SEAN M. MALONEY

OPERATION KINETIC

STABILIZING KOSOVO

FOREWORD BY SIR MIKE JACKSON

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Foreword by Sir Mike Jackson

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Set in Minion Pro by Mikala R Kolander.

For my students at RMC, future leaders all

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FOREWORD

SIR MIKE JACKSON

I had the privilege to command NATO's Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) from early 1997 to the end of 1999. My headquarters was multinational, with the United Kingdom as lead nation; I was fortunate enough to have Canadian officers on my staff. After nearly a year of stop/start planning and preparation in relation to the Kosovo crisis, the ARRC headquarters was finally deployed to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in February 1999. At this stage our role was the coordination of various NATO troop contingents in FYROM—then still under national command—with a view to the possible rapid implementation of any agreement that might have emerged from the Rambouillet talks.

The failure of those talks led quickly to the commencement of NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999. As the embryonic Kosovo Force (KFOR), we saw our role change dramatically to the conventional ground defense of northern FYROM while preparing for entry into Kosovo—either by agreement following Yugoslav concession or, if need be, by ground offensive. It was a challenging and uncertain time during which KFOR grew in size and multinationality.

Yugoslavia conceded on 3 June 1999, and I conducted the Kumanovo talks with a Serb military delegation over five days (5–9 June). Those talks ended with agreement on the manner and timing of KFOR's entry into Kosovo and the Serb security forces' withdrawal. Our entry commenced at first light on Saturday, 12 June; the Serb withdrawal was complete, a few hours before their deadline, on Sunday, 20 June. It was a hectic, confused, and dangerous nine days during which KFOR had to stamp its authority on both the Serb forces and their opponents, the Kosovo Libera-

tion Army (KLA), while assuring so far as we could the safety of the civilian population, of whatever ethnic origin.

Having secured the Serb withdrawal, we had as our next urgent security task the demilitarization of the KLA. Following parallel negotiations conducted mainly in Albania, the KLA leadership presented me with their official understanding to demilitarize over the following ninety days. This was done in my tactical headquarters just outside Priština in the wee hours of 21 June.

KFOR spent the following weeks and months on a myriad of challenging tasks: ensuring that the KLA held to their program of demilitarization; establishing a secure environment for a volatile and angry population; restarting public utilities, including hospitals, power generation, and communications; providing support to UNMIK, the UN civil administration; assuring freedom of movement; demining; assisting with the return of refugees; and deterring any reoccupation of Kosovo by Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) forces.

The whole operation was a demanding, challenging, and exciting task for the soldiers of KFOR, drawn as they were from many countries, both NATO and non-NATO. Among them was the Canadian contingent, based initially on a reconnaissance squadron from Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) with its very effective Coyote vehicles, supported by Griffon helicopters. Time was against the Canadian deployment, and the determination shown to make the line of departure on time was most impressive. Indeed it was a tour de force. With the subsequent arrival of 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (1 PPCLI), the Canadian contingent developed into a strong and impressive battle group under 4 (UK) Armoured Brigade and provided a very significant element of KFOR's combat power.

Sean Maloney has described most vividly these extraordinary events from the Canadian perspective. It is a fascinating account, wide in its international context, putting together as it does the pieces of a most complicated jigsaw; the book portrays a very rapidly moving political and military situation with great clarity. Indeed I have discovered things of which I was not aware at the time!

The author also provides us with rich descriptions of the human aspect of these dangerous and uncertain events. The personal narratives of Canadian soldiers are a vibrant picture of the demands placed on soldiers by their nations, as well as of the quite admirable way in which they responded.

Three years before these events in Kosovo, during the first half of 1996, I was commanding NATO's Multinational Division Southwest in Bosnia-Hercegovina during the first phase of implementing the Dayton Agreement. There were two brigades under command: 4 (UK) Armoured Brigade (again!) and the Canadian Multinational Brigade. During this time I got to know the Canadian Army very well and also to admire their professionalism and cheerful, can-do approach to soldiering.

It was therefore a great honor and pleasure once more to have Canadian soldiers under my command in Kosovo. They rose superbly to the challenges and uncertainty of the rapidly changing situation before, during, and after KFOR's entry. No general is of any value whatsoever without the soldiers whose task it is to translate intent into reality; I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Canadian soldiers of KFOR who did just that in 1999, along with the soldiers of my own and other nations. My thanks go to them all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The origin of this book dates back to the early 1990s and my initial involvement in the Balkans. I served as the historian for 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade (4 CMB), which was the Canadian Army's NATO ground force commitment in West Germany during the Cold War. When the Wall went down and trouble started in Slovenia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe asked Canada to contribute observers to the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM). The ECMM later expanded its activities into Croatia and Bosnia. While I was working on the Canadian brigade history, 4 CMB was tasked to deploy ECMM observers and then units—the first Canadian UN contingent—to Croatia. These events were incorporated into the final chapter of the brigade history, later published as *War without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951–1993*.

On repatriation to Canada I retained a growing interest in the Balkan conflicts. I cowrote, with my friend and colleague John Llambias, an oral history of Canadian soldiers in the Balkans, *Chances for Peace*. In 1995 I traveled to Croatia and Bosnia and observed UNPROFOR I and II operations. I then wrote a short history of the ECMM, *Operation BOLSTER*.

During my work with the ECMM and UNPROFOR I met and interviewed Maj. Gen. Mike Maisonneuve, who was the chief operations officer at UNPROFOR HQ during the Medak Pocket operation in 1993. I was teaching in the War Studies Program at Canada's Royal Military College (RMC) and providing input into the Directorate of Army Doctrine (DAD) and Army Lessons Learned Center organizations when Canada was asked to deploy observers with the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). General Maisonneuve asked me for a copy of my Operation Bolster study so they could apply

lessons learned to KVM as it prepared to deploy. Sure, I said, but I wanted to come over and write the history of the KVM too, to which he readily agreed. Mike and his boss, Lt. Gen. Marc Caron, deployed in late 1998. They were working on getting me over to Kosovo to accompany KVM when the mission was ejected from the province and Operation Allied Force's bombardment started, in March 1999.

From there the project turned into something much larger and more complex. Who was going to capture the history of the army's involvement in Kosovo Force? There was no easy answer to this, as the structure that was supposed to be established in DAD to do this had its "person years" and position numbers removed in a reshuffling. Because time was of the essence, I took on Operation Kinetic as a Canadian Forces–supported research project in my capacity as a professor at RMC. I eventually got to Kosovo to conduct research once KFOR was on the ground.

The events of 11 September 2001 and the war that followed overshadowed my efforts and unfortunately ensured that *Operation Kinetic* did not see light of day at the time. The Balkans had seemingly become irrelevant, and publishers made that point clear. That state of affairs was not only frustrating to me, the author, but it was also frustrating for the soldiers who had enthusiastically explained to me in detail what they accomplished in Kosovo and who wanted their successes known, particularly after all of the Balkan and African failures during the 1990s. It was with a heavy heart that I communicated with many disappointed troops and had to explain the reality of the situation.

