Air Operations for Strategic Effect –

theory and practice in Kosovo

Milosevic.

By Group Captain Peter W Gray, Director of Defence Studies RAF

People have preferred to feel rather than to know about strategic bombing.

Dr Noble Frankland[1]

As befitting an operational aviator, as well as being the co-author of the official history of the World War II Strategic Air Offensive against Germany[2], Frankland was an air power enthusiast from the classic mould. He considered strategic bombing to be at the heart of air power[3] – the vital characteristic that set air power apart from land and naval warfare. His sentiments in the opening quotation remain as relevant now as they were in the aftermath of the Second World War. Much of the public debate[4] during the Kosovo campaign tended, in volume if nothing else, towards the emotional end of the spectrum rather than the analytical. A considerable quantity of material was published over the crisis with the more serious arguments ranging from the moral and legal issues through to technical matters. One of the most common themes, however, was the debate that centred on whether air power could win the day on its own. The 'armchair generals'[5] and some academics on the one hand suggested that only an overwhelming ground force could secure the province of Kosovo. Others (arguably the more enlightened) kept faith in the efficacy of air power, but without necessarily advocating its utility in isolation. One of the more striking results from the debate was the 'conversion' of military historian John Keegan[6] whose implacable opposition to the 'air power alone' theory was overturned by Milosevic's eventual capitulation.

This apparent victory for air power will continue to generate debate for years to come – not least because the real reasons for Milosevic's actions will remain, at best, highly classified and may well be interred with his bones. As stated by General Jumper in the last issue of this Review,[7] we must be wary of drawing generic lessons from such an idiosyncratic operation. This does not, however, suggest that the debate is sterile: indeed analysis is highly relevant at all levels, from the implications for the assumptions that underpinned the United Kingdom's Strategic Defence Review, through the technical merits of specific weaponry, to the robustness of national and NATO doctrine.

It would be neither practical nor appropriate for this article to attempt to cover all of this ground. But with the ink barely dry on the third edition of AP 3000 – British Air Power Doctrine, it is timely to examine the use of air power for strategic effect in the light of the Kosovo air operation.[8] This article will therefore cover the – often competing – theories of strategic air power and coercion; the legacy of air power operations in the Balkans; the political build up to Operation ALLIED FORCE; the air war itself; and finally the robustness of British air power doctrine in the wake of NATO's first offensive operation.

THE THEORY

The various theories and counter-theories of the strategic use of air power have already filled innumerable pages. Authors have invariably felt that they are bound to cover the story of the birth of the Royal Air Force and its subsequent fight for survival. Some versions of the story have been the result of scholarly research;[9] others, however, have been rather superficial with selective analysis chosen to complement the theme of the host book. The essence of the plot is that Trenchard inherited (from his rival, and fellow CAS, General Sir Frederick Sykes) a plan for a bombing strategy aimed at dislocating the enemy's key industries. Trenchard's position gradually switched from implacable opposition (based on the impracticalities of the scheme) to fulsome support. Trenchard heavily emphasized the damage that air attack could wreak on enemy morale. He believed wholeheartedly that air power must be used as an offensive weapon and that the defence of the United Kingdom could best be achieved by hitting the enemy so hard that he had to reallocate valuable offensive resources to the defence of the home land. Trenchard was well aware of the practical difficulties of intercepting bombers, particularly as the performance of the fighters was often worse than that of their targets. His emphasis on the importance of offensive action has remained a constant theme in the history of air power thinking. Developments in radar technology and aircraft such as the Spitfire, however, radically changed the Trenchard concept of air superiority, albeit with considerable reluctance from those air force staff who had been brought up on a diet of strategic bombing.[10] The benefit of forcing the enemy to increase his investment in defence was also seen during the bomber offensives in both World Wars.[11]

