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By

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VICTORY BY ACCIDENT:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY
DIMENSIONS IN KOSOVO

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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Preface

From October 1998 to February 2000 I was deployed to Pristina Kosovo. My deployment period was split between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Working for OSCE I was the senior Military Advisor to Ambassador William G. Walker, Head of KVM, from October 1998 to July 1999. The second half of my deployment was spent working for UNMIK in the capacity of an executive officer for the Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG), Dr. Bernard Kouchner, and his deputy, Mr. Jock Covey.

Both positions were unique and offered incredible access, exposure, and understanding of military and diplomatic dimensions before and after NATO's 78 day bombing of Serbia. As an advisor I was able to participate in formulating policy within the OSCE framework and observe first hand how policy impacted what we as verifiers were trying to accomplish in the field. I was able to attend OSCE Council meetings and Contact Group meetings in the final days prior to NATO bombing. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet with President Milosevic on three occasions, sit in on numerous high level meetings with NATO's Secretary General Javier Solano, and Generals Wesley K. Clark and Klaus Neumann. I was able to accompany Ambassadors Holbrook and Walker to deliver final messages of impending NATO attack to Mr. Milosevic. I was also able to spend considerable time in the field as a verifier; meeting with senior members of the Kosovo Liberation Army and Serb security forces; negotiating hostage and POW releases; negotiating cease fire arrangements and building co-existence strategies. Ultimately I ended up in Paris France for the Rambouillet peace talks and observed its failure. Finally, I had a front row seat to watch the international print and network media shape the Kosovo conflict for the consumption of the world population. I participated in several media interviews and came away with considerable respect for the value of good journalism.

While assigned to UNMIK I was able to observe the lessons of Bosnia be applied to Kosovo. The civil-military relations between UNMIK and KFOR were extraordinary and developed into the model for future interventions. It was truly generals and diplomats at their best. Participating in the development of standing up an interim government was filled with highs and lows. The challenges were sometimes insurmountable, but I learned to appreciate the value of process, patience, and negotiation. It was also clear that militaries alone could not bring peace and stability to such conflicts.

To say the least this was a very rich experience. And it was quite unusual for an Air Force Officer to participate at the levels I was exposed to. Both in the field and behind closed doors for high level negotiations. As a result of having such first hand knowledge and experience, many of the views I describe in the paper are likely to generate debate and argument, but they are my views and my perceptions, shaped by my own experiences.

The purpose of this research project is simply to offer a perspective from the ground on how diplomatic failures led to war, and how military and political decisions exasperated attempts to bring Slobodan Milosevic to his senses and seriously sit down to negotiate a feasible solution for Kosovo. I was always impressed with how significant a role personality played in every aspect of the Kosovo problem. Generals have clearly crossed the line into the world of diplomacy. And diplomats seem quick to grab the military instrument to achieve political objectives. Coercive diplomacy failed in the case of Kosovo. The threat of force was missing critical linkage between having the political will to actually apply force and a synchronized diplomatic strategy to support its means. This paper highlights some of those miscalculations. The value of the paper aims at reassessing how future humanitarian interventions on sovereign territory should be approached and provides relevant lessons learned from the Kosovo experience.

The project required enormous patience of several senior military and civilian policy officers and demanded considerable time and guidance from my fellow associates and faculty advisors at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. I am grateful for their assistance and advice.

Abstract

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The resurgence of regional instability is an apparent manifestation of the post Cold-War era. Unlike during the Cold War period most of the instability is intra-state vice inter-state conflict in the post-Cold War period. Regional instability manifests itself in a wide range of behaviors: from small border disputes to ethnic conflict to violent acts of terrorism, and in some cases, wars for independence. The war in Kosovo is a case study of how devastating post-Cold War regional instability can be and how humanitarian crisis can lead to state sovereignty challenges and the introduction of force to resolve abusive human rights violations from dictatorial regimes. It also reveals the struggle in formulating policy around the issue of sovereignty and internal abuse of that sovereignty. Because of the rapid rise in regional instability, a cohesive mechanism is needed that helps prevent and resolve such crisis.

The thesis this paper will explore the political and military dimensions of the Kosovo conflict. While NATO did secure a victory in Kosovo, victory was achieved largely by accident more than by design. It was highlighted by failed international agreements, diplomatic miscalculation, reluctant militaries, and constrained by local politics, both in Washington and across the Atlantic with our European allies.

Victory by Accident: An Assessment of the Political and Military Dimensions in Kosovo

*It is indeed tragic that diplomacy has failed, but there are times
when the use of force may be legitimate in the pursuit of peace.*

--Kofi Annan

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The thesis this paper will explore is the political and military dimensions leading up to the Kosovo conflict. While NATO did secure a victory in Kosovo, victory was achieved largely by accident more than by design. It was highlighted by failed international agreements, diplomatic miscalculation, reluctant militaries, and constrained by local politics, lack of strategic clarity and purpose, and political and military ego's, both in Washington and across the Atlantic with our European allies.

This paper reviews pertinent aspects of the regions history. It examines the diplomatic and military dimensions and provides insight into policy options that may have been more efficient in deterring conflict in Kosovo. Since the final outcome of Kosovo has yet to be determined the focus of this paper will be from the time the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) entered Kosovo as the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) in October 1998, up through their evacuation on 20 March 1999 and subsequent 78 day NATO bombing campaign beginning on 24 March

1999. This paper will conclude with a brief review of policy implications and relevant lessons learned for future humanitarian interventions.

This paper is divided into six major sections:

1. Historical Perspective of Kosovo: Reviews the pertinent aspects of the region's history up through October 1998 and reviews what was happening in Kosovo. It also provides a review of the Holbrook-Milosevic Agreement that failed to contain the violence in Kosovo and eventually led to the 78 day NATO bombing.

2. The Political Diplomatic Dimension: Discusses the national security interests and their preferred multilateral approach in Kosovo and the surrounding European region. This discussion will also examine the failures of OSCE and NATO, and the effectiveness of each in dealing with Kosovo. It also reviews the mixed signals being sent from the West to Belgrade and how they were interpreted by President Milosevic.

3. The Political Military Dimension: Explores why NATO opted for the military option when, in fact, this was interference in the affairs of another country and was based on weak legal basis. This section will also highlight the doubts and concerns of the Defense Department concerning the committing of forces in Kosovo. The political and military dimension will review their contradictions, mixed signals, and successes and failures against the backdrop of the political phase.

4. Ramboulliet "Lite" Talks. Reviews the dilemma of enforced negotiations and why they failed. The talks were not a serious attempt to by either East or West to find a feasible solution for the repression of Kosovar Albanians. Although the French and the British foreign ministers chaired the talks, Ramboulliet was without committed leadership, and hence, another factor that led to war. Also discussed is how war may have been avoided.

5. Casualties of War: Examines the consequences of going to war without a viable plan. As we all know, wars seldom go according to plan. That is more true when leaders don't seem to have a plan—a viable plan, anyway—as appeared to be the case when we opted to go to war with Serbia. To request 300 aircraft three weeks into the war is not an indication that everything is on track. Casualties of war reviews what happens when war is waged without the objective of winning. War must always be fought as if it were truly a real war instead of some strange interlude between peace initiatives.

6. Conclusions and Policy Implications for Future Interventions: Reviews the importance of a synchronized diplomatic and military plan when using coercive diplomacy to achieve political objectives; and also provides a brief discussion on the issue of sovereignty and how we must approach policy when sovereign contracts are violated by their abusive dictators. The paper concludes with a list of practical and relevant lessons learned from the Kosovo conflict from a diplomatic and military perspective.

The Imperative to Act and Basic Assumptions

In 1998 and early 1999, the United States and the international community faced a deep moral and legal dilemma; the responsibility to avoid force if at all possible, and the demand to protect a victimized population against severe abuse of human rights and gross violations of international humanitarian law. The assessment after the fact of the choices made is inherently difficult, since it necessarily involves speculation on alternative paths that might have been attempted. This same dilemma confronts us today as we struggle to find appropriate and legitimate diplomatic solutions for the cases of North Korea and Iraq. Kosovo is a complicated scenario but may offer some lessons on how we proceed towards the future in dealing with failed states and the question of humanitarian intervention. How we prepare for the future is best achieved by taking an honest critical look at the past and the challenges the future presents for shaping coherent policies and strategies for future humanitarian interventions.

Such speculation and critique, however, must be anchored in an awareness of crucial factors over which the international community had very limited influence over FRY intransigence. For example:

- FRY policies and actions were clearly the fundamental cause of violence and unrest in Kosovo during the 1990's, and especially the period between 1997 and 1999. The Milosevic regime by its oppressive policies and misrule in Kosovo bears full responsibility for provoking crisis of decision among concerned governments and within international institutions, especially the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and NATO. It is also accountable for the criminality of Serb behavior in Kosovo itself.

- The FRY's approach to Kosovo was dominated by the play of the domestic political forces. Arguably, by playing the nationalist and ethnic card in Kosovo as his path to power, Milosevic had made himself captive to the ideological forces that were unwilling to compromise on Kosovo. In domestic terms, he may have had very little wiggle room of accepting any kind of a pragmatic solution, no matter which diplomatic strategy had been chosen by the international community.
- The Kosovar leadership did not offer much for accommodation either. The uncompromising and maximalist Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and KLA demands for independence, and the subsequent violence and deliberate provocative insurgency of the KLA, confronted Belgrade with an escalating challenge whose demands went beyond what was acceptable to the international community and even Milosevic's anti-democratic opposition. The international community, in fact, was virtually unanimous in its opposition to the notion of Kosovo as an independent state. Nevertheless, the KLA was effective in internationalizing the conflict and managed to induce NATO intervention rather than a diplomatic compromise, as only the former would likely lead to an independent Kosovo.

Given the moral imperative to act in the face of massive human rights abuse, even in the face of an on-going insurgency, made the need for action obvious. The political and military constraints were enormous and the choices of action taken are always important to assess. To assess the political/diplomatic and political/military dimensions of this conflict it is important to provide some backdrop to what was happening in Kosovo leading up to NATO's intervention and briefly describe the U.S. interests at stake resulting in Operation Allied Force.

Chapter 1

A Historical Perspective of Kosovo

“What happened here yesterday?” you ask the “cleansers” who took over the ruins. “Well, in 1389,,,” explains a Serb irregular fighter while waving a gun. “No, not in 1389: yesterday,” you interrupt....”Under the Ottoman Empire...” he tries again. “No, please!~ What happened yesterday?” You get impatient. “Because in 1921, they....” You cannot give up, of course, so you sigh and try again, until you get his version of the events.

--A conversation in time¹

Before Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic embarked on a policy to forcibly expel ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, they represented about 90 percent of the province’s two million people. It is estimated that about 800,000 people were left homeless as a result of a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing.² Many fleeing into the already fragile democracies of Macedonia and Albania during the spring of 1999. About 70 percent of the ethnic Albanians are Muslim. They became the majority population in Kosovo earlier this century.

If one talks to any Serb, the reason Kosovo is so important, as they say often, they make a comparison that Kosovo is to the Serbs as Jerusalem is to the Jews. And the reason is because in the middle-ages, Kosovo was the center of the Serbian kingdoms and for that reason it is full of the most important churches and monasteries of the Serbian (orthodox) church and many historical monuments. Kosovo was also the scene of the historic event—the battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389—pitting Serbian forces against the troops of the Ottoman Empire. Kosovo is viewed by the Serbs as the birth place of the Serbs. For the Albanians, or rather Muslim Albanians it was different. Because it was Muslim, the Albanian aristocracy was the power in the land, and in constant struggle not to be run out of their villages as the Christian states (Greece, Serbia, Montenegro) of the region began to re-emerge as powers and all claimed land inhabited by Albanians. Thus the Albanians have feared for their future for hundreds years. Forced to flee or emigrate, the Albanians have been homeless and in refugee status for a couple of centuries. For several hundred years the Albanians have been seeking independence and power to

secure their identity and a homeland. Fighting against this current was Slobodan Milosevic's focused desire to form a greater Serbia.

Despite being sacred ground and honored by poems of a century ago, Kosovo has always been the poorest area of Yugoslavia. Like Plymouth Rock for the United States, people have always been leaving it, when they can; both Serbs and Albanians. Those who have stayed are either too poor to leave, with nowhere to go without reserves, or ultra-nationalists, who choose to stay no matter what; Serbs and Albanians both. In other words, the place had become a socio-nationalist tinderbox. For the last 600 years both Serbs and Albanians see Kosovo as their rightful birth place.

There has always been a degree of backwardness in Kosovo. Kosovo was, and is, a very poor area, in which ethnic Albanians had large families, as a survival response. These large families became extended families, and functioned as clans. The result was a population broken up against itself socially, established blood feuds between clans, organized crime, revenge politics, and various forms of bootleg lawlessness. In many respects it was the Balkan version of America's wild wild West.

The political status of Kosovo is complicated. It had been an autonomous region in Serbia under Tito's constitution, meaning that it had certain rights which Serbia had to take into account. This meant that Kosovo could do what it needed to do internally without asking Serbia, but Serbia could not do anything internally without asking Kosovo (and Vojvodina, the other autonomous region). Until Germany started pulling Yugoslavia apart after the former Soviet Union collapsed, this was okay as an arrangement. Indeed, Kosovo became a defacto province during the 80s.

When Germany started pulling Yugoslavia apart, Serbia decided that they had to act. This was when Slobodan Milosevic started to come into his own as a strong central figure. After coming to power in 1989, Milosevic began to dismantle the Albanian administrative and cultural autonomy in Kosovo. His first act was to revoke Kosovo's autonomous status. The idea was to make Serbia governable, if it was going to be under economic or political stress from Europe. The second thing he did was try to repopulate Kosovo with Serbs. He did this in the usual bureaucratic manner; he gave Serbs jobs in the Kosovo government, at all different levels; thus, kicking out the ethnic Albanians who had held those jobs. The Albanian elite such as doctors, teachers, lawyers and

politicians, were stripped of their livelihoods and their dignity. They were often jailed as political prisoners or became missing. Moreover, the Albanian language was made illegal and could not be spoken in schools—Serbian was the only authorized language. In some cases, those caught speaking Albanian were jailed. Albanian university professors were removed and in some cases beaten and murdered. The Albanian population was systematically being completely stripped of its cultural identity.

But this was also a period in which the market economy was opening up. The ethnic Albanians made jobs for themselves by setting up businesses. Thus, the region became divided in another way. The Serbs controlled the political structure, and the ethnic Albanians controlled the economy. And their control of the economy was the base from which they started moving towards autonomy once again. A parallel government was also established with a strong political movement, but it was not secessionist. It fought for autonomy in Serbia, and for proper representation in the political structure. Ibrahim Rugova was the political leader of this movement—the president of Kosovo. However, Rugova was a noted pacifist and preferred non-violent measures to achieve self-determination and an independent Kosovo. The movement was peaceful, building political channels for itself, and working through them. And it was not a monolithic society or people, like everyone else.

So things remained until the end of 1997. It was during this time period the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) from Albania began to emerge and assert self-determination through the use of force and guerilla warfare tactics. During the pyramid scheme upheavals in Albania, the armories were raided and emptied; an estimated 100,000 guns distributed around the country and eventually finding their way into the KLA's arsenal. When the Italians went into Albania as peacekeepers, they took the weapons away from some people, and left them in the hands of the others. Guns started to make their way up into Kosovo.

The KLA set itself up in Kosovo as a party of violent revolution. The group was governed collectively and really never had a charismatic leader. This was an issue that would later create difficulty for the United States as their special envoys searched for whom to deal with to find a feasible resolution to Kosovo. It would also account for the KLA inability to develop a coherent political plan.

At its height the KLA's core group of serious hard line fighters was estimated at 4,000 to 5,000. Most rebel fighters were in their mid-twenties and thirties. At the top of their political structure was a young and ambitious, politically astute Albanian nationalist named Hashim Thaci—better known in Kosovo by his rebel name of “Snake.” Thaci was highly popular among the Albanian population and was all about self-determination and independence for the Kosovars. His KLA revolution called for the expulsion of Serbians from Kosovo by force, and for secession. They started ambushing, booby-trapping, kidnapping, and executing. Their first targets were Serbs; they shot police, border guards, and bureaucrats. They also started assassinating some of their own representatives and leaders of more moderate political factions of ethnic Albanians if they were not in favor of secession, or stood in their way of KLA objectives—independence. They also summarily executed a handful of senior military officials and warned that the organization planned to punish civilians who it knew were collaborating militarily with the Yugoslav government. In one of several actions that raised questions about the rebels' commitment to democratic norms, the KLA arrested and jailed two Albanian leaders of the largest ethnic Albanian political party, allied with LDK President, Ibrahim Rugova. Rugova and the KLA never saw eye to eye on how to achieve independence and he repeatedly scorned the KLA and its violent methods. Rugova would eventually lose his popularity among Kosovar's and the United States would soon learn that any successful outcome on Kosovo would be hinged upon negotiating with the KLA leadership—whoever they were.

In response to the KLA violence, Milosevic deployed the Yugoslavian Army (VJ), and dramatically increased the number of Serbian Police (MUP) and paramilitaries to protect ethnic Serbs. The Serb security forces responded in a heavy-handed manner that was a clear and disproportionate response to KLA hit and run tactics. Tanks and artillery were used to defeat small arms. This response resulted in the destruction of entire villages creating thousands of internally displaced people. Revenge, mass exodus, and hatred among the greater Albanian population increased the KLA popularity. The Serb response was a repeat of Milosevic's actions in Bosnia and was alarming to the West.

As early as 1992, President George Bush Sr. issued President Milosevic a stern warning to stop the violent crackdowns on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.³ Shortly after taking office President Clinton threatened to use military action to stem the violence.⁴ Milosevic was warned again in 1996 when the Dayton Peace Accords were signed ending the war in Bosnia. President Chirac of France issued similar warnings—but they were not backed by a credible threat of force—more importantly, the political will to use that force was non-existent.

In early 1998 Secretary of State Madeline Albright placed the problems in Kosovo squarely on Milosevic and presented options on how to deal with Milosevic to the Contact Group. The Contact Group consisted of France, UK, Italy, Germany, the United States and Russia, and served as the clearinghouse for political consensus-building and later as a policy-making body for the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Speaking before the group in March 1998 Secretary Albright outlined the terms which Milosevic and his government must accept including the presence of 2000 international observers in Kosovo, “enhanced” status for Kosovo within Serbia, and a complete stop to the intimidation and government sponsored killing.⁵ These terms were not met and the internal civil conflict intensified. The threat of NATO air strikes loomed over Milosevic if he did not comply. Sensing that NATO was on the KLA’s side they stepped up their own terror attacks against the Serbs and the Serbs responded with the Yugoslavian Army. As a result, the KLA stuck to the cities, fighting urban guerrilla warfare, rather than move into the rural areas. The brutality was stepped up on both sides and a kill for kill strategy ensued. After several weeks, the Serbs had the KLA on the ropes. Their numbers had dwindled, their leadership was in disarray, and in retreat.

In October 1998 Ambassador Richard Holbrook secured an agreement with President Milosevic to allow 2000 international unarmed verifiers to monitor the situation in hopes of reducing the violence and establishing and maintaining ceasefires, verify compliance with the established agreement, and allowing tens of thousands of displaced persons to return to their villages before the onset of a bitter Balkan winter. The agreement was endorsed by United Nations Resolution 1203 on October 16, 1998.⁶

Flawed Agreements and Ambiguous Solutions

The Organization for Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE) began to deploy a verification force in late October of 1998. The mission was called the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) and was led by a tough, experienced career Foreign Service diplomat named Ambassador William G. Walker. He had seen similar civil war and violence during his time as Ambassador to El Salvador in 1988, was the popular UN transitional administrator in Croatia in 1995. More importantly, he was familiar with working with unsavory thugs—Albanians and Serbs alike.

The ultimate aim of KVM was to buy time so a negotiated and peaceful resolution had time to be shaped by the international community.⁷ KVM was designed to be an unarmed and intrusive international monitoring operation. Most significantly, its purpose was to avert another Bosnia experience. The West wanted some kind of an immediate response to stop the violence in Kosovo, and KVM was, at the time, the best answer to address the immediate crisis and contain the ongoing violence in Kosovo.⁸ The alternative to KVM was a NATO deployment and Milosevic made it clear that he would not allow NATO forces on sovereign territory. Milosevic eventually accepted the deployment of OSCE monitors because he was familiar with their lethargic bureaucracy and inability to arrive at consensus. He believed OSCE would not be able to deploy 2000 verifiers in a timely manner or get organized fast enough to be an effective verification force.

In part, Milosevic was correct. Self imposed administrative obstacles severely hindered OSCE's ability to act quickly. OSCE operated at two speeds. One speed was typical of European decision making and included the circulation of mass paper, studies, and fruitless prolonged meetings where nothing was decided. The other speed was long waiting periods while consensus among fifty-five member states was debated. These debates could last weeks as agreements were always difficult to hammer out in a timely manner. OSCE in Vienna compartmentalized everything and significantly delayed the timely deployment of seconded personnel by implementing a lengthy resume and vetting period. There was no mechanism to get qualified people recruited and assigned quickly. Nations would bid for positions through fictitious resumes and then barter for safe positions that did not endanger their people.⁹ During holidays OSCE was literally shut

down and was difficult for KVM leadership to reach senior OSCE officials for guidance. This became particularly frustrating during the Podujevo Christmas Offensive in 1998. A major cease fire breach had occurred, both sides engaged in heavy fighting, and there was no one to provide “higher headquarters guidance.” There was no twenty-four operations center to look after the largest and most dangerous OSCE mission ever deployed.

In addition to OSCE obstacles the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement was difficult to implement for several reasons. First, it was never clear to the OSCE verifiers what it was they were verifying.¹⁰ There was great confusion around the issue of how many Serb forces were to remain. Second, even though the verification force was established to monitor Serb compliance, there was no way to enforce non-compliance or punish violations of the agreement.¹¹ Agreements where there is no enforcement mechanism unnecessarily puts monitors or observers at considerable risk. And third, the agreement ignored a critical part of the problem in Kosovo and that was the Albanian insurgent forces—the KLA. The agreement failed to address how the security vacuum would be managed if and when Serb forces reduced their numbers. There was no way to prevent the Albanians from exploiting the retreat of Serb forces. As it turned out, the Albanians did take advantage of this gaping hole and managed to acquire and control about 40 percent of the territory throughout Kosovo.¹² This made the Serbs furious and raised their suspicions about the motives of West. It also helped to escalate the conflict because the Serbs began to deploy additional forces to root the KLA out of the newly acquired territory.

The agreement gave the appearance of being pro-Albanian and raised considerable distrust for the international community. From a diplomatic perspective it only made their jobs all the more difficult and failed to address the very issue for which it was designed--security. Aside from improving the humanitarian situation for the duration of the winter the agreement was largely ineffective and represented poor diplomacy.¹³

The agreement Holbrook won was simply full of ambiguity. In reality, Milosevic gave up nothing by accepting the international community’s demands. The lack of a viable political framework to resolve the Kosovo crisis rendered Milosevic’s long term acceptance of these demands highly unlikely. Moreover, by sending 2000 unarmed verifiers into Kosovo seriously compromised NATO’s ability to enforce compliance because no air strikes could take place, which further undermined the credibility of the

threats to conduct air strikes.¹⁴ Ultimately, because of its ambiguity, the Holbrook agreement contributed to the failure of the KVM. Nonetheless, OSCE was quick to establish its headquarters in a former Yugoslav bank in downtown Pristina, Kosovo. The mission was the first international mission of its kind and had little chance of success from the outset. No other mission had ever entered a civil war to monitor such a volatile and deteriorating situation without being armed or having some mechanism in place to enforce the mandate.

In addition to administrative obstacles the mission also met several operational obstacles early in the game. Numerous support requests from OSCE were repeatedly denied to the mission by Serb authorities, and Milosevic himself. KVM was denied several medical, logistical, and personnel support requirements. For example, denied were medevac helicopters in case a mission member was injured; visa processing was delayed for personnel reporting to the mission; also denied were armed body guards for KVM senior leadership¹⁵; almost every line item in the Holbrook agreement went unfulfilled by Milosevic. It was a clear message from Serb authorities that KVM was not being taken seriously in either Belgrade or in Pristina.