I am thus doubly grateful that Tom Swanson at Potomac Books took a strong interest in the exploits of Operation Kinetic, and I thank him not only on my own behalf but for those who served on this operation and entrusted their experiences to me. I would like to thank Generals Maisonneuve and Caron for supporting me in my efforts to document our operations in the Balkans, as this cooperation led directly to the volume in your hands. Another key individual was Col. Jamie Cade, then working in the DCDS's J-3 International shop (the predecessor to Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command and its successor, Canadian Joint Operations Command). With General Caron's concurrence I was able

to identify primary source material from army records and have it vetted for use in this publication through the good offices of Colonel Cade and his staff. I would like to thank them all for taking a liberal view on what could and could not be used, as this positively contributed to the narrative of *Operation Kinetic*. Indeed a security review of the manuscript resulted in no demanded or requested changes.

There were four combat arms and two helicopter units that contributed forces to Op Kinetic: Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians); Royal Canadian Dragoons; 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; 1st Battalion, the Royal Canadian Regiment; 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron; and 430 Escadron Tactique d'Hélicoptères. Back in 1999–2001 all of these organizations assisted me openly and fully with documentation, and the unit leadership in all six cases facilitated my interviewing a cross section of their personnel who served in Kosovo. Thanks especially to all of the interviewees.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the crucial assistance of Dr. Jason Ridler, who at the time was a graduate student and my research assistant during the initial phases of this project. Jay's dedication, hard work, and outside-the-box thinking were most appreciated on many occasions. I'd like to also thank my colleague Maj. Tanya Grodzinski, who was at the time editor of the *Canadian Army Journal* and highly supportive of contemporary army history and still is today. Thanks also to Maj. Terry Turner and his wife, Jenny, for assisting me when I was undertaking research in the United Kingdom.

Finally I would like to thank my agent and friend Fritz Heinzen for his support and patience over the years. When we were constantly told by publisher after publisher post 9/11 that the Balkans were as passé as the Cold War, we could only smile to ourselves and wait it out, because we knew that when it comes to eastern Europe, the wheel always turns.

INTRODUCTION

On the sweltering night of 12 June 1999 Canadian Coyote reconnaissance vehicles pulled out of the Krivolak training area south of Skopje, Macedonia, and headed for the tactical assembly area on the international border around 2300 hours. Four hours before British airmobile troops were scheduled to board their helicopters and seize the strategic Kačanik passes leading into Kosovo, men and women wearing black berets on their heads and maple leaf flags on their left shoulders swarmed onto the sleek eight-wheeled armored vehicles, attaching equipment, mounting machine guns, tightening bolts, and filling jerry cans with that precious fluid, water. Not all of the feverish activity was due to the humid, 40-plus degrees Celsius atmosphere: NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) was preparing to enter that eponymous Yugoslav province, and the timelines were tight. The soldiers of the Lord Strathcona's Horse Reconnaissance Squadron sweated out their last-minute tasks as radios and vehicle intercoms crackled back and forth. There was a hum of purposeful activity, but it was tempered by uncertainty. Despite all of the assurances made by the diplomats, KFOR might not be actually be invited guests.

The Yugoslav army might decide at the last minute to play the spoiler in this latest drama in the little shop of horrors called the Balkans. The Canadian code name for this mission was Operation Kinetic, and like that physics-based name NATO was prepared to use its energy to punch a hole into the heart of Kosovo. Canada and its allies were not going to stand idly by and observe the wholesale ethnic cleansing of yet another Balkan minority group. This new conflict had potentially huge repercussions in the volatile region, especially in recently stabilized Bosnia. And the Russians were now threatening to intervene.

Even though it was front-page news for more than a year, in 1998–99, "Kosovo" even today is a name barely spoken outside of a tight ring of Balkans specialists. In the nearly two decades after al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq it is easy to forget that a NATO-led coalition intervened in Serbia to protect the population from state-sponsored genocidal violence and then established a statelet administered by the international community to stabilize the affected province. At that time the air campaign NATO conducted against Serbia was massively controversial. Boris Yeltsin's Russia even conducted a nuclear "flourish" directed at North America.

Why exactly have the dramatic events of the Kosovo campaign receded into collective amnesia? There are many reasons, none of them good.

During the war against al Qaeda and its allies in the 2000s the Balkans region, along with its discontents, became a strategic backwater. There was media fatigue, as well as compassion fatigue, after almost a decade of protracted violence in the region. In the reordering of the world after 9/11 the campaign in Kosovo had no relevance to the al Qaeda propaganda machine: indeed the "Crusader" West's rescue and protection of one million Muslims in what had been Yugoslavia was a liability to Osama bin Laden as he attempted to mobilize his constituents against his enemies near and far, including NATO members. Although he decried Serb barbarities in Bosnia, he was silent on Kosovo in his expositions.[1] Bin Laden's opponent, Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. secretary of defense, was scathing about Kosovo and "offered the Balkans as a model of a postwar policy gone wrong," one that had generated a "'culture of dependence' that made it hard for the Kosovars to stand on their own feet."[2] Nothing good, it seemed, could be derived from those experiences. Counterinsurgency was the way of the future for the 2000s, not failed 1990s "peacekeeping" operations. And if one wanted to progress upward in Rumsfeld's Pentagon, one did not mention Kosovo or the Balkans.

The Kosovo intervention is today obscured or otherwise distorted by the virulent "hybrid warfare" propaganda that accompanies Russian adventures in Ukraine, the Baltic states, and Syria.

Vladimir Putin, viewing the geopolitical stage through the kaleidoscope of Kosovo, justifies Russian interventions in these regions on the basis of NATO's intervention in the Balkans. With tired old Communist Party propaganda techniques employing moral equivalence, the simplistic argument is made that what happens in Ukraine is acceptable because it somehow balances what NATO did in the Balkans, particularly in Serbia.[3]

Arguments employed in the service of current Russian objectives similarly include the assertion that all NATO operations since the 1990s are either failures, have questionable legitimacy, or both and that they generate regional chaos in each case. The logic is this: if all NATO operations are failures and illegitimate, then the Kosovo operation was a failure and illegitimate. The argument has no further utility except as a club with which to beat NATO and excoriate its membership. Normally this sort of simplistic argument remains in the realm of propaganda, but now some members of the academic community use it in public forums, and the facts about what happened in Kosovo are in some cases actively suppressed.[4]

The criticism does not stop there. For Serb nationalists it was the intervention that unleashed ethnic cleansing and genocide directed against the Kosovar Serb population, who suddenly morphed from perpetrator to victim status. Therefore NATO was held to be at fault. For extremist Kosovar Albanians the intervention force got in the way of the final victory against the Serbs. Therefore NATO was held to be at fault.

