bring NATO into their homes for 78 days gives me some hope that they will build a future consistent with NATO values.

## Lessons Learned

In conclusion, what are the key lessons that we have learned at NATO Headquarters from our experience in dealing with the media during Operation Allied Force?

### *Lesson One*

Do not expect perfection in dealing with the press in a crisis or conflict. Crises and conflicts inevitably polarize positions. A critical press does not mean that NATO is failing to put its message across as we discovered during the Kosovo air campaign. Conflicts especially

produce more than their fair share of confusion and uncertainty. We will probably never have enough accurate information in real time to keep the press happy. There will inevitably be accidents and unintended casualties that the media will highlight despite NATO's best attempts to keep them focused on the big picture and on the moral justification for our actions. In a conflict there will always be an opponent and that means a certain amount of propaganda, disinformation and simple counterarguments that we will have to deal with. Finally, the media will give plenty of prominence to the talking heads, those retired generals and admirals as well as academics, who will claim to have a superior strategy and who will judge that lack of instant success represents failure. With 24-hour TV, every event will be dissected and analyzed in every detail and any conflict will begin to seem lengthy after just a few days. Moreover as NATO is an open institution where the press can gather in strength and write what it likes without fear of sanctions, our activities are bound to be subjected to more critical scrutiny than those of our opponents where press freedoms are likely to be curtailed. Belgrade during Allied Force was a case in point.

During times of crisis and conflict NATO's press relations will inevitably be more difficult than during peacetime. We are obliged to send strong messages and stay on-the-record whereas the media want more backgrounders and the inside story. Moreover, conflicts are not popular with public opinion even at the best of times. Public opinion will be more robust in certain Allied countries than in others. Therefore NATO's press strategy has to be geared towards the optimal selling of the Alliance's basic arguments and objectives and the optimal down playing of the manifold criticisms from the media that the resort to arms and the always less than ideal conduct of military operations are bound to endanger.

How can this be done?

### ***Lesson Two***

We need to strengthen our press and media organization from the moment NATO's involvement in a conflict or major crisis appears inevitable. Setting an organization up only during the middle of the air campaign and in response to our earlier mistakes was better than nothing, but far from ideal. The NATO Press Service is staffed for normal peacetime operations. Clearly it will need reinforcements to handle a news story of global significance and for more than a few days.

Therefore, something like the Kosovo Media Operations Center (MOC) should be established as quickly as possible.

At the same time, the MOC has to be seen as the creation of NATO Headquarters and not something that is imposed on us by capitals. We do not want to see again headlines such as "Spin doctors from No. 10 take over NATO information effort." During Allied Force the perception that spin doctors, more interested in message than accuracy, were running our public information activities was damaging and reinforces a stereotype in pressions.

The essential functions for the MOC are:

- Grid- planning events, coordination, deconfliction;
- Media monitoring- all media- home and opponent;
- Rebuttals;
- SHAPE liaison/military information; and
- Drafting, research, and analysis/message formulation.

### ***Lesson Three***

During the crisis period the provision of military information from SHAPE must be improved. Much of the damage to our credibility during Operation Allied Force was inflicted during the first few weeks when the SHAPE/NATO information network was not functioning optimally. The press criticized us not so much for the fact of causing collateral damage but for the confusion and delay in explaining exactly what had happened. The SHAPE information network has to be institutionalized. During Allied Force we were far too dependent on one or two people from capitals who happened providentially to have a good source at SHAPE and were able via the back channel to obtain information quickly. In the future there has to be a unit at SHAPE that is responsible for investigations and rapidly answering requests for information from NATO. We found out during Allied Force that when we were unable to explain an incident because of a lack of information the story would play for days in the media. When towards the end we were able to give information quickly, the story disappeared almost immediately.

### ***Lesson Four***

We need to know much more about our opponent in a crisis or conflict. During Operation Allied Force it was several weeks before we had people knowledgeable about Yugoslavia in the MOC or started to monitor the Yugoslav press or TV closely. Milosevic's propaganda sometimes caught us by surprise. If we had had this expertise from the beginning, we could have anticipated some of Milosevic's moves and learned to counter them better. Equally, the intelligence community has to provide us with more information about our opponents that we can use to support our cause. Far too often, when I came across interesting information, I was told that it was classified and therefore could not be used publicly. This did not mean that it did not emerge an hour or so later in the Pentagon briefing.

At the same time, if our opponent has free and unimpeded access to our media, we need to be more dynamic and creative in obtaining access to his public opinion to level the playing field. This is not easy in a dictatorship where the media is tightly controlled. During Allied Force, we had ideas to set up a radio station to broadcast into Yugoslavia, to use aircraft to beam in radio programs, or to help existing radio and TV stations widen their spectrum in Yugoslavia. However, none of these ideas were exploited before the end of the air campaign. We need to have media planning for such a pro-active approach better prepared next time.

### ***Lesson Five***

In the TV age, pictures are crucial. The Serbs had the advantage over us in that they could generate pictures from the ground, usually of NATO's collateral damage, whereas we often could only counter with words. The press often believed Milosevic's pictures more than they believed NATO's words. Of course since Western media have entered Kosovo on the heels of KFOR with their cameras we have been vindicated. But it would certainly help if we could show more photographic evidence to support our allegations (for instance mass graves or burning villages in Kosovo). We had some of this during the conflict, and it was generally effective, but more is always useful.

### ***Lesson Six***

One thing that we did well during the Kosovo crisis was to occupy the media space. By having a morning briefing and an afternoon briefing at NATO headquarters, and having also every lunchtime London MOD briefing and the Washington briefings in the afternoon, we created a situation in which nobody in the world who was a regular TV watcher could escape the NATO message. It is essential to keep the media permanently occupied and supplied with fresh information to report on. That way it is less inclined to go in search of critical stories. The off-camera briefings at 11 a.m. and overnight written updates certainly helped in this connection. We were also always able to have a briefing on hand to react to breaking news or Serbian disinformation that might otherwise have remained uncorrected until the following day. Having leaders of one country address public opinion in other countries via TV appearances, speeches, Op-Ed articles, and interviews can help in this respect.

One thing that we could have done better during Operation Allied Force was to track public opinion trends in those Allied countries that did not have a supportive public opinion and devise more active strategies to reach the media in those countries. Two of our three new Allies had certain difficulties in this respect which we did not really respond to as we might have done. Also key neighboring states such as Romania, Bulgaria, and FYROM had media and public opinion problems that could have impacted negatively on their solidarity vis-à-vis the Alliance. We could have done more to support them in our press activities. We will need in future a team to monitor the situation in certain sensitive Allied and partner countries and to devise specific media campaigns in cooperation with the national authorities.

## **A Final Thought—Crisis Management Exercises**

The prominence of the media during Allied Force clearly indicates that the all-intrusive nature of press relations to an Alliance in conflict is still under-played and under-exploited in NATO's crisis management exercises. We have to redefine these to give media activities and media training a much more central role in line with reality and our own experience. The media is not an optional add-on; it is key. The NATO Press Service has to be more involved in the scenarios and planning

for crisis management exercises. We could also consider recruiting journalists to create a more real-life atmosphere with actual press conferences, media reporting, and feedback. *A faire à suivre.*

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<sup>1</sup>Address to the Summer Forum on Kosovo organized by the Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom and the Trades Union Committee for European and Transatlantic Understanding. Reform Club, London, 15 July 1999.

<sup>2</sup>The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author alone. They do not represent an official position of NATO.

