

義大利對阿爾巴尼亞之干預： 外交手段與和平部隊的派遣

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摘要

1997年初阿爾巴尼亞歷經了一波波的動盪和與日遽增的暴力事件，泰瑞拉（Tirana）對國家的掌控程度令人產生嚴重質疑。阿爾巴尼亞南部陷入了無政府狀態，而北方雖然大部份傾向於貝利加（Berisha），但仍為若干幫派所掌控。

三月間隨著情勢惡化，阿爾巴尼亞問題引發南亞德里亞海地區的關注，而義大利則強力懇促派遣多國部隊進行干預。在歷經美國和義大利前後兩度防止衝突的外交手段失敗後，義大利於是轉而支持「和平維護行動」（Peace for Support Operation）。

由義大利所主導多國和平維持部隊之派遣，避免阿爾巴尼亞陷入進一步分裂的國家。在部隊進駐的同時，阿爾巴尼亞進行了若干重要的政治措施，6月29日的大選使該國產生一多數政府，而自1992年來一直執政的民主黨為社會黨所取代。如今縱然公共秩序仍是各方關切的重點，但阿爾巴尼亞人民的生活無疑地獲得相當的改善，而泰瑞拉承諾展開現代化的程序，勢必有助於該國的穩定。

The Italian Intervention in Albania: Diplomacy and Deployment

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“If an operation can be completed on time, with minimal loss of blood and treasure and with relations between the various members of the intervening coalition in relatively good repair, it is normally seen as successful.”^①

When the soldiers of the Multinational Protection Force (MPF) left Albania last August, the impression was that the mission aims had been achieved. Codenamed ‘Alba’, it lasted just one month longer than it had been expected, and this because the election in Albania was called for 29 June. It suffered very few casualties, and unity among states involved in the MPF was maintained during the mission. In the months of the intervention, Albania went through significant political changes and managed to re-start the difficult process of economic development. Although public order today remains a major concern, the overall situation is very different from early last year when, following the collapse of the pyramid scheme, widespread disorder broke out.

This paper analyses the intervention in Albania, and the reasons that determined the international community and the Italian government attempts to promote such an operation. It also tries to identify the elements that have contributed to the results that, so far, can be considered positive.

I. Uprising, riot or civil war?

One of the main issues for scholars in international relations is to provide a definition of civil war that is widely accepted, that

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① Charles King, *Ending Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper 308, (IISS, Oxford, 1997), p. 12.

identifies the common features of it, and, more significantly, that distinguishes it from riots, uprisings, insurgency or other internal tensions. This task is not just another academic exercise. It is becoming increasingly important because of the proliferation of domestic instability often accompanied with violence. Understanding the features of a civil war is essential to identifying the origins of domestic structural violence, and therefore the best way to finding peaceful solutions to domestic conflicts. It is also a role of the international community to establish the most effective time for involvement in domestic instability: when humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping, peace enforcing or peace support mission is required and appropriate. The euphoria of the early 1990s, when the momentous changes in international structures generated the view that the deployment of a handful of 'blue helmets' could provide peace and stability everywhere in the world, is over. Too many failures, too many deaths have made the international community aware that, before getting involved in a situation of domestic violence, it is necessary to understand the origin of it and its potential as a threat to international stability. States nowadays are also increasingly inclined to consider whether intervention through peace support operations (PSOs) in internal violence is advisable when a new and more stable situation is emerging.

Albania posed the international community with the dilemma of understanding the nature of the domestic violence that started in February 1997, following the collapse of the infamous 'pyramid scheme'. It was after this event that Albanians began angry and increasingly violent demonstrations against politicians in general, and against the state and President Sali Berisha in particular.

