

Negotiating on the Brink
The domestic side of two-level games that brought the world to the edge of WWII

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Introduction:

On June 11th, 1999, Russian peacekeeping troops left their stations in Bosnia and entered Kosovo's capital, taking control of the intended Kosovo Force (KFOR) headquarters, the Pristina Airport. The military maneuver, which had not been coordinated with NATO and had been denied by the Russian authorities until the news was broadcasted over CNN, blocked NATO troops from the airport and protected retreating Serbians. This little known standoff was perhaps the closest the world has been to WWII since the Cuban Missile Crisis: NATO, Russian military, Yugoslav military and Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) forces faced each other off in a "military stew."¹ Currently no research exists analyzing the takeover of the airport and US – Russian negotiations; this paper proposes to explore the Russian decision to send troops into Kosovo through the lens of two-level games and coercive diplomacy, as well as the resulting negotiations and their effectiveness in resolving the crisis, from June 10th through 18th. The domestic and international context under which the Russian military contingent entered Kosovo will be evaluated through domestic public opinion polls, statements from the Duma, news articles, and the memoirs of key negotiators.

Background:

The Kosovo War between Serbia and NATO began in March of 1999 with several months of a NATO air bombing campaign. Russia, citing religious and historical ties to the Serbs, as well as regional interests, involved itself as a third party to the conflict. The United States' played a pivotal role as point man in

¹ John Norris, *Collision course NATO, Russia, and Kosovo* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Pub, 2005) 275.

negotiating between Russia and NATO. The Russian government was under incredible domestic pressure from the Russian public and from the Duma to resolve the conflict and usher NATO out of what had historically been Russia's sphere of influence. Russia's relations with NATO and the US also became strained, and Russia abruptly recalled Russian representative Lieutenant-General Viktor Zavarzin from the NATO-Russia Council.

On June 2nd, after months of difficult negotiations between Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, representing the US, and several negotiators on the Russian side, but most notably Yeltsin's special envoy Chernomyrdin, the US and Russia were able to reach united terms of peace for Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. The agreement brushed over Russia's role in KFOR, a point of contention that would soon become dramatically problematic. At that point in time, Russia refused to allow its peacekeepers to fall under NATO command, while NATO insisted that, in order to avoid catastrophes like the Srebrenica massacre, a centralized command under their control was non-negotiable.

Although it was unclear at the time who ordered the Russian troops into Kosovo on June 12th, it now appears that the Russian military devised the idea and received loose support from Yeltsin for troops to enter Kosovo simultaneously with NATO. The Russian civilian government, besides the president, may have been aware of the plans, but were certainly not in control of the plans' enactment. The so-called "Trojan Horse" plan called for a small contingent of Russian soldiers to take the Slatina airfield.

As soon as the US and NATO got wind of Russian troop movement into Serbia, negotiators from the US team immediately engaged their Russian counterparts in the Defense and Foreign Ministries to clarify Russian intentions. They found Yeltsin's government in the throes of a constitutional crisis, where it was clear that civilian control of the military was tenuous at best. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott tried to clarify the situation and was repeatedly assured by the Foreign Ministry that Russia would not enter Kosovo until NATO did.

Russia entered Kosovo on June 12th, slightly after a secret team of NATO Special Forces spotters, and took the Pristina Airport (also known as the Slatina Airport). NATO forces had otherwise held off their deployment given the uncertainty of Russian troop intentions, and to the chagrin of General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO Forces in Europe (SACEUR), allowed the Russian's to capture KFOR's intended headquarters. Russian soldiers blocked the roads surrounding the airport, and NATO subsequently surrounded the Russian contingent. Retreating Serb forces and Serb civilians took refuge with the Russians, torching a house near the airfield; Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members raised flags on municipal buildings within NATO control. Sporadic gunfire flashed at night around the airport between the Serbs and KLA; there was a very real chance of Russia – NATO military conflict.

Russia requested airspace permission from neighboring states to fly reinforcements into Kosovo, but was denied passage. By July it was clear that Russia could not support the troops holding the airport, and a deal with NATO was struck at Helsinki giving the Russians a modest peacekeeping role.

Literature Review

The Pristina Airport takeover reflected a particularly volatile moment in Russia, where the civilian government lost control over the military, and domestic concerns of public approval influenced Russia's actions on the international stage. The study of two-level games in international negotiation, and coercive diplomacy or brinkmanship, is essential to understanding the events in Kosovo, June 1999.

Putnam (1988) differentiates between Level I games (bargaining between negotiators), and Level II (separate discussions within each group of constituents about whether to ratify the agreement reached at Level I)². He notes that the state is a complex network of interests, and is not unified in its views. This is highly relevant in the Pristina Airport negotiations, where the Russian government was clearly not united in its interests, let alone its actions. Articles on the interaction between domestic and international negotiations that perceive the state as a unitary actor would therefore be misleading in this situation. Putnam also notes the strong incentive negotiators have for "consistency between the two games:"³

"Any key player at the international table who is dissatisfied with the outcome may upset the game board, and conversely, any leader who fails to satisfy his fellow players at the domestic table risks being evicted from his seat."⁴

² Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two Level Games" *International Organization* 42.3 (1988) 436.

³ Ibid. 434.

⁴ Ibid. 434.

Regardless of the importance of information in discovering an overlapping “win-set,” negotiators are often unaware of their opponents’ Level II politics⁵. Negotiators also have an incentive to emphasize their domestic weakness and small win-set in order to force the other side to give in more⁶. Since higher-level negotiators generally have more domestic leverage, it is also in the interest of the opposing party to request the highest-level counterpart possible.

Putnam discusses several important linkages between domestic politics and international negotiations, such as the distinction between voluntary and involuntary defection, domestic cleavages, and diverging interests between the negotiator and his constituency.

Ikioka explores Putnam’s model in more detail and finds that a small win-set is an advantage for Party A only if Party B has enough information to believe that the win-set is truly small⁷. If such information exists, then the size of the win-set will not increase the risk of negotiations breaking down. Ikioka also notes that negotiations can break down as a result of “domestic uncertainty,” that is, that the negotiators themselves do not understand the win-set that the domestic constituency is willing to accept. This would lead to involuntary defection, where the Level II agreement would be outside of the zone of possible agreement as defined by the Level I constituents, and the agreement would therefore not be ratified or implemented, even though the negotiator had worked in good faith.

⁵ Ibid. 452.

⁶ Ibid. 459.

⁷ Keisuke Iida, "When and How Do Domestic Constraints Matter? Two-Level Games with Uncertainty." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37.3 (1993): 403-26. *Jstor*. Web, 10 Mar. 2010, 410.

Two of the dominant frameworks of negotiation that Druckman (2007) identifies have particular significance for two-level games, or as he calls them, boundary-role conflicts. Negotiation as organizational management brings to the forefront the importance of consensus building for the successful negotiator. Parties must negotiate with their own constituency, but they also have the opportunity to negotiate with potential allies within their opponent's constituency. Negotiation as diplomatic politics takes into account broader foreign policy, precedents, and the structural elements of the international system. This perspective reveals an important facet of Level I games, where interactions between international negotiators are influenced by previous events and constrained by the norms of the international system.