# CHAPTER X

## Operation Allied Force: The Media and the Public

Pascale Combelles Siegel

Amid the discussions of Allied Force, both during and after the campaign, many have argued that NATO constructed an ineffective information strategy and conducted it poorly. Some assert that Milosevic – not NATO – provided the best rationale for supporting the campaign through the mass deportation of ethnic Albanians begun toward the end of March 1999.<sup>1</sup> Others argue that Milosevic's courtship of the international media allowed him to manipulate Alliance resolve and strategy. From his vantage point in Macedonia, one U.S. officer viewed the situation as follows:

*Milosevic is winning the information ops, the perception management. He's the underdog and everybody else looks like a bully ganging up on him.<sup>2</sup>*

Subsequently, official lessons learned efforts have identified information operations and Milosevic's ability to put his message in the Western media as a source of vulnerability and reason for concern. Testifying before Congress, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shelton, USA, and Secretary of Defense Cohen commented that "the conduct of an integrated information operations campaign was delayed by the lack of both advance planning and strategic guidance defining key objectives."<sup>3</sup> Admiral James Ellis, USN, Commander JTF Noble Anvil, argued that Serbia was able to launch its own disinformation campaign via the international media to gain sympathy for its cause and disrupt NATO's information superiority. "The enemy was better at this.. and far more nimble."<sup>4</sup> In their lessons learned, the French Chief of Staff similarly concluded that Milosevic successfully targeted specific Western media to foster his goals.<sup>5</sup> All of this suggests the importance

of the media as a battlefield in today's operations and each suggests a belief at senior military levels that the Alliance lost on this battlefield.

Prior to Allied Force's commencement, NATO leaders knew the fate of the operation would be at least partly decided in the media arena. NATO is composed of democratic nations and, in democracies, media reporting can greatly influence policy makers. With combat operations, the media's non-stop coverage of operations exerted intense pressure on Western officials to document their actions and release information relevant to the conduct of operations. This intense pressure sometimes collided with concerns over protecting operational security. Finally, media coverage of collateral damage incidents allowed tactical issues to have strategic, worldwide political repercussions to the point of threatening coalition resolve to continue the campaign.

As the Yugoslav authorities could not (and apparently did not) expect to win in a conventional confrontation of forces lined up on the battlefield, they exploited every possible issue in the marketplace of ideas to threaten the viability of the coalition. In that respect, the war was as much about the perceptions of weapons dropped as it was the actual physical effects achieved by those weapons. (Thus, is battle damage assessment (BDA) a question of analyzing physical effects or, more appropriately, of understanding psychological implications of the perceptions of those attacks?) One could argue that Kosovo was a deconstructionist war since perceptions mattered as much— if not more— than reality. In fact, one could argue that in Allied Force arguing for a distinction between perception and reality might be at best a coffeehouse argument, for decision making, perception is reality.

Information strategy contains many elements, including intelligence gathering, psychological operations, and public affairs. Formuch of this, the media is a battlefield, with the combatants engaged in both open and secretive clashes. This chapter focuses on that aspect related to open relations with the media, commonly referred to as Public Affairs in the United States, but called Public Information within NATO. Within the context of the media as battlespace, Public Information is thus a weapon in the commander's arsenal. This chapter reviews this particular weapon system's use and effectiveness during Operation Allied Force.

This chapter analyzes NATO public information during Operation Allied Force. Contrary to official folklore, I argue that NATO won that war— the battle for public opinion within NATO and around the world despite the

many shortcomings and errors of NATO and NATO nations' public information efforts. I also argue that many NATO errors could have been prevented had NATO adopted alternative policy and organizational measures.

To clarify how NATO could have better managed its media relations, the chapter is organized so as to provide a guide to the challenges the Alliance faced. The chapter first examines how today's media functioning provides challenges to any military endeavor. Second, it analyzes the challenges stemming from the coalition nature of the operation. Finally, it analyzes the challenges stemming from the NATO's policies and organization. It finally concludes with lessons and recommendations for future engagements.

## Changing Media Environment Creates New Challenges

Today's media environment provides some enduring challenges for the conduct of military operations. Increased competition, increasing numbers of media actors, continued (if not increased) antagonism toward officialdom, and fast-paced technological developments are only a few of the challenges NATO had to prepare for in its information policy. These changes are likely to continue into the future and are challenges military commanders and political leaders will confront in future operations. This section will review some of these challenges and how they affected NATO during Allied Force.

### Facing the Fast-Paced Media Cycle

With the exponential growth of media outlets, all-information networks, round-the-clock operations, and the Internet, the news cycle has expanded to a constant stream of information. Thirty years ago, officials dealt with media deadlines. Newspapers went to print once a day (either in the early afternoon or in the late evening), radio had two or three news programs a day, and America's three television network news programs had their major deadlines in the late afternoon for the 6 o'clock evening news. Public Affairs was organized around these deadlines. In those days, a story line could be expected to live at least 24 hours, if not longer. In today's environment, the number of media outlets devoted (partly or entirely) to news has vastly expanded from three television

networks in the seventies to at least nine major broadcast and cable outlets today.<sup>6</sup> Totally new mediums have emerged, such as the World Wide Web with literally thousands of sites with constantly updated news— both from reputable news organizations (whether broadcast or print or Web based)— create new demands for information and create difficulty for targeting public information efforts. This proliferation of mediums and news vendors have rendered the concept of deadline as virtually meaningless outside very limited contexts. In this environment, the news business is constantly on deadline. Dripping like an open faucet, the media are insatiable consumers of information, placing intense pressures on officials, as Jamie Shae, NATO's chief spokesperson during Allied Force, attested:

*One afternoon, I received a respected international correspondent in my office. He asked me for new information. Frankly, I was stunned, I asked him whether he had attended the briefing that had just ended. The correspondent responded that he had attended the briefing, but that was history. He was on at 5 and needed something new.<sup>7</sup>*

This environment also places great pressure on reporters and editors to uncover and report information as soon as possible. In this quest, the necessity for filing under deadlines (or on constant deadline) sometimes supersedes the need for verifying stories. The pressures of competition and the need to fill an ever-expanding airtime (for television) means that "being first matters more than being right," and that reporters can go on the air with little to no information provided that they are on the air. In that context, rumors, half-truths, and unchecked information quickly become news. This frequently occurred during Allied Force. Virtually any politician or military official could be assured that comments would get coverage— somewhere. The environment of warfighting often led to unquestioned acceptance of asserted facts that seemed convenient. For example, throughout the war, many journalists repeated Western officials' assertions that Serbian repression in Kosovo had killed tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Kosovar Albanians— as horrific as Serbia's actions might have seemed then or in retrospect, this was not true nor truthful information. In another example, in April 1999, American media wrongly asserted that NATO had softened the conditions for stopping the air war.<sup>8</sup>

## Battlefield Transparency or the impact of New Technology

A second challenge for military officers and other officials stems from the threats posed by media access to modern technology. The media now have access to cheap and reliable (essentially) instant communication capabilities. With a portable phone, a reporter can report on events from essentially anywhere in the world. In 1998, even Kosovo was part of the European GSM satellite-based communications system, offering reporters in Pristina timely and reliable communication with the outside world.<sup>9</sup> In addition, with a digital video camera and a satellite dish, a reporter can provide live footage from anywhere in the world to audiences worldwide in real time.

These technological improvements are starting to blur lines between journalists and spectators. Anyone with a digital hand-held camera and access to the Internet can become a photojournalist under the right conditions. The World Wide Web provides any individual the means to have—literally—world-wide access to describe their views of the situation. Thus, technology further expands the proliferating media spectrum by offering the opportunity to cheaply and, potentially, effectively self-publish with massive, rapid reach.

The increased availability of commercially-available satellite imagery means that the media has access to high-definition satellite pictures—surveillance capabilities better than any government had just decades ago. Governments have little to no control over these firms and the media's access to such material. That form of battlefield transparency can quickly become worrisome to the military, as massive troop movements may be visible to journalists who could report them to the enemy while reporting them to the public. Technology is making it more difficult to hide activity from journalists.