From 1992, the financial pyramid scheme offered investors interest of about 8 per cent per month. Reginald Hibbert, a former British diplomat, stated that "Get-rich-quick experts acquired property and enterprises and founded investment companies which drew in the cash earned from small-scale trading and became the notorious 'pyramid' companies. Smuggling, fomented by the international sanctions against former Yugoslavia, added greatly to the unhealthy brew."^② Albanians investing in the system were promised the doubling of their capital in just one year. This situation was a

^② Reginald Hibbert, "Dealing with the Dispossessed", *The World Today*, (Vol. 53, n 5, May 1997), p. 119.

providential solution to unemployment which gave Albanians the feeling that they could achieve a Western style of life. For fifty years Albanians had lived under a tough pro-Stalinist regime that isolated the country and imposed on it a strictly autarkic economy. As a result, Albanians were cut off from progress and modernisation and confined to a state of poverty. Exacerbating this situation, since the early 1970s Albanians have been able to receive television programmes from the Italian networks. Despite the fact that the Communist regime attempted to block these transmissions, from the 1980s Western television programmes became very popular. Aerials and satellites proliferated, and these television programmes became the image in which the western society was mirrored. Thus, western life-style became the dream of Albanians. The role played by the 'pyramid schemes' appeared to Albanians fulfilment of this dream. Albanians believed that the beginning of the process of democratisation was associated with prosperity and wealth. The interest rates provided from the 'pyramid' generated stability, although it was clear from the start that such a scheme could not be financially sustained over a long time. And indeed it collapsed after a few years, wiping out the savings of tens of thousands of people.

In February last year, when Albanians realised that their money had disappeared they launched widespread and increasingly violent demonstrations against the government, which had supported the scheme rapacious organisers. In this period Albania experienced the worst violence since Communism had been dispatched. The Double-Headed Eagle country was on the brink of economic and social chaos. Angry demonstrations erupted in a significant number of towns.^③ Tension escalated rapidly. The state lost control of the south of the country. From Saranda in the extreme south, to Elbasan, south of Tirana, all major cities fell under the control of rebels or were gripped by a state of anarchy in which criminal gangs proliferated. Gjakaster and Vlore, where a large number of people invested in the so-called financial societies that ran the 'pyramids', erupted in fierce anger against the government. On the 2 March, after protesters looted weapons from army stores, the government decreed a state of emergency.

When the government decided to deploy the army against the rebels, after just a few minor skirmishes in the south of the country

③ "Bad to Worse", *The Economist*, (February, 15th 1997).

military units withdrew and deserted. The weakness of the army in facing the emergency became evident when under the pressure of the events it just vanished. Already on 6 March, Berisha ordered the suspension of all military operations, but by then probably there was no need for it because in a few days the military had disintegrated. Nearly the whole of the armed forces, including air force and navy, defected to the rebels or simply deserted. Several fighter aircraft and ships arrived in Italy seeking political asylum.^④ Two of the main naval bases, Vlore and Saranda, were in rebel hands. Most of the tiny fleet was being used for illegal transportation of refugees to Italy.^⑤

At the beginning of March hundreds of thousands of machine guns, pistols and rifles were looted and fell into rebel hands. As a consequence of the high number of weapons dispersed across the country, more than a thousand people were killed, many of them caused by inexperience in the handling of guns. The country was divided into three main areas: the south controlled by several salvation committees and infested by criminal gangs; the north controlled by pro-Berisha militias; and the centre with Tirana in the hands of the government.

It was clear that neither the government nor the rebels had the power to defeat the other. In such a situation Berisha finally gave in to some of the rebels' demands. On 11 March, the president appointed the Socialist mayor of Gjirokastra, Baskim Fino as the prime minister of a national unity government. In the next two days, several 'political prisoners', among them the Socialist Leader Fatos Nano, were freed. Finally the president pledged to call new elections. Yet, Berisha initiatives had a more positive echo on an international level than on the domestic scene. Some rebels units and most of the salvation committees did not consider the president trustworthy and therefore continued to maintain their opposition. The numerous criminal gangs in the south simply did not care about political issues; they wanted the continuation of anarchy in which they flourished. In this scenario, often signifying a stalemate, several observers argued that Albania was in a state of confusion but it was not yet in a c-

④ G. Caforio, "Albania la crisi di un esercito", *Informazioni della Difesa*, (n 4, luglio-agosto 1997), p. 13.

⑤ Andrea Nativi, "I retroscena militari della crisi", *Albania Emergenza Italiana*, i quaderni speciali di limes, (1/97), p. 45.

condition of civil war.^⑥ Raffaele Gorgoni, a Rai (Italian Television) correspondent, wondered whether war in Albania was just invented by the media. He maintained that “Western media that scream about civil war are contradicted by the extremely slow rise of the conflict. The more television broadcast images of war, the more the prediction of an imminent conflict disappear.”^⑦

However, if Albania was not yet in a situation of civil war, it was clearly heading towards it sooner rather than later. It is true that violence during February and March 1997 never reached the level of savagery of intra-state conflicts such as hit Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia, yet tension increased far above a situation of disorder. At the beginning of April, Baskim Fino, the newly appointed prime minister, was attacked by a pro-Berisha gang^⑧ while travelling to Scutari in the north. He survived by a miracle, but the attempt on his life exacerbated an already difficult political situation.