The cumulative effect of these criticisms over nearly twenty years is a tendency to unfairly ignore or even vilify the successful actions and activities of those who participated in the complex Kosovo intervention. In 1999 Kosovo was the breakpoint in a decade of problematic and failed interventions by international organizations in locations around the globe: Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Croatia, and Bosnia. Kosovo cannot and should not be taken out of its historical context. The intervention was the first time in the 1990s that ethnic cleansing was arrested while it was in progress and the effects reversed. That fact alone should merit historical recognition if not praise for those who conceived and carried out those operations. They should no longer be subjected to one-sided exco-

riation by those critics in the comfortable and safe surroundings of the human rights industry, academia, the legal profession, the internet, and the diplomatic cocktail party. Somebody had to carry out the operation on the ground, dig up the mass graves, prevent the destruction of cultural property, and forestall mob violence.

The expulsion of an estimated 850,000 Kosovar Albanians to Albania and Macedonia and Serbian security forces' internal displacement of some 400,000 more out of a population of two million residents was unparalleled in post–World War II western Europe.[5] This humanitarian outrage included Serb forces murdering an estimated 10,000 Kosovars, many of whose remains were later excavated, pulverized, and transported to multiple sites in Serbia when it became clear that NATO forces would enter the province (these transportations were dubbed "sanitation" operations by Serbian special security forces). Mass graves of Kosovar Albanians were still being found in Serbia as late as 2010.[6]

Indeed the deliberate destruction of archives, libraries, land ownership documentation, and other cultural artifacts undertaken in 1998–99 by Serb elements appears to have been an attempt to expunge Kosovar Albanians from the history of Kosovo.[7] In essence the combined effects of these events constituted genocide in its original 1948 definition, despite attempts by elements in the UN to shy away from seriously discussing it.[8] The wanton destruction of Serb Orthodox monasteries, churches, art, and religious facilities by Kosovar Albanians during violence that surged in March 2004, as well as any other revanchist activity undertaken subsequently against Kosovar Serbs, while equally abhorrent, does not retroactively justify the large-scale actions Belgrade implemented in Kosovo during 1998–99.[9] For rational human beings history is chronological, not concurrent.

Ultimately the unwillingness of the peoples of Kosovo to reconcile over real and imagined grievances related to Josip Broz Tito's management of Yugoslavia and the exploitation of those grievances during the Slobodan Milošević years, coupled with the inability of the peoples of Kosovo as a whole to grip those who profit from advocating and employing prejudice and ethnic violence are some

of the problems that baffle the international community today in the region. Those problems perhaps have no short-term solution. Certainly the economic limitations owing to Kosovo's small size and divided status aggravate those conditions, not the fact of the 1999 intervention by the international community to restore a million and half people to their homes, reroof or rebuild those homes, and generate a comparatively secure environment so the people could remain in those homes.

Operation Kinetic: Stabilizing Kosovo is an in-depth examination of how the international community transitioned from a small observer force on the ground, where it monitored the deteriorating situation, to the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) building up in Macedonia and then deploying into Kosovo and on subsequent operations. It does not deal with the air campaign, Operation Allied Force. The highly tactical nature of KFOR operations was generated by the relatively small operating area coupled with the complex human and ethnic terrain laid like a web in the hills and valleys of the province. KFOR divided the province up into lead-nation sectors: British, French, German, American, and Italian. Other NATO members and even Russia contributed additional forces and subordinated them to those sectors.

Canada's contribution to KFOR started off as augmentation to the British-led sector, with a tactical helicopter squadron, an armored reconnaissance squadron, and a mechanized infantry battle group. However, the mobility of the Canadian units plus their unique technical surveillance capabilities led them to be employed throughout the province. As a result, the activities of the Canadian sub-units provide us insight into the problems of stabilizing Kosovo as a whole, not just within the British sector.

Reflecting the broad activity of the Canadian participation, this book is divided into several sections. The complexities of the conflict in Kosovo and why Canada chose to become involved form part 1. The deterioration of the situation, its monitoring by the international observer missions, the Kosovo Force buildup, and its entry into Kosovo constitute the material in part 2. The operational context of the sector known as Multinational Brigade (Cen-

ter) begins part 3. From there, there are four functional chapters that cover the tactical activities of the reconnaissance squadron, the tactical helicopter squadron, and the mechanized battle group for the period 1999–2000. It is here that the collision of stabilization methodology with the specific local problems of the province takes place and leads us to examine the limits of stabilization operations in this particular ethnic and cultural arena.

The all-or-nothing approach taken by numerous propagandists, commentators, and some academics in critiquing the operation in Kosovo does not assist us at this level. It is best to let the practitioners explain what was within the realm of the possible and why they thought so at the time. Only then can we really determine how to measure the viability of this stabilization operation. It was a series of small, local successes, sustained over the short term, that presented a foundation for long-term success, not grandiose, publicly proclaimed, short-attention-span projects. And one must be prepared for setbacks like the violent events of 2004, contain the emotionally driven criticism that follows from all players, and incrementally move forward. There is no decisive battle. This will not be solved quickly or overnight. *Operation Kinetic* describes one particular phase of the Kosovo stabilization project, something that remains in progress nearly two decades later but without the bloodshed that occurred in 1998–99.

A note on conventions. Kosovo place-names come in two versions: Serbian and Albanian. This orthographic difference was a point of contention at times between the local populations and the KFOR troops, since the Kosovar Albanian majority in the region had had their language and culture suppressed under the Belgrade regime. They preferred to abandon anything Serb-related, and that included place-names: even road signs written in Serbian were defaced so that a visitor to the region could not tell where the destinations were, even though the arrows remain. I have elected to use the Serbian place-names simply because the NATO contingent's maps used them, as did the personnel I interviewed for this project. This should not be taken as an indication of partiality on their part or mine.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABCA	America-Britain-Canada-Australia–New Zealand army standardization agreements
ACE	Allied Command Europe
ALCE	air logistics control element
AOR	area of operations
APC	armored personnel carrier
APOD	aerial point of debarkation
ARRC	ACE Rapid Reaction Corps
ASD	alternate service delivery
ASZ	air safety zone
ATGM	antitank guided missile
AVLB	armored vehicle launched bridge
AWACS	airborne warning and control system aircraft
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CDS	chief of the Defence Staff
CFIOG	Canadian Forces Information Operations Group
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLS	chief of the Land Staff
CO	commanding officer
COMKFOR	Commander, Kosovo Force
CP	command post
DAD	Directorate of Army Doctrine
DCDS	deputy chief of the Defence Staff
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada)
DLFR	Directorate of Land Force Readiness
ECMM	European Community Monitor Mission
EOD	explosive ordnance disposal

FARK	Freedom Army of Kosovo
FLIR	forward looking infrared system
FRY	Former Republic of Yugoslavia
GPMG	general purpose machine gun
GSZ	ground safety zone
HEAT	high explosive antitank
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IFOR	Implementation Force (NATO)
IMP	individual meal pack
ISTAR	intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance
ITC	international training center
JIAS	joint interim administrative structure
JIC	joint implementation commission
JNA	Yugoslav National Army
JSO	Jedinice za Specijalne Operacije (special operations unit)
KDOM	Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission
KFOR	Kosovo Force (NATO)
KRWAU	Kosovo Rotary Wing Aviation Unit
KTA	Krivolak training area
KVCC	Kosovo Verification Coordination Center
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission
LDK	Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës (Democratic League of Kosovo)
LKÇK	Lëvizja Kombëtare për Çlirimin e Kosovës (National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo)
MAWS	missile attack warning system
MFO	Multinational Force and Observers
MIF	military implementation force
MNB	Multinational Brigade
MRP	Ministria e Rendit Publik (Ministry for Public Order)
MSR	main service route