This technological evolution has worried the Pentagon brass for quite some time. Under the chairmanship of General Hugh Shelton, the Joint Chiefs of Staff has sought to protect operational information by increasing the controls of information and tightening guidelines for release of operational information. According to Pentagon's spokesman Kenneth Bacon:

*The leadership is taking a more conservative approach. Both Secretary of Defense William Cohen and Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, think we ought to be as stingy as possible in giving out information, which means we have to be restrained with the press.*<sup>10</sup>

At the onset of the air war against Yugoslavia, NATO and the Pentagon were worried that too much loose talk might endanger Alliance personnel and threaten operational security (OPSEC). Captain Michael Doubleday, USN, a Pentagon spokesman, explained that:

*We're very concerned about the capability of [Yugoslav President Slobodan] Milosevic to assemble and to aggregate information that could be used to the detriment of our forces.*<sup>11</sup>

Bacon complained that the Yugoslavs were able to get meaningful tactical information from the media. He argued that they used this information to take actions that threatened NATO's OPSEC or undermined the results of NATO's operations. For example, Bacon argued that live coverage of jets taking-off from NATO bases in Italy gave the Yugoslavs early warning information and helped them understand NATO's operating patterns.<sup>12</sup> In another example, the Pentagon accused the media of allowing Serbia to empty its Interior Ministry before it was struck by a NATO bomb after *The Washington Post* indicated in a story that NATO was going to expand its target list to include various official buildings, including the Interior Ministry.<sup>13</sup> This last example, however, indicates the complexity of some finger-pointing. In fact, NATO officials (including many Americans) had been talking with many journalists about expanding the target lists in what was seen by many as an attempt to use the media to send a message to (and hopefully intimidate) the Serbs that NATO was not about to end the bombing and that the situation was about to become much worse on the receiving end of NATO air attacks.

## The Cycle of Media Punditry

Current trends of media reporting also create some enduring challenges for military commanders. As operations commenced against Yugoslavia, the Pentagon quickly faced a wave of critical media assessments. Critical

assessment refers to the media's increasing tendency not only to report facts, but also to interpret and analyze those facts for the public. In the post-Vietnam Watergate era, the media's effort to analyze and document the issues of the day is increasingly marked by antagonism and cynicism. The need for antagonism stems from a romanticized vision of journalism where:

*... the press is completely independent of government in its quest for news, that it routinely searches out vast amounts of hidden, jealously guarded information, that it is constantly defying persons in high office, that it is the day-in, day-out adversary of the "Establishment" and the equally faithful defender of the People.<sup>14</sup>*

In this adversarial tradition, journalists treat official claim with suspicion, consider it their duty to find out what is really happening under the surface, and second-guess officials, official statements, and motives.

Examples of this suspicion-filled, antagonistic approach happened throughout the war against Yugoslavia. From the onset of the war, reporters openly questioned NATO's strategy. Reporters and pundits, who had expected (based mainly on comments by officials) a short show of force, questioned whether the strategy was a success. Commentators (both informed and relatively unschooled) immediately voiced concern about whether NATO had the fortitude to maintain its cohesion until victory, considering it likely that the coalition would collapse under the weight of public pressure (especially in Greece and Italy). Reporters criticized NATO for its lack of planning and lack of responsiveness to the refugee situation after Kosovo as Albanians began streaming into Macedonia and Albania.

Critical assessments of the war's progress and NATO's strategy were commonplace across the media spectrum. According to research conducted by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, the debate in the nightly newsmostly focused on whether the bombing was right or wrong, whether it was achieving its stated goals, and whether ground troops should be sent in. From March to the end of May, 68 percent of all quoted sources opposed the bombing campaign.<sup>15</sup> However, throughout the same period, reporters and pundits alike were convinced that NATO would ultimately prevail (if for no other reason because it could not afford to fail).<sup>16</sup> Overall, 62 percent of all sources quoted thought NATO would prevail. Only during the first week of the bombing,

did a clear majority think President Milosevic might prevail (71 percent). As the war lingered on, reporters and pundits more and more favored NATO as the probable winner. Reporting on whether NATO's strategy was successful was balanced. About 50 percent of those judging the effectiveness of NATO's policy pronounced it a success.<sup>17</sup>

## Every Story Has Two Sides

For a variety of reasons, today's journalistic ethic in the United States seems to assume that there are at least two sides to every story and that these views deserve a balanced hearing. Thus, in discussing Holocaust deniers, many news outlets will give equal time to renowned scholars and Holocaust survivors, on one side, and Nazis, on the other, as if they have an equal basis to speak authoritatively and as if this issue of fact is open to debate. Thus, in the murkier arena of an ongoing military operation, it should not surprise anyone that journalists view matters of national security and defense as areas with at least two sides to the story. In this context, media organizations feel free to interview the other side, seek and gain access to the battlefield from the opponent, and report on what the opponent side puts forward. This, of course, is complicated by the changing media environment, where us and them is far from as clear a distinction, with the blurring of national boundaries in media organization structures, ownership, and reporting. Steven Erlanger, *The New York Times* correspondent for the Balkans, defined this philosophy as follows:

*I think journalism has an obligation to not think that every story must be told from a single side only, which is your own, and I think we also have an obligation, as Western journalists did and do in Iraq also, to listen to the officials of the other side, to try to get their points of view fairly expressed into the paper, into the kind of judgement of public opinion, and part of that is to actually go out and see bomb damage.<sup>18</sup>*

During the Vietnam War, American reporters took years before finally deciding to report from Hanoi. During the Persian Gulf War, although many news organizations tried to obtain Iraq's authorization to report from Baghdad, Iraq (Saddam Hussein) granted only CNN this privilege. Throughout the war, Peter Arnett regularly fed reports from Baghdad.

(And many Americans considered this Australian reporter a traitor to the United States for this.) During the war against Yugoslavia, many news organizations left reporters in Belgrade to report the Yugoslav point of view.

Broad access (by historical comparison), if not unrestrained, to the Yugoslav side allowed the media to extensively report on the consequences of the bombing on the Yugoslav population. By reporting from Belgrade, the Western media also played into the hands of Milošević's strategy to undermine the political will of the coalition. Indeed, the Western media became a resounding board for Yugoslavs' claims against NATO's barbaric actions.

Before the war, the Yugoslav authorities agreed to have several Western networks (including CNN, BBC, Sky News, ABC, French, German, Italian, and Greek televisions) stay and operate from Belgrade in the event of a conflict. This access came at a price and was not—in any major way—unconstrained. Reporters in Belgrade operated under severe restrictions and sometimes under duress. Several reporters were roughed up, interrogated by police, and, in some cases, expelled from Yugoslavia.<sup>19</sup> CNN's star war reporter, Christiane Amanpour, left the country after Milošević's forces ransacked her hotel room and the indicted war criminal Arkan showed up looking for her.<sup>20</sup> Reporters were not free to report on issues of their choice, but taken to media opportunities controlled by the Belgrade authorities. Even under such circumstances, however, Western media felt their presence was valuable to document an essential aspect of the story: the consequences of NATO's airstrikes. This coverage was viewed by many NATO and national officials as a key tool for Milošević having the upper hand in the information war, as he could control access to the ground and—by definition—the best photos. Journalists only got to photograph and report on those situations and in ages to which Serbian authorities were willing to grant them access. Journalists received invitations virtually on a silver platter when bombs hit hospitals, but events surrounding a destroyed surface-to-air missile (SAM) site were a private affair. Thus, even the most truthful Western reporting from Yugoslavia was at most partial, and thus distorted, lens on events during the conflict.

European Broadcasting Union (EBU) technical support greatly facilitated Western media coverage from Yugoslavia. The EBU's all-digital Eurovision network made it possible to offer news broadcasters more than 30 channels for news backhaul. Many transmissions were

routed through permanent stations (London, Paris, Washington), but also through temporary production and transmission facilities across the theater.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the EBU had arranged for reports to be broadcast from the hotel Inter-Continental in Belgrade, a permanent Yugoslav authorities suspended on 24 March 1999. However, notwithstanding the revocation of license, EBU was able to continue providing broadcasting opportunities through the Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) (which is a member of the EBU) and through its permanent stations in Budapest and Sofia. EBU multiplied the new broadcasters' opportunities to feed reporting back to their headquarters. In the first 24 hours of Allied Force, EBU handled 1,000 transmissions, and over 10,000 through the first 2 weeks of the campaign.<sup>22</sup>

## Coalition Challenges

NATO's 19 nations had only a weak consensus leading into the campaign against Yugoslavia.<sup>23</sup> It took a long period of ebb and flow in Serbian aggression, followed by cooperation, then followed by renewed recalcitrance to convince all the nations that some form of military operation had become necessary. NATO nations only reluctantly agreed to use force against Yugoslavia. They were not in agreement about how to conduct the operation, on the amount of force necessary, nor on what constituted legitimate targets. Their only shared view was a hope that Milosevic would back down before any strike would be necessary or after a short, relatively painless (symbolic) bombing campaign.<sup>24</sup>

From the beginning, the NATO mission in Kosovo was beset by a strategic Catch-22.

