

# NATO CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONCEPT: TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE BOMBING OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract:* This paper examines NATO's engagement during the bombing of the Federal Republic Yugoslavia and its impact on further development of crisis management defined by the Strategic Concept and other relevant documents. The authors have tried to provide the answers to the questions regarding the NATO's procedures, effectiveness and efficiency during the operation MERCIFUL ANGEL (Operation Allied Force) and their implications for further development of the crisis management concept throughout adoption of the Strategic Concepts in 1999 and 2010 and relevant doctrines, as well as throughout building the Allied related capabilities. Planning, preparation and conducting all the NATO's crisis management operations after 1999 were based on lessons learned from the operation MERCIFUL ANGEL and the previous NATO's engagement in the former Yugoslavia. Taking the above-mentioned into consideration, this paper seeks to find out how NATO's military coercive activities in the former Yugoslavia, including aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, has affected its engagement in

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Afghanistan and Libya, as well as on the crisis management concept as a whole. The research methodology is based on four case studies (NATO interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Republic Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya) in order to scrutinize common trends in the crisis management operations conducted by the Alliance in these countries and its significance for further development of the crisis management concept.

*Key words:* NATO, Crisis Management, Strategic Concept, NATO aggression on the FRY, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Libya.

## INTRODUCTION

Within the last three decades in the post-Cold War period, crisis management almost replaced deterrence as the key NATO's concept. In practice and also in doctrinal and capabilities spheres, after the end of the Cold War, NATO focused less on territorial defence and more on out-of-area engagement. Nowadays, this trend has changed because of NATO's concerns about resurgent Russia. The Alliance's officials pointed out that strengthening Deterrence and Defence Posture is getting more and more important for NATO in order to respond swiftly and firmly to new security challenges, especially from the East. In accordance with NATO assessment, Russia has become more assertive with the illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine, as well as with its military build-up close to NATO's borders (NATO, 2018a).

Crisis management has had some roots within the Euro-Atlantic community since NATO was formed. Articles 1 to 4 of the Washington Treaty indirectly foresee NATO management role in a crisis, but within the purpose of the collective defence in its own area in accordance with Articles 5 and 6. Apart from collective defence, some scholars during the Cold War gave ideas to task NATO also with out-of-area crisis management, for example, Buchan (1966). However, in the Cold War practice, any attempt within the Alliance to establish the out-of-area crisis management concept failed in order to avoid a risk of diversion from the major task of collective defence. It can be noticed that it was also the case during the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. After the Cold War, the Allies realized a significant transformation process based on the assumption that collective defence along traditional lines would no longer be sufficient to justify NATO further existence. At that time, US Senator Richard G. Lugar has commented on the Alliance's dilemma with one very interesting phrase that NATO would "go out-of-area or out-of-business". The Strategic Concept published in November 1991 describes a shift in

direction that reflects the new post-Cold War security environment. Crisis management and a renewed accent on political activities as the means for promoting and defending NATO interests represent the features of the new allied strategy. Following the scope and the topic of this paper, it is very important to emphasise that the 1991 Strategic Concept referred neither to peacekeeping nor to peace support operations and out-of-area operations, but maintained that developments in the Soviet Union constituted the greatest concern for the Alliance. This observation has already been presented by many scholars, and it is very often presented critically in terms of too slowly NATO's adaptability to the new environment, one of them is Frantzen (2005).

Unfortunately, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia and the NATO bombing in 1995 and 1999 were pilot-projects for introducing the Alliance's crisis management concept and out-of-area engagement which has had its evolution from peacekeeping through peace support to crisis response operations, or also in the wider framework to hybrid warfare as noticed by Stojković (2017). After the Cold War, the Alliance was the only organization that possesses the tailored package of political-military tools for effective crisis management, and it was very important for NATO to find its unique role among other international organizations which were striving to establish interlocking institutions in the security area.

At the Washington Summit in 1999 during the mid of the NATO aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), the Alliance adopted the Strategic Concept. In comparison with the previous practice, mentioned document more emphasized a comprehensive view on security and the Allied capabilities for conflict prevention and crisis management. All these originated from lessons learned from NATO's engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as from aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Obtaining success in the Allied air campaign in 1999 was very important for the United States and NATO, and became a test of the post-Cold war Alliance's role in Europe. General Clark (2002) noticed that a NATO failure would bring the collapse of several European governments and the worldwide repercussions on U.S. credibility and the significance of American commitments. The NATO air campaign, conducted as a limited war and engagement in the Kosovo crisis, based on previous lessons learned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had a significant impact for further development of the crisis management concept, including the last Strategic

Concept adopted in 2010 during the Summit in Lisbon, as well as the further Alliance's engagement in Afghanistan and Libya.

