

## NATO in Balkan's Late Twenties Tide

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### **Abstract**

*NATO did not intervene in the Balkans to overcome Yugoslavia, or destroy it, but above all to avoid violence and to end discrimination. (Shimon Peres, the former Israeli foreign minister, winner of Nobel Prize for peace) NATO's intervention in the Balkans is the most historic case of the alliance since its establishment. After the Cold War or the "Fall of the Iron Curtain" NATO somehow lost the sense of existing since its founding reason no longer existed. The events of the late twenties in the Balkans, strongly brought back the alliance proving the great need for its existence and defining dimensions and new concepts of security and safety for the alliance in those tangled international relations.*

**Keywords:** NATO, the Balkans, military intervention, new concepts

### **Preamble**

In the nineties, NATO took on a new role by creating stability in the troubled and violent Balkans. <sup>1</sup>

One of the first challenges and serious issues facing NATO after the fall of the Berlin Wall was the Balkan crisis, otherwise known as former Yugoslav crisis. <sup>2</sup>

The crisis of the former Yugoslavia started internally a few years after Tito's death. But still, it continued to be dominated by federalists by the end of the '80s. The processes in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union only accelerated the Yugoslav crisis, and shoved it in a very problematic situation.

The Yugoslav crisis passed certain stages. It began in 1991 with the secession of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina crisis that peaked in 1994-1995, rose again the Kosovo crisis, especially in 1998-1999 and finished as a crisis with conflicts and wars in Macedonia in the spring of 2001. <sup>3</sup> The Yugoslav crisis was complex. It assumed the character of an armed conflict, almost in the dimensions of a regional war. Not only did the Yugoslav crisis engage NATO but it also engaged all the important international factors such as UN, OSCE, EU, EC. The conflictual character of this situation and realistic expectations about the possible expansion of the conflict in much larger proportions, made NATO's commitment to resolving the crisis in the Balkans necessary. International opinion began to be shaken by the shocking images from the state that once was known as Yugoslavia of Tito - but that now was "overflowing" from the ethnic hatred, nationalisms and chauvinistic that Europe had thought it had left behind with the ending of World War II. "European barbarism in the Balkans has showed itself with neighbor slaughtering one another in fratricidal wars that have cost more than 200,000 human lives, and attempts for the ethnic cleansing of millions of human beings, most Bosnian Muslims and Kosovars" <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Brzezinski, Zbignjew, ZGJEDHJA- Global Domination or Global Leadership, Zenith, Pristina, 2006, p. 121

<sup>2</sup> Bashkurti, Lisen, On the International Law and International Organizations, Helping young diplomats, p. 162, Geer, 2006 Tirana

<sup>3</sup> Bashkurti, Lisen, Mbi të Drejtën Ndërkombëtare dhe Organizatat Ndërkombëtare, Në ndihmë diplomatëve të rinj, Geer, 2006, Tiranë, p. 162

<sup>4</sup> Ash Garton Anthony, Fre World, Random House, New York, 2004, p. 52

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

To achieve peace", it is the focus of the international community's commitment in Bosnia and Herzegovina's calamity. This was largely because of collisions and initial indifference of the international community regarding the appalling situation created in this part of Europe, during the disintegration of Yugoslavia. "Originally, from the Europeans as well as by Bush administration (the oldest - v. j) this crisis was seen as a European problem that should and can be solved by the Europeans"<sup>1</sup>. It cost a lot more, than what was supposed to do in beginning it was done too late. To help solve the appalling crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN peacekeepers were sent initially, while the UN Security Council approved a series of resolutions demanding an end to the war. Realizing the emptiness of these collisions at this level, and not respecting the resolutions of the UN, the Bosnian Serbs continued to commit murders in the most brutal ways, massacres, deportations and everything else that makes the portrait of the sentence "ethnic cleansing" clear, a term which later was heard in the vocabulary of diplomats and international politicians in the phrase of defining everything that was happening there. The culmination of this gap resulted in massacres of July 1995, when Serb forces entered the "protected areas", one of them Srebrenica, and murdered within a few days, over eight thousand Muslim men and boys in Bosnia just before the eyes the world and the peacekeeping forces that were present in order to help preventing that what happened. "On 11th July 1995, Srebrenica became the latest victim in a campaign of genocide committed before the eyes of Europe and the United States"<sup>2</sup> – wrote at the time former Foreign Minister and former Bosnian ambassador to the UN, Muhamed Sacirbey, recalling that such horror breaks US-European commitment "never" given after the Holocaust, at the end of World War II. US envoy of the Clinton administration, Richard Holbrooke, in his book *To end a war*, accepts the implications of the relationship between the decision-making factors. "There was no more energy left in the international system. Confusion prevailed about the Bosnian Serb brutality. The first line of resistance to any action was the Dutch government which refused to allow its attacks until its soldiers leave Bosnia. We made pressure for action through every channel in London, Paris and in NATO. It was useless. The Serbs knew this and kept the Dutch forces hostage in Potocari until they finished their filthy work in Srebrenica"<sup>3</sup>. After the failure of the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations at the height of the crisis, the intervention of NATO force was inevitable and only for the abolition of war and the establishment of peace between the parties.

