

Fifteen Years Ago: Lingered Echo of Bombings in Bosnia

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Fifteen years have passed since NATO started a massive bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serbs in the course of an ethnic civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1995. Code-named Operation Deliberate Force, a series of air strikes was carried out under the pretext of persuading the Serbian side to accept the international plan for a Bosnian settlement. In 1999, NATO launched a similar campaign against Yugoslavia, forcing it to renounce Kosovo.

These two operations against the Serbs undoubtedly testified to NATO's intention to eventually undermine and split Yugoslavia, a traditional ally of Russia and perhaps the only power in the Balkans that sought to pursue an independent policy.

Earlier, NATO forces' attacks on the Bosnian Serbs were part of the so-called "pin-point" operations which were incapable of dramatically altering the course of the war.

In 1995, NATO planned an overall defeat of Serb troops, even though the use of force was inconsistent with the then resolutions passed by the UN Security Council.

Furthermore, a military air strike was considered a means of last resort to force the opposing side to peace. All steps by the North Atlantic Alliance were directly coordinated by General Rasim Delic, a senior Bosnian Muslim Commander, who personally pointed to Serbian facilities NATO immediately launched air strikes on. Similar military-technical interaction was characteristic of NATO's 1999 intervention in Kosovo.

In both cases, the alliance provided strong military support to one of the sides to the conflict, which fundamentally contravened basic peacekeeping principles. As a result, the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina became a hardly controllable territory torn by discord, according to Russian historian and Slavist Anna Filimonova.

NATO laid the foundation of a unilateral power game towards the Serbs by all international organizations that were somehow involved in resolving the conflict. The republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is kept under constant pressure as the West attempts to curtail its sovereignty and deprive it of some particular rights.

As for Kosovo, the US and NATO took possession of Camp Bondsteel – the world's largest military base beyond control of the UN or any other non-NATO institutions.

Saying it may be used as a secret prison of the CIA, human rights activists across the globe have already nicknamed this base a "smaller version of Guantanamo". Neither the UN, nor the Council of Europe seem capable of making the Pentagon reveal the facility's original

purpose, not to speak of closing it.

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