Beyond Bosnia

Evaluating NATO-Russian relations during the IFOR/SFOR experience (1995-2004)

Jan Wieger Posthumus

Source: Republican Herald, 'General Joulwan with Russian Colonel General Leontiy Shevtsov at SHAPE' (2016)

Student number: 5728800
Thesis advisor: Stefanie Massink MA
Date: 28-10-2020
Word count: 8161

Abstract

This study assesses NATO-Russian relations during the NATO-led humanitarian intervention missions in Bosnia: the Implementation Force (1995) and the Stabilisation Force (1999-2004). Insights provided from this assessment are placed within broader post-Cold War debates on relations between NATO and Russia. The author argues that the successful cooperation during IFOR/SFOR shows that, under the right leadership, Russia and NATO can cooperate during humanitarian missions. In result, Russian presence had a positive effect in executing the mission's objectives. Besides, the author argues that if trust among the political leadership had been higher, NATO-Russian relations during the nineties could have resulted in more cooperation. Honest communications among the military leadership during IFOR/SFOR shows strong support of this.

Index

While on his post as three-star General in Germany in the late eighties, George A. Joulwan was unaware that he was being watched by two men on the other side of the Iron Curtain. One of them was the General Grachev, who would later become Minister of Defense for Boris Yeltsin. The other man, Leontiy Shevtsov, was commander of the tank division whose objective was, in the case of war, to take and cross the Rhine. Both would become Joulwan's partner in an unprecedented cooperation between NATO and Russia during the IFOR and SFOR missions in Bosnia. With trust and confidence, even former enemies can become partners for peace.

In this thesis a unique moment in history, in the light of post-Cold War NATO-Russian relations, will be examined. This exceptionality is the NATO-led military intervention in Bosnia (1995-2004), which consisted of two missions: the Implementation Force (IFOR) (1995) and the Stabilisation Force (1996-2004). These missions are unparalleled since they are the only occasion where the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Russia worked together on a common military objective and has been dubbed 'the high point of NATO-Russian relations'. [1] The cooperation between the Russian Federation and the NATO member states during the Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilisation Force (SFOR) missions is the subject of this study. This research aims to find an answer on what made this cooperation happen and tries to assess the problems and successes of this cooperation.

The Bosnian War (1992-1995) was the third phase of the Yugoslav Wars and is known to be the bloodiest stage of the conflicts. [2] The disintegration of Yugoslavia had been fuelled by increasing economic inequalities in the years before and politician's ethnocentric answers to these inequalities. Bosnia-Herzegovina, ethnically the most diverse region of Yugoslavia, became the battlefield of Serbians, Croatians and Bosnian Muslims, who all called the mountainous region their home. Since 1992 the world community had been involved in the conflict through the presence of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) peacekeeping mission. When reports of ethnic cleansing and various other war crimes reached the ears of world leaders, NATO's strategy toward Bosnia shifted toward peace enforcement. Previous military and diplomatic attempts by NATO, the

---

[1] Oksana Antonenko & Bastian Giegerich. 'Rebooting NATO–Russia Relations.' *Survival*, *51* (2009) (2), 13-21.

[2] Stepjan Mestrovic. 'Genocide after emotion: The post-emotional Balkan War' (2013). see 7-8

European Community and the United Nations to end hostilities failed but on 14 December 1995 the war in Bosnia officially ended through the signing of the Dayton Agreement. [3]

The Implementation Force mission started after the Dayton Agreement was ratified through the signing of the United Nation Security Council Resolution 1031. [4] On 20 December 1995, the UN-led peacekeeping force UNPROFOR was relieved by the multinational coalition consisting of NATO member-states and other countries, including Russia, who was a co-signer of the Dayton Accords. The goal of the IFOR mission was to implement the directives of the Dayton Accords: end hostilities, authorise the civilian and military program and set up a central Bosnian government. The IFOR mission's mandate ended after one year, after which its mandate continued through the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) through the UN Security Council Resolution 1088. [5] The scope of this research ends in 2003, as the Russians left Bosnia that year. The SFOR mission ended one year later. In order to fully comprehend the context in which the military cooperation occurred, several key theoretical debates and backgrounds are explained in the next chapter.

Theoretical context

During the nineties, NATO was looking for a new *raison d'être*. After the Berlin Wall came down on the 11th of November 1989, the Soviet Empire disintegrated within two years. The end of the Cold War also meant the end of NATO's founding purpose. Originally, NATO's mission had been marked by the idea of "collective defense" against a common enemy: the Soviet Union and its allies. After the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, NATO's purpose shifted towards "collective security", with the intervention in Bosnia being the first case of military action beyond its borders. [6] A NATO member's security was no longer defined by an attack on one of its allies, but by security from a threat to peace itself.[7]

---

[3] Dick Leurdijk, 'Before and after Dayton: the UN and NATO in the former Yugoslavia.' *Beyond UN Subcontracting* (1998) 49-66.

[4] United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1031 (1995)

[5] United Nations, Security Council resolution 1088 (1998)

[6] David Yost, 'The new NATO and collective security', *Survival,* 40 (1998) 2, 135-160, see 137-141

[7] Richard Rupp, 'NATO 1949 and NATO 2000: From collective defense toward collective security'. *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 23 (2000) 3, 154-176, see 156-159.

Scholars from both realist and liberal schools have analysed NATO's future and its search for renewed purpose during the nineties. Serena Simoni has summarised both approaches in her work. Realists, like Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, offered a pessimistic view between 1991-2001 of NATO's future role. Their argument relies on the absence of a common enemy as ideological glue to hold the two continents together. Due to the emergence of a multipolar reality, security options for both the US and Europe increased which, without a common threat, would result into decreasing necessity for economic perspectives and cooperation. Eventually, this decreased economic and security cooperation would lead to a political split within the North Atlantic community. [8]

Other scholars, like Jonathan Clarke have questioned NATO's relevance after the Cold War, and propose the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as an international organisation that might provide a better framework for global collective security. [9] Liberals, like Joseph Nye and G. John Ikenberry, offer a more optimistic view on continued Transatlantic cooperation. Liberal arguments centre around the fact that, even without a common enemy, NATO's member states will still have sufficient common ground for continued cooperation. Their key argument is that transatlantic elites identified themselves with liberal democratic values. [10] Besides this, "the West" is a (artificial) community of closely knitted institutions whose member share these values. [11] These shared values still form ground for shared economic and security prospects and therefore lead to continued cooperation between the two sides of the Atlantic Community.

NATO and Russia

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, envisioned a world in which Russia and the West would cooperate and find common ground. [12] Without an enemy, NATO should expand or die, according to Brzezinski. Its expansion would mean long-term peace in Europe, and the eventual accession of Russia

---

[8] Serena Simoni. 'Split or Cooperation? Contending Arguments on the Future of the Transatlantic Relations (1991-2001)' (2008) see 6-27

[9] Jonathan Clarke, 'Replacing NATO'. *Foreign Policy,* 93 (1993) 22-40.