MTA	military technical agreement
MUP	Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova (Yugoslav interior ministry police forces)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters (Canada)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NLA	National Liberation Army (of Albanians in Macedonia)
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
NVGs	night vision goggles
OPO	operations order
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PGOK	Provisional Government of Kosovo
PJP	Posebne Jedinice Policije (special police units)
PSYOPS	psychological operations
PU	Policia Ushtarake (Kosovar Albanian "police")
QRF	quick reaction force
RCD	Royal Canadian Dragoons
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RGJ	Royal Green Jackets (UK)
ROE	rules of engagement
RO-RO	roll-on/roll-off ship
ROWPU	reverse osmosis water purification unit
RRB	remote rebroadcast site
RS	Republika Srpska
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe (NATO)
SAJ	Specijalna Antiteroristicka Jedinica (Special Antiterrorist Police)
SDB	Služba Državne Bezbednosti (State Security Service,Serbia's secret police)
SFOR	Stabilization Force (NATO)
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SOF	special operations forces
SUP/OUP	Sekretariat Unutrašnjih Poslova/Odeljenje Unutrašnjih Poslova (ordinary police units)

SWSS	secure weapons storage sites
TAG	Tactical Air Group
TMK	Trupat e Mbrojtjes së Kosovës (Kosovo Protection Corps)
TUA	TOW under armor (antitank missile system)
UÇK	Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës (Kosovo Liberation Army)
UÇPMB	Ushtria Çlirimtare e Preshevës, Medvegjës, dhe Bujanocit (Liberation Army of the Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac)
UDB	Uprava Državne Bezbednosti (Yugoslav security police)
UN	United Nations
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNPREDEP	United Nations Preventive Deployment
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
VCDS	vice chief of the Defence Staff
VCP	vehicle checkpoint
VJ	Vojska Jugoslavije (Yugoslav Army)
WAC	weapon authorization certificate
WEU	Western European Union

OPERATION KINETIC

1

BACKGROUND

ONE

The Balkans

A Quick and Dirty Primer

> The UN, through the Security Council, could not guarantee the peace. . . . Collective security could not, in fact, be organized on a basis of world-wide agreement. We knew that this hard fact must lead to changes in our policies. While we actively supported the UN, we had no illusions about its weaknesses, especially about the growing tendency to substitute propaganda for constructive debate and action.
>
> —LESTER B. PEARSON, Canadian secretary of state for external affairs, on why Canada helped form NATO in 1949

Throughout the 1990s it was commonplace in streets, hockey rinks, and bars to hear Canadians ask in wonderment why Canada maintained such a large military commitment to the pieces of the former Yugoslavia. The most common remark was, "Why do we bother? They've been killing each other for hundreds (or thousands) of years anyway." Such resignation was understandable, particularly when UN forces in the region were hamstrung, or when Canadian soldiers serving as UN military observers were roughed up and handcuffed to poles at Bosnian Serb installations to act as human shields, or even when Canadian soldiers were disarmed and forced to undergo a mock execution.

Yet successive governments deemed it necessary that Canadian soldiers be deployed to these places. The answers to those questioning such measures were of course extremely complex ones, and it is not a stretch to suggest that Canadian decision makers did not and could not have had all of the facts available when committing the Canadian Army to the Balkans. Indeed the decision to partic-

ipate in KFOR was based on better information than the decision makers had back in 1991, when Canada joined the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM), the first Balkans peacekeeping operation. Twenty years later we are in a better position to look back at the events that led up to Operation Kinetic. In essence the violent collapse of Yugoslavia produced fragmentation over time. The situation prompted Canada to commit forces at each stage of that fragmentation to contain the violence, to prevent spillover effects on adjacent countries, and to forestall aggressive Russian intervention in the region that would affect NATO and therefore Canada. In 1999 KFOR was the latest step in that process.

Topography of Terror, Crossroads of Empires

Yugoslavia was a European country located next to the Adriatic Sea in the heart of the Balkans. The territory that modern-day Yugoslavia controlled in the twentieth century had historically been an area over which a variety of empires had fought. The Balkans region was the dividing zone between the Roman and Byzantine Empires until parts of it were absorbed by the Ottoman Empire in the 1000s. It was the battleground between the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans and then between their nineteenth-century successor empires—the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Turkish-controlled Ottoman Empire.

In terms of religion the Balkans region was pagan until around AD 500 and then Christian, both in its Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic forms. Once the Ottomans had overrun significant portions of the Balkans in 1300s, some groups occupying what would become Albania and Bosnia-Hercegovina converted to Islam. This is how the region developed its ethnic matrix. The situation was not clear-cut, however, in that the conflicts in the region at that time were not conducted solely on religious grounds: Christian troops fought for the Ottomans, while troops from Islam-oriented societies in the region fought for Christian princes. Christian sold out Christian, as well as their converted Muslim cousins, and the Ottoman Turks took every advantage of these divisions and exerted control through fear and by threatening forcible assimilation of all ethnic and religious groups.[1]

The Balkans region was like a seismic fault zone where the "tectonic plates" of the Eastern world, the Western world, and the Muslim world uneasily encountered each other for the next five hundred years. The nature of the conflicts that erupted involved temporary alliances, proxy wars, and jockeying for position. Given that the Balkans region consists mostly of mountainous terrain and is thus highly defensible, there was a certain utility to dominating the region. Control of the Balkans or key portions of it prevented attack and also provided a secure base from which to attack a rival.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires in the wake of World War I permitted a growing Yugoslav nationalist movement to blossom. This movement had started in the mid-1800s among Croatian intellectuals who viewed the French Revolution with interest and saw the economic possibilities of a multiethnic, modern state: this was called the "Yugoslav idea." Similar concepts were generated inside Serbian intellectual circles at the same time. The outside control exerted by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires did not, however, allow these ideas to be realized until the 1920s, when the first modern multiethnic state called Yugoslavia was formed. Notably, the formation of the first Yugoslavia at that time had been predicted back in the 1870s, when the Ottoman Empire was having economic difficulties and there was a belief that the bonds holding it together would eventually be loosened.[2]

Two new empires, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, then took control of the region during World War II and used ethnic division to divide and conquer Yugoslavia, pitting Croatian and Albanian against Serb and Bosnian Muslim. As the Germans and Italians were losing ground in the war, a young communist named Josip Broz changed his name to Tito and led a war of liberation (with Allied help) against the Axis powers. At the same time, however, Tito fought another war against those ethnic-based groups seeking autonomy—groups that had been suppressed by the Yugoslav government in the 1930s. Tito instituted a totalitarian police state that kept the lid on such ethnic-nationalist aspirations throughout the long Cold War.[3]

Prior to its demise in 1991 Yugoslavia consisted of eight administrative divisions: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro,

