

THE ETHICAL AND MORAL DIMENSIONS OF THE NATO AGGRESSION AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

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The paper discusses the NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia through two ethical perspectives: deontological or the ethics of duty and consequentialist or the ethics of consequences.

The hypothetical starting point is that, if the aggression is based on moral principles, then those principles should also characterize it, starting from intention, motive, goals, means to final result, and if this is not the case, the aggression cannot be justified from a moral point of view.

The objective of the paper is to present the unsustainability, in an ethical and moral sense, of the "humanitarian" character of the intervention and reasons such as the prevention of humanitarian catastrophe and the protection of human rights.

After the introductory part of the paper, the theoretical basis and analytical approach have been presented, in order to consider the moral sustainability of the reasons for the aggression and its moral character through a deontological and consequentialist ethical perspective.

It has been concluded that the aggression does not fully meet the deontological and consequentialist criteria of moral rightness, that is, that interests are hidden behind moral reasons. Morality does not have a decisive role in international relations, but it is, along with international law, the only argument that small countries can invoke.

The hypothetico-deductive, descriptive and analytical-synthetic methods have been used in the paper.

Key words: aggression, Yugoslavia, moral perspective, ethics of duty, ethics of consequences

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Introduction

The NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) lasted from March 24, 1999 to June 10, 1999. It was carried out by 19 NATO member states led by the US, without a decision of the Security Council or the United Nations (UN) and in violation of international law. The most common reason for aggression “against a part of the territory of an internationally recognized state (is) support to secessionist forces, which strive to disintegrate and establish a separate state or join a neighbouring state” (Kovačević et al., 2017: 52). This was also the case with the aggression against the FRY, although it is not the most important reason. The aggression was justified by humanitarian reasons and the moral obligation to intervene due to the humanitarian disaster of the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija (KiM) and the endangerment of their human rights. The assessments about the character of the aggression and its justification are still controversial, because “the aggressors emphasize moral coercion and specificity, and the opponents geopolitical interests as a motive, pattern and justification for future intervention” (Pešić, 2021: 398).

In the science of international relations and practice, morality is present as a subject of dispute, as a regulator of political decisions, and most often as a means of abuse and excuses.

The concepts such as humanitarian intervention and protection of human rights have been problematized in the paper, and the unsustainability of the moral explanation of the aggression from the most important ethical perspectives such as deontological and consequentialist ethics has been emphasized.

Within each theory, three dimensions have been analysed and identified: *intention, means and consequences*, expressed through the relationship to the main principles and categorical apparatus of each theory.

The theoretical basis of the analytical approach

Theories differ according to possibilities of using morality in international relations, which is why some of them advocate moral relativism (realism), others give it absolute importance and necessity in decision-making (liberalism), and the third of them emphasize the universality of moral norms based on an individual (cosmopolitanism).

Ethical theories should define actions or influence international relations, that is, offer certain strategies in decision-making. Ethical normative theories provide structured moral systems and moral rules and principles that can be implemented in practice.

As with other actions, in international relations and foreign policy, their morality is evaluated based on the starting point of the main ethical theories.

Deontological theory (Greek *deon* - duty, obligation), or the ethics of duty, is based on the explicit respect for truth, laws, rules that are correct in themselves, and not based on good or bad consequences. Morality is evaluated based on whether intentions, goals and means are within the framework of given moral norms.

According to Kant (Immanuel Kant), man experiences morality *a priori* from reason, which is inherent in all people. People act morally only when they act according to reason, and not according to external motives. The moral law is unconditional and self-evident, so it is man's duty to act according to it. Every rule or procedure should be in accordance with law, i.e. with the categorical imperative saying "act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature" (Kant, 1979: 53) and "act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant, 1981: 74).

