

THE ROLE OF THE EU DURING NATO MILITARY INTERVENTION

MA.sc. Adnan THAQI¹
MA.sc. Shkodran REXHAJ²

Abstract

The great impetus for the launch of an air bombardment operation on the military targets of Serbian forces by the United States of America, almost synchronously, received the approval and support of the EU High Representatives for Foreign Affairs. The EU Council met in Berlin, attended by the presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers of the EU member states. At this meeting, the resolution was unanimously adopted, expressing the unreserved support of NATO for its intervention against Milosevic's army. This was a very important resolution for the EU because it became clear to Belgrade and Milosevic, but also to Moscow that all EU countries support NATO and that when it comes to Kosovo, there is no difference. The EU throughout its history did not seem so determined to make major decisions aimed at intervening in a very bloody war on its continent. Despite the development of NATO air operations to coordinate and prepare for the consultation of decisions that would take further decisions, in this period of the bombing campaign the five of the Contact Group, composed of foreign ministers, became a organization led by the US, Germany, France, Britain and Italy, called the Quint countries.

Keywords: EU, NATO, Contact Group, military intervention, etc.

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1. Introduction

Efforts by EU envoy Petritsch and US mediator Richard Holbrook to persuade Milosevic to reach a compromise to avoid military operations were in vain. Despite the commitment of the mediators to achieve a result, despite the American and European determination that in case of failure to reach a compromise by the Serbian leader, air strikes would follow for Milosevic, who according to the latter, these efforts and this determination posed only a threat to sign a deal as he called it "fraud."³ American determination was more than essential because the only option Milosevic understood was military intervention. Immediately after the start of NATO airstrikes on Serbian targets to express the determination and commitment of the EU in support of NATO intervention, the EU Council met in Berlin, attended by mayors, prime ministers and ministers. foreign affairs of EU member states. At this meeting, the resolution was unanimously adopted, expressing the unreserved support of NATO for its intervention against Milosevic's army.

2. The role of the EU

This was a very important resolution for the EU because it became clear to Belgrade and Milosevic, but also to Moscow that all EU countries support NATO and that when it comes to Kosovo, there is no difference.⁴ But the persistence of the EU and the US is finally bearing fruit. Europe was already under the influence of the United States, which together had taken responsibility for the eventual withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. In this context, the first NATO bombings against Serbian forces begin. The EU has so far been undecided on a strong response, but that concept changed after the US decided to launch a bombing campaign against Serbian military targets. The EU throughout its history did not seem so determined to make major decisions aimed at intervening in a very bloody war on its continent. Despite the development of NATO air operations to coordinate and prepare for the consultation of decisions that would take further decisions, in this period of the

¹ Adnan Thaqi - MA.sc., University of Prishtina Hasan Prishtina, Kosovo, adnan.thaqi@uni-pr.edu.

² Shkodran Rexhaj - MA.sc., University of Prishtina Hasan Prishtina, Kosovo, shkodran.rexhaj@gmail.com.

³ Sylë Ukshini, *Kosova ne Politikën e jashtme 1991-2007*, LOGOS-A, Shkup, 2008, p. 211.

⁴ Joshka Fisher, *Vitet kuq-gjelbër: Politika e jashtme gjermane – nga Kosova deri më 11 shtator, libër i përkthyer*, KOHA, Prishtinë, 2008, p. 161.

bombing campaign the five of the Contact Group, composed of foreign ministers, became a organization led by the US, Germany, France, Britain and Italy, called the Quint countries. The quintet for both the US and the EU had become an instrument that proved very effective and direct in informing and coordinating the further political actions of the western alliance for a transatlantic cooperation. In the proposals and decisions under Quint's leadership, the US was dominant with its power, but even the EU member states were clearly involved in important decisions that would be exercised and reflected within the EU-US relationship. First it had to be debated between the members of the Quint and the flow of decision sources should come from the latter.⁵ The Kosovo war had managed to greatly increase the resolve for Kosovo, where, despite the differences that existed before in the case of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milosevic thought that he would succeed with a rift between the US and the EU. On the contrary, these reflected in a result of an expressed and determined co-operation against Milosevic's stance on military intervention, despite very strong opposition from Russia and China and without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council, the EU's support for The US was clear and determined. It was the first time in the history of the EU that this resulted in military intervention and its NATO member states taking part in a military mission against one state in Europe - the remaining Yugoslavia, based on it. human rights and protect human dignity.⁶

Despite the incessant actions of the NATO air campaign in Kosovo to stop the Milosevic regime against the population, the situation was deteriorating day by day by the killings, destruction and deportation of the civilian population displaced from ethnic territories. The Yugoslav government had made the "Patkoi" plan for the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, thinking that it would make a solution internally, to empty Kosovo of Albanians, expelling them to Albania and Macedonia. These two countries had become arteries for the displacement of the Kosovar population. Operation "Horseshoe" was discovered by the Bulgarian government. Then the Minister of Foreign Affairs of this state, Nadezhda Mihailova, had informed the German Foreign Minister Fisher, who was also the representative of the EU Council. According to this plan, the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo would take place.⁷ At this time Kosovo had begun to be largely emptied with the displacement of people. The number of refugees displaced from Kosovo to Macedonia alone reached 350,000 within a nine-week period. NATO and the EU were at the forefront of aid to these refugees, giving large offers to the Macedonian side for assistance, to overcome the situation of the great refugee crisis in Macedonia and Albania. At the initiative of the EU, on April 8, a meeting was held with the participation of neighbouring countries, international humanitarian organizations and other international financial institutions, aimed at rehabilitating the displaced and aiding for this emergency phase.⁸ In addition to the EU military engagement on Serbian targets, which was of particular importance, the EU's role and contribution was great in other areas as well, including the protection of refugee civilians and the provision of aid, rehabilitated the population of Kosovo, which was outside the ethnic borders in this period.