Vojvodina, Serbia, and Kosovo. The last three had a slightly different relationship in that Kosovo and Vojvodina were "autonomous provinces," but politically they were appendages of Serbia. All eight had a varied ethnic matrix, though usually one ethnicity was in the majority due to sheer numbers. The ethnic matrix in Yugoslavia by the latter part of the twentieth century included Croatians, Slovenes, Serbians, Albanians, Bosnian Muslims, and Hungarians. These ethnic groups were generally based on religious groupings. The Slovenes, Croatians, and Hungarians were mostly Roman Catholic, while the Serbians were Eastern Orthodox. Albanians and Bogomils or their descendants, the Sandzak Muslims from Bosnia, followed Islam. Over hundreds of years, particularly during Tito's time, ethnic groups were transplanted from one region to another for political reasons so that by 1991 no one region was populated by a single ethnic group.[4]

The concept of the Balkans as the "crossroads of empires" continued into the 1940s. What was Canada's general position on Yugoslavia? Canada displayed little interest in the region until World War II, when Canadian covert operators working with the Special Operations executive supported Tito in his fight against Nazi Germany. These operations supported the main Allied effort on the Italian front, which included I Canadian Corps, by drawing off German and other Axis forces that would otherwise be used against the Allies. The British also had plans to land in Yugoslavia and move north through Hungary and into Germany to cut off the Soviets and thus stop them from seizing control of eastern Europe.[5]

The Cold War emerged out of the smoking ashes of 1945 as the Soviets became more and more expansionistic. Canada joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), formed in 1949 to deter communist aggression and if necessary defend western Europe from communist attack. It was assumed for many years, with complete justification, that Yugoslavia was a Soviet ally and thus antagonistic toward the Canadian way of life and interests. In time Tito broke with Stalin and declared Yugoslavia to be nonaligned, though it remained communist. Despite this realignment, NATO remained concerned about Yugoslavia throughout the Cold War, and, since Canada was part of that organization, NATO concerns tended to be

Canadian concerns, particularly since Canada had dedicated significant air and land forces to NATO in central Europe.[6]

It was conceivable that the Balkans region might fulfill its traditional role as a crossroads of empires if the Cold War turned hot, though in this case the heat would have been caused by nuclear weapons. The Ljubljana Gap in Slovenia was considered by NATO planners to be a likely point of entry by Soviet forces targeting Italy and Austria; they would then have access to NATO's rear area in West Germany. NATO developed several defense scenarios, some of which had Yugoslavia resisting the Soviet advance and others where they facilitated it.[7] NATO on the whole remained pessimistic about Yugoslavia's ability to remain nonaligned and generally treated it as a potential adversary.

A 1965 NATO intelligence estimate concluded that "despite 17 years of the regime's best efforts to instill a Yugoslav consciousness, most of the population still consider themselves primarily Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins or the like. The practical consequences of this psychology are a reluctance on the part of the more advanced areas of the country[,] such as Slovenia or Croatia, to be forced to contribute to the development of backwards areas in the south and an indifference to problems outside one's constituent republic. In time of war the tensions between the various people called Yugoslavs probably again would be the cause of disunity."[8]

Why Yugoslavia Collapsed

Since the outbreak of hostilities in 1991 and the subsequent deployment of European Community, United Nations, and NATO operations within the former boundaries of Yugoslavia, the media and scholars have expended considerable effort in trying to determine exactly what prompted the country to collapse so violently. There is no single or easy answer: such events always have many causes, and, depending on which side one takes, the reasons will always be controversial with any given opposing group. Professional Balkans observers tend to fall into three groups: journalists, political scientists, and historians. Broadly speaking, journalists blame nasty people, while political scientists blame failed political structures. Historians tend to look at both but also to examine those factors

over the long term and then place today's events in that context. Put another way, Yugoslavia collapsed either because it was never structurally sound in the first place, that is, the nineteenth-century "Yugoslav idea" was unrealistic, or it collapsed from a more immediate and malevolent agenda initiated in the 1980s. Finally there is an argument to be made that Yugoslavia collapsed for both reasons. Let us examine each of these views carefully, since all of these reasons have a direct bearing on the place of Kosovo and the need to deploy NATO forces there in 1999.

One argument suggests that the collapse was a victory of aggressive nationalism brought about by conflicting nineteenth-century nationalist identities that were reborn in the 1980s. When Yugoslavia was formed in the 1920s, not all ethnic groups, particularly the Croats, Albanians, and Slovenes, bought into the idea of a federal Yugoslav state. Some members of these groups did buy into the "Yugoslav idea," but those who dissented also covertly kept their dreams of independent states alive. These nationalisms were not fully developed, that is, there was division and argument as to what a Croatian or Slovenian state would look like, how it would work, and so on. Serb nationalism and identity were, however, more developed than other identities before Yugoslavia existed and more resilient when federal authorities crushed nationalist groups in the 1930s. Therefore it was in a better and stronger position when the breakup occurred in the 1990s. Consequently the other groups wanted to balance things out rapidly to right the wrongs of the past that had been inflicted on them by the communist federal Yugoslav system, which they viewed as dominated by Serbs. There was a tendency to overreact to the situation, particularly when communism in other countries collapsed at the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.[9]

A similar view agrees that the end of the Cold War promoted a revival of nationalism among several ethnic groups in Yugoslavia but that the number of people within each ethnic group demanding their own independent state and identity was much higher, that is, nationalism was more developed all around, not just among the Serbs. The problems in the region therefore were the result of a collision between fully formed cultural and religious values. The

values within each ethnic group produced social expectations that in turn affected the interactions between groups.[10]

What does this mean? One group defines itself as not being like the others. The differences are in language, religion, culture, and territory. Part of defining oneself as not being another may lie in the fact that long ago those who are not yours committed some transgression, possibly violent, against yours, which in turn assists in defining the difference between the two groups. Therefore the seeds of hatred in the Balkans were sewn in the very distant past. Historical memory is long in that part of the world, and wounds are carried from one generation to the next. Further atrocities in later years, particularly during World War II, were committed partly because of the situation at the time and partly because of something that occurred decades or even centuries before.[11]

In modern Canada we use television, radio, and the internet to transmit ideas and information. In the medieval Balkans region religion and religious organizations were used to broadcast ideas to populations with limited education. Many Balkan cultures use disturbing, apocalyptic, and violent religious imagery: for example, Ottoman Turks are portrayed as demons in religious artwork. Fairy tales reminiscent of the Grimm brothers' stories depict Serbs as monsters. Atrocity stories from hundreds of years earlier are handed down in an oral tradition. It is not surprising that they serve as fuel for ethnic violence. Revenge is then exacted for perceived as much as for real historical violence. When civilizing controls like representative government are removed, terrorism and anarchy result.[12] One observer believes that the Serbian Orthodox Church "deserves credit for having done much to embitter Serbs against Albanians [and] Croats."[13] Similar remarks could be made about the religious authorities in each ethnic group.