### **NATO ENGAGEMENT IN THE OPERATION MERCIFUL ANGEL (OPERATION ALLIED FORCE)**

The military engagement between the security forces of the FRY and the Kosovar Albanian terrorist groups to solve the conflict in Kosovo was unique in NATO's history. For the first time, the Alliance conducted an offensive military operation "worth more than \$3 billion" to compel the FRY to accept its terms (Lambeth, 2001, p. xx). From NATO's point of view, the Allies had three primary interests during the NATO aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: ensuring the stability of Eastern Europe; thwarting ethnic cleansing and ensuring NATO's credibility (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000). NATO publicly stated the objectives of the campaign, demanding a stop to disproportionate use of force by the FRY forces, without addressing the issue of the status of Kosovo. At the beginning of the Kosovo's crisis, NATO tried to avoid any statements that could be interpreted as support to the "Kosovo Liberation Army". In one of the first statements, dated on 16 December 1997, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) expressed concern over escalating ethnic tension in Kosovo and called upon the involved parties to solve the crisis by defining a mutually acceptable solution. Thereafter, in this sense, the NAC condemned terrorist acts and rejected all use of violence, either by the Yugoslav security forces or by the Kosovar Albanian terrorist groups (NATO, 2018b; NATO, 2018c). To solve the crisis in Kosovo, NATO had the intention of building its strategy on out-of-area issues or more precisely on the concept of peace support operations, which should be impartial.

However, NATO left this approach regarding the principle of impartiality and also conducting a pure peace support operation. As noticed in *NATO's empty victory*, "NATO policy in practice was based on a simplistic and unfair interpretation of the problems in Kosovo. The Alliance leaders openly sympathized with the Albanian Kosovars and placed all the blame for a complex dispute at Belgrade's door" (Carpenter, 2000, p. 2). Likewise, using a very comprehensive quantitative comparison within the same book *NATO's empty victory*, it was pointed out "that NATO was more than a trifle hypocritical in arguing that the situation in Kosovo constituted genocide and that the Alliance could not stand by and let such an offense to humanity go unchallenged" (Carpenter, 2000, p. 2). Apart from that, Operation Allied

Force (OAF) did not fit into the concept of peacekeeping or into the wider framework - peace support operations. As observed by Frantzen (2005), NATO had to come up with a new concept, something that the Alliance did not do other than calling it the "air campaign".

On the other hand, the OAF was not authorized by the UN Security Council and NATO acted in the absence of Article 42 mandate stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations. As noted by Proroković and Lađevac (2018), it was *sui generis* or precedent in international relations which had significantly deteriorated the role of the United Nations. NATO did not seek a UN Security Council Resolution in order to approve the use of armed force because it understood that Russia and China would veto such a proposal. Instead, NATO argued that the UN Security Council Resolutions 1160 (31 March 1998), 1199 (23 September 1998) and 1203 (24 October 1998) offered sufficient mandate for the use of force against the FRY and deliberately ignored the UN Security Council and unilaterally assumed entire control over the operations. Consequently, as also pointed out by Gazzini (2001), NATO apparently violated international law and its action was criticized by a significant number of states as contrary to the Charter of the United Nations as well as to the customary norm prohibiting the use of force in international relations. By the same token, Proroković and Lađevac have pointed out that "The most controversial issue regarding this action of air strikes on the territory of the FRY is the question of the nature of these attacks known as "interventions". In accordance with international law and a system of international relations founded and generally accepted in the 20th century, the intervention of this kind had to be approved by the Security Council after the violation of Chapter VII of the UN Charter was noted" (Proroković & Lađevac, 2018, p. 173).

Thus, a debate within the UN Security Council witnessed a sharp division. Some countries (China, the Russian Federation and Namibia) tried to call for an immediate cessation of the air operation. The failed adoption of the draft resolution calling for an immediate cessation of the air strikes cannot be treated as an implied authorization. As Rynning (2005) pointed out, NATO thus appeared to be Europe's new collective security backbone that sponsored collective action to defend the liberal-democratic status quo.