*Like it or not, fear makes people to jump each other's arms.*

Lord Carrington, former secretary general of NATO.

Bosnian war undoubtedly set new standards in the field of relations and the power of response of the international factors to future crises. It also testified that Europe's form of commitment and action, its slow policy and without a mutual cooperation with the Americans was not quite ready for solving such crises. Robert Kagan in his book *Paradise and Power* had said that Europe acts more slowly, a thing that Americans do with rapid interventions that have been shown to be successful. The crisis was finally elected within a few days primarily using the US Air Force, under NATO auspices humiliating the Europeans, who had been silent witnesses of a genocide"<sup>4</sup>. The first attempt to use EU as a crisis mechanism had failed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the NATO intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina was to stop the war, ensure a lasting peace and the establishment of the institution of trust between sides. 60,000 heavily armed NATO troops were sent to Bosnia and settled a sustainable ceasefire there.<sup>6</sup> The presence and role of NATO supported the Dayton peace agreement signed by the powers and parties of the conflict in 1995.

The intervention of the international community in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina was just like doctors unexpectedly concluding the disease of the patient at risk, using inadequate treatments, delay the preparation of the medication in the lab and the patient almost dies.

<sup>1</sup> Albright Madeleine, Zonja Sekretare, botimet Dudaj, Tiranë, 2004, p. 216

<sup>2</sup> Sacirbey Muhamed, A convenient genocide in a Fishbowl, [aconvenientgenocide.com](http://aconvenientgenocide.com)

<sup>3</sup> Hoolbroke Richard, *To end a war*, Random House, New York, 1998, p. 70

<sup>4</sup> Weller Marc, Shtetësia e kontestuar, KOHA, mars 2009, Prishtinë, p. 449

<sup>5</sup> Weller Marc, Shtetësia e kontestuar, KOHA, mars 2009, Prishtinë, p. 449

<sup>6</sup> GOLDSTEIN, Joshua S, Marrëdhëniet Ndërkombëtare, DITURIA, 2003, Tiranë botimi i katërt, p. 60

## 2. Kosovo, another step for NATO

*"You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you"*

Trotsky<sup>1</sup>

This time, the international community responded faster and more powerful even though the Kosovo case had a confusion in the unique decisions to intervene.

*"During the war we had to respond to more difficult questions, but what helped us was the idea that no matter how difficult these questions were, however, they were much lighter than the questions we would have had to ask ourselves if we did not act. If NATO had not acted, the Serbian offensive would eventually move more than half a million Kosovars, radicalizing many of them and also would have created a new source of long-term tensions in Europe. Milosevic could be empowered, and perhaps also tempt others to add their power through such methods. And NATO would have remained divided, thus putting into question its very existence at the dawn of the twentieth century"*

(Madeleine Albright, the book: Madam Secretary)

*"Memories of the Holocaust and human torture that extreme nationalism brought during World War II served as laws for armed intervention in Kosovo"*<sup>2</sup>

Robert Cooper

Kosovo's people did not want war, but the war was imposed.