The problem of deontological ethics is in its explicitness and unconditionality, which makes it difficult to implement it to different aspects of life and which leads to moral dilemmas arising from the conflict of derived moral rules of the second order. Therefore, some degree of relativization occurs, because the solution to moral dilemmas is found in adding exceptions (NATO intervention) or giving priority to the rule that is more general or binding at first glance. In politics and international relations, it is also a justification for disobeying moral norms, even though almost everyone declaratively advocates them.

Teleological (Gr. telos-purpose, goal, outcome) or consequentialist (consequential) ethics is the theory of purpose, goal or final result. It is based on moral justification of everything that contributes to the accomplishment of goals or interests and final result. Utilitarianism is the most widespread ethical theory that relativizes moral norms because it is considered morally correct to do everything that is useful for the majority, which means that some moral rules can be violated if it is in the interest of the majority. Morality is not evaluated on the basis of motives and means, but on the basis of final result. This kind of moral judgement is very widespread in politics. The limitation of this theory arises from the impossibility of predicting consequences and due to the relativization of evaluation norms according to outcome. Utilitarian theory is insensitive to justice and fairness. It mostly exploits the fact that politics and international relations are probabilistic in their character and that, due to many unpredictable factors, the probability of the desired outcome is often low.

Regardless of the fact that morality is a consequence and characteristic of a strong cohesive community, which cannot be said for the international community, it is nevertheless a subject of international relations, when it is present or absent.

Joseph Nye believes that the role of morality in foreign policy depends on interests and contextual situation and that "good moral judgement should be three-dimensional: weighing and balancing *intentions, means and consequences*" (Nye, 2019/2020: 98). For Amstuc (Mark Amstuc), moral analysis is "based on outcomes, ... on rules and as a three-dimensional analysis" (Amstuc, 2008: 47) as advocated by Nye. Some ethical theorists believe that the focus of virtue ethics is on intentions, deontological on means, and utilitarian on consequences. Nevertheless, it can be said that, regardless of focus, relationship to other concepts also defines the analytical possibilities of concrete ethics.

The analysis of the morality of the aggression

Given that the aggression of the Western countries was not legal, it was necessary to gain legitimacy. Morality is a cover for legitimacy, that is, it was found in the prevention of a humanitarian disaster and in the protection of the human rights of the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. These are the reasons for "humanitarian intervention".

This expression was chosen as acceptable for the international community and its public opinion as affirmative and indisputable in value, because "humanitarian intervention is a *priori* morally justified war" (Babić, 1998: 146). Therefore, the intervention was preceded by the stigmatization of the Serbs in the world, an analogy with the suffering in Bosnia and a hypothetical projection of a humanitarian disaster that would befall approximately two million Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. Humanitarian causes should be the prevention of the persecution of the Albanians, ethnic cleansing, murder, rape and other crimes. Although in reality "the aggression against the FRY was prepared for a long time (as indicated by many statements, and also the practical moves of the NATO structures)" (Krga, 2022: 51), it remains questionable which human rights the Albanians as a national minority were denied in order to demand the aggression against the FRY. The position of the Albanians was never a democratic or ideological issue, but rather their need for secession. Reducing their rights to the rights that belong to a national minority in other democratic states and to the individual rights enjoyed by all citizens is not an issue of human rights, but the issue of rounding off the Serbian statehood in this territory. Therefore, Amstuc rightly concludes that "basically, the conflict between the Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo was about political control over this territory, and not about the violation of human rights, political repression, or unfair, discriminatory policies" (Amstuc, 2008: 47). Unfortunately, the Albanians managed to win over the greatest world power - the US and other Western countries for their goals. This does not mean that Serbia did not make wrong moves or implement repressive measures.

Deontological perspective

The deontological aspect of the analysis of the morality of the aggression starts from the fact that there are certain rules and duties that have to be obeyed, regardless of consequences. With this approach, moral causes and actions are analysed, but from the aspect of intentions and goals that are to be achieved and means that are used.