KVM had no real leverage against Milosevic other than to close the mission. And the threat of the pulling the mission out of Kosovo did concern him because it portrayed his unwillingness to cooperate with the international community and unwillingness to resolve the Kosovo problem through peaceful means.

Milosevic was equally concerned and highly suspicious of NATO's deployment to Macedonia of a small 700 man force called "French Extraction Force". For him, it signaled NATO was prepared to invade sovereign territory. For OSCE, the purpose, or so we thought, was to come in and rescue the verifiers if things continued to deteriorate to the point where verifiers were taken as hostages to ward off NATO attacks. There was precedent for such a tactic in Bosnia where Milosevic had the UN observers taken hostage and handcuffed to bridges to deter NATO air attacks. However, according to SACEUR, General Wes Clark, "the French led extraction force was not to going to be capable of saving the verifiers if they got in trouble".¹⁶ In essence, there was no insurance policy to protect the verifiers deployed in Kosovo. It was clear KVM was truly on their own with virtually no support or backing from either NATO or other foreign ministries.

Milosevic was keen to recognize the ambivalence of the West and it was equally clear the West did not have a coherent policy to deal swiftly and effectively with the Balkans. This would become painfully clear during the Serb Christmas Offensive in Potejuvo in 1998.

From the beginning the KVM deployment suffered constant harassment from Serb authorities. Verifiers were denied freedom of movement, and confronted daily intimidation from the Serbs. Just as Secretary Albright had predicted, Milosevic failed to keep his promises to the international community as agreed to in the Holbrook-Milosevic Agreement. Thus, over a period of five and half months, only about a 1,379 verifiers actually deployed while the remaining numbers were largely made up of untrained and inexperienced Albanian locals and a hand full of Serbian locals.¹⁷ KVM never did reach its full deployment order.

It became increasingly difficult for the KVM to deploy throughout the Kosovo province and monitor the killing fields of Kosovo. When they did, verifiers were often turned back by Serbian security forces with threat of arrest or physical harm, and prohibited from executing their observer mandates.¹⁸ Several massacres in Kosovo occurred at the hands of Yugoslavian security and paramilitary forces.¹⁹ The KLA was responding in kind and being equally vicious in their attacks on the Serb civilians and Serbian security forces. The KLA recognized early on that only violence received international attention. They recognized if they could internationalize their strategy they had a chance of realizing their ultimate aim of an independent and free Kosovo. In the end, their strategy was effective and NATO provided their air force free of charge.

On January 15, 1999 in the village of Racak, located just 15 miles to the northeast of Pristina, 45 Albanian civilians were massacred. The victims included women, children, and male adults. The facts verified by KVM suggested evidence of arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial killings, and the mutilation of unarmed civilians by the security forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Racak massacre was the key turning point galvanizing the United States and the international community into action and included the use of force. Milosevic could have saved himself had he come out and issued a statement condemning the violence and killing, but he remained silent. As Secretary Albright said, "there was no way we could stand by and allow in Kosovo what Mr.

Milosevic did in Bosnia”.²⁰ Albright’s words would ring even more true as just 15 days later the Serb army and police conducted a joint operation massacring more Albanians in the village of Rugovo where 26 Albanians were executed at close range; 11 killed by two grenades thrown into a van. Again, there was no statement from Milosevic condemning the killing. It was clear things would only get worse and never better. Rugovo was yet another defining moment for the West to react and they failed.

The Racak massacre resulted in Secretary Albright developing and presenting a strategy that consisted of an ultimatum that the Serbs and the KLA had to accept by a specific date. If the parties accepted the plan NATO would put troops on the ground to enforce the agreement. If they did not, NATO would implement the activation order to begin a phased air campaign against Serbia. With NATO’s commitment to act the Contact Group convened a meeting in London on January 29, 1999, and directed the parties to “get serious about negotiating a settlement—and they had one week to get their act together.” This crucial Contact Group meeting resulted in the Rambouillet peace talks to be held in France February 1999. Secretary Albright was tough and concluded by warning that there “should be no doubt on either side that the consequences of failure to reach an agreement or to show restraint on the ground will be swift and severe.”²¹

Because of relentless harassment and Serbian intimidation it became nearly impossible for OSCE to effectively execute the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement. The business of verifying was becoming increasingly risky and more dangerous. Moreover, the KLA was proving to be of no help. They too were becoming increasingly violent and were incrementally stepping up their violence for each Serbian attack. As a result of increased danger and lack of cooperation from Serb authorities and KLA zone commanders, KVM was directed by the OSCE Chairmen in Office to evacuate the mission in the early morning hours of March 20, 1999. The evacuation signaled the defeat of the international OSCE verification mission, another round of diplomatic failure, and the introduction of a 78 day NATO bombing campaign just four days later.

Road to War

13 years ago, Kosovo was an autonomous province of Yugoslavia, with a functioning, multi-ethnic government. President Slobodan Milosevic took away that

autonomy and implemented an apartheid-like policies that excluded Kosovar Albanians from virtually all positions of responsibility. In 1992, President Bush warned Milosevic of the consequences of Serb violence against or forced expulsion of Kosovar Albanians. In 1998, this discrimination and abuse of human rights turned into systematic violence against the Kosovar Albanians, precipitating the crisis that forced NATO to act on the diplomatic and military fronts.

In October 1998, under pressure of impending NATO military action, Milosevic agreed to the deployments of international observers into Kosovo, and the violence was managed, but never really subsided. By late winter, full scale violence had resumed, NATO was again reviewing military options, and the parties were summoned to negotiations at Rambouillet, France—which ultimately failed because of Serb intransigence. And with the evacuation of the Kosovo Verification Mission on March 20, it was increasingly clear NATO would have to intervene with force to stop Milosevic’s humanitarian disaster.

On March 21, 1999, the international community initiated one last diplomatic effort. Ambassador Richard Holbrook, President Clinton’s special Balkan Envoy, was dispatched to Belgrade to deliver a warning to Milosevic. On March 22, in response to Belgrade’s continued intransigence and repression, and in view of the evolution of the situation on the ground in Kosovo, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) gave Secretary General Solana authority, subject to consultations with the allies, to order a phased air operation. Ambassador Holbrooke departed Belgrade on March 23, having received no concessions of any kind from Milosevic, which led Secretary Solana to direct General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), to initiate air operations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). On March 24, 1999, The United States and its NATO allies turned from a path of diplomacy backed by the threat of force to a military campaign supported by diplomacy. The air campaign devastated much of Milosevic’s economic infrastructure and demoralized his military. Moscow had failed to back Milosevic and he underestimated the West’s resolve to achieve its political goals.

In June 1999, Mr. Milosevic acquiesced to the pressure of NATO’s devastating air campaign and threat of an impending ground invasion and gave way to NATO’s demands. However, before this was done Milosevic’s security forces managed

to murder an estimated 10,000²² Albanians, and ethnically cleanse Kosovo of almost one million Kosovar Albanians.²³ One can hardly call this a victory of airpower--especially when one of the stated goals of military intervention was the protection of Kosovar Albanians.

Interests at Stake

The United States and its NATO allies had three strong interests at stake during the Kosovo crisis.

First, Serb aggression in Kosovo directly threatened peace throughout the Balkans and the stability of NATO's southeastern region. There was no natural boundary to this violence, which previously had moved from Slovenia to Croatia to Bosnia and then to Kosovo. Continued fighting in Kosovo threatened to: (a) derail the successful Dayton peace process in Bosnia; (b) re-ignite chaos in Albania; (c) destabilize the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with its large Albanian minority; and (d) spill over into other neighboring countries, including Bulgaria and Greece. Instability in this region had the potential to exacerbate rivalries between Greece and Turkey, two NATO allies with significant and often distinct interests in Southern Europe.²⁴

Second, Belgrade's repression in Kosovo created a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions. It began as soon as OSCE was ordered to evacuate. Named "Operation Horseshoe" by the Serbs, this ethnic cleansing campaign was comprehensively planned months in advance by Milosevic as a brutal means to end the crisis on his terms by expelling and killing ethnic Albanians, overtaxing bordering nations' infrastructures, and fracturing the cohesion of the NATO Alliance.²⁵ NATO and other members of the international community responded to this crisis, preventing starvation and enduring, ultimately, that the Kosovars could return safely to their homes.²⁶

Third, Milosevic's conduct leading up to Operation Allied Force directly challenged the credibility of NATO, an Alliance that has formed the bedrock of transatlantic security for fifty years.²⁷ The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia signed agreements in October 1998 that were to be verified by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and monitored by NATO.²⁸ In the

period up to March 1999, the FRY increasingly and flagrantly violated these agreements.²⁹ Had NATO not eventually responded to these violations and other acts of the FRY, its own credibility, as well as the credibility of U.S. security commitments throughout the world, and American leadership in general would have been called into question.

Balancing NATO's response to the Kosovo conflict with the desire to maintain a positive and cooperative relationship with Russia which strongly opposed NATO military actions against the FRY, was essential. Given the importance of maintaining a constructive relationship with Moscow, both the United States and NATO had to consider carefully how their actions in the Balkans would affect their long-term relationship with Russia.³⁰

¹ Anna Husarska, "No End of Troubles in the Balkans," *The Washington Post*, Book World, November 1, 1992, p.5.

² Department of State Human Rights Report, October 1999.

³ David Halberstan, *War In A Time Of Peace, Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Department of State press release on Secretary of State Albright's statement to the Contact Group in London March 1998.

⁶ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp. 252, describes the details of the the Holbrok-Milosevic Agreement.

⁷ Interview with Ambassador William G. Walker, Head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, October 1998-July 1999. November 14, 2002.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp.49-50.

¹⁴ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C.

¹⁵ As an interesting side note Milosevic finally gave in after repeated demands by Ambassador Walker, Generals Clark and Naumann, and Ambassador Holbrook, by

stating that only Ambassador Walker could be armed—he could have a small caliber handgun to protect himself. This angered many as it was clear Milosevic was not taking any of the negotiations seriously.

¹⁶ General Clark made this comment in January 1999 during a meeting with Ambassador Walker, Ambassador Dick Miles and other US Embassy officials in Belgrade.

¹⁷ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C. OSCE. Gen Drewienkiewicz operations notes indicate KVM hired about 1600 local Albanian and Serbs to support Pristina OSCE headquarters and their five regional field offices. Only a fraction of the local hires were evacuated with the mission and some of the local hires left behind were later arrested or murdered by Serbian police who lists of all the Albanians who worked for the OSCE. The mission had Serb informants who were providing valuable intelligence on the KVM. Such activity was later substantiated by OSCE human rights reports, and my personal interviews.

¹⁸ Authors first hand knowledge having been assigned to the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) as a verifier from October 1998–July 1999. I participated in several incidents where verifiers were denied access to the village of Malisevo, Stimlje, and others. Threats of arrest were common place.

¹⁹ OSCE Human Rights Report, October 1998 to May 1999, indicates confirmed massacres at Racak, Rugovino, Qirez, Srbica, Likosane, and other villages throughout the Drenica valley in central Kosovo.

²⁰ Albright made this comment in her remarks to the Contact Group in London in January 1999.

²¹ Madeleine K. Albright, “Remarks at the U.S. Institute of Peace” (U.S. Department of State, February 4, 1999).

²² The number 10,000 is often in dispute as mass graves are still being uncovered. This number comes from multiple human rights reports and coincides with the Department of State (DoS) report October 1999.

²³ OSCE Human Rights Report, Volume 2, pp.143. October 1999, OSEC HQ, Vienna Austria.

²⁴ Interview with former Secretary State, Madeleine Albright, January 8, 2003, Georgetown University.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ivo Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000. Appendix C, Documents, UN Endorsement of the Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement, pp.252-255.

²⁹ Authors observations and assessment from being deployed on the ground in Kosovo to evaluate Serb compliance with the October 1998 Holbrook-Milosevic Agreement.

³⁰ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, SACEUR, November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

Chapter 2

The Political and Diplomatic Dimension

*This is the Balkans—rationality isn't a reliable compass.*¹

--A Western diplomat in Belgrade

To fully understand the political and diplomatic tug of war there are two key questions that must be addressed. One, why did diplomacy fail to deter war? And two, what might have been done differently to avert conflict? There are a couple of ways to explain the failures.

A first and most obvious observation is the failure and powerlessness of the United Nations in Kosovo. The UN Security Council passed four resolutions on Kosovo during the phase of conflict.² The first was ignored. The second was simply disregarded until NATO threats enforced partial compliance.³ This lack of compliance can easily be explained. Mr. Milosevic knew that non-compliance would hardly entail additional UN sanctions and, especially considering the Russian and Chinese attitudes, certainly would not lead to the authorization of force. Unfortunately, this again reflects clearly the defects of the present UN system of collective security. Because the Security Council only occasionally, and very selectively, authorizes armed interventions, States involved in conflicts may assume that the UN will probably not authorize the use of force, thus reducing the chances of compliance with UN resolutions. The UN was finally called upon, but only for post facto blessings of an agreement concluded in other channels.

The failure of the UN required urgent action to contain the violence that was exploding throughout the hills of Kosovo in the early days of March 1998. The Serbs were going village to village wreaking havoc. The heavy crackdown had resulted in the deaths of eighty-five Albanians in just a few short days. Secretary Albright called for the Contact Group to meet in London to condemn the killing and review the overall situation. It was clear that threats and diplomatic rhetoric was no longer working. The Contact Group ministers demanded that Milosevic end the violent Serbian repression against the

ethnic Albanians, withdraw all Serb special police from Kosovo within ten days, allow humanitarian groups to enter Kosovo, and begin a serious dialogue with the Kosovar Albanians for a peaceful resolution. Failure to meet these demands, the ministers warned, would lead a denial of travel visas for senior Yugoslav and Serb officials, an arms embargo, trade and investment restrictions, and a freeze on funds held abroad.⁴ While these actions were swift they were with serious contradictions.

The first contradiction was the desire to act swiftly and decisively and the perceived need to form a consensus on policy not only with NATO allies but also with Russia. There were major differences on how some contact Group members preferred to respond to the crisis. For example the Russians, and to a degree, the Italians, favored a policy of relying on incentives. The Americans and the British on the other hand preferred a more confrontational policy. At times, however, this conflict was bypassed when the need for action outweighed getting the agreement of all Contact Group members, as when Russia abstained from decisions to impose economic sanctions on Belgrade and when NATO, in threatening to use force, bypassed the UN Security Council and a certain Russian veto.

The second contradiction concerned the belief that a solution to the Kosovo crisis lay in pressing Milosevic to end the violent crackdown in Kosovo—while at the same time NATO relied on him to negotiate a final settlement with the Albanian community. This meant that the ability to apply pressure on Milosevic to tend the violence would at every turn be constrained by the fact that in the end the Yugoslav president was central to any successful negotiations. This constraint was compounded by the belief that the success of Western policy in Bosnia also depended upon Milosevic's full cooperation. It was therefore never really apparent who had leverage over whom: The United States and its allies over Milosevic, or vice versa.

The third contradiction to the Contact Groups demands was pressuring Milosevic to end the violence and repression while hoping the not to encourage the ethnic Albanians Kosovo to push their claims for independence. Having rejected independence as an acceptable outcome of the conflict, Western policymakers had to constantly balance their pressure against Belgrade with the need to discourage the Kosovars from pressing for secession.

These policy contradictions were not inevitable.⁵ Some of the assumptions underlying Western policy could have been relaxed or even abandoned altogether. For example, the decision to rely on consensus within the Contact Group typically resulted in the least common denominator policies, hardly the kind of approach need to convince Belgrade we were serious and he needed to change course. Moreover, the best way to pressure Milosevic without encouraging the Kosovars to seek immediate independence would have been if NATO countries had been prepared to deploy ground forces in Kosovo as part of an agreement with Belgrade to protect ethnic Albanians, demilitarize the KLA, and guarantee their territory's continued inclusion in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. None of these options would have ensured success, but all would have improved the chances for a peaceful settlement. Conversely, if the use of force was to remain a true option of last resort so as to maintain domestic and allied support for the policy, then abandoning opposition to Kosovo's independence in favor of pursuing partition might have been worth an attempt. However, rather than make these difficult choices the United States and its European friends elected to defer making these tough choices hoping instead that some kind of an easy solution would magically present itself.

The Holbrook-Milosevic Agreement

To understand the second reason why diplomacy failed it is important to establish how we arrived at the diplomatic and military crossroads and analyze the various factors unique to the case of Kosovo. Effectively, the agreement between Richard Holbrook and President Milosevic negotiated and announced in October 1998 was dead on arrival. Behind policy doors it was Secretary Albright, whom, more than any one else in Washington, knew Milosevic would never follow through on the agreement. The agreement was dead for several reasons.⁶

First, it never had a chance because there was no reason to believe Milosevic would ever keep his word. His personal history would serve as his future—a pathological liar and always playing for time.⁷ So one of our first diplomatic mistakes was to believe Milosevic would abide by the October agreement. A second mistake was that the agreement was never actually signed by Milosevic.⁸ This was not an uncommon maneuver. It was vintage Milosevic, and cleverly used to his advantage because by never

attaching himself to such agreements he was able to distance himself from accountability of not complying with such agreements. This tactic gave him wiggle room and left such agreements open to constant interpretation. Milosevic and the FRY government had never cooperated with similar agreements in the past and there was absolutely no reason to believe he would in the future. And third, despite the so-called agreement there was no effective enforcement mechanism on the ground to ensure the provisions on the agreement were being complied with.⁹ Thus, by January 1999, it was no surprise to learn that FRY security forces had in fact grown almost double in size, rather than be withdrawn to the levels originally agreed upon.¹⁰

The notion of deploying an international monitor force with 2000 unarmed verifiers to manage compliance (or non-compliance) of the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement was an extremely dangerous and risky a diplomatic move. It had never been done before. However, by its very design, KVM had no chance of being successful.¹¹ KVM was able to win a few tactical battles, but the war of compliance or non-compliance was completely dominated by the Serbs. The OSCE was never able to stop the violence and atrocities or effectively observe the relevant UN Security Resolutions because they had neither the mandate or the means to stop the carnage.¹²

The aim of KVM was to get in between the Serbs and Albanians and establish a cease fire. Secondly, it was designed to buy time for the international community to figure out what to do with Serb intransigence and to interrupt the resumption of all out fighting.¹³ KVM did buy about five and half months and made it difficult for the Serbs to hide their security action so one could assess KVM did fairly well with crisis management. Unfortunately, the fighting never really halted and KVM routinely found themselves in the middle of fire fights being shot at—sometimes injured, and prohibited from entering villages where on going Serbian police operations were underway. At times, it became impossible to verify non-compliance. As a result of uncooperative Serb behavior, and a poorly crafted agreement, Serb security forces systematically and gradually sidelined KVM. The mission became frustrated, and intentionally distracted from its mandate. Mission creep began to slowly confuse and strangle the mission. Internally, KVM found itself struggling with two problems. One was operational and the other was an external political bureaucracy that developed into an internal nightmare.

Operationally, verifiers found themselves involved in evacuating injured from villages attacked by Serb security forces, conducting human rights abuse research, meeting with families of the missing Serbs and Albanians, wrapped up in negotiations with Serb security and government officials, and trying to conduct a census for future election needs. Serbian interference made the mission of verifying non-compliance virtually impossible from the highest to the lowest levels of their bureaucracy.

Bureaucratically, when the mission stood up, European capitals were adamant about assigning key deputies to ensure their interests were being looked after. The idea of having an American diplomat in charge of the verification mission was unsettling for many nations, but especially so for France. As a result, the Head of Mission (HoM), Ambassador William G. Walker, had six deputies assigned to him by the OSCE. The deputies represented Norway, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, and Russia. The French view of these kinds of endeavors was always one of suspicion. Not only did the French have foreign investment in Serbia they had significant history with the Serbs and have always enjoyed a special relationship. Fearing that their special relationship would be challenged by an American as the HoM, the French immediately cried foul and demanded the number two position to keep an eye on the American diplomat.¹⁴ OSCE acquiesced and the French assigned Ambassador Gabriel Keller to be KVM's counterpart to senior Serbian diplomats representing Milosevic in Kosovo. Walker-Keller relationship was enveloped with difficulty from day one.¹⁵

There was constant tension between Walker and Keller and it eventually found its way into the local news networks and print media, the OSCE council in Vienna, KVM staff meetings, and KVM field operations.¹⁶ The French were unhappy with the aggressive nature of verification operations as designed by the American HoM. It was important to exercise no notice inspections and keep the pressure on the Serbs to remain in compliance with the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement. The French on the other hand wanted a more conciliatory and passive approach to intrusive verification. On occasion the French deputy shared KVM operational data and plans with his Serb counterpart putting verifiers in danger by taking away their element of surprise.¹⁷ The French deputy also scheduled himself to speak before the OSCE Council in Vienna without the knowledge or coordination with the American HoM. The French Ambassador was quite

famous for undermining the successes KVM enjoyed and highlighted its mission failures in the council forums. Keller used his moments in front of the OSCE Council as a bashing opportunity and as a way to undermine the confidence about Walker and the “American” agenda in Kosovo. He managed to effectively create suspicion among the 55 member states. His accusations and criticisms created enormous problems and doubt for the mission because now critical time was being used to explain these complaints while taking away from the business of verification. This problem seriously detracted from mission objectives, built resentment, and divided the mission along personality lines as well as Franco-American policy lines. More significantly, it created tremendous suspicion and distrust among the Kosovar Albanian population as to what the French political motives were.¹⁸

Externally, OSCE suffered other bureaucratic impediments. Behind closed doors, OSCE member states were pleading with Walker to ensure the safety and protection of their own by bartering for jobs and responsibilities that kept them safe and out of the field operations.¹⁹ This created absolute chaos. Not only were the verifiers trying to establish control of a civil war, KVM was regularly cornered by European domestic politics. Representatives of OSCE member countries came by the droves to visit the mission and see how their material and manpower contributions were being utilized. Safety was paramount to their concerns; however, being unarmed left KVM no insurance policy. Dealing with OSCE member states was in itself consuming and extremely distracting for KVM leadership.²⁰ More significantly, it also revealed the lack of real commitment by many of the OSCE member states.

Milosevic was a master at manipulating the international community and distracting them from their real purpose of conflict prevention. He kept NATO and OSCE at bay and was highly effective at keeping both institutions wrapped up in diplomatic confusion and double talk concerning the agreement. Milosevic effectively manipulated the semantics of the Holbrook agreement when it was convenient for him to do so.²¹ The result was constant shuttle diplomacy of the President’s Special Balkan Envoy and General Clark to explain the intent of the agreement—exactly what Milosevic wanted—attention on the international stage.²² In the field it created constant confusion for verifiers and uncertainty about what it was they were verifying; and what the rules

actually were, further exploiting the OSCE rift between an aggressive American diplomat in Walker, and a pro-Serbian French deputy.

Two of Milosevic's henchmen, Deputy Prime Minister, Nikoli Sainovic and retired Serb Army General, Milo Loncar, were assigned as his political and military liaisons, respectfully, in Kosovo. Their purpose was to tend to the needs of OSCE and facilitate the October agreement. Interestingly, both men were subsequently indicted for war crimes in Kosovo. Both received their orders directly from Milosevic and were held accountable for Serbian army and police activity in Kosovo. These two players held tremendous influence on how Serb security forces planned and conducted security operations.²³ Through these individuals, Milosevic repeatedly, and effectively, disrupted OSCE's ability to deploy, and shape the international mission. Milosevic installed himself as a major obstacle ensuring the business of verifying was made extremely difficult and risky, if not impossible.