*"I stick on the experience that war does not solve anything. But, sometimes it is necessary and nothing else remains (... ) We should have intervened in Milosevic's actions much earlier. What about our memory if we have forgotten what happened every day in Sarajevo a few years ago? Shootings in an open city, markets, buildings, schools – and those who have done this have been Serbians supported by Milosevic! The Dayton Agreement had completely left the Kosovo conflict aside, as if it did not exist at all - it was a mistake for which we have to pay now". (Günter Grass)*<sup>3</sup>

The armed intervention of NATO in Kosovo was more than necessary because, besides the escalation of violence and causing a humanitarian catastrophe through the Serbian scenario which strategies and tactics were similar to those in Bosnia while using the blank disagreements of the international community, it also followed the violation of UN resolutions which called for an end to the repression against the Albanian people in Kosovo. <sup>4</sup> Inter alia this increased risk of conflict expansion throughout the region, and the consequences would have been tenfold.

NATO had now learned the lessons in the case of Bosnia and was more persistent.

"The involved States have acted with enough hesitance to counter the threat of a humanitarian disaster, but also the opportunity of a military confrontation, which could spread beyond Kosovo to Macedonia and Albania, and eventually in other countries" Marc Weller wrote in his book "Contested Statehood"<sup>5</sup>.

The evening of 24 March 1999 opened a new chapter, and scored big turnaround for the future role of the North Atlantic Alliance, which for a half century had served its purpose in a row for a collective security for member countries.

The factor that accelerated the start of the bombing campaign by NATO was twofold.

<sup>1</sup> Just and Unjust Wars, Michael Walzer, Basic Books, New York, p. 29

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, Robert, The breaking of nations, Atlantic Books, London 2003, p. 61

<sup>3</sup> Grass Günter, Novelist Gjerman, Koha Ditore 24 mars 2009/ p.7

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/nato-trans/nato-trans-alb.pdf> Broshurë, NATO e Transformuar, fq. 16, shikuar se fundi 25.06.2008,

<sup>5</sup> Weller Marc, Shtetësia e kontestuar, KOHA mars 2009, Prishtinë, p. 205

First of, the discovery of a number of massacres of Serb forces against Albanians, including women, the elderly and children, forced NATO to take a decision.

Secondly, the Western powers found the overall strategic plan of Milosevic to "solve" the Albanian problem, known by the code "Operation Horseshoe"<sup>1</sup>

The existence of this plan was revealed for the first time from the then Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in his statement of 07 April 99, for the Berliner Zeitung newspaper "On 26<sup>th</sup> of February Serbs have put into effect the specific plan which had the purpose of the expulsion of the Albanian people of Kosovo"<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with his code name, Milosevic planned to close the Albanians inside a giant horseshoe and then force them to flee from Kosovo. <sup>3</sup>

The destruction of their property and all identification documents was to ensure that they will not ever return.

In a nutshell, Kosovo would "be cleansed" from all the Muslims in order to ensure a *lebensraum* for the Serb newcomers. <sup>4</sup>

At the NATO summit in Washington on April 23 to 25, 1999, was concluded that "The crisis in Kosovo represents a fundamental challenge to the values of democracy, protection of human rights and the legal state upon which NATO has stood since its foundation... therefore the thesis "We will not allow this campaign of terror"<sup>5</sup> was defended one voice.

NATO's intervention in Kosovo has a double impact this also has a historical weight in international relations.

With the fall of the Soviet Union began the end of the Cold War, and with the destruction of Yugoslavia, which happened in Kosovo, ended the last international relations crash regarding the Cold War, therefore Kosovo's case is an emblematic case because there ended the Cold War and the way towards a new world order was opened. <sup>6</sup>

Advantages of NATO in Kosovo	Disadvantages of NATO in Kosovo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NATO's campaign in Kosovo took place without a major loss in men,</li><li>• The last dictator in Europe was defeated</li><li>• The displaced population returned to their homes</li><li>• Establish peace in the country,</li><li>• The construction of the country and security institutions begins and so does the gradual transfer of powers to them.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The war lasted longer from what NATO expected,</li><li>• NATO did not believe that the introduction of ground troops will be necessary,</li><li>• cohesion of the Alliance had fluctuations</li><li>• The main burden remained of the US although the war took place in Europe.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Judah, Tim Kosova, Luftë dhe Hakmarrije, KOHA, Prishtine, fq 290

<sup>2</sup> Bellamy Alex J., Kosovo and International Society, Palgrave macmillan, 2002, New York, p. 164

<sup>3</sup> John G. Stoessinger, Perse Kombet shkojnë ne Luftë, Instituti i studimeve ndërkombëtare (AII), Tiranë, p. 154