*NATO political leaders ruled out sending ground troops to Kosovo because they believed their people would not support it. Instead, they backed a limited air campaign that used jets and Navy ships to hit Yugoslav targets with missiles and bombs from three miles up, a strategy designed to limit pilot losses. They believed that such a show of force would within days make Milosevic call off the Serbian paramilitaries and the Yugoslav army troops carrying out the "ethnic cleansing."*<sup>25</sup>

As a result, maintaining strong sentiment among Allied publics in favor of the strategy and continuing the campaign against Milošević became critical to maintaining the Alliance cohesion. If public support waned, then the commitment of some governments was deemed to be in danger. The perceived frail nature of the coalition made it a matter of utmost importance to maintain strong public sentiment in favor of the intervention.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the very nature of a coalition created many challenges for NATO in attempting to maintain public support and to speak with a unified voice.

The issue of speaking with a unified voice was a key challenge. Even without the reality that numerous agendas existed within NATO and NATO nations, articulating a single coherent strategic vision appealing to the broad spectrum of relevant audiences would have been a major challenge. These audiences ranged from NATO member nations, other European nations, the world community (official and unofficial), the Kosovar Albanians, to the Serbians (Milošević, the military, the public). These audiences (and, of course, each of the listed groups can be broken up in almost endless ways to create a confusing array of target audiences) had varying (if not diverging) interpretations of events, varying interpretations as to the principles in question, and varying degrees of tolerance for the use of force and for collateral damage.

Within the challenge of speaking with a common voice came the challenge of accommodating differing national practices and doctrines for information release and dealing with the media. Every NATO nation wanted to handle information and information release as it saw fit to accommodate its national issues. Within the coalition, key nations included France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Each of these governments (and, perhaps, more importantly, key actors in these governments) had greatly different views as to how to handle release of information and dealing with the media. The contrast between the United States and the United Kingdom well illustrates these differences.

As always, U.S. government media activity seemed mainly focused on domestic political issues—despite the fact that the nation was at war. Numerous statements, leaks, and background comments seemed focused on internal political issues rather than their possible international implications. President Clinton's ruling out the use of ground forces at the outset of Allied Force is the most prominent example

of this tendency to focus on internal factors seemingly oblivious to their external impact.<sup>27</sup>

The UK government, on the other hand, mainly spoke on the record and the key comments seemed designed to influence its allies about campaign strategy and to convince Milosevic that NATO did have the resolve to see the campaign through to victory. Prime Minister Tony Blair's public advocacy of the use of ground forces and reporting on the preparations to mobilize 50,000 members of the Territorial Army for a potential ground war are a good example of the UK's approach. While these comments were surely designed to communicate to the British public about the seriousness of the endeavor, they were more assuredly aimed at allies (to convince others that a ground war might be necessary) and Milosevic (to show resolve and, hopefully, push him toward capitulation).

Official policy and structure for the release of information also differed across the nations. Three cases illustrate the difficulties stemming from this.

The British Ministry of Defence (MoD) did not follow SACEUR's guidelines to restrict comments to its own national forces' participation and actions—without providing too much detail. The British MoD allowed release of more information on its operations than any other nation. It encouraged UK subordinate commanders to join national press conferences (via video conference) to answer media queries. The British allowed a fair amount of coverage of their units in theater and engaged in operations. The British approach created tensions with the United States and some other NATO nations as reporters asked the Pentagon and NATO for similar access.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the war, many different nations, organizations, and units issued different Public Affairs Guidelines (PAGs).<sup>29</sup> These PAGs were not always consistent with each other, creating confusion at subordinate command levels as to what the official line was. According to a U.S. Air Force, Europe, (USAFE) after-action report, these PAGs sometimes offered contradictory guidelines to public affairs officers (PAOs) in the field. In some cases, units received PAGs from organizations not in their chain of command. The confusion was sometimes compounded by the fact that units in the NATO chain of command sometimes followed national rather than NATO guidelines.

Different nations had different concepts for information release and the role of public information officers. Traditionally, U.S. public affairs

officers consider their mission to be to "release complete, accurate, and timely information to the public and the media." Keeping this standard is the key to credibility. While not trying to spread disinformation, the PAO's job is to present, as cogently as possible, the military's point of view and attempt to have this view reflected in media reporting. Not all nations' militaries view public information in this light. Some see little distinction between public information and psychological operations, some see public information as a synonym with advertising (get out a good story no matter the truth, spin), while others view a public information officer's responsibility as simply keeping the media out of the commander's hair.<sup>30</sup> Tensions arose at NATO headquarters over which view of public information should prevail. As reports that the Yugoslav army in Kosovo was experiencing morale problems surfaced, some nations argued that NATO should use the spokesman to emphasize the problems, to inflate the consequences of the attacks in Kosovo to further deepen the opponent's morale problems. A majority of the participants, however, argued that this would be an ill-advised approach. They argued that spreading false information would ultimately backfire. As the Yugoslavs could probably be able to assess the amount of damage NATO was actually causing, they would be able to take advantage of inaccurate NATO claims. The latter view was upheld.

Maintaining unity through the conflict was not easy. Again, NATO had only a weak consensus for resorting to the use of force against Yugoslavia and this consensus weakened as it became clear that a few days of strikes were not sufficient to force Milošević to surrender. As the conflict dragged on longer than expected, U.S. officials began to engage in a blame game. A variety of American officials (civilian and military) anonymously accused the Europeans of foot-dragging in decision making in an effort to explain why the campaign was not yielding the expected results and to deflect blame away from the Administration in the internal U.S. political dynamic. By mid-April, several articles in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* appeared blaming the Europeans for exerting too much caution, refusing to allow the use of ground troops, restricting the number of targets, and limiting their assets in support of the campaign. These 'sources' rarely discussed the internal U.S. military and government processes that created similar drag on the campaign strategy and on prosecuting the air campaign. As reporters demanded accountability

for the slow progress of the war, U.S. officials showed little resistance to the urge to point fingers and allocate blame on the Europeans, while diminishing the responsibilities of the U.S. government.<sup>31</sup>

## Challenges Within the Military to Effective Public Information

The ultimate measure of merit (MOM) for any warfighter must be performance in conflict. Despite any problems, the overall effectiveness of NATO's public information must be judged positively—NATO won and the general world-wide belief was and remains that NATO was mainly right during its conflict over Kosovo. At no point during the campaign did Alliance public opinion (with the principal exception of Greece) undermine the military operation, giving governments breathing room to continue (albeit with problems) prosecuting combat operations until NATO decided President Milosevic had complied with its demands.

A great deal of the success, however, must be laid on the opponent's lap. Milosevic's massive expulsion of ethnic Albanians strengthened the resolve of Western publics. Meanwhile, the public massively supported the proposition that Milosevic (not NATO) was responsible for the expulsion of ethnic Albanians. U.S. media (network) references to President Milosevic were overwhelmingly negative, while their references to President Clinton were overwhelmingly positive.

Although there was a lot of discussion about the air strikes and the strategy, the media and the public both believed that, ultimately, NATO would prevail.<sup>32</sup>

While NATO won the conflict and won in the information arena, this victory occurred despite a range of problems and at a cost. The following paragraphs examine some of the weaknesses and shortcomings of NATO's information policy. While these shortcomings did not cause NATO to lose the media war to Milosevic, they clearly affected NATO's ability to convey its message in an accurate and timely manner. In a different environment and with a more skillful opponent, they could lead to failure. Addressing these shortcomings could help avoid such a catastrophic failure in the future.

## NATO's Organization

The PI organization, much like the rest of NATO's operation, was caught off guard by the extended bombing campaign, nor were they prepared for the media frenzy that accompanies major military operations in today's world. Anticipating a short and limited operation (and, until the last moment, uncertain whether it would even occur), the organization was not augmented prior to the operation. In addition, due to somewhat modifying the NATO process for public information, the understaffed PI organization was poorly prepared for discussing actual military operations (rather than policy issues).