Moving away from religion and ethnicity, one finds another view on the collapse, one arguing that all ethnic groups bought into the "Yugoslav idea" in the 1920s in hopes of external security, the promise of a representative government, and improved economic prosperity. This system worked until it was replaced by Tito's communist system. Communism's institutions and governmental structures just didn't work in the long term, since commu-

nism could only compromise so much between the ethnic groups. There was "widespread disillusionment and bureaucratic chaos." It was then undermined by individuals pushing their own nationalistic agendas.[14]

The Yugoslav economy was already in trouble by 1979: economic trouble produces uncertainty among citizens of any country. Tito, the man who had created the communist state and held Yugoslavia together, died in 1980. Competing strongmen then moved onto the scene to exploit the uncertain situation even further, for their own benefit. One observer noted in 1991 that "if we were to judge the six presidents of the former Yugoslav republics by their characters of twenty years ago, then Slovenia would have a Stalinist head of state; Croatia, a raving anti-Semite; Serbia, a blood-thirsty Bolshevik; Montenegro an adolescent; and Macedonia another Stalinist."[15]

Franjo Tudjman was fomenting unrest in Croatia as early as 1984, in part because he told his people that there were more Serbs in power positions throughout the late 1980s than any other ethnic group and that this affected Croatian aspirations. When violence broke out between Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population and the Serbian minority in 1987, Slobodan Milošević emerged as the Serbian leader after traveling to Kosovo to reassure Serbs that "no one shall dare beat you."[16] The effects of the speech he delivered on that occasion and the role of Kosovo as the "Serbian Jerusalem" will be explored in a later chapter.[17]

In recent years more and more attention has been focused on the roles of the key leaders in the tragedy that followed. Indeed one view is that Yugoslavia didn't fall: it was pushed. The country "was deliberately and systematically killed off by men who had nothing to gain and everything to lose from a peaceful transition from state socialism and one-party rule to free-market democracy."[18] Milan Kučan, a political opportunist in Slovenia, was part of this effort, while Tudjman in Croatia wanted to create a Croatian state at the expense of the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims.

In the 1980s the central government in Belgrade had, for example, been cracking down on Croatian nationalists for some time. Belgrade thought that Croatia and Slovenia were too closely tied

to the West, while the nationalists argued that the East was backward and that there were too many Serbs in control. Tudjman used the old ethnic horror stories to create his mass movement demanding Croatian sovereignty. Bosnian Muslims were, in his view, Islamized Croats and therefore Croatia had to expand in the direction of Bosnia, or, alternatively, they were the tools of the global Muslim conspiracy that wanted to use Bosnia as a springboard into Europe.[19]

Serb nationalists and Belgrade intellectuals (who drafted a memo in 1986 demanding the protection of Serbs in Kosovo from "Albanian genocide") were also part of the mix. Slobodan Milošević used both groups in a bid to seize power in Serbia first and then continue to control the rest of Yugoslavia as Tito's successor. In 1991, when that agenda disintegrated in the face of Slovenian and Croatian resistance, Milošević shifted his aim to creating as large a Serbian state as possible at the expense of the other ethnic groups. Serb groups in Albania, Bosnia, Slovenia, and Croatia therefore had to be supported since they were Serbian footholds in those areas.[20]

Control over the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and other coercive components of the state apparatus was key to these endeavors. The armed forces of any communist state were part of huge bureaucracies that were horizontally and vertically integrated into one big state plan. The elimination of communism would produce efficiencies that would entail the elimination of a vast part of that bureaucracy. Thus the livelihood of those people working in that bureaucracy was put at risk. The Yugoslav army's leadership targeted enemies who perhaps were not there as part of a bid to retain power. Slovenia was singled out as the first scapegoat, an action that produced the Ten-Day War in June 1991.[21]

Tito's communist system of control over Yugoslavia was based on a federal state in Belgrade that controlled the Communist Party, the police, and the army. When he died in 1980, the balance between the three could not be held in check because that balance was based on the charismatic control of one man. Throughout the 1980s the Yugoslav army was becoming a state within a state, with 60 percent of its officers drawn from Serbia and Montenegro. The Yugoslav army also had the Kontraobaveštajna služba (KOS), its own

counterintelligence service, and the army also controlled the massive Yugoslav arms industry. Yugoslavia sold weapons to whomever would pay, offering everything from AKM assault rifles to T-72 tanks (called the M-84 in Yugoslav army service). Hard currency flowed into Belgrade, and the arms factories concentrated in Bosnia flourished under JNA control.[22]

The political police (UDB) were predominantly Serbian and highly decentralized into each province. The UDB conducted covert overseas terror campaigns against Croatian and Slovenian émigré nationalist groups located in Germany, Italy, and Austria. This naturally increased the animosity between Croatia and Belgrade.[23]

Legislative weaknesses compounded the problem. Were the leaders of the republics and provinces representative of all of the different ethnic groups in their particular province or were they supposed to represent only their own ethnic group members? Proportionate representation was no longer guaranteed. In Kosovo, for example, the Albanian majority did not want the minority Serbian population to determine their destiny. Belgrade bureaucrats did not like the closer Slovenian economic relationship with the West and instituted controls that in turn irritated the Slovenians. The Serb population in Croatia was agitated by the pro-Nazi wartime record of the Croatians. Anti-Croatian rhetoric increased, as did demands for less Croatian control over the Serb population. Meanwhile an Islamic revival in Bosnia, fueled by increased contact between Bosnian Muslim expatriates working in the Middle East, prompted Belgrade to initiate a virulent propaganda campaign that even included Stalinesque show trials.[24]

A serious aggravating factor that would appear later in the Balkan wars of the 1990s was the presence of the Territorial Defense Forces. Under Tito small arms and heavy weapons had been stockpiled in decentralized depots. In the event of external attack on Yugoslavia a trained partisan organization would collect the weapons and conduct guerrilla warfare against the invader. With a collapsing federal system, the security of the depots could not be guaranteed, and the partisan organizations were politically unreliable since they consisted of the various ethnic groups in each republic or province. The existence of such an organization was a criti-

cal factor in the rush to violence: the partisan groups could fight the JNA with sophisticated weapons.[25]

The collapse of Soviet communism and the resultant instability in eastern Europe are other critical factors in the collapse of Yugoslavia. In essence the Soviet empire was Yugoslavia writ large: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics consisted of more than one hundred ethnic groups, which were kept in check by a combination of military might, secret police organizations like the KGB, and the structure of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The early movements toward a more democratically representative system initiated under Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s loosened the bonds enough to allow chafing at the edges. In 1986 there were mass riots and deaths in Kazakhstan. In 1987 Crimean Tatars demonstrated in Moscow. By 1988 Nagorno-Karabakh had exploded into violence, followed by Georgia and Azerbaijan in 1990.[26]

By 1989 the Warsaw Pact system was disintegrating. The first indications were mass demonstrations in Rumania and the occupation of the Berlin Wall. Poland, already isolated within the Warsaw Pact system in the wake of the shipyard strike and subsequent Solidarity movement of 1980, was ready to change governments. Then the fervor spread to the Baltic states. This was a little too close to home for Moscow, and troops were dispatched to Lithuania in February 1990. In January 1991 there was nearly a war with Latvia. In August 1991 Communist Party hardliners, led by the head of the KGB, attempted a coup against Gorbachev. Thus the mighty Soviet Union was destabilized, and the situation was suddenly very, very unclear. Although the Berlin Wall had been torn down by this time, there were still half of a million Soviet troops in the former East Germany. Peace in newly freed eastern Europe was by no means secure.[27]

It is no coincidence that the breakup of Yugoslavia that began in 1990 and 1991 occurred at the same time the Warsaw Pact was dissolved and the future existence of the Soviet Union thrown into doubt. Like the collapse of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires after World War I, the collapse of the Soviet system at the end of the Cold War provided nationalist groups in the Yugoslav republics and provinces with new opportunities. There was no lon-

FIG. 1. Kosovo

ger a strong communist federal structure to hold them in check as there had been at the end of World War II. The first republic to go was Slovenia, and that was where Canada first got involved in the Balkans.

