

Policy Analysis

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Blunder in the Balkans The Clinton Administration's Bungled War against Serbia

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Executive Summary

The Clinton administration has made one miscalculation after another in dealing with the Kosovo crisis. U.S. officials and their NATO colleagues never understood the historical and emotional importance of Kosovo to the Serbian people, believing instead that Belgrade's harsh repression of the ethnic Albanian secessionist movement in Kosovo merely reflected the will of President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia. The administration's foreign policy team mistakenly concluded that, under a threat of air strikes, the Yugoslav government would sign a dictated peace accord (the Rambouillet agreement) to be implemented by a NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo. Even if Milosevic initially refused to sign the Rambouillet agreement, administration leaders believed that Belgrade would relent after a brief "demonstration" bombing campaign. Those calculations proved to be disastrously wrong.

President Clinton and his advisers justified their decision to use force with two arguments: that NATO bombing was needed to prevent a Serbian military offensive in Kosovo with attendant "ethnic cleansing," and that vigorous action was essential to prevent the Kosovo conflict from spilling over into neighboring states, thereby destabilizing the southern

Balkans. Administration leaders also hoped that NATO pressure would undermine Milosevic's political power and embolden the democratic opposition in Serbia. The bombing campaign has been wholly counterproductive with regard to all three objectives.

Administration officials have committed miscalculations eerily reminiscent of faulty U.S. assumptions during the Vietnam War. Those mistakes include overestimating the effectiveness of air power; underestimating the willingness of the target government and population to fight for their homeland; and demonizing the opposing political leader, thus making a negotiated settlement more difficult.

Even if Belgrade finally capitulates, the adverse effects of the administration's actions already constitute a policy fiasco. Instability in the Balkans is far worse than before the bombing. Relations with Russia are now at their worst point since the darkest days of the Cold War. And the bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade has caused a serious rift in the Sino-American relationship. NATO's bombing campaign has produced a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo, the rest of Serbia, and neighboring countries. Good intentions alone cannot excuse the negative consequences of U.S. Kosovo policy.

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Introduction

It is impossible to foretell the ultimate outcome of NATO's first war. Nevertheless, it already is apparent that the Clinton administration's policy has failed in key respects. Instead of solving the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, the NATO air campaign has greatly exacerbated it. Instead of preventing instability in the Balkans, NATO's actions have worsened it. And, instead of weakening Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic's hold on power, the NATO bombardment of Belgrade and other Yugoslav cities has solidified Serbian opinion behind him and hardened Serbia's resolve to resist the alliance's coercive strategy.

The United States and NATO now find themselves in a war that, however it ends, will leave the United States deeply entangled in the Balkans. At best, the United States and Western Europe will be left with the long-term problems of resettling refugees, rebuilding war-shattered Kosovo, and propping up client states in Macedonia and Albania.¹ It now seems highly likely that, as a consequence of this conflict, a sizable contingent of U.S. military forces will be deployed, if only as peacekeepers, in and around Kosovo far into the future. At worst, the United States and NATO may yet stumble into a ground war with Yugoslavia. Against this backdrop, it is not too early to review and assess the administration's strategy to date. The administration's failures bear crucially on whether the United States should escalate its military commitments and its war aims in this conflict.

Two obvious questions about the administration's policy must be asked: How did the United States become involved in this war? And why have things gone so badly during the first month and a half of the conflict? That the Clinton administration has blundered badly is apparent. The administration expected Belgrade would capitulate quickly once NATO bombing commenced. And Washington had no backup plan in the event

the air strikes failed to produce the expected quick result. When asked by visiting Italian prime minister Massimo D'Alema what would happen if bombing did not force Belgrade to back down and it instead stepped up its military campaign in Kosovo, President Clinton was reportedly unprepared to answer. According to Italian sources, "Instead of replying, he turned to his national security adviser, Samuel R. 'Sandy' Berger. After a brief hesitation, the sources said, Berger responded: 'We will continue the bombing.'"²

Reflecting the prevailing view within the administration on March 24—the first night of hostilities—Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declared, "I don't see this as a long-term operation."³ Confronted with the failure of its bombing strategy, the administration quickly changed its tune. Just 11 days after proclaiming that the campaign against Serbia would be over quickly—and confronted with the failure of the NATO bombing to achieve its expected goal of forcing Belgrade to sign the Rambouillet accords—Albright, echoing the new administration line, declared, "We never expected this to be over quickly."⁴ The administration's claims that it expected the massive refugee flows that followed the start of the bombing, and that it expected the aerial campaign to be prolonged, were belied by its unpreparedness to deal with the refugees and by the other hasty improvisations that marked the escalating bombardment of Yugoslavia.⁵ Simply put, the Clinton administration was unready to deal with the very consequences it *now* claims to have foreseen.