The following were the key NATO PI nodes at the start of Allied Force:

**SHAPE:** SHAPE PI, which usually handles media relations for the military headquarters, played no role in the information policy for Kosovo and was tasked with conducting PI for all non-Kosovo matters.<sup>33</sup> At SHAPE headquarters, an Information Operations (IO) group under the auspices of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (DSACEUR), the deputy Operations officer, General David Wilby, UK, chaired the IO cell. The cell consisted of operations officers (CJ-3), intelligence officers (CJ-2), PSYOP officers, and the military spokesman. The IO cell was tasked with issuing daily guidelines and supervising the daily information activities. The presence of the PSYOP and PI officers enabled SHAPE to unify the Alliance's messages. A gain, however, the SHAPE PI had no direct role in dealing with the media on Kosovo operations.

**NATO Headquarters:** At NATO headquarters, a five-person PI cell was tasked with information dissemination, handling daily press briefings, maintaining the NATO Web page, and answering media queries on a round-the-clock basis. The NATO PI organization is civilian and focused on policy issues surrounding the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which governs NATO. They do not normally deal with the details of military operations and do not have a strong link into (nor direct authority over) the SHAPE PI staff, nor do they have a direct link into the SHAPE operations cell.

**Other NATO and national commands:** While virtually all major commands have public information (or public affairs) staffs, NATO ordered commands to restrict their dealings with reporters, attempting to centralize the release of information.

The initial organization did not enable NATO PI to provide the media with timely and accurate information. Shae and his staff worked around the clock to piece together the relevant operational picture to answer reporters' questions as best as they could and prepare for the daily briefing. However, the peacetime staff of five was seriously overworked to deal with the 600-strong press corps crowding the NATO headquarters.<sup>34</sup>

The staffing problem was compounded by a lack of adequate relationship between NATO PI and SHAPE Ops. NATO PI staff was not allowed in operational meetings (the VTC between various commands) nor in the SHAPE ID group. As a result, Shae found himself:

*...before a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. Every day, I had to work hard to put the pieces together. I needed to act as a journalist to reconstruct the story as best I could.*<sup>35</sup>

The organization marginalized Shae, putting him in an impossible situation. He was out of the loop, unaware of major operational developments, and too remote from the commander's thinking to be able to effectively manage the massive media presence to shape NATO's public image during a combat operation.

The United Kingdom drove a change in the situation. In mid-April, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair asked NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to make changes in the public information arena to create a more effective approach. This led to an augmentation of the PI staff with over forty additional staff (mainly UK and U.S. personnel). The additional staff also came with more authority to have access to operational information and NATO commands. The reorganization enhanced the status of the PI operation and enabled the PI to work more closely and more effectively with the operational staff. As Jamie Shae admitted, this reorganization and augmentation greatly improved his ability to deal with the media and speeded his ability to release information. These improvements allowed NATO to better satisfy the media's quest for information and enhanced NATO's credibility with journalists (and, by extension, the public at large).

NATO Headquarters established a Media Operations Center to improve the circulation of information between the operational side and the PI. The MOC consisted of a twenty-person team (again, mainly American and British). NATO formed the MOC to strengthen ties between NATO

HQ PI and the SHAPE operations cell to get operational details in a more complete and more rapid fashion into the hands of the PI staff.

NATO PI improved its liaison relationship with the key NATO capitals. In the original set-up, Shae's team had neither the time nor the resources to manage sustained relations with the major capitals involved in the operation. The MOC had national liaisons built into the concept. Moreover, the influx of new personnel allowed NATO PI to prepare and handle daily teleconferences which included the key spokesmen (NATO, U.S., UK, French, German).

The CAOC formed a crisis center in Vincenza to handle information relating to collateral damage incidents.

## NATO's Concept of Operation

To ensure effective dissemination of the Alliance's message, NATO chose a pro-active policy whereby NATO and (some) Alliance spokesmen would brief the media regularly and be available to answer their inquiries around the clock (or, to use the current buzzword, on a 24/7 basis).<sup>36</sup> On a daily basis, reporters had access to NATO's version of events from 9 a.m. to the end of a 9 p.m. briefing (Brussels time) (see Table 1). In retrospect, Shae commented on the media saturation strategy:

*The one thing we did well in the Kosovo crisis was to occupy the media space. We created a situation where nobody in the world who was a TV watcher could escape the NATO message.<sup>37</sup>*

The strategy suited the cable news format. With the daily briefings, NATO and the Alliance's members provided cable news television with a series of (cheap) newsworthy daily shows that attracted audiences. Indeed, several all-news cable outlets, such as CNN, C-SPAN, MSNBC, and Sky-News carried one or all of the briefings every day. The Western point of view was therefore widely disseminated throughout the day. Evening news programs, newspapers, and newsmagazines regularly referred to material released during these briefings. The constant rollover of official briefings certainly helped the Alliance set the media agenda for the day and allowed it to respond (multiple times and in numerous ways) to criticism or questions raised by reporters.

Time (Bruxelles)	Location	Audience
9:00	Background briefing, NATO HQ	Europe, Asia, Middle East
11:00	British MoD	Europe, Middle East
15:00	Briefing at NATO HQ	Europe, Americas, Middle East
19:00	State Department	Europe, Americas
20:00	Pentagon	Americas, Europe
21:00	White House	Americas, Europe, Asia

Table 1: NATO 's M edia Saturation Strategy

To fill the m edia spectrum ,NATO and the capitals resorted to a mix of philosophical rhetoric and operational information about the air campaign. As SA CEUR was aware that release of operational data could jeopardize operational security, he initially insisted on tight guidelines for information release whereby "specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions could jeopardize operations and endanger lives."<sup>38</sup> In addition, to protect pilots (and their families) from retaliatory actions, NATO asked reporters not to identify military personnel by name or photograph them . Finally, SA CEUR gagged NATO subordinate commanders, ordering them to restrict their interactions with the media. For the first 3 weeks of operations, NATO and the Pentagon contented them selves with the vaguest statements about sortie numbers and their effects on the Yugoslav military, maintaining an optimistic outlook.<sup>39</sup>

As the war continued, however, both NATO and SA CEUR relaxed some of the restrictions, increasing transparency and allowing more information about the targeting process and its results. SA CEUR explained that

*... now that the Yugoslav understand the pattern of our attacks, it does not make much sense to hold such information.*

As a result, the press was increasingly filled with more detailed discussions about the prosecution of the war. To mark the shift in strategy, policy and operational flag officers were added to the daily Pentagon briefing, so as to present a more complete operational picture and release more complete, accurate, and timely information to the public. Such efforts paid off. Jamie Shea remarked that after the mid-April reorganization, he was able to give out six times as much information as at the beginning of the war by 9 a.m.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, NATO used every opportunity to press virulent anti-Milosevic rhetoric, demonizing the dictator and faulting his policies. As the conflict lingered on seemingly without end, NATO stepped up its rhetoric, unveiled new evidence, and offered new testimony of Milosevic's brutal and misguided policies in Kosovo. For example, Western officials likened Milosevic's policies to the Third Reich's.<sup>41</sup> When information supported attacks on Milosevic or his policies, restrictions on releasing specific types of information were applied far less stringently.<sup>42</sup>

## A Flawed PI Concept of Operation?

NATO's public information concept of operations had a number of flaws. In fact, three problems quickly emerged.