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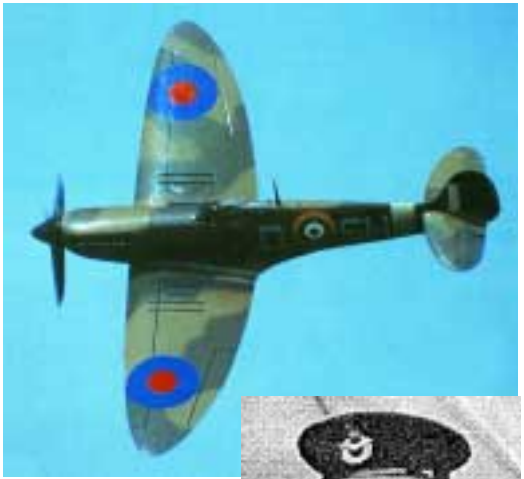
The very survival of the fledgling Air Force was also understandably high on Trenchard's agenda. As post-Great War budgets were slashed, the RAF needed its own, distinct role. If air power was primarily in support of land and naval forces, assets could be redistributed with an appropriate saving in organisation costs – and then the junior service would probably be allowed to wither on the vine. The strategic bombing role offered both a lifeline for the RAF and a cudgel with which to beat sister services in the scrimmage for funding. As this was a continuing process, the concept of strategic bombing became embedded in the RAF psyche, particularly under the charismatic leadership of 'Boom' Trenchard. The vision of strategic bombing in which fleets



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of invincible aircraft would strike terror into the hearts of the enemy populace causing their total collapse was not, however, born out by the technological realities of the inter war years – or even until the advent of nuclear weapons.

In practical terms, however, the RAF needed a role in which air power could be utilised and developed in parallel with the mantra of strategic bombing. The use of aircraft for imperial policing provided this outlet.[12] Notwithstanding some of the more bellicose sentiments expressed over the strategic bombing concept, it was evident in the execution of the policing duties that causing widespread casualties was not the aim. In fact Sir John Slessor makes it plain in his description of operations that efforts were made to avoid such an outcome.[13] Briefings to the RAF Staff College over the inter-war years highlight the pragmatic approach to real operations. Colonel Philip Meilinger[14] quotes a presentation by Tedder in 1934 to describe the doctrine as being an air strategy for paralysis – not obliteration. This description is particularly apposite in the light of the relevant chapter in the newly issued third edition of AP 3000.[15]

British Air Power Doctrine recognizes a single centre of gravity at the strategic and operational levels, but not in the tactical arena (unlike other forces that accept a number of centres at each of the higher levels). This article will concentrate primarily on air operations for strategic effect. This effect could theoretically be created by independent and distinct use of air power alone, or, more likely, it will be part of joint or multi-national activity. Air operations for strategic effect are aimed to destroy or disrupt the defined strategic centre of gravity of an opponent.[16] It is worth emphasising at this point that the *effect* sought by the use of air power may not necessarily be the physical destruction of the chosen target set. Indeed, the centre of gravity may not be the enemy's army (which Clausewitz saw as being the natural choice); it may be as ephemeral as a despot's ability to further his family's fortunes and influence. Warden[17] has suggested that attacking the

leadership of a foe could lead to strategic paralysis, thereby possibly obviating the need for attacks on fielded forces. Air assets other than attack aircraft may, however, be involved in strategic air operations. Activities such as supervision of a no-fly zone or the provision of relief supplies may have strategic effect, depending on the circumstances prevailing at the time.

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The objective of strategic air operations, consistent with the tenets of manoeuvre warfare, is to shatter the enemy's cohesion and will – not just to destroy men and materiel. Target sets will have been selected, as part of the estimate process, for their strategic relevance and may include the machinery of government, military forces, infrastructure and so forth. Given the flexibility of air power, other targets at the operational and tactical levels may be attacked in parallel with, or subsequent to, strategic operations. The target sets at this high level of operations, and the weapons proposed, will inevitably excite considerable political, legal and humanitarian interest in the highest spheres of governmental machinery. Whilst the military preference is for the espousal of a clear political aim followed by centralised planning and then decentralised execution, it is entirely proper in a democratically accountable structure that political oversight is maintained. This is bound to be most appropriate, and most contentious, at the strategic level. The possible necessity of maintaining coalition solidarity may make this aspect of an operation or campaign particularly fraught.

A study of the historical uses of air power at the strategic level suggests a number of possible lessons that may influence coalition planning. The actual shock of aerial bombardment may be sufficient on its own to influence the target government – particularly if the intended victim has been sceptical as to the will of his foe. The psychology of this type of operations is at best hugely difficult and, more probably, such that each case is *sui generis*. The actual effect of the attack, rather than just the damage assessment, is extremely difficult to assess, particularly if it has been accompanied by information operations. The US operation against the Gaddafi regime in 1986 is held by some to have been successful in its shock effect; but it is by no means certain that ELDORADO CANYON did little more than force Libya to be more covert in its support for terrorism.[18]

A concerted bombing offensive can have a profound effect on a target population. In a democratic state with open media, this may result in increased pressure on the ruling elite. In any event it may well force the target government

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to reallocate scarce assets to defence of the homeland.[19] The less accountable the leadership of the target state, however, or the more 'total' the war, the less likely they are to bow to public opinion. Furthermore, measuring 'public morale' is hardly a scientific art in any country let alone one that is subject to police control, censorship and propaganda.