The Conflict in Kosovo: Background

Clinton administration officials seemed to have only the haziest understanding of the Kosovo conflict's historical or even near-term context.⁶ President Clinton's remark that the United States cannot stand by while people are driven from their homes just because of their religion or ethnicity reflects a lack of historical awareness. The liberal notion of

“civic nationalism” ostensibly may prevail in the United States, but in other parts of the world—the Balkans are a prime example—religion, kinship, and ethnicity are the defining elements of national and group identity.⁷ In regions like the Balkans, passions, not American notions of “rational choice,” are the determinants of conflict. Before the United States is drawn even more deeply into the Kosovo war, the conflict’s roots should be understood.

Deeply rooted ethnic and religious animosities are pervasive in the Balkans. For more than half a millennium, the region has been a fault line separating European Christendom from the Islamic world.⁸ The origins of the current conflict go back to 1389, when the Ottoman Empire defeated an army led by Serbian Prince Lazar at Kosovo Polje, the Field of Blackbirds.⁹ As a result of their defeat, the Serbs were subjected to Ottoman rule until being granted independence by Europe’s great powers at the 1878 Congress of Berlin. (It was not until the Balkan Wars, in 1912–13, that Serbia wrested Kosovo from the Ottoman Empire.) Over the intervening centuries, Kosovo Polje was transformed into an epic tale of Serbian heroism, and the battle became the centerpiece of the national myth that sustained the Serbs during their long subjugation to Ottoman rule. Kosovo was also seen by the Serbs as the cradle of their civilization and was (and remains) home to churches, monasteries, and other sites of great historical significance to the Serbian nation.

Untangling the grievances of rival Balkan peoples is no easy task. Who did what to whom, and why, is not always clear, and depending on the starting point, one arrives at different answers. In this century, there is no doubt that the Serbs’ pent-up hatred of Muslim ethnic Albanians and Turks in Kosovo found violent expression in the Balkan Wars. As one regional expert notes:

The Balkan Wars were to set the precedent in this century for massive waves of ethnic cleansing and the forced

migrations of hundreds of thousands of people. All the worst evils that were witnessed in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995 were present in the Balkan Wars, including large-scale massacres of civilians, the destruction of whole towns, and the gross manipulation of the media.¹⁰

After World War I, the new, Serb-dominated Yugoslav government followed a discriminatory policy toward Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians. During World War II, which for Yugoslavia was also a bloody civil war, many ethnic Albanians sought revenge against the Serbs by siding with the German and Italian occupiers, and the Nazi SS was notably successful in recruiting troops from Kosovo’s ethnic Albanian population. (The same was true of the Muslim population in Bosnia.)

During the post-World War II rule of Marshal Josef Broz Tito, Yugoslavia’s latent ethnic conflicts were suppressed. Tito, however, tended to tilt against the Serbs when it came to the distribution of power within the Yugoslavian federation. Specifically, in Kosovo he largely allowed the ethnic Albanians to remain in control, much to the dismay of the Serbian population. In 1974 Tito went even further and granted enhanced autonomy to Kosovo, the population of which was increasingly comprised of ethnic Albanians.

By the late 1980s, when Slobodan Milosevic launched his rise to power by playing the “Kosovo card,” an attempt to tap Serbian national sentiment, ethnic Albanians made up nearly 90 percent of the province’s population. On the eve of World War II, Serbs had accounted for more than 25 percent, and perhaps as much as 40 percent, of the population. Their declining numbers in Kosovo are explained by three factors. First, during World War II, many Serbs were killed, and others fled to escape retribution from ethnic Albanians. Second, during the Tito period, many Serbs left Kosovo because they felt themselves to be victims of discrimination by the ethnic Albanian authorities running the

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province. Finally, Kosovo's changing demographics reflected the fact that the birthrate of ethnic Albanians was much higher than that of Serbs. In 1989 Belgrade stripped Kosovo of the extensive autonomy granted in 1974. That was done to protect Kosovo's Serbs from persecution by the ethnic Albanian majority and, more important, because the Serbian authorities believed that, given demographic realities, the ethnic Albanians would use self-rule as a springboard to complete independence. Indeed, ethnic Albanians had openly agitated for independence during the early 1980s.