If civil war is defined as being an armed power struggle among several factions resulting in a large number of deaths among those fighting and civilians, Albania was not seized by civil war. Nonetheless, the instability of the country was greater than would have been caused by riots, an uprising or turmoil.

The Albanian state had lost control of one-third of the country, in the south, and its influence on the north was limited. The armed forces rapidly disintegrated, displaying a deep lack of faith in the state. The police, where still existing, were struggling to maintain some form of public order. In the south, the large number of weapons available and the proliferation of criminal gangs became a serious threat to the local population. Albania was in a state of anarchy where violence, mostly of a criminal nature, was a major concern. In particular the south was quickly becoming an important centre of activity for international crime organisations.^⑨

These features delineated an extremely unstable situation, which could easily develop into a civil war. Although the prospect of peace negotiations between opposing sides could not be completely ruled

⑥ *Ibid.* p. 47.

⑦ R. Gorgoni, “Una guerra inventata dai media?”, *Albania Emergenza Italiana*, i quaderni speciali di limes, (1/97), p. 87.

⑧ Roberto Fabian, “Alba pericolosa”, *L'Espresso*, (24 aprile 1997).

⑨ Olga Mattera, “Adriatico: Mare delle mafie”, *Albania Emergenza Italiana*, i quaderni speciali di limes, (1/97), pp. 65-72.

out, the political landscape was so fragmented that starting effective negotiations was already extremely difficult. In the middle of March, Professor Tom Gallagher emphasised that his relative calm of the past few days is deceptive. Except in Tirana, the state has evaporated; everywhere food stocks are running out. If unrest continues, power is likely to gravitate to militias that will fight with rivals over territory, control of fuel and the right to tax. In failed states, such armed states are hard to contain.^⑩ Therefore tensions in Albania could easily turn into a Somalia-like scenario that would pave the way to a more vicious conflict.^⑪

II. The failure of preventive diplomacy

When Berisha's Democratic Party won the 1992 general election and became the president of the republic, Albanians and the international community had strong expectations that the new leadership would start an effective process of democratisation. Despite the fact that at the end of 1990 the Communist regime was already forced to open the country to multipartitism, at the 1991 general elections the Socialist Party (the new name of the former Communist Party of Labour) gained 60 per cent of the vote cast. Therefore for one year the complexion of the Albanian leadership failed to go through any significant political change. Ramez Alia, who replaced the Communist dictator Enver Hoxha in 1985, was elected president of Albania, and from 1991 to 1992 three Socialist leaders in succession assumed the office of prime minister.

The defeat of the Socialist party in the next elections in 1992 was perceived as the real beginning of a process of democratisation, and the newly elected president as the main warranty of it. Professor Morozzo della Rocca emphasised that in 1992 Albania was "euphoric for the new freedom, overflowing with trust in the future, proud of having realised the political transition without bloodshed."^⑫ Yet the country economic situation that Berisha had to face was desperate.

⑩ Tom Gallagher, "Europeans Can't Afford to Dodge Intervention in Albania", *The International Herald Tribune*, (20th March 1997).

⑪ Janus Bugajsky, "The Balkans: on the Brink Again", *The Washington Quarterly*, (Vol. 20, n 4, Autumn 1997), p. 227.

⑫ Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Albania*, (Guerini eAssociati, Milano, 1997), p. 55.

Unemployment exceeded 150,000 which was over 50 per cent of the urban work force. Public deficit was of Lek10 billion (\$ 100m), equivalent to 15 per cent of GDP.^⑬ Inflation was above 200 per cent and the average individual income was the lowest in Eastern Europe. And even if the picture was extremely worrying, the main concern of Albanians was that of coping with a pervasive food shortage. This last problem in particular triggered large Albanian emigration to Italy and Greece.