Any dealings with a state such as Milosevic's Serbia must make these options at best questionable. The majority of the press is firmly under state control and the Interior Ministry Police would ensure that serious unrest did not become a threat. Hoping for the populace to pressurise a dictator may be overly optimistic. Furthermore an external threat would tend more to unite the people behind Milosevic, particularly if the potential aggressor had taken up cudgels on behalf of the loathed Albanian neighbours. Nor are the Serbs slow to exhibit a marked tendency towards national martyrdom – particularly over Kosovo with its historic connections to the infamous Battle on the Field of Blackbirds in 1389. Drawing too many examples from the historical use of strategic bombing may be counter-productive. An analysis of more recent usage of air power in the Balkans could therefore be more useful.

THE LEGACY OF AIR POWER IN THE BALKANS – DELIBERATE FORCE

The break up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia shortly after the successful end to the Gulf War has occasioned veritable rain forests of literature, both in the open press and in academic research papers. It is well outside the scope of this article even to review a sample of the works, let alone describe the dissolution of Tito's legacy. Suffice it to say that the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (JNA) had failed to prevent the secession of Slovenia in the Summer of 1991 and the world was subsequently reminded of the potential brutality of violence in the region as Serbs and Croats fought out their bitter struggle in the border areas of Croatia. As the first peacekeeping troops entered that country in early 1992, the few Balkan specialists watched the area with mounting trepidation, anticipating an upsurge of violence in the multi-ethnic state of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosnian Serb paramilitary units had formed in anticipation of Muslim-led calls for secession, greatly aided by the JNA who released war stocks of weaponry to their Serbian brethren. Bosnia withdrew from Yugoslavia in March 1992, resulting in immediate conflagration as the Bosnian Serbs sought to use their military potential for maximum territorial gain.

The first air power on the scene, almost inevitably, were AWACS aircraft in support of the NATO/WEU operation to enforce the arms embargo (SHARP GUARD). (In addition, the Sarajevo airlift began on 2 July 1992.) United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 781 prohibited all military flight operations over Bosnia and Operation SKY WATCH soon reported that the ban was being observed only in the breach. This was followed on 31 March 1993 by the issue of UNSCR 816 which banned all flights not authorised by the UN; SKY WATCH was replaced by DENY FLIGHT and policing of the No-Fly Zone began in earnest. Further air power missions were added to the DENY FLIGHT folder including the option to use Close Air Support for relief of UN peacekeepers under attack. The whole operation was fraught with problems. HQ 5 ATAF, under whose command the operation fell, was ill-equipped to handle an operation of the complexity of DENY FLIGHT, let alone undertake an extensive offensive campaign.[20] The practical situation was exacerbated by the often delicate relationship between the UN and NATO. There was considerable concern that a rash NATO air attack, possibly fuelled by high level political frustration, could seriously endanger the lives of the peacekeepers on the ground.[21] This resulted in the so-called dual-key approach under which a given target had to be approved at high level in

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both organisations.[22] Air power was used on occasions such as the attack on Ubdina airfield in late 1994; NATO proudly announced that this had been the largest air raid in Europe since World War II – Richard Holbrooke described it in horror as being closer to 'pinpricks'.[23] General Sir Michael Rose defended similar actions as being 'textbook examples of the precise use of force in a peacekeeping mission'.[24] From these two viewpoints, it is evident that perceptions are all-important.

As the months went by, the situation in Bosnia continued to deteriorate. The UN's worst fears were realised in May 1995 when the Bosnian Serbs took 370 (largely French) peacekeepers hostage following NATO bombing of ammunition depots at Pale. Srebrenica fell to a brutal assault in mid-July and the clamour within the international community for 'something to be done' rose to yet another peak. NATO planning within AFSOUTH had by this time improved to the point whereby suitable Bosnian Serb targets had been identified throughout the theatre – including 'indirect' targets such as bridges and command facilities.[25] These indirect targets were specifically chosen to increase the level of coercive pain levered on the Bosnian Serbs.