[10] Serena Simoni, 'Split or Cooperation?' (2008) see 28-54

[11] Daniel Deudney and Gilford John Ikenberry, 'The Logic of the West' (1993) see 18

[12] Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'The Grand Chessboard' (1997) see 71-96

into the wider trans-Atlantic security umbrella. [13] Former Secretary of State, James Baker III, proposed in 1993 that NATO should set out a clear vision on expansion into Eastern Europe, including Russia. "*Otherwise, the most successful alliance in history is destined to follow the threat that created it into the dustbin of history.*", he argued. [14] Excluding a developing democratic Russia from the prospect of becoming a NATO-member will create new tensions and gives substance to the argument that NATO, expanding into Eastern Europe, is a legitimate adversary to Russia. [15]

Russia also struggled with its purpose and place in the world during the early nineties. [16] Throughout Russian history and its foreign relations, two schools of thought have defined its actions. Westernisers, Peter the Great or Yeltsin's first Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, for example, viewed Russia's distance to Western civilisational standards as a gap of progress.[17] Others, like the scholar Alexander Dugin, do not see a bridgeable distance between the civilisations, but see two different worlds. Western standards were not to be seen as a goal for Russia to strive for, but Russia ought to take up leadership in its own sphere of influence and its *near abroad*. [18]

Within the two primary schools of international relations - liberalism and realism - there have been debates about the *hows and whys* of international humanitarian interventions. Peceny and Sanchez-Terry explain that liberal states, like the US, are forced to intervene since (liberal) cultural values force them to do so. Humanitarian crises, human rights violations and tyrannical governments are so contradictory to the values of liberal states that even contradictory actions, like interventions, become justifiable options. [19]

---

[13] Zbigniew Brzezinski. 'NATO: Expand or Die' *New York Times* (December, 28 1994)

[14] James A . Baker III, 'Expanding to the East: A New NATO Alliance' *Los Angeles Times* (December 5, 1993)

[15] James A . Baker III, 'Russia in NATO?.' *Washington Quarterly* 25 (2002) 1. 93-103.

[16] Jeffrey Mankoff, 'Russian Foreign Policy: the return of great power politics' (2012) see 89-100

[17] Jeffrey Mankoff, 'Russian Foreign Policy' (2012) see 28, 67

[18] David Kerr, 'The new Eurasianism: The rise of geopolitics in Russia's foreign policy'. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *47(1995)*, 977-988.

[19] Mark Peceny & Mark Sanchez-Terry, 'Liberal Interventionism in Bosnia'. *Journal of Conflict Studies*. (1998)

Realists offer another explanation to US participation to the IFOR/SFOR mission. At this point in time, Mastanduno explains, NATO had lost its original purpose and the Bosnian Intervention formed the unifying element it was looking for. At the same time, President Bill Clinton did not want to lose earlier found common ground with Russia, which had become domestically unstable. Therefore he welcomed its participation in the NATO-led mission.[20] The foundations for Russia's willingness to cooperate in this NATO-led mission will be dissected in chapter two.

Before "Beyond Bosnia"

Yeltsin's inability to remain Russia's traditional presence in the Balkans is stated to have been the main reason for its eventual participation in the IFOR peacekeeping mission. Simic puts forward this idea as he notes that in the phase before the Dayton Agreement, Moscow had been very vocal on NATO's unilateral military action in Yugoslavia. Russia accused NATO of violating international law, abandoning the UN charter and siding against Serbia instead of peacekeeping. Internal political pressure on Yeltsin from ultranationalist sentiments continued. When the Dayton Agreement was signed, Yeltsin had the option to join forces with NATO and return to his earlier foreign policy intentions through cooperating and coming in closer contact with the West. [21]

Sharyl Cross has used the peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo to assess NATO-Russian relations during the turn of the century. Cross argues that Moscow's decision to participate in the mission was based on three reasons. First of all, she states that its willingness to cooperate was mostly symbolic because it would implicate that Russia was still important within the European theatre. Besides, she argues that Russia wanted to participate in the mission as it wanted to represent the Serbian side in creating an impartial peacekeeping force. Lastly, Cross argues that Russia's willingness to cooperate was based on the fact that it saw the Bosnian Intervention as an opportunity to move past the Cold War-era East-West divisions. [22]

---

[20] Michael Mastanduno, 'Preserving the unipolar moment: Realist theories and US grand strategy after the Cold War'. *International security*, 21 (1997) 4, 49-88. see 56-65

[21] Predrag Simic, 'Russia and the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.' *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 1 (2001) 3 95-114. see 99-101

[22] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century: conflicts and peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo' *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 15 (2002) 2. 1-58.

Russian presence also helped in creating legitimacy for the mission for especially the Serbs, that historically viewed Russians as more like-minded partners. Nevertheless, there turned out to be some problems in cooperation with Russia. Especially the structure in which NATO commanders gave instructions to Russian soldiers turned out to be problematic at some point. [23] Although Cross her study provides useful insights, it purses the Bosnian and Kosovar experiences together, which turn out to be rather different experiences. Cross has interviewed various US soldiers who experienced the collaboration with the Russian contingent first-hand. One of the key figures, General Joulwan remains unmentioned in the study. Besides this, her evaluation on the Bosnian cooperation lacks certain authoritative sources, which this study will use. This study aims to exclusively and more thoroughly assess the missions in Bosnia and place its lessons in the context of post-Cold War NATO-Russian relations.

Relevance

Relations between the West and Russia have deteriorated dramatically in the decades following the Bosnian Intervention. Russia faces heavy sanctions from the West after annexing Crimea and supporting insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. At this very moment another conflict of interest in Belarus is looming over Russian-NATO relations. Why has this tide of cooperation during the Bosnian intervention turned into one of deterrence? There are several fields of policy in which a better NATO-Russian cooperation could profit both; counterterrorism, regional conflict management and nuclear proliferation for example. [24]

This study will present new insights on Russia-NATO relations since the only scholarly assessment of the IFOR/SFOR missions has been published in 2002. After 2002, more primary resources have been declassified. In the meantime, NATO-Russian relations have developed dramatically. Drawing refreshing lessons from past cooperation will prove useful for better understanding the present state of affairs. Since the cooperation in Bosnia has been assessed as the highest point in contemporary NATO-Russia relations, it can specifically expose a message which has been muted in more recent debates. Besides examining the relations during the peacekeeping mission, this study also tries to

---

[23] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) 25-31

[24] NATO, 'Relations with Russia' (2020) (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50090.htm) (October 25, 2020)

place the cooperation within the framework of broader East-West relations. The central question to this research is:

What insights can be drawn from the cooperation between NATO and Russia during IFOR/ SFOR missions in regard to post-Cold War NATO-Russia relations?

This question will be answered through the following subquestions:

1. *What political processes overshadowed NATO-Russian relations and in which manner did these influence the IFOR/SFOR missions?*
2. *Why did Russia join the NATO-led IFOR/SFOR missions in Bosnia?*
3. *Which factors determined military-operational successes and problems in the cooperation between NATO-member states and Russian troops during the IFOR/ SFOR missions?*

Methods

In order to answer these questions several sources are to be consulted. First of all, scholarly work will form the basis of this analysis. Secondly, primary sources will be consulted to analyse the parties' experiences with the different authority. In this search, documents from NATO will be used. Documentation of the NATO Review and SFOR Informer, which is available in the Online NATO-archives, will prove useful. NATO Review is a monthly publication in which various political, military and scholarly figures offer their opinions and ideas on NATO's development. SFOR Informer was a weekly review in which soldiers and officers wrote about their experiences during the SFOR mission. Sources from NATO are likely to emphasise positive experiences. Also, military evaluation conducted by officials from the US government will be used for this analysis. Most of these evaluation are available online through the Army Center of Lessons Learned and the Foreign Military Studies Institute. Russian experiences, through military reviews and scholarly sources will also be subject of evaluation. Many of these experiences are recorded in Western studies.

Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General George Joulwan shared his insights through an online interview. The interview was semi-structured. Some questions were send to the General beforehand in order for him to prepare, others were brought up during the interview to prevent predetermined answers. Determining what

problems and successes were during both missions is based on first hand experiences from the general and through military evaluations reports. Several evaluation reports have been used to review different perspectives. A report from the Department of Defense, a joint NATO-Russian report and an independent report are subject of analysis. No major discrepancies were found in the analysis of these reports.