Kosovo's Insurgency

History and demographics are the principal underlying causes of the Kosovo conflict. The immediate cause of the Kosovo war is the clash of rival Serbian and ethnic Albanian nationalisms, which has led to a situation where the political demands of the two sides are irreconcilable. Constituting the overwhelming majority of the province's population, Kosovo's ethnic Albanians have invoked the principle of national self-determination, and seek complete independence from Serbia. However, because of Kosovo's historical and cultural importance to them, Serbs view Kosovo as an integral part of their nation, and hence they reject ethnic Albanian demands for independence and are unwilling to give up the province.

Since the beginning of the NATO air campaign, the notion has taken hold in the West that Serbia is committing "unprovoked aggression" against Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population. Lost in the "perception management" waged by the administration and NATO officials in Brussels is the fact that the Kosovo Liberation Army has become the chief instrument of ethnic Albanian separatism, and that the KLA has been waging an armed guerrilla insurgency to gain independence from Belgrade.

In the early 1990s the ethnic Albanian movement was led by Ibrahim Rugova and his League for a Democratic Kosovo. The LDK was nonviolent (Rugova himself is a

pacifist). As *The Economist* recounts, under the LDK's leadership, "Kosovo's 2m Albanians established a parallel state, with a parliament, president, taxation, and an education system."¹¹ Without Serbian approval, the LDK organized a 1991 referendum in which Kosovo's ethnic Albanians overwhelmingly endorsed independence. Although, as *The Economist* noted, "Albanian leaders in Kosovo are unanimous in support of independence," over time many ethnic Albanians became disillusioned with the failure of the LDK's moderate, peaceful policy for achieving that goal.¹² By 1996 the KLA had appeared on the scene, and by 1998 it had become a significant political and military factor. The KLA was committed to gaining independence for Kosovo by waging war against the Serbian government. During the first three months of 1998, the KLA stepped up its insurgency against Serbian authorities in Kosovo. KLA units attacked Serbian police, waged an assassination campaign against Serbian officials in Kosovo, and attacked various government buildings and installations as well as civilian Serbs.¹³

The West Begins to Meddle

Belgrade responded to the KLA insurgency with a brutal military crackdown on KLA strongholds in rural Kosovo. Serbian reprisals triggered a spiral of rising violence, causing a potential crisis that prompted the United States, which reimposed sanctions against Belgrade, and NATO to become directly involved.¹⁴ In early March 1998, Secretary Albright urged immediate action to punish Belgrade for its actions in Kosovo "and to encourage [the Serbian government] to finally resolve the problems in Kosovo through dialogue and reconciliation."¹⁵ Two months later, former assistant secretary of state Richard Holbrooke was sent to the Balkans in an attempt to defuse the Kosovo crisis.¹⁶

American efforts foundered for two reasons. First, the gap between Belgrade and Kosovo's ethnic Albanians (whose leaders were committed to separatist policies) was

unbridgeable: the Albanians insisted on independence from Serbia, while Belgrade refused to relinquish its sovereignty over the province. Second, Washington's policy was undermined by a serious inconsistency: while opposing ethnic Albanian demands for independence, the United States also opposed Yugoslavia's efforts to suppress a guerrilla insurgency on its own territory.

In June 1998 NATO conducted aerial maneuvers over Albania and Macedonia in an attempt to coerce Belgrade to desist from its counterinsurgency campaign in Kosovo. At the same time, NATO defense ministers authorized the preparation of contingency plans for both a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia and the deployment of ground troops to Kosovo.¹⁷ By midsummer 1998 the crisis seemed to have abated, and with it the prospect of NATO intervention. During that period, Pentagon officials indicated that the United States had made it clear to the KLA that NATO would not come to its rescue. The same officials also expressed their frustration at the KLA's intransigence in diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.¹⁸