On 28 August 1995, a mortar bomb exploded in a Sarajevo marketplace killing 68 people. The Bosnian government blamed the Serbs. The Bosnian Serbs blamed the Muslims for firing on their own people in an attempt to provoke a NATO response.[26] There then followed a short delay while plans were finalised and, more importantly, UN forces were allowed to take up positions that they could defend. DELIBERATE FORCE started in the early hours of 30 August 1995. Some 220 fighter aircraft and 70 support aircraft from the US, UK, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Greece, Turkey, Spain and France took part, generally flying four or five 'packages' of aircraft on each day that weather allowed operations. Some 3515 sorties were flown delivering 1026 weapons against 48 targets.[27] For presentational purposes, the NATO attacks were carried out as part of the campaign to protect the safe areas – directly and indirectly. It is obvious, however, from Holbrooke that any coercion of the Bosnian Serbs towards a peace settlement would be beneficial.[28] Furthermore, the air campaign was materially assisting an ongoing Croatian Army[29]/Muslim ground offensive – much to the discomfort of the Bosnian Serb Army who found that the concentrations of tanks and artillery necessary to counter this assault made excellent targets for air power. Holbrooke suggested to Milosevic that the air campaign was not coordinated with the ground offensive, but later in his account admits to having advised President Tudjman of Croatia as to which towns his troops should occupy to facilitate later negotiations.[30] The marked escalation in external military involvement resulted in a new momentum for the talks' process.

Wright-Paterson Air Force Base in Dayton Ohio was chosen as the venue for substantive talks between the erstwhile warring factions. The delegates arriving from the Balkans by air had to walk past ramps laden with operational aircraft, leaving the Serbs in no doubt as to the scale of air resources available to an American led coalition. For many commentators and participants the use of air power was decisive. Carl Bildt, however, correctly brings the enthusiasts back to earth with the reminder that the key events were political rather than military – not least because the US administration was at last prepared actually to recognise

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politically the Bosnian Serb entity[31] (this had stymied earlier attempts at a settlement).

Beyond the implication that DELIBERATE FORCE had galvanised both sides into negotiating a settlement at Dayton, it is always difficult to penetrate the Stygian gloom of Belgrade politics. Milosevic had already been seen to have sold out the Krajina Serbs; he then confounded the 'Greater Serbia' theorists by supporting Dayton. Some key factors can, however, be identified. There was a marked improvement in the terms on offer at Dayton with the recognition of the Bosnian Serb entity. What is more, Russia was fully integrated into the political process[32] and would certainly not have supported Belgrade militarily. After months of dithering, which Milosevic would have perceived as endemic weakness, the international community had sanctioned the use of air power on a significant scale and showed no signs of relenting in its use. Again from the Serbian perspective (both in Belgrade and Pale), Western resources must have appeared unlimited. Finally there was the risk, from Milosevic's perspective, that coalition air power would increasingly be coordinated with Croat/Muslim ground forces and that more Bosnian Serb territory would be lost in action than at the conference table. Even though Milosevic has consistently shown himself to be a master tactician (rather than a strategist), his evil genius almost certainly appreciated the prospect of the 'keener' elements of the international community becoming bogged down in policing the settlement for years knowing that the alternative would leave him or his successors a clear field.

THE KOSOVO AIR OPERATION

The background to the most recent crisis in Kosovo has excited considerable and understandable interest. The literature on the Balkans has increased exponentially over the last decade; it will, however, be many years before a neutral and authoritative account is available. In the meantime the would-be student needs to retain the mental health warning that many authors have prepared their works with the sound of axes being sharpened in the background. A visit to the region in search of first hand research would almost inevitably result in a series of contradictory history lessons, usually accompanied by the selective use of maps and washed down with Slivovitz. For the purposes of this article, it is sufficient to go back to 1987 when the Serbian Communist Party *apparatchik* Slobodan Milosevic latched onto the plight of the Kosovo Serbs as a vehicle for his own rise to power.[33] He stripped Kosovo, and the Hungarian majority area of Vojvodina, of their status as Autonomous Provinces and vainly attempted in the former to redress the population balance by importing Serbs who had been displaced from other regions. The ethnic Albanian population still outnumbered the Serbs by a huge margin. Their 'shadow' economy and political system functioned well; while Sarajevo was under siege and Belgrade was in the grip of economic sanctions, Pristina appeared almost prosperous[34] in comparison with other parts of the Balkans – not least because the Kosovo Albanian economy was supported by hard currency remittances from the diaspora. This stability was maintained under the benign rule of Ibrahim Rugova whose pacifist stance[35] tended to reduce the possibility of strife. But no one was naïve enough to doubt that Milosevic would not hesitate to inflame the situation if domestic politics required a diversion, or if the Albanians openly espoused independence.