Why the Canadian Army Deployed to the Balkans, 1991–1999

The Ten-Day War between Slovenia and the federal government in Belgrade resulted in a Yugoslav defeat and produced the Brioni Agreement, which called for the withdrawal of Yugoslav army troops from the new country. The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (now called the OSCE) was asked to mediate the ceasefire, and the European Community was subcontracted to provide an observer force to do just that. The parties to the agreement, however, wanted American or Canadian observers on the newly formed European Community Monitor Mission so that the European members would be kept honest. When fighting started between the Yugoslav army and the Croatians in the aftermath of the Ten-Day War, the ECMM was expanded so that it could bro-

ker ceasefires. The first Canadian peace observation troops arrived to serve with the ECMM in the fall of 1991.[28]

Canadian involvement at this point was motivated by several factors. First, Canada had developed a credibility problem with its closest allies in NATO. After the Berlin Wall was brought down late in 1989, the Canadian government abruptly announced that its NATO forces stationed in Europe—4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade and 1 Canadian Air Group—would be brought home and the bases in Germany closed. This move was a purely bureaucratic one and made without consideration of the damage it could cause to Canada's relations with the new Europe. Meanwhile war broke out in the Persian Gulf when Iraq invaded Kuwait. This dangerous situation had the potential to drastically affect the European economy and thus Canada's economy, not to mention the fact that the Iraqi regime was reported to be developing nuclear weapons that could threaten other Canadian interests in the region. The Canadian government made a minimalist contribution to fight Iraq and refused to send ground troops. For all intents and purposes it appeared that Canada was adopting an isolationist stance in the new world order.[29]

The decisions behind these two actions require further study. There is one school of thought suggesting that some in the Canadian foreign policy establishment were convinced that the United Nations would come into its own now that the world order was no longer based on superpower influence and NATO was therefore less important as a pillar of Canadian security. Canada could thus cater to the third world and not the first. Such views, as the 1990s bore out, were naïve and optimistic. Be that as it may, Canada's decision to participate in the ECMM operation was an attempt to regain some influence with European allies.[30] Why was this important?

Canadian participation in the ECMM and the other Balkan operations, including Operation Kinetic in Kosovo, are the result of a long-standing Canadian strategic tradition called Forward Security.

In the most fundamental terms the purpose of the Canadian government is to physically protect Canadian citizens. This protection takes many forms: health care, pensions for the elderly,

and law enforcement. Canadians also require and demand a certain standard of living and opportunities for self-improvement. Therefore the protection of the means by which these things are provided is critical. Canada has never been and cannot be completely self-sufficient. Consequently the economic health of the country and the protection of it is necessary so that Canadians can enjoy prosperity. These factors have remained the same since Canadian Confederation in 1867.[31]

In essence these are the predominant Canadian values on which the nation is based. The primary threat to these Canadian values since 1867 has been totalitarianism, which is, according to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, a political philosophy that demands "a centralized dictatorial form of government requiring complete subservience to the state." Such a political system is inherently violent and seeks to destroy individual liberty. Individual liberty is fundamental to having a personally fulfilling and economically prosperous society.

So when Canada's closest cultural connections and trading partners in Europe were threatened by Nazi, Italian, and Japanese totalitarianism during World War II and Soviet totalitarianism during the Cold War, Canada deployed troops to Europe. In the first case Canadian troops fought against the Nazi and fascist forces, while in the second Canada was a member of NATO seeking to deter the Soviets in Europe and supporting UN peacekeeping to prevent the Soviets, the Chinese, and their surrogates from forays into the developing world.

In the post–Cold War world there are still some totalitarian states that have the potential to threaten Canadian interests. The Russian "kleptocracy" that emerged from the totalitarian Soviet Union may in fact be more dangerous than the former Soviet Union.[32] Those totalitarian states have, however, been supplemented by other emergent threats. Technological and media developments have produced new weapons that groups of people without allegiance to any state can use to affect a country's interests. Thus the level of violence can be quite high and disproportionate to the numbers of people involved. An individual can kill three hundred people with a truck bomb. A religious cult can use nerve gas against

commuters. A local warlord decides to kill off the competing clan for control over humanitarian aid. A small nation of one million people can acquire a nuclear capability and the means to deliver it. Tribal loyalties may override weak national governments, and huge, forced population movements might affect the economic and political status quo of neighboring states. In other words, widespread effective violence and chaos in the post–Cold War world is as much a threat to Canadian interests in some regions as totalitarian states.[33]

Forward security is then a strategic tradition that seeks to keep violent conflict away from North America and to keep crises overseas from developing into conflicts that can affect Canada's allies and trading partners. Both assure the physical and economic protection of Canadian citizens.

Forward security was operating in the background when Canada joined the European Community mission in 1991. As the situation in the Balkans deteriorated later that year, however, forward security again was reestablished as the prime Canadian motivator when the UN asked members to deploy troops in Croatia, particularly when KFOR was created in 1999.

The sheer geographical proximity of the collapsing Yugoslavia to Canada's European neighbors might have been enough to trigger Canadian involvement: this was not some remote African or Asian slaughterhouse. Indeed it boggled the mind that the front lines in Croatia and the massacres in Bosnia were less than a day's drive from the bases of Canadian Forces in Lahr and Baden-Soellingen, Germany.

By the end of 1991 the instability in the disintegrating Yugoslavia was associated with political and economic uncertainty in the former communist states in eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union (which was dissolved that year). Potential instability north of Yugoslavia came in two varieties. First, there was no guarantee that the newly freed states of the new Russia would not succumb to some new form of totalitarian control. It was possible, as the events of August 1991 demonstrated, that Communist Party hardliners could mount coups d'état. There was also the problem of who had control of the estimated twenty-six thousand Soviet

nuclear weapons, many of which were pointed at Canada and the United States.[34] Second, there was serious concern about the future of the united Germany in the new Europe. Would Germany follow the old paths that had led to World Wars I and II? Would the new Germany remain a stalwart ally of the West? Would the fever pitch of nationalism reach into the new Germany, too?[35] These were important questions for Canada since it had an estimated eighty thousand war dead buried in Europe as part of the effort to stop German totalitarianism during the course of the twentieth century, plus several hundred Canadian soldiers and airmen who had died while serving with NATO forces in Europe during the Cold War.