1. Best Intentions…Bigger Illusions

Russia and NATO-member states had been engaged in the political turmoil during the breakup of Yugoslavia for some time, but a peace enforcement mandate had been missing until the Dayton Agreement was signed on the 14th of December 1995. Several peace deals were sent to the bin because of the lack of trust from either Bosnian, Serbian or Croatian sides. Communications between the heads of state of Russia and NATO's prime partners had existed prior to the Dayton Agreement through the establishment of the Contact Group as a response to the war that occurred in Bosnia. This chapter examines the political debates that existed between the NATO-member states and Russia surrounding the peacekeeping missions IFOR/SFOR. It will take a look at the cornerstone of the IFOR/SFOR cooperation, the Dayton Agreement. In addition, this chapter will dissect two overshadowing political problems that shaped the times: NATO's new *raison d'être* and its subsequent expansion.

Increasing political cooperation between NATO and Russia coincided with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. When the question of German Reunification came up, it was said that Gorbachev was promised by Western leaders that NATO would not expand beyond Germany. Although historians nowadays agree that there was never such a *formal* agreement, some still argue that the US played a double game with Russia concerning this informal agreement. However, it can be argued that, not the US, but NATO followed a two-track policy. Through this policy NATO wanted to:

1) open itself up and expand cautiously into Central and Eastern Europe, while supporting Gorbachev and Yeltsin's reforms, and
2) build a cooperative relationship with Russia.[25]

The creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) during the Rome Summit of 1991 was NATO's first action in pursuit of the second goal. This council, open to all NATO and former Warsaw Pact members, served to open political dialogue between the former antagonists and offer the perspective of eventual accession to the European

---

[25] Stephan Kieninger, Opening NATO and Engaging Russia: NATO's Two Tracks and the Establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in *Open Door NATO and the Euro-Atlantic Security After the Cold War* (2019) 57-58

security system, including Russia. Although its achievements were humble, the Council served as the first steps of NATO's rapprochement with the East. [26]

1.1 New Purpose, New Partners?

During the Rome Summit the question of NATO's *raison d'être* also came up. In the new Strategic Concept the alliance outlined its new vision. While earlier Strategic Concepts had focussed on deterring the Soviet-Union, this strategic concept showed a shift from its old policy. Previously, NATO's approach to security was that of *collective defense*; an attack on one of its members was an attack on all member states. In the 1991 Strategic Concept, NATO shows a new approach to security; that of *collective security*. Collective defense is less encompassing than collective security. While collective security engages in large-scale coalitions and unites diverse states against threats to peace, collective defense unifies a select group of states sharing a particular threat. [27] This difference is subtle, but is best illustrated by the new role NATO attributed itself in times of peace and crisis: facilitate dialogue, contribute forces to UN missions and respond to out-of-area crises that threaten a member state's security. [28] In response to NATO's new Strategic Concept, Moscow hoped that it could move NATO in direction of subordination to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), especially regarding their newly adopted peacekeeping responsibilities.[29]

Building on the renewed Strategic Concept, NATO also committed itself to cooperation with the former Warsaw Pact. The NACC became the forebear of NATO's approach to establishing more formal military relations with Central and Eastern Europe through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF). These two concepts are of key importance in understanding Russia's decision to join the IFOR mission and to understand NATO's eastward expansion. These concepts will be subject to further examination in a next chapter. The debates surrounding eventual enlargement of NATO had been followed closely by Russia since its rebirth. Already in 1991, the first democratically elected president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, had sent an open letter to the

---

[26] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) see 4-5

[27] Richard Rupp, 'NATO 1949 and NATO 2000: From collective defense toward collective security' see 157-158

[28] NATO, 'The Alliance's New Strategic Concept' (1991) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm (October 24, 2020)

[29] David Yost, 'The new NATO and collective security', (1998) see 155-156

NACC stating his reflections on potential expansion of NATO. He worried that NATO could either evolve into a war machine or in an alliance of peaceful nations based on common values. Although stating that he didn't ask for membership of the organization, Yeltsin intentions were clear. Russia's regarded NATO membership as: "our long-term political objective"[30].

Andrei Kozyrev, Yeltsin's Foreign Minister, further explains that Yeltsin misunderstood the notion that the PfP-program was not an alternative to membership, but a precursor to it. The Russian press however, did understand what the PfP program meant. [31] This fed suspicions in Moscow that Russia had become a second grade partner to Washington and Brussels. Yeltsin felt betrayed by the fact that Clinton did not consult him regularly, especially when NATO bombed Yugoslavia in 1994. Although relations between Yeltsin and Clinton seemed amicable during joint press conferences, the reality of it was that frank dialogue on the real political issue at stake — NATO's expansion and Russia's place in this matter — had ceased to exist. [32]

1.2 From Dayton to IFOR

In the early days of conflict in Yugoslavia Moscow quietly supported Western solutions, since domestic struggles diverted Yeltsin's attention to the home-front. From 1993 onwards, a more pro-Serb stance was taken, when Russian nationalist sentiments became more apparent in Russian society. During the war in Bosnia, this highlighted differences between Russia and NATO, but an emerging rift between Slobodan Milosevic, the President of Yugoslavia, and Radovan Karadzic, the President of Respublika Srpska, made way for peace. Mike Bowker puts forward the argument that initial Russian restraint on a multilateral peace agreement turned into action after Karadzic's attacks on international peacekeepers. [33] The independent Russian newspaper *Izvestiya* wrote on the 3rd of August 1994:

---

30 Andrei Kozyrev, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' in: Kristina Spohr Readman, and Daniel Hamilton, *Open door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic security after the Cold War*. (2019) 449-485

31 Alexander Velichkin, 'NATO as seen through the eyes of the Russian Press.' *NATO Review* (1995) https://web.archive.org/web/20010106062300/http://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/9502-6.htm (October, 25 2020)

32 Andrei Kozyrev, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' (2019) 453-457

33 Mike Bowker, 'The Wars in Yugoslavia: Russia and the International Community' (1998). 1245-1246, 1254-1258

"One gets the impression that the Bosnian Serb leaders have utterly discredited themselves in the eyes of Russian foreign policy makers, and that henceforth the Kremlin intends to deal only with Slobodan Milosevic".[34]

Now that Russian and Western delegations only wished to negotiate peace with Milosevic, Bosnia seemed ripe for Dayton. The political decision for Russia to join IFOR was made when Clinton had asked Yeltsin to send a contingent of soldiers to NATO operations in Bosnia. As a trade-off, Clinton would support Yeltsin's re-election bid and no visible steps would be taken on NATO expansion. In regard to Russia's domestic sentiments, Yeltsin and Clinton agreed that Yeltsin would run as an anti-NATO candidate. Kozyrev remembers this as a "pathetic deal" in which "none of this addressed the NATO enlargement conundrum between the United States and Russia" [35]

Nevertheless, despite different intentions and internal political unrest, the Dayton Agreement and the subsequent IFOR peacekeeping mission can be seen as a successful example of NATO-Russian international legitimate cooperation. Russia had been vocal about the unilateral military action taken by NATO before Dayton. The IFOR and SFOR missions however, were implemented through the UN Security Council Resolution 1031, which transferred the implementation of the peacekeeping mission of UNPROFOR to a NATO-led mission. All present states voted in favour of this resolution. [36]

1.3 Russian Response to NATO's New Nature

While NATO and Russia had come to a political and military agreement to cooperate in IFOR, the debates on expansion were still followed with suspicion in Russia. In her item for NATO Review, Tatiana Parkhalina, a Russian political scholar, explains how opposition against NATO expansion had become national consensus within Russian politics. She emphasises that a rift has emerged within Russia on this topic that is used by politicians to exploit the topic of NATO enlargement for political purposes. Although still a proportionate share of Russian society favoured NATO membership (22 percent), anti-