The aftermath of the Dayton agreement traumatised the ethnic Albanians – particularly as Lord Owen's consistent calls for the plight of Kosovo to be included in the settlement were ignored. Their policy of non-violence had not worked. The subsequent (but unconnected) collapse into anarchy of Albania in 1997 resulted in an almost unlimited supply of weapons becoming available, and the scope for armed insurrection suddenly opened. This mounting frustration, along with a massive influx of light weaponry, resulted in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) growing from a minor bunch of disillusioned ex-patriates into a serious threat to the Serbian authorities. The cycle of violence expanded with the inevitable counter-offensives through 1998. The spectre of massacres, ethnic cleansing and other atrocities prompted the international community into the Rambouillet talks process.[36] Milosevic could not accept the terms on offer. Having come to, and maintained, power on the basis of rabid nationalism, he could not back down without some semblance of a fight. There was a clear risk of secession, and the detail of the agreement contained, from Belgrade's perspective, serious erosions of Serbia's sovereignty.[37] Acceptance would have been political suicide for Milosevic – not a trait for which he is renowned.

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Milosevic may have doubted the will of the international community and almost certainly bargained on NATO not being able to maintain its cohesion. He must also have hoped that Russia would not tolerate an open attack on a fellow Slav sovereign state and would have anticipated a veto on Chapter VII action in the UN Security Council. Although Serbia's own respect for international law is less than comprehensive, Milosevic may also have reckoned on the international community taking a conservative approach based on the absolute sovereignty of nation states. In the event, Milosevic miscalculated. The West was quite clear that military action was justified as an exceptional measure to prevent an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe.[38]

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It could be argued that an analysis of NATO strategy in the lead-up to the campaign would be as doomed to confusion as an attempt to rationalise Balkan history. It is evident that many hoped that the mere exercise of military force would be sufficient to make Milosevic realise his ultimate destiny. This apparent optimism may have been based on realisation of coalition fragility, rather than cold military appreciation. NATO options varied from a limited conventional attack against fixed military targets across Serbia through to a 2-phase operation against specific Kosovo related military targets.[39] At first sight, it would appear that these options would have given NATO the flexibility to apply air power to a wide range of targets. Therein lies the probable rub. Too extensive a range would undoubtedly have been politically unacceptable to the less committed members of the alliance. And a hesitant campaign would have allowed Milosevic's small paramilitary units to get inside the Alliance decision making loop. The subsequent disconnect in NATO aims may have become evident in the publicly stated war aims of its leaders. SACEUR, General Wesley Clark, stated in a NATO briefing on 25 March 1999 that:

> "We're going to systematically and progressively attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate, and ultimately – unless President Milosevic complies with the demand of the international community – we're going to destroy these forces and their facilities and support."

On the other hand, Lieutenant General Michael Short, who was the air commander in theatre at the time, subsequently gave evidence to the Senate (and in TV interviews) that there had been severe national differences over the targeting of Serbian centre(s) of gravity. Short stated somewhat graphically that he would have preferred to have

> "gone for the head of the snake on the first night".[40]

It is possible that Clark may have been reflecting NATO appreciation of an operational centre of gravity while his air commander had identified the strategic Centre. This argument would have been consistent with the Service background of the officers concerned – particularly in the classic Clausewitzian desire to destroy the enemy army. The tone of Short's evidence suggests, however, that there was considerable frustration over the high level of (perfectly proper) political control.

Notwithstanding the internal debate, the air operation commenced at 1900 GMT on 24 March 1999 and continued for 78 days. Some 38,004 sorties were flown of which 10,484 were strike missions. The UK flew 1,618 sorties of which 1,008 were strike.[41] The air campaign began with a series of strikes on air defences across Serbia and Montenegro and against a limited number of military targets in Kosovo and elsewhere in Southern Serbia. Targeting policy was under political control in NATO and nationally. Any Western assessments[42] that Milosevic would collapse immediately were quickly shown to be wrong as his special forces and para-military units set about an ethnic cleansing operation of unprecedented brutality. The refugee situation alone threatened the stability of neighbouring Macedonia and Albania. Disquiet in Greece and Italy also made NATO cohesion look questionable.[43] In the event, the combination of Serbian intransigence and extreme brutality only served to confirm the NATO coalition in its determination.