Serb obstacles to standing up the mission came in many forms. For example, verifiers were denied timely visa's to enter the country. Once in country verifiers were not provided the base line Serbian force structure information. This information was critical to determine what the Serbs had deployed in Kosovo. Although promised by Milosevic, it was never provided—thereby making it impossible to verify FRY security forces strengths. Verifiers were also denied access to Serb units when they arrived to conduct no-notice inspections. KVM verifiers were not informed by Serb officials of impending FRY army or police operations until after the fact. On occasion, verifiers were detained at the borders as customs officials searched OSCE vehicles for weapons and other contraband. Under the Holbrook agreement, OSCE was afforded basic diplomatic status. With such traditional status came diplomatic immunity and freedom of movement. However, this status was regularly violated both in the field and at border crossings into Kosovo. Verifiers experienced lengthy car inspections, detentions, and denials for crossing into Kosovo. This, coupled with Serb denials of other requests created a highly tense environment to conduct verification.

As a result of Milosevic's uncooperative behavior, KVM was never able to fully deploy the original mandate of 2000 verifiers and diplomacy was effectively disrupted.²⁴ By the time of OSCE's evacuation in March 1999, only about 1,379 internationals and

1,600 locals (Serbs and Albanian's), spread out across five regional OSCE field offices were in place to actually conduct any form of verification of non-compliance—several hundred short of the agreement. Thus, the agreement seemed doomed from the very beginning.²⁵

There was also an agreement that Milosevic would grant access to the International Criminal Tribunal (ICC) on the former Yugoslavia. That never happened. In fact, any effort to travel into the region was blocked—including blocking Chief Hague Prosecutor, Judge Louise Arbour, from entering Kosovo to investigate the Racak massacre on January 15, 1999. Milosevic also agreed to political dialogue in the October agreement that would lead to an interim agreement as early as November 1999. That never happened and should have come as no surprise to the international community.²⁶

The international community did a lousy job of reading Milosevic, and at times, appeared as diplomatic amateurs because they failed to perform necessary and detailed homework of exactly what it was, and who it was, they were dealing with. The American administration and the international community had little excuse to claim they misread Milosevic after their experience with him in Bosnia. In fact, General Wesley Clark modeled his entire strategic vision on Kosovo after his experience with Ambassador Richard Holbrook in Bosnia. During this experience Clark had many opportunities with Milosevic and believed he knew him well.²⁷ He also believed he had learned Milosevic's fears—the prospect of attack by American air power.²⁸ These assumptions proved to be deadly in the days ahead..

What made them think that Milosevic would acquiesce and back away from Kosovo? While it is true that the bombing in Bosnia did help get Milosevic to the negotiation table, Bosnia was an entirely different set of problems that both diplomat and generals alike failed to understand. In Bosnia the Americans big problem was limiting Serb aggression. In Kosovo they would have to stop Serb aggression as well as deal with a tactically skilled insurgent force—the KLA. The KLA was brilliant in triggering violent and disproportionate responses from the Serbs. Unlike Bosnia where the Bosnians had not wanted violence and were victims of it, the KLA wanted violence because it worked to their favor to appear as victims of Serb reprisals to the court of world opinion. The KLA fought a good information warfare campaign by exploiting the media. Failing to

understand why Kosovo was so important to Milosevic was critical to understanding Milosevic's intransigence, his responses to diplomatic maneuver, and his reaction to the use of force. Had the international community understood this they likely would have been more efficient in arriving at a viable diplomatic solution that politically shaped the end state for Kosovo.

For Milosevic, Kosovo was very different from Bosnia. Bosnia was never an integral part of the Serb nation or myth, as Kosovo is, and it was independent, as Kosovo is not. The Serbs were losing anyway by the time the Americans got around to trying to stop the war in Bosnia in 1995, and Milosevic had a lot to gain by suddenly turning into the West's crucial partner in peace—namely his hold on power and not being indicted as a war criminal and turned over to the Hague. After all Milosevic had said and done since 1987 and then to turn to the international community and say “to hell with all that,” and signed the Rambouillet peace deal in February 1999, he'd be dead.

Because of this important factor American policy that was designed to push Milosevic to the wall over Kosovo, to act as they want or to be killed, was a counter productive policy and severely limited the U.S. ability to deal with Milosevic in a rational manner. Instead, this policy had the reverse effect and pushed Milosevic into embracing his isolation to preserve his power. The American policy was a suicidal policy and truly had little chance of success. In fact, the American approach to Milosevic actually rallied Serb nationalist and strengthened Milosevic's domestic support at home giving the policy virtually zero chance of success.

Regardless, the agreement was effectively broken. And it was broken because the diplomatic solutions that lead to the agreement were based on premises that proved to be mistaken. First, there was the premise that cease-fire was supposed to start on October 13th would have provided time for the two sides to negotiate an interim solution.²⁹ In fact, the cease fire, or the time provided by that cease fire, was used by both sides to prepare for a major spring offensive. As it turned out, spring came in early. The KLA used this so called cease fire to re-establish itself politically and militarily in a stronger position than it was at the time the fighting ended. So winter, as opposed to a cease fire, was used to get ready for the spring and the resumption of fighting.³⁰

Secondly, and the reason the agreement was sold as a major Holbrook success back in October 1998, was the notion that an international presence inside Kosovo would somehow deter a resumption of fighting.³¹ With KVM on the ground, and a NATO aerial verification mission in the air, it would effectively report on compliance. There were two problems here. First, KVM and NATO were verifying non-compliance as opposed to deterring or enforcing compliance. The verification mission was incapable fulfilling their mission mandates because, in both instances, they were unarmed and unable to force adherence to compliance. Second, despite the air verification missions, the resulting intelligence of those reconnaissance flights was not getting into the hands of the verifiers to confirm FRY non-compliance because they were not cleared for NATO-releasable intelligence products.³² Thus, they presented no credible threat to Milosevic and his security forces. KVM, and for that matter the agreement, became a political toy that amused Milosevic because it had no teeth. Repeated violations of the agreement only resulted in visits from General Clark or Ambassador Holbrook telling Milosevic what a bad guy he was. There was nothing else the West could do—sanctions were already in place, the threat of force had already been delivered—again and again—and all that was left was to follow through with air strikes. The question for NATO was did they have the political will in place to follow through on their activation orders established by NATO in October 1998. It was difficult to find any real leverage against Milosevic because we had played our diplomatic hand so poorly from the very beginning.

The one fear Milosevic did have was if the KVM evacuated its mission would NATO follow through on the threat of force.³³ It was important to Milosevic to have KVM stay at least through the spring months for a couple of reasons. First, like NATO, Milosevic needed to buy time. He knew that when KVM evacuated from Kosovo his time would be very limited both as President and as the international community would learn later to execute a detailed ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kosovar Albanians.³⁴ From a purely operational perspective Milosevic needed more time to get his security forces deployed and postured to defend sovereign territory. Fortunately for Milosevic KVM did stay through the spring evacuating on March 20, 1999.

Milosevic also needed the KLA because they provided his justification for the additional deployment of Serb forces and follow on action. Intelligence reports indicated

Serb forces were generally less active during the winter months. Thus, the spring would be the ideal time for Serb security forces and paramilitaries to execute a detailed expulsion plan called Operation Horseshoe. Operation Horseshoe was designed to purge all Kosovar Albanians from Kosovo—forcefully and brutally. While it was clear to KVM verifiers on the ground what Serb intent was the threat never registered with either diplomat or general until the cleansing was already underway in the village of Podujevo about 20 miles northeast of Pristina on March 24, 1999. By the time NATO bombing occurred on March 24, the Serb expulsion plan was well advanced and difficult to stop—especially with air power. Delay and indecision had proven costly. And a humanitarian disaster of staggering proportion was in the making. Regional instability now faced NATO and required immediate action and assurances from the alliance that the fragile democracies of Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bulgaria, all bordering Kosovo, would be protected. Moreover, the fear of Greece and Turkey entering the fray was of equal concern to the alliance.

Using the Racak and Rugovo massacres as examples, what happened in both instances was indeed verification of the fact that people were killed and executed in a brutal and repulsive fashion. There was no way for verifiers to prevent that from happening. The international presence in the region consists of people who are not armed. The inability of the OSCE verifiers to deter the massacres in Kosovo is the starkest reminder of why the unarmed verifiers alone lack the ability to force compliance by the Serbian police and require NATO back up. Despite the failures of the OSCE verifiers to exert control over Serb security authorities and the KLA, it's difficult to call KVM a complete failure. Because of the mere fact that they were on the ground made it very difficult for the Serbs to hide or cover up the kind of massacres the world witnessed at Racak and Rugovino. Regardless, this scenario played itself over and over during the five and half months KVM was deployed in Kosovo.

By January 1999 it was clear the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement was, for the most part, unable to deter and monitor Serb compliance with the agreement. Fighting had resumed at even more deadly and wide spread levels than prior to the October 1998 agreement. Neither threats of NATO air strikes or international verifiers were effective in deterring Milosevic and his security forces from his brutal repression of ethnic Albanians.

Had NATO followed through on its threat of air strikes early in the political and diplomacy phase, after wholesale violation of the October 1998 agreement—in which Serbia agreed to a cease fire, limits on its forces in Kosovo, and international monitoring—from land and air, coercive diplomacy may have proven more efficient. However, doubtful Americans, lack of a policy, and reluctant allies were ill prepared at this point to take any decisive action and Milosevic was keen to exploit this weakness of the West.

A key problem affecting the need for military force were political constraints of the alliance placed upon the military dynamic. As General Clark observed, “we worked with and through the sensitivities of some allies, the concerns and instincts of diplomats, the self interests of nations in the region, and the egos, judgments, and experience of some colleagues in uniform, especially in Washington.” This dilemma was a continuing struggle and affected full scale detailed military planning and preparation. The key lesson here—delay pays a heavy price by squandering the opportunity to act preventively and with less force.³⁵ This was a crucial lesson of the diplomatic and political process. Failing to understand its importance resulted in a humanitarian disaster and thousands of lost lives because it failed to act decisively and in a timely fashion. Unfortunately, the political will to introduce force at this specific crossroad was not synchronized with the diplomatic plan, nor was the threat of force prepared to act. As a result a significant opportunity to avoid conflict may have been missed.

Another important factor that effectively caused Milosevic to challenge the West was the constant nature of confusing and ambivalent diplomatic and military signals being sent to FRY authorities. There were several diplomatic errors that sent mixed signals to Milosevic and further complicated the West’ ability to form a coherent strategy.

From Belgrade Milosevic witnessed the White House take the deployment of ground troops off the table. He saw the Pentagon redirect the USS Theodore Roosevelt from the Adriatic Sea to the Persian Gulf. He recognized serious debate and division over the legality of attacking the Serbs. Partisan divide, lack of strategic clarity, and lack of popular consensus at home served to make Milosevic only more bold as he challenged the United States and NATO’s ability to formulate a plan acceptable to the governments

of NATO. Milosevic also recognized U.S. priorities and where the Balkans fit in those priorities as they relate to U.S. commitments to the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia. He saw Congress hesitate because of budget concerns for a war seemingly unimportant to U.S. interest³⁶. In essence, Milosevic saw a hesitant White House, a skeptical Congress, a reluctant Pentagon, and of course the NATO members all having very different attitudes on how much or little power, if any, to use. Such indecision by the United States and political constraints upon NATO offered Milosevic a logical strategy—try to outlast the alliance and break their cohesion.

These mixed signals are likely the reason Milosevic seemed so indifferent to Ambassador Holbrook's final visit in late March 1999 when he warned Milosevic one last time, "the attack will be swift, it will be severe, and it will be sustained."³⁷ Milosevic probably believed he had enough data to indicate NATO could never go through with it. And if they did go through with it, he believed he could withstand the short bombing period so well advertised by Washington diplomats of lasting only three to four nights. Perhaps it was the bombing that had taken place during Operation Desert Fox, when the United States attacked Iraq for seventy hours and then stopped that may have caused Milosevic to believe he could withstand that kind of bombing. Whatever his reasons it is difficult to find fault with Milosevic's logic. He had every reason to believe it was sound. Lack of decisiveness by the United States and NATO, lack of international will proved to be obstacles that created unnecessary delay, caused increased risks to monitors, and placed NATO pilots in a fight with their hands tied behind their backs³⁸. It was as if we never learned any of the lessons of Vietnam.

The OSCE mission mandate was rushed and was never made clear. The agreement was ambiguous and it was poorly crafted from the beginning. OSCE knew implementing the agreement would be difficult. The agreement was negotiated in haste by Ambassador Holbrook and left out crucial details that would have allowed the KVM to be a diplomatic success. However, the United States was anxious for an agreement as soon as possible. Holbrook was hired to retrieve such an agreement. Anything the United States could do to avoid the use of force would be done and done quickly. However, the rush to an agreement left much of the heavy lifting and confusion for monitors to sort out. Examples are numerous; disagreements about the degree of freedom of movement

for KVM verifiers caused OSCE operations planning problems and put them unknowingly in harms way. Key Serb liaison officers were missing when needed most; wrong contact numbers were provided; deception and denial of pending security operations in and around Kosovo; intimidation and threat of physical force upon verifiers increased, and the list goes on and on. Equally clear was the fact that senior Serb politicians failed miserably to communicate with lower levels of its own bureaucracy about these kinds of issues. So confusion on both sides paralyzed OSCE's ability to execute the mandate. Whether by design, or by real confusion, it had an adverse affect and created enormous tension between OSCE and FRY authorities at all command and control levels.

Ambiguous agreements are risky and place those involved in implementing such agreements in grave danger unnecessarily.³⁹ Other events also created difficulty and raised the suspicion of the Serbs. In the case of Kosovo, it caused KVM to become distracted from the purpose of verification. Although not officially in the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement, Ambassador Holbrook managed to convince NATO to send a small force to Macedonia. It was called the NATO extraction force and it was to be led by the French and deployed to the Kosovo-Macedonia border before Christmas. It was an ill thought out deployment and had virtually no capability to enter Kosovo and rescue OSCE verifiers. Even if it was capable of rescuing the verifiers the force had no authority from the Alliance to cross the border uninvited. Its deployment served only to be provocative and intimidating. The French led extraction force was out numbered three to one by OSCE monitors. The force had no airlift, insufficient vehicles, and no "*in-place*" plan to extract verifiers if required. OSCE was unable to share useful intelligence because there was no NATO-OSCE intelligence agreement permitting such a relationship. In a briefing in Belgrade at the U.S. Embassy Clark tells Ambassador Walker, "the extraction force is a joke and could not, and would not, rescue his verifiers".⁴⁰ The extraction force was a last minute idea of Holbrook's and one that troubled Clark because he was not in total agreement with the idea and it had not been vetted with the alliance.⁴¹ Moreover, the deployment did not help with negotiations in Belgrade as Milosevic saw the deployment as provocative and another threat by NATO to invade his sovereign state. It also fed into Milosevic's hands because he used this NATO deployment to justify additional VJ

deployments into Kosovo.. The fact that the extraction force would not be able to rescue verifiers also crossed Ambassador Walker up with OSCE member states because he had been briefing for weeks this NATO force was in place to ensure the safety of their people.⁴²

The notion that the extraction force was not capable of rescuing verifiers was a major set back for the entire agreement and the Kosovo Verification Mission. It highlighted just how out of synch diplomatic and military components were. This force was not prepared to rescue verifiers or was it ever designed to rescue verifiers. Moreover, it was a force not well equipped or capable of waging any serious battles if the Serbs decided to pre-empt an impending NATO invasion. It was a deployment that was poorly planned and risked NATO's credibility if it found itself unable to respond to Serb aggression. All the deployment did was provoke the Serbs and further harden their position and escalate the tensions.

Diplomatic Options—How Did We Get To Air Strikes?

The single most important event to spur the international community's resolve more than any other was the Racak Massacre on January 15, 1999. Racak jerked the Clinton administration into focus on the seriousness of the Kosovo problem. Despite President Clinton's domestic problems created by the Monica Lewinsky scandal it was clear the Clinton administration could no longer avoid the issue of Kosovo because the atrocities being committed by the Serbs were now the lead story both on network news and print media and was being viewed in living rooms all across America.⁴³ At this moment it was apparent the Europeans had failed to contain the Serbs and their bid for a greater Serbia. It was also at this moment the U.S. moved the Europeans aside and began to formulate a tougher policy on Milosevic.

Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, and the administrations National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, could no longer dismiss Kosovo as a European problem. General Clark had been back to Washington several times to warn of the coming implosion of Kosovo if the United States did formulate some kind of strategy and policy for Kosovo and begin to work more seriously with Alliance members. The last time in Bosnia, it was

Srebrenica that had moved the West to take decisive action. This time in Kosovo, it was Racak.

Racak was another one of those small villages that clearly defined the need for immediate action against Milosevic. At Racak, in response to the killing of four Serbia policeman in a nearby village by KLA insurgents, Serb security forces entered the small village of Racak in the early morning hours of January 15 and forcefully separated young male and female children from the male adults and executed, at close range, 45 Albanian civilians. The killings included women, a young boy, and 43 male adults. Some were decapitated while others were mutilated. But it was clearly a crime against humanity of the highest order.⁴⁴

Upon learning of the killings Ambassador William Walker led a team of OSCE verifiers out to Racak with a sizable press presence. Upon witnessing the brutal atrocities he emotionally and publicly denounced the killings as a crime against humanity and those responsible would be brought to justice. His courageous announcement earned him a diplomat's badge of honor because after making his announcement Milosevic gave him 24-hours to leave the country or be subject to arrest. Racak was exactly the event Secretary Albright and General Wes Clark were waiting for. They knew this event was what was needed to mobilize the West, and lessen the divisions not just between the alliance countries, but also within the Clinton administration. Racak now made it difficult to oppose military action.⁴⁵

Perhaps even more important than Racak was the Christmas offensive, December 25, 1998, in the small village of Podujevo located approximately 20 miles northeast of Pristina. This event has not been widely analyzed or written about but warrants a review from a verifier's perspective on the ground.⁴⁶

Podujevo represented all that was wrong with the NATO political and military dynamic. It was a clear indication of the lack of political will of the alliance and the difficulty of getting diplomats and generals on the same page.

Podujevo represented another challenge where decisive diplomatic and military commitment in the West failed badly. For weeks several hundred Serb VJ and MUP forces had been deploying to an empty airfield just on the outskirts of known KLA territory.⁴⁷ The Serbs were exercising daily and on occasion conducting joint VJ and

MUP exercise activities. It was clear what was going to happen. Serb forces were causing tremendous fear, tension, anxiety, and intimidation in all the surrounding the area. KVM was reporting daily on the build up and the violations of force structure. When KVM confronted the Serbs were with this activity as not being in compliance with the October agreement they interpreted the agreement to say they were authorized to conduct such training—provocative as it was, they claimed it was a normal part of their training cycle.⁴⁸ Repeated calls from OSCE to Belgrade to pull these troops out of Podujevo fell on deaf ears. All OSCE could do was stand by watch them through binoculars. Even the KVM reports failed to ignite any sense of urgency among the capitals of Europe and the United States.

In due time, the Serbs got exactly what they were looking for and that was a major battle with the KLA. What is important here is not the clear violation of the agreement, but the failure of the West to respond. While this activity was big news on the ground, and was being reported back through OSCE channels to the member states, it only got a trickle of attention from the capitals of Europe and Washington—and almost none from the press. The verifiers received no backing from NATO or the United States. And Milosevic, realizing and understanding this message, quickly recognized he could go after the KLA with impunity—receiving nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

Careful analysis of the Christmas Offensive at Podujevo suggests that Podujevo paved the way for the murders at Racak. Milosevic likely thought at this point that KVM truly was useless and therefore he had a free hand to step up the violence that he claimed all along he the right to do, as a sovereign state, to rid the province of terrorist and protect his people.

Secondly, the KLA plan for a spring offensive was Milosevic's justification to begin Operation Horseshoe. Had the West recognized the severity of the Christmas offensive in Podujevo and the intelligence signals it sent, it is conceivable that Racak may have never happened and the international community may have had more time to arrive at a political settlement and avoided the war all together.

Limits of Persuasion—Option Dilemmas

As Ivo Daadler describes in his book, *“Winning Ugly”*, no matter where in the world there are only three options to deal with any situation that the State Department must choose. The first is to step back and disengage leaving resolution to regional powers. The second is to muddle through with a limp stick and half-baked carrots, half-hearted commitments and a strategy of hope—hoping that limited saber rattling will scare the parties into resolving their differences. And finally, they can choose to take decisive action.⁴⁹

What does stepping back mean? In the case of Kosovo stepping back means the resumption of full scale fighting and the complete destruction of international organization credibility—to include NATO. How does this option balance what is happening in Sierra Leone and Chechnya in terms of the numbers and details of the massacring going on there? What is it in Kosovo that riles us when a dictator orders the killing of 51 people? After all, it is not unusual for dictators to kill their own people—they do it all the time. Why is Kosovo a special case and why did it get us to act? And why are massacres in other parts of the world where the kinds of atrocities we are seeing are much worse that seem to go virtually ignored? The answer is simple—because the crisis was occurring on NATO’s flanks. So stepping back is a real option, both in principle and in practice. Not because the credibility of the United States and its NATO partners was on the line, but because by what was happening in Kosovo could not be tolerated or dismissed.

The second option, which was our preferred policy in the early going, was to stumble through. The U.S. opted to have the Contact Group issue a statement of principles that needed to be negotiated, the kind of autonomy agreement that we are looking for, and to increase our pressure, which consist of more rhetoric, longer statements, more threats, in order to have the two sides come together and negotiate.⁵⁰ Our strategy at the time was to get the Albanians to agree to a single position. But we missed the essence of the real problem. The problem, why is there no negotiated settlement or agreement, is not that the Albanians disagree. It is because the Albanians disagree with the Serbs about what a solution is. And even if we would have had one negotiating team that was representative of the Kosovars, it remained unlikely to achieve

an agreement, given that the two sides were, as they are now, on two fundamentally different sides of the question regarding independence for Kosovo. The West can no longer ignore this fundamental fact and until this basic problem is addressed Kosovo will likely remain a protectorate state for a very long time and NATO will be charged with managing the violence and protecting human rights until a determination is made of what a final settlement will not be vice what it will be. In the mean time, Kosovo has given NATO a degree of relevancy and something to do in the new century.

Now we're left with the third option--decisive action. Typical of State Department option papers, the decisive options are usually left vague and without specificity. There are really two distinct options in regard to decisive action as an instrument of power. The first option is to deploy ground forces—in the case of Kosovo-- inside Kosovo. And the second is to launch air strikes.

On the question of deploying ground forces in Kosovo a reluctant Pentagon estimated a force of two hundred thousand troops if we deployed in accordance with the Powell Doctrine of overwhelming force.⁵¹ This estimate was high, but was a sure fire way to test the political will of the administrations commitment. It was also a way to ensure we would not go into Kosovo in a half-hearted manner. This would have ensured victory and most definitely sent the right message to Milosevic that the West was indeed serious about winning. The British and French governments estimated the ground option would have taken at least 100,000 troops, in order to go in forcefully, separate the sides, and stabilize the situation sufficiently. Force, very likely would have allowed an agreement to be negotiated and imposed on the parties. However, there were problems with this option. First, we had already put the American public through this same scenario in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia. Inserting American forces into the middle of civil wars tends to get people killed. And it doesn't necessarily get them killed for good reason. And no matter how you cut it, we had no vital interests at stake in Kosovo. It can be debated how important U.S. interests were, but deployment of ground forces into the Kosovo situation would never have had the support of the American people or Congress.⁵² It was, however, a serious strategic misstep by President Clinton to announce so early in the diplomatic game that ground forces were not an option. It quickly undermined the military strategy and simply made any military action more difficult.

Milosevic quickly recognized this weakness and capitalized on the American and alliance constraint by continuing his ethnic cleansing and expulsion of the Kosovar Albanians. Had the ground option been left on the table, it is quite possible the Russians could have had more success with Milosevic and possibly avoided conflict altogether. Second, if you go in and establish a protectorate in Kosovo or in an Iraq, or an Afghanistan there is one sure bet. You will never get out. A commitment to deploy troops in a civil war or to occupy territory is a commitment to stay. And that's what we have today in Kosovo—a protectorate state where final status is as elusive today as it was before Dayton. If force is used it cannot be done in a hit and run fashion otherwise nothing is solved. Force must be used in such a way that the only option is overwhelming and decisive victory. And it may not necessarily always be considered as a last resort. Such strategy may interrupt civil war, but it will never end it if the commitment to stay is not part of the game plan up front. However, confronting American foreign policy today is the war on terrorism and that focus may challenge Balkan priorities, specifically, U.S. troop commitments.