Alexander George, who has written several influential texts on coercive diplomacy, notes the difference between coercive diplomacy and deterrence. In his conception, coercive diplomacy is to defensively "back one's demands on an adversary with a threat of punishment for noncompliance that he will consider credible and potent enough to persuade him to comply with the demand."⁸ As opposed to deterrence, which involves future actions, coercive diplomacy attempts to dissuade an enemy to stop, or to undo, an action already begun. George describes the use of time limits and urgency, as well as "tacit" ultimatums with no explicit time frame, noting that the greater the sense of urgency, the greater the coercive impact. The balance of both sides' demands and motivations is also important. George

⁸ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991) 4.

develops a quick framework to understand the variables affecting coercive diplomacy strategies in different situations.

Policy-makers must decide 1.) what to demand of the opponent; 2.) whether and how to create a sense of urgency for compliance with the demand; 3.) whether and what kind of punishment to threaten for noncompliance; 4.) whether to rely solely on the threat of punishment or also to offer conditional inducements of a positive character to secure acceptance of demand⁹.

The decision by the Russian military to move into Kosovo without prior warning, and to specifically occupy the site that NATO had selected for the KFOR headquarters, can be viewed as coercive diplomacy or brinkmanship. I will generally describe it as “compellance,” a term which encompasses both ideas¹⁰. Although there is no consensus on the definition of brinkmanship, Schwarz and Sonin (2007) describe it as the rational exercise of observable probabilistic threats to prompt a victim to make concessions¹¹. Lebow (1981) notes that brinkmanship often occurs in stressful situations in which a party has incomplete information¹². Corbacho takes the study of brinkmanship one step further when he notes that it occurs not only due to cognitive limitations – in this case the lack of sufficient information - but also as a result of rational strategic calculations regarding

⁹ Ibid. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid. 7.

¹¹ Michael Schwarz and Konstantin Sonin, "A Theory of Brinkmanship, Conflicts, and Commitments." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 24.1 (2008) 4.

¹² Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis*. (New York: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984) 57.

domestic threats to leader's power¹³. The possibility for a leader to be, in Putnam's words, ejected from his seat by unsatisfied constituent Level II players, is what Corbacho argues drives many exercises in brinkmanship, regardless of their rationality on the Level I playing field.

As of this date little research exists that addresses the decision for Russian troops to take the Slatina Airport, or examining how the Russian and US parties neutralized the crisis. Brannon has written an illuminating text on Russian – Civil Military relations in Russia, using the Pristina incident as an example proving that Russia had lost civil control over the military. He does not explore the incident within a negotiations framework, although he does note that the “race to Pristina,” as it is called in Russia, was likely formulated to give the Russian negotiators leverage over the US and NATO in negotiations over KFOR. This paper will also address how the incident was resolved.

¹³ Alejandro L. Corbacho "Predicting the probability of war during brinkmanship crises: The Beagle and The Malvinas conflicts." (Universidad del CEMA, 2003) 2.

Methodology:

This paper will be a case study that applies the concepts of two-level games, brinkmanship and coercive diplomacy to the Russian decision to send troops into Kosovo, and US – Russia negotiations regarding Russia’s role in KFOR, from June 10th through 18th. I will review the memoirs and printed interviews of key actors and negotiators, as well as news articles, polls, and other academic literature regarding Russia in the Kosovo War. I will explore the events leading up to and through the Russian military “Race to Pristina,” to answer the questions:

1. Why did Russia make such a surprise move that almost led to military confrontation with NATO?
2. What can negotiators learn from the circumstances in which Russia made this decision, and how the US and Russian team defused the military standoff?

To answer these questions I will explore the domestic and international context under which the Russian military contingent entered Kosovo, particularly focusing on the domestic public opinion and statements from the legislature about the NATO bombings, and later, about the Pristina airport standoff. I will use the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, renamed the World News Connection after 1994, to access translated Russian media articles.

The Race to Pristina through a Negotiation Lens:

The Kosovo War and “Race to Pristina” took place in the context of NATO’s new policy of “out of area” operations, a policy which allowed NATO’s involvement in areas outside NATO allies’ borders. Russia regarded the policy as expansionist, perceiving that it was that was encroaching upon the Warsaw Pact members and endangering Russian national security interests, through a continuation of the Cold War. NATO involvement in the Balkan Wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo were the first results of the new policy.

Russian national opinion was strongly against the war, with demonstrators protesting in the streets of Moscow for days after NATO bombing of Serbia began. Public opinion of the United States was lower than it had ever been during the Cold War¹⁴. In an analysis of Russian public opinion during the war, Shlapentokh writes that: “72 percent of the Russians described themselves as 'hostile toward the USA.¹⁵” The Russian Fund of Public Opinion found that 63% of respondents believe NATO was the most at fault for starting the war, and that, in sharp contrast to polls in 1998, 73% of Russians believed that they had “external enemies who [could] unleash a war against our country.¹⁶” Near a thousand protesters gathered around the US embassy for days, the embassy was shot at with a submachine gun and

¹⁴ “Showdown in Pristina,” *The Nation*, 17 June 1999, Web. 10 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.thenation.com/doc/19990705/editors>>.

¹⁵ Seymour M. Lipset and Vladimir Shlapentokh, “The Balkan War, the Rise of Anti-Americanism and the Future of Democracy,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 11.3 (1999): 275, Proquest, Web, 27 Mar. 2010.

¹⁶ G. L. Kertman, *The Balkan Crisis: NATO's Motiveless Agression?*, Fund of Public Opinion, Apr. 1999, Web, 27 Mar. 2010, <<http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/o904402>>.

In August of 1988, only 44% of respondents responded that Russia had enemies that could start a war with them.

almost shot at with a grenade launcher, and there was a bomb threat¹⁷. Brannon recalls that Liberal Democratic Party leader Zhirinovsky personally led anti-American chants¹⁸. Russia, having a historical religious and ethnic bond with Serbia, vehemently opposed the bombing on the grounds of Yugoslavian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and because of the fact that there was no UN directive for war. Accusing Yeltsin of “plotting to sell out Russia to the West,” among other crimes, the Russian Duma began impeachment proceedings which fell through several days later¹⁹. There were hysterical cries of “Today Yugoslavia, Tomorrow Russia.”²⁰ On the phone with President Clinton on April 25th, President Yeltsin described “forces within the Duma and military ... that were agitating to send a flotilla into Belgrade” and that “he had already fired one commander in the Far East who was trying to mount a battalion to go to Serbia.”²¹

The US and NATO had engaged Russia on the topic of Serbian ethnic cleansing in Kosovo from the Rambouillet talks in March 1999 onwards, since, as Talbott noted: “we’d like to keep the Russian’s involved in the diplomacy, since their

¹⁷ Andrey Yarushin, "Russia: Callers Welcome Attack on US Embassy," *Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service*, 30 Mar. 1999, (*World News Connection*) Web. 10 Apr. 2010; Viktoria Dunayeva, "Rally Continues at US Embassy in Wake of Shooting," *Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service* 28 Mar. 1999, (*World News Connection*) Web. 10 Apr. 2010.

¹⁸ Robert B. Brannon, *Who Was Calling the Shots? Civil Military Relations in Russia 1996 – 2001* (Diss. Catholic University of America, 2006 Washington DC: Catholic University, 2006, Print) 137.