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NATO progressively increased the pace and tempo of the operation, extending the spectrum of targets open for attack.[44] After early objectives had been achieved, including the consolidation of air superiority, NATO was able to shift its focus to the Yugoslav Army's fielded forces.[45] The rate of attrition increased, not least because the weather had started to improve allowing more formations of aircraft to deliver their ordinance without fear of causing collateral damage. The US deployed Apache to Albania, AC130U Spectre Gunships began operations from Italy and the sortie rate overall increased, peaking at close on 800 per day by the end of May.[46] At the same time, ground troops were continuing to form in Macedonia and speculation was mounting in the press that land operations could be attempted in a 'semi-permissive' environment: the hitherto comforting (for Belgrade) mantra that ground troops would not be used in Kosovo had gradually reduced. Milosevic could be in no doubt that NATO cohesion had been maintained and that there was no evidence of diminution of allied appetite for the conflict. Furthermore no real help was forthcoming from Moscow.

Peace talks started to produce results, culminating in the signing, on 9 June, of the Technical Military Agreement which set out how the Serbs would leave Kosovo. NATO peacekeeping troops entered Kosovo on 12 June (a day after a small contingent of Russian troops unexpectedly drove into Pristina). The Serbs evacuated large numbers of troops and military vehicles, claiming that NATO had been duped by simple deception techniques.[47] The inevitable post mortems, 'bean-counts' and so forth will doubtless continue to be bandied around for years to come. Lessons will undoubtedly be learned – provided we remember General Jumper's advice about drawing generic lessons from such an idiosyncratic operation. The mistakes, such as the bombing of the Chinese Embassy and attacks on refugees, will be mulled over. And the sterile debate as to whether air power 'did it alone' will drone on. The bottom line remains, however, that Serbian forces evacuated Kosovo without the loss of 'the bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier'; NATO-led forces are in control, supervising the return of refugees.

What brought about Milosevic's change of heart may never be known. But there are similarities between the end of this conflict and the end of DELIBERATE FORCE. As with Dayton, the peace settlement was an improvement on what was on offer at Rambouillet, not least over specific recognition of Serbian sovereignty. Again Russia had given little more than popular support – the forces of international economics proving stronger than pan-Slav nationalism. The international community had been seen to dither up to the banks of the Rubicon, but having decided to go forward did so with increasing strength and determination. Air power was used on a significant scale against a wide range of targets – not just the military assets. Furthermore, from the Serbian perspective, Western resources must have appeared unlimited (despite articles in the specialist press suggesting otherwise[48]). As with the situation leading up to Dayton, Milosevic must have been concerned that NATO air power was at least being taken advantage of by the KLA.[49] Serbian military responses to KLA action brought troops and equipment out into the open for long enough for the NATO targeting cycle to respond. Finally, Milosevic could again see that the West had become committed to another long sojourn in another area of the Balkans. He may have calculated that coalition capacity to provide ground troops was more limited than the provision of air power, which could have significant ramifications for the next flash point (possibly Montenegro?).

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So how does the doctrine on the use of air power for strategic effect hold up in the light of Operation ALLIED FORCE? Notwithstanding the debate within NATO, this author has been unable to locate an official definition of the enemy strategic centre of gravity. But Milosevic's personal hold on power must have been a reasonable possibility (provided, as always, that success would not have resulted in him being replaced by someone more radical – a very likely contingency in Serbia).

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It is probably too early to say what the long-term effects of the Operation were on Milosevic. He was probably unsettled by his indictment as a war criminal, not least because it left neither him, nor his cronies, with an escape route to comfortable exile.

In the past, Milosevic has adeptly manipulated sanctions regimes and hyperinflation by allowing his cronies to profit from the constrictions in supply and demand. These have almost invariably worked in hard currencies with black marketeers making huge profits on both the transaction and the rate of exchange. Ironically, in previous 'hard times', Kosovo with its remunerations from the diaspora has been a fertile source of Deutchmarks and Swiss francs. The continuing air campaign almost certainly was squeezing the Serbian economy to the point at which there were few profits to be made. Support from corrupt businessmen could only be taken for granted when they had something to gain; if Milosevic could not maintain the momentum of the gravy train, his erstwhile cronies could easily turn against him. This is even more likely if he needs hard currency to be repatriated for the rebuilding of Serbia.

Milosevic has always been an adept politician; he has demonstrated considerable prowess in manipulating the fractured opposition and, at the time of writing, little change is evident on this front. Serbian paramilitary units have been consistent in their support for Milosevic and this is almost bound to continue – mutual support is vital with war crimes indictments on the horizon.[50] Support within the army is probably more fragile. Milosevic has consistently removed potential opposition, but even his hand picked general staff must have become increasingly frustrated with the plight of their troops who had to hide in underground car parks. The ability of air power intelligence assets to identify concentrations of troops can only have added to this trend.