---

[34] Izvestiya, 3rd of August 1994 as in Mike Bowker, 'The Wars in Yugoslavia: Russia and the International Community' (1998) 1253

[35] Andrei Kozyrev, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' (2019) 453-457

[36] United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1031 (1995)

Western sentiments were rising. [37] Political nationalistic opposition used NATO enlargement to discredit the Yeltsin administration. Yeltsin in his stead, felt betrayed by NATO's plans of expansion and became unable to set out his radical Western course.[38] Colonel General Leontiy Shevtsov, Russia's Deputy to IFOR/SFOR's command, mentions in his work for NATO Review that the successful cooperation is overshadowed by NATO's plans of expansion. He notes on the basis of the successes in Bosnia that future joint military planning between Russia and NATO is possible. NATO's future expansion, in which Russia remains outside of the European security framework, however, will create a new geopolitical reality that forms a threat to Russia. He urges NATO to halt this process and re-engage Russia in its policies.[39]

Despite several warning signs from Russia, NATO went through with their expansion plans and in 1999 it added a first round of Eastern European States: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. As a sign of diplomatic goodwill, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was founded in 1997 which made way for the NATO-Russia Council. Again, in illusion, Yeltsin described the Act as: "*enshrining NATO's pledge not to deploy nuclear weapons on the territories of its new member countries and not [to] build up its armed forces near our borders...nor carry out relevant infrastructure preparations.*" This statement was false according to NATO officials. [40] The revision of the Strategic Concept in 1999 became another blow to political relations between NATO and Russia. The renewed Strategic Concept enabled NATO to intervene in crises beyond its borders. [41] This led Russians to believe that NATO did turn into the war machine that Yeltsin had warned about in 1991. In 1999, NATO unilaterally decided to bomb Serbian targets in Kosovo, going beyond their peacekeeping mandate from the UN. [42] These bombings proved to Russia what they had already feared; NATO had become an offensive alliance countering Russia. IFOR and

---

[37] Tatiana Parkhalina, 'On myths and illusions: Russian perceptions on NATO enlargement' *NATO Review* (1997) https://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9703-3.htm (October 20, 2020)

[38] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) see 7-11

[39] General Leontiy Shevtsov, 'Russian-NATO military cooperation in Bosnia: A basis for the future?' *NATO Review* (1995) https://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9702-5.htm#FN1 (October 24, 2020)

[40] Andrei Kozyrev, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' (2019) see 457

[41] NATO, 'The Alliance Strategic Concept' (1999) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm (October 25, 2020)

[42] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) see 16

SFOR were not seen as a political success within Russia itself, and most officers resigned or were dismissed after the mission ended. Its lessons were cast away.[43]

Two years later, Vladimir Putin, the current leader of Russia, offered his view on NATO's existence:

"The simplest [solution] is to dissolve NATO, but this is not on the agenda. The second possible option is to include Russia in NATO. This also creates a single defense and security space. The third option is the creation of a different new organisation which would set itself these tasks and which would incorporate the Russian Federation. We do not see NATO as a hostile organisation, but given the demise of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, we don't see why it is needed anymore. If NATO turns away Russia while expanding to include other countries all the way up to its borders, we shall continue to mistrust each other, although I think that everybody understands now that Russia is not threatening anyone." [44]

Putin's remarks have turned to reality. The mistrust between NATO and Russia has increased until the present. As Andrei Kozyrev states; the political opportunity for NATO and Russia to become allies in early nineties has been missed. [45] However, the military reality during their cooperation in Bosnia shows that trust and confidence in one another can exist between NATO and Russia. The next chapters will show how these factors determined a successful military cooperation.

---

[43] Oksana Antonenko, 'Russia, NATO and European security after Kosovo.' *Survival* 41 (1999) 4 124-144. see 128

[44] Peter Baker, "Putin Offers West Reassurances and Ideas on NATO." *Washington Post* (2001) https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/07/19/putin-offers-west-reassurances-and-ideas-on-nato/99892a84-fde0-43d6-aa10-35d9c842c50a/ (October 21, 2020)

[45] Andrei Kozyrev, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' (2019) see 457-458

2. Initiating Partnership

Since Russia already contributed forces to the UN mission, there were already Russian soldiers present in Bosnia, albeit wearing a blue helmet. The conditions that led to the eventual military participation in the NATO-led mission in Bosnia remain undetermined. As was shown in the previous chapter, the political decision for Russia to join IFOR was made as part of a badly brokered deal between Clinton and Yeltsin. This chapter's findings will dig deeper in the processes and context that determined the eventual decision on a military level.

Before the mission started, NATO and Russia had already opened inter-military communications. Russian Colonel Andrei Demurenko had been invited at Fort Leavensworth, Kansas to attend General Staff College in 1993. [46] This was an example for what later became part of NATO's strategy toward the former members of the Warsaw pact: the Partnership for Peace (PfP). This initiative was introduced at the NATO Heads of State Summit on the 11th of January 1994. [47] Through military-to-military exchanges from the PfP-program NATO trained the participant nations and created personal relations between the respective militaries. These exchanges, through joint planning and exercises, focussed on peacekeeping missions. In the end, PfP's main goal was not to prepare partners for eventual accession into the Atlantic security framework, but it did provide the necessary foundations for doing so.[48] The joint exercises and the inclusion of Russian officers in these exchanges in the early nineties made the IFOR mission possible. [49]

In early 1995, Colonel Demurenko was sent to Bosnia to observe and evaluate the UN-mandated UNPROFOR mission. In Bosnia, Demurenko noticed that the peacekeepers lacked a clear mandate and objective. [50] General Joulwan confirms this idea, as he argues that the UN-peacekeepers mandate was too vague and in practice this meant that the peacekeepers were only able to protect themselves when fired upon. He argues that

---

[46] Timothy Thomas, 'Russian "Lessons Learned" in Bosnia'. *Military Review* 76 (1996) 38-43

[47] NATO, 'Declaration of the Heads of State and Governments'. (11 Jan. 1994) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24470.htm?mode=pressrelease (October 20, 2020)

[48] John Borawski, 'Partnership for Peace and beyond.' *International Affairs*, 71 (1995) 2, 233-246.

[49] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) see 13

[50] Timothy Thomas, 'Russian "Lessons Learned" in Bosnia'. see 39-40

this unclearly articulated UN mandate has cost many lives of peacekeepers.[51] The mandate and range of authorisations of UNPROFOR was insufficient to protect the civilian population, sadly illustrated by the Srebrenica Massacre of July 1995. [52] The mandate from Dayton and its robust rules of engagement during IFOR/SFOR were clearer; if someone threatened to violate peace, they could expect resistance and counteraction. This helped convince Moscow to join the mission. The response that the General gave to Milosevic, when Milosevic asked who the General was, is illustrative in determining the contrast between the mandate of UNPROFOR and IFOR:

"I am the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. I am also the US commander of all the US forces in Europe. I have a mandate now from sixteen democratic nations and if you so much point a tank or a weapon or a rifle at anyone of my soldiers, they will shoot back and shoot back to kill and they don't have to go to Boutros Boutros Ghali or the UN for permission. He [Milosevic] later said to [Richard] Holbrooke: 'Who is this crazy guy?'" [53]

2.1 Building Trust and Confidence

Another important aspect of the creation of military-to-military bonds that was shaped during the NATO Summit of 1994 is the creation of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF). The prime reason why NATO adopted a CJTF command structure is because it was more suitable to work together with nations outside of the organisation. Through joint training exercises, command structure enhancement and improved logistics NATO's leadership opened up the organisations command and control mechanisms. Besides this, the CJTF made operations outside of NATO's territory a more workable option. [54] This new strategy can be explained by the shift of NATO's purpose from a collective defense to a collective security organisation. As Kelly Thomas explains, NATO's adoption of this new command system was also in preparation for the Bosnian Intervention. [55] General Joulwan explained that during the UNPROFOR mission communications between the different nationalities

---

[51] Interview with General Joulwan (October 9, 2020)

[52] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations and Prospects for a Future Combined Security System: The Peace and Stability of Europe after IFOR' (2000) 14, 32

[53] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 72-73

[54] Kelly J. Thomas, 'Security into the 21st Century: NATO's Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Concept' (2001).