By early autumn, however, the fighting between Yugoslav and KLA forces in Kosovo again intensified, as did calls from senior Clinton administration officials for NATO to threaten the use of force to pressure Belgrade to end its operations against the KLA.¹⁹ In October, under threat of NATO air strikes, Belgrade agreed to withdraw troops from Kosovo and accept an internationally monitored cease-fire in the province. Three aspects of the process leading to the October cease-fire are noteworthy. First, notwithstanding that Yugoslavia was engaged in suppressing an insurgency by secessionist rebels on its own territory, the United States blamed Belgrade alone for the violence in Kosovo, and NATO's military threats were targeted only on Yugoslavia.²⁰ Second, the ethnic Albanians were openly hostile to the cease-fire because it failed to bring them closer to their goal of independence. Third, as Yugoslav forces began withdrawing in accordance with the cease-fire, KLA forces imme-

diately moved to reoccupy the territory they had lost during the Serbian offensive.²¹ The KLA also used the respite afforded by the cease-fire to reconstitute its fighting power.²²

The familiar pattern of guerrilla war soon set in: insurgent attacks provoked Serbian reprisals, which begat more insurgent attacks and a reintensification of the fighting. The KLA's strategy was to create enough concern in NATO capitals about the Serbian counterinsurgency to bring about Western intervention in the war. In fact, the U.S. intelligence community warned the administration that, in an attempt to draw the United States and NATO into the conflict, the KLA acted deliberately to provoke harsh Serbian reprisals.²³ By January the Yugoslav forces had embarked upon a renewed assault on KLA strongholds. That offensive triggered allegations that Serbian troops had massacred ethnic Albanian civilians and were engaging in ethnic cleansing. The cease-fire's unraveling heightened U.S. and West European concerns that the fighting could lead to a humanitarian tragedy, which could spill over into Albania and Macedonia and thereby destabilize the Balkans. Those fears led to the Rambouillet negotiations.

The Rambouillet Negotiations: How Not to Conduct Diplomacy

At the Rambouillet meetings, the goal of the United States and its West European allies was to gain the assent of Belgrade and the KLA to a peace agreement for Kosovo. The proposed Rambouillet accord would have superseded the October 1998 cease-fire agreement. Rambouillet provided for (1) the withdrawal of Yugoslav military and paramilitary forces from Kosovo; (2) the restoration of Kosovo's political autonomy; (3) a three-year transition period, at the end of which there would be a referendum on Kosovo's future; (4) disarmament of the KLA; and (5) deployment of an armed NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

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After 18 days, the Rambouillet talks were at an impasse, with both Belgrade and the KLA refusing to sign the accord. The talks were thereupon adjourned for 19 days, until March 15, while the KLA emissaries returned to Kosovo for consultations with their leadership. The KLA representatives refused to sign because they did not receive an explicit guarantee that Kosovo would become independent at the end of the three-year transition period. Washington and the West Europeans had agreed only to *consider* the results of the referendum in determining Kosovo's future status. Specifically, Chapter 8, Article 1, Section 3 of the Rambouillet agreement states:

Three years after the entry into force of this Agreement, an international meeting shall be convened to determine the mechanism for a final settlement for Kosovo, on the basis of the will of the people, opinions of relevant authorities, each Party's efforts regarding the implementation of this Agreement, and the Helsinki Final Act, and to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the Agreement and to consider proposals by any Party for additional measures.²⁴

When the Rambouillet meeting reconvened, the KLA, after considerable arm-twisting by the United States, signed the proffered accord. The Yugoslavians, however, held fast in their refusal to sign, and thereupon NATO made good on its threat to bomb Yugoslavia.

**Biased Diplomacy Produces
Predictable Failure**

Rambouillet is a textbook example of how not to practice diplomacy. The U.S. policy, charted by Secretary Albright, was fatally flawed in a number of respects: (1) it was biased; (2) it reflected an appalling ignorance of Serbia's history, nationalism, and resolve; and (3) it showed a culpable neglect for the foreseeable consequences of carrying out the

alliance's military threat.