If U.S. policy in the Balkans changes and U.S. forces are redistributed to defend freedom in other locations such as South Korea, the Persian Gulf, or Afghanistan, it's a sure bet that war in the Balkans will emerge from hibernation. The remaining UN and KFOR forces will find themselves in the middle of cross fires or victims of isolated terrorist attacks as the two sides grow impatient with the lack of international progress on the issue of final status, and begin to distrust the peacekeepers and their commitment to stay the course. Losing territory as a result of war is not new to the Serbs. The Serbs have historically shown great patience. And if they have to wait for a hundred of years until they gain back disputed territory they will leave Kosovo in its current status and in the hands of Kosovar's and the international community. Having lost Kosovo to war—historical precedent tells us the Serbs will return. It may be 10 years; it may be fifty years or even a hundred years; but the Serbs will return to reclaim sovereign territory. In the Balkans, history is always the future.

Third, for those reasons, the political situation during the Clinton administration would have never allowed the consideration of American participation in such force. The administration was seriously divided on what to do in Kosovo. Even General Clark was

at odds and in conflict with the senior military at the Pentagon on two levels.⁵³ First, they wanted as little military activism in the Balkans as possible; second, they were not entirely sure that the Serbs were the sole guilty party, and third, they saw no vital interests that threatened the security of America. And if there was no American participation, the Europeans were certain to not go it alone without the American's—"not us without you."⁵⁴ The deployment of ground forces would have also created a major divide within the NATO alliance and presented serious domestic problems for Germany and Italy, both of which were facing a transition in government. In contrast, the British were anxious for the ground option to be employed.⁵⁵ With President Clinton taking the ground option off the table it would have been nearly impossible to achieve allied consensus and risked splitting the alliance into different camps. Exactly the strategy Milosevic was hoping for. To complicate this option even further, the Russians would have gone completely nuts if NATO had entered Yugoslavia without Belgrade's consent. Washington ultimately decided the political risk were too great to chance splitting the allies over something other than a vital interest.

That leaves the option of air strikes. Unfortunately this became our best option--or at least, our least bad option. This option was discussed and decided in September 1998 by NATO. A series of escalating strikes against military targets designed to force Milosevic to implement the agreements he signed with Holbrook and that were contained in the UN Security Resolution 1199.⁵⁶ There were two problems with the air strike option at this point. Other than punishment it wasn't real clear what they might achieve. Especially in the limited strikes being discussed at this point in the decision process. What purpose would such air strikes really have had? As General Joe Ralston, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, correctly asked, "what if they don't work? In other words, what's our back up plan?"⁵⁷ When Clark responded to this question he said "they will work."⁵⁸ Clark had every reason to be confident NATO would prevail based on his experience in Bosnia; but he was emotionally involved with Kosovo, and Milosevic specifically, because of the unnecessary loss of three close friends in Bosnia in August 1995. The truth is we never had a back up plan if the air strikes failed. Who ever heard of planning a war without alternative options or at least having more than one strategy? What made NATO believe that Milosevic would throw in the towel with NATO's "do or

die” strategy? What was the plan the day after the air strikes? It was fully realized after NATO bombed its way into Kosovo that NATO troops would have to secure Kosovo on the ground to allow the international community to establish a functional society and establish a degree of security. It was also clear Kosovo would not be a short-lived deployment.

These questions are exactly the reasons our diplomatic and military processes failed us and why it is critically important to ensure both process are synchronized. There was an overall lack of strategic clarity and political will, but more significantly, there was an overall lack synchronization between the two processes. The only reason NATO survived Kosovo was purely because of overwhelming American weapons technology, and because we had no other choice, for the sake of the alliance, to win. If Milosevic would have hunkered down with his forces in Kosovo and been less aggressive with his expulsion campaign, NATO might very well have been unable to sustain unity of purpose and fallen silent on its own rhetoric. It was truly victory by accident.

The hope of decisive action by the application of air strikes was that if successful, they would have the affect of moving Serb forces out. If this were true then it meant ground forces could be deployed in less numbers than you would if you had to forcefully enter into the situation. And that would make the deployment of ground forces more acceptable to the Europeans, and for that matter, the American public. A key concern in the case of Kosovo if ground forces were not quickly inserted following the success of air strikes was that NATO would appear to be indirectly contributing to the independence of Kosovo, because the KLA would be strengthened. And in effect, NATO would be serving as the KLA’s air force—something Secretary Cohen vowed he would never allow to happen. Because of their organized crime element, and drug trafficking, the KLA did not make an attractive ally for the West—despite our sympathy for their plight. Another concern was if ground forces were not put on the ground quickly, the KLA fill the security vacuum making NATO’s job more complicated and more risky. It would also give the appearance of the KLA and NATO working together which was unsettling for the alliance.⁵⁹

¹ Attributed to an unidentified Western diplomat in Belgrade in Roger Thurow and Tony Horwitz, “History’s Lessons,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 7, 1992, p. A1.

This quote reflects one of the great difficulties in coming to grips with the problems in the Balkans. It is not that Balkan interlocutors are irrational. They simply begin at a start point and follow a path that is different from their Western counterparts. Until Western diplomats and policymakers recognize this key difference and understand its full ramifications, solutions to the Balkan crisis will remain elusive.

² UNSC Resolutions 1160, (31 March 1998), 1199 (23 September 1998), 1203 (24 October 1998), and 1239 (14 May 1999).

³ Milosevic and Holbrook concluded an agreement on October 12, 1998, Yugoslavia and NATO on October 15, 1998 (text in UN Document. S/1998/991) and Yugoslavia and the OSCE on October 16, 1998 (text in UN Doc. S/1998/978). Yugoslavia promised to respect the UNSC resolutions and accepted verification by NATO (in the air) and by the OSCE (on the ground).

⁴ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p. 24.

⁵ Ivo Daadler, *Kosovo: Bosnia Déjà vu*, Washington Post, April 17, 1998, p. A23.

⁶ Interview with former Secretary State, Madeleine Albright, January 8, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C..

⁷ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill January 9, 2003, Georgetown University. Ambassador Hill was President Clinton's Special Envoy to the Balkans and was doing the negotiating with Mr. Milosevic from 1998-1999. During this period Ambassador Hill was also serving as the U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia.

⁸ Ibid. Hill interview January 9, 2003.

⁹ Ibid. Ambassador Hill discussed this as one of his greatest frustrations while negotiating between Serbs and Albanians. He tells a short story that whenever he met with the Albanians, and specifically Adam Demaci, former political prisoner of Serbia, that "they should say their prayers each night that Milosevic's health stays good—otherwise he would not be negotiating with them".

¹⁰ Ibid. Ambassador Hill Interview January 9, 2003.

¹¹ Ibid. Hill expressed his view that the OSCE was not the best international body to manage cease fires—especially as unarmed verifiers. This aspect did not aid in developing a successful outcome and impacted NATO's ability to enforce compliance because of 2000 unarmed verifiers on the ground. Unarmed verifiers was quick fix by Holbrook that Milosevic agreed to—Hill highlights that Holbrook had no chance of getting Milosevic to agree to an armed international force such as NATO.

¹² The OSCE has no enforcement powers and although it can mandate peacekeeping missions, it has not yet done so.

¹³ Interview with Ambassador William Walker, Head of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), October 1998-July 1999. November 14, 2002.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ambassador Gabriel Keller was assigned by the French Government as the French Ambassador to the Former Republic of Yugoslavia after the NATO bombing.

¹⁶ KVM staff meetings were highly volatile. The French Ambassador routinely accused Ambassador Walker of talking too much to Washington, and Albright specifically. Keller routinely highlighted in staff meetings that OSCE was, and should remain an unbiased monitoring mission. Calling back to Washington or to General Clark

in Mons Belgium was flagrant disregard for the international communities goals and objectives concerning Kosovo. Similarly, Ambassador Walker accused Ambassador Keller of spending too much time at his foreign office in France and was never available to KVM when he was need most. Other relationships also suffered. For example, the Norwegian and British deputies at one point threatened to punch each other in the nose after some name calling over the inability of Norway to move quicker on establishing computer connectivity to OSCE's regional field operations, and because the Norwegian contingent was planning to go back to its home country for the holidays. The Russian representative understood little English and his sole purpose seemed to be more about intelligence gathering than fulfilling his reconstruction responsibilities. To say the least, KVM staff meetings were contentions and difficult as a result of HoM having to accommodate six deputies. Consensus among six deputies was nearly impossible—and virtually non-existent among the OSCE's 55 member states.

¹⁷ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C.

¹⁸ Interview with Ambassador William Walker, Head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, October 1998-July 1999. November 14, 2002.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill, January 9, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

²² Ibid.

²³ The author met numerous times with both Deputy Prime Minister Sainovic and General Loncar in a liaison capacity for OSCE. Both men repeatedly indicated they could not make decisions concerning OSCE request without first discussing with Belgrade leadership. It was clear command and control was directly tied to Milosevic.

²⁴ Interview with Ambassador William G. Walker, Head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, October 1998-July 1999. 14 November 2002.

²⁵ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C.

²⁶ Ambassador Chris Hill interview, January 9, 2003. Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

²⁷ Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities & Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*. Harvard Press, 2002, pp. 182-183.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 182-183.

²⁹ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000. Appendix C, Documents, UN Endorsement of the Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement, pp.252-255.

³⁰ Interview with Veton Surroi, Editor in Chief Koha Ditore Newspaper, Prisitna, Kosovo, at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), November 2002, Washington D.C.

³¹ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill January 9, 2003, Georgetown University.

³² My personal experience being on the ground trying to coordinate the release of intelligence imagery to KVM operations.

³³ Meeting with President Milosevic in Belgrade November 1998. Ambassador Walker was dispatched to deliver a message from President Clinton about the importance of his cooperation during the KVM deployment. Ambassador Walker suggested that if cooperation did not occur he had no choice but to pull the Kosovo Verification Mission out of Kosovo. This visibly upset Milosevic and was followed by an out-burst of the U.S desire to bomb him. It was clear he knew how he would be viewed by the West if he did not cooperate.

³⁴ The author attended a meeting on December 12, 1998 in Belgrade at President Milosevic's residence. The meeting was directed by the Department of State and was between Milosevic and Ambassador William Walker. In this meeting Milosevic expressed his concerns with how he was being perceived by Brussels and Washington. He discussed his desire for cooperation with the OSCE mission in Kosovo, but it was clear he was not seriously committed. The meeting was rather hostile when Walker told Milosevic he was not cooperating. Milosevic called the accusations "bullshit".

³⁵ Haas, Richard N. Policy Brief No. 54. *The Use and Abuse of Military Force*. Brookings Institute, November 1999. On-line at www.brookings.edu.

³⁶ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp.238. For planning purposes the Pentagon estimates \$10 billion for every 100,000 troops. The estimated cost for the Kosovo war was about \$3 billion.

³⁷ Ambassador Richard Holbrook delivered these precisely chosen words to Mr. Milosevic during his final his final meeting in March 1999. The author was a witness to this final meeting.

³⁸ Because of the U.S. administrations fear of losing American pilots NATO was directed to impose highly restrictive and constraining rules of engagement which forced bombing to be executed at 15,000 or above. This increased the collateral damage on the ground as the bombing was not as accurate from those altitudes.

³⁹ Interview with Major General William L. Nash, US Army (Ret), October 29, 2002. Senior Fellow, and Director of Center for Preventative Action, Council of Foreign Relations, Washington D.C.

⁴⁰ The author was present for Clark's statement to the Ambassador Walker during a meeting at the U.S. Embassy Belgrade, December 1998. The fact that KVM did not have an insurance policy angered Walker because he had promised 55 member states that should KVM find trouble we would have immediate help from the extraction force. When it was learned this was not true, the OSCE Vienna Council began to question the U.S commitment. This was a serious setback for Ambassador walker and the KVM.

⁴¹ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, (ret), former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) 1997-2000, November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

⁴² Ambassador Walker briefing to OSCE Council in Vienna, December 1999.

⁴³ Monica Lewinsky was a White House intern who had a sexual affair with President Clinton. The scandal concluded with an impeachment trial of the president. The significance of this scandal was it dominated the public for several months and

minimized media coverage of the atrocities taking place in Kosovo. As soon as the Lewinsky-Clinton affair ended Kosovo was finally able to be introduced to the world public and pressure was applied for the U.S. to do something. Racak served as the spring board forcing Clinton and his security team to build policy options and finally execute the threat of military force after a final stab at diplomacy at the Rambouillet peace talks in February and March 1999.

⁴⁴ The author accompanied Ambassador William Walker to Racak on January 15, 1999 to view the massacre, interview MUP and VJ forces, KLA members and Albanian families, and photograph the massacre.

⁴⁵ Interview with former Secretary State, Madeleine Albright, January 8, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C..

⁴⁶ The authors perspective of ground operations and from meetings with senior Serb and KLA representatives.

⁴⁷ Interview with Major General (Ret) John K. Drewienkiewicz, British Royal Armed Forces, and former OSCE KVM Operations Deputy, February 19-20, 2003, Washington D.C.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pp. 70.

⁵⁰ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*. Brookings Institution Press, 2000. Appendix C, Documents, Contact Group Statement Calling for Rambouillet Conference, pp.259-261.

⁵¹ Powell Doctrine

⁵² Senator John McCain remarks at CSIS. On-line at www.McCaine.speeches.

⁵³ Interview with Walt Slocomb, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Pentagon, December 14, 2002, Washington D.C..

⁵⁴ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, (ret), Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 1997-2000, November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ For a review of UNSR 1199 refer to Ivo Daalder's / Michael O'Hanlon's book, *Winning Ugly*, Appendix C, pp.247.

⁵⁷ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, (ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Presentation by Ambassador William Walker to the OSCE council in Vienna January 1999. Ambassador Walker emphasized the importance of filling a security vacuum once OSCE evacuated and Kosovo was turned over to NATO.

Chapter 3

The Political and Military Dimension

At the time (1995), many people believed nothing could be done to end the bloodshed in Bosnia. They said, well that's just the way those people in the Balkans are. But when we and our allies joined with courageous Bosnians to stand up to the aggressors, we helped to end the war. We learned that in the Balkans, inaction in the face of brutality simply invites more brutality. But firmness can stop armies and save lives. We must apply that lesson in Kosovo before what happened in Bosnia happens there, too.

--President Bill Clinton, 24 March 1999

The political and military dimensions to the Kosovo conflict were indeed complex. The international politics of NATO's air campaign went far beyond the battlefield. One of the more negative aspects of the war was on U.S. – Russian relations. Other countries also suffered fallout to include Serbia.

NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia provoked a major crisis with Russia. On March 23, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, en route to Washington, turned his plane around and returned to Moscow after he was notified by Vice President Gore of the military action against Yugoslavia. Russia was furious. In the UN they demanded an immediate cessation of the NATO bombing. Russian President Boris Yelstin condemned the action in an emergency session of the UN Security Council. They introduced new UN resolutions calling for a halt to the NATO aggression on a sovereign state and a resumption of negotiations, but 12 members of the Security Council opposed it. In Russia the public opinion polls reflected anti-American sentiment doubling from 23 percent to 49 percent of the population and the favorable rating of the United States declining from 67 to 39 percent.¹

Despite the U.S. best efforts to manage a damaged relationship the Russians sent several ships into the Mediterranean where they could enter the Adriatic. This naval action caused considerable tension between the NATO alliance and Moscow. NATO now became worried that the Russians may be providing the Serbs valuable intelligence on

NATO flight operations from the Russian ships. Yelstin even sent a message to NATO that such aggressive action could lead to a world war, adding more tension and considerable anxiety upon the alliance.

In Yugoslavia the bombing actually rallied the Serbs around Milosevic and strengthened his nationalistic fervor. Serb forces responded with a new surge of purpose believing that NATO cohesion would eventually collapse under the pressure of political cost and Milosevic's strategy of outlasting the alliance would lead to his victory over NATO. In fact, the Serb armed forces reported to have an easier time of recruiting; open acts of defiance against the West were displayed all over Belgrade. Open air concerts were organized throughout Belgrade; Serbs were flocking to key bridges holding up in defiance, bulls eye targets for NATO to attack; the rifts between Serb military officers and Milosevic quieted and they began to support him more strongly. Serb nationalism had been effectively rallied by NATO action.

In the non-NATO countries surrounding Yugoslavia were generally at ease with the alliance. After all, these were countries that one day soon hoped to join NATO so it was in their interest to either remain silent or cooperate. They chose to cooperate by providing NATO the use of their air space and assisting in imposing economic sanctions on Yugoslavia, by cutting off fuel and oil deliveries, and other trade. In return, NATO provided the surrounding countries reassurance by guaranteeing their security and protecting their fragile democracy's.

The political dynamic in NATO showed its colors through demonstrations. The Greeks were adamantly opposed to the war and demonstrated their position throughout the course of the war. The Greeks had strong ties to the Serbs through their Orthodox Christian religion. The Serbs were their brothers and they shared in their struggle against the Muslims in the region. They demanded a bombing pause and a return to negotiations, but Clark and the alliance ignored the demands as not being a militarily bright move. In the end, the Greek leadership stood by NATO despite the wishes of the Greek population.

The new NATO members—Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic—joined NATO in March 1999. Two weeks later they found themselves at war. The Czech's were divided on the war. Only 35 percent of Czech citizens supported the air strikes. Poland stood by Operation Allied Force, with 60 percent of their public approving the campaign.

Hungary, with 300,000 ethnic kin living in Serbia, in the Vojvodina province, was divided. Hungary was not supportive but did allow the use of its air space, military bases, and transportation routes for alliance use.²

The main goal of NATO's use of force was to use air strikes to cripple Milosevic's security forces imposing the devastating destruction on Kosovo Albanians. In his March 24 Oval Office address, President Clinton said that one of NATO's three main goals was, if necessary, "to seriously damage the Serb military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo."³ General Clark described NATO's goals in the air campaign as trying to "disrupt, degrade, devastate, and ultimately destroy" Yugoslav military forces as well as the facilities and infrastructure that supported them.⁴

Gaining consensus among nineteen NATO members to use force in Kosovo meant different things to different alliance members. For example, British Secretary Robertson told the House of Commons, "Our military objective—our clear, simple military objective—will be to reduce the Serb's capacity to repress the Albanian population and thus to avert a humanitarian disaster."⁵ One NATO official said that "the purpose of the air strikes is to remove his capacity to commit atrocities and remove his ability to use heavy artillery."⁶ There was the notion among almost all NATO members that air power alone would bring Milosevic to his knees. Almost universally they had accepted the U.S. position that after just a few days of bombing the Kosovo conflict would be over. It was a bad assumption that created additional political stress throughout the alliance. Recognizing this General Clark adopted a strategy of incremental bombing through a phased air campaign.⁷ However, the targeting issues remained an area of intense debate.

Clark's strategy was key to keeping a skittish alliance together. Clark was correct in assessing that NATO needed to attack Serb Forces in the field. Milosevic, he believed, valued his military forces. This position would be challenged by his air component commander and causing additional friction in strategy and tactics of attacking targets.

Building consensus among the allies seemed relatively easy compared to the fight General Wes Clark had to wage on his home turf for support. Some of these problems were institutional, while others were ego and personality driven. The problems further

complicated the military dimension designed to defeat Milosevic. Regardless, gaining support for a full on war was overwhelmingly difficult and severely undermined Clark's ability to execute basic war fighting doctrine. This was an unimaginable way to plan and execute the conduct of war—especially as it was NATO's first major test in 50 years.

It seemed unthinkable to risk the credibility of NATO over political and personal differences. Some senior military officers in the Pentagon even felt the Kosovo conflict was General Clark's personal adventure to settle a score with Milosevic whom he blamed for the loss of three close colleagues in Bosnia in the summer of 1995. All of this according to Clark, was just outright ridiculous and beyond comprehension.⁸ In his view, NATO had voted to use force to enforce to a diplomatic outcome and save thousands of lives. He was charged with making that happen. And the United States had an obligation to intervene to prohibit another Bosnia by using the wherewithal of the world's greatest military power to conclude it quickly. He firmly believed Kosovo could be handled in short order. His assumptions were based on his experience in Bosnia and his familiarity with Milosevic.

The idea that Milosevic would back down after two or three nights of bombing resulted in the initial plans for Operation Allied Force being of limited size. On the first night of bombing only fifty-two targets were struck. Clark had worked his tail off to get at least this much accepted by the allies, but by the second night Clark had begun adding more targets and began requesting more sorties. The short fight NATO was now engaged in required a major overhaul if they intended to win. Clark had virtually no support from his peers at the Pentagon. He was given just enough rope to hang himself. And in the end, there was indeed a lynching. As soon as the Kosovo conflict ended Secretary Cohen relieved Clark from his duties as SACEUR—two years early. Secretary Cohen despised Clark because of his independent rogue warrior persona—true or not. He was perceived as kind of a loose cannon and a favorite of Clinton's—even though they hardly knew each other. Cohen and the service chiefs believed Clark was “too friendly” with the civilians in the Clinton administration.

Personality played a large part in how Clark was treated by his contemporaries. Back home, the service chiefs were reluctant to support a conflict that had obscure objectives—and using force in this instance made no sense to them. Clark pressed the

joint chiefs hard to convince the Pentagon to declare the Balkans a theater of war. This measure would have given him a lifeline for endless resources and priority from the Department of Defense. Moreover, it would have allowed Clark to wage a serious war without having his hands tied behind his back. But all of Clark's peers opposed getting involved in Kosovo. His peers at the Pentagon just outright opposed using military force, especially air power as an instrument in a human rights driven crisis that did not clearly affect vital U.S. interests. The joint chiefs doubted the ability of air strikes alone to force Milosevic back to the negotiating table.⁹ Many also felt Clark was fighting the last war (Bosnia) and there were distinct difference. He was without a coalition of his own peers and essentially faced war on three fronts. One, a real war in Kosovo; two, a battlefield was being waged in the hallways of the Pentagon; and third, NATO itself.

NATO was not comfortable with going to war in Kosovo. Keeping NATO focused on unity of purpose was Clark's full time job. He eventually prevailed, but it was at the risk of the entire alliance. In Washington his test was resented by many of his colleagues, but especially so with Secretary Cohen.

As all ready mentioned in this paper, Clark's strategy for keeping a cohesive alliance was to wage war incrementally. It was not what Clark wanted to do. It went against everything military doctrine had taught all American military officers. Incremental escalation completely dismissed the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force. For many of the senior officers in the Pentagon the idea of "incremental escalation" and Vietnam were synonymous. It brought back haunting memories of disaster. But Clark had little choice. He knew it was the only way he could keep NATO from splintering and keep the momentum of war moving forward. He also knew once NATO got going it was unlikely they would back away from the conflict. It was important to finally follow through on months of threats and get NATO committed.

The politics of waging war interfered with operational military planning. All these factors combined created tremendous skepticism among the allies about U.S. commitment to sustain any kind of Balkan policy. Even the selections of targets had to be approved in Washington, London, and Paris. The issue of bombing from 15,000 feet was aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the air defense threat and protecting NATO pilots to the maximum extent possible; however, using air power in its least optimum fashion

created unnecessary collateral damage and increased civilian casualties.¹⁰ The bombing errors resulted in civilian casualties and were presented to the entire world on the nightly news, making Clark's job that much tougher in keeping the alliance unity of purpose intact. Moreover, Air power alone remained impotent against Serb murderers terrorizing ethnic Albanians. Concern over casualties—to NATO airmen, Kosovar Albanian civilians, and Serb civilians—influenced the air campaign throughout its course.