[55] Interview with General Joulwan (October 9, 2020)

that participated in the mission were insufficient. This problematic system of communications created unclarity on the UNPROFOR command structure. [56] NATO's enactment of the CJTF created more points of contact between military personnel of NATO member states and that of PfP-nations.

General Joulwan explained that the adoption of these systems and the military-to-military contacts that were made in the early years after the Cold War were principal for Russia to ultimately decide to join the NATO-led mission. [57] However, the content and character of these relations are still undefined. The key players that facilitated and made the decisions were Secretary William Perry, General Joulwan and on the Russian side Minister Grachev and Colonel-General Shevtsov. Joulwan emphasised that his key idea on the establishment of a successful relationship with the Russian delegation can be defined by the words "trust and confidence". When early negotiations on Russian participation were going on, he took this recipe for success very serious. The Russians needed the same basis for a cooperation. General Joulwan's way of creating this trust and confidence between the two parties can be said to be unconventional, yet very successful:

"*Shevtsov came to my headquarters and he reported and was looking all tough and Soviet-like, and I said: 'Sit down! You want a cup of coffee?' So we had a cup of coffee and I said: 'Let me be clear. If you are going to join this team, you have to understand we are going to have clarity of mission, unity of command —that's me — we're going to have robust rules of engagement'. I said: 'what do I need to do? Where do you wanna go so that we can build some trust and confidence?' Just as I was used to. He looked at me sort of funny and I said: 'Where do you wanna go? Anywhere in NATO. You tell me where you wanna go'. He said: 'I wanna go to your air operations centre over-watching Bosnia'. That was in Italy, it's called Bellafranca. (…) So then, he [Shevtsov] came back and I asked: 'Where do you wanna go now?' He said: 'I wanna go to the Allied Rapid Reaction Force'. It's in Germany, headed by a three star British [General]. So I send him up there, I didn't go with him, and I said: 'Let him open every door, see whatever he wants to see. He's going to be part of the team so let's treat him as such.' So he came back and I said again: 'where do you wanna go now?' He said: I wanna go to the Headquarters in Stuttgart' — my US headquarters — I didn't go with him. I send him down there; same thing over:*

---

[56] Gerard Gouthro, '"Peacekeeping when there is no peace to keep": A case study of UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina.' (1995)

[57] Interview with General Joulwan (October 9, 2020)

'open every door, we gotta build this trust'. True story! He came back and he was amazed. He didn't expect any of that. So I said: 'If we're going to work together we got to have this trust and confidence.' 'Well all-right' he said. So that's what started it and we build on that. So it wasn't just 'send me some troops' but it was how do we create the idea that we can work together."

With this open door strategy towards partnering with the Russians, General Joulwan initiated a working relationship with a former enemy that remains unprecedented. The General truly shaped the idea that Russia and NATO can work together in the minds of Russian and NATO officials. The trust and confidence that was shaped between the Russians and NATO facilitated the final decision to cooperate in IFOR. At the same time, this decision was facilitated by several structural processes that were initiated after the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. One of them was the Partnership for Peace, that initiated the military-to-military contact between NATO and former members of the Warsaw Pact. NATO's adoption of the CJTF command structure further facilitated more practical issues in working with non-NATO members while executing a peacekeeping operation in an out-of-territory operation. The trust that was built became the basis of this cooperation. During a meeting on the 8th of November Secretary Perry, Minister Grachev, General Joulwan and Colonel General Shevtsov negotiated the final details of the Russian participation in IFOR, before it became a reality.

3. Command and Cooperate

This chapter will delve into the question which successes and problems occurred on a military-operational level between NATO and Russia. The final details for Russian participation in IFOR caused some trouble along the road. The structure of command implicated that a Russian general were to be subordinate to the NATO Supreme Allied Commander. [58] This caused problems within Russian military and political circles. [59] After negotiations, both parties came to the conclusion that there was an ingenious solution to this. The Russian deputy for the mission, General Shevtsov remained under command of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Joulwan, but in his role as Commander of US forces in Europe.[60] The Russians would remain in command of their own brigade through Major General Lentsov, while being commanded by the Commander of the Multi-National Division (MND), Major General William Nash.[61] This illustration, from the joint evaluation shows how the command structure worked out. Note that even though there was a vertical command order between General Joulwan and General Shevtsov picture shows the command to be horizontal, indicating them to be on equal footing.
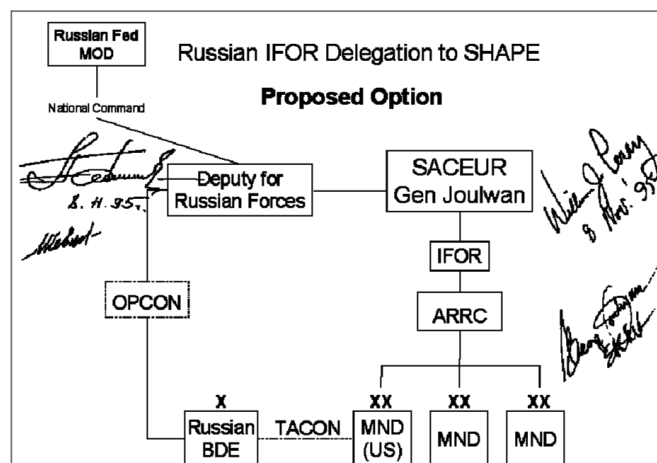

Figure 1: Proposed Chain of Command of Russian NATO cooperation during IFOR/SFOR [62]

---

[58] Art Pine "Defense Ministers Reach Compromise on Russian Army's Bosnia Role : Military: Moscow's troops would report to U.S. commander, not NATO. Other issues remain unresolved" *Los Angeles Times* (9 November 1995) https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-11-09-mn-1181-story.html (October 13, 2020)

[59] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) see 28-29

[60] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) see 13

[61] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 65

[62] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) see 13

This chain of command turned out to be satisfactory for both. As General Shevtsov mentions:

"*We agreed because: (a) We really wanted to find a solution to the problem; (b) we understood how important it was; and (c) General Joulwan had the necessary attitude towards finding the solution for this problem and towards the Russian Operational Group. So much of our success can be attributed to his very personable, friendly, and cooperative attitude, especially at the beginning of our relationship. We depended a great deal upon this man. I can only say that he was the right person in the right place for this concrete task.*" [63]

Although the discussions on the chain of command were solved relatively easy, some minor problems kept existing during the mission. Coordination at the strategic and tactical level proved most efficient, but at the operational control some problems existed. The command structure did not always provide sufficient in flexibility and efficiency of command. [64] There is reason to believe this can be explained by (military) cultural factors. The Russian military was more inclined to follow orders from a top-down structure, in contrast with a more dynamic approach from NATO-partners. Furthermore, the impressions existed that the Russian forces perceived written orders to be more 'binding' compared to verbal communications. [65]