After fifty years of isolation, during which Albania had been ignored by the outside world, it suddenly became a major concern in the southern Adriatic region. The crisis in the former Yugoslavia, with its violent developments, was still the focus of attention for the international community, but the growing number of Albanians leaving their country mainly for Italy and Greece, quickly became an emergency. In March and in August 1991, more than 20,000 people disembarked on Italian shores. Never in the past had Italy to cope with such a large number of people arriving on its coasts at the same time. From the early 1990s, immigration was already central to the political debate in Italy, but nobody had expected to have to face an influx of this dimension. And it is not surprising that the Italian government reaction to this problem was inadequate, and thus widely criticised. Albanians were provided with poor facilities and eventually they were forced to repatriate.

It was evident however that the reasons that motivated an increasing number of Albanians to leave their country for Italy posed the Rome government with a different, and more complex situation than immigration from, for example, the north African countries. Rome knew that without a commitment to help Albania to emerge from its backwardness, any effort to solve the emigration problem was senseless.

As a result of the events of summer 1991, Italy decided to launch its Operazione Pellicano (Operation Pelican) with the aim of helping Albania to cope with the problem of food shortages. The features of Operation Pelican were, and still remain, unique among humanitarian interventions. For two years, until December 1993, the Italian army sent 5,000 unarmed soldiers to Albania for the sole task of distributing food and other emergency aid to the population. The

^⑬ Kerin Hope, "Albania to launch economic reform package", *The Financial Times*, (May 7, 1992).

deployment of Italian troops served strictly the purpose of helping to solve the basic needs of the Albanian population. There was no major tension in Albania to be resolved, no factions to be separated, and no need to protect aid convoys. Italian soldiers operated only as an aid agency. Their presence did not have any impact on the evolution of Albanian politics, and Albania continued its transitional phase from Communism to democracy.

Operation Pelican achieved its aim of helping several Albanian districts to cope with food shortages and created a positive environment for the establishment of good diplomatic relations between Italy and Albania, despite the fact that in 1993, at the end of the mission, some minor differences did arise between the two countries. Following the stabilising of the political scene, Italian small and medium companies found it convenient to invest in Albania. The Italian share of foreign investments in Albania reached 75 per cent of the total. Italian companies in the Double-Headed Eagle Country employed more than 60,000 people.

At the end of 1991 and during 1992, Italy was the main political and economic partner of Albania. Still from the time Berisha was elected president, relations between the two countries weakened. The new president wanted to avoid Albania having just one strong bilateral partnership. The aim of Albanian foreign policy was to create close relations with several states, particularly the US, Turkey, and Germany, in addition to Italy. Indeed Berisha was committed to establishing a privileged link with the United States more than with any other country. In 1992, the Albanian economic situation was so difficult that the country had to rely heavily on foreign aid, and the US offered Berisha the financial support he needed. The US, in fact, saw Berisha electoral success in 1992, not only as a setback for Communism, but also as a decisive step towards Albania democratisation.

Washington provided Berisha with substantial economic and military support. The Double-Headed Eagles' Country became an ideal base for US military involvement in Bosnia, and at the same time the Americans provided training for the Albanian army. In addition, Berisha hoped that the US might help Albania to solve the problem of the large Albanian community of Kosovo in Serbia.

Yet Berisha political conduct became increasingly repressive, mainly from 1994 onwards, when the political opposition rejected his proposal of a new constitution and the Albanian electorate voted against the constitutional project in a referendum called by the presi-

dent for November of that year.

As a consequence of Berisha actions, relations with the US slowly deteriorated. American diplomacy unsuccessfully pressurised Berisha to adopt a more democratic approach. In 1995, following Berisha decision to dismiss Zef Brozi, chairman of one of Albania two highest courts, the \$3 million that President Bill Clinton offered Albania to train judges, prosecutors and police was cancelled.^⑭

Behind the facade of a democratic leader, Berisha retained the dictatorial practice of the former regime. And the more the opposition succeeded in foiling his political plans, the more he tried to run the country along autocratic lines. Fred Abrahams of the Human Right Watch-Helsinki, wrote that "During his first trip to Washington in 1991, Mr Berisha sold himself as the man who would bring Communism to its knees. But from his first day as president, he used Communist-style tactics to eliminate rivals and consolidate power."^⑮ At the end of 1994, a new secret police, the Shik, was established. For the Albanians the new institution was a stark reminder of the Sigurimi, the former secret police that controlled the country and ruthlessly repressed any opposition to the Communist regime. Those who joined the Shik were not the same who had belonged to the Sigurimi, but the means they adopted were very similar.^⑯

Berisha's policies exacerbated Albania relations with its Western partners, and the close relationship with the US came to an end after the May-June 1996 general election which were rigged by his supporters. In the election the Democratic Party 'won' 122 seats out of 140, an overwhelming majority for Berisha, and the remainder was shared by several other parties. The Socialists denounced the elections as having been conducted unfairly. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE, in charge of monitoring the parliamentary vote, charged that it had been marred by serious irregularities.