The initial Alliance's planning for the potential ground and air operations against the FRY started in April 1998 with a plan for a "preventive deployment" within Operation Determined Falcon along Yugoslav border with Albania and Macedonia to stabilize these two countries, which faced in that time growing violence and political instability

affected by the Kosovo crisis. Planning for air aggression on the FRY started on the beginning of June 1998. Initial plans were developed by the U.S. Air Base in Ramstein, Germany and were named Operation Nimble Lion. On the other side, formal planning within NATO began also in early June 1998 when the NAC asked the Military Committee to assess the full range of gradual options to deter further violence and influence the behaviour of the parties to the conflict. In this format, the Allies developed a separate plan called the Concept of Operations Plan 10601. Although there was some overlap between these two plans as Lambeth (2001) noticed, Operation Nimble Lion and the Concept of Operations Plan 10601 were different. Operation Nimble Lion predicted that the campaign's goal should be achieved immediately, whereas the Concept of Operations Plan 10601 entailed a gradual, incremental, and phased approach. The Concept of Operations Plan 10601 ultimately became the basis for Operation Allied Force. In accordance with the agreed Concept of Operations Plan 10601 and observations taken by Lambeth (2001), the first phase included attacks on Yugoslavia's air defence system. The second phase envisaged attacks against military targets mainly, but not exclusively, below the 44th parallel – south of Belgrade. Finally, only in the third phase, NATO would bombard military facilities located north of the 44th parallel and targets in and around Belgrade.

Apart from two mentioned plans, a third secret plan for a massive ground invasion by some 300,000 troops was also on the table. However, before the OAF started, the U.S. and NATO leaders within national and integrated Alliance's commands and structures had largely eliminated any prospect of using ground forces as part of an integrated campaign to fulfil NATO's objectives in Kosovo and Metohija. As noticed by Nardully and others, "the political and military costs and risks of conducting a ground operation were viewed as excessive, and there was no sense that an air-land operation was either appropriate or necessary" (Nardulli, Perry, Pirnie, Gordon & McGinn, 2002, p. 3). NATO's reliance only on air strikes arose from experience coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his book *Waging the Modern War*, General Clark emphasised one very interesting statement given by President Slobodan Milošević – "I had been reflecting [...] on Milošević's comment to me in December 1995 about how the Serbs had no chance against NATO air power" (Clark, 2001, p. 116). Also, General Clark (2001) pointed out that reliance on the air threat was natural for NATO due to several reasons: it had worked in Bosnia 1995; it promised a low-cost and

low-risk statement of political intent; and it left open other, more difficult and costly options.

Taking the above-mentioned into account, it should be emphasized that there was no clear and unified military recommendation and guidance, whereas different perceptions between the army and air officers from the ally countries as well as from the NATO integrated military structure. Hence, the way in which air power was used was seen to run contrary to military advice. Moreover, the NATO Military Committee had been sidelined during the conduct of NATO aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Alliance first threatened to use air power during October 1998 to enforce agreements reached between Richard Holbrooke and Slobodan Milošević on a cease-fire and the Yugoslav force level in Kosovo. During that period, a significant number of initiatives were conducted by the international community in order to force the Yugoslav authorities to sign a peace agreement and allow the OSCE observers to enter Kosovo and Metohija to monitor compliance. As mentioned in *Disjointed War – Military Operations in Kosovo*, the October crisis in 1998 had several important consequences: “ it brought NATO to the brink of executing a limited air strike and kept this option permanently on the table; it led to deployment of the Kosovo Verification Mission under the auspices of the OSCE and to deployment of surveillance aircraft over Kosovo, allowing NATO planners to gain familiarity with the terrain; and the 1998 October crisis suggested that President Milošević would back down when threatened with air strikes, encouraging NATO to make this threat again” (Nardulli, Perry, Pirnie, Gordon & McGinn, 2002, pp. 16-17).

When the peace talks were officially suspended on 19 March 1999 in Paris without signing the Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo from the Yugoslav side, NATO started with a final preparation. The general expectation was that the OAF would constitute a very short air campaign, approximately two weeks. Expecting a short engagement, the NAC approved only the first phase of the planned air operation and also failed to establish a smoothly running mechanism for target development and review. Hence, launched on 24 March 1999, air campaign focused on a relatively small set of Yugoslavia’s air defence and command and control targets.

In accordance with (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000, pp. 31-32) available NATO air assets, targeting capabilities were tailored under the

expectation of a few-days short campaign. NATO began the operation with only 344 planes available, less than the 410 planes stationed in the region in October 1998. These constituted only 10 percent of the coalition aircraft that participated in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq in 1991.