The main rules that have been violated, and that international relations have been based on since the Westphalian Treaties of 1648 and the UN Charter, are compliance with state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, in this case the FRY. These rules have been accepted by all UN members, so their non-compliance is not only illegal, but also immoral, bearing in mind that membership creates an obligation, and not selective implementation. (Im)morality manifests itself in inconsistency or double standards, best demonstrated by the war in Ukraine. The question is why the

sovereignty of Ukraine is important, and the sovereignty of Serbia is not, or, if Russia has committed aggression against Ukraine, how come the NATO countries have not committed aggression against the FRY. At the same time, the aggression in both cases was carried out without the approval of the Security Council, which also indicates non-compliance with rules and procedures. And the other way round, why would something be allowed to a great power, but not to the other?

Viewed as a process, the order for the deontological analytical approach to moral assessment is to identify the following concepts: *intentions - motives - behaviour - goals - outcomes*. Outcomes are what has actually been achieved. In the aggression against the FRY, they were expressed as follows: the need to act *humanely and justly - the protection of human rights - "humanitarian intervention"* (aggression) - the prevention of *the humanitarian catastrophe of the Albanians and the protection of their human rights*.

Ethical actions are not undertaken for the sake of goals or external motives, but because they are based on principles derived from mind, which is why fairness, humanism and human rights are at the level of general principles. The duty of the actors of the aggression is to act towards them, which is their intention and justification for the aggression. This means that the explanation of the objective, the protection of the Albanians, is irrelevant if it is carried out for their own sake as an external motive, and not for duty. If it is really derived from a general duty, then it is morally correct. However, due to the principle of universality, it is an obligation and duty to act in all other cases, as well. It is the moral imperative to be impartial and consistent in this matter, regardless of consequences, as required by deontological ethics.

The United States and the Western NATO member countries do not show the same consistency when it comes to violating human rights, for example, of women in Saudi Arabia, Kurds in Turkey or Russians in Ukraine. The reason for the selective approach are allies or interests. Therefore, this principle, due to the selectivity of its implementation, does not have the character of universality, and thus no justification for intervening according to it, which also refers to the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. Due to its inconsistency, it does not meet even Kant's categorical imperative that such an action be an example of a general law of action valid for everyone, as well as because of later defined motives that were primarily of interest. If this request were to be reversed, in the sense of whether our treatment of others would mean that we can be treated in the same way, inconsistency is emphasized once again. Can anyone imagine intervening in the US for violating the human rights of Afro-Americans? Furthermore, from the point of view of logical and moral consistency, it is inexplicable how it is possible to intervene for one against the other or to exercise the rights of some at the expense of others, while remaining at the principle of universality. And the second Kant's principle, which requires that man should not be treated as a means, but exclusively as a goal or purpose, is not fulfilled twice. On the one hand, the Serbs, as the object of aggression, were used as a means, so that the Albanians can achieve their "rights", more precisely secession, and on the other hand, both were a means to achieve the political interests and goals of the aggressors.

When talking about humanitarian disaster, one encounters the problem of indeterminacy, i.e. the lack of criteria to treat certain events as such, i.e. to bring "humanitarian intervention" under just war. Defensive war has so far been understood as just, and in this case aggression as "humanitarian military intervention" would contain "an implicit danger that every defensive war is defined as unjust" (Savić, 2009: 532). If the NATO aggression against the FRY was humanitarian intervention, then the defence against it is unjust, which is controversial to say the least. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has not attacked anyone, nor given a similar reason or posed a threat to world peace, and the threat of human rights is also disputed.

Michael Ignatieff states three principles that would justify humanitarian intervention: "human rights abuses have to be gross, systematic and pervasive; they have to pose a threat to international peace and security in the surrounding region; military intervention must have a real chance of stopping abuses" (Ignatieff, 2000: 313). Nye proposed four principles for humanitarian intervention: "having a just cause in the eyes of others; proportionality of means and goals; the high probability of success; and, wherever possible, the reinforcement of the humanitarian objective by the existence of other strong national interests" (Nye J. S., 1999: 83).