The fracture between Berisha and the US became irreparable. The Americans condemned the irregularities and distanced themselves from the Albanian president. They were adamant that a new

^⑭ Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Long Shot in Albania Fails to Pay Off", *The New York Times*, (March 20 1997).

^⑮ Fred Abrahams, "U.S. Promoted Albanian", Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times*, (March 26 1997).

^⑯ Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Albania*, op. cit., p. 62.

and fair election was needed. On 6 November, the US Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Timothy Wirth, emphasised that Washington foremost objective vis-a-vis Albania was to promote democratic development, including an inclusive constitutional process and parliamentary elections organised under the new constitutional framework. We have no intention of abandoning this effort."¹⁷ For his part Berisha had no intention of calling a new general election, although this meant ending close ties with the US.

As a consequence of the setback in the relations between the two states, Italian diplomacy increased its commitment in Albania. On July 1996, Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, in a meeting with Tritan Shehu, the Albanian foreign minister, decided to send a special envoy to Albania. At the end of August, ambassador Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, as a result travelled to Tirana and met with Berisha, as well as Prime Minister Meksi, the foreign minister and representatives of eleven Albanian political parties. From summer 1996, the staff of the Italian embassy, where most of the meetings were held, and the Italian ambassador to Albania, Paolo Foresti, became the focus of attention in Albanian politics. Ferraris became immediately and keenly aware that the situation in Albania was one of concern. The 1996 general election provoked strong conflicts between the majority and the opposition. The Italians' main task was to start a negotiating process that would give the opposition parties confidence that the rigged electoral results of the parliamentary elections could be corrected. This issue was a sensitive one. From the very beginning Ferraris main objective was to persuade the Albanian leadership and the opposition that the coming administrative elections in October could be a significant test of the unfairness of the previous general election. In order to give impetus to Ferraris action, Paolo Foresti suggested that Italy should monitor the local elections. The SIOI, Società Italiana per l'Organizzazione Internazionale, Italian Society for the International Organisation, provided 150 observers and the structure required to their deployment. At the end of October, the Council of Europe on the behalf of all the observers declared the elections fair and free despite a few irregularities.¹⁸

¹⁷ Timothy E. Wirth, "Albania's Democracy Has Full Support of US", Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times*, (November 9 1996).

¹⁸ Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, "Diario di una missione a Tirana", *Albania Emergenza Italiana*, i quaderni speciali di limes, (1/97), p. 81.

Although Berisha party lost some of its strength in the votes cast, it still remained the majority party, and the vote it lost, mainly in the north of the country, did not shift to the Socialist Party but to nationalist parties such as the Balli Kombettari.^{①⑨}

However, the situation after the elections did not change much. As a consequence of the positive result obtained in October, Berisha asked Socialist MPs to take their seats in the Parliament, and to join the parliamentary constitutional process. At the same time, he rejected firmly the idea of a new general election. For their part, the Socialists demanded that a new constitution be adopted as designed by a constitutional assembly elected by proportional representation.^{②⑩}

There was very little room for negotiation between Berisha and the opposition. When in December Ferraris visited Tirana for the last time, Albania was on the brink of turmoil. The first pyramid scheme collapsed in January, and the ensuing anger of people that fuelled political tensions made any attempt at negotiations impossible.

III. The reasons for the intervention

The Italian diplomatic action did achieve results in the first weeks of March. On 10 March, Paolo Foresti organised a meeting between government and rebel representatives aboard the Italian vessel San Giorgio.^{②⑪} The next day, Berisha appointed a new prime minister, Baskim Fino, to form a government of national unity. Despite the sweeping change in Berisha policy, the situation in Albania remained critical. Tension did not ease and anarchy involved ever larger areas of the country.