¹⁹ "Yeltsin Survives Impeachment Vote." *BBC NEWS*. 16 May 1999. Web. 15 Apr. 2010. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/344805.stm>>; "Yeltsin Impeachment Hearings Begin," *Guardian.co.uk*. 13 May 1999, Web, 15 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/may/13/chechnya.russia>>.

²⁰ Dmitrii A. Danilov, "Implications of the NATO Attack against Yugoslavia for European Security and Russian-Western Relations," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 10.3 (1999): 51-69, (*Muse.jhu.edu*, Mediterranean Affairs, Inc, 1999, Web) 10 Apr. 2010. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mediterranean_quarterly/v010/10.3danilov.html#FOOT26>.

²¹ Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: a Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy*. (New York: Random House, 2002, Print) 310.

disengagement is not likely to be passive or benign.²² A plan emerged for Russian presidential envoy V. S. Chernomyrdin, and the EU and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, to bring the final terms for peace to Milosevic. The Russian and US negotiating teams were deadlocked on two points, however; NATO's insistence that zero Serb forces remain in Kosovo, and that NATO command the peacekeeping operation. After 78 days of bombing and weeks of fruitless diplomatic back and forths between Talbott, Ahtisaari, and Chernomyrdin's respective teams, Chernomyrdin finally agreed to present NATO's version to Milosevic as non-negotiable. Divisions within the Russian government were clear, however, with Russian General Colonel Ivashov declaring that: "he could not endorse the demands because they did not reflect the thinking of the Russian military and had not been approved by the Russian minister of defense."²³ Russia's role in KFOR was left unresolved in a "footnote" to NATO's demands. Not expecting Milosevic to accept the peace settlement, the US and Russian teams assumed that they would have more time to reconcile "NATO at the core" and "Russian military not under NATO command," the demands of NATO and Russia, respectively. As Talbott notes in his memoir, this "development ... would have explosive consequences."

Milosevic, to the surprise of all involved, accepted NATO's demands as they stood, on June 3rd. President Ahtisaari later "surmised that the logical explanation for this about face would have been that Milosevic had concluded a secret deal with the Russian generals to make northern Kosovo a Serbian zone."²⁴ Talbott disagreed,

²² Norris 146.

²³ Talbott 177.

²⁴ Brannon 158.; Norris 311.

stating in a PBS interview that “the Russians should have known they would never be able to ... deliver, on that deal.”²⁵ General Colonel Ivashov indicated that the Russians only devised a plan to unilaterally enter Kosovo after Milosevic had capitulated. He writes that Milosevic accepted the NATO deal since the “Yugoslavs were left alone, without allies.”²⁶

NATO and Yugoslav military officials met on the Macedonia – Serbian border to work out the details of what would become the Military Technical Agreement two days later. The military negotiations to operationalize terms for NATO entry into Kosovo were remarkably rocky. Yugoslavian officers, with Russian military commanders supporting them, appeared to renege on some of the points of the peace agreement, such as the total withdrawal of Yugoslav forces, and the speed of withdrawal²⁷.

It was also unclear whether Chernomyrdin had the authority to put together a peace deal, as his mandate from Yeltsin “had never been formally conveyed to the foreign and defense ministries.”²⁸ On June 10th the Russian Duma asked Yeltsin to fire Chernomyrdin, and to conduct an investigation into Chernomyrdin’s handling of the peace settlement, which was “against Russia’s interests.” The resolution was passed with “271-91 voting, while the necessary minimum of votes total[ed] 226.”²⁹ Only one faction voted against. The resolution described the peace agreement as

²⁵ Strobe Talbott, “War in Europe: Interviews: Strobe Talbott.” Interview by PBS Frontline (*Frontline*, PBS, Web) 20 Feb. 2010.

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/talbott.html>>.

²⁶ Leonid Ivashov, “The Race to Pristina.” *Academy of Russian History*, Foundation for the Russian Entrepreneur, 24 Mar. 2009, 17 Apr. 2010. <http://ei1918.ru/russian_today/brosok_na.html>.

²⁷ Norris 224.

²⁸ Ibid. 183.

²⁹ “Duma Resolution Attacks NATO’s ‘Latest Ultimatum’” *Interfax* [Moscow] 10 June 1999, (*World News Connection*, Web) 10 Apr. 2010.

“the latest ultimatum, which NATO member-countries imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with Chernomyrdin's help, [which] leads to Yugoslavia's capitulation to the aggressor and an occupation of Kosovo by NATO troops.” In contrast, the state-owned *Rossiskaya Gazeta* published that a poll by the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion on Social and Economic Questions had resulted in 60 percent support for the peace plan³⁰. Nevertheless, Ivashov went public with his opposition to the agreement. Talbott observes that: “it wasn’t clear whether Chernomyrdin’s agreement to the Petersburg document was binding on the Russian government.”³¹

Operation Trojan Horse:

According to Russian General Colonels Ivashov and Zavarzin in separate articles, a plan to “restore Russia’s international prestige³²” and to put Russia on an “equal footing” with NATO surfaced quickly after Milosevic accepted the peace agreement; Zavarzin explicitly dates the plan to “June 10th.³³” Ivashov later described the development of the Trojan Horse plan, stating that: “plans for the Kosovo operation had been drawn up by the Chief of Operations Administration on the General Staff, General Baluyevsky, with the consent of the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Kvashin³⁴” Such a move would show Russian voters that

³⁰ Mikhail Kushtapin, "Left Hit Over Chernomyrdin Kosovo Role," *Moscow Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 10 June 1999, (*World News Connection*, Web) 10 Apr. 2010.

³¹ Talbott 330.

³² Ivashov

³³ Brannon 142. Citing General Zavarzin

³⁴ Brannon 163.

Yeltsin was not a NATO puppet, “he would not be pushed around.”³⁵ Yeltsin was apparently briefed and supported the plan to “synchronize the Russian contingent’s entry into Kosovo with NATO’s entry.”³⁶ In his Presidential memoirs, he describes the operation as a “crowning gesture” of “moral victory” that Russia had not been defeated.³⁷ Given Yeltsin’s poor health at the time, it is questionable whether he was able to take such a decision.³⁸ Norris, in his detailed account of the Kosovo War, pinpoints an earlier date, noting that “around June 7th, the commander of the Russian peacekeeping forces in Bosnia . . . told his troops they needed to prepare to move on short notice.”³⁹ The plan was for a Russian contingent of Implementation Force (IFOR) peacekeepers in Bosnia to move very quickly into Kosovo and occupy the Slatina Airport. The force of about 200 Russian paratroopers would block NATO’s access to the Airport, KFOR’s intended headquarters, and carve out a section of northern Kosovo for Russian command. As SACEUR Clark later noted, “the danger was that if the Russians got in first, they would claim their sector and then we would have lost NATO control over the mission.”⁴⁰ NATO had so far conducted the Kosovo war entirely from the air. The airport was of vital importance to the introduction of NATO ground troops rapidly into the scene as Yugoslav troops retreated.

Strobe Talbott and the US negotiating team returned to Moscow on June 10th to finish negotiating Russia’s role in KFOR. The Finns sent negotiators as well. The US team had a military component, represented by Generals Casey and Foglesong.

³⁵ Norris 219.

³⁶ Ivashov

³⁷ Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, *Midnight Diaries*. Trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000, Print) 266.

³⁸ Brannon, 166.