The use of air power for strategic effect is based primarily on the identification of the weak spot in the make up of the enemy, attack on which will lead to his acceptance of diplomatic imperatives: accurate assessment of the enemy's perceptions is vital. The strategy maker then works around the loop to analyse how to attack this weak spot – it may be a centre of gravity, a centre of influence or, indeed, a seam between elements of his decision-making fabric. The next step is to draw up the target list and attack using the best weapons available, or politically acceptable. The consequences of the action are then analysed prior to the cycle repeating. This is not carried out automatically; the battle damage assessment must include an analysis of enemy perceptions and responses to the progress thus far. If necessary, the target set is amended to reflect say a hardening of attitudes. Given the flexibility of air power, other targets at the operational and tactical levels may be attacked in parallel with, or subsequent to, strategic operations.

The full range of strategic targets appears to have been attacked in the Kosovo air operation. Sceptics who insist on counting the men and materiel that have been 'plinked' miss the point that the aim is strategic effect – not the large-scale destruction of physical assets, nor the wholesale lowering of morale. Frankland's quotation is as relevant after Kosovo as it was when he wrote his history of the World War II bombing campaign. That Kosovo is now in NATO hands proves the point.

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NOTES

1 This quotation was also used to start Chapter 6 (entitled Strategic Effect of Air Power) of AP3000 British Air Power Doctrine, Third Edition, (HMSO), 1999' page 2.6.1. The original is from Noble Frankland, *The Bombing Offensive against Germany, Outlines and Perspectives*, (London: Faber and Faber), 1965, page 18. This book was based on his delivery of the University of Cambridge *Lees Knowles Lectures* in 1963.

2 Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany*, (London: HMSO), 1961; 4 volumes.

3 *Outlines and Perspectives*, page 16.

4 For a useful review of the theory of the relationship between the public debate and the inevitably classified reflections of officialdom see Jonathan Mermin, *Debating War and Peace – Media coverage of US Intervention in post-Vietnam era*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999.

5 This rather derogatory term was used by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, on the Radio 4 *Today* programme on the morning of 25 March – after the first night's bombing. For better or worse, the term stuck irrespective of the operational pedigree of those concerned.

6 John Keegan, 'So the bomber got through to Milosevic after all', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1999, page 28. See also John Keegan, 'Yes, we won this war; let's be proud of it.' *Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 1999, page 26. Contrast this with General Sir Michael Rose, 'Peacekeepers fight a better war than bombers', *Sunday Times*, 20 June 1999, page 26.

7 General John Jumper (Commander of US Air Forces in Europe and of Allied Air Forces Central Europe), Kosovo Victory – A Commander's Perspective, *RAF Air Power Review* Vol 2 No 4, December 1999, page 1.

8 Note that, doctrinally, the air operation was part of the overall campaign – not a campaign in its own right.

9 See for example, Air Vice Marshal Tony Mason, *Air Power – a Centennial Appraisal*, (London: Brasseys), 1994, Chapters 1 and 2.

10 R J Overy, *The Air War 1939 –1945*, (New York: Stein and Day), 1980, page 15.

11 Ibid, page 121. See also Tami Davis Biddle, 'British and American Approaches to Strategic Bombing: Their origins and Implementation in the World War II Combined Bomber Offensive', in *Air Power Theory and Practice* ed by John Gooch, (London: Cass), 1995, page 98.

12 See David Omissi, *Air Power and Colonial Control: the Royal Air Force 1919 – 1939*, (New York: St Martins).

13 John C. Slessor, *The Central Blue*, (London: Cassell), 1956 page 62.

14 Philip S Meilinger, 'Trenchard and 'Morale Bombing' the Evolution of Royal Air Force Doctrine Before World War II', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol 60, No 2. April 1996, page 264.

15 British Air Power Doctrine, AP 3000, third edition, (London: HMSO), 1999, Chapter 6.

16 Ibid, page 2.6.1.

17 John A Warden III, *The Air Campaign*, (New York: to Excel), 1998; the original version was first published in 1989 and was highly influential in the Gulf War air campaign.

18 See, for example, Joseph Lepgold, 'Hypotheses on Vulnerability: Are Terrorists and Drug Traffickers Coerceable?' in *Strategic Coercion, Concepts and Cases*, ed by Lawrence Freedman (Oxford: OUP), 1998, pages144-147.