First, reporters immediately criticized the NATO restrictions on the release of information.<sup>43</sup> Reporters bitterly criticized NATO and the Pentagon for releasing too little information, avoiding reporters' questions, and keeping to general, optimistic, and vague statements. As *The Baltimore Sun's* Ellen Gamerman wrote:

*The crisis in Kosovo is described by NATO officials with gung-ho sound bites, blurry aerial videotapes of bomb drops (with the sounds of pilots in combat politely left out) and occasional aerial photos of bombed-out targets. In Washington, daily briefings by White House spokesman Joe Lockhart and Pentagon spokesman Kenneth H. Bacon occasionally release a bit of new information but they have routinely allowed the briefings to remain vague.*<sup>44</sup>

Others felt that NATO was unresponsive to questions.<sup>45</sup> Many reporters felt NATO lied in attempts to make a failed operation look like a success. News organizations protested the information black-out. In early April 1999, seven news organizations sent a letter to Secretary Cohen denouncing the restrictions and urging him to relax the rules so they could better inform the public.<sup>46</sup> In reaction to this, Ken Bacon convened a meeting with the news organizations and agreed to relax some of the rules. However, the bulk of the restrictions on operational information remained. The constant stream of anti-Milosevic's demonization led

many reporters to equate Milošević's and NATO's propaganda machines. Criticisms subdued as NATO became more forthcoming on the shortcomings of its campaign and began to release more information after several weeks of military action.

Second, NATO seriously eroded its credibility when it released false information, unverified rumors, and exaggerated speculations about what was happening inside Kosovo. Jamie Shae has maintained that he paid extra attention to releasing only factually correct information and argued that he discarded many rumors and allegations that, he felt, were not substantiated.<sup>47</sup> However, despite Shae's carefulness, in its eagerness to convince the media, NATO did not always handle information with the care it required and, on several occasions, released false information.

On 29 March, NATO announced that Yugoslavia had assassinated Fehmi Agani (advisor to Ibrahim Rugova) and five other militants. This was not true and two days later, NATO had to retract its statement.<sup>48</sup>

In their zeal to demonize Milošević's regime, several NATO leaders, including Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and the U.S. special envoy for war crimes, all publicly claimed that Milošević's forces had killed tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of Kosovar Albanians. The figures turned out to be largely exaggerated. As of May 2000, the ICTY had exhumed 2,108 corpses from various mass graves across Kosovo.

Several times, to avoid taking responsibility for collateral damage caused by its own forces, NATO released false and unsubstantiated information. For example, when two F-16s mistakenly hit two civilian convoys near Džakovica (14 April 1999), SACEUR first accused the Serbs. Later on, after NATO killed 80 Albanian refugees in the Korisaj command barracks, the Alliance initially blamed the Serbs.

Third, with some information releases, NATO may have eroded its operational capabilities and given Milošević substantial advantage or affected his decision making to the detriment of NATO objectives. Catering to various audiences (national audiences, Serbian forces, Serbian leadership), the allies had some difficulties reconciling how to speak with a single consistent message. As a result, NATO may have given the Yugoslavs equivocal signals as to its intentions, capabilities, and resolve—this mixed message might have extended the campaign's

duration. For example, at the opening of the war, President Clinton announced he had no intention to send ground troops into harm's way. The President was catering to the American audience who did not support losing too many lives for Kosovo. Meanwhile, the statement may have led Milosevic to conclude that NATO's effort would simply be half-hearted and encouraged him to adopt a posture of waiting out the Alliance.<sup>49</sup>

NATO's public announcements of its intended targets, at times, allowed Milosevic to manipulate the situation to his benefit. After NATO announced it was ready to strike the radio-television station, the Yugoslav authorities ordered a few workers into the targeted building. These workers were among the casualties of the bombing.<sup>50</sup>

Public announcements of disagreements between Alliance members—in particular on the need for planning a ground operation or on the legitimacy of specific targets—may have enticed Milosevic into believing that his strategy of division may work. Milosevic likely entered the campaign learning a lesson from Saddam Hussein's experience with Operation Desert Fox in 1998—that the most the Western Alliance could mount would be a short, relatively painless bombing exercise that would leave him in a stronger position internally and externally after the dust settled. The mixed messages may have kept Milosevic holding onto this image and kept him from entertaining serious peace discussions much longer than if NATO had been able to speak with a truly unified voice.

## Countering Serbian Propaganda

Much of the criticism addressed by officials to the NATO's PI structure focused on its perceived inability to effectively counter Milosevic's propaganda and efforts to destabilize the coalition. Milosevic's regime propaganda mostly consisted of describing Kosovo as an internal affair and denouncing NATO's barbaric aggression against Yugoslavia.

At the start, NATO and its nations were curiously ill-equipped to deal with Milosevic's propaganda machine. Early in the war, and with a staff of five, NATO PI did not have sufficient resources to monitor the Yugoslav media. In addition, the Alliance was short of staff with local language capabilities. Not until mid-April 1999, with the reorganization of NATO PI, did NATO have qualified personnel tasked with monitoring the Yugoslav media. By the same token, NATO's Internet Web site was

not translated into Serbo-Croat due to a lack of resources.<sup>51</sup> Even without Serbo-Croat language material, NATO Web sites received frequent hits from within Yugoslavia— though how effective or far-reaching English (or French) messages were is unclear.

NATO also had difficulties reacting to Yugoslavia's exploitation of collateral damage. The media devoted considerable attention to the collateral damage issue. Although only 20 bombs went astray with deadly consequences (out of a total of 23,000 ordinance dropped), stories about collateral damage made up to 23 percent of war coverage on the three networks. (Table 2 summarizes CNN coverage to some collateral-damage incidents.) Again, it was the Serbs who controlled on the ground access, thus it was far easier to get film footage of a bomb that struck a home than one that hit a command bunker.

Date	Incident	# of stories
7 May 1999	Chinese Embassy	212
14 April 1999	Djakovica	60
13 May 1999	Korisa Command Post	31
12 April 1999	Gradica	25
23 April 1999	RTS Station	19
5 April 1999	Aleksina	16
1 May 1999	Luzanne Bridge	13
27 April 1999	Surdulica	12

Table 2: CNN Coverage of Collateral Damage

Collateral damage coverage allowed Milošević to set the agenda. Yugoslavs controlled the scene of the incidents and they quickly brought reporters to sites that told a good Yugoslav story (such as, in a non-collateral damage story, the crash site of the shot-down F-117). The Yugoslav authorities would disseminate initial information about these incidents, creating the first impression, and let reporters turn to NATO for accountability. However, NATO's strategy in dealing with instances of collateral damage did not effectively counter Milošević's efforts. A General, speaking on condition of anonymity, confided to French journalist Serge Halimi that: "All we had to do was announce that we were looking into the incident and release the information two weeks later when nobody cared anymore."<sup>52</sup> But that was not NATO's approach to these incidents.

In fact, NATO responded in an ill-advised and inadequate way to collateral damage incidents. NATO's approach only perpetuated the stories and gave Belgrade more credibility. In the case of the D jakovica incident, NATO first denied any involvement (accusing the Yugoslavs). NATO then asserted that Allied pilots had only bombed military vehicles. The next release was an acknowledgment that one F-16 might have bombed a civilian convoy. This was followed by a press conference focused on the tape recording of the voice of the relevant F-16 pilot talking with the CAOC to illustrate the difficulties of identifying targets, and later by an acknowledgment that the voice recording had nothing to do with the incident. It took 5 days for the Alliance to finally acknowledge all the facts that had first been released in a matter of hours by Belgrade: that two F-16 had struck two civilian convoys north of D jakovica, killing a number of civilian refugees. In the case of the Korisa command post in late May 1999, NATO again first refused to acknowledge that any civilians had been killed. It took NATO 2 days to acknowledge the facts.

By delaying information, making wild (and unfounded) accusations and disseminating false information, NATO damaged its credibility. This prolonged the story for as many days as it took NATO to finally come clean on the facts. NATO failures gave some credibility to the accuracy of Serbian reporting. A more effective approach would have been to readily acknowledge mistakes, explain why they happened, and move forward to the next issue. As such, the story would have died a natural death much faster. A case in point is the bombing of the Chinese Embassy. It took only 2 days for the U.S. government to find out how the mistake happened. As a result, the story about sorting out the facts died very quickly and NATO was praised for being forthcoming.

## Concluding Remarks

Astonishingly enough, as it prepared to go to war against another nation in a difficult context, the Alliance underestimated and did not adequately prepare for fighting the media war.

Erroneous assumptions (such as the duration of the campaign) and inadequate planning handicapped NATO's public information effort. As a result, the NATO public information office was understaffed and overworked and could not effectively fulfill its mission during the initial period of Allied Force.

