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NATO's 'Peace-Enforcement' Tasks and 'Policy Communities': 1990-1999

Giovanna Bono



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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Lists of Abbreviations</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	xv

Chapter 1

<i>The Debate about NATO's Future and the Establishment of the ARRC</i>	1
The first debates and proposals	2
The impact of national defence debates on NATO's transformation process	8
The Gulf war and its impact on NATO's review process: November 1990 to June 1991	21
Conclusion	30

Chapter 2

<i>The Impetus to NATO's 'Peace-Enforcement' Tasks: CFSDP and the Yugoslav Crisis</i>	35
Introduction	35
The Franco-German alliance, CFSDP and responses: 1990–1991	35
The break-up of Yugoslavia and EC/US responses: April to September 1991	39
The demand for a WEU peace-keeping force	42
The 'interlocking of institutions' in regional peace-keeping: November 1991 to July 1992	49
The Bosnian conflict and NATO/EU Member States' responses	52
Conclusion	59

Chapter 3

<i>NATO's Role in the Balkans and the Restructuring Debate: August 1992 to December 1993</i>	61
NATO's new mandates: August 1992 to December 1992	61
A new <i>modus vivendi</i> between the Clinton administration and NATO staff	67
A turning point: Srebreniza and the 'Safe Areas' mandate	73
The first test of NATO air power in the Balkans: Sarajevo (August 1993)	78
The NATO peace-keeping doctrine, CJTF, PfP and 'policy communities' (July 1992 to December 1993)	80
Conclusion	91

Chapter 4

<i>NATO Use of Air Power and the Establishment of IFOR: 1994–1995</i>	95
CJTF during 1994 and 1995: European reactions	95
NATO and the Sarajevo crisis of February 1994	97
NATO's first air strikes: February to April 1994	99
The attempts to foster a new division of labour between the UN and NATO	102
The Washington agreement and military developments: summer and winter of 1994	105
NATO and the Bosnian wars: spring to autumn 1995	110
Conclusion	117

Chapter 5

<i>NATO's War over Kosovo</i>	119
NATO in the Balkans (1997)	120
Phase One: January 1998 to early June 1999	121
Phase Two: Mid-June to October 1998	123
Phase Three: November 1998 to March 1999	128
Conclusion	131

Chapter 6

<i>Explaining the Evolution of NATO's 'Peace-Enforcement' Role</i>	135
Neorealism	135
Neoinstitutionalism	137
Organisation theory	139
Case Study One: NATO's 'peace-enforcement' tasks 1990–1995	141
Case Study Two: NATO's war over Kosovo	145
Bibliography	149
Books and articles	149
Official publications by countries and international organisations	160
Newspapers and magazines	165
Interviews	171
<i>Index</i>	173



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Preface

Why has The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) managed to transform itself into a ‘peace-keeping/peace-enforcement’ organisation in the 1990s? A variety of answers are available. Some analysts stress the ‘fear of threat’ and ‘spillover’ of conflicts outside NATO’s borders, others the role of organisational and institutional dynamics. More recently, the theory of humanitarian intervention has been used to explain NATO’s war over Kosovo.

By combining assumptions from ‘transgovernmental coalition’ and ‘epistemic communities’ literatures, this book tests the above-mentioned predominant explanations by advancing the hypothesis of the existence and role of ‘policy communities’ defined as:

an alliance between sections of national government (composed of officials and politicians) and sections of an international bureaucracy. Members of policy community have in common shared belief-systems and perspectives on a number of foreign policy and security issues. They influence the policy-making process by intervening in setting agendas and proposing measures during periods characterised by high-level disagreement among political leaders at the international level.¹

The hypothesis is tested by examining the attitudes and strategies of NATO international staff, along with British, German and US policy-makers during two case-studies: one covering NATO’s activities between 1990 and 1995; the other examining the Western Alliance’s response to the Kosovo crisis between January 1998 to March 1999.

The results show that the hypothesis of ‘the fear of threat’ cannot explain the NATO’s initial decisions to intervene in the Balkan conflict. Nor can it account for NATO’s war over Kosovo. Similarly the research findings do not support the theory of ‘humanitarian intervention’. In contrast, the results highlight the fact that there were policy communities that influence the policy-making process. They were able to do so partly because of the existence of favourable domestic and international circumstances.