After a few days, NATO expanded aggression on the FRY to include air strikes against the Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior forces in Kosovo (Phase Two). As already been mentioned due to the expectation that the campaign would not face major difficulties, the Allies did not feel they needed to establish an agreement that would regulate the selection and approval of campaign targets. The absence of any targeting capability in the early weeks of the conflict added to the difficulty and resulted in a largely ineffective air power effort against Yugoslav police and military units. It was a reason for slowly expanding air strikes through the introduction of the Navy Air Force (US aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt), the expansion of fixed targets and number of engaged aircrafts. In order to provide a greater pressure to coerce Belgrade, the scope and type of targets expanded significantly, including also Yugoslav civil infrastructure – the Phase Three (electrical power plants, government ministries ...), especially after the NATO Summit which took place in Washington, D.C., in April 1999. However, the approval process for targeting civil infrastructure was often contentious and challenging, owing to a significant measure to the political concerns of various member countries. As mentioned in Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report to Congress “for selected categories of targets, for example, targets in Belgrade, in Montenegro, or targets likely to involve high collateral damage, NATO reserved approval of higher political authorities” (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000, p. xx). At the beginning of the NATO campaign, only the UK prime minister and the U.S. president made decisions about the bombing of civilian targets. Also, the French president insisted to be directly involved. In these circumstances, the UK, U.S. and French leaders agreed to set up guidelines regarding the target selection process. Later, the process was extended to include also high-ranking German and Italian officials. As observed by Ivanov (2011), this political process of selecting, approving, and acquisition of new targets became very slow, which hampered significantly the efficiency of the campaign. It can be concluded that although the NAC agreed on the substance of the OAF, it had difficulty in generating consensus about the implementation of the bombing and the utilization of the integrated military command during the seventy-eight-day campaign. However, the fact was that NATO always maintained that no single or set of targets were more



important than cohesion within the Alliance. Also, the difficulty in generating consensus was accompanied by insufficient levels of interoperability.

In accordance with the assessment given by eminent experts, NATO's use of force in dealing with Belgrade revealed serious problems.

“What was to be a quick military operation instead became a 78-day campaign. NATO also set itself an objective to reduce the capability of the Serbian military forces to wage violence in the future. This too turned out to be a largely unmet goal, as the Serbian fielded forces survived NATO's air war largely intact. Finally, on the eve of Slobodan Milosevic's capitulation, the U.S. and NATO decision-makers faced the imminent prospect of having to conduct a ground invasion for which detailed military planning and preparations were still quite limited. A decision to commit to a ground invasion of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would have severely tested NATO's political resolve” (Nardulli, Perry, Pirnie, Gordon & McGinn, 2002, pp. 1-2).

NATO's engagement in the air campaign showed internal divisions and highlighted a great capability gap between the United States and the European Allies plus Canada, which seriously affected the Alliance's ability to operate in the most effective way. It can be concluded that NATO could not have undertaken the air campaign without U.S. participation. Ivanov (2011) presented that in comparison to American efforts, the Europeans contributed marginally – about 36 percent of the total aircraft deployed and less than half of the sorties. Also, 70 percent of the deployed European allied forces performed a supportive role, such as air-to-air refuelling, tactical jamming, and airlift operations. In spite of efforts to improve standardization to obtain interoperability, the OAF confirmed that troops of different allies faced significant problems regarding required capabilities. As pointed out by Flockhart (2011), despite the significance of the decision, the experience of Kosovo turned out to be partly negative as it resulted in considerable transatlantic disagreement and mutual recrimination. NATO, therefore, came out of the Kosovo conflict with a damaged self-perception with regards to its practical ability to perform as a cohesive actor in a militarily demanding environment. Thus, in accordance with Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report to Congress, U.S. Department of Defence “has funded more than \$3,5 billion in enhancements to address the lessons learned from the Kosovo operation” in the areas such as precision strike; electronic warfare and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000, p. 3).

During the bombing campaign, NATO had a very strong determination to prevail, and one of the most significant turning points was the Summit in Washington, D.C., on 23-24 April 1999. As presented in Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report to Congress in Washington, D.C., "Alliance leaders decided to further intensify the air operation by expanding the target set to include military-industrial infrastructure, propaganda-related media and other strategic targets, and announcing the deployment of additional aircrafts" (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000, p. 23).<sup>5</sup> Apart from that, at the Washington Summit, NATO claimed that it was not waging a war against the Serbian people, but against the policies of the regime in Belgrade. In accordance with NATO policy, the political objective was clearly emphasised in Statement on Kosovo – "a peaceful, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo in which all people can live in security and enjoy universal human rights and freedoms on an equal basis" (NATO, 2018d). Also, right after the NATO Summit, the five core demands were endorsed by the G-8 foreign ministers. All of these five demands are presented in report *Kosovo: Lessons Learned from Operation Allied Force* on the following way: "stop all military action, violence and repression in Kosovo; withdraw from Kosovo Yugoslav military, police and paramilitary forces; agree to the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence with NATO at its core; agree to the return of all refugees and access to them by humanitarian aid organization; and provide assurance of willingness to work on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords to establish a political framework agreement for Kosovo" (U.S. Congress, 1999, pp. 2-3).

It is very important to emphasise that NATO did not define a clear objective of the air campaign. NATO aggression began with one modest objective – to bring the Serbs back to the negotiations. After that NATO moved towards other two aims – halting the ethnic cleansing and fulfilment of the above-mentioned five core demands as a whole.