In this situation Berisha appealed to the European Union and Nato to deploy peacekeeping troops in Albania to restore order. Baskim Fino visited Rome on 25 March to ask once more the EU foreign ministers for the deployment of a humanitarian intervention, which the Italian government supported. Fino request met the firm

^{①⑨} Morozzo della Rocca emphasised that in Scutari, where there was a strong anti Communist and conservative tradition, the nationalist Balli Kombettari, a party with origins in the period preceding W.W.II, obtained results better than the Socialist Party. Albania, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

^{②⑩} Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, *op.cit.*, p. 84.

^{②⑪} Pino Agnetti, *Operazione Alba*, (Stato Maggiore della Difesa, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara, 1997), p. 34.

opposition of the UK and Germany. Klaus Kinkel, the German foreign minister, strongly opposed the creation of a stabilisation force, saying his is no time to plunge into a new adventure."²² Malcolm Rifkind, the then UK foreign secretary, maintained that at that time it was not clear "whether the humanitarian workers simply need an escort or whether we are talking of clearing a path through bandit lines. I do not dispute in certain circumstances that some military help might be needed. But we must clarify the situation first."²³ Separately the US made it clear that the first step toward restoring order was Berisha resignation.²⁴

The negative response of the US, UK and Germany to the Albanian appeal did not weaken Italian determination and perception that a peacekeeping operation was needed to prevent Albania from falling into an irreversible state of civil war. Certainly it was difficult for a medium power such as Italy to promote this kind of mission without the direct involvement of major powers. Yet Italy was so adamant on its position that it had already developed an intervention plan by the middle of March and it was ready to act even by itself.²⁵

Beniamino Andreatta, Italian defence minister, emphasised that "Italy did not want to intervene in such a difficult situation by itself, but we were ready for such action if it was needed."²⁶

On 27 March, the OSCE Permanent Council passed Decision 160 that promoted the creation in Albania of a framework within which international aid organisations could operate safely. The following day, the UN Security Council agreed to Resolution 1101 that approved the offer made by certain Member States to establish a temporary and limited multinational protection force."²⁷

In a few weeks, on 12 April, the first troops of the MPF disembarked in Albania. The 6,000 soldiers of the MPF were provided

²² Lionel Barber, Guy Dinmore, "EU rejects sending troops to Albania", *The Financial Times*, (March 17 1997).

²³ Helen Cranford, Bruce Johnston, Tim Butcher, "Europe agrees aid for Albania", *The Daily Telegraph*, (March 25 1997).

²⁴ Jane Perlez, "Bitter Albanians, Facing Anarchy, Arm Themselves", *The New York Times*, (March 14 1997).

²⁵ Michele Concina, "Andreatta: 'Saremmo partiti anche da soli'", *Il Messaggero*, (16 aprile 1997).

²⁶ Beniamino Andreatta, in Prefazione to *Operazione Alba*, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

²⁷ UN Security Council, Resolution 1101, (28 March 1997).

by Austria, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Rumania, Spain and Turkey. For Italy, being for the first time in charge of a peacekeeping mission, this intervention was an important test.

IV. Organising the mission

Past Italian involvement in peacekeeping missions, particularly in this decade, had been a valuable experience in the effective organisation of the MPF. The first task was to establish a working chain of command. Sir Roger Palin emphasised the critical role played by the political authority in multinational military forces. Thus he stressed that there must be a mechanism for achieving political consensus among participating nations, and even among those not taking part but which have a major influence on the particular crisis.²⁸ During the intervention in Somalia, Italy often criticised the unreliable chain of command provided by the UN.²⁹ On several occasions, the military, diplomats and politicians lamented that the UNOSOM II, beside being patchy, was not representative of all the states involved in the mission.

As regards the political control of the MPF, on 4 April, Italy established a steering committee with a permanent secretariat at the Italian foreign ministry. The committee was formed by representatives of all states participating in the intervention, which could be occasionally assisted by military advisors. Observers from the UN, OSCE, EU, WEU and other international organisations joined the committee meetings. The committee determined the political aims of the MPF and provided the necessary link between the multinational force and the UN.³⁰

The military side of the chain of command was organised on two levels. The Italian defence chief of staff, Admiral Guido

²⁸ Roger H Palin, *Multinational Military Forces: problems and Prospects*, Adelphi Paper, 294, (IISS, Oxford, 1995), p. 70

²⁹ For a detailed account on the Italian position during the intervention in Somalia see Paolo Tripodi, "Italy and the Humanitarian Intervention in Somalia", *Journal for Contemporary History*, (Volume 22, N. 2, December 1997), pp. 23-36.