In the first case study we demonstrate that, next to the role of policy communities, there were organisational and competitive intra-institutional factors in operation. The strategies pursued by the policy community were

¹ This definition belongs to the author and is developed in the Introduction.

facilitated by the fact that Western policy-making towards the Balkan wars was driven by *ad hoc* reactions to events. In addition, Western policy towards the Balkans was closely linked with the planning for the restructuring of NATO forces and posture.

In the second case study, next to the role of a policy community and domestic factors there were other dynamics in operation: the impact of diplomatic and military lessons learnt from Western intervention in the Bosnian wars (1992–1995); the influence of attempts to establish a new transatlantic burden-sharing arrangement; the Serbs' strategies against the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Kosovo Albanian civilians.

The findings highlight the role of the NATO international military structure and the ability of NATO officials to build transgovernmental and transnational coalitions under specific circumstances.

The research for the case studies is based on primary sources (official documents and memoirs) and on news reports. Extensive interviews were undertaken with NATO and Western European Union (WEU) officials along with politicians and experts.

This book began its life as a PhD thesis at the University of Kent in Canterbury (UK), written under the supervision of Professor John Groom, Dr Thomas Saalfeld and Mr Dan Hiester. Each one of my supervisors inspired and encouraged me to complete my research. The book was revised during a Research Fellowship in the Peace Studies Department at Bradford University in the UK.

Giovanna Bono

Lists of Abbreviations

ACCHAN	Allied Command Channel
ACE	Allied Command Europe
ACLANT	Allied Command Atlantic
ACTORD	Activation Orders
ACTWARN	Activation Warning
AFT	Allied Tactical Air Force
AMF	Allied Mobile Force
ARFPS	ACE Reaction Forces Planning Staff
ARRC	ACE Rapid Reaction Corps
ATAF	Allied Tactical Air Force
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control Systems
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
BDF	Bosnian Defence Force
BiH/HVO	Bosnian Government Forces and Bosnian Croats Forces
BMV	Bundesministerium der Verteidigung [German Ministry of Defence]
BSA	Bosnian Serbian Army
CAS	Close air support
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
CDU	Christian Democratic Union [Germany]
CFSDP	Common Foreign Security and Defence Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CGS	Chief of General Staff
CINC	Commander-in-Chief
CINCHAN	Commander-in-Chief Allied Command Channel
CINCSOUTH	Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
CMAIRSOUTH	Commander-in-Chief Allied Air Forces Southern Europe
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSU	Christian Socialist Union [Germany]
DCI	Defence Capabilities Initiative
DoD	Department of Defence

DPC	Defence Planning Committee
DPP	Defence Policy and Planning
DRC	Defence Review Committee
EEC	European Economic Community
EC	European Community
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
EUROFOR	European (Rapid Deployment) Force
EUROMARFOR	European Maritime Force
FAWEU	Force Answerable to the Western European Union
FCC	Federal Constitutional Court
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FDP	Free Democratic Party of Germany
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IFOR	Nato Implementation Force
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
IMS	International Military Staff
IPS	International Political Staff
IRF	Immediate Reaction Force
IS	International Staff
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JNA	Yugoslav Army
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LANDCENT	Allied Land Forces Central Europe
LANDSOUTHCENT	Allied Land Forces South-Central Europe
MC	Military Committee
MNCs	Major NATO Commanders
MoD	British Ministry of Defence
MPA	Maritime Patrol Aircraft
MSWG	Military Strategy Working Group
NAA	North Atlantic Assembly
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NORTHAG	Northern Army Group
NPG	Nuclear Planning Group
NSC	National Security Council
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialists [Germany]
PfP	Partnership for Peace

PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Aid for Restructuring of Economies
PJC	Permanent Joint Council (NATO-Russia)
PMSC	Political-Military Steering Committee on Partnership for Peace
PPCG	Provisional Policy Co-ordination Group
PUS	Permanent Undersecretary of State
ROE	Rules of Engagement
RRF	Rapid Reaction Forces
RSK	Republic of Serbian Krajina
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SACLANT	Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SPC	Senior Political Committee
SPD	Social Democratic Party [Germany]
STANAVFORCHAN	Standing Allied Naval Forces Channel
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPAs	United Nations Protected Areas
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
USECOM	US European Command
VOPP	Vance-Owen Peace Plan
WEU	Western European Union