Despite the above-mentioned constraints, as observed in *Disjointed War – Military Operations in Kosovo 1999*, "NATO's air operation against fixed

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<sup>5</sup> On 24 March 1999 214 U.S. and 130 allied aircraft were poised at bases in Europe ready to initiate combat operations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. By June 1999 the total number of U.S. aircrafts in Europe had grown to 731. During the same period allied contributions was more than doubled to over 300 aircrafts (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000, pp. 31-32). Also, NATO expanded the air campaign from the initial strikes directed at 51 targets to 1.000 targets (Clark, 2001, p. 430).

targets ultimately brought great pressure to bear on the Belgrade leadership" (Nardulli, Perry, Pirnie, Gordon & McGinn, 2002, p. 5). Finnish President Ahtisaari and Russian envoy Chernomyrdin developed a plan to bring the conflict to closure. This peace proposal also included five core demands agreed by foreign ministers in the G-8 format. With the signing of the Military Technical Agreement on 9 June 1999, the air campaign ended, and NATO forces moved into Kosovo and Metohija to conduct Operation Joint Guardian by the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

### **NATO CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONCEPT BEFORE AND AFTER THE OPERATION MERCIFUL ANGEL (OPERATION ALLIED FORCE)**

Before taking part to solve the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, NATO was directly involved in two crises: the Cyprus Christmas Crisis 1963 and Desert Shield/Storm 1991 (LaSalle, 1993). During the Cyprus crisis, NATO's involvement was limited to diplomatic efforts in order to protect the Alliance cohesion and keep its ability to defend against the Soviet Union. It means that NATO took measures to protect common interests, subordinating the national interests of particular members (Greece and Turkey) to the higher goal - collective defence. In the Gulf War, NATO's direct military role was minimal due to enormous engagement of North American and European coalition members. Apart from the mentioned crises, NATO engagement was also present in some way during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

The new approach was first set out in 1991 during the NATO Summit in Rome, as part of The Alliance's New Strategic Concept. The mentioned document implies a brand-new and wider approach to security issues and provides better opportunities to obtain defined objectives by using political tools. On the other hand, the 1991 Strategic Concept stipulated the end of the "comprehensive linear defence" in the central region, which had been the key feature of NATO's defence posture in the Cold War period (NATO, 2018e). The Alliance's New Strategic Concept announced the growing prominence of NATO's political element, and political consultation among NATO members became even more important. During the Cold War, planners did not expect to have much time to consult before having to react militarily. During that period, operations plans were an important component of the deterrence role of NATO forces. However, in the newly born circumstances, the crisis management principles call for intimate

political NAC control over flexible and responsive military forces capable to fulfil the designated task. In spite of considered guidance given by the 1991 Strategic Concept, NATO's crisis management was firmly defined within the traditional framework of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, without mentioning out-of-area engagement in different operations. Also, developments in the Soviet Union constituted the greatest concern for the Alliance.

The next passage from *NATO and Peace Support Operations 1991-1999* written by Frantzen can illustrate the above-mentioned attitude of mind:

"In the autumn of 1991, negotiations on the new Strategic Concept of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) went into their final stage. Simultaneously, NATO conducted exercise "Certain Shield" on the German plains. This largely computer-simulated exercise was based on a scenario with a generic enemy, and was essentially an exercise in great tank battles, which resulted in 700,000 computer-simulated casualties in one week. NATO commanders justified the exercise on the grounds that this kind of warfare posed the greatest challenge to allied tacticians. Furthermore, the exercise was the first experiment with multinational formations below the divisional level. When asked, high-ranking officers rejected the idea that NATO divisions could intervene in Yugoslavia, even if there was the political will to do so because of logistic shortcomings. Eight years later, NATO experienced severe problems in mounting a force of 50,000 troops to stop the civil war in Kosovo. This illustrates both the differences between the "old" and "new" NATO and the problems of adjusting the strategy of the Alliance of the new environment" (Frantzen, 2005, p. 61).

Considering the above-mentioned, it can be concluded that the 1991 Strategic Concept was inappropriate for the actual strategic situation at that time, due to the fact that the Alliance engaged only one year later in a peace support operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina without any reference which should have been defined in this strategic document. The North Atlantic Council, on 15 July 1992, ordered the Standing Naval Force Mediterranean to the Adriatic Sea to aid in monitoring the UN embargo against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In conjunction with the maritime operations, five AWACS platforms, based in Greece and Italy and flying only in NATO and international airspace were to provide aerial surveillance support. Also, in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 781 dated on 9 October 1992, NATO started monitoring the airspace of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These actions represent the first NATO's out-of-area officially acknowledged military engagement. As Wijk noticed (1997), in mentioned circumstances,

the Defence Planning Committee decided in 1993 that the concept of crisis management should refer both to Article 5 and non-Article 5 scenarios (it also includes out-of-area engagement) and this concept became the political linkage to the peacekeeping. Also, in June 1995, the NAC formally divided NATO's roles into Article 5 and non-Article 5 operations.