³⁰ Ministero della Difesa, Gabinetto del Ministro, Servizio Pubblica informazione, Albania 1997, *Operazione Multinazionale "Alba" e attivita' nazionali correlate*, (12.08.1997), p. 7.

Venturoni, was the commander in chief of the operation (COPER). Admiral Venturoni led the operation through an operational headquarters of the Intervention Force in Albania (COFIA) based in Rome, in which all the state members had liaison officers.

General Luciano Forlani was the commander of the force (COMANFOR) in charge of the operational theatre command. Three deputy commanders, French, Greek and Turkish generals, co-operated with him. The MPF headquarters in Tirana was multinational.

The three levels of the chain of command, - the political and the two military strands -, operated under Italian leadership, but they were representatives of all states involved in the MPF. This became a strong factor in the positive result of the operation, because troops deployed on the ground even at the tactical level received precise directives. All military units, at a regiment or battalion level, were placed under the command of General Forlani, hence the unity of command, - extremely important in any military operations - was achieved. Lieutenant Colonel Salvatore Farina emphasised that by adopting this structure the creation of duplicate centres of command was avoided and the transmission of orders was fast and with very limited distortions.”^①

The other main Italian concern from the very beginning of the disorders in Albania was the gathering of detailed information about rebel units, salvation committees and the objectives of these formations. Intelligence was a vital element to form a full picture of the depth and breadth of the Albanian crisis. In early March 1997, more than one month before the intervention, the Italian army launched operation ALBA-NEO (Non-combatant Evacuation Operation) to rescue Italians in Albania. In this occasion an exhaustive description of the Albanian political, economic and social situation was being provided.^② When the Albanian crisis worsened, the Italian army and navy sent specialists to Albania with the task of finding landing zones for the helicopters of Operation ALBA-NEO. But apart from playing the role of pathfinders, they also carried out several covert missions.^③ Before the deployment of its troops in April, the MPF

① Salvatore Farina, “Missione Alba Un Valido Esempio di Peace Support Operation”, *Informazioni della Difesa*, (n 5, settembre-ottobre 1997), p. 17.

② *Ibid.*, p. 14.

③ Andrea Nativi, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

had most of the information it needed.

Alba placed a special emphasis upon its relationship with civilians. Italy and the Italian soldiers involved in other PSOs have always stressed that achieving good relations between civilian population and peacekeepers is not enough. The Italian view is that civilians must feel immediate and positive effects of the military deployment on public order and political stability as well as on other aspects of their life. General Bruno Loi, commander of the Italian troops deployed in Somalia during Restore Hope, emphasised that one of the mistakes of the operation was that very little was done to reactivate an economic and social life in Somalia. Electricity and water distribution remained blocked, debris was not removed, not even small projects, such as operating water drills, were activated, there was no market or public transportation system. He stated that Somalis were disappointed in their expectations. They just could not understand what the UN had come to do in their country.³⁴

As a result of this past problem, Alba established the CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation).³⁵ The programme was in charge of establishing and co-ordinating contact between local authorities and international aid agencies; providing support for the humanitarian organisations in contact with the MPF; and gathering data about health, education, unemployment and other relevant social aspects of Albanian life at the local level.

On 13 June, the CIMIC began dealing with the environmental degradation in Vlore. The following day the Italian defence minister launched "operation winning" which connected several Albanian cities in close partnerships with Italian cities. The Italian partner was committed to helping its Albanian twin to resume the essential public services stopped during the disorders.³⁶

³⁴ Bruno Loi, 'An actual case: Somalia', Conference on: possible forms of international intervention: peace-keeping, peace-building, peace-enforcing, peace-making, Roma, 19 January 1994, in *Informazioni della Difesa*, (supplement to n 2, marzo-aprile 1994), pp. 35-48.

³⁵ CIMIC reproduced the features of the NATO's programme of Civil-Military Cooperation established in Bosnia in December 1995. For a more detailed account on CIMIC's activity in Bosnia see: Willima R. Philips, "Civil-Military Cooperation: Vital to peace implementation in Bosnia", *NATO Review*, (N 1, Spring 1998), pp. 22-25.