Endangering international peace does not meet the criterion related to human rights and the justice of the cause, because this is not characteristic of small states, including the FRY, which does not have such an international capacity. Security could be jeopardized in the region, but not because of the FRY, but because of the Albanians, who have territorial claims towards other countries, as well. The intervention could meet the criterion of pleasing the Albanians, so that they would not destabilize the region. When it comes to the high probability of the success of the mentioned objectives, it is unquestionable, given the power of NATO in relation to the FRY. The problem is once again in consistency or universality. Since the reasons for the intervention were not truly moral motives, it was a moral failure, because after it there was a denial of the human rights of the Serbs and their ethnic cleansing. In doing so, the actors of the intervention sided with those who wanted secession, an ethnically homogeneous community and who themselves violated human rights. Ignatieff notes that "in practice, the fourth criterion also appears: the region has to be of vital interest, for cultural, strategic or geopolitical reasons, to one of the powerful world nations" (Ignatieff, 2000: 313). Henry Kissinger came to the same conclusion, believing that when the criteria are "narrowly defined, the rhetorical distinction between humanitarian and national interests collapses" (Kissinger, 1999). This is exactly the real reason for the intervention: the national interests of a great power or the Western countries (On the interests of Germany and other Western countries, see: Kincel, M. (2021) *Put u Rat – Nemačka, NATO i Kosovo*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik), which made the region and the conflicts be used as a means to accomplish them, and humanitarian disaster and human rights were a convenient cover. Having in mind that national interests are essentially limited to one or several nations, this means that by their very character they cannot have a universal character.

Nye's criterion of "having a just cause in the eyes of others" also fails the test of universality due to an external judgement of validity. Therefore, it is enough that it seems justified in the eyes of others, and it does not have to be justified in itself or derived *a priori* as a postulate of the mind. Otherwise, justification in the eyes of others was fully provided by the aggressor. The US and the Western countries turned almost the entire world public opinion against the Serbs with various perfidious propaganda methods and false facts. A lot of false data, succession, different sources and authorities make it impossible for "the truth of the facts ... to be proven, because their definition is a part of war" (Todorov, 2001: 256-257).

Thus, the aggression against the FRY was executed in the name of the debatable concept of humanitarian disaster and intervention, although the protection of human rights may be a valid reason, but not unconditional.

A necessary condition for moral actions and intervention is the *truth* of the facts, i.e. claims that there was humanitarian disaster and that human rights were really threatened.

The fact that there was no humanitarian disaster, and no violation of human rights, is confirmed by many data from relevant organizations, government institutions of the aggressor countries, as well as many authors of various profiles who do not ignore the facts. On the first day of the aggression, the Western countries began to manipulate their public opinion, claiming that Kosovo and Metohija lacked half a million residents due to genocide. After a few weeks, there was a talk of a hundred thousand missing, at the end of the aggression about 11,000 dead, so that the International Criminal Court found that 2,108 Albanians died during the conflict, and that 4,266 people, including the Serbs and others, were missing. This means that there was no mention of genocide (Todorov, 2001). Moreover, according to the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany sent to the German courts, in the period from a year to the date of the aggression, "there is not even a word about the alleged persecution of Kosovo Albanians, ethnic cleansing, genocide against the Albanian population, humanitarian disaster, ... but it is stated that the measures that were undertaken by the security forces in Kosovo were directed against terrorists, not against the Albanian population" (Krivokapić, 2014: 360). We find similar views with other theorists, as well. Thus, Noam Chomsky states that, according to the reports of the British Government, most of the murders in Kosovo and Metohija until the beginning of the aggression were committed by the KLA, wanting to provoke an overreaction of the Serbs, so that NATO would intervene (Chomsky, 2018: 190). Furthermore, Alain Badiou proves that the aggression against Kosovo and Metohija is neither a humanitarian nor a democratic issue, nor the intention of most states of the international community, but of the Western imperial structures out of their geopolitical interests (Badiou, 2011: 62-75). It can be concluded that in this case, the truth suffered on purpose, because it reduces arguments in favour of the morality of humanitarian intervention to theoretical speculations, and not to a very event.