At Rambouillet the United States did not play the role of an impartial mediator attempting to bring rival parties to an agreement. Rather, the United States effectively took sides—the KLA's—in a civil war. That the United States aligned itself with the KLA against Serbia is hardly surprising. After all, in March 1998 Secretary Albright had pinned full responsibility for the unrest in Kosovo on the Belgrade government, notwithstanding that it usually requires two parties to cause an armed conflict.²⁵ Albright and the rest of the Clinton team seem to have overlooked the fact that there was an ongoing insurgency in Kosovo mounted by the KLA. On the eve of the Rambouillet talks, Albright declared, "If the Serbs are the cause of the breakdown, we're determined to go forward with the NATO decision to carry out air strikes."²⁶ At no time during the Rambouillet process did the administration threaten to take military action against the KLA if *it* caused the talks to break down. Indeed, the United States was remarkably vague about the actions it would take against the KLA under those circumstances.²⁷

Since the Rambouillet process collapsed, and the air campaign began, administration officials—including President Clinton himself—have blamed Belgrade for that outcome and claimed that the Yugoslavians failed to accept the "just peace" that was on the table.²⁸ That assertion hardly does justice to the facts. At Rambouillet the Yugoslavians were "negotiating" with a gun to their head. Indeed, the United States and the West Europeans were not negotiating with Belgrade at all; Belgrade was presented with an ultimatum and given the choice of signing or being bombed. That was repeatedly underscored by administration officials, including Clinton and Albright.²⁹

The administration's strategy of coercing Yugoslav acquiescence to Rambouillet was knocked off the tracks by the KLA's initial refusal to sign, which, as the *New York Times* reported, "flabbergasted" the Clinton team.³⁰ After the Rambouillet impasse, the adminis-

tration spent the better part of the recess in the talks cajoling the KLA to sign. To gain the KLA's assent, Washington used NATO's threat to bomb Serbia as a carrot. U.S. officials reminded the KLA that, unless it signed the Rambouillet pact, the alliance would be unable to carry out its threat to bomb Serbia.³¹ In the end, of course, the KLA was persuaded to sign the accord, and Belgrade refused to do so.

Why Belgrade Balked

The Yugoslavians refused to sign at Rambouillet for two reasons. First, Belgrade correctly believed that the Rambouillet settlement disproportionately favored the KLA. Although the Rambouillet plan provided that Kosovo would nominally remain part of Yugoslavia for three years, Belgrade's actual control over the province would have been reduced to a nullity. Notwithstanding that the United States and NATO did not explicitly specify Kosovo's status at the end of the plan's three-year transition period, the KLA made it quite clear what would happen: either Kosovo would become independent or the KLA would resume the war. Indeed, even as they agreed to sign the Rambouillet accord, KLA officials expressed their intent to ignore its disarmament provisions and to keep the KLA's military capabilities intact.³² The Yugoslavians also refused to sign because they believed that the provision requiring them to accept the presence of NATO soldiers in Kosovo (as peacekeepers) infringed on their sovereignty. Indeed, an appendix to the Rambouillet agreement would have permitted NATO to deploy its forces not only in Kosovo but anywhere on Yugoslav territory. Belgrade hardly can be condemned for balking at the prospect of such a persuasive regime of military occupation. Few, if any, governments would willingly accept such a pervasive regime. Specifically, Chapter 8, Appendix B, Section 8 states:

NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted

passage and unimpeded access *throughout the FRY* [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] including associated air-space and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, maneuver, billet, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations.³³

NATO Resorts to Force

With the KLA's signature in hand, and Belgrade's refusal to agree to the Rambouillet accord, the United States and NATO proceeded to make good on their threat to bomb Yugoslavia, ostensibly to (1) compel Belgrade to reconsider its position and to accept Rambouillet and (2) deter the Serbs from expelling ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. The bombing campaign was based on serious miscalculations about its effect on the Serbs and on events on the ground in Kosovo.

The Administration's Rosy Scenario

The available evidence indicates that the Clinton foreign policy team, especially Secretary Albright, expected that the Rambouillet process would have one of two outcomes. In all likelihood, U.S. officials believed, Belgrade ultimately would bow to American and NATO threats and sign the Rambouillet accords. But if Belgrade refused to do, it would quickly change its mind after NATO conducted a brief "demonstration" bombing of Yugoslavia. Indeed, many U.S. and NATO policymakers apparently believed that NATO's threat to use force, or its actual use in a brief but intense bombing campaign, would be welcomed by Milosevic. The reasoning was that by submitting to superior force Milosevic could resolve the Kosovo problem on NATO's terms without incurring damage to his domestic political position.

