

## **PART IV The UN and No-fly Zones\***

The model for No-fly Zones (NFZs) was created by the United States after the 1991 Gulf War as a means to prevent further Iraqi aggression. First, a NFZ was established over Iraq's north to prohibit Iraqi aircraft from attacking the Kurdish ethnic minority in the region. In 1992, a NFZ was declared in the southern half of the country to help protect the Marsh Arabs and Shiite areas. The United States and its allies implemented the NFZ through operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch, which were not explicitly UN-authorized. The Americans did, however, operate in conjunction with a UN observer mission along the Iraq–Kuwait border. James MacKay elaborates in Chapter 10 on how the NFZ was enforced, including through ironic violations of the demilitarized zone that the UN mission was monitoring.

In contrast to the Iraqi NFZs, the Bosnian NFZ (1993– 1995) was created by the Security Council. It sought to prevent Serb forces from using aerial superiority in the internecine war. At first the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), under Operation Sky Monitor, only reported on NFZ violations; it did not take action in response, frustrating many on the ground and in the international community. However, NATO worked closely with UN forces on the ground, including UN military observers like F. Roy Thomas, who describes his experiences “touched by air power” in Chapter 11. In 1994, under Operation Deny Flight, NATO aircraft shot down four Bosnian Serb fighter aircraft that violated the NFZ, making it the first combat engagement in NATO's history. The dual key system, under which NATO and the UN had both to “turn a key” to activate enforcement, proved confusing and inadequate for fast and effective responses. After the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, NATO was given broad authorization to carry out attacks beyond implementation of the NFZ, as described by Robert C. Owen in Chapter 13, in Part V.

The Security Council again created a NFZ in 2011, this time over Libya, to prevent the Gadhafi government from attacking its citizens and the opposition force. Furthermore, the Council authorized member states to protect Libyan civilians, leading NATO to take control of the airspace by eliminating Libyan air defences and bombing any forces targeting civilians. This resulted in the fall of Muammar Gadhafi. As this operation involved much more than a simple NFZ, the Libyan campaign is described by Christian F. Anrig in Part V, Chapter 15. But the imposition and enforcement of the NFZ remains an important application of air power.

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