From deontological aspect, which prefers intentions, motives, actions and goals, it is certain that every intervention should be for a just reason, which is why it is necessary for means to be just and proportionate. In the case of the NATO aggression, this was not even close to the case.

The aggression of 19 NATO countries, which is many times superior, against a small country is an immoral act in itself, bearing in mind the disproportion of power, regardless of reasons. At the same time, on the basis of false facts, the opponent (Serbs) was dehumanized, which prepared the ground for suppressing any criticism for the use of all means in the aggression. Otherwise, means in political practice are considered effective if they enable the accomplishment of set goals, which puts their moral justification in the background.

Even if we assume the moral correctness of the goals in the NATO aggression, "the means - an intensive air campaign against Serbia and Kosovo - raises serious ethical questions", which is why it was "necessary to harmonize goals and means" (Amstuc, 2008: 49). Amstuc claims that the NATO military strategy is morally challenged: due to relying exclusively on an air campaign and from a long distance, ... which led to unnecessary casualties of the Serbian civilians; that it encouraged ethnic cleansing; "which, by waging the war without any risks, called into question the moral goals of the war", because avoiding one's own victims indicates the lesser value of others; because of the bad evaluation of the Serbian morale and determination to fight and, finally, because of the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs after the end of the war (Amstuc, 2008: 49-51).

The use of means that minimize the risk of the intervention for Paul W. Kahn indicates "incompatibilities between the morality of goals, which are universal and the morality of means, which seem to favour a particular community" (Kahn, 1999: 1). Even the Rambouillet Agreement in the form of an ultimatum is immoral, because the words of a clause are such that "every nation would consider it unacceptable (to be occupied by NATO), and which were there only to bring the situation to war" (Badiou, 2011: 68). However, if we consider it from the perspective of consequentialist ethics, then setting impossible conditions and ignoring the truth and facts is quite acceptable, considering the declarative justice of goals and the expected outcome.

The famous German philosopher Jürgen Habermas says that this war, as "an authorized peace mission", differs from previous ones in that "the surgical precision of air bombing and the sparing of civilians give it high legitimacy" (Habermas, 1999: 1), while being on the border between law and morality. Reports on the number of destroyed facilities and civilian casualties belie surgical precision. At the same time, "the aggression... (is) beyond both law and morality, situated deep within the domain of interest-motivated armed acts of the US foreign policy" (Radojčić, 2011: 137).

Habermas' evaluation is based on the uncritical acceptance of fabricated facts that justify the aggression for moral reasons. However, he speaks today quite differently in the text regarding Russian aggression against Ukraine. He believes that due to the dilemma in which the West found itself, to "choose between two options - the defeat of Ukraine or the escalation of a limited conflict into World War III," (Habermas, 2022), the West should think carefully about its actions, i.e. that due to the Russian nuclear threat, caution and compromise are necessary. It is obvious that the human rights of the Ukrainians are no longer important, as in the case of the Albanians, if you stand

against a nuclear power. It can also be concluded that the goals of the country that was attacked (Ukraine) and those who support it are actually different, and that is another proof of the Western inconsistency and moral hypocrisy.

The justification of all means because they serve moral goals cannot withstand deontological criticism, even if a deontological hierarchy of values is established and the principles of the first and second priority are defined, for example, humanity before sovereignty, human rights before the rule of non-interference in internal affairs. The reason is that the entire process of action, for deontological ethics, has to be morally correct and that the universality of the starting principles cannot be denied, primarily that any person cannot be a means or an expense.

Therefore, it can be said that deontological ethical perspective could not justify the aggression, because there is no consistency of reasons in any case, which means that they cannot rise to the level of universality. And if we were to raise them to that level and implement them consistently, again the aggression cannot be justified morally, because it was based on the false facts.