Public Information was not closely linked to operations cells at the beginning of Allied Force. Long experience has shown that PI cannot be effective in the context of modern military operations without a close association and understanding of operations. As the media is part of the modern battlespace, commanders must integrate PI into battle plan, much like any other weapon. Missing or deficient links with operations leave PI officials ill informed, and therefore ill equipped to brief the media, as occurred with NATO in Allied Force's initial weeks.

Restrictive information policy tarnished NATO's credibility and provided for a confused and unclear picture of what was happening, fueling debate and controversy across the world.

NATO was ill prepared to handle the civilian casualties/damage issues. Journalists frequently found NATO unable or unwilling to quickly admit to the truth, leaving Milosevic time to exploit further collateral damage incidents to undermine NATO and support his agenda.

Having multiple briefings across the Alliance (principally Brussels, London, Washington) enabled the Alliance to dominate the media space throughout the day and to speak more effectively to different audiences. However, this also opened the door for mixed messages and required significant resources for coordination that, again, were not available at the outset of operations.

As called forth above, the Allied Force experience suggests a number of lessons identified for NATO and other coalitions for public information in future operations.<sup>53</sup> We can only hope that NATO and its constituent nations adopt these PI lessons so that an effective PI policy can be a force multiplier rather than a means of simply managing crises that occur during operations. A SA dm iralellis concluded:

*Properly executed IO could have halved the length of the campaign.*<sup>54</sup>

Public information is a critical component of the soft-side of information operations and deserves serious focus before— rather than after— NATO's next military operation.

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<sup>53</sup>See for example, Jamie Shae, *The Kosovo Crisis and the Media: Reflections of a NATO Spokesman*, Address to the Summer Forum on Kosovo organized by

the Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom and the Trades Union Committee for European and Transatlantic Understanding, Reform Club, London, 15 July 1999. See also, Alistair Campbell, "Communications Lessons for NATO, the Military and Media," *RUSI Journal*, August 1999, 144/4, 31-36.

<sup>2</sup>As quoted in Bob Shaochis, "Pens and Swords: A Positive Dynamic for the U.S. Media and Military," *The Harvard International Review*, Winter-Spring 2000, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Secretary Cohen and General Shelton, USA, *Joint Statement on the Kosovo After-Action Report*, presented before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 14 October 1999. Available at [www.defenselink.mil:80/new/s/oc/1999/b10141999\\_bt478-99.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil:80/new/s/oc/1999/b10141999_bt478-99.htm)

<sup>4</sup>Admiral James Ellis, U.S. Navy, Commander-in-Chief, Southern Europe (NATO CINCSOUTH) and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy, Europe (CINCSNAVEUR), "A View From the Top," briefing, 1999.

<sup>5</sup>Ministère de la Défense, *Les enseignements du Kosovo: Analyses et références*, Paris, Délégation à la Communication de la Défense (DICO), novembre 1999, p. 38. Available at [www.defense.gouv.fr](http://www.defense.gouv.fr)

<sup>6</sup>In the early seventies, only three networks existed: ABC, NBC, and CBS as well as a public network, PBS. Today, these networks are completed with three CNN outlets (CNN, CNN International, and CNN fi), three C-SPAN networks, MSNBC, CNBC, Fox news channel. This, of course, does not even consider local stations, radio stations, nor international networks and programming with reach into the United States.

<sup>7</sup>Jamie Shae, Presentation to the United States Institute of Peace Seminar on "The Media and NATO in Kosovo: Partners or Partisans," Washington DC, 4 April 2000.

<sup>8</sup>Steven Brill, "War Gets the Monica Treatment," *Brill's Content*, 2/6, August 1999, p. 101-103.

<sup>9</sup>The GSM system was the only reliable communication system in the country. Otherwise, communications would have to go through the state system, notoriously unreliable, but also under state surveillance.

<sup>10</sup>Associated Press, "On the Info Front, Military Plays It Conservative," *The Washington Times*, 12 April 1999, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Ellen Gameman, "Information About War Is Tightly Controlled. Reporters have to accept Pentagon's slant on action," *The Baltimore Sun*, 7 April 1999.

<sup>12</sup>There is anecdotal evidence that the Yugoslav quickly learned the pattern of NATO's bombing runs, as many officers have acknowledged, publicly or privately. Whether the Yugoslav learned this watching CNN or with their own spies standing at the outskirts of the bases remains to be seen.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Lippman and Dana Priest, "NATO Agrees to Target Belgrade," *The Washington Post*, 31 March 1999, p. A1. Several reporters disagree, arguing the expanded list of targets was common knowledge.

<sup>14</sup>Paul H. Weaver, "The new journalism and the old-Thoughts After Watergate," *The Public Interest*, Spring 1974, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup>Center for Media and Public Affairs, "Crisis in Kosovo: TV News Coverage of the NATO Strikes on Yugoslavia," *Media Monitor*, X III/2, May-June 1999.

<sup>16</sup>As expressed by Brookings Institution specialist Ivo Daalder. See Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 2000.

<sup>17</sup>Center for Media and Public Affairs, "Crisis in Kosovo: TV News Coverage of the NATO Strikes on Yugoslavia," *Media Monitor*, X III/2, May-June 1999.

<sup>18</sup>*New York Times* correspondent Steven Erlanger on CNN *Reliable Source*, 3 April 1999.

<sup>19</sup>For example, CNN lost about \$1 million in equipment burned, destroyed or confiscated during the Kosovo crisis. Peter Johnson and Gary Levin, "Cost of War," *USA Today*, 29 April 1999, p. 3D. Many reporters have been threatened or abused by Yugoslav authorities. Italian journalist Lucia Annunziata and French TV reporter Emmona Hnteman were both (among others) roughed up and expelled by Belgrade authorities. See "Abuse of reporter outages Italians," *European Stars and Stripes*, 18 April 1999, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>CNN refused to do any coverage of Ammanpour's circum stances. Eason Jordan, CNN's executive in charge of global news-gathering, explained that "the story is not what happens to CNN journalists. The story is the bombing of Serbia," in Charles Lane, "Air War Serbia Shackles CNN," *The New Republic*, 10 May 1999. However, other news organizations made Serbia's media relations part of the story. Both CBS and ABC interviewed their own correspondents after they were detained, interrogated, and expelled from Yugoslavia on 25 March. French television also broadcast several segments on the same theme.

<sup>21</sup>These included facilities in Aviano, Italy (near the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) and a principal NATO airbase for the operation); NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium; Skopje, Macedonia (near the border with Serbia (Kosovo area) and with NATO forces in Macedonia); and Tirana, Albania (with NATO and national relief efforts and the U.S. Task Force Hawk).

<sup>22</sup>That's more coverage on day one than on the first day of the ground war during the Gulf War or than following Princess Diana's death in 1997.

<sup>23</sup>A wide range of works have come out looking at the path to the war. The following three works represent a valuable (and hopefully representative) spectrum of Western views of events: Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000; See also Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, op. cit.; and, Barry R. Posen, "The War for Kosovo: Serbia's Political-Military Strategy," *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 4, Spring 2000, pages 39-84.

<sup>24</sup>A common estimate at NATO headquarters was that the political consensus for continuing the strikes would not last more than 4 to 6 days. A memo circulated between the British and German NATO representatives on 20 March 1999, reflected that sentiment: "Political will to see through NATO's threat of military action is not guaranteed if it does not achieve results within 4 to 6 days," quoted in Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>25</sup>Dana Priest, "Risk and Restraint: Why the Apaches never flew in Kosovo," *The Washington Post*, 29 December 1999. Article can be found at: <http://propl.org/nucnews/991229/991229nn.htm> This is well discussed in: Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup>The nature of NATO decision making, however, did ease this pressure somewhat. The key factor in NATO decision making is unanimity. A unanimous vote was required to start the bombing campaign. In theory, one might have been required to stop it. Thus, as long as no clear-cut decision was required at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) related to continuing the bombing, no single nation (other than, perhaps, the United States) could easily end the bombing. While more than one NATO government was troubled by the course the campaign took, not even the Greek government (with the Greek population the most pro-Serbian of any NATO population) seems to have seriously tried to end the campaign without some degree of NATO victory in hand.