19 Overy, *The Air War 1939 –1945*, page 121.

20 For an authoritative account see Colonel Robert C Owen USAF, 'The Balkans Air Campaign Study', published in two parts in the *Airpower Journal*, Summer and Fall 1997.

21 Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, (New York: The Modern Library), 1998, page 63.

22 General Sir Michael Rose, *Fighting for Peace*, (London: Harvill), 1998, page 160 (for example).

23 Holbrooke, *To End a War*, page 61.

24 Rose, *Fighting for Peace*, page 161.

25 Owen, 'The Balkans Air Campaign Study', page 20.

26 Rose, *Fighting for Peace*, page 43.

27 Owen, 'The Balkans Air Campaign Study', Fall 1997, page 8.

28 Holbrooke, *To End a War*, pages 145 – 150.

29 Thomas Quiggin, Do airstrikes amount to an effective policy?, *RUSI Journal*, April/May 1999 page 17 is quite specific over the involvement of regular Croatian Army troops.

30 Holbrooke, *To End a War*, pages 147 and 160.

31 Carl Bildt, Holbrooke's History, Review Essay, *Survival*, Autumn 1998, page 187.

32 Pauline Neville-Jones, Bosnia after IFOR, *Survival*, Winter 1996-97, pages 45 – 65. This essay gives a UK perspective on the process to balance Holbrooke's somewhat Washington centric view.

33 See for example, Tim Judah, *The Serbs:History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, (Yale: Yale University Press) 1997.

34 But only by prevailing Balkan standards. The author, in his capacity as a Balkans analyst in the Cabinet Office, visited Kosovo in 1993. Two Albanian youths were shot dead in the street outside the author's hotel at about 5.00 AM.

35 Rugova was, and still is, a quietly spoken academic who shunned all question of militant action against the Serbs. He would expound at great length how a softly-softly approach was the only way to challenge the Serbs – even over lunch he was never without his scarf around his neck.

36 For a detailed discussion on the international legal aspects of these talks see Marc Weller, 'The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo', *International Affairs* 75, 2 1999, pages 211 –251. Weller has acted as counsel to the Bosnian Muslims and the Kosovo Albanians.

37 See John Pilger, 'Revealed: the amazing NATO plan, tabled at Rambouillet, to occupy Yugoslavia', *New Statesman*, 17 May 1999. Pilger contended that a full copy of the plan had been published in France but had been suppressed in the UK. His objection was that it allowed NATO unbridled access to any part of Yugoslavia and was therefore an excessive infringement of sovereignty.

38 See the MoD justification on www.mod.uk/dicmt/kosovo/legal.htm. See also Catherine Guicherd, 'International Law and the War in Kosovo', *Survival*, vol 41, no 2, Summer 1999, pages 19-34. AP3000 states correctly on page 1.1.10 that legal opinion is divided over this issue. In a less extreme case than Kosovo, intervention may be more hotly debated.

39 See for example, Rebecca Grant, *The Kosovo Campaign: Aerospace Power Made It Work*, Air Force Association Special Report, Arlington, September 1999, pages 4 – 7.

40 Reported in Greg Seigle, 'USA claims France hindered raids', *Janes Defence Weekly*, 27 October 1999, page 3.

41 Details taken from www.mod.uk/news/kosovo/account/nato.htm on 11 Oct 99.

42 See for example, Sue Cameron, 'Top Brass Brassed Off', *The Spectator* 17 April 1999, page 14.

43 CAS has described NATO cohesion as being its 'Centre of Gravity'. Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns, Presentation to the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators on 21 September 1999.

44 Nick Cook, 'Serb air war changes gear', *Janes Defence Weekly*, 7 April 1999, page 24.

45 Air Cdre Andrew Vallance, 'Kosovo exclusive – a planner's perspective', *Aircraft Illustrated*, September 1999, pages 20 – 23.

46 Kosovo War Diary, *AIR International*, July 1999, pages 14 – 15.

47 'Air Power over Kosovo. A historic victory?, *IISS Strategic Comments*, Vol 5, Issue 7, September 1999.

48 Greg Sample, 'US Cruise missile stocks dwindling', *JDW*, 7 April 1999, page 3.

49 Bryan Bender, 'KLA action fuelled NATO victory', *JDW*, 16 June 1999, page 5.

50 'Foul Play: Serbia's opposition', *The Economist*, 9 October 1999, page 60.