Placed in the historical context of World War I, the situation in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s appeared to some to be shaping up into a German-Russian proxy fight that could drag in allies on either side. Croatia was cultivating Germany with pleas of help for Catholic Croatians beset by "atheistic" Serb communists, while Belgrade was appealing to Moscow out of pan-Slavic unity to contain "German-sponsored fascism."[36] As one journalist noted, "This was utter nonsense, but it was nonsense which a large number of men with heavy weaponry believed."[37] If the situation was not contained, it could easily get out of control and put the world back to the pre-1990 status quo or worse.

After the European Community decided that a western European peacekeeping force was out of the question, the United Nations spent most of the spring of 1992 setting up and deploying a United Nations peacekeeping force to Croatia. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was designed to implement the Vance Agreement, whereby the UN would guarantee the security of four ethnic Serbian enclaves in a newly independent Croatia and police the demarcation lines between the belligerents in those areas. Canada deployed a composite battalion group from 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade in Lahr, Germany, to UNPROFOR; this was called Operation Harmony.[38]

Soon after the Canadian Battalion (CANBAT) settled into its positions in May and June 1992, Bosnia-Hercegovina was the next Yugoslav republic to disintegrate. UNPROFOR's logistic airhead and headquarters were situated in Sarajevo, which was quiet at the

time. Now UNPROFOR's "rear area" was a triethnic battle zone between Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Muslims. CANBAT 1 was then tasked to redeploy to Sarajevo to secure the airport for the UN in July 1992. This was the start of the next phase of the Balkan wars.[39]

Thus far Slovenia was out of the conflict: the federal forces were gone and nobody was harassing ethnic minorities. Croatia was frozen in place, albeit temporarily. Now pent-up murderous rage broke out in Bosnia. It was as if each Yugoslav republic was lining up in turn to confront anarchy and violence. The lines in Bosnia stabilized, and a second UN force, UNPROFOR II, was established to provide armed protection to humanitarian relief operations in the region.[40] Canada then deployed a battle group (CANBAT 2) as part of this effort in the winter of 1992. This operation was called Cavalier. In addition, Operation Air Bridge was also mounted. This mission involved the use of a specially modified Air Command CC-130 transport and ground support deployed to work alongside other NATO members flying in humanitarian air relief to Sarajevo.

UNPROFOR II's mandate was unclear and resulted in some mutation throughout 1993. CANBAT 2 therefore wound up not only escorting convoys but maintaining the line between the belligerents in its area of operations and rotating into one of three established UN safe areas to deter Bosnian Serb attacks against predominantly Bosnian Muslim populations. To make matters worse, Croatia stepped up support for the Bosnian Croats against both the Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims, which in turn increased Belgrade's assistance to the Bosnian Serbs. Strategically the situation in Bosnia, combined with the situation in Croatia, remained explosive in that it could prompt Germany, Russia, and others to increase their support to the belligerent forces, perhaps in other areas. The Russians were particularly upset with the events in Bosnia, particularly NATO air support for UN forces, and even rattled their nuclear sabers on at least one occasion.[41]

The situation once again turned critical in 1993. Macedonia, another of the Yugoslav republics, declared independence. This move increased fears that the violence in Croatia and Bosnia would continue its march south. Macedonians feared that Belgrade, as

well as Albania or Bulgaria, might take advantage of the situation and take over. The government in Skopje requested deployment of a UN force to act as a trip wire on its borders with these three states. Thus the United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) was formed. A Canadian company group from CANBAT 2 deployed in January 1993 as part of this operation. In addition the European Community mission deployed Canadian observers to Albania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia to act as listening posts so that any move by those states toward the use of force could be countered diplomatically.[42]

Instability dominoing south in the Balkans was as detrimental to Canadian interests as the instability that could affect relations to the north. The most important problem here was the poor state of relations between Greece and Turkey. These two NATO members had nearly gone to war four times in the 1960s over ethnic cleansing and intolerance on the island of Cyprus. Canada was instrumental in establishing a NATO-backed UN peacekeeping force, UNFICYP, in 1964.[43] The Greeks and Turks remained at loggerheads over Cyprus well into the 1990s. Turkey, where Islam predominated, had an affinity with the Muslims in Bosnia, Macedonia, and Albania, while the Greeks were Orthodox Christians, like the Serbs. To complicate matters even further the Greeks were extremely upset with the Macedonians over what they viewed as the appropriation of the name "Macedonia." Macedonia could be caught in a squeeze play that in turn could domino into a war between Greece and Turkey. Turkey abutted members of the Russian Federation, which supported the Serbs in Belgrade. It was not in Canada's best interests to step back and allow this conflagration to proceed any further, particularly if the possibility of aggressive Russian involvement existed.

The Canadian contribution to peace operations in the Balkans was significant: there were military observers working with the European Community, military observers working with the UN, two battle groups and a logistics battalion attached to the UN forces, and a transport aircraft. In time practically every unit in the Canadian Army would rotate through the former Yugoslavia. To apply even more pressure to belligerents, Canada also participated in

Operation Sharp Guard, a combined NATO–Western European Union (WEU) naval interception force designed to enforce UN economic sanctions against Belgrade. As with the army and its units in UNPROFOR, practically every Canadian naval ship would rotate through this mission, as would a number of Air Command Aurora maritime patrol aircraft.[44]

By 1995 UNPROFOR was in serious trouble. It was outgunned and understrength. The force suffered from obsolete rules of engagement and a convoluted command system. Elements of UNPROFOR were unreliable, and some took to covertly supporting one or more belligerents. On the whole the force lacked credibility, and the belligerents sensed this. In time the Dutch battalion from UNPROFOR II guarding the Srebrenica UN protected area surrendered to Bosnian Serb forces, and most of the Muslim population were massacred. UNPROFOR I forces, including a Canadian infantry battalion covering the southern Krajina areas, were then overrun by Croatian forces while the Krajina Serb population fled for their lives. The only UN forces left in Croatia were in the Serb-dominated rump of Eastern Slavonia, which the Croatian army was incapable of kicking out. UNPROFOR I and II were disbanded, and a small UN force remained in Eastern Slavonia.

A series of American-led peace initiatives supported by NATO consensus and threats to bomb Serb military targets were able to bring all parties in Bosnia to meet and agree on a ceasefire. The resulting mechanism to secure the peace was a NATO peacekeeping force, Implementation Force (IFOR). Operation Joint Endeavor was supposed to last for one year, starting in December 1995. Its mandate was to separate the belligerent forces and enforce the ceasefire. Unlike UNPROFOR, IFOR was fully capable of using a wide range of military force to accomplish its mandate: IFOR had attack helicopters, tanks, massed air support, and plenty of infantry. Even more important was that IFOR commanders had the will to use these tools to intimidate the belligerent forces from all sides and thus pressure them into complying with the ceasefire.[45]

Canada decided to contribute several discrete units that would fit into a British division controlling one of the IFOR sectors. Unlike the UNPROFOR contributions, the Canadian IFOR troops