Abbreviations for newspapers, magazines and official publications

The Associated Press (AP)
 Atlantic News (AN)
 Britain, House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates* (BritainPD)
 Congressional Quarterly (CQ)
 Congressional Record (CR)
 Der Spiegel (SPI)
 Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA)
 The Economist (ECO)
 Financial Times (FT)
 Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)
 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)
 Frankfurter Rundschau (FRS)
 Germany, Deutsche Bundestag, *Plenarprotokoll* (GermanyPL)

The Guardian (GDN)
The Independent (IND)
Independent on Sunday (IOS)
The International Herald and Tribune (IHT)
Jane's Defence Weekly (JDW)
Le Figaro (FIG)
Le Monde (LM)
New York Times (NYT)
Reuter Textline News Service Eastern Europe (RTEE)
Reuters Textline (RT)
Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)
The Times (TIM)
Tribune (TRB)
US Department of State Dispatch (USDSD)
Wall Street Journal (WSJ)
Washington Post (WP)

Introduction

Why has NATO, an organisation ostensibly established to defend Western Europe against the Soviet threat, managed to survive and assume peace-keeping and peace-enforcement tasks? Many explanations are available for this phenomenon. To caricature slightly the official perspective, the story could go as follows: the Western Alliance has endured because its members share a set of common values. NATO is in fact not merely a military alliance but a political set of norms. During the early 1990s, the Western Alliance was confronted with new threats: instability in the Middle East and southeast Europe. Faced with these fresh challenges the organisation had to react to protect Western Europe from instability. NATO succeeded in remaining relevant by finding a balance between maintaining its article 5 activities, that is the defence of member states' territory, and developing new tasks ranging from humanitarian support to peace-enforcement' operations in the Balkans.

NATO's ability to expand its activities outside its own borders – what traditionally were known as 'out-of-area' tasks and lately have come to be defined as 'peace-keeping and peace-enforcement' tasks – is indeed a remarkable development. It must be remembered that, throughout the post-war period, NATO's 'out-of-area' role was a thorny issue in transatlantic relations. Although various American administrations attempted to use the NATO framework to obtain European partners' support for their operations in Asia and the Middle East, Europeans were reluctant to back US actions. European NATO member states rejected US pressure to use the framework of the Alliance to deploy forces in such conflicts (Stuart and Tow, 1990; Winrow, 1994; Blaker, 1985). NATO's intervention in the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict (1992–1995) and NATO's war over Kosovo in the spring of 1999 represent a departure from the missions that the Western Alliance pursued in the Cold War period.

Although the official line is that NATO's 'peace-keeping and peace-enforcement' tasks are only some activities amongst others, in reality they have become *central* to the restructuring of the Western Alliance's forces and military posture, as the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) and the new transatlantic security burden sharing arrangement exemplify (NATO, 25 April 1999; Andreani et al., 2001).

How have academics and historians made sense of NATO's transformation process into a peace-keeping and peace-enforcement organisation? Experts have focused on analysing different aspects of the development and excellent

literature has been produced (Papacosma and Rubin (eds) 2001; Brenner (ed.), 1998; Cornish, 1997; Wijk, 1997; Drew, 1995; Foster, 1995; Meiers, 1996; Brenner (ed.), Walt, 1997).

However, this literature is by and large not driven by theoretical concerns. The exceptions have tended to adopt either a neorealist or a neoinstitutionalist approach, two prominent schools of thought in International Relations theory in the USA (Chernoff, 1995; Karádi, 1994; Lepgold, 1998; Koslowski, 1995; Rader, 1996). To simplify the arguments, neorealists maintain that NATO survived because of the continued existence of threats, as the conflicts between Iraq and Kuwait and in former Yugoslavia exemplify. There was a concern about the 'spillover' effect of the conflict in other neighbouring countries (Burg, 1995; Mearsheimer, 1990 and 1994/1995).¹ In contrast, neoinstitutionalists argue that the high level of co-operation established among NATO member states fostered commonalities of views and interests in maintaining the organisation. In the early 1990s, it was also perceived that the material costs of building new organisations were too high, despite the fact that the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) already existed. In common with organisation theory, neoinstitutionalists point to the existence of institutional interests, defined as NATO international staff's desire to maintain the alliance in order to safeguard their jobs. Finally, neoinstitutionalists argue that an institution's past success could have created a momentum for the organisation. Such momentum can be particularly useful at a time of external change (Keohane (ed.), 1984; Hellman, 1993; McCalla, 1996).