³⁶ Ministero della Difesa, Gabinetto del Ministro, Servizio Pubblica informazione, Albania 1997, *Operazione Multinazionale "Alba" e attivita' nazionali correlate*, (12.08.1997), p. 10-11.

V. Concluding remarks: advocating preventive deployment.

From the very beginning the aims of Alba were crystal clear. The mission principal objective was "to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance", while the indirect end was to create the necessary conditions of stability to allow Albanians to hold new elections.^{②7} The efficiency of the chain of command, intelligence gathering, good relations with civilians, the impartiality of the mission and the harmony among the MPF member states are among the elements of success in achieving the two aims of the mission. Undoubtedly Alba set a valuable example for future PSOs. However, despite the vital importance of these factors, the mission positive results were achieved also because of several other elements.

To begin with, although one of the main features of Albanian society is lack of homogeneity - Albanians are divided into two main groups Tosks and Ghegs, and their religious composition is fragmented - religious and ethnic issues were not involved in the crisis. Political leaders, even when in difficulty, never used ethnicity to attract support. In contrast, Glynne Evans in her analysis of the crises in the African Great Lakes reminds us that in several African states "violent domestic conflict was generated by politicians deliberately using ethnicity and fear to mobilise support."^{②8} In addition, the Albanian crisis did not spill over the national border, despite the fact that Albania ethnic links transcend its national border. Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro host large Albanian communities. Greece has a large community of Albanian immigrants, while a large Greek community has traditionally existed in southern Albania.

The MPF tasks were also facilitated by the Albanian people positive perception of their relations with Italians. Italy has one of the oldest Albanian communities. In addition, in the last decade Italy has represented a role model for Albanians. One of the main results achieved by Operation Pelican from 1991 to 1993 was to lay the foundations for positive relations between the two peoples. Already in 1990, Maria Paola Mossi of the Università Cattolica wrote that in

^{②7} Stefano Silvestri, "I colori dell'Alba", *Il Sole 24 ORE*, (16 aprile 1997).

^{②8} Glynne Evans, *Responding to Crises in the African Great Lakes*, Adelphi Paper 311, (Oxford, IISS, 1997), pp. 8-9.

Albania early “all the inhabitants understand, speak (often even write) Italian.”³⁹

Finally the timing for intervention was particularly appropriate. The Albanian crisis was escalating and although it was not yet showing the features of a civil war, the country was already in a state of anarchy. The attempts of preventive diplomacy mainly by the US and Italy led to no positive result in stabilising the political scene. How long would the Albanian crisis remain limited to minor armed conflicts among rebel units, and how long religious and ethnic issues would be kept out of the crisis, and how long the turmoil would be confined within Albania national border, are all questions that only the lack of intervention by the MPF might have answered. The gamble was that if the crisis had escalated to civil war it would have presented the international community with a tougher situation. Past peacekeeping experiences taught us several lessons: the major one is that, once a crisis escalated into civil war and thousands are killed, the community finds itself divided by deep hatred. In such a situation peacekeepers can do very little. Pervasive popular hatreds diving a country render outside intervention too risky, too expensive and prolonged. It is not surprising that because of the complexity and brutality of civil wars, Western armies have been reluctant to intervene in them.⁴⁰ This attitude towards peacekeeping, determined by the failures or limited results of the interventions of this decade, can change by adopting a preventive deployment approach. Confronted by the failure of preventive diplomacy, in most domestic crisis, outside intervention has to follow quickly. Waiting becomes a gamble that eventually discourages an increasing number of states from getting involved in bloody civil wars. The next generation of peacekeeping must be based upon the concept that the chances of a successful intervention are greater if PSOs face a situation where very few people have been killed and ethnic or religious issues have not become part of the crisis. Albania presented a perfect test for preventive deployment with and positive instructive results.

³⁹ Maria Paola Mossi, “LA diffusione della lingua e della cultura italiana fra gli albanesi e in Albania”, in Vincenzo Lo Cascio, *Lingua e cultura italiana in Europa*, (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1990), p.369.

⁴⁰ David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention*, Adelphi Paper 316, (Oxford, IISS, 1998), p. 2.