Further, NATO and UNPROFOR on 10 August 1995 concluded a Memorandum of understanding on the execution of air strikes by NATO forces in order to protect "safe areas", especially Žepa and Srebrenica. The Memorandum of understanding became operative on 30 August 1995 when NATO conducted an extensive bombing campaign named Operation Deliberate Force against the Bosnian Serb positions involving 400 aircraft (3,515 sorties) and 5,000 personnel from 15 nations in order to undermine the military capabilities which had threatened and attacked UN-designated "safe areas" (Owen, 2000). In accordance with the Dayton Agreement, NATO sent an Implementation Force (IFOR) of 60,000 troops to Bosnia and Herzegovina and replaced the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). When IFOR's one-year term was completed and the situation on the ground remained potentially unstable, the international community agreed that a new Stabilization Force (SFOR) also led by NATO would be introduced.

Lessons learned from NATO's engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina were invaluable and provided an operational template for the next Alliance's intervention in Kosovo 1999.<sup>6</sup> As Williams (2018) observed against the background of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, the military idea behind the Partnership for Peace Programme was to develop the forces of non-NATO partners, primarily central and eastern European, so that they could participate compatibly in peacekeeping operations. In this sense, the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Initiative proposed by SACEUR at the Defence Ministerial Meeting in Germany in October 1993, was the means by which allies and partners could intervene in a crisis beyond NATO's borders. The CJTF, composed of allied and non-allied forces under

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<sup>6</sup> Three new features helped to build operational template for the Alliance's intervention in Kosovo 1999 and to transform integrated military structure from a mobilization model to a crisis management and intervention capability: (1) the development of an operational planning capability in SHAPE aided by a significant injections of U.S. expertise, (2) the initiation of a Force Generation Process, (3) the importance of non-NATO allies in filling gaps and niches in a force structure (Williams, 2018).

integrated command, had the first test in December 1995 in the framework of the Implementation Force in Operation Joint Endeavour in Bosnia.

Without any doubt, IFOR and SFOR were important in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but mentioned missions constituted no serious test of the transformation within NATO in terms of the decision-making process and required military capabilities. Later on, the entire process over Kosovo clearly indicated the lack of reform of the Alliance. Consequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo revealed weaknesses both with regard to the political-military decision-making process and in the military capability of the European Allies plus Canada, as well as domestic doubts and outright opposition to the bombing in some member states. Likewise, the strategy of relying on air power alone was also much debated, due to the fact that it was a concept developed against military advice and general wisdom. As already had been mentioned in the previous part of this paper, the OAF did not fit into the concept of peacekeeping and also into the wider framework – peace support operations. It was the main reason that the term crisis response operations first appeared in December 1998 after the Foreign Ministerial Meeting, as the Kosovo crisis escalated. At the mentioned meeting, Ministers instructed the NAC in Permanent Session to pursue further work on referred topic vigorously so that the new text was available by the time of the Washington Summit (NATO, 2018f). The main prediction at that time was that crisis response operation could provide a more flexible political framework in comparison with peace support operations and greater independence from the UN and OSCE mandate. The Operation Allied Force is one of the examples of such crisis response operations.

Also, Ivanov (2011) correctly observed that several notable differences between KFOR and IFOR/SFOR confirmed that NATO's involvement evolved from peacekeeping in Bosnia to the crisis response in Kosovo. First, under UNSC Resolution 1244, KFOR was given a significantly broader mandate. In addition to security, the NATO-led forces were charged with maintaining law and order in Kosovo. In comparison to IFOR/SFOR, the advancement of KFOR exemplifies “vertical evolution from peacekeeping to crisis response missions” (Ivanov, 2011, p. 94).

In large, the preparation and conducting activities to solve the Kosovo conflict had provided important input to the process of developing a new Strategic Concept, which later was adopted at the Washington Summit in 1999. After the OAF, there was no longer any severe resistance among NATO member countries against occasionally engaging in out-of-area operations. On the other hand, the main controversy within the Alliance as

the Washington Summit came closer, was how to introduce crisis management in the internal NATO's framework and also within broader relations between NATO and the UN on authorising an out-of-area mission. As noticed in *NATO and Peace Support Operations 1991-1999*, "the main rift was among those members who felt discomfort with using force and those who were ready to do so, and the question of the need for the UN authorisation and also disagreement on what priority these new tasks should take and to what extent they should determine the force structure of the members" (Frantzen, 2005, p. 73).