Organisation theorists have other arguments at their disposal for explaining why NATO survived and transformed itself. Some maintain that there was a process of 'normative isomorphism'. This states that there is a phenomenon of growth and elaboration of professional networks that span organisations. These networks facilitate the diffusion of similar modes of thinking and practices. It is the existence and spreading of these 'professional networks' that could explain why an organisation survives and transforms itself (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 63–82).

The literature on 'humanitarian intervention', whilst it does not seek to explain the overall Western Alliance's transformation process, provides powerful explanations for the reasons why NATO intervened in Kosovo. Briefly, some writers argue that NATO acted in the crisis because there was a peculiar situation characterised by a fundamental dissociation between population and an existing government. This had led to a humanitarian catastrophe of significant proportion and NATO had to intervene militarily to prevent a deterioration of the situation. (Weller, 1999a; Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000.) This explanation finds support in NATO's official stance. As an official communiqué issued on 30 January 1999 stated:

¹ For the neo-realist view on why alliances survive see Waltz, 1979 and Walt, 1997.

*NATO's strategy is to halt the violence and support the completion of negotiations on an interim political settlement for Kosovo, thus averting a humanitarian catastrophe.*²

All of these approaches are highly contested. The theory of threat assumes that organisational dynamics and domestic factors did not play a role in NATO's transformation. The theory of threat takes as its starting point the preoccupation of members of the Western Alliance without explaining why some countries were more concerned than others about external developments. The theory assumes that external developments can be conceptualised as *exogeneous* and distinct from the perceptions and interests that NATO and Western governments had of the Balkans and of the modernisation of the Western Alliance.

An analysis of the role of threat has to be able to explain the interaction between perceptions and outcome. It could be argued that, although events in the former Yugoslavia did have their own dynamics, separate from those of alliance politics, as soon as Western governments demonstrated an interest in break-up of Yugoslavia, the separation between the two processes became blurred. By assuming that threat was constant and real, the theory of threat legitimises the perception of certain policy-makers without accounting for the origin and reasons for such perceptions.

The neoinstitutionalist approach does provide a further number of powerful hypotheses worth investigating. Policy-makers' calculations, when discussing NATO's future, might have been influenced by the concerns about the role of start-up costs and awareness of the difficulties in creating a new regime. Similarly there might have been organisational interests that shaped the Western Alliance's renewal. The testing of neoinstitutionalist hypotheses remains important because neoinstitutionalists have shied away from undertaking extensive research in the area of security studies.³ (They have assumed that the pattern of co-operation is more likely to occur in international regimes in the field of economics than in the area of security.) However, neoinstitutionalists fail to explain the dynamics of interest formation within national, international and transnational policy-making fora.

The theory of 'humanitarian intervention' assumes that the Western Allies' involvement in Kosovo was disinterested and that there were no domestic, institutional or other political factors, exogenous to events in Kosovo, that might have influenced the strategies pursued by NATO. The theory of humanitarian intervention and NATO's official explanations for its decision to bomb the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)/Serbia have been subject to intense criticism.⁴ Two aspects have come under intense attack:

² Statement by the North Atlantic Council on Kosovo, 30 January 1999, in Weller, 1999b: 416.

³ An exception has been the work of Chernoff, 1995. For a critique see Mingst, 1996.

⁴ For an overview of the debate see Booth, 2001; Schnabel and Thakur, 2000.

first, it has been argued that, prior to the launching of NATO's bombing campaign, there was no situation resembling genocide or a humanitarian catastrophe justifying military intervention. Second, the Serbs were prepared to negotiate on a variety of key aspects but the Western Allies did not give them a chance, preferring military means over diplomatic ones. The most outspoken critics of NATO's intervention in Kosovo have argued that the Western Alliance went to war not because of a concern with humanitarian lives but because it needed to justify its own existence and role in post-Cold War Europe. At the same time the USA led the Alliance in the war to demonstrate that it was still the world leader and to ensure that NATO could act without UN approval (Chomsky, 1999: 197–9; Carpenter, 2000; Adam, 1999).