³⁹ Norris 220.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 238.

On the Russian side, Chernomyrdin's role was over, as his orders had been to "stop the bombing." Talbott's team now negotiated with the Russian Foreign Ministry, particularly with Foreign Minister Ivanov, whereas the US military attachment engaged the Russian Defense Ministry, with Defense Minister Marshall Sergeyev and General Colonel Ivashov.

The US team had no knowledge of Operation Trojan Horse as of yet, but were openly worried about a contingent of Russian IFOR peacekeepers that had left their posts early on the 10th and were moving towards Serbia. The Russians insisted that their forces would enter Kosovo concurrently with NATO, adding their own time-dimension to the negotiations.

The US team refused a Russian peacekeeping sector in Kosovo in principle, sticking to "NATO at the core" (or as President Ahtisaari had dubbed it earlier, "hard-core NATO")⁴¹. Talbott expressed that a Russian sector would be "a magnet for Serbs who wanted to live under the protection of Russia.... It would also be a magnet for violent Albanians."⁴² As Norris deduces in his book, "the international community could not trust Russia to serve as an impartial peacekeeper."⁴³ The Russians, on the other hand, continued to insist vehemently that their soldiers would not be under NATO command.

Negotiations between the US and Russian teams on June 10th and 11th went nowhere, with the Russian military, particularly Ivashov, threatening unilateral Russian deployment into Kosovo. Talks between the militaries broke down on June

⁴¹ Talbott 318.

⁴² Norris 253.

⁴³ Ibid. 253.

12th with the Russians not budging on their demand for a KFOR sector and urging UN command over peacekeepers, and NATO refusing. Talbott's negotiations with Russian civilian leaders such as Foreign Minister Ivanov, Deputy Foreign Minister Avdeyev, and Security Council Secretary Putin were bafflingly different: after assuaging Talbott's fears about unilateral Russian deployment, Putin even asked dismissively, "who, by the way, is this Ivashov?"⁴⁴ Talbott's team took off for Washington on the 11th, trusting in Putin's assertion that "'nothing improper' would happen."⁴⁵

Knowing that NATO openly planned to enter Kosovo several days after concluding detailed military arrangements with Yugoslavian forces, General Ivashov later accused Talbott's negotiations from June 10th – 11th regarding Russia's role in KFOR to be a stalling tactic. He believed Talbott's intentions were to "tie down the military and political leadership of Russia with the visibility of the negotiations, and ensure a preemptive entry for NATO."⁴⁶ NATO, strategically needing to enter Kosovo as soon as possible after the withdrawal of Yugoslavian forces, was in fact planning on entering Kosovo with or without Russia⁴⁷. Since the NATO-Yugoslav military arrangements had been concluded on June 9th, the US may have been hoping to use this "time card" to push Russia into a more favorable deal. Time was running out for Russia to agree to participate ahead of time in the KFOR structure. Ivashov was told flatly that: "Russia had the option of not participating" if it continued to insist on a

⁴⁴ Talbott 336.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 337.

⁴⁶ Ivashov

⁴⁷ Norris 223.

“Russian sector under a separate command⁴⁸.” Deputy Foreign Minister Avdeyev also openly voiced to Defense Minister Sergeyev in a meeting with the US negotiators that “if [the Russian team] keep[s] talking and talking, NATO will move in and leave us with nothing to talk about.⁴⁹”

The Race to Pristina:

The US negotiating team left Moscow on June 11th without reaching a formal agreement for Russia’s role in KFOR, beyond vague statements from Prime Minister Stepashin and Secretary Putin that the Russian and US militaries would “work out a mutually acceptable arrangement.⁵⁰” Talbott later reflected that he should not have left Moscow, with such ambiguous assurances⁵¹.

The crisis escalated before Talbott’s team had even left Russian airspace; the vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Advisor called to alert him that the Russian IFOR paratroopers were moving full speed through Serbia towards Kosovo. CNN was broadcasting live the Russian’s every move through Yugoslavia. Foreign Minister Ivanov and Ministry of Defense officials had ordered the Russian contingent to wait on the border, but General Colonel Ivashov countermanded “no turning or stopping, only forward.⁵²” Ivashov even told the officer in charge of the paratroopers, General Zavarzin, to turn off his cell phone to “keep VM Zavarzin from new orders that were not sanctioned by the Minister of

⁴⁸ Ibid. 229.

⁴⁹ Talbott 335.

⁵⁰ Talbott 335.

⁵¹ Ibid. 337.

⁵² Ivashov

Defense.⁵³ It is clear that the Minister of Defense had not ordered the Russians into Kosovo, however, as would be seen from his reaction to the news that the Russians had reached Pristina a day later.

Talbott's team, back in Moscow, repeatedly asked for reassurances from their Russian counterparts in the Defense and Foreign Ministries. The responses of the Russian civilians and Russian military were disturbingly different, with Foreign Minister Ivanov and Minister of Defense Sergeyev insisting that Russian troops did not have permission to enter Kosovo until NATO did so first. General Colonel Ivashov, on the other hand, repeatedly threatened that "Russia could well operate without cooperation."⁵⁴ Foreign Minister Ivanov "was in a state of agitation" when he met with Talbott on the 11th, stating that "no matter what... [they] absolutely must reach an agreement that night, 'so that [their] forces [could] go in together.'⁵⁵ Ivanov and Talbott went to meet with Defense Minister Sergeyev, and Ivanov suggested that they "had to make Sergeyev ... feel invested in NATO-Russia cooperation."⁵⁶

Talbott and his team met with Sergeyev, Ivanov, Ivashov, and Chief of the General Staff General Kvashin in the late evening in a deserted Ministry of Defense. Defense Minister Sergeyev accusingly reported that NATO had already begun deploying into Kosovo, a fact that Talbott corrected: NATO would deploy the next morning, on Saturday June 12th. The negotiations stretched past midnight and NATO

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Norris 238.

⁵⁵ Talbott 339.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 339.

decided to delay its entry into Kosovo, hoping to give the Moscow negotiations more time.

In a surreal moment, as Russian ministers continued to assert that Russian troops would enter Kosovo only after NATO, CNN began broadcasting live footage of the Russian paratroopers crossing into Kosovo. Sergeyev and Ivanov had either been lying to the US delegation, or they were in the dark about their military's plans. As Norris recounts, "while most press accounts at the time credited Russia with being the first to enter the province, a small vanguard of NATO Special Forces spotters had entered Kosovo under the cover of darkness – ahead of Trojan Horse.⁵⁷" Marshall Sergeyev was indeed right that a few NATO soldiers had begun deploying, although Talbott's team was unaware of the movements of NATO Special Forces. The meeting broke up as the Russian delegates left the room bewildered, and the US team could hear Marshall Sergeyev shouting at General Kvashin, furious that his order for "Russian forces to hold at the border and deploy concurrently with the main body of KFOR" had been countermanded⁵⁸. It appeared that the civilian government had lost control of the military, and that the military was calling the shots based on Yeltsin's vague approval and on the military commander's interpretation of "Russian National Interests." Moscow Interfax later reported that a

⁵⁷ Norris 263.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 265.