Through Cooperation comes Legitimisation

One of the conclusions that Colonel Demurenko made while observing the UNPROFOR missions, and which he shared with General Nash, was that the different sides of peacekeeping were keen on influencing the peacekeepers to support their side of the issue. [66] Both cooperating parties feared that this could divide the impartiality of the multinational force. [67] The Russians, for example, had historic and religious ties to the Serbs. Reports on the UNPROFOR missions exemplified instances in which Russian UN-

---

[63] Colonel-General Leontiy Shevtsov, 'Russian Participation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.' (1997) http://www.csdr.org/97Book/SHEVTS.HTM (October, 25 2020)

[64] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000).58

[65] Larry Wentz, 'Lessons from Bosnia: The IFOR Experience.' Department of Defense (1998) see 261-264

[66] Timothy Thomas, 'Russian "Lessons Learned" in Bosnia'. see 3

[67] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 58, 64-65, 73

peacekeepers failed to protect Bosnian Muslims during their mission. [68] At the same time, Russians mistrusted NATO's impartiality before the mission. Russian policymakers sharply condemned NATO's 1995 airstrikes on Serbian targets.[69] Cross notes that public opinion on impartiality was formed through unbalanced one-sided media coverage on both the Russian and the Atlantic side. [70]

The public fears on both sides that there would be partiality among the participants towards one of the factions turned out to be unjust. Measures were taken to prevent this by placing one Russian battalion in Serb territory and the other in Bosniak territory. [71] Major General Nash indicates that Bosniaks periodically created some minor difficulties for the Russian but called their approach even-handed.[72] Instead, Russian presence was beneficiary to the mission's objectives. [73] Their participation in the mission helped creating trust within the Serbian camp in the peacekeepers mandate and their impartiality. Russian support in early stages of the conflict proved to the Serbians that this peacekeeping mission was truly impartial. For the same reasons as he wanted Turkey, as a Muslim ally to the Bosniaks, to be included in the mission, General Joulwan said that inclusion of Russian forces, as Orthodox kin to the Serbs, helped create legitimacy for "his" mission. [74]

Another consequence of the Russian presence was that it also helped in communicating the missions mandate with the local population as Russian and Serbo-Croatian are mutually intelligible. [75] Besides communicating the mission's objectives, the likeness of the Slavic languages also helped in more quickly resolving routine issues, like setting off a

---

[68] Jørn Buø, 'Keeping the Peace Together?: Joint Russian-Western Peace Operations in the Commonwealth of Independent States' (2001). Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI). see 81-89

[69] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) 11-12

[70] Ibidem, 16-17

[71] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) 15

[72] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) p. 32

[73] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 54-73

[74] Interview with General Joulwan (November 9, 2020)

[75] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002) p. 31

live grenade in the garden of a villager near the Russian headquarters. [76] The contribution to the legitimacy of the mission from the Russian presence was not only based on their communication skills, but also on their bond with the local populations. Contributors to the SFOR Informer noted how well-liked the Russian soldiers were among the local population. The locals could freely walk around the Russian camp and receive medical help if needed. Around ten locals enjoyed the care from Russian doctors every day. [77] The Russian soldiers also viewed the protection of the local population as their most important and most preferable task. [78]

This corresponds with the differences in interpretations of what "peacekeeping" entails that exist between the different participants of the IFOR and SFOR missions. A report from the Department of Defense shows that the Russians and Americans have different interpretations of this activity. [79] For the Russian soldiers, the implementation of the imperatives of Dayton were their primordial task. This meant that their sole focus was to protect the peace between the several factions. Building peace, through working with civil organisations, was not part of their mandate. The US and most NATO entities followed a broader approach of peacekeeping and worked with NGO's and civil leaders to build a lasting peace. This included supplying water to the local population, rebuilding infrastructure and setting up local government. [80] During the IFOR phase, this caused some issues on a strategical level, but noting too serious. The broader definition of peacekeeping seemed to be adopted by the Russians during the SFOR mission, as they were working together with US soldiers to rebuild a bridge. US Lieutenant Daniel Lowry

[76] 2nd Lt. Alexis Clement, 'Russian Engineers Ready to Help'. *SFOR Informer* 90 (21 June 2000);: https://web.archive.org/web/20020209001926/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/90/rusengin/t000623t.htm (October 20, 2020).

[77] See for example: 2nd Lt. Alexis Clement. 'What life is like in the Russian Battle Group'. *SFOR Informer* 94(16 August 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20040325130733/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/94/russi/t000817n.htm (October 23, 2020) or
Lt. Řystein Paulsen, 'Russian Medical Platoon in Ugljevik'. *SFOR Informer* 74 (Date Unknown) https://web.archive.org/web/20040314011723/http://www.nato.int/sfor/sfor-at-work/rusmed/t000112a.htm (October 23, 2020)

[78] 2nd Lt. Alexander Barbé. 'Soldiers in the Spotlight'. *SFOR Informer* 111 (April 18, 2001)https://web.archive.org/web/20040314004956/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/111/s111p16a/t01041816a.htm (October 23, 2020)

[79] Larry Wentz, 'Lessons from Bosnia: The IFOR Experience.' Department of Defense (1998) see 125-128

[80] Larry Wentz, 'Lessons from Bosnia: The IFOR Experience.' Department of Defense (1998) see 261-264

noted on the cooperation: "*The team worked very well together even though we had difficulties with languages.*" [81]

Frank Dialogue and Honest Relations

Problems in communications between Russian soldiers and US soldiers kept existing throughout the operations. Most Russian soldiers possessed basic English skills, as this was part of their training for the mission, and this facilitated exchanges with the NATO soldiers within their zone of operations. [82] However, most NATO officers did not understand Russian. [83] Within the realm of operational control, taking the rigid Russian command structure in mind, this caused the most problems. When tactical issues occurred on the ground and these were reported to the operational control at SHAPE, NATO and Russian liaison officers needed translations to approve new orders.[84] Nevertheless, this only caused slowed down communications, which had no severe implications on the mission's objective.

Overall, the cooperation between NATO and Russian soldiers can be seen as a big success. Obstacles along the road existed, but they were overtaken with enthusiasm, trust and willpower. "*Their cooperation and enthusiasm for working with NATO, were beyond reproach.*" as was noted in the IFOR assessment from the US Department of Defense on their bond with Russian soldiers. [85] The professional and personal bonds that were created between Russian and NATO soldiers enabled further cooperation in the mission. In the course of the mission, joint patrols of NATO and Russian forces became

---

[81] 2nd Lt, Alexis Clement, 'Change of bridge in Celic'. *SFOR Informer* 88 (May 24, 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20040309110746/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/88/celicbrid/t000526d.htm (October 25, 2020) or
2nd Lt. Alexander Barbé, 'Russians, Americans and VRS building together.' *SFOR Informer* 103 (December 20, 2000) (October, 25 2020) through: https://web.archive.org/web/20040405065907/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/103/s103p11a/t00122011a.htm

[82] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 95

[83] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) see 38

[84] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 68-70

[85] Larry Wentz, 'Lessons from Bosnia: The IFOR Experience.' Department of Defense (1998) see 261-264

more frequent. [86] These joint patrols had a two sided positive effect. First of all, they showed the former warring factions that they presented a united front for the peoples of Bosnia. Secondly, they allow soldiers to become better acquainted. [87] When trust and interoperability improved, more joint tasks and responsibilities were shared. For the first time since World War II, joint intelligence collection and exchanges were conducted. [88] Besides this, joint mine locating and clearing shows another positive example of this improved collaboration. More than 14 thousand mine fields were located during the operation [89] Joint exercises became much less frequent after NATO's bombings of Yugoslavia in 1999. [90]