Related to lessons learned in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, at the Washington Summit in April 1999, the NATO adopted the new Strategic Concept which emphasised a more comprehensive view of Euro-Atlantic security and NATO capabilities for conflict prevention and crisis management. In this sense, the 1999 Strategic Concept maintained the distinction between Article 5 and non-Article 5 operations. Moreover, the new tasks of crisis management and crisis response operations were given a high profile in the referred document. These tasks should be conducted in conformity with Article 7 of the Washington Treaty (NATO, 2018g).

It is important to note that the crisis response missions are completely different from peacekeeping. While peacekeeping missions require multinational task forces where the emphasis is on troops' multinational character, the crisis response missions require much more cohesive and mobile capabilities. Since multinational task forces alone were insufficient to meet the increasing needs for rapidly deployable and effective forces, NATO initiated the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI). At the Washington Summit in April 1999, heads of state and government launched and announced the DCI (NATO, 2018h). NATO's military authorities during the OAF recognized that the Alliance's force structure was no longer flexible enough to react appropriately to unforeseen events. In the 1990s, NATO's transformation process focused on headquarters within the integrated military structure and very little on the unit level. Thus, implementation of the DCI became more and more important. In Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report to Congress is clearly mentioned that "successful implementation of the DCI must remain one of the NATO's top priorities – a lesson strongly reinforced by the Kosovo experience" (U.S. Department of Defence, 2000, p. 25). The referred initiative aimed at bringing the too large and partially outdated force structure of European NATO members more up to date (NATO, 2018i). The DCI is divided into five overlapping areas: mobility and deployability; sustainability and logistics; effective

engagement; survivability and interoperable communication. The need for modernisation within the DCI was reinforced by the American military dominance in the Kosovo crisis. As noticed by Ivanov, ironically, "Defence Capabilities Initiative was inaugurated amid another of NATO's campaigns in the former Yugoslavia – Operation Allied Force" (Ivanov, 2011, p.123).

Experience from the OAF and KFOR engagement has had a big impact on further post-Washington Summit development of capabilities, tactic, techniques and procedures regarding the crisis management concept implementation by NATO. When the OAF finished, international military troops within KFOR were sent to Macedonia without a mandate, mission funding or command arrangements in place. Thus, NATO's crisis management procedures were described by many high-ranking military officials as flawed and stressed the need to improve synergy between the NATO's military and political part. From lessons learned in the OAF, a number of steps were taken to improve NATO's procedures. In this framework, peacekeeping documents and rules of engagement were updated and approved. Frantzen (2005) commented that, up to 1999, NATO did not manage to develop a common doctrine for peace support operations with political approval – there have been at least five drafts, but it proved impossible to achieve consensus on a common peace support operations doctrine. After the aggression on the FRY, NATO's doctrine for peace support operations for the first time adopted in 2001, was followed by the doctrine for non-article 5 Crisis Response Operations dated on March 2005. Also, the NAC approved the Crisis Management Response System in 2005, and since then it has been under constant improvement taking into consideration lessons learned in on-going operations. Apart from that, "the operational planning system also had been revised, the catalogue of military scenarios updated, as well as the precautionary system together with new procedures for crisis response planning" (Frantzen, 2005, p.72).

Regarding capabilities, although the DCI had outlined the goals for crisis prevention, this mechanism lacked precise commitments from individual allies without which the success of the rapid response forces would be elusive. In these circumstances, NATO endorsed a new initiative at the Summit in Prague in November 2002 – the Prague Capabilities Commitment. The new initiative built on its predecessor foundations – the DCI but with some differences. Within the Prague Capabilities Commitment "Allies have made over 400 firm political commitments to improve capabilities covering several specific fields, including CBRN defence; intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance,



command, control and communications; combat effectiveness; strategic air and sea-lift; air-to-air refuelling; and deployable combat support and combat services support units" (NATO, 2002, p. 26).

Also, NATO engagement in the former Yugoslavia significantly improved cooperation between NATO and the European Union in the field of crisis management. In this sense, NATO allies have supported the EU-led crisis management operations since 2003, including the adoption of the Berlin plus Cooperation Agreement.

After the Kosovo crisis, NATO had one serious challenge to cope with - the war in Iraq in 2003 when the member countries had major difficulties to endorse a contingency plan for Turkey's defence. As Ivanov noticed, "Allies did not have a problem regarding the fulfilment their treaty obligations, but they disagreed on the principle of *casus belli*" (Ivanov, 2011, p. 109). The United States faced major resistance from Belgium, Germany and France to proceed with planning to defend Turkey. In these circumstances the United States chose to act unilaterally in Iraq, forming a loose collation of the willing countries that lacked the type of legitimacy that a NATO-led campaign would have had.