“well-placed source has told Interfax that the Russian Foreign Ministry ‘was not informed about the military decision to introduce their forces into Kosovo.^{59”}

June 12th was Russia’s National Day, and “Russian public reaction to the operation was enthusiastic.^{60”} The Moscow Mayor Luzhkov staged “a charity act under the motto “We are your brothers, Belgrade.^{61”} President Yeltsin promoted the General who had lead the paratroopers, V. M. Zavarzin, to General Colonel (the equivalent of three stars), although it is likely that he had long been recommended for the promotion⁶². A medal was later created for those who participated, directly and indirectly in the march to Pristina⁶³. News outlets in Russia continue to glorify the “great campaign^{64”} and celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2009. Pravda published an interview with General Colonel Ivashov, who stated that the lesson was to “believe in your strength and in your army.... Then political confidence [in the maneuver] will come.^{65”}

Amidst the celebrations Talbott arranged a number of high-level discussions between Foreign Minister Ivanov and Secretary of State Albright, Secretary of Defense Cohen and Minister of Defense Sergeyev, to try to resolve Russia’s role in KFOR – taking the negotiations up a level. Vice President Gore and Prime Minister

⁵⁹ "Foreign Ministry Not Told of Kosovo Deployment," *Interfax* [Moscow] 12 June 1999, (*World News Connection*, Web) 10 Apr. 2010.

⁶⁰ Norris 271.; Brannon 146.

⁶¹ Tatyana Shadrina, "Moscow Government Plans Act of Solidarity With FRY," *Moscow Itar TASS* 10 June 1999, (*World News Connection*, Web) 10 Apr. 2010.

⁶² Brannon 146.

⁶³ "Medal for ‘Participants of the March-Race 12 June 1999 Bosnia and Kosovo,’” *All About Military Service*, (Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Web) 28 Apr. 2010.

⁶⁴ Yuri Nesesov, "The Kosovo Theatre of General Zavarzin," *Agency of Political News*, 30 June 2009, Web, 15 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.apn.ru/publications/article21765.htm>>. “великий поход”

⁶⁵ "Russian Troops in Kosovo Could Change History" *Pravda.ru*, 12 June 2009, Web, 28 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.pravda.ru/world/europe/balkans/12-06-2009/313738-kosovo-1/>>.

“Уроки в том, что нужно верить в свои силы, верить в себя и свою армию. Не бояться её, всесторонне заботиться о ней. Тогда будет и политическая уверенность.”

Stepashin were also scheduled to speak to one another, and soon after that conversation President Clinton would call President Yeltsin. The US wanted to find out whether the civilian leadership was still intact.

Russia and NATO Face Off:

Ivanov and Sergeyev's subsequent orders for the 200-some Russian paratroopers to leave Kosovo and wait to enter simultaneously with NATO went unheeded, and the Russians took over the Slatina Airport, KFOR's intended headquarters. Cheering Serbs and Yugoslav troops met the Russians, and did not continue pulling out of Kosovo, but rather remained within the space that the Russians had claimed. KLA guerillas that had moved in along with refugees as NATO entered Kosovo now mingled with NATO British troops, meters away from Yugoslav troops on the airfield. Serbs torched houses near the airfield, and NATO stood back as the KLA and Yugoslav forces exchanged periodic gunfire at night⁶⁶. A rocket-propelled grenade was fired near the airport, but did not cause any damage⁶⁷.

The Russian military had been requesting over flight clearances from Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine; NATO and the US worked fervently to get those clearances denied. Russia had plans to send as many as "10,000 reinforcement troops to Pristina."⁶⁸ The Hungarians briefly acquiesced, not realizing that the Russians would be transporting weapons and troops, but later rescinded their

⁶⁶ Norris 279.

⁶⁷ *Morning Briefing by Mr Jamie Shea, NATO Spokesman: June 15 1999, NATO's Role in Kosovo*, (NATO/OTAN, 15 June 1999, Web) 05 Apr. 2010.
<<http://www.nato.int/Kosovo/press/1999/b990615m.htm>>.

⁶⁸ Talbott 346.

acceptance after asking the Russians for more information. The Ukrainians stalled at first, and finally gave the Russians permission – just as the Hungarians turned the clearances down. The Romanians flatly refused. Russia found itself with no way to legally support its isolated paratroopers in Pristina. To the relief of NATO and Russia’s neighbors, the Russian military did not attempt to fly without permission, which could have prompted NATO to shoot down Russian planes. The US team repeatedly issued warnings to their Russian counterparts that illegal flights could precipitate a war. When a NATO system reported a false positive Russian flight, Talbott called the Russian ambassador in DC to let Foreign Minister Ivanov know that there were “possible preconditions for a genuine confrontation” if that (nonexistent) flight continued through unauthorized airspace⁶⁹.

Meanwhile, Yeltsin’s health was worsening. He was inebriated on a call to Clinton on June 14th, mumbling about meeting on a “boat, a submarine, or some island where not a single person can disturb us. . .⁷⁰” Norris recounts how “fear continued to mount that Yeltsin and his government were on the verge of collapse.⁷¹” Talbott writes that: “Yeltsin had been out of sight and out of contact during the crisis.⁷²”

Resolving the Crisis:

On June 15th, Clinton and Yeltsin had another phone call, and Yeltsin was sick but clear-headed. Yeltsin reaffirmed that Russia would cooperate with NATO in

⁶⁹ Ibid. 347.

⁷⁰ Norris 281

⁷¹ Ibid. 282.

⁷² Talbott 346.

working out a command structure, and that no reinforcements would arrive to Kosovo until a deal was struck. He also called for Cohen and Sergeyev to meet in Helsinki to reach an agreement. The G-8 summit was coming up quickly on the 19th; if an acceptable command structure for Russia within KFOR was not devised before then, Yeltsin would have to make an uncomfortable decision as to whether to attend the summit.

On the Slatina Airfield, the Russian paratroopers, who were generally dependent on IFOR in Bosnia, were running out of food and supplies. The “poke in NATO’s eye⁷³” quickly turned into negotiating with NATO for food and water. NATO spokesman Shea announced that “British forces delivered 14,000 litres of fresh drinking water to the Russian forces,” apparently without the Russians giving anything in return⁷⁴. British General Jackson was informed, and allowed, General Colonel Zavarzin to bring in a resupply convoy from Bosnia. The convoy brought in food and water, but not more than 27 troops⁷⁵.

Cohen and Sergeyev (along with Foglesong and Ivashov, respectively,) met in Helsinki on June 16th, joined by Finnish President Ahtisaari, who had worked on the original peace deal signed by Yugoslavia. Albright and Ivanov joined them on June 17th⁷⁶. Norris details that the Russians seemed unprepared to accept NATO’s unified

⁷³ Brannon 151. Quoting Pravda

⁷⁴ *Morning Briefing by Mr Jamie Shea, NATO Spokesman: June 16 1999, NATO’s Role in Kosovo*, (NATO/OTAN, 16 June 1999, Web) 05 Apr. 2010.
<<http://www.nato.int/koSovo/press/1999/b990616m.htm>>.

⁷⁵ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), *DoD News Briefing, Tuesday, June 15, 1999 - 2:00 P.m. News Transcript*, (U.S. Department of Defense, 15 June 1999, Web) 05 Apr. 2010.
<<http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=494>>; *Morning Briefing by Mr Jamie Shea, NATO Spokesman: June 16 1999*;
Morning Briefing by Mr Jamie Shea, NATO Spokesman: June 15 1999.