The trust between the soldiers could not have existed if there was no such trust between the commanders of the mission. As has been implied earlier in this study, the relationship between General Joulwan and Colonel-General Shevtsov was the determining factor in making the cooperation a reality and a success. The success of IFOR and SFOR can largely be attributed to the commitment of General Joulwan and Colonel General Shevtsov. [91] They both shared the idea that the IFOR mission proved that Russia and NATO can work together. Their joint assessment of the mission serves as another piece of evidence to this matter in their regard. Through honest and frank dialogue with another, these two men truly created the idea that they can work together. Although political realities created some tensions in their working relationship, this did not break their commitment to executing the mission. [92] Also the impact of the working relationship between General Nash and General Lentsov on the mission's success is not be

[86] The Russians patrolled with the Danish: 2nd Lt Alexander Barbé , 'One Patrol Further'. *SFOR Informer.* 99 (October 25, 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20040314004856/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/99/s99p10a/t00102510a.htm (October, 25 2020)

[87] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) 28

[88] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 27, 33, 47 & 60

[89] FMSO & CMSS, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations" (2000) see 60

[90] Beth Crimmel & Jeremy Saunders, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000) 15

[91] Ibidem, see 13, 18-19

[92] Ibidem, see 18

underestimated. Both earned decorations from their respective partner's countries. [93]
Shevtsov concludes:

"*From all of this we can see that the military of Russia, the U.S., and NATO can solve problems together.* And this is most important. *We may conclude that we can closely cooperate in the military area and solve any problems successfully.*"

---

[93] Colonel-General Leontiy Shevtsov, 'Russian Participation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.' (1997) http://www.csdr.org/97Book/SHEVTS.HTM (October, 25 2020)

Conclusions

Returning from the past to the present, it can be concluded that the outlook of NATO-Russian relations has changed dramatically since the days of IFOR and SFOR. General Lentsov, once a good companion to NATO in Bosnia, nowadays commands forces in the war between Ukraine and Russia, a conflict at the borderlands of East and West. Relations have turned for the worse since NATO's air campaign in 1999. Before this, the outlook was very different. The early nineties marked a moment of hope in Europe. Russia was reborn as a democratic state and its leader openly spoke about liberal common values as a basis for cooperation with the West. Early attempts to establish more institutionalised relations provided a forum for dialogue.

Political realities overshadowed this wind of progress. What could have turned into a lasting bond of friendship, became a confusing connection marked by double-speak, illusions and disappointment. Although best intentions were present, the opportunity of frank conversation was missed because of diplomatic distrust and political power-play. When a horrific war reminded both parties of their shared past, the need for cooperation turned into action.

When political leadership dealt with Russian contribution to the mission, it was up for the responsible military leaders to come to an arrangement that worked for both parties; a task easier said than done. Programs that facilitated military-to-military exchanges between NATO and the Russian officers, shaped mutual understanding. Personal relations were of great importance in making NATO-Russian cooperation in Bosnia a reality, as was demonstrated by General Joulwan and Colonel General Shevtsov. Their orders were to enforce the peace in a war-torn Bosnia, while working together with their former sworn enemy. When a soldier receives orders under extreme circumstances, they make it work anyhow.

Cross's arguments on why Russia wanted to participate are largely valid, but the reality of political decision making was much more simple; "a pathetic deal". [94][95] This study's findings supports her notion that Russia's motivation to protect Serbian interests in the peacekeeping effort were important in joining the missions. Besides, there is also strong

---

[94] Sharyl Cross, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century' (2002)

[95] Andrei Kozyrev, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' (2019)

reason to believe that political and military leadership saw the opportunity to move past Cold War-era East-West divisions. Within theoretical international relations debates there seems to be a divide between political and military aspects along the arguments for the motivations concerning the intervention in Bosnia. There are convincing indications that among NATO and Russian leadership, the protection and expansion of the actors interests were decisive in intervening in Bosnia. However, military leadership was decisive in convincing political leaders for intervening on a humanitarian basis while cooperating with former enemies in the process. This notion supports liberal arguments. [96]

Although this study included various Russian accounts, Russian primary sources proved hard to find. This is partly explained by the attitude from the later Russian government towards the cooperation, but also due to a lack of credible translations. Providing new perspectives from Russian participant sources on this cooperation might strengthen the lean historiography on the events surrounding the IFOR/SFOR mission.

Debates on NATO's post-Cold War place in Europe have also been offered another perspective by evaluating the IFOR/SFOR missions. The cooperation proved that Russia and NATO can work together militarily and successfully execute a complex peacekeeping mission. The success of the cooperation and the mission can be attributed to two main factors. First of all, (honest) communications between the different factions played a key role in this. Lines of communications between the two actors increased in the early nineties, due to increasing institutionalised dialogue in international fora. However, the dialogues on a political level did not always prove to be frank. This facilitated a breach of trust among the political leadership. Domestic political pressure prevented Yeltsin from speaking honestly about his intentions, while NATO's political leadership remained ambiguous about their goals of eastward expansion.

However, due to military-to-military exchanges between NATO and Russia in the same period, the existing connections between military leaders were much more open and straightforward. The bonds that developed over the years facilitated a successful cooperation in Bosnia. Several evaluations and first-hand accounts show that personal relationships among military leadership formed a decisive factor in shaping Russian

---

[96] Mark Peceny & Mark Sanchez-Terry, 'Liberal Interventionism in Bosnia' (1998)

participation in IFOR/SFOR. The trust and confidence that was built in the phase before the missions, became the cornerstone of successful cooperation.

Secondly, another factor that determined success in the military operation was that of (international) legitimacy. The Dayton Agreement can be seen as a successful international mandate. As the Russians participated in IFOR, under a bolstered mandate, this reinforced the idea of peace among the former warring factions. Russian participation also helped a great deal in operational issues in which communication with the local population played a role.

In the political arena, there was a clear lack of legitimacy on the basis of international cooperation. NATO's unilateral decision to bomb Yugoslavia in 1995 and in 1999, caused great outrage in Moscow. Yeltsin's only wish was that he was consulted beforehand, but the phone didn't ring. Russia attempted to end the bombings, but was given 'no' for an answer. After 1999, relations between Russia and NATO never really restored. Although consults happened regularly between NATO and Russia, NATO's leaders went onward with enlargement at the cost of Russia's interest. This expansion created a rift between Russia and NATO that is still visible today. NATO's expansion consolidated the idea among the Russian people that NATO was an offensive alliance.

This reinforced idea shaped Russia and its prevalent anti-NATO sentiments among the Russian people today. Liberal arguments in the nineties on NATO's future are valid, as NATO is still together, bound by common values. On the account of realism; Russia has been reborn as NATO's binding factor: an ideological enemy. This idea of the "liberal democratic West" versus the "authoritarian Russians" can be seen as the product of NATO's expansion, as domestic issues prevented Yeltsin from truly liberating Russia. In contemporary politics, this causal relation is often turned around. NATO indirectly shaped its new purpose, *because it expanded.* Today's issues between Russia and NATO are a result of this expansion, rather than grand ideological differences. If there is one thing that the IFOR and SFOR missions showed, it is that Russia and NATO can work together and overcome any challenge through dialogue, trust and confidence.