The employment of air power often led to disagreements among the allies over what to target to hit. Some allies thought about targets in a military sense while others thought about targets in a political sense. For example, the French were of the belief that by bombing the wrong set of targets Milosevic would be strengthened rather than weakened.¹¹ The French were right as bombing escalated to phase three target sets. Milosevic was quick to take advantage of NATO's mistakes. He skillfully exploited the bombing errors by highlighting the destruction of non-military targets and civilian casualties for his public's propaganda consumption. Clark was constantly defending NATO's bombing mistakes, but he never blamed the restrictive politics that limited his ability to apply force in an unconstrained manner. The strategy of hope that the Clinton administration saddled Clark with was at times crippling to the overall mission. And taking the ground force option off the table did little to help matters.

Another signal of disjointed plans between the military and policy was Clark's request for Apache helicopters. After a long hard fight he finally succeeded in convincing the Pentagon to deploy the Apache. It came with great reluctance from Washington because it signaled escalation, and took the war to a whole new level of lethality. The aggressive firepower employed by attack helicopters would have put U.S. soldiers directly in harms way at low altitude atop Serb forces. The chances of U.S. casualties went up by an order of magnitude. And no policy maker was willing to take that chance—so Clark was told to hold off on employing Apache's.¹²

Even within Clark's own chain of command there was difficult debate on how best to employ airpower. His component air force commander, Lt General Michael Short, had been a serious detractor for the air operation. Clark and Short had fundamental disagreement on what the centers of gravity were for Milosevic. Contrary to Clark, Short believed that Milosevic cared little about his military. Clark believed the Serb Army was

the center of gravity. Short complained bitterly to Clark about the inefficiency of using million dollar cruise missiles and expensive bombs to hit small tactical targets Clark was ordering. This particular relationship often bordered on insubordination creating operational difficulties because Short did not always carry out SACEUR's orders. If Short did not believe in the targeting he often delayed target execution. It was only later in the conflict when Clark was able to get NATO approval for striking more strategic targets in downtown Belgrade that Short began to express any satisfaction Clark's conduct of the war.¹³

We went to war with an improvised Kosovo operation, virtually zero support from the Pentagon brass, limited resources to conduct the war, and a plan that was unlikely to achieve the objectives spelled out by President Clinton. On the political side we had reluctant allies, an unsupportive congress, and a President who was not willing to commit ground troops. The conditions for going to war couldn't be worse.

Perhaps even more important was the obligation Washington had to save NATO's standing as a relevant alliance. If the political-military coalition could not meet its first post-Cold War challenge then we had to answer the question, was NATO even relevant anymore and should it continue to exist? Military leaders and diplomats never got the politics of going to war right. Ego's and personalities seemed to get in the way of the bigger issues—the obligation to stop ethnic cleansing. Despite having both hands tied behind his back and one eye blindfolded, Clark achieved victory in Kosovo—but just barely.

On another front was the whole idea of attacking a sovereign nation. One of the primary reasons complicating NATO's decision to go to war over Kosovo was the absence of an agreed strategy.¹⁴ Strategic clarity was complicated by the political and legal issues the alliance struggled with. As a result, these political obstacles seriously affected proper planning and preparation of military forces. The key question here is why NATO sought a military option when in fact it violated the sovereignty of another country.

Justifying War

Some observers will argue that NATO's intervention in Kosovo was an illegal campaign that violated the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There is some foundation for this argument. It is true that the United Nations did not sanction NATO's action.

Others will argue that NATO's intervention did not stand up to the test of the Weinberger Doctrine. Because there were no vital interests at stake the United States had no business leading the allies to war in Kosovo. The war was perceived to be unwinnable, and clear objectives and end game were unable to be formulated.¹⁵ Public support for another Balkan war was weak at best and would clearly require a tremendous information campaign to garner the necessary public interest to support U.S. intervention in a place that posed no threat to the United States. Congress was not interested in spending the capital necessary to handle this conflict the right way and they had no interest in the ground troop option. The Pentagon was distracted by its commitments to the war on terrorism and in Northeast Asia and the Persian Gulf despite the fact the only real conflict was in Europe. Weighing against all these arguments are other factors that are critical in determining U.S. commitments. Not the least of which were moral and legal considerations, political interests, public opinion polls, and of course important relationships with Russia and China. To say the least, Kosovo was a highly complex political problem for the international community as well as their respective domestic politics.

Still others argue the Balkans have been at the heart of two world wars in this century, so stability of the region is important. As a NATO member, the United States cannot ignore an assault in Europe against all our values by a thug who has directed brutal atrocities in Kosovo and Bosnia. As Casper Weinberger suggests, the objective in Kosovo had to be victory and that the United States and NATO had to be willing to apply sufficient force to win.¹⁶

Two arguments prevail here. One view holds that NATO entered the Kosovo conflict to right a humanitarian wrong. It was more for values that democratic nations stood for and for altruistic reasons, not an attack on NATO's territory, but an affront to its values. The other view is NATO entered the war to save NATO's face; having threatened

Milosevic repeatedly with endless ultimatums, the West, through NATO, was ultimately compelled to act upon its own threats or risk irrelevance.¹⁷ It really boiled down to “put up or shut up”. No one disputes that NATO’s credibility was increasingly on the line as the campaign wandered down a rocky diplomatic road without strong legal basis. In fact, this is a key crossroad where Milosevic made his most serious strategic miscalculation. He effectively had NATO’s back to the wall. So much so that he left NATO with no choice but to succeed because member governments could not afford to fail.¹⁸

As General Clark observed, the United States, NATO, and the international community decided the risks were worth taking. For not to have acted, would have meant that the Atlantic community legitimized ethnic cleansing in its own backyard.¹⁹ Had NATO remained passive in the face of a conflict that was on the scale of memories we harbor of Nazi Germany it would have made NATO as irrelevant as the United Nations in terms of peace enforcement.²⁰ It would have severely undermined the whole value system on which US policies are founded. Inaction in the face of the Kosovar plight would have undermined our policies, the credibility of Western institutions, and the transatlantic relationship. The United States viewed its position as having no other option but to act.²¹ The question is had the United States acted sooner could war have been prevented and avoided altogether. Were there opportunities missed, in other words that could have prevented, and avoided, the Balkan showdown? The answer is maybe.

It can be argued that opportunities to avoid the Kosovo problem were missed in 1992, 1995, 1998, and in 1999 at the Rambouillet talks. Just prior to leaving the White House in 1992 President George Bush Sr. issued a stern warning to Milosevic as a result of indications that Serbia might be contemplating a violent crackdown against Albanians in Kosovo.²² Unfortunately, this Christmas warning was not subjected to senior interagency scrutiny or was it shared with our European partners. Most importantly, the threat was levied to the surprise of the military as no planning for such a contingency had ever been done. And finally, Milosevic recognized the Christmas threat as coming from a lame duck President who would not be around to enforce it—so it was dismissed as a threat with no diplomatic or military credibility. However, the ever resourceful Milosevic used the diplomatic mis-step for his own purposes. Within hours, the administration—which had intended to keep the warning secret—found itself embarrassed when the Serbs

handed copies of Washington's message to U.S. allies, who had not been consulted in advance.²³

As President Clinton came to office he issued a similar warning to Milosevic to cease his repression of the Albanians in Kosovo.²⁴ His threat was also issued without a military plan to enforce the threat. It can also be argued another opportunity was missed in 1995 at Dayton as peaceful resolution was achieved in Bosnia. In fairness however, it is important to note, that neither Milosevic nor the Albanians were prepared to have the Kosovo discussion at Dayton. Dayton was about a war already having been fought and Kosovo was not yet a war; therefore it was dismissed as a major worry. And finally, in February and March 1999, diplomats missed an opportunity at Rambouillet.

Opportunities to avoid conflict were missed because America's leadership was reluctant to become engaged in another Balkan quagmire. Foreign policy was not their interest, and in the case of the Balkans, was considered a political risk the Clinton administration had no desire to become involved in. In their view it was a no win situation. Secondly the Clinton cabinet had never developed a coherent policy to address the matter and even among themselves remained divided—there was simply no presidential passion to solve the problem. The U.S. was anxious to settle the Bosnia conflict and pull all U.S troops out of the Balkans as soon as possible. Secretary of Defense William Cohen remarked, “after all, how can you solve something that has not yet happened”.²⁵

The American administration repeatedly misread Milosevic. Repeated threats did not deter him. Milosevic was doing just enough peace enforcement to keep the pressure and control over Kosovo without being overly provocative towards the West's concerns for escalating violence in the summer of 1998. The Serbs taunted the West's inability to build any kind of coherent policy by advertising, “a village a day keeps NATO away”.²⁶ Milosevic clearly enjoyed the worldwide attention he was getting and he was supremely effective at keeping America's Chief negotiator, Ambassador Richard Holbrook, among others, on a short string.²⁷ The number one rule for using a coercive diplomacy strategy is it must be backed up by a credible use of force and ensure the political will is prepared to use it. NATO threatened military force so many times and ultimatum after ultimatum passed without incident, and deadlines came and went that its credibility became a

serious question and resulted in Milosevic believing he could outlast the Alliance. We gave Milosevic every reason to assess NATO would not follow through on its ultimatums. Our ambivalence was easily interpreted. Even in March 1999, with the likely failure of the Rambouillet talks, the Pentagon sent the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt away from the Adriatic and into the Persian Gulf, despite impending conflict in Europe. How could Milosevic have assessed the signals otherwise? Of course, the Christmas Offensive at Podujevo was yet another indicator of NATO's lack of political will to use force. Strategically, the alliance was all over the map. Its sense of cohesion and direction was teetering on the edge of failure and Milosevic sensed it—the question was who had the guts to out last who.

Milosevic was betting NATO could not sustain its unified persistence to defeat him. Many nations were publicly questioning NATO's strategy and were seeking to negotiate a resolution with him. As a result, political discussions and diplomatic activities within NATO were sending mixed messages and Milosevic was clever to adopt a strategy to try and outlast NATO. However, Milosevic miscalculated NATO's staying power and ability to remain unified towards obtaining their military and political objectives. He also miscalculated the Russian position and their willingness to support him. The Russians pressed him hard to end the war. It was clear President Yelstin did not want his name associated with Milosevic. Like NATO, Yelstin too was mad at Milosevic. Russia wanted to be seen as having influence of the situation and they feared being marginalized by the West. Yelstin demanded a bombing pause so the Russians could negotiate. Clinton was not prepared to allow a bombing pause until Milosevic first cried uncle. Clinton told the Russians that before any bombing pause three conditions had to be met. They were simple instructions—NATO in, Serbs out, and refugees back. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Tony Blair had convinced President Clinton that he must use the threat of ground forces to up the ante with both Milosevic and the Russians. The pressure on the Russians and Milosevic was tremendous. About the same time all this was going on Milosevic was indicted for war crimes. The real war was a battle of wills between Milosevic and NATO. Fortunately for the alliance, the combination of air power, an impending ground invasion, and lack of Russian support all contributed to Milosevic's ultimate demise.

Like the United States, Milosevic also chose a strategy of hope. The coercive diplomacy strategy being used against him had no credible means. He was hopeful to be able to exploit our legitimate political concerns about target selection, unravel the cohesion of the alliance, exploit NATO's collateral damage, and exploit the conduct of military operations against enemy forces intermingled with civilian refugees. In the end he failed on all these efforts, but he did create some defining moments for the alliance.

One of the critical flaws in believing Milosevic would capitulate after just a few days of bombing was what to do if Milosevic did in fact agree to NATO forces on FRY soil? This key question was overlooked in our coercive diplomacy strategy. The political ramifications were challenging and highly complex. If such an agreement came to pass then NATO forces would have to accept the presence of Yugoslavian Security Forces along with the Serbian paramilitary forces. Clearly this was unacceptable because it would mean placing increased risk to NATO ground forces. How would this be possible after what they had just done—expelling hundreds of thousands of Kosovars from the region? Militarily and politically it would be impossible. Such a decision was equal to a pause in bombing as the Italians and Greeks had requested. A pause would have allowed the Serb military to reorganize, rebuild, and re-evaluate counter tactics during the pause thus allowing the Serbs to catch a breath. General Clark wanted to keep the pressure on—remaining relentless in its attacks.²⁸ Similarly such an arrangement would have also presented opportunity for the KLA to get reorganized, rearmed, and draw up new hit and run plans and renew more aggressive guerilla warfare. The results would likely have put NATO ground forces in the middle of a crossfire thereby creating monumental domestic political challenges in Washington and Brussels, and the capitals of Europe. Who would NATO protect—the Serb forces or the KLA? How does collective defense separate warring factions in a guerilla warfare environment? Washington could have never allowed this to happen. The American aversion to body bags—especially to a conflict as controversial as the Kosovo intervention would have surely created domestic upheaval.

During Operation Allied Force, our diplomacy had several objectives. The first was to ensure that NATO remained united and firm. Our second objective was to help the countries that were directly affected to cope with the humanitarian crisis, and to prevent the conflict from widening. Our third diplomatic objective was to work constructively

with Russia. While Russia was vehemently opposed to the NATO bombing 30 years of diplomatic history between the United States and Russia eventually paid off as it was only the U.S. who was able to enlist Russia to help bring an end to the air campaign.²⁹

NATO knew it could no longer postpone the bombing and it also believed that the use of force was the only form of diplomacy Milosevic would clearly understand. NATO's credibility was at stake and Milosevic easily read the ambivalence of the Alliance to use force. He was acutely aware of NATO's inability to stomach the body bag syndrome in their respective capitals. Death was an issue that never prohibited Milosevic from achieving his objectives—in Bosnia or in Kosovo.³⁰

In assessing whether or not the military component of the Kosovo conflict worked one must weigh the designed strategy against the final outcome. In the case of Kosovo it can be argued that NATO did force the capitulation of Milosevic, the displaced persons returned to their homes in Kosovo, and the Serb security forces were forced out of Kosovo, and NATO forces were present to provide security for all people in Kosovo. For the average Kosovar, life today is better and the future is more promising than at any other time since Belgrade stripped Kosovo's autonomy away almost a decade ago.

When the violence started in March 1998 it was possible a different policy might have avoided the high cost and risks of war on a sovereign state. From the outset of the Kosovo conflict, the Clinton Administration based its Kosovo policy on three assumptions.

- First, developments in Kosovo were of important interest to the United States and its European allies not only because of a general and commendable concern with human and minority rights and basic values in this part of the world but also because a violent flare-up there could prove unsettling for the Bosnian peace achieved in Dayton and stability within southeast Europe as a whole.
- Second, at the heart of the conflict were Milosevic's nationalistic policies and only pressure on Belgrade would succeed in effecting a solution to the conflict.

- Third, the preferred solution to the conflict increased self-government for the Kosovar Albanians that would fall short of the territory's independence, let alone its partition.

There were three strategic blunders by the Clinton administration. First, the initial strategy was on a strategy based on hope. President Clinton hoped, that after a few days of bombing, Milosevic would capitulate and acquiesce to NATO's demands. As former Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon R. Sullivan, once said, "In war, hope is not a method".³¹ When this assessment failed both Albright and Clinton camps blamed the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for providing such optimistic assessments. However, Walt Slocomb, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy argues this assessment was never provided to the White House or Department of State—reflecting again the divide between State and Defense over Kosovo.³²

Second, the Clinton administration failed to keep the ground option on the table despite the British insistence that it remain an option to force Milosevic to re-think his ethnic cleansing policy in Kosovo. According to Boris Mayorski, the senior Russian representative at Rambouillet, had the Americans deployed ground forces Milosevic would have likely have rethought his entire strategy, withdrawn his forces, and bartered an agreement much more quickly than otherwise happened.³³ The Russians clearly did not want NATO ground forces in Kosovo, but more importantly, in Serbia. Taking the ground option off the table was yet another signal of ambivalence by the West that Milosevic exploited and used as part of his strategy to outlast the alliance by splitting its center of gravity, alliance cohesion, over the issue of introducing ground forces. Interestingly, as General Clark points out in his book, *Waging Modern Warfare*, it was ultimately the threat of a ground force invasion that Milosevic finally capitulated.³⁴

And third, the idea that air power alone can solve everything and win wars is simply a bad strategy and kills, unnecessarily, innocent people on the ground.³⁵ The result of this plan was that the air only intervention strategy failed to achieve one of the principal goals of the United States and NATO set for themselves: guarding and protecting the people of Kosovo. Air power can accomplish many things, but not everything. Still, it is important to draw a distinction between what proved in the end to

be a successful application of coercive force in Kosovo and failure of it in Iraq in 1998.³⁶ In the former, significant air power was deployed in an open ended fashion. The condition for stopping attacks was clear: Milosevic had to meet a specified set of demands. NATO meanwhile, had to be prepared to stay the course until he met them. Such coercion thus remains a risky form of intervention in that it cedes the initiative to the target, which has to decide whether to hold out or to compromise. But coercion does make for clarity of purpose, because it links intervention with a specific goal. To randomly bomb, as we did in Iraq under operation Desert Fox, without any clear political or military objective unnecessarily risks lives. When airpower is used to demonstrate force it must be used in a clear and unambiguous fashion—in other words it must be overwhelming and it must be aimed at achieving more than just a demonstration of air power.

As Ambassador Richard Hass correctly observes, “even an ideal military cannot succeed if it is undermined by either of two constraints”.³⁷ The first is an unwillingness to allow the military to do its job even when U.S. interests warrant it and the military tool is judged the most appropriate. Not acting entails real cost for the interests at stake or, in the case of humanitarian emergencies, for the innocent people who lose their homes or lives—and for America’s image in the world. Moreover, a narrow foreign policy based solely on self-interest is unlikely to capture the imagination or enjoy the support of the American people, who want international commitments with a moral component.³⁸

A different form of reluctance to commit is that involving ground troops. As discussed in this paper, air power is clearly limited in what it can be expected to accomplish. In some instances, such as where high-value targets are few in number the adversary is exploiting its advantage on the ground, only ground forces will be able to protect the interests involved. Domestic opposition and Congressional worry to such a commitment can be reduced and overcome by concerted presidential effort and by designing interventions that justify an American casualty level by the interest at stake. This requires time and political capital, but it is time and capital well spent. Interventions shaped more by politics than by strategy are unlikely to succeed.³⁹

The other constraint is in some ways the opposite: over reliance on the military instrument of power. Humanitarian emergencies constitute but one demand on U.S.

military capabilities; the United States needs to be discriminating in its future interventions, because it runs the risk of exhausting itself and leaving the nation unable to cope with those scenarios where its vital interests are at stake.

When it comes to humanitarian situations Ambassador Haas suggests three considerations when contemplating the use of force for the purposes of humanitarian interventions of the future; several factors should influence the decision to intervene. The first is the scale of the problem: not every repression is genocide, and not every massacre is genocide. A second consideration is the likely costs and consequences of acting, both for the immediate problem and for the broader U.S. strategic and economic interests. Third is the matter of partners and the extent of the military and financial help the United States can expect from others. A final consideration is the likely results of other policies, including, but not limited to that of doing nothing.⁴⁰

These considerations do not constitute a template for intervention and are no substitute for situational judgment, but it does offer a framework and potential guidance to shape an appropriate strategy and policies for an effective response from our national toolbox. Had we applied some of these considerations it may have made it less likely to occupy Haiti or expand the Somalia intervention into nation building, but might have encouraged the United States to act earlier in Bosnia and Rwanda, where small interventions could conceivably have prevented genocide. In Kosovo, it would have been wiser to continue diplomacy and deal with a limited humanitarian crisis while looking for ways to weaken or topple Milosevic regime—or for that matter, Saddam Hussein’s regime, or to send in ground forces at the outset and prevent the displacement and killing. Hiding behind respect for sovereignty should not be allowed when a government violates the rights of its people in a massive and brutal way, and legitimacy should not be dependent upon UN actions. The reason for delay should be the absence of partners willing to bear the brunt of the operation, and obstacle that might have been overcome by more forceful diplomacy.⁴¹

As NATO tried to muster leverage against Milosevic in the months before the ethnic cleansing reached a point that conflict became inevitable, our own deep-seated ambivalence vitiated our policies.⁴² Many nations had legitimate questions concerning the real facts on what was actually happening in Kosovo. Were the Serbs actually

attacking and going after the KLA? How many villages were actually being destroyed? Were the Serbs just responding to the terrorist attacks? The result was, we could not present an unambiguous and clear warning to Milosevic that he had to halt his actions.⁴³ After the Racak massacre the United States led an aggressive do or die strategy by calling for both parties to sit down together and hash out an agreement. The forum for such an effort was Rambouillet located in Paris France.

¹ Michael Wines, *Hostility to U.S. Is Now Popular with Russians*. New York Times, April 12, 1999, p. A1.

² William Drozdiak, *NATO's Newcomers Are Shaken by Air Strikes*,. Washington Post, April 12, 1999, p. A17.

³ President Clinton's address to the nation March 24, 1999. Complete text found online at News Hour, www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/jan-june99

⁴ Press Conference by NATO's Secretary-General Javier Solana and Gen Wesley Clark, SACEUR, NATO Press Conference, March 25, 1999.

⁵ Quoted in Robert's, "*NATO's Humanitarian War Over Kosovo*," p. 111.

⁶ Quoted in John A. Tirpak. "Short's View of the Air Campaign," *Air Force Magazine*, vol. 82 (September 1999), pp.43-47.

⁷ The air campaign in Kosovo was designed to be executed in three phases. The first phase was designed to bring Milosevic back to the negotiating tables by using symbolic air strikes. The target list for this effort was only about three days worth of targets. They consisted of traditional military targets such as command and control facilities, army barracks, forces in the field, etc. Phase two consisted of bombing a wider set of military targets below the forty-fourth parallel, which roughly bisects Yugoslavia, with Belgrade and Novi Sad above it, Montenegro and Kosovo as well as cities such as Nis below it. The targets included military infrastructure such as depots and airfields and forces in the field. Phase 3 expanded the targeting considerable and consisted of targeting civilian infrastructure with military application such as TV and radio transmitters, and leadership targets such as police headquarters and Milosevic's residence. All were considered high value military targets.

⁸ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, (ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

⁹ Bradley Graham, *Joint Chiefs Doubted Air Strategy*, Washington Post, April 5, 1999.

¹⁰ End of war estimates reflect at least 500 civilians were accidentally killed by errant NATO bombs and missiles. Another 580 Serb soldiers and police perished, and thousands of Yugoslavs were injured.

¹¹ Discovery Channel documentary film, *Yugoslavia: The Fall of Milosevic*, Holocaust Museum, March 9, 1999, Washington D.C.

¹² Dana Priest, *Risks and Restraints: Why the Apaches Never Flew in Kosovo*, Washington Post, December 29, 1999, p.A1.

¹³ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, (ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

¹⁴ Presentation by Ambassador William Walker to the OSCE council in Vienna January 1999.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Air Force Magazine, August 1999, Volume 82, No. 82

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ General Wesley K. Clark,(ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), *Waging Modern War; Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, pp.422. Public Affairs Press, New York 2001.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ President Clinton's address to the Nation, March 24, 1999. On-line news hour web site: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/jan-june99/address_3-24.html.

²¹ Ibid. pp. 425

²² Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*, pp. 9. Washington D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000..

²³ Louis Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. Duke University Press, 2002.

²⁴ David Halberstan, *War In A Time Of Peace, Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.

²⁵ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill, January 9, 2003, Georgetown University.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, SACEUR , November 21, 2003, Stephens Group, Inc. Washington D.C.

²⁹ Interview with former Secretary State, Madeleine Albright, January 8, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

³⁰ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill, January 9, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

³¹ General Gordon R. Sullivan (Ret) & Michael V. Harper, *Hope Is Not A Method*. Random House, New York, 1996., pp.225.

³² Interview with Walt Slocomb, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Pentagon, December 14, 2002, Washington D.C.

³³ Mr. Boris Mayorski,, Senior Russian Representative at the Ramboulliet Peace Talks in France, shared with the author his view on what NATO would have to do to get a serious response from Milosevic; February 8, 1999, Ramboulliet, France.

³⁴ General Wesley K. Clark, (ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 1997-2000, *Waging Modern War; Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*. Pp.420-425. Public Affairs Press, New York 2001,.