⁷⁶ “Helsinki Talks Seek to Resolve Russia’s Kosovo Role,” *CNN.com*, 16 June 1999, Web, 28 Apr. 2010.

command, continuing to insist on their own sector of Kosovo with 10,000 troops until the last half hour of talks. US negotiators suspected the Russians were bluffing and firmly held to NATO demands⁷⁷. After a trip to the Russian embassy on June 18th for orders from Yeltsin, the Russian delegation accepted NATO unity of command.

Russian participation in KFOR was resolved on June 18th, with Russians giving up their demand for a separate sector and operating instead throughout the country under the US, German, and French sectors. Russia would send 3,600 soldiers. NATO only commanded Russian troops when it came to “flight plans and all issues relating to airspace.”⁷⁸ The Russians retained a “paper-thin guise of military independence,” with the Helsinki agreement stating somewhat contradictorily⁷⁹:

All command arrangements will preserve the principle of unity of command. It is understood that the Russian contingent in Kosovo will be under the political and military control of the Russian Command⁸⁰.

General Colonel Zavarzin, who led the “throw to Pristina,” later lamented in an interview that the event had bolstered Yeltsin’s popularity as he “successfully harness[ed] the anti-American wave that had engulfed the society after the bombing of Yugoslavia”, and that the Helsinki Accord later “raised the legitimacy of the occupation of Yugoslavia” by including Russian troops⁸¹. Russia, he continued, was

<<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9906/16/us.russia.01/>>.

⁷⁷ Norris 290.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 290.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 290.

⁸⁰ NATO/OTAN, *Helsinki: Agreed Points on Russian Participation in KFOR*, (NATO/OTAN, 7 July 1999, Web) 27 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.nato.int/koSovo/docu/a990618a.htm>>.

⁸¹ Nesesov

left in the “unenviable role of a fig leaf” behind which “Washington prepared for the recognition of Kosovar independence.⁸²”

In Kosovo, nearly all of the 800,000 Kosovar Albanian refugees returned in 1999 home to rebuild their lives, while perhaps a third of the 200,000 Kosovar Serbians fled that year. Vojislav Kostunica won an upset victory over Milosevic in the 2000 presidential elections, and after subsequent protests and strikes, Milosevic ceded power. He was arrested and turned over to the Special International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia in The Hague in June of 2001. In April 2003, General Kvashnin withdrew Russian troops from Kosovo, noting an absence of Russia's strategic interests in the Balkans and the possible savings of \$25 million per year.

Analysis: Russian Compellance:

By analyzing Russia's “race to Pristina” through the study of two-level games and compellance, it becomes clear that the fractured Russian executive and therefore fractured negotiating party combined dangerously with inconsistency between Level I and Level II games in Russia. The risk that key players the Russian executive branch associated with the negotiations would be “evicted” by domestic and legislative discontent for their dealings with NATO created the space and impetus for simultaneous compellance and voluntary defection on the part of the “defenders of the Fatherland,” the military. The Russian military assessed the comparative motivations of Russia and NATO to go to war over Russia's role in KFOR, and

⁸² Ibid.

determined that Russia had stronger interests in the conflict, a critical component in the success of compellance.

Through Putnam's theory we can relate the volatility of the talks with the Russian side to the often-contentious relationship between Level I and Level II games, as well as take note of the effects of a fractured negotiating party. From Putnam we learn that a fragmented negotiating party matched simultaneously with inconsistency between Level I and Level II creates a situation ripe for unhappy actors from Level I to tap into Level II discontent and upset the game board.

It is clear from the events of June 1999 that the Russian negotiating party was seriously fractured, enough so that Brannon (2006) contests whether the civilians were in charge of the military (both present at Level I). At points in time Russian negotiators on the same Level I team would contradict or repudiate each other's decisions, as happened most visibly between Ivashov and Chernomyrdin on June 2nd⁸³. The fissures in the Russian team were significant because through Operation Trojan Horse, dissatisfied actors within the fractured negotiating party "upset the game board," as Putnam says⁸⁴. In this case General Ivashov, along with other players in the Russian Military such as Generals Kvashin and Baluyevsky, decided that the agreement that Chernomyrdin, Talbott, and Ahtisaari had put together was shameful and dangerous for Russia, and that Russia needed to alter the implementation of the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Ivashov did his best to spoil the negotiations between

⁸³ See page 7.

⁸⁴ Putnam 434.

Russia and the US but was unsuccessful due to Chernomyrdin's presence. While more input and guidance from Yeltsin could have unified the Russian team, such a move would have put Yeltsin in serious political danger. The Russian military therefore upset the game board in the negotiations regarding implementation, in a way that almost made the peace settlement signed by Milosevic obsolete. The "race to Pristina" was an example of voluntary defection and compellance by a supposedly subordinate actor: the Russian military.

The terms of peace to which Milosevic agreed on June 3rd determined that NATO would be at the core of KFOR but also left Russia's position in KFOR open. Russian and US negotiators agreed that further discussions would clarify Russia's role. The "rush to Pristina" was both voluntary defection and compellance. It went against the agreement to have NATO "at the core" and to discuss Russia's role further before action would be taken, and it also attempted to change facts on the ground in order to influence negotiations concerning Russia's role in KFOR.

There was visible tension between Russian Level I and Level II negotiations. Chernomyrdin, who had been heading the Russian negotiating team, and Yeltsin, who had been seeking a way to end the war in conversations with Clinton, were both condemned by members of the Duma for their "capitulation" to NATO. Yeltsin was almost impeached; as Norris describes, he "survived a political near-death experience."⁸⁵ Both men risked "being evicted from [their] seat[s]," because they did not maintain enough consistency between the two games – between domestic interests and the US-Russian negotiations. Russian domestic opinion was furious

⁸⁵ Norris 107. "Duma deputies failed to impeach Yeltsin on any of the five charges against him. The closest vote, linked to the conduct of the war in Chechnya, fell only 17 votes shy."

about the Kosovo War and even perceived that Russian national security was in danger. The United States' embassy in Moscow had been shot at and was constantly surrounded by protesters. All of the Russian negotiators, and Yeltsin himself, in phone calls to Clinton, emphasized the stress between Level I and Level II negotiations, particularly the "intensity of anti-American sentiment."⁸⁶ Russian national opinion largely supported the FRY's sovereignty, which made the win-set which the Russian public and Duma would accept very different and perhaps not overlap with the US win-set.

The fact that the US and Russian negotiating teams were able to reach an agreement at Helsinki, and that it was implemented, might be a testament to Russia's authoritarian history. Russian domestic opinion polls indicate such anti-NATO sentiment that the Helsinki agreement may have been outside of the Level II win-set. The agreement survived Russian domestic indignation, however, possibly because Yeltsin's government had regained control over the military and had evaded "eviction" by the Duma. Additionally, the Russian military was unable to support its troops in Pristina, or introduce more soldiers, and therefore joined forces with NATO as its best option for continuing to support Yugoslavian territorial integrity.