This book tests some of the assumptions put forward by neorealists, neoinstitutionalists and the explanations taken from the 'humanitarian intervention' approach. It develops the hypothesis of the role of 'policy communities' in shaping the Western Alliance's transformation. This hypothesis was formulated by synthesising some of the assumptions contained in the transgovernmental relations and epistemic community approaches.

In the early 1970s, Keohane and Nye had argued that policy-making within international organisations was characterised most of the time by an alliance between sections of the international bureaucracy and subsections of national bureaucracies. They described this phenomenon as *transgovernmental relations*. They argued that this phenomenon occurs when sub-units of government behave in a relatively autonomous way separate from a higher political authority. Keohane and Nye identified two types of transgovernmental relations: *transgovernmental policy co-ordination* and *transgovernmental coalition building*. The former happens when there is a high level of exchange of information and frequent meetings among sub-units. This creates a sense of collegiality with individuals even starting to think more in relation to the transnational group than purely in national terms. The existence of a regularised pattern of co-ordination leads to the formation of *transgovernmental elite networks* linking officials in various governments to one another by ties of common interest, professional orientation and personal friendship. In contrast, transgovernmental coalitions develop when sub-units of government build coalitions with similar agencies from other governments against elements of their own administrative structures (Keohane and Nye, 1974).⁵

In more recent literature, the concept of 'epistemic communities' has been developed. 'Policy communities' are characterised as a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-knowledge in that specific domain. Policy communities can be mobilised and exert significant influence on the policy-making process (Haas, 1992).

⁵ These points have been reemphasised by Risse-Kappen (today known as Risse) who used the concept to analyse policy-making within NATO.

The differences between the ‘epistemic communities’ and the ‘trans-governmental coalition/networks approach’ are twofold: the ‘epistemic communities’ approach emphasises ideological and value systems as forging common attitudes; the ‘epistemic communities’ approach does not assume that individuals or institutions, with the potential to influence the policy-making process, are to be located in government structures, as the trans-governmental coalition literature does.

This hypothesis of ‘policy community’ here advanced takes the assumption from Keohane and Nye (1974) that there is a phenomenon of transgovernmental policy-co-ordination and transgovernmental coalition building. However it argues that a transgovernmental coalition can emerge not only because there is an intense pattern of interaction but also because of the existence of *common value systems* and *shared ideological perspectives* towards a number of policy issues. In summary, by combining some of the assumptions contained in transgovernmental relations with the emphasis placed by the ‘epistemic community’ on the ideological factor, a ‘policy community’⁶ is here conceptualised as:

an alliance between sections of national government (composed of officials and politicians) and sections of an international bureaucracy. Members of policy community have in common shared belief-systems and perspectives on a number of foreign policy and security issues. They influence the policy-making process by intervening in setting agendas and proposing measures during periods characterised by high-level disagreement among political leaders at the international level.

The hypothesis assumes that the existence of a ‘policy community’ contributes to shaping the formulation of policies and their outcomes. In this study, the role of ‘policy communities’ is examined by comparing the attitudes and roles of NATO international staff, British, German and US policy-makers during key events that shaped the development of NATO’s ‘out-of-area’ tasks between 1990 and 1999. More specifically, this book is driven by three research questions:

- 1 Can we identify the existence of ‘policy communities’?
- 2 If ‘policy communities’ were in existence, did they pursue a conscious strategy to seek to influence the policy-making process?
- 3 Did those policy-makers opposed to the idea that the Alliance should assume peace-enforcement tasks change their positions because of the influence of the actions and ideas of the policy community or because of other factors?

⁶ This definition of ‘policy community’ is not related to the definition of ‘policy community’ as developed by R.A.W. Rhodes and D. Marsh. In their definition a ‘policy community’ is characterised by stability of relationships, continuity of restricted membership, vertical interdependence, insulation from networks and the general public and high levels of integration (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992).