³⁵ Richard N. Hass, Policy Brief No. 54. *The Use and Abuse of Military Force*. Brookings Institute, November 1999. On-line at www.brookings.edu.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² General Wesley K. Clark, (ret), former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 1997-2000, *Waging Modern War; Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*. Pp.422. Public Affairs Press, New York 2001, pp.420.

⁴³ Ibid.

Chapter 4

Ramboulliet “Lite” Talks

All that is required for evil to flourish is that good men do nothing.

--Edmund Burke¹

The Ramboulliet talks were initially held February 6, 1999 and then later extended into March for a second set of talks as the parties came closer to signing an agreement. Ramboulliet represented the last attempt to make any progress towards a negotiated peace. The NATO threat of force was key to getting Milosevic to even discuss the possibility of a peaceful resolution. The Ramboulliet negotiations were a Contact Group initiative and were chaired by the French and British ministers of foreign affairs. The parties were brought to the negotiating table by the threat of force and they were expected to agree with a certain set of principles from the outset.²

Unlike Bosnia where Milosevic was effectively brought to the United States and locked in a room until a signed agreement emerged Milosevic had no intention of giving up Kosovo. This was most apparent at the Ramboulliet talks by the delegation he delivered—no one in the delegation had the authority to sign any documents nor did they reflect a serious level of FRY officials. It was clear that for success at Ramboulliet to occur Milosevic needed to be present. And it was his, and only his, signature that would have made any arrangement between the parties stick. However, the threat of force also made the KLA less and less interested in negotiations and compromises. The stronger the threat was, the less inclined was the KLA to yield. That was the real dilemma of enforced negotiations.

Prior to Ramboulliet Chris Hill was relatively optimistic that he may be able to pull off the impossible and get an agreement.³ From a verification perspective on the ground it was clear the Serbs were not serious about Ramboulliet. If they had been serious about a peaceful resolution Milosevic would have condemned the massacres at Racak, and later at Rugovo, but he did not issue such a statement. This sent a clear signal to the West that the Serbs were no longer making an effort towards a peaceful outcome

and military action was inevitable because diplomacy was not stopping Milosevic. It was just after the massacres that Clinton's national security team appeared near unanimous in support of the threat of military action against Milosevic and support for Rambouillet was most probably a technique to ensure NATO eventually would support air strikes on Serb forces. It is difficult to assess, but for Washington's policy community there was little expectation that Rambouillet was going to be successful. They may have finally realized the inevitable and just wanted the bombing to be done with. Rambouillet may just been a necessary last ditch diplomatic formality.

At the same time the second set of Rambouillet talks were getting under way just south of Paris in early March 1999 the Serb army began deploying in and around Kosovo in large numbers and the KLA knew something big was taking place.⁴ Hindsight reflects their readiness and willingness to execute Operation Horseshoe even while Rambouillet was underway. Clearly it was a calculated move designed to attack and annihilate the KLA and achieve a quick victory. Recognizing this, the KLA eventually signed the draft agreement. They knew Milosevic would not. They also knew NATO would not begin bombing the Serbs unless they signed. It became the perfect moment to bring the full fury of NATO upon the Serbs and for the Kosovar Albanians to gain maximum sympathy from the court of world opinion for their cause.

The KLA strategy was to force a violent confrontation and counteraction by Serb forces. OSCE being unarmed, had no way to stop this from happening. Both the LDK and the KLA wanted an armed NATO presence on the ground and neither had any intention of pulling back from their political objective—independence. The KLA's success did not lie in its effective hit and run guerilla tactics against Serbian security forces. It was in its ability to internationalize the conflict. Operation Horseshoe was sure to internationalize the conflict.

Why did Rambouillet Fail?

The Rambouillet talks failed to make progress for two reasons. First, the deal on the table was the deal the international community wanted, but neither of the parties want. The Serbs wanted complete sovereignty over Kosovo, and the Kosovar Albanians wanted, and still want, complete independence. Autonomy was the interim compromise

deal on the table, but its not one either side would have chosen if they had an option. Second, the negotiations at Ramboulliet were about the details of autonomy. That focus was completely beside the point of how you get to an end state in the negotiations.

Fundamentally, the negotiations at Ramboulliet were about security—security for the Kosovar Albanians and a way to find that security without having the Serb police forces providing that security. For the Albanians they wanted, and eventually got, a large NATO and U.S. military presence. In return for that presence they were willing to accept interim autonomy for a period of three years according to the Ramboulliet accord. For an interim period there appeared to be a route to independence. In the eyes of the Albanians, at the end of this interim period, is Kosovar independence. For the Serbs, they do not want to give up their sovereignty over Kosovo; they do not want their sovereignty, understandably, trampled upon. And that is a legitimate concern the international community must figure out. However, what must not be forgotten is the Racak massacre on January 15, 1999. It is this massacre that will never allow Kosovo to be under Belgrade rule again. As a result, there cannot be an end state without independence in Kosovo--its impossible without more bloodshed.

Kosovo was a much more difficult problem than Bosnia. Three things distinguish Bosnia from Kosovo. First, there was no cease fire. In Bosnia, we had a cease fire in early October for two and a half months before NATO troops came in. Second, in Bosnia, clearly, the parties were exhausted and ready to sit down and negotiate peace, not a continuation of war. This is not the case in Kosovo—the KLA wanted to fight because it enticed the Serbs to create more atrocities thereby gaining the KLA and the conflict international attention. Third, there were clear lines of confrontation and control in Bosnia. There were none in Kosovo. Getting the sides separated and getting this situation to be an environment that is permissive was clearly going to take time and a large force. The mission would be extremely demanding.

The NATO force was supposed to oversee, and if necessary, enforce the drawdown of the interim police force from 12,000 down to 2,500 troops within 4 months. And then 2,500 are to be in cantonment and only operate under NATO control and go down to zero within 12 months.⁵ That's a big deal. We did not have to do that in Bosnia. Finally, the KLA, or the irregular forces as they are called in the agreement, had to be

demobilized within 4 months. That too, required enforcement. In order to have success meeting these requirements one needs overwhelming military force. In this instance, the Powell Doctrine was clearly applicable. A much larger presence, perhaps 8-10,000 troops in the initial stages of this deployment would have been crucial.

Finally, the exit strategy; clearly in Congress and in the military, there was worry, quite correctly, that there was no exit strategy. There cannot be an exit strategy if you do not have a political solution shaped. Exit strategies must be based on local political and strategic conditions—not arbitrary and rigid timetables; and they should also encompass a post-intervention strategy designed to tackle long term economic and political problems—and this aspect of that final solution was never made clear in the early going and it was never made clear at Rambouillet.

Two points here—the final solution in Kosovo, cannot, and will not, be foreseen because it requires fundamental political changes inside Serbia. The first has already occurred and that is Mr. Milosevic is no longer in political power. It is critical to democratize the surrounding area in which the KLA was, and some may argue still is, apart. This aspect must be fundamental to any successful policy in Kosovo. If we want to leave a Balkans governed like Poland and the Czech Republic and not like Serbia is today.

Second, we must worry about long-term troop commitments inside the Balkans. This issue is more problematic for the United States. Our interests and priorities are no longer based in the Balkans. According to President Bush's National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, the administration does not even have the Balkans on its radar as its priorities are focused on the war on terrorism.⁶ We have about 37,000 troops in Korea. About 100,000 in Western Europe, and about 120,000 troops in Persian Gulf region. As the build up of forces in the Persian Gulf continues to grow for possible war with Iraq, and with the recent pressing concerns over North Korea's nuclear weapon program and intransigence, and as the war on terrorism increase in intensity and commitment, U.S. troop commitments will have to be reprioritized to reflect our vital interests.

Was War Preventable.

The short answer is maybe. There were several failures where diplomacy had many opportunities to succeed. War was not an inevitable feature of resolution in Kosovo. From the start of the Kosovo crisis, U.S. and European leaders shared a common belief that they had to do something about the situation in Kosovo. They just could never agree what the something was. The indecision in Washington and elsewhere was a result of policymakers who were unwilling or unable to set political objectives and to consider how far they were prepared to go to achieve them militarily. The lack of a clear policy resulted in poor synchronization of military and diplomatic means and ways. This failure alone complicated and already complex situation.

As already discussed, diplomatic opportunities were missed on several occasions. They were missed at Dayton in 1995; at Rambouillet in February and March 1999; and they were missed when Milosevic blew off the Holbrook-Milosevic agreement of 1998. Coercive diplomacy was used poorly and therefore gave Milosevic no reason to take the West seriously.

Some critics of the war argue that the Americans missed a significant diplomatic opportunity at the conclusion of the Dayton Accords ending the Bosnian war. Had tough diplomacy introduced Slobodan Milosevic to the consequences of similar behavior with fist pounding clarity it may have been possible to force Milosevic to deal with the Kosovo problem by linking the Bosnia agreement to reimpose sanctions and NATO forces if Milosevic did not restore autonomy to Kosovo. If Milosevic understood nothing else in diplomacy, he did understand the application violence. This was clearly the West's experience from dealing with Milosevic at Dayton. It's impossible to know, but this may have made Milosevic think hard about his plans for Kosovo. By not sending a clear message with credible underpinnings of the use of force from the very beginning from the highest levels of the U.S. government we unmistakably missed an opportunity to deter Milosevic's behavior in Kosovo. However, by the time all the parties were done designing an effective solution for Bosnia, exhaustion had consumed them. Thus, the Kosovo issue never saw the light of day at Dayton in 1995. This was an unfortunate diplomatic misstep because by 1998 Milosevic was back at it again. This time the target was Kosovo and ethnic Albanians. And this time Milosevic had managed to back the

NATO allies into a corner with all its threats. The credibility of NATO was clearly on the line. Milosevic was betting that NATO cohesion could not sustain the pressure of its own local politics.

Rambouillet was clearly a missed diplomatic opportunity for a feasible peaceful resolution. Missing from Rambouillet was a leader that clearly had charge of the peace talks—the Europeans simply failed to follow through on Rambouillet. Also missing were the foreign ministers who failed to give the peace talks credibility and teeth—forcing the parties to sit and emerge with some kind of an agreement. The Clinton administration correctly acted by recognizing the crisis was simply too dangerous to allow ourselves to be hamstrung by our allies inability to take any kind of decisive action. Although difficult to know, it may be by design, that Rambouillet was a means to an end to convince NATO to come together and take decisive action by bombing Milosevic's army and his economic infrastructure.

A series of tensions seriously affected the diplomatic throw weight and served to only further complicate and confuse the diplomatic response. All parties miscalculated in a variety of ways. It seems the only real lesson to from Kosovo, aside from the obvious, give greater attention to non-violent options and some degree of specificity when developing a coercive action plan and to engage early.

Is Kosovo A Special Case?

What makes Kosovo so special that NATO was willing to put the entire alliance at risk over finding resolution to a problem that did not directly threaten the alliance? This can be answered by recognizing four important factors. First, Kosovo was worth the risk because of its geographic significance to two key alliance members, Greece and Turkey. The fear of the fourth Balkan war in ten years spreading into Southeastern Europe and destabilizing the region made Kosovo at least an important interest for the United States and for the alliance. Second, there was an overwhelming moral imperative to intervene and protect the values and belief system that define democracy and the free world. Third, failing to act risked making NATO irrelevant which could have been disastrous for the future security needs throughout Europe. Failing to act would have seriously challenged U.S. interests in Europe, both militarily and economically. And

finally, only Mr. Milosevic stood in the way of peaceful, stable, and free Europe—he had to go. Four wars in ten years and the destruction of an entire country and countless numbers of unnecessary genocidal deaths was motivation enough for the United States to engage and take the lead in putting an end to terror in the Balkans.

Despite these four reasons, the fact remained that neither Washington, or Brussels, had any interests in fighting another war in the Balkans. Milosevic sensed this and probably thought he could get away with one more war without the West intervening. He recognized there were no vital interests at stake for the United States. And he recognized the Europeans simply were not capable of stopping him with U.S. leadership. The American's were exhausted with dealing with these reoccurring Balkan problems and began to view this region in a cynical manner. As far as they were concerned people in the Balkans had been killing each other for centuries and nothing they did would eliminate a way of life that had simply become a fact of life in the Balkans. However, lurking in the back of the minds of Washington's key national security advisors was Balkan history and Milosevic's willingness to exploit Balkan nationalism to ensure his seat of power. He was between peace and anarchy in a greater Europe and it was decided that Milosevic must go once and for all.

Kosovo represented the third time in the twentieth century that Serbia has been issued an ultimatum to surrender its sovereignty or be attacked. In 1914, the Austrian Empire issued a 14-point ultimatum to Serbia designed to force the nation to surrender her sovereignty under threat of attack. The Serbs refused and World War I started. It ultimately took an Austrian Army, a German Army, and a Bulgarian Army to occupy the nation. The Serbian Army escaped intact and came back to fight in 1916-1918. Germany and Austria lost the war, Austria lost an empire, and the map of Europe was redrawn.

In 1941, the Serbs rejected a German ultimatum to let German troops move through their country to help Mussolini's beleaguered forces in Greece. The subsequent German invasion delayed the planned invasion of the Soviet Union by six weeks and prevented a knockout blow before the Russian winter came. It also resulted in a prolonged war of attrition against Serbian guerrillas that tied down large numbers of Axis troops, preventing them from being used on either the Eastern or Western fronts. These

were crucial factors in turning the tide against Germany, which lost the war. The map of Central and Eastern Europe was redrawn.

Now the administration is faced with Kosovo. “The Albanians were a pain in the ass to deal with” as Ambassador Hill often said. Ambassador Hill use to tell them that they had better pray that Milosevic’s health remain good because if it wasn’t for him we would not be dealing with you or any of the Albanians.⁷ Like it or not, Kosovo and Milosevic had to be dealt with once and for all. And with the failure of Ramboulliet it was important to break down the last obstacle that prevented a free and whole Europe.⁸

Many security analysts have argued that it was the severe punishment from NATO bombing and destruction of key economic targets; that it was the Russians unwillingness to come to their defense both militarily and diplomatically; and others argue that it was the impending ground operation to invade and secure Kosovo. It was a combination of all these things that eventually isolated Milosevic and forced him to accept NATO’s demands. Some senior American policy makers have suggested that both Brussels and Washington were simply tired of having to deal with Milosevic and it was time for him to go.⁹ For the last ten years Milosevic had been the bully of nations in Eastern Europe and kept the southern region of Europe in constant chaos. We had been through the war in Bosnia, Croatia, the splintering of Yugoslavia, been witness to the worst atrocities seen since WWII, and now crisis had finally unleashed itself in the small province of Kosovo. Milosevic’s decade long pattern of aggression and warfare had to come to an end if Europe was ever to be a free and whole. This feature alone makes Kosovo special.

¹ Attributed to Edmund Burke, and 18th century British parliamentarian, scholar, and writer. For various constructions of this quote, see Angela Partington , ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 4th ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 160:4 and Suzy Platt, ed., *Respectfully Quoted*, Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1989, no. 560.

² Weller, *The Ramboulliet Conference on Kosovo*, 1999, 75 International Affairs, pp.211-251; IA web site: [Http://www.diplomatie.fr/actual/dossiers/Kosovo/rambouill.html](http://www.diplomatie.fr/actual/dossiers/Kosovo/rambouill.html).

³ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill, January 9, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. Hill was optimistic he could push the Albanians “over the goal line” before Christmas 1998, but the death of his father caused Hill to leave the Balkans December 12, 1998, and the gains he had achieved had been lost upon his return. It was

during this period the Serbs began heavy deployments in and around Kosovo, but specifically to an empty airfield in Potejuvo. This was the beginning of the end for peaceful resolution between Serbs and Albanians. Hill recognized at this point that success in Kosovo hinged on dealing with the KLA because the LDK (President Rugova) no longer had the same popular support the KLA did. Hill knew he had only two options: either include them in the negotiation process, provided they are willing to consider an outcome short of independence, or cripple them. And this kind of insurgent war was something the Clinton national security team would not consider.

⁴ Hashim Thaci, former KLA commander; interview at United States Institute of Peace, November 2002, Washington D.C.

⁵ Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

⁶ Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, 20 November, 2002, Georgetown University, Washington D.C..

⁷ Interview with Ambassador Chris Hill, January 9, 2003, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Authors notes from meeting with Ambassador Walker, Walt Slocombe, Secretary Albright, General Ralston, meeting (Slocombs office) January 1999, Pentagon Washington D.C.

Chapter 5

Casualties of War

Before one takes the first step, one must consider the last.

--Clausewitz

The only real casualties of Kosovo conflict were our diplomats and our military leaders who failed to learn the lessons of past conflicts. Our military leaders were embarrassed as they found themselves unprepared to wage a war in Kosovo. The much advertised Apache helicopters arrived in Albania with crews that were unprepared for combat and not fully mission qualified and were not mission ready for night operations. Military leaders were embarrassed that they were unable to respond to the NATO commanders request for a mission ready combat capability. In fact, the only body bags of the war came from an Apache training mission where crews were training in theater to become combat ready and unfortunately crashed into a mountainside killing both crewmen. Combatant forces should arrive in the theater of war operationally ready and fully qualified to conduct warfare. Overwhelming force was not a means to an end. Ways were compromised because of competing political agendas among NATO countries and fear of domestic back lash in their respective capitals.

Our diplomats were equally handcuffed because they did not understand modern warfare or fully appreciate the virtues of military doctrine. Politicians wanted a limited war despite the Powell Doctrine. As a result, the air campaign was simply airborne diplomacy based on a strategy of hope. While it is correct to assess the air campaign was a contributing factor and major influence on Milosevic's decision to cave in to NATO demands, it should come as no surprise that the 3d Serbian Army marched back to into Serbia virtually untouched. NATO air forces were restricted to bombing from 15,000 feet. It was no surprise to see the Serbian Army employ a wide variety of physical and electronic deception techniques, remain tactically well dispersed, and hide their combat systems in the infrastructure of cities and villages to preserve combat power. Limiting military action in this way prolonged, unnecessarily, the air campaign, and increased

collateral damage that rocked NATO cohesion. In short, diplomacy forfeited NATO's combat effectiveness and their ability to deter, and the ability to significantly degrade Belgrade's military machine—one of our stated military objectives. Diplomatic means and military ways, means and ends were contradictory to each other and not synchronized to unleash “holy hell” on the battlefield and win decisively. This shortcoming violates the first rule of diplomacy—coercive diplomacy must be backed by credible threat—and it must remain consistent.

The Kosovo affair carries with it another price. It has intensified the process in which reformers are losing out to communists and nationalists. Kosovo was beyond Russia's reach. There are areas that are very much within its reach, such as the Baltic's, Ukraine, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. NATO has established a precedent: it can intervene in other countries so long as human rights issues justify it. Human rights violations abound in the former Soviet Union. As hard liners inexorably increase their power in the Kremlin, NATO will have provided them with full justification for intervention in areas where they have the upper hand and NATO is without options. If suffering humanity is a justification for war, NATO just gave Russia the moral basis for reclaiming its empire. And it should be remembered that Russia may not be able to take on NATO, but Lithuania or Uzbekistan have a different correlation of forces, to say the least.

Observers easily criticize General Clark for the manner in which he prosecuted the war. Like all wars we learned valuable lessons in Kosovo. From past conflicts we also learned how not to fight limited wars. If we intend to win then we should plan for and show up like we intend to win. Anything short of the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force gets people killed—military and civilian alike. Clark underestimated his adversary. He employed a hurry-up offense with insufficient force structure to end the conflict conclusively. And he severely miscalculated his adversary to throw in the towel when he threatened him with force. Had he executed his campaign with a comprehensive war plan, sufficient force according to the principles of war and war fighting doctrine, it is likely a 78 day NATO bombing campaign could have been reduced to days vice months.

NATO has clearly won a victory and the diplomats have been instrumental. However, it is victory in which the price will be higher than anyone anticipated or would

have been willing to pay at the beginning of the conflict. NATO came out of the conflict internally weaker than it went in. Russia and China came out of the conflict more, rather than less, hostile. The stability of the Balkans is now a permanent and impossible responsibility for the West. It was a victory no doubt. I am not certain the United States could stand a few more victories like this.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Implications

“Power and diplomacy work together.”

-George Schultz¹

The Role of Coercive Diplomacy.

In Kosovo, unlike our experiences in Haiti and Bosnia, coercive diplomacy failed as did the attempt to demonstrate NATO's resolve by launching limited air strikes against Serbia following Belgrade's refusal to sign on to the Ramboulliet peace plan. Instead, the Serbs escalated their campaign of expulsion of over 800,000 Kosovar Albanians through Operation Horseshoe. The U.S and NATO were forced to abandon their coercive diplomacy strategy and employ a major military operation. Despite its initial failure to protect and prevent the Serb onslaught against Kosovo's civilian population the war did end successfully when Milosevic finally withdrew all his security forces and accepted the deployment of a 50,000 strong NATO force. NATO's success, however, has come with a significant price tag. According to best estimates, approximately 10,000 Albanians were systematically killed by Serb forces. Tragedy was realized by nearly every ethnic Albanian inside Kosovo—some were killed, more were wounded and maimed, raped, mutilated, and almost all were forcefully removed from their homes as they watched them torched and then discarded from Kosovo like a bag of garbage. It is not surprising that in today's Kosovo, hatred and revenge consume almost an entire ethnic population. And that can only mean one thing—the Albanian's will never forget what the Serbs did to them. Revenge killing will continue for many years. A war will remain in hibernation for another day.

Kosovo, as in Iraq, clearly demonstrated the limits of coercive diplomacy, at least as we applied them by the Clinton administration in both these cases. In both Kosovo and Iraq the threat of force was not tied to a military strategy that assured success if force had to be used. Instead, the objective was left ambiguous—degrading military capability is not an easy measure of merit. Ambiguous objectives are dangerous because they often

lead to early termination such as the U.S. experience in Iraq. We ended the bombing in Iraq after just four days despite public and world support to force Saddam from power. Equally dangerous of vague objectives is the danger of escalation. Vietnam and Somalia are clear examples of vague objectives leading to escalation.

Yes, we had great success in Bosnia and Haiti using coercive diplomacy, but it failed in Iraq and Kosovo. And it failed for two reasons that have far reaching implications the next time we decide to intervene for humanitarian purposes. Both the Kosovo and Iraq cases were characterized by the absence of two critical requirements if winning is our ultimate objective. First, the threat of force must be credible if a strategy of coercive diplomacy is pursued. Second, a military strategy that demonstrates how a clearly defined objective can be achieved decisively if force is used. In both cases the threat of force lacked the credibility in the eyes of Milosevic and Saddam Hussein. This was true because the West did not understand what their respective adversaries valued. Neither leader cared much about the physical destruction or human suffering of their people as much as they cared about sustaining and prolonging their own power. The credibility of the U.S and NATO was further undermined by the lack of follow through on earlier threats of military force. The threat of force were viewed by both leaders as having no teeth—or political will to actually use or sustain the force it threatened them with.

Coercive diplomacy is an important tool and often used for dealing with difficult and important foreign policy problems—and if used correctly, as we did in Bosnia and Haiti, can be successful. However, coercive diplomacy should not be applied as a substitute for diplomacy or as an alternative to military force. It requires a capacity and political will to do both. Most importantly, for coercive diplomacy to be successful it must be backed by a credible and achievable strategy for employing force decisively to achieve clearly defined objectives. In Kosovo, the threat of force finally succeeded, but it was only after NATO clearly defined its goals in unambiguous terms: Serbs out, NATO in, and refugees back. Even then Washington and Brussels had to make clear that they intended win at any cost—even if it meant the use of ground forces.

Flawed diplomatic and military strategies nearly cost NATO the war. If war was to have a chance of being avoided a policy that produced a more robust military threat

would have been needed. More robust means the possibility ground forces to neutralize and demilitarize the KLA and to protect all ethnic peoples in Kosovo. All necessary in crafting a meaningful policy would have a significant increase in air power with a green light to conduct overwhelming simultaneous air operations that paralyzed all of Serbia. Milosevic likely would have immediately understood NATO's willingness to endure in order to achieve its three political objectives—although clearly we may never know. When NATO did decide to become serious about winning they eventually piecemealed together a strategy that reflected such policy; however, three months after the start of the air strikes was simply too late. NATO was really only able to transition from the political dynamic to the military dynamic once victory was assured. After that it was interesting to observe how much more arrogant the Alliance became—but it was equally obvious how relieved they all were now that the credibility test of NATO was over. Everybody loves a winner.