Consequentialist perspective

According to consequentialist, most often utilitarian ethics, the moral justification of actions depends on their consequences. This very acceptable theory in foreign policy is promoted by the Western countries led by the US.

Utilitarianism as a principle of utility can be used in two ways: in evaluating rules and acts.

The evaluation of rules was carried out taking into account obeying relevant norms and rules in the international community, starting from how much their moral correctness in some situation benefits the international community, the common good and global peace (i.e. the aggressor). Thus, non-interference in the state internal affairs and respect for sovereignty were *ad hoc* relegated to a lower level of hierarchy, while respect for human rights and the prevention of humanitarian disasters were set as supreme principles.

In evaluating an act, more precisely, the very aggression against the FRY, utilitarianism focuses on the welfare of the majority. Simply put, if final result is the well-being of the majority community (Albanians) in Kosovo and Metohija, then it is a morally correct act, and thus the collateral damage during and after the aggression is negligible. In both cases it is useful to intervene.

Consequentialist ethics also evaluates outcomes from the aspect of morality of undertaking or not undertaking actions. This is a false moral dilemma with a solution already known in advance. The intervention is justified by the parsimony of a complex problem, whose meaning is: if we do not act, there will be ethnic cleansing, and if we act, we will prevent it. At the same time, the conscience of actors and the public will be calm, and their interests and political goals not related to the relationship between the Albanians and the Serbs will be accomplished. If everyone is brought to agreement on intention and goal, it can consequently be brought to agreement on means, as well.

This then justifies their indiscriminate use and intervention in general, even though there were other political solutions and outcomes.

Nye emphasizes that “a good moral conclusion about consequences must also consider the maintenance of an institutional order that promotes moral interests” (Nye J. S., 1999: 98), which means that after the intervention in Kosovo and Metohija, conditions and a system that will contribute to moral behaviour have to be provided. This has not happened, supported by the fact that immediately after the established peace, there was the exodus of the Serbs, when “more than 164,000 Serbs left Kosovo from the beginning of June” (Human Rights Watch, 1999) to August. The persecution continued later, culminating in March 2004 with the killing of the Serbs and ethnic cleansing (BBC News, 2004). Thus, in a few years, during the peacekeeping (NATO) forces, more than 250,000 Serbs were expelled and more than a hundred churches were burned.

Consequences fundamentally define consequentialist ethics, and they also call it into question. After each Western intervention, they are rather disastrous, so that “inhumane consequences are exactly what contradicts the consequentialist justification of *humane war*” (Savić, 2009: 535).

Therefore, consequentialist ethics can find a moral justification for the aggression because the consequences would be to stop the humanitarian disaster, ethnic violence and protection of the Albanian rights. On the other hand, it could be critical because of the excessive use of force, the destruction of infrastructure and the suffering of the population, the use of depleted uranium, causing an environmental disaster, the bombing of the media and civilians. Apologists lump it under necessary collateral damage or pre-charged costs as a cover for good intentions. However, good intentions do not exempt anyone from responsibility.

Consequentialist ethics, by the fact that it is governed by consequences, relativizes moral rules and enables the implementation of double standards according to interests. Due to the impossibility of fully predicting outcomes, there are no universal criteria of moral evaluation, which leaves room for the abolition of responsibility. Thus, the moral hypocrisy of the West has received its full support with the war in Ukraine and the implementation of double standards towards itself and Russia, that is, the aggression against the FRY and Ukraine.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that neither theory, nor dimension, gives a complete picture and evaluation of moral correctness, which means that a multidimensional analysis is necessary in order to evaluate the morality of the intervention. In this context, the aggression against the FRY is immoral, because it does not fully meet either deontological or consequentialist criteria of morality. It does not meet deontological criteria due to the inconsistency of acting according to the universal principles invoked by the aggressors, due to inappropriate means and basing the intervention on false facts. Consequentialist reasons are partially fulfilled, considering the outcome in favour of the Albanians and their interests, and not due to “the collateral

damage“, persecution and ethnic cleansing of the Serbs and because the same outcome could have been achieved without the war.