3. The role of Javier Solana

Undoubtedly, the role of the Secretary General of the most powerful military Alliance in the world - NATO, was more than essential and very determined towards the military stance that, through the deployment of NATO troops, to achieve an end to the atrocities they caused Serb forces in Kosovo. Javier Solana had an extraordinary sense of direction to lead the Alliance's move towards pushing for military intervention, despite differences that existed over military options.⁹ From the beginning of the war, from 1998 onwards, the developments that preceded the horrific events in

⁵ Ibid, p. 165.

⁶ Sylë Ukshini, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 217.

⁷ Blerim Shala, *Libri i Fitores*, Vëllimi II, KOHA, Prishtinë, 2012, p. 210.

⁸ Joschka Fisher, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 169-171.

⁹ Wesley Clark, *Të bësh Luftë Moderne*, Prishtinë 2003, p. 204.

Kosovo, caused by the Milosevic regime, Javier Solana was the most powerful voice that, according to him, without the deployment of NATO troops in Kosovo, there would be no achievement of peace and return to normal life in the country. On these issues, he repeatedly warned Milosevic even with the NATO air threat. The highlight that shook the international opinion about the events that took place in Kosovo, was the Recak massacre. On this occasion, Secretary Solana had expressed his anger, adding that NATO will not tolerate the return of the general war and the policy of repression in Kosovo. To discuss the situation in Kosovo, after the massacre in Recak, the NATO Council met in an extraordinary meeting. On behalf of the Council, Javier Solana had stressed that the Council strongly condemns the massacre of civilians in the village of Recak and considers it a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.¹⁰ Solana's clearest position was made at a meeting on January 30, 1999, when the NATO council authorized him to launch air strikes against the Milosevic regime. The primacy of leadership for air strikes had already passed into the hands of the NATO Secretary General, where now no member had the opportunity to veto the Alliance Council for ordering the attack. Solana himself had stated about this, that: "There is no veto now - now there is an attack".¹¹

At the end of January, intensive efforts were made by European diplomacy to reach the formation of delegations for the warring parties, to start negotiations as soon as possible to reach an agreement. This resulted in the start of talks in Rambouillet, with the principles of the Contact Group. In this context, Solana herself, after the meeting of the NATO Council in Brussels, which lasted about eight hours, was authorized to implement military sanctions, if in the conflict in Kosovo they did not respect the announced calendar. He himself was personally determined to shorten the period of consultations between the allies before the start of the airstrikes in case the Serbian side would not be able to stop the fierce campaign against the innocent civilians.¹² Solana, in a meeting in Bonn with German Chancellor Gerrard Schroeder and Foreign Minister Fisher, had stated that the ongoing talks were a chance to use this conflict to end peacefully and to prevent any further continuation or further expansion of the tragedy in Kosovo.¹³ Solana repeatedly insisted that NATO troops be deployed in Kosovo, stressing that after the talks in France, Kosovo should be placed under the supervision of NATO peacekeepers, adding that the main cause of the Kosovo crisis was Slobodan Milosevic.¹⁴ Following the conclusion of the talks, which took place in Rambouillet, which lasted until February 23, these talks were welcomed despite the great differences that existed between the parties. Solana had also expressed his concern about the violence that had been exercised in recent days by Serbian forces against Kosovo Albanian civilians, and that NATO requires a full agreement. At the March 1 meeting, Solana had stated that NATO urged both sides in the Kosovo conflict to use these two weeks to achieve peace in Kosovo, rather than to foment more fighting.¹⁵ After accepting the Rambouillet agreement from the Kosovo side, Solana had a meeting in the White House with US President Bill Clinton, where the president was satisfied with the acceptance of the agreement by the Albanian side. In this meeting, Solana stressed that NATO is determined to act in Kosovo, in case the situation worsens, then added that if no agreement is reached and if President Milosevic does not sign the agreement, the risk of a catastrophe will be very real, and that the west and NATO will not allow this to happen.¹⁶

Solana had repeatedly consulted the NATO Council. On March 21, in consultation with the prime ministers of the 19 NATO member states, he was consulted on air strikes if Milosevic does not comply with our demands.¹⁷ After all the threats and attempts to persuade Milosevic, these seem to be the daily routine of constant calls and threats, both from NATO and other international

¹⁰ Koha Ditore, 18.01.1999, p. 3.