Before 1998, a pattern of mixed messages from the international community to the key players in the Kosovo drama was already well entrenched. The international community's early failure to respond, lack of consistency, and at times complete lack of engagement all contributed to the diplomatic difficulties that would arise later. Support for the Kosovo parallel society and a greater attempt to establish and maintain an international presence on the ground would have strengthened the more moderate factions, while giving the international community more leverage to influence the local situation. A more consistent pattern of diplomatic effort was needed in this period to keep Kosovo on the international political agenda and maintain pressure on Serbia. Clearly, the most promising window of diplomatic opportunity to resolve the crisis without war existed in this pre-1998 period.

Paradoxically, the political will to mount such a diplomatic effort could only gain the necessary momentum after the conflict had escalated into full scale violence, while this violence in turn severely constrained the responsiveness of local players to diplomatic initiatives. Thus, once the KLA became a recognized force with its attacks against Serbian police and other civilians, the FRY faced an armed insurgency using terrorist tactics. The FRY had legitimate and sovereign responsibilities to protect its citizens from such an armed uprising and would have had little trouble convincing the

international community that such terrorist attacks demanded a response—even a forceful response. But in an era when the information age and various media tools bring the horrors of internal civil wars such as massacres, rape, pilfering, and torched villages, into the public eye, we find public opinion plays a steadily increasing role in determining the moral position of the international community. And to the extent the FRY was targeting innocent civilians undermined its justification of counter-insurgency and severely hurt their case. As casualties and displacement of Kosovar civilians mounted, the political will of the international community slowly coalesced.

Also working against the FRY was the international community already had considerable experience dealing with Milosevic and Serbia. The Bosnian experience conditioned everyone's attitudes and calculations of the possibilities. Distrust and skepticism were high, and deservedly so, but to a certain extent Milosevic was beginning to be seen as a known quantity. The international community clearly viewed Milosevic as the major obstacle to a peaceful Europe and quite frankly as royal pain in the ass. The international community was tired of Milosevic, in other words, they had had enough of this guy. This conditioning both helped and hindered the diplomatic process. Thus, the pitfalls of fighting the last war proved very relevant.

The question of whether or not air strikes were effective can be endlessly debated. In the end however, there is no debate about the outcome. NATO clearly made life better and more promising for the average Kosovar than at any other time since they were stripped of their autonomy. However, the fact that air strikes were used to bring about political victory should concern policymakers on the limits of coercive diplomacy and military power to achieve political gains. Airborne diplomacy is a dangerous game and air power alone cannot solve everything all the time.

The Role of Military Force.

The effort to stop Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing was initially an exercise in coercive diplomacy, or compellance, that did not work. The purposes of the campaign did evolve overtime and in the end, NATO clearly achieved victory. They achieved all stated goals and met NATO's five conditions: Cease fire established, Serb military and police out, international security presence in, 800,000 refugees returned, and

an opportunity for a political settlement. Importantly, a ground invasion was avoided, no airman died and no airman were missing; historical monuments remained intact in Belgrade and Kosovo, and war did not spread, as predicted, into the surrounding states. Although it wasn't pretty, and some may argue victory was largely by accident, NATO did prevail. But we have many lessons to take away.

The Kosovo conflict demonstrated many of the limitations of the use of force. From the beginning this was a campaign where political rather than military considerations determined both strategy and tactics. The means employed in Kosovo, were insufficient to achieve the objectives that NATO political leaders were talking about. Secretary General Solana said that our objective was to halt the violence, and to stop further humanitarian catastrophe. Those are broad, meaningful, and important political objectives. But a limited air campaign that was constrained to keeping ourselves out of harms way, as we did it, cannot get you to those objectives quickly or easily, if at all. You don't prevent a genocide by limited air campaigns. In a situation in which time is your major constraint, we chose a strategy that required a lot of time in order to be effective. And that's poor matching of means to objective. That means that the political leadership has to be willing to scale back its objectives, if it's not willing to commit the military means to achieve them.

NATO clearly believed that a determined display of force would somehow bring Milosevic to the negotiating table. When initial strikes failed to secure this objective, an escalating air campaign of uncertain duration had to be quickly rolled out. Despite excessive press focus on the alleged splits in the alliance, NATO moved quickly and cohesively to widen the range of targets being struck. SACEUR ordered reinforcements. General Clark was requesting the apache helicopters to deliver the war up close and personal to Serb ground forces in Kosovo; the ground options were being reconsidered; the air operation would increase to 900 aircraft; and NATO would gradually begin to escalate its targeting selections from air defense sites to Serbian ground forces and some select strategic targeting of Belgrade communications facility, factory's, and power station. Later on this would move towards air strikes of key government buildings in downtown Belgrade.

But this was not the application of air power according to strategic doctrine. Air powers very effectiveness depends upon the synergetic effect of an all out onslaught from the first day of bombing. Col John Warden, master architect of the air war in the Gulf in 1990, argued quite correctly that new technology cannot be introduced with old Cold War strategy—the key to successful use of modern technology is parallel bombing.² The idea being to completely surprise the adversary by hitting simultaneously a variety of strategic and tactical targets that render the adversary unable to respond or recover—or if he does its at great risk to life and limb—and establishing control of the skies. The thought being whoever controls the air generally controls the surface. This is USAF doctrine. However, Kosovo presented an entirely different challenge for political and military leadership. NATO's center of gravity was its cohesion and Milosevic knew that if its cohesion splintered he would survive NATO's first major war and NATO's credibility would crash and burn. General Clark clearly understood, as did NATO's capitals, that the war in Kosovo would have to be fought as an incremental campaign if the alliance was to survive and remain a cohesive diplomatic and military instrument. It is true, the alliance was slow to realize that force would have to be used, but once force was ultimately used and hostilities began the alliance became stronger and more unified as the weeks passed. But critically, the integrity of the alliance was maintained.

In the case of Kosovo, the air campaign was diplomacy by another means, not an all out military struggle. It was a limited air operation handcuffed by political and military caution and based on a strategy of hope. NATO hoped that allied bombing would cause Milosevic to acquiesce to NATO's demands. Unfortunately, hope is not a principle of war or is it a means to an end. NATO was forced to fight the war with the gloves on despite the ineptness of a third rate power outdated and isolated military machine. On the other hand Milosevic had the luxury to fight the war with the gloves off with no political, military, or moral and ethical constraints. He was prepared to use any means at his disposal including brutality, murder, rape, and wholesale expulsion of an entire civilian population to achieve his ends. This type of asymmetry could have important implications on future conflicts, where Western troops are constrained to fight within very tight limits not experienced by their adversary.³ Despite NATO's apparent victory it

was not without cost—both in terms of political risks and political relationships as well as policy implications for future humanitarian interventions.

Squeezing Milosevic.

Milosevic was hoping the alliance would crack and the bombing campaign would fall apart. Instead, NATO's determination increased over time and the bombing intensified. He was hoping that neighboring countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania, would not cooperate with the West, and indeed, large majorities of their citizens initially opposed the war. But the power of NATO extended even to these countries, which at that point were non-members. We simply made clear to their leaders that if they wanted to be considered for eventual membership in NATO--and they did, very much--then they'd have to help us against Milosevic, which they did, quickly. Faced with this remarkable unity of effort and determination, even the Russians, who strongly sympathized with the Serbs, also abandoned Milosevic in the end.

Other international institutions helped us tighten the noose. The United States acted under the authority of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1199, passed in the fall of 1998, and authorizing all available means to deal with the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo--language which helped give our military intervention international legal and moral authority. The threat against Milosevic of war criminal charges was additional leverage. When the International Criminal Tribunal indicted Milosevic for war crimes on May 25, 1999, the resolve of our European allies notably stiffened—a fact that we should keep in mind as we struggle with solutions for Saddam.

In the end, NATO achieved every one of its aims. With the air war intensifying, a ground invasion being prepared, and no other country to turn to for help, Milosevic in early June pulled his troops, police, and weaponry out of Kosovo. A NATO-led international peacekeeping force entered to establish order. Nearly a million Kosovars returned to their homes. Weakened by his defeat, Milosevic lost an election he had tried to rig in his favor. When he still refused to cede power, a student-led uprising did the job for him. Milosevic is now behind bars at The Hague and is being tried as a war criminal. Though Serbia and Kosovo are still struggling with the aftermath of ethnic conflict and autocratic leadership, they are now governed by democratically elected leaders eager for

good relations with the West. All this was achieved at a remarkably slight cost, minimal destruction on the ground, no NATO casualties, and relatively few civilian deaths despite the use of some 23,000 bombs and missiles.

What caused this outcome was not just the weapons of war. Forces far beyond the bombs and bullets were at work: the weight of international diplomacy; the impact of international law; and the "consensus-engine" of NATO, which kept all the allies in the fight. The lesson of Kosovo is that international institutions and alliances are really another form of power. They have their limitations and can require a lot of maintenance. But used effectively, they can be strategically decisive.

Future Intervention Considerations.

What does the Kosovo experience tell us about the future and things our policy makers must consider the next time we opt to intervene for humanitarian reasons?

First, States have two main coercive instruments available when considering intervention: the use of force and economic sanctions. The authority to employ that force comes from one source that is recognized around the globe as the sole source of that authority—the United Nations. One of the hot buttons associated with the war in Kosovo was that the application of violence to stop Milosevic and his security forces from ethnically cleansing all of Kosovo was void. The problems of intervention were entwined with the problem of interfering in a sovereign state which is why the Russians and the Chinese were prepared to veto the use of force if it ever got to the United Nations Security Council. Post Cold War models of sovereignty can no longer serve as absolute models. True, the notion of sovereignty has served us well for over 350 years. But it is clear we can no longer form policy based on the issue of sovereignty alone. Today, we have to consider other competing interests. How we think about sovereignty issues should be within the framework of a contract. It is a relationship between the governed and the government. And when one party breaks the contract, or does not fulfill its obligations, one cannot expect to get all the benefits of sovereignty. And this applies to Yugoslavia.⁴

The notion of sovereignty can no longer be viewed as a given; it must be viewed as a contract and not an absolute in the post-Cold War world. As General Clark observes,

“In modern war, achieving decisive political aims may not require achieving decisive military results. Wars can be won through battles never fought, as much as battles of annihilation taught in the military textbooks. Operations Allied Force showed us how this can be done, under the right conditions”.⁵

The Kosovo experience and others like it, Rwanda, Somalia, and East Timor, make it increasingly clear that the realization of humanitarian intervention is a global responsibility. It also highlights that sovereignty is no longer as sacrosanct as it once was. In a regional context and from a regional perspective all humanitarian emergencies are different and therefore each case has a different response. As a result it is difficult to draw up one set of criteria or template that applies equally across the board to all cases. Secondly, the world response must have other means to deal with humanitarian emergencies in the event the UN Security Council is blocked by veto. The global response must have other means to deal quickly, efficiently, and effectively with the Kosovo emergencies of tomorrow. And it must have other ways to authorize military intervention for human protection. If the UN Security Council is unable to act there must be a way to seriously evaluate the legalities and legitimacy of intervention. Military means cannot stand-alone and should only be considered as part and parcel of a larger tool box. Law is only one element of the question of humanitarian intervention; political will and legitimacy is another. The distinction must be driven by decisions that answer specifically humanitarian needs. Kosovo was an exceptional experience and the international community did the right thing. The basis for the Kosovo operation was clear and legitimate in the name of gross violations of human rights and genocide. Europe is not finished with these kinds of problems. The Hungarian ethnic minority living outside the Hungarian borders is an issue of real concern and a potential powder keg. It is important to identify and address these potential hot buttons before they consume enormous international resources and time and develop into worse case scenarios. Integration is one tool beyond military intervention. The European Union could be a magnet for success to break down borders and eliminate hatred. In Kosovo, the international community has done a brilliant job in containing the violence and bringing a degree of calmness allowing government structures and order to be built. However, the

fundamental causes of conflict still exist in the Balkans. Until those causes are addressed success in the Balkans will be short lived.

The way humanitarian interventions of the future are dealt with is best described by a conversation between General Wes Clark and Prime Minister Tony Blair just prior to NATO's intervention in Kosovo:

Tony Blair to Gen Clark; "Are you going to win--because the survival of my government depends on it"? Clark replied "what do you mean Mr. Prime Minister"? Blair responded, "I am asking you, General Clark, if you are going to win".⁶ This exchange was really the crux of NATO's dilemma—and will be the likely contentious factor shaping future humanitarian crisis. Alliance, or coalition objectives will be inextricably linked to local politics. In the case of Kosovo, all NATO member states had political objectives that affected the way the Kosovo campaign was waged. As a result the alliance gradually transformed into of more of a coalition than a true collective defense structure. Ways, ends, and means are entirely political. Military operations, although many senior military leaders may not readily admit it, are entirely political in nature. These are the political realities of warfare. Politics drive ways, ends, and means. In turn, the military must adapt to these political features to the physical realities of the battlefield in order to secure the stated objectives on the battlefield.

War is a test of wills. No one goes to war thinking they will lose. Milosevic was willing to take risks and focused smartly with great intensity on dividing NATO's center of gravity, its cohesion, by executing a highly successful propaganda war that began to make NATO member states question NATO's resolve and rethink its objectives. Italy and Greece were vehement about having a bombing pause so diplomatic dialogue could somehow bring NATO military actions to an end. France was agitated about the targeting selection. The British wanted a full ground invasion and for planning to commence immediately. The United States eliminated the ground option before the first bullet was fired. The ultimate reason for this was President Clinton's desire to placate the American people and domestic politics at home because his re-election bid was not far off. It also allowed NATO to move closer to consensus on military action from the air only. From a military perspective taking the ground option off the table violated the theory of escalation. A limited war violated every principle of war that had been shaped and

learned since Vietnam. Under the Powell doctrine overwhelming force is emphasized if the U.S is serious about winning. Unleashing holy hell on the enemy is how war should be fought according to the Powell doctrine.

However, having said that, there may be value in limited war. And defense officials and generals must look at strategies and military options that service the needs of political objectives and not necessarily military objectives. The idea of limited war brings back bad images of the whole Vietnam debacle, not to mention the expansion of objectives in Somalia, and in Lebanon. However, that was then and this is now. The post Cold War presents a whole new set of problems and we should not be so quick to dismiss the value of limited war in the 21st century. Limited war has some utility. Secondly, we may want to rethink the whole notion of war as a last resort. There are reasons where this idea should be revisited.

Indeed, the late Richard Nixon declared that “the capability and will to use force as a first resort when our interests are threatened reduces the possibility of having to use force as a last resort, when the risk of casualties would be far greater.” He also noted the obvious: “Every military operation cannot be a sure thing.”⁷ The United States cannot be tied to such doctrine mantra because they are out of step with realities and impact of globalization and the war on terrorism, and because they imply we will only fight popular and winnable wars. The role of the United States in the world is such that it must be prepared for, be prepared to threaten, and even be prepared to fight those intermediate conflicts that are likely to fare poorly on television and may not have any direct vital interests, such as Kosovo, for the United States.

The idea of humanitarian interventions is not just a fad. There will be continued pressure from our world populations to “do something” when they see large-scale atrocities being perpetuated on innocent civilian populations. There is also a changing and evolving conception of “community” that must be confronted as we develop military intervention strategy for future operations. The information age continues to widen the world view as to who our neighbor is and demands the issue be addressed through regional and global institutions that do encumber or delay the nature of humanitarian emergencies.

To be sure, there were unintended political and military consequences of NATO's bombing. If selective intervention is considered again, and I suspect in a post-Cold War world the odds are that we will, Kosovo is the case study of how not to do it. Two key questions emerge from a post Kosovo analysis that we should concern ourselves with. First, were the political risks worth the political and physical damage? And second, did the bombing ultimately serve its objectives? I believe these two questions can be answered in a relatively simplistic way by looking at the issue of values and human rights as a whole.

I think that a Europe that is entering the 21st century based on this set of principles first endorsed at Helsinki and later at the Charter of Paris, that is, it's a Europe where gross violations of human rights at some point start to bunch up to the recognition of sovereignty of a European state. I think we are now in a situation where the question of sovereignty needs to be addressed in such a way where what people do internally in a state has an impact on how the external community needs to react to what is happening in that state. The information revolution has made the internal activities of a various societies a window through which the world can watch and monitor the behavior of nation-states and non-state actors. In essence, in the information age, there is no where to hide.

The question on the issue of independence of Kosovo, which is projected on the basis that Serbia and former Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, sovereign state, that therefore we cannot interfere in the internal affairs, is a question that needs to be carefully looked at in future interventions because the fundamental denial of human rights and minority rights and fundamental freedoms inside that state raises the question of how far that sovereignty can be extended.

Kosovo's Final Status.

Finally, the issue of final status for Kosovo must be addressed. Final status in Kosovo is a ways off, but it must be addressed sooner rather than later. Otherwise war is likely to breakout all over again and this time NATO troops could be in the crossfire. Substantial autonomy entails substantial reliance. And reliance will be measured by how well the Kosovo leaders (Serbs and Albanians) honor multiethnic integration and

responsibilities into provisional institutions. The international community did not intervene in Kosovo to protect one group over another, but rather to defend the norms of international behavior and fundamental human rights. Thus, the only outcome possible is one that is multiethnic vice monolithic. The answer to Kosovo's success is in reform. Reform is vital. But the origins of the FRY crisis lie in the collapse of reform efforts precipitated by the immediate post-Cold War political, economic, and security vacuum. As long as the West continues to view the crisis in terms of endemic nationalist conflict and ethnic hatred, rather than terms of its own policy failures, progress on reform will be unlikely. The answer in Kosovo is not status, but rather standards. The sooner we address reform with the framework of real reform the more likely Balkan policy will succeed.

Kosovo should not be given independent status until lasting standards are achieved. An explicit strategy is needed now. The best bet for Kosovo is arriving at some kind of compromised autonomy. However, the longer we wait, the more likely an independent strategy emerges as the only answer. An independent strategy means violence will be back one day.

Unfortunately, Kosovo, or for that matter, all of the Balkans, is of little to no interest to the current Bush administration as its national security interests are focused on the global war on terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, and homeland security. The National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, says the Bush administration is just not interested.⁸ This is not good news for the Europeans or American policy makers. The longer we wait to address the Kosovo problem the more likely conflict will erupt again and revenge killings will disrupt all that has been achieved by the international community. And worse, NATO could find itself caught in the cross fire between warring factions. Whatever we do in the Balkans we must approach it in the context of our grand strategy toward Europe; and two, we don't do anything that leads to or could reignite a crisis, including reduction of our military commitments. If we did reduce our military commitment it would be a mistake and damage our standing in the alliance and make it impossible to lead the alliance. On the other hand, with the current rift between the United States, Germany, and France over a unified position concerning war in Iraq it would not be surprising to see American policy completely reverse its interests in the

Balkans and pull U.S. troops out and redirect their presence towards more pressing and vital interests.

¹ George Schultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993, pp.10.

² David Halberstam, *War In A Time Of Peace, Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*. Simon and Schuster, 2001. pp. 47-55.

³ General Wesley K. Clark,(ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 1997-2000, *Waging Modern War; Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*. P. 422. Public Affairs Press, New York 2001.

⁴ As of February 5, 2002 the state of Yugoslavia was officially renamed Serbia and Montenegro by the Serbian federal parliament. Washington Post, February 5, 2003, pp.A20.

⁵ General Wesley K. Clark,(ret) former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 1997-2000, *Waging Modern War; Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*. Pp.422. Public Affairs Press, New York 2001, pp. 420-425.

⁶ General Clark's presentation to the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, 20 November 2002.

⁷ Michael Handel, *Masters of War, Classical Strategic Thought*. Third Edition, Cass Publishing, London, 2002.

⁸Interview with General Wesley K. Clark, (ret), former, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 1997-2000, November 20, 2003, Georgetown University. Washington D.C.

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Appendix A

Kosovo Chronology*

Although bombing did not begin until March 24, 1999, NATO's path to war in Kosovo wound its way through much of the region's troubled recent history.

The following chronology traces the roots of the war in Kosovo from Slobodan Milosevic's rise to power in the late 1980s and through the diplomatic gambles and military threats that failed to head off the conflict. It charts the escalation of the air war with Serbia and the steps that finally led to NATO's victory in early June 1999.

NOTE: This chronology also notes the contexts in which important decisions were made -- including President Clinton's impeachment scandal and U.S. military strikes against Iraq and Osama bin Laden.

PRE 1998

- 1987** Slobodan Milosevic's power grows with trip to Kosovo. At large public rallies, Serb nationalists embrace him when he dramatically promises to defend their interests in the province.
- 1989** Milosevic engineers changes in the Serbian constitution that vastly reduce the provincial autonomy Kosovo has enjoyed since 1974. Other measures put tens of thousands of Kosovar Albanians out of work and restrict the activities of their cultural organizations. Rioting and protests by Kosovo Albanians ensue.
- 1991** The bloody break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) begins as Slovenia and Croatia declare their independence. After a secret vote, ethnic Albanians proclaim the creation of their own Republic of Kosovo, though it earns little international recognition.
- 1992** War breaks out in Bosnia, after it too moves for independence. Several months after Europe, USA extends diplomatic recognition to the three major breakaway Yugoslav republics, but not Kosovo. In May, Kosovar Albanians elect literary scholar and pacifist Ibrahim Rugova president in unofficial elections. Rugova begins creating a shadow government.

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- Dec. 1992** In a secret "Christmas Warning," U.S. President George Bush informs Milosevic that Serbian aggression in Kosovo will bring unilateral US military response. Clinton administration reiterates the threat on several occasions through 1998.
 - 1993** War in Bosnia continues, as "ethnic cleansing" spreads. NATO threatens airstrikes to defend "safe areas" created to protect Muslims.
 - 1994** In April, NATO carries out first airstrikes in its history -- against Bosnian Serbs.
 - 1995** More NATO airstrikes - along with a successful Croat/Muslim ground offensive - bring Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table. On 21 Nov., the Dayton Accord ends war in Bosnia. Milosevic emerges as the region's power broker and NATO sees a lesson in its use of force. Kosovo issues, however, are left unresolved.
 - 1996** The **Kosovo Liberation Army** (KLA) appears, and begins sporadic attacks against Serb authorities in Kosovo. Serbs ratchet up repression of student and ethnic movements in Kosovo.
 - Late 1996** **Madeleine Albright** named first female US Secretary of State. As UN ambassador, Albright had argued in favor of early military intervention in Bosnia.
 - 1997** In October, violence escalates in Kosovo as Serbian security forces clamp down further on resistance and KLA steps up its attacks.

1998

- 13 Jan. 1998 Renewed crisis in Iraq as President Saddam Hussein bans weapons team led by US inspector.
- 19-21 Jan. 1998 First Monica Lewinsky scandal stories appear in the press. Several days later Clinton denies affair with Lewinsky, saying "I did not have sexual relations with that woman....I never told anybody to lie."
- 23 Feb. 1998** US diplomat Robert Gelbard publicly calls KLA "without any question a terrorist group" -- a comment which some observers say Milosevic interprets as a green light to continue repression.