Morality in international relations does not have a decisive role, it can be ignored, but it can also be an excuse for achieving partial and egoistic interests, as it was done by the Western countries in the aggression against the FRY.

The problem of small countries is that morality and international law are the only remaining arguments they can invoke in the face of injustice and force, which in most cases is not effective. In this regard, we should recall the Melian Dialogue, in which Athens, as the hegemon, demanded that the neutral Melians side with it, and the friendly Sparta against them. When the Melians argued that law and morality were on their side, Athens simply told them that “the strong do what they can, and the weak do what they have to.“ It is the main principle of the behaviour of the great in politics and the basis of realism, which liberalism also implements without scruples when it is in its interest. Any similarity between the Melians and the position of the FRY during the NATO aggression against the FRY and the current position of Serbia and pressures for alignment is intentional, and how effective it is depends on the conclusions that can be drawn from this parallel.

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Summary

The NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 is controversial on several grounds, especially its moral character.

The author considers the aggression through two ethical perspectives: deontological or the ethics of duty and consequentialist or the ethics of consequences.

The hypothetical starting point is that, if the aggression against the FRY was based on moral principles, then those principles should also have characterized it, starting from intention, motive, goals, means to final result, and if this is not the case, the aggression cannot be justified from a moral point of view.

The objective of the paper is to present the unsustainability, in an ethical and moral sense, of the "humanitarian" character of the intervention and reasons such as the prevention of humanitarian catastrophe and the protection of human rights. After the introductory part of the paper, the theoretical basis and analytical approach have been presented, in order to consider the moral sustainability of the reasons for the aggression and its moral character through a deontological and consequentialist ethical perspective.

First, the falsity of the initial basis for the intervention was pointed out, namely the prevention of humanitarian disaster and the protection of human rights, and then an ethical analysis was executed.

Deontological approach involved the analysis of intentions, motives, goals and means, while consequentialist approach was analysed through the intended and final outcome. It has been proved that no theory, no dimension, gives a complete picture and evaluation of the moral correctness of the intervention, which means that a multidimensional analysis is necessary in order to judge its morality.

It has been concluded that the aggression does not fully meet deontological or consequentialist criteria of moral correctness, i.e. that interests are hidden behind moral reasons.

Deontological criteria were not met due to the inconsistency in the implementation of the universal principles mentioned as the reason for the intervention, due to inappropriate means and false facts on which it was based. This means that from a deontological ethical perspective, the NATO aggression against the FRY cannot be justified on any basis.

Consequentialist approach was carried out through utilitarian evaluation of rules and acts of the aggression itself. By evaluating rules, it has been concluded that the rules of non-interference in the state internal affairs and sovereignty were relegated to a lower level of hierarchy, and the respect for human rights and the prevention of humanitarian disaster were put at the highest level. It has been considered as more beneficial to the international community and the common good. In the evaluation of the act of the aggression itself, the welfare of the majority has prevailed, i.e. the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as the interests of the aggressor countries.

Consequentialist ethical perspective somewhat justifies the aggression, because the accomplished goals, regardless of means, were in favour of the protection of the Albanians and the interests of the aggressors, which was also its main goal. However, the negative consequences, the destruction of infrastructure, the suffering of civilians, the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs and the creation of the basis for independence to an ethical community cannot justify the aggression even from a consequentialist point of view.

In the end, it has been concluded that morality does not have a decisive role in international relations, so it did not have it in the aggression against the FRY either, but, along with international law, it is the only argument that can be invoked by small states in relations with great ones.

Key words: NATO aggression, Yugoslavia, moral perspective, ethics of duty, ethics of consequences

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