"Yeah I think this was what I was trying to do. That's why I had these officers meetings in Russia, and if that had kept going on… that's how you create friendship. Lentsov ended up being a three star General in Ukraine. He was the Brigade commander in Bosnia. I later said: "These officers are going to shape the future of Europe." (…) General Jones was the SACEUR in 2005 and he hosted a 10 year anniversary dinner. So he asked if I could come over from the United States. Russia send over all kinds of guys from the Ministry of Defense. And Shevtsov came and he wanted to meet with me. So we met in the library of the Chateau in Mons and he said: Why did you leave us? I said: "I had served my time, I have been on two tours in Vietnam, I have been over in Latin America, I have been to Rwanda. It was time for me to go." He said: "We trusted you and this trust left us afterwards." So remember what I said, Jan: 'trust and confidence, not guns and tanks; that is how you create the conditions for success'"

— General George A. Joulwan

October 9, 2020

Bibliography

Primary sources

Baker, Peter, "Putin Offers West Reassurances and Ideas on NATO." *Washington Post* (2001) https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/07/19/putin-offers-west-reassurances-and-ideas-on-nato/99892a84-fde0-43d6-aa10-35d9c842c50a/ (October 21, 2020)

Barbé, 2nd Lt. Alexander, 'Russians, Americans and VRS building together.' *SFOR Informer* 103 (December 20, 2000) (October, 25 2020) https://web.archive.org/web/20040405065907/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/103/s103p11a/t00122011a.htm

Barbé, 2nd Lt Alexander 'One Patrol Further'. *SFOR Informer.* 99 (October 25, 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20040314004856/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/99/s99p10a/t00102510a.htm (October, 25 2020)

Barbé, 2nd Lt. Alexander. 'Soldiers in the Spotlight'. *SFOR Informer* 111 (April 18, 2001) https://web.archive.org/web/20040314004956/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/111/s111p16a/t01041816a.htm (October 23, 2020)

Buø, Jørn, 'Keeping the Peace Together?: Joint Russian-Western Peace Operations in the Commonwealth of Independent States' (2001). Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI).

Clement, 2nd Lt. Alexis, 'Change of bridge in Celic'. *SFOR Informer* 88 (24 May 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20040309110746/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/88/celicbrid/t000526d.htm (October 25, 2020)

Clement, 2nd Lt. Alexis, 'Russian Engineers Ready to Help'. *SFOR Informer* 90 (21 June 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20020209001926/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/90/rusengin/t000623t.htm (October, 20 2020).

Clement, 2nd Lt. Alexis, 'What life is like in the Russian Battle Group'. *SFOR Informer* 94 (16 August 2000) https://web.archive.org/web/20040325130733/http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/94/russi/t000817n.htm (October, 23 2020)

Foreign Military Studies Office & Center for Military-Strategic Studies, 'Lessons and Conclusions on the Execution of IFOR Operations and Prospects for a Future Combined Security System: The Peace and Stability of Europe after IFOR' (2000) https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a434985.pdf

Shevtsov, General Leontiy, 'Russian-NATO military cooperation in Bosnia: A basis for the future?' *NATO Review* (1995) https://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9702-5.htm#FN1 (October 24, 2020)

NATO, 'Declaration of the Heads of State and Governments'. (11 Jan. 1994) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24470.htm?mode=pressrelease (October 20, 2020)

NATO, 'Relations with Russia' (2020) (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50090.htm) (October 25, 2020)

NATO, 'The Alliance's New Strategic Concept' (1991) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm (October 24, 2020)

NATO, 'The Alliance Strategic Concept' (1999) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm (October 25, 2020)

Parkhalina, Tatiana, 'On myths and illusions: Russian perceptions on NATO enlargement' *NATO Review* (1997) https://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9703-3.htm (October 20, 2020)

Pine, Art "Defense Ministers Reach Compromise on Russian Army's Bosnia Role : Military: Moscow's troops would report to U.S. commander, not NATO. Other issues remain unresolved" *Los Angeles Times* (9 November 1995) https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-11-09-mn-1181-story.html (October 13, 2020)

Paulsen, Lt. Řystein, 'Russian Medical Platoon in Ugljevik'. *SFOR Informer* 74 (Date Unknown) https://web.archive.org/web/20040314011723/http://www.nato.int/sfor/sfor-at-work/rusmed/t000112a.htm (October, 23 2020)

United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1031 (1995)

United Nations, Security Council resolution 1088 (1996)

Velichkin, Alexander, 'NATO as seen through the eyes of the Russian Press.' *NATO Review* (1995) https://web.archive.org/web/20010106062300/http://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/9502-6.htm (October, 25 2020)

Wentz, Larry, 'Lessons from Bosnia: The IFOR Experience.' Department of Defense (1998) http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Wentz_Bosnia.pdf

Literary sources

Antonenko, Oksana, 'Russia, NATO and European security after Kosovo.' *Survival* 41 (1999) 4 124-144.

Antonenko, Oksana & Giegerich, Bastian, 'Rebooting NATO–Russia Relations.' *Survival*, *51* (2009) 2, 13-21

Baker, James A. III, 'Expanding to the East: A New NATO Alliance' *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 1993

Baker, James A III, 'Russia in NATO?.' *Washington Quarterly* 25.1 (2002): 93-103.

Borawski, John, 'Partnership for Peace and beyond.' *International Affairs*, *71* (1995) 2, 233-246.

Bowker, Mike, 'The Wars in Yugoslavia: Russia and the International Community' (1998).

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, NATO: Expand or Die. *New York Times,* December 28, 1994

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, The Grand Chessboard (1997)

Clarke, Jonathan (1993), 'Replacing NATO'. *Foreign Policy,* (93), 22-40.

Crimmel, Beth & Saunders, Jeremy, 'Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations' (2000)

Cross, Sharyl, 'Russia and NATO toward the twenty-first century: conflicts and peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo' *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 15 (2002) 2. 1-58.

Deudney, Daniel and Ikenberry, G.J, 'The Logic of the West' (1993)

Gouthro, Gerard, '"Peacekeeping when there is no peace to keep": A case study of UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina.' (1995)

Kerr, David, 'The new Eurasianism: The rise of geopolitics in Russia's foreign policy'. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *47 (*1995), 977-988.

Kieninger, Stephan, 'Opening NATO and Engaging Russia: NATO's Two Tracks and the Establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council' in: Kristina Spohr Readman, and Daniel Hamilton, *Open door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic security after the Cold War*. (2019)

Kozyrev, Andrei, 'Russia and NATO Enlargement: An Insider's Account' in: Kristina Spohr Readman, and Daniel Hamilton, *Open door: NATO and Euro-Atlantic security after the Cold War*. (2019)

Leurdijk, Dick, 'Before and after Dayton: the UN and NATO in the former Yugoslavia.' *Beyond UN Subcontracting* (1998)

Mestrov, Stepjan, 'Genocide after emotion: The post-emotional Balkan War' (2013).

Mankoff, Jeffrey, 'Russian Foreign Policy: the return of great power politics' (2012)

Mastanduno, Michael, 'Preserving the unipolar moment: Realist theories and US grand strategy after the Cold War'. *International security*, *21* (1997) 4, 49-88. in 56-65

Peceny, M & Sanchez-Terry, S, 'Liberal Interventionism in Bosnia'. *Journal of Conflict Studies*. (1998)

Rupp, Richard, 'NATO 1949 and NATO 2000: From collective defense toward collective security'. *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, *23* (2000) 3, 156-159.

Simic, Predrag "Russia and the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 1 (2001) 3 95-114.

Simoni, Serena, 'Split or Cooperation? Contending Arguments on the Future of the Transatlantic Relations (1991-2001)'

Thomas, Timothy. 'Russian "Lessons Learned" in Bosnia'. *Military Review* 76 (1996) 38-43

Thomas, Kelly J., 'Security into the 21st Century: NATO's Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Concept' (2001).

Yost, David, 'The new NATO and collective security', *Survival,* 40 (1998) 2, 135-160