<sup>4</sup> John G. Stoessinger, Perse Kombet shkojnë ne Luftë, Instituti i studimeve ndërkombëtare (AII), Tiranë, p. 154 (**Lebensraum-Habitat**)

<sup>5</sup> Publication "The reader's guide to the NATO summit in Washington, the Office of Information and Press NATO-11-10 Brussels, Belgium, the NATO Summit in Washington April 23 to 25, 1999, p 8

<sup>6</sup> Bashkurti Lisen, ligjerata te autorizuara, UI Prishtinë, October 2009

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Advantages and Disadvantages are mainly resources from books: Making a Modern War - Clark, and Robert Kagan – Of Paradise and Power.

### 3. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – FYROM

NATO intervened in FYROM to extinguish tensions between the country's ethnic Albanians and the armed forces of this country.

Former FYROM President Boris Traykovski on June 20, 2001 through a letter sent to Secretary General Lord Robertson of NATO at the time, required the intervention of NATO as the only alternative to prevent civil war in the country<sup>1</sup>.

NATO in principle accepted the request but under the condition, that the FYROM's government approves the constitutional reforms to enhance the participation of ethnic Albanians in society and politics.

A decision to intervene "with stronger rules of engagement" in FYROM, NATO had taken on the 29th June in year 2001 but an intervention could be done after the violence between the parties had been terminated, the establishing of a successful dialogue between the parties was made, a truce between the parties was reached and to make sure that it is being followed.

On August 13, 2001, the Skopje government and ethnic Albanian representatives signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Under this agreement, the government pledged to improve the rights of the ethnic Albanian population. In exchange, the ethnic Albanian representatives agreed to abandon separatist demands and hand over their weapons to NATO. This was the beginning of short-term military presence of NATO in the country (2001-2003).<sup>2</sup>

In FYROM, NATO engaged in three separate operations:

*Operation Essential Harvest*, - it was officially founded on August 22 and effectively began on August 27, 2001. This 30-day mission was manifested by sending about 3,500 NATO troops, with logistical support, to disarm groups ethnic Albanian and destroy their weapons.

*Operation Amber Fox*: 23 September 2001 - December 15, 2002, would have a specific mandate to contribute to the protection of international observers, who will monitor the implementation of the peace plan in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The mission was placed under German leadership with the participation of other countries in NATO and consisted of about 700 troops, along with 300 troops that were already in place.

*Operation Allied Harmony*; - In response to a request from President Traykovski, the North Atlantic Council agreed to continue supporting the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with a new mission by 16 December 2002. Since that was very real likelihood that the Amber Fox operation will be completed successfully, the North Atlantic Council agreed to the continuation of the international military presence in the country, in order to minimize the risks of destabilization.

NATO's presence after December 15 had a double impact; Its operating elements provided support for international observers, and its advisory element helped FYROM's government in taking security responsibilities across the country.<sup>3</sup>

### Conclusion:

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52121.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52121.htm), Peace support operations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, last visited 07. 01. 2010

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52121.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52121.htm), Peace support operations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, last visited 07. 01. 2010.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nato.int/fyrom/> last visited 07. 01. 2010.

The collapse of the Yugoslav state through bloody wars in the former republics of that State and terror created in the past two decades in the region were the basis of the need for existence, returning the North Atlantic Alliance to the scene and redesigning the strategy of NATO actions. At the same time what happened in that part of Europe strengthened the thesis that the only force that can be faced with such situations is the North Atlantic Alliance. NATO intervention in the Balkans was the first time that this alliance in practice observed Article 5 of its charter. In fact, it was the first war since its establishment, had told General Clark, supreme allied commander during the Kosovo intervention.

NATO proved with the intervention in the Balkans that is unique and that it is the only hope for unprotected nations, dedicated to interrupt conflicts and wars in the countries where the state has no will or capacity to protect its citizens, and especially then when it becomes the source of their endless suffering.

NATO intervened in the Balkans in order to reinforce long-term stability, develop and integrate the region into Euro-Atlantic structures.<sup>1</sup>

As is Bosnia and Herzegovina so are Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia running through integration processes.

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<sup>1</sup> NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 1110 Brussels-Belgium, website: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int), Publikim Se bashku për Sigurinë, p.18

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