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- 1 1998 Mar.** Rugova's shadow government reportedly urges Kosovar Albanians to defend themselves against the Serbs.
- 5-7 1998 Mar.** After KLA attacks on police, Serb security forces **massacre** over 50 members of the Jashari family in the village of Prekaz. In following weeks, tens of thousands rally in Pristina to protest massacre. Serbs respond with counter-demonstrations.
- 7 1998 Mar.** In Rome, Madeleine Albright declares "We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia."
- 9 1998 Mar.** "Contact Group" countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia) meet in London to discuss Kosovo. In a tense meeting, Gelbard meets with Milosevic in Belgrade.
- 23 1998 Mar.** Ibrahim Rugova re-elected "president" of Kosovo with 99% of vote in controversial elections boycotted by increasingly popular Kosovar Albanian hard-liners.
- 31 1998 Mar.** UN Security Council **resolution 1160** condemns Yugoslavia's excessive use of force, imposes economic sanctions, and bans arms sales to Serbia.
- 1 1998 Apr.** Judge Susan Webber Wright dismisses Paula Jones's lawsuit.
- 21 1998 Apr.** FRY closes borders with Albania and Macedonia.
- 23 1998 Apr.** In national referendum, 95% of Serbs reject foreign mediation to solve the Kosovo crisis.
- May 1998** Gelbard meets with KLA officials in Switzerland. Amb. Christopher Hill named US Special Envoy to Kosovo. Dayton Accord negotiator **Richard Holbrooke** travels to Belgrade. Talks lead to first-ever meeting between Rugova and Milosevic on May 15, though dialogue quickly breaks down.
- 28 1998 May** Rugova and other Kosovar Albanian officials arrive in Washington to meet with Clinton, Gore, Albright and advisors. In 29 May meeting in Oval Office, Rugova seeks Clinton's support for the Kosovar Albanians' cause.

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- 31 May 1998** As many as 20 Kosovar Albanians killed in retaliation for death of a Serb policeman near Glogovac.
- 1 Jun. 1998** Rugova meets UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan in New York, requests UN/NATO intervention.
- 11 Jun. 1998** At NATO ministerial meeting, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen urges NATO defense ministers to begin conceptual planning for potential intervention in Kosovo. Ministers decide to "send a signal" to Milosevic by conducting air exercises in the region.
- 12 Jun. 1998** Foreign ministers of Contact Group, plus Canada and Japan, meet in London and level more economic sanctions on FRY.
- 15 Jun. 1998** In the "Balkan Air Show," 85 NATO warplanes fly over Albania and Macedonia in show of force aimed at Milosevic.
- 16 Jun. 1998** Milosevic and Yeltsin meet in Moscow, issue joint statement approving idea of diplomatic observers in Kosovo.
- 23-24 Jun. 1998** Holbrooke meets with Milosevic. Travels to Kosovo, to talk directly with KLA commanders.
- 6 Jul. 1998** Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission begins monitoring operations in the province (US and EU)
- Early Aug. 1998** Serbian forces intensify their summer offensive, attack KLA and Kosovo Albanian villages in Drenica region, driving thousands into the hills.
- 5 Aug. 1998** Iraq ceases cooperation with **UN inspectors**.
- 7 Aug. 1998** Bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam, apparently by operatives working for **Osama Bin Laden**.
- 17 Aug. 1998** After completing four hours of grand jury testimony, Clinton offers nationally televised admission of his "inappropriate relationship" with Lewinsky.

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- 20 Aug. 1998 US launches cruise missile attack on Afghanistan and Sudan in response to Bin Laden's embassy bombings. In polls, significant numbers of Americans say they believe the attacks were staged to divert attention from the Lewinsky scandal.
- 1-2 Sept. 1998** At Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Moscow, Albright & Foreign Minister Ivanov together call for negotiations and an end to Serb offensive.
- 5 Sept. 1998** Former Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) and Asst. Sec. of State John Shattuck travel to Kosovo & Belgrade.
- 9 Sept. 1998 Independent Counsel Starr dramatically delivers 36 boxes of impeachment information to Congress.
- 9 Sept. 1998** Serb police begin to pull bodies of Kosovar Albanians and Serbs from a canal near the village of Glodjane. At least thirty-four bodies are eventually discovered, and suspicion falls on the KLA.
- 23 Sept. 1998** UN Security Council approves **Resolution 1199** demanding cease-fire, Serb withdrawal and refugee return and calling for unspecified "additional measures" if Serbia refuses to comply.
- 24 Sept. 1998** In Vilamoura, Portugal, NATO Defense Ministers give NATO's Supreme Commander permission to issue an activation warning (ACTWARN) -- the first real step in preparation for air strikes.
- 26 Sept. 1998** After more than a dozen Serb police are killed in fighting with the KLA, Serb security forces kill 35 villagers - including 21 members of a single family - in and around Gornje Obrinje.
- 30 Sept. 1998** At principals committee meeting, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pushes for air strikes against Serbia. Administration briefs Capitol Hill on the plan. Meeting Congressional resistance, the Administration notes it has no plans to send ground troops to Kosovo, even as peacekeepers.
- 5 Oct. 1998** UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan reports FRY violations of UNSCR 1199.
- 5 Oct. 1998 House Judiciary Committee votes on party lines to recommend Clinton impeachment inquiry.

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- 12** **Oct.** NATO approves an "activation order" (ACTORD) authorizing preparations
1998 for a limited bombing campaign.
- 13** **Oct.** After more than a week of negotiations, Holbrooke secures the "October
1998 Agreement." Agreement calls for Serbian compliance with UN Resolution 1199, a cease-fire, troop withdrawals, elections, substantial autonomy for Kosovo and other confidence-building measures. NATO temporarily suspends - but does not rescind - its ACTORD to allow for Serbian compliance.
- 16** **Oct.** Milosevic agrees to allow unarmed OSCE cease-fire monitors - the Kosovo
1998 Verification Mission (KVM) -- into Kosovo. NATO extends ACTORD deadline until 27 October.
- 24** **Oct.** NATO Supreme Commander **Gen. Wesley Clark** and Chairman of the
1998 NATO Military Committee **Gen. Klaus Naumann** travel to Belgrade. Milosevic agrees to reduce FRY forces in Kosovo to pre-March 1998 levels.
- 27** **Oct.** In what appears to be a vindication of NATO's strategy, Serbia withdraws
1998 thousands of Serb security forces from Kosovo. Thousands of Kosovar Albanians begin to descend from the hills as winter threatens.
- 31 **Oct.**
1998 Iraq halts all cooperation with UN arms inspection team.
- Nov.1998** Unarmed international KVM monitors under American **Ambassador William Walker** begin deploying in Kosovo.
- 5 **Nov.**
1998 In US, Democrats make surprising gains in Congress, through Republicans maintain control.
- 11 **Nov.**
1998 UN staff evacuated from Baghdad as US rushes aircraft carriers to the region and threatens strikes against Iraq.
- 13** **Nov.** Serbia warns Macedonia against allowing NATO to position troops on its
1998 territory.
- 19 **Nov.** Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr testifies before Congress for 12 hours.
1998 The following day, Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde issues new subpoenas and signals committee may widen its probe of impeachable offenses.

Early Dec. 1998 The House of Representatives prepares, approves and begins debate on articles of impeachment.

Dec. 1998 Border clashes and skirmishes in Kosovo draw new US condemnations. NATO approves and begins deploying in Macedonia an "extraction force" (XFOR) to defend peacekeepers in Kosovo.

17 Dec. 1998 US and Britain begin four days of limited airstrikes against Iraq.

19 Dec. 1998 President Clinton impeached by House of Representatives.

23-27 Dec. 1998 FRY security forces battle KLA and attack villages near Podujevo.

1999

14 Jan. 1999 Senate trial phase of impeachment begins.

15 Jan. 1999 At meeting of top US foreign policy advisers -- the "Principals Committee" - - Albright pushes for US/NATO military ultimatum, but is frustrated by colleagues's resistance and a reluctant Pentagon.

15 Jan. 1999 The **Racak Massacre**. In retaliation for KLA attack on 4 policemen, Serb security forces kill 45 Kosovo Albanians. **KVM Director William Walker** arrives on scene following day, forcefully blames Serbia in front of television cameras. Milosevic refuses to allow war crimes prosecutor Judge Louise Arbour to visit Racak.

18 Jan. 1999 Milosevic orders Walker out of the country, though he retracts the expulsion order under international pressure 21 Jan and saves face by calling for diplomatic freeze on Walker.

19 Jan. 1999 In light of Racak massacre, National Security Adviser **Sandy Berger** reconvenes Principals Committee. Albright's push for military ultimatum wins the day. At same time, NATO SACEUR Wesley Clark and NATO military council chairman Gen. Klaus Naumann meet with Milosevic in Serbia in tense seven-hour meeting. Milosevic claims Racak was staged by the KLA, calls Clark a war criminal.

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- 27** **Jan.** Joint statement on Kosovo by Albright and Russia's Ivanov. Clinton meets
1999 with foreign policy team to discuss post-Racak strategy.
- 29** **Jan.** In London, Contact Group foreign ministers issues ultimatum to Kosovo
1999 Albanians and Serbs, calling them to begin peace talks at in France at Rambouillet on Feb. 6.
- 30** **Jan.** NATO renews its military threat, reapproves its ACTORD (force activation
1999 order).
- Early Feb.
1999 Senate trial of Clinton continues.
- 1** **Feb.** Kosovo Albanians announce they will participate in talks in France; KLA
1999 agrees to participate following day.
- 6** **Feb.**
1999 Rambouillet peace talks begin in France, though Milosevic refuses to attend.
- 11** **Feb.** Clinton meets with foreign policy team to discuss "NATO planning, US
1999 costs and KFOR exit strategy."
- 12 Feb.
1999 Impeachment effort fails, Clinton acquitted in the Senate.
- 13** **Feb.** The day after his impeachment drama ends, Clinton calls Congressional
1999 leaders to discuss Rambouillet, possible US role in **NATO-led Kosovo force**. In a radio address, Clinton notes his intention to send 4,000 U.S. peacekeepers to Kosovo after a cease-fire and a Serb withdrawal have been won.
- 20** **Feb.** Madeleine Albright arrives in France for last days of talks, attempts to
1999 salvage negotiations. Albanian delegation continues to refuse to sign agreement.
- 23** **Feb.** Amidst great allied frustration, Rambouillet talks pause to allow Albanian
1999 delegation to return home for consultations. Clinton meets with Congressional leaders to discuss Rambouillet, US KFOR role.
- 8** **Mar.** Senator Dole returns to Macedonia to lobby KLA to sign Rambouillet
1999 agreement.

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- 10 Mar. 1999** Holbrooke and Hill meet with Milosevic to urge him to accept NATO settlement.
- 12 Mar. 1999** KLA reportedly ready to sign a peace pact. However Hill reports to Albright, Cohen, Berger, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Hugh Shelton that there is "zero point zero percent" chance of a deal on the Serb side.
- 14 Mar. 1999** Delegation led by Deputy Sec. of State **Strobe Talbott** travels to European capitals to confer on Kosovo.
- 15 Mar. 1999** Peace talks begun at Rambouillet reconvene at Avenue Kléber conference center in Paris.
- 16 Mar. 1999** CIA warns of imminent Serbian offensive. FRY asks Interpol to arrest KLA leader **Hashim Thaci**.
- 18 Mar. 1999** In Paris, Kosovo Albanian delegates finally cave in and sign autonomy plan. Serbs refuse, and begin "winter live fire" exercises in Kosovo the next day.
- 19 Mar. 1999** In light of failure of peace talks and massing of Serb troops of Kosovo's border, Clinton meets with foreign policy team to review NATO plans & strategy.
- 20 Mar. 1999** Kosovo Verification Mission leaves Kosovo. Serbian forces quickly move in, begin a new offensive in northeastern and north-central Kosovo. Western embassies begin withdrawing dependents and non-essential staff from Belgrade. Operation Horseshoe begins.
- 22 Mar. 1999** In a last ditch effort to avoid air strikes, Holbrooke is sent to Serbia to deliver a final ultimatum. Meeting fails to draw any concessions from an embittered Milosevic. Holbrook walks out with a thumbs down to the press.
- 24 Mar. 1999** The Kosovo air war begins. In televised address, Clinton rules out the use of ground troops to fight a war in Kosovo. Officials hope for a quick resolution, in line with their experience in Bosnia prior to the Dayton Agreement. To signal Russia's displeasure, Prime Minister Primakov cancels trip to Washington in mid-flight.
- 25 Mar. 1999** Serbian forces reportedly kill more than 60 Kosovar Albanian men near the village of Bela Crvka. FRY breaks off diplomatic relations with United States, Germany, Great Britain and France.

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- 27 Mar. 1999** Russian Duma condemns NATO attack, postpones Start II treaty vote. A **US F-117 Stealth bomber** is shot down, raising concerns about the vulnerability of even the US's most advanced aircraft. Kosovar Albanians are loaded on special "refugee trains" and sent to the border with Macedonia.
- 1 Apr. 1999** Serbian television broadcasts images of **three US soldiers taken while on patrol** in Macedonia, feeding fears about the use of ground troops.
- 3 Apr. 1999** Central Belgrade hit by NATO missiles for first time. Air commanders bomb FRY and Serbian Interior Ministries as they seek to make clear their determination to "go after the head of the snake" in Serbia.
- 4 Apr. 1999** With much fanfare, officials decide to deploy 24 Apache attack helicopters (Task Force Hawk) and 2,000 protecting troops in Albania, ostensibly within 8 to ten days. Delays ensue, as policymakers debate whether the helicopters move the US closer to ground war and engineers scramble to build them a base.
- 6 Apr. 1999** First major NATO mishap: three missiles hit a residential neighborhood in the mining town of Aleksinac, killing several civilians. Milosevic calls for an (Orthodox) Easter cease-fire and willingness to guarantee "substantial autonomy" for Kosovo. NATO, State Dept. reject offer, and spokesman James Rubin announces conditions for end to NATO bombing.
- 8 Apr. 1999** German Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping publicizes the existence of a document several pages long detailing the Serbian "Potkova" (Horseshoe) Operation -- allegedly a detailed plan to expel ethnic Albanians months in the making.
- 9 Apr. 1999** Russian President Yeltsin speaks out against bombing and possibility of a NATO ground war against Serbia, warns that Russia could be forced into a European or worldwide war. Gennadi Seleznev, President of the Duma, claims that Yeltsin has ordered nuclear missiles to target Serbia's attackers -- a charge that Yeltsin's spokesman later denies.
- 10 Apr. 1999** NATO approves "Allied Harbor" deployment of 8,000 men in Albania, ostensibly to aid humanitarian and refugee efforts.

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- 14 Apr. 1999** Yeltsin appoints **Chernomyrdin** as special envoy to the Balkans. Move appears to herald a Russian shift on Kosovo, and desire to salvage relationship with the West. Hard-line Prime Minister Primakov fired from Prime Minister's position one month later. News breaks of mistaken US/NATO strike on column of Kosovo Albanian refugees, reportedly killing at least 60.
- 20 Apr. 1999** First direct clash between Albanian and Serb armies. First Apache helicopters begin to arrive in Albania, though officials seek to ratchet down expectations regarding their use.
- 21 Apr. 1999** NATO bombs Socialist Party headquarters in Belgrade. Attack destroys offices of several companies with ties to Milosevic's inner circle, including television operations run by Milosevic's daughter and wife. Bombs also strike one of Milosevic's private residences. Targets had been subject of complex, contentious negotiations between allies. On eve of NATO summit, Clinton and **Blair** meet for three-hour White House dinner.
- 22 Apr. 1999** NATO's 50th anniversary celebrations begin in Washington. Though squabbling continues in the wings, allies maintain public unity, and move for an intensification of the air war.
- 23 Apr. 1999** NATO attacks Serbian television in Belgrade, causing at least 10 deaths.
- 25 Apr. 1999** With Summit underway, Yeltsin phones Clinton to discuss Kosovo, reopen contacts between Gore and Chernomyrdin.
- 28 Apr. 1999** House of Representatives votes largely along party lines to reject a resolution supporting air war, demonstrating continuing mistrust of Clinton and his Balkans policy.
- 28 Apr. 1999** NATO missile lands near Sofia, in Bulgaria, though no one is killed.
- 29 Apr. 1999** At the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the **FRY files suit** against the NATO allies.
- 30 Apr. 1999** NATO strikes on Belgrade continue, targeting FRY Defense and Army headquarters. Chernomyrdin meets Milosevic for 6 hours in Belgrade. Jesse Jackson arrives in Belgrade to discuss release of 3 captured US servicemen.

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- 1** **May** NATO accidentally bombs a civilian bus on bridge near Pristina.
1999
- 2** **May** Jesse Jackson secures freedom for 3 US soldiers captured in Macedonia.
1999 Milosevic reportedly gives Jackson a letter calling for a face-to-face meeting with Clinton. Late at night, NATO graphite bombs short-circuit electrical circuits in Serbia. A US F-16 crashes in Serbia.
- 3** **May** Chernomyrdin comes to Washington, meets with President, Gore and
1999 advisers. Endorses the idea of enlisting Finnish President Ahtisaari to assist with negotiations. NATO kills at least 17 in attack on civilian vehicles near Pec, in Kosovo. FRY closes Montenegro's port of Bar, provoking fears of impending Serbian coup there.
- 4** **May** Bulgaria authorizes NATO to use its airspace for attacks.
1999
- 5** **May** The first NATO deaths occur when 2 US soldiers are killed in non-combat
1999 Apache helicopter accident north of Tirana.
- 6** **May** At the Group of Eight (G8) meeting in Germany, the Russians begin limited
1999 cooperation with the allies. From Italy, Rugova calls for a NATO force in Kosovo, and a Serb withdrawal.
- 7** **May** In night of extensive bombing, NATO planes mistakenly target Chinese
1999 Embassy in Belgrade, killing 3 and wounding 20. UN Security Council meets to discuss the US's "terrible mistake" and violent demonstrations ensue in China. In a separate incident, a NATO cluster bomb misses an airfield and strikes a market and a hospital near Nis, reportedly killing 15.
- 10** **May** Milosevic announces end to attacks on KLA, claims that some units of the
1999 army and police being withdrawn. NATO denies any withdrawal underway. Chinese demonstrations continue.
- 11** **May** Chernomyrdin and Jiang Zemin confer in Beijing, criticize bombing.
1999
- 14** **May** In Korisa, NATO bombs kill as many as 87 Kosovar Albanians after Serb
1999 troops use them as human shields.

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- 18 May 1999** In a reference to ground troops, Clinton notes that "we will not...take any option off the table." However later the same day Clinton calls Blair, reportedly angered by continued British public pressure for ground troops. In Helsinki, Ahtisaari and Chernomyrdin meet Talbott in the first of four negotiating sessions.
- 22 May 1999** NATO mistakenly bombs a KLA position in Kosare, reportedly killing 67.
- 24 May 1999** NATO aircraft destroy the Serbian power grids. Strikes earlier in the month had shut off the power temporarily.
- 25 May 1999** NATO votes to increase ground forces in neighboring Macedonia (FYROM) to 48,000. Though the troops are officially labeled peacekeepers, they could be recast as the core of an invasion force.
- 26 May 1999** KLA launches important offensive to win a supply route into Kosovo. Within three days the effort stalls, drawing NATO air support on Mt. Pastrok.
- 27 May 1999** In secret Bonn meeting, US Defense Sec. Cohen meets with NATO defense ministers to discuss possible invasion; allies conclude that governments must decide soon whether to assemble ground troops. International War Crimes Tribunal announces indictment of Milosevic and four other FRY and Serbian officials.
- 28 May 1999** NATO spokesman announces work on Albanian road network. Officials cite humanitarian reasons for the construction, but note the road's "dual-use" potential for carrying NATO ground troops.
- 30 May 1999** NATO bombs a bridge in Varvarin, reportedly killing 11 civilians.
- 31 May 1999** A NATO missile goes off-course and strikes a residential neighborhood in Surdulica, killing at least 20.
- 1 Jun. 1999** Final round of talks between Talbott, Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari begins. Discussion continues up until negotiators depart for Belgrade two days later. FRY informs Germany of its readiness to accept G8 principles for ending bombing.

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- 3 Jun. 1999** Clinton reportedly on brink of decision regarding the mobilization of ground troops in preparation for an invasion. However, after mediators meet with Milosevic, the outline of a new Kosovo peace deal is announced. Clinton, advisers and allies greet the news cautiously.
- 7 Jun. 1999** NATO bombing continues as talks falter over details of Serbian withdrawal. Two B-52 bombers come to aid of embattled KLA fighters on Mount Pastrik, supposedly killing hundreds of Serbs -- though that figure is now disputed.
- 8 Jun. 1999** During G8 talks in Cologne, allies and Russia reach agreement on possible UN resolution to sanction the peace deal.
- 9 Jun. 1999** After more discussions, NATO and FRY officials finally initial a **Military Technical Agreement** to govern the Serb withdrawal.
- 10 Jun. 1999** UN Sec. General Solana requests suspension of NATO bombing, and the Security Council adopts **resolution 1244** permitting the deployment of the international civil and military authorities in Kosovo.
- 12 Jun. 1999** In a move that surprises allied commanders, approximately 200 Russian troops leave Bosnia, travel through Serbia and enter Kosovo before NATO, taking control of Pristina airport.
- 14 June 1999** Ethnic Albanians beginning flooding back into Kosovo; within three weeks over 600,000 will return in one of the most rapid refugee returns in history. As many as 200,000 Serbs and Roma begin moving toward Serbia and Montenegro to escape retribution.
- 18 Jun. 1999** After a week of tension, confusion and discussions, Albright, Cohen and Russians reach preliminary agreement over Russian participation in peacekeeping force. In all, over 20,000 international troops have moved into Kosovo.
- 20 Jun. 1999** Serbs complete withdrawal from Kosovo, and Secretary General Solana formally ends NATO's bombing campaign.
- 21 Jun. 1999** Under NATO pressure, KLA agrees to disarm.
- 4 Jul. 1999** Discussions with Russians continue, and conclude the following day with resolution of final details concerning **Russian participation**.

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- 23 Jul.** In a sign that tensions will continue, 14 Kosovo Serb farmers are killed in
1999 their fields near Lipljan.
- 29 Jul.** US Secretary of State Albright visits Kosovo, meets with KFOR
1999 Commander Michael Jackson and Bernard Kouchner.
- 20 Sept.** KFOR certifies that the KLA has completed demilitarization.
1999

* Chronology taken from Ivo Daadler / Michael O'Hanlon's Book, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War To Save Kosovo*, Brookings Institution Press, 2000, Washington D.C.

Relevant Lessons of Kosovo

1. Deterrence requires credibility.

Coercive diplomacy must be backed by a credible threat of force and the political will to actually use it. Enforcement mechanisms must be in place if force is threatened. NATO had no agreed upon strategy as to how to prosecute the war. The result was delay and endless efforts of diplomatic hand wringing hoping Milosevic would come to his senses. Political and legal constraints handcuffed military decision makers at the expense of operational effectiveness. Even in the absence of an agreed upon strategy, NATO was successful because it was able to strategically adapt during war. Not the ideal way for military war planners to conduct a war. Political conundrums dominated sound operational necessities. All options, land, sea, and air, should always remain viable options and never be taken out of the diplomat or generals hands.

2. Military and diplomatic synchronization is a must.

Military and diplomatic ways and means must compliment each other to assure political objectives are achievable through military force.

3. Decisive action is almost always preferable to incremental escalation.

Delay in taking action is enormously costly in terms of humanitarian interventions and loss of life. Delay pays a heavy price by squandering the opportunity to act preventively and with less force.

4. Using force as a last resort is not necessarily the best option.

In limited wars with limited objectives force should be considered as a first resort. It would not be wrong to revisit the value of “first resort.”

5. Political will is absolute and cannot be compromised once committed to take action.

6. Strategies based on hope are useless.

The use of force must be used to win political objectives. That means the application of violence should be aimed at achieving those objectives by using overwhelming force according to basic war fighting doctrine. Demonstrations of force have little value in conflicts where commitments and political will have no unity of purpose.

7. Unarmed verification missions lack the ability to force compliance of dictatorial regimes.

Unarmed verification missions reflect lack of commitment and send the wrong signals to an adversary whose behavior we are trying to change. They also lack enforcement mechanisms that allow such a force to be taken seriously.

8. Do not undertake military missions unless political and military objectives are clearly and completely outlined, the force levels are agreed upon, and the exit strategy clear.

9. War by committee can be a disaster if not properly and methodically guided along the course of achieving consensus.

10. International institutions and alliances are another form of power.

They have their limitations and can require a lot of maintenance. But used effectively, they can be strategically decisive.