It is unclear whether the US negotiators did or even could even take the constraints on the Russian team into account. Negotiators do have an incentive to emphasize their domestic weakness and small win-set in order to force the other side to give in more, and this tactic can work if the domestic constraints are

⁸⁶ Ibid. 67.

believable⁸⁷. Regardless of Russia's domestic constraints, the US team along with Ahtisaari did not change their demands. "NATO at the core" and "total Serb withdrawal" remained essential and non-negotiable. The bombing of Serbia did not stop either, until, as NATO had demanded, the Yugoslav military withdrew from Kosovo. It is unknown whether Chernomyrdin realized that the terms of peace to which he agreed were outside of the win-set acceptable by the Russian constituency. The US team noted that Chernomyrdin nearly involuntarily defected due to domestic uncertainty, and for a while the US was worried that the peace settlement would not stick. It is likely, though, that Russian intransigence in the face of NATO demands was an important reason behind the US's continuing negotiations with the Russians. It kept the Russians involved.

Corbacho notes that brinkmanship (or compellance) occurs to assuage domestic opinion: certainly a factor in this case. The Russian military would likely not have felt empowered to devise and execute the "rush to Pristina" if they were not justified in defending Russia's "interests" as defined by domestic opinion. The architects of the maneuver, riding on a current of popular displeasure, sought to "restore Russia's international prestige⁸⁸" by undermining peace terms that they, and apparently most of the Russian Duma, found to be offensive. As Norris recounts, a US negotiator at Helsinki opined that the maneuver "really was symbolic."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Putnam 459.; Iida 405.

⁸⁸ Ivashov

⁸⁹ Norris 289.

Russian civilians loosely or belatedly signed on to the plan because it was so in line with public opinion, and because it was integral to showing that Yeltsin was not a “NATO puppet.” By celebrating the general who had led the “rush,” promoting him the very next day, and allowing transports to be prepared to supplement the quartering party, Yeltsin showcased his national pride, poking NATO in the eye and showing Russia to be an “equal” in military might.

Corbacho argues that brinkmanship is in fact not an instance of incomplete information where the offending party inadvertently crosses a line that could lead to war, but a calculated move aimed at domestic audiences with less regard for international consequences. In the case of Operation Trojan Horse, General Colonel Ivashov writes that the danger of war with NATO was considered, but that NATO allies would likely shy from war with Russia until “repeated ‘arm-twisting’ by the US.⁹⁰” After all, NATO allies had avoided a ground operation at all costs. He was willing to take Russia to war alongside the Serbs, however, if it came to that.

George distinguishes between deterrence and coercive diplomacy (here understood as compellance); the “rush to Pristina” may have been a deterrent in its original intention but became coercive diplomacy as June 11th progressed. The Operation Trojan Horse plan was to enter Kosovo on NATO’s heels in order to pressure NATO to accept a Russian controlled sector in KFOR. As NATO spotters entered ahead of the main NATO body on June 11th, the Russian contingent of 200 entered Kosovo as well, deciding the NATO spotters sufficiently represented

⁹⁰ Ivashov

“NATO’s entry into Kosovo.” As the Russians were deciding to cross the border, deployment of NATO’s main body halted, to allow for more negotiating time with the Russian government. Once NATO was in Kosovo hours later, Russia’s takeover of the intended KFOR headquarters became coercive diplomacy, demanding that NATO forces leave a sector for Russia and undo the plans that left NATO in charge of all Kosovo. In addition to the sense of urgency created by the presence of Russian troops on the Kosovo border threatening to enter once NATO did, the Russian move increased the time pressure on US negotiators once the 200 paratroopers took the Pristina Airport. Not only were conflict deaths imminent with KLA and Serbian forces engaging in firefights between the NATO and Russian held territory, respectively; the fact that Russian transports were preparing to fly into Kosovo put NATO on high alert and challenged US negotiators to accept Russian demands for KFOR, or engage in war. Had Russia been able to secure timely over flight clearances from Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine, the punishment for NATO’s noncompliance would have been high – any NATO retaliation would have led to the first war directly between Russia and the US, possibly involving NATO and certainly involving Serbia. The punishment was not divisible, and no inducements were given to NATO. Whether Russia’s “rush to Pristina” was coercive diplomacy or brinkmanship is debatable. On the one hand Russia sought to get the upper hand over NATO by forcing NATO to heel by creating its own preferred reality on the ground and threatening war. On the other hand NATO was in an area of the world that Russia considered part of its area of influence, and yet refused to allow Russia a say in the structure of KFOR. NATO would have gone into Kosovo without Russia, and

belatedly given Russia a position in KFOR that was in line with NATO's interests, had Russia not pressed for equal inclusion in KFOR through Operation Trojan Horse⁹¹. It certainly was a very dangerous move on Russia's part; whether it was justified or not is a matter of opinion.

In assessing the risks of compellence, George expresses that each party's motivation should be considered, to see if the receiving party has more incentive to escalate and not comply with demands, or to comply. From Colonel Ivashov's discussion of the decision to send the 200 paratroopers across the Kosovo border, it appears that the Russian military evaluated the US and Russian comparative motivations and decided that NATO was unlikely to escalate – the NATO allies could be divided and conquered into shirking from war. The Russian military considered their motivations far stronger: Serbia was a religious and historical “brother” to Russia, the FRY was in Russia's zone of influence, and there was strong Russian domestic support for aid to the FRY. The Russian military may have miscalculated the determination of SACEUR Clark, although they were probably correct in assuming that the NATO allies would avoid a war with Russia. Clark did seriously consider shooting down illegal Russian over flights, and he had wanted to take the Slatina Airport before the Russian paratroopers did. His orders may not have been followed, as demonstrated by General Jackson's refusal to send Apache helicopters into the unclaimed airspace above the Slatina airport to block possible Russian transport flights from landing. Because of the multinational structure of NATO, soldiers within the organization could appeal to their home countries to overturn a

⁹¹ Norris 312. “Senior NATO officials acknowledge that Russia would have gotten even less favorable command and control arrangements without a presence on the ground in Kosovo.”

superior's decision. NATO's motivations were to keep their hard-won military campaign from unraveling in the peacekeeping stage, save institutional face internationally, and to gain access to the Slatina Airport, which was the only airport in Kosovo with sufficient integrity for planes to land.

Analysis: The Resolution of the Crisis:

The US and NATO chose to publicly de-escalate the crisis, calling the “rush” a mistake and a misunderstanding produced by Russia's willingness to join KFOR. They emphasized NATO's ability to work out the issues on the ground. The message was that Russia and NATO were still in a cooperative relationship, and that NATO's unity of command was still intact⁹².

Privately, the US and NATO were much more concerned but handled the crisis behind the scenes. The US very clearly let Russia know that some moves would lead to war, such as unauthorized supply and reinforcement flights over Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine. Talbott's team also ensured that they were getting the views of the Russian military by having US and Russian military representatives meet. Although US Generals Foglesong and Casey, in charge of the US military attachment in negotiations with Russia, were unable to convince General Ivashov to compromise on issues, the US was more importantly keeping tabs on the intentions of the Russian military.

Druckman's framework of negotiation as diplomatic politics became very important for NATO – it was through the relationships that NATO had developed

⁹² Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), *DoD News Briefing*

with Ukraine, Hungary, and Romania, that NATO was able to undermine Russia's compellence and make it an empty threat. The three states either rejected or delayed Russian over flight clearances with such timing that Russia was unable to legally fly reinforcements into Kosovo. Russia was apparently unwilling to violate its neighbors' air space. Russia, left with an isolated and hungry contingent in Kosovo, was eager to negotiate a way out without losing face. Hungary and Romania were later given NATO membership.