¹¹ Koha Ditore. 31.01.1999, p. 2

¹² Eric Laurent, *Lufta e Kosoves (Dosja sekrete)*, Tiranë, 2001, p. 59.

¹³ Koha Ditore, 02.02.1999, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 02.03.1999, p. 3.

¹⁶ Kosova Sot. 17.03.1999, p. 4.

¹⁷ Koha Ditore 22.03.1999, p. 4.

mechanisms. NATO and the international community were determined to act in the event of Milosevic disagreeing. Prior to the visit to Belgrade, Holbrooke had met with Solana. In this meeting, Solana said that Holbrooke's visit to Belgrade is the last chance for peace in Kosovo, without the use of force. Solana conveyed a message to Milosevic through Holbrooke, saying that President Milosevic should know that NATO is ready to act if this latest attempt fails, where he hinted that attacks on Yugoslavia would follow the departure of the emissary.¹⁸ After Holbrooke's return from Belgrade, which was his last mission but to no avail, Milosevic, with strong support from US President Clinton, authorized NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana to launch attacks on Yugoslavia. and the latter ordered the Commander of the NATO Forces, General Wesley Clark, to launch attacks on Serbian military targets in the FRY.

4. Fisher Plan

In addition to the EU military engagement during the war, most of the EU, NATO and the US state thought that once the attacks began, the Milosevic regime would capitulate very quickly and seek peace. Such a thing did not happen in these circumstances. In Kosovo, the situation was exacerbated by the Serbian regime, causing killings and deportations of the population, which complemented Milosevic's program of ethnic cleansing. At this dramatic stage in the development of the crisis, a great burden had fallen on the EU and its foreign policy to influence the search for a plan to resolve the crisis in Kosovo. In these circumstances, the German Foreign Minister had increased his commitment to take a political and diplomatic initiative for a solution, which he managed to impose on the international community as a basic platform for finding a compromise between NATO and the Milosevic regime.¹⁹ After the meetings that took place on April 7-8 between the G-8 (which consisted of the most industrialized countries) where, in the composition of the political directors, the meeting turned out quite positive and after the talks held by Fisher with the Russian Foreign Minister, the way was open for a plan document. On April 12, Fisher unveiled his so-called "Fisher Plan", which set out six points to end the war in Kosovo, thus securing peace and paving the way for a final solution for Kosovo.²⁰ The plan presented to the public and recognized by all as a plan to achieve peace and to find the support of the International Community, envisaged: The full withdrawal of Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces from Kosovo; KLA commitment to end attacks and surrender weapons; Deployment of NATO-led international peacekeeping troops in Kosovo; Return of refugees and deportees during the war in Kosovo; Placing Kosovo under an interim administration, until a final political solution is reached and the start of humanitarian assistance programs to alleviate the dire situation and rebuild Kosovo.²¹ This was a plan in line with the conclusions of the meeting of EU foreign ministers, held on April 8 in Brussels, which foresaw the steps to lead to a political solution for Kosovo, which showed commitment. of the EU to achieve peace in Kosovo.

The Fisher Plan was a good transitional solution for Kosovo from the administration, paving the way that would later lead to the final resolution of the Kosovo crisis. The international community, such as the United States, NATO and Russia, was also informed about the implementation of this plan. The implementation of this plan required an increased commitment of the EU and the US to move in the right direction and in particular with the attitude towards Russia, as a worthy ally of Serbia. The EU had chosen as its representative the man with the most weight in international relations, who enjoyed great respect in many international centres - former Finnish President Marti Ahtisaari - EU mediator. The EU diplomatic engagement had yielded the first results, putting Russia in the action plan as well. As a result of the efforts, the new trio was formed, consisting of Marti Ahtisaari, Strobe Talbott and Viktor Chernomyrdin, representing the EU, the US and Russia, to achieve peace and end the war in Kosovo. Especially the EU and US representatives were put in

¹⁸ Blerim Shala, *op. cit.*, 2012, p. 183.

¹⁹ Sylë Ukshin, *op cit*, 2008. p. 219.

²⁰ Joshka Fisher, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 192.

²¹ Sylë Ukshini, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

constant efforts for a compromise with Russia and China.²² Compromise, however, remained difficult as the course of events on the ground was changing the situation and automatically imposed other compromises, or ones that no longer needed to be sought.

5. Conclusion

The European Union on its path to consolidation as an important actor in international politics since 1957, when it was established, has made efforts to establish a Common Foreign and Security Policy, but managed to consolidate this only in 1993 with Maastricht Treaty. This treaty paved the way for European cooperation and development in many areas, including that of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Whereas in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 the function of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy is created, and the common strategies, activities and attitudes are defined within this policy.

Numerous problems in the region, especially in the Balkans, required a more unique approach by EU countries, to directly influence overcoming deadlocks and conflicts. Thus, the European Union began a new reorganization of its authority, approaching problems in the region and beyond, more effectively, where the advancement of EU foreign policy already takes on clearer and more organized dimensions, including also security aspects. Coordination of EU policies through the PPJS and NATO military authorities in the case of the Kosovo War and the intervention campaign there proved to be the most successful system of the EU's common foreign and security policy.

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²² Ibid., p. 222.