<sup>27</sup>This represents a great change in the media environment. Several decades ago, politicians could speak with separate messages to overseas and domestic audiences without difficulty. Today, with the instant and worldwide reach of the media (such as CNN), American politicians (and other significant individuals, such as Pentagon briefers amid a conflict) do not have the luxury (ability) to distinguish between audiences in this way. Thus, a message meant mainly to forestall internal criticism of military action also hit foreign audiences (such as Milosevic) who may not have been an intended target.

<sup>28</sup>See for example, Department of Defense, Briefing, 25 March, 26 March, 27 March, 29 March 1999. This situation is a real contrast to earlier NATO and coalition operations involving the United States and the United Kingdom. It is difficult to think of an operation prior to Allied Force involving UK and U.S. forces in which the situation was not reversed, with the United States releasing more information. The U.S. government (especially the Department of Defense) adopted a more restrictive policy regarding information release during military operations through the end of the 1990s while the United Kingdom seems to have decided that media reporting is a key battlefield and that effectively presenting and releasing information is a key tool in winning that battle.

<sup>29</sup>Public Affairs Guidelines are internal instructions detailing talking points for public affairs officers to use with the media.

<sup>30</sup>Not that there are not U.S. officers who view public affairs in this light as well. For a discussion of some national differences during NATO's initial period on the ground in Bosnia, see: Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Target Bosnia: Integrating Information Activities in Peace Operations: The NATO-led Operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina: December 1995-1997*, Washington, DC, National Defense University Press, 1998.

<sup>31</sup>That process lasted after the war. For example, in a long article on the deployment of Aaches (Task Force Hawk) in support of the air war, *The Washington Post* repeated claims from unknown U.S. officials that France and Italy significantly delayed the deployment. Dana Priest, "Risk and Restraint: Why the Aaches never flew in Kosovo," *The Washington Post*, 29 December 1999. The article can be found at: <http://prop1.org/nucnews/s/9912nm/991229nm.htm> Priest does not seem to have interviewed either French or Italian officials. Having spoken to numerous U.S. and allied personnel involved with Albania operations, the claimed problems caused by allies were exaggerated as part of a process within the U.S. system to avoid blame for Task Force Hawk's troubled deployment.

<sup>32</sup>This is discussed in further detail in Pascale Combelles Siegel, *Did NATO win the media and does it matter for C2 research?* Presentation for the CCRTS symposium, Monterey, June 2000 (available via: [www.dodocp.org](http://www.dodocp.org)). For a discussion of the air strike strategy, see, for example: Daniel Bymann and Matthew C. Waxman, "Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate," *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 4, Spring 2000, pages 5-38.

<sup>33</sup>The reasons for excluding SHAPE PI from the Kosovo PI operation about Kosovo remain unclear.

<sup>34</sup>Alistair Campbell, Prime Minister Blair's media guru, describes the situation: "When I saw the NATO press service, I was amazed that Jamie was still alive. He was doing his own scripts, fixing his own interviews, attending key meetings, handling every enquiry that came his way, large and small. He was the front man for the whole campaign, yet was expected to do his job without adequate support," Alistair Campbell, Prime Minister Blair's press secretary, recalled NATO's press operation in the following terms: in "Communications

Lessons for NATO, the Military and the Media," *RUSI Journal*, vol. 144, n° 4, August 1999, p. 32.

<sup>35</sup>Jamie Shae, presentation to the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 4 April 2000.

<sup>36</sup>NATO headquarters, the British Ministry of Defense, the Pentagon, the State Department, and the White House briefed reporters on a daily basis. Only the White House usually does. Other coalition members (such as France) chose a more subdued approach, meeting with reporters on an as-needed basis and holding only occasional press conferences.

<sup>37</sup>Dr. Jamie Shae as cited in Maj. Gary Pounder, USAF, "Opportunity Lost: Public Affairs, Information Operations, and the Air War against Serbia," *Aerospace Power Journal*, Summer 2000, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup>Maj. Gary Pounder, USAF, *Op. Cit.*, p. 66. As a result, such information as the number of aircraft involved in missions, types of ordnance dropped, selected targets, weather conditions, rough estimate of damage inflicted to the Yugoslav forces and infrastructure were routinely withheld from the press.

<sup>39</sup>Within the United States, it seems clear that this limited release of information represents a clear change of policy and continues to affect public understanding of a Allied Force. As of this writing, almost 2 years after a Allied Force, the quality and extent of publicly released information is sparse and poor compared to the same types of information released during and following Operation Desert Storm. Compare the Department of Defense's official reports following the two operations and this clear change becomes clear. Interestingly enough, this seems to be the reverse with at least a few U.S. allies, as both the UK and French after-action and lessons reports from the campaign against Serbia are more extensive than those released after the war with Iraq.

<sup>40</sup>Jamie Shae, presentation to the United States Institute of Peace, 4 April 1999.

<sup>41</sup>This might not have been necessary. Broadcast footage of Yugoslav authorities (including military personnel) showing refugees aboard trains (including cattle cars) in Pristina was enough to remind Europeans of their darkest moment.

<sup>42</sup>For example, in early April, German officials indicated they had evidence that Milosevic had planned the mass expulsion of Kosovo Albanians (known as Plan Horseshoe) and detailed the evidence that supported their claim. Later, NATO documented mass graves with satellite pictures.

<sup>43</sup>A good summary of reporters' discontent with NATO's regulations appeared in: James Kitfield, "Command and Control the Messenger: The media feels used and abused after Pentagon manipulations of information during the war," *National Journal*, 11 September 1999, pp. 25-46.

<sup>44</sup>Ellen Gamerman, "Information About War Is Tightly Controlled," *The Baltimore Sun*, 7 April 1999.

<sup>45</sup>For example, Margaret Evans (Canada Broadcasting Company): "I'd like to have my questions answered, period. I'm tired of straightforward questions being answered by a stream of rhetoric." For a review of the media criticisms, see James Kitfield, "Command and Control the Messenger: The media feels used and abused after Pentagon manipulations of information during the Kosovo war," *The National Journal*, 11 September 1999, p. 25-46.

<sup>46</sup>The following organizations signed the letter of protest to Secretary Cohen: *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, NBC News, CNN and the Associated Press. For more information, see Felicity Barringer, "Editors Seek More Information On The Air War," *The New York Times*, 16 April 1999.

<sup>47</sup>Jamie Shae, comments at the United States Institute of Peace, 4 April 1999.

<sup>48</sup>Mr. Agani was executed three weeks later, in unclear circumstances. Others, such as Baton Haxhiu, editor of *Koha Ditore*, survived the war. See Paul Quilès and François Lam y, *Kosovo: Une guerre d'exceptions*, Rapport d'information, Commission de la Défense, Assemblée Nationale, Paris, Les documents d'information, p90.

<sup>49</sup>The President took a substantial amount of criticism in the political arena (from Senator John McCain, for example) and in the media on this statement abandoning one military option. Many observed that announcing one's intentions was not good strategy.

<sup>50</sup>A detailed enquiry was conducted by the French NGO Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders). See Reporters Sans Frontières, *Les bavures médiatiques de l'OTAN*, Dossiers et rapports de mission, 1999.

<sup>51</sup>One could argue due to a lack of imagination – how many expatriate Serbs or Serbo-Croat speakers are there in NATO's 19 nations who could have been put on contract to translate NATO material? And how expensive might this been in the context of a multi-billion dollar operation?

<sup>52</sup>"La guerre du Kosovo ou l'escalade tous azimuts," *Stratégique*, n° 74-75, 1999, p 12.

<sup>53</sup>I use the term *lessons identified* in preference to *lessons learned*. We seem not to learn most lessons, but to identify them, forget most, to relearn them again in another context. Writing lessons in an environment like this (or in *lessons learned* reports) is only an initial step in this process.

<sup>54</sup>Admiral James Ellis, U.S. Navy, Commander-in-Chief, Southern Europe (NATO CINCSOUTH) and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy, Europe (CINCSNAVEUR), "A View From the Top," briefing, 1999.