Almost at the same time, the developments in Afghanistan became an international security challenge on the highest level. NATO established ISAF as the largest out-of-area operation. In comparison with previous peacekeeping and crisis response operations, ISAF was a framework for counterinsurgency campaign where NATO has limited experience. Also, conducting stability operations was a big challenge for NATO countries and its partners. NATO's lessons learned from Kosovo engagement pointed out that non-Article 5 missions very often refer to stability operations which require a longer conducting period, multiple tasks and more advanced capabilities. These kinds of missions are usually conducted between war and peace.

Taking the above-mentioned into consideration, in 2006 the Allies agreed the following: "Experience in Afghanistan and Kosovo demonstrates that today's challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments, while fully respecting mandates and autonomy of decisions of all actors, and provides precedents for this approach" (NATO, 2018j). The comprehensive approach addresses the challenges of determining a clear division of tasks, duties and responsibilities between civilian and military

actors across the whole spectrum of crisis prevention, management, stabilisation and reconstruction.

Based on the experiences gained from the engagement in Kosovo and Afghanistan, NATO started with developing a process of a new strategic framework. Active Engagement, Modern Defence Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in November 2010 (NATO, 2010). It devoted special attention to the engagement in crisis prevention, conflict monitor and control, and stabilization during and after conflict situations (Glišić, 2011). As Ivanov presented in his study, the new adopted Strategic Concept “reaffirmed that the Alliance continued to play a central role in defending its members, which also included commitments to deploy robust military forces where and when required, and to promote common security around the globe” (Ivanov, 2011, p. XIII). Recognizing crisis management as one of the core NATO’s task, the 2010 Strategic Concept sees the Alliance as a global player in the international scene. However, adding crisis management as a core NATO’s task did not provide a solid base for the engagement in the coming crises. As Flockhart (2011) observed, the experience of Kosovo and Afghanistan has left some NATO allies with “mission fatigue”, which suggests that NATO is unlikely to rush into any new demanding missions. Indeed, such “mission fatigue” may well be the main reason for NATO’s reluctance to commit seriously to the engagement in enforcing no-fly zone during the crisis in Libya agreed by UN SC Resolution 1973 in March 2011. Regardless, NATO is once again involved in the use of force against Colonel Muammar Qaddafi regime in the civil war in Libya. The Operation Unified Protector, mandated by the above-mentioned UN SC Resolution, involved a broad range of activities for the protection of civilians and civilian-populated areas under the threat of attack by the regime forces.

In present circumstances, from the Serbian point of view, NATO’s evolution in the area of crisis management and its engagement in the former Yugoslavia, including aggression on the FRY and KFOR presence on the soil of Kosovo and Metohija, has had a very big impact on the Republic of Serbia to become a militarily neutral country. As noticed by Stojković and Glišić (2018), Serbian military neutrality is a result of historical and political factors developed during the end of the 20th and early 21st century, including NATO engagement to solve crises in the former Yugoslavia soil.

Also, the military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia proved to be economically beneficial.

## CONCLUSION

The review of NATO military engagement in the former Yugoslavia, including also the aggression on the FRY in 1999, is essential to understand the transformation of the Alliance in the area of crisis management. During this transformation process from pure peacekeeping to crisis response operation, including also the development of required capabilities, the NATO bombing of Bosnian Serbs and the FRY, as well as the engagement in IFOR/SFOR and KFOR had played a decisive role. It was also visible through the development process of the Strategic Concepts in 1999 and 2010.

NATO aggression on the FRY presents the milestone event in the development process of the crisis management concept, particularly regarding the approval of relevant doctrines for peace support and the crisis management operations, including appropriate command arrangements. Introducing the new way of Allies' engagement – out-of-area, and a new type of operation – non-Article 5 operations, was also a part of the process examined in this article. Apart from that, NATO had emphasised the importance of the further development of the tailored capabilities for conducting crisis response operations.

In fact, this engagement was a limited war, or in other words – a war with limited objectives. In the wider framework of the NATO crisis management concept, it represented coercive diplomacy, which was implied in order to impose the political will of the Alliance on the Yugoslav Government using NATO's armed forces without the United Nations mandate. As noticed by many NATO and other officials, it was a historical precedent for the use of armed force in one sovereign country to intervene for purposes of humanitarian relief.

As it is usual in the existing practice, NATO engagement in the former Yugoslavia to solve very complex crises was reactive. NATO and the international community as a whole due to inaction waited until the escalation, and thus led themselves into a situation to react improperly. In order to be prepared for pre-emptive and proactive engagement, NATO started with developing appropriate concepts, doctrines and capabilities during the crises on the former Yugoslav soil. It was very important to keep

NATO's relevance within the international community. It can be concluded that the crises in the former Yugoslavia, and especially the NATO bombing in 1999, saved the Alliance from irrelevance.

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