The US raised the level of the negotiations on June 15th, sending Secretary of Defense Cohen and Secretary of State Albright over to Helsinki to negotiate with their Russian counterparts. As Putnam noted, higher-level negotiators have more political clout and domestic support. As a result, they are able to negotiate larger win-sets in Level II negotiations. By raising negotiations over Russia's role in KFOR to the Secretary level, and requesting the same of Russia, Russia gained more status by negotiating with higher-level government officials than Talbott's team. At the same time the higher-level Russian negotiators, including Yeltsin, had greater prominence and political control back in Russia, and were able to retake control of the situation into civilian hands, after the Russian military option had dissolved.

The timing of the G-8 Summit also played a role in motivating Yeltsin to find a cooperative solution to the crisis, because the Russian President needed to be on good but face-saving terms with NATO in order to attend. Russian international prestige had more to gain from attending the Summit than supporting the losing side of the war. The Helsinki agreement was concluded on June 18th, in fact, the very day of the summit.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Russian military officials, with some implicit high-level civilian support, sought to improve their negotiating position vis-à-vis NATO by engaging in brinkmanship. The most important factor in the decision to enter Kosovo without prior coordination was likely the intense domestic pressure in Russia, however.

When dealing with a fractured negotiating party and inconsistencies between Level I and Level II, the motivations of the discontent parties to upset the game board should be assessed. In this case, the Russian military was likely correct to think that NATO would not have engaged in a war with them. However, the Russians did not take into account that NATO and the US had favorable relations with key neighbors, which ultimately impeded the success of Russian compellence. The problem with such brinkmanship is that it can have devastating and bloody international consequences, or, as in this case, it can damage a state's international credibility by showing how hollow their threats are. As Talbott said, Russia could not "deliver."⁹³ Whether Operation Trojan Horse would have had a more successful outcome if the Russians had used divisible punishments and some incentives should be a subject of further study.

The NATO – US strategy to resolve the crisis was to avoid reacting strongly and publically to the "rush to Pristina," and instead to emphasize Russia – NATO cooperation. This allowed Russia to save face and gave NATO time to shut down Russia's attempts to reinforce their troops in Kosovo.

Talbott's negotiating team (team A) learned that in a situation where both

⁹³ Talbott, "War in Europe: Interviews: Strobe Talbott."

the Level I and Level II negotiations in a state are fractured, unhappy actors could ride domestic frustration and engage in compellance to change the direction of the negotiations or make them obsolete. In situations of such risk, negotiator A needs to assess the comparative motivations of the opposing actors to engage in compellance, and his or her own team's willingness to not comply. Additionally, where the opposing negotiating team is so fractured, the pool of actors that team A speaks with could be widened, to see if a more stable consensus can be built. If for political reasons that is unadvisable due to fears that speaking to a wider range of powerful individuals in a state could destabilize the legitimate government, solutions outside of the negotiation table must be found to narrow unhappy actors' ability to upset the gameboard. "Intensifying" the negotiation by engaging higher level players is also a tactic that was successfully used in this instance. It carries the danger, however, of further destabilizing the government if the Level I and Level II negotiations are inconsistent and strong domestic public opinion precludes a zone of possible agreement.

Interestingly, Milosevic's acceptance of the final terms might have been based on discussions with Russia about Russia's "sector" in Kosovo. Ironically, Russia's "Trojan Horse" "race to Pristina" may have gotten Milosevic to capitulate, and in the end, there was no Russian sector to speak of. Although US – Russian relations were damaged, and Russian public opinion's views of the US became more unfavorable, the US and NATO may have avoided a ground war with Serbia as a result. The Helsinki agreement legitimized NATO's role in KFOR through the inclusion of Russia, Yugoslavia's ally, and boosted Yeltsin's stature for achieving an agreement,

which (on the surface) gave Russia a role in KFOR without subordinating the Russian military to NATO. The Helsinki agreement met important interests for both the US and Russia: The US was interested in keeping Russia positively engaged throughout the war and peacekeeping mission, and Russia wanted to appear able to stand up to the West as an equal.

In sum, one must wonder whether the outcome in Kosovo would have been different if the Russian military had been able to resupply its troops in Yugoslavia. Russian compellence may well have been an attempt to obtain through diplomacy and limited military action (the occupation of the airport) what the Russian government could not achieve otherwise, namely the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia.

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Appendix A: Chronology:

February 6, 1999 – The Rambouillet Talks begin, but are ultimately unsuccessful as Milosevic refuses to attend.

March 24, 1999 – The NATO bombing campaign begins.

April 14, 1999 – Yeltsin appoints Chernomyrdin as Special Envoy to the Balkans

June 3, 1999 – Talbott, Chernomyrdin, and Ahtisaari agree on peace terms to present to Milosevic

June 4, 1999 – Milosevic agrees to peace terms

June 9, 1999 – FRY and US agree to the Military Technical Agreement

June 10, 1999 - Talbott delegation flies to Moscow to discuss Russia's role in post-war Kosovo. Differences emerge. After 2 days talks end in deadlock.

June 11, 1999 - Talbott delegation departs Moscow with empty hands.

June 12, 1999 - In a move that surprises U.S. and NATO commanders, approximately 200 Russian troops enter Kosovo before the NATO main body, taking control of the Pristina airport.

June 12, 1999 - Talbott, while in flight on his way to Washington, receives a cable from Clinton to turn the plane around and return to Moscow. For 2 more days he tries to negotiate a solution.

June 14, 1999 - Clinton and Yeltsin hold an hour- long telephone conversation to end the standoff but managed to agree only to "intensify bilateral dialogue" and to let U.S. secretaries of State and Defense meet their Russian counterparts to discuss the issue further.

June 15, 1999 – Russian contingent in Pristina receive a resupply convoy with food and water.

June 16, 1999 - Defense Secretary William Cohen meets with his Russian counterpart in Helsinki, Finland, to negotiate the standoff over Russian participation in the international security force in Kosovo.

June 18, 1999 - Secretary Albright and Defense Secretary Cohen reach agreement with their Russian counterparts in Helsinki about Russian participation in KFOR.

Appendix B: Main Parties to the US – Russian Negotiations

USA: President Clinton Secretary of State Albright Secretary of Defense Cohen Deputy Secretary of State Talbott General Foglesong General Casey	Russia: President Yeltsin Foreign Minister Ivanov Defense Minister Sergeyev Presidential Envoy Chernomyrdin General Ivashov General Kvashin
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Appendix C: Images

The “Race to Pristina”



Serbians wave Russian flags as the Russian IFOR tanks (repainted KFOR) roll through to Kosovo.

<<http://img151.imageshack.us/img151/9610/3685264ow0.jpg>>.



Russian Troops enter Pristina
<http://img510.imageshack.us/img510/6675/3772697cq2.jpg>.



Troop movements in Kosovo. Russian troops were in US, German, and French zones.
http://planken.org/images/balkans/map_kfor_troops.gif.



Russian IFOR Troops moved from Bosnia to Pristina, Kosovo, in two days.
 < http://www.reisenett.no/map_collection/europe/Cen_Balkan_ref802638_1999.jpg >.