In reaching that conclusion, U.S. officials, especially Secretary Albright, believed that precedent pointed to such an outcome. After all, according to the Clinton adminis-

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tration's misinterpretation of recent history in the Balkans, NATO air strikes on the Bosnian Serbs in 1995 had caused Belgrade to agree to the Dayton accords. And, in October 1998, the alliance's threat to bomb Yugoslavia apparently had persuaded Belgrade to agree to a cease-fire in Kosovo.³⁴

The administration's reading of past events was flawed. In particular, Belgrade was brought to the negotiating table at Dayton, not by NATO air strikes, but by the Croatian army's devastatingly successful summer 1995 ground offensive. The comparison with Bosnia was flawed in three additional respects. First, Dayton was made possible because the Bosnian Serbs had wearied of the war. There was no corresponding Yugoslav war weariness with respect to Kosovo. Second, Belgrade and the Bosnian Serbs could accept the Dayton accords because they largely had achieved their key war aim of establishing a Serbian enclave in Bosnia. In Kosovo, prior to the bombing campaign, Belgrade had not achieved its key objectives. Finally, Washington did not understand that Kosovo was far more important to the Belgrade government, and the Serbian nation, than Bosnia and the Krajina. Hence Belgrade would fight for Kosovo.

Overestimating Air Power

The administration apparently was warned by U.S. military leaders that, if it became necessary to carry out the alliance's threat to bomb Yugoslavia, air power alone probably would not be sufficient to attain NATO's aims: forcing Belgrade to desist from its offensive against the KLA in Kosovo and compelling the Yugoslav government to accept the Rambouillet accords.³⁵ Certainly, there was (and remains) good reason to doubt whether an "air-power-only" strategy could succeed. The belief that air power could bring Belgrade to heel is very much in the tradition of "the American way of war"—the substitution of firepower and technology for manpower.³⁶ As military analyst Jeffrey Record observes, "Americans, more than any other people, have been inclined to regard air

power as a technological substitute for relatively casualty-intense ground combat. Americans have always sought to substitute machines for men in war."³⁷

Air power enthusiasts have argued that aerial bombardment can win wars by destroying the enemy's will to resist; disabling the enemy's industrial, transportation, and communications infrastructures; and immobilizing and destroying the enemy's forces on the ground. Air power is undoubtedly a very important component of modern warfare. But alone, it has never been a war-winning weapon. There was no reason to assume things would be different this time.

Replicating the Mistakes of the Vietnam War

Although the Clinton administration may have put too much faith in air power, it made a series of even more fundamental miscalculations about its opponent. The interaction between the administration's flawed military strategy and its serious political misjudgments accounts for the failure up to this point of the alliance's air campaign. In key respects, the Clinton administration repeated in Kosovo many of the mistakes that American policymakers had made in Vietnam.

Pervasive Historical Ignorance

As Andrew Mack, formerly professor of international relations at the Australian National University, has demonstrated, there is nothing unusual about big nations losing small wars. Vietnam was only one dramatic recent example of a great power's failing to prevail in a conflict against a far less powerful opponent.³⁸ Like their counterparts during the Vietnam era, Clinton administration policymakers underestimated their adversary while overestimating the ability of the United States to prevail. In his apologia for his role in prosecuting the Vietnam War, former secretary of defense Robert McNamara laments that the

Kennedy and Johnson administrations approached the war “with sparse knowledge, scant experience, and simplistic assumptions.”³⁹ The United States became ever more deeply involved in Vietnam because it understood little about either the historical context of the conflict or the aims and determination of North Vietnam and the Vietcong. As McNamara concedes, U.S. policymakers underestimated the motivating power of Vietnamese nationalism (as embodied by North Vietnam and the Vietcong), and Washington’s strategy “reflected our profound ignorance of the history, culture, and politics of the people in the area, and the personalities and habits of their leaders.”⁴⁰

It is evident that the Clinton administration made the same errors in framing its Kosovo policy. The Clinton team seems to have had only the most superficial understanding of the origins of the Kosovo crisis, the complexity of the dispute, and the nature of Serbian nationalism. Blinkered by her obsession with viewing all international crises through the lens of the “1930s analogy,” Secretary Albright most egregiously failed to understand the distinctive roots of the conflict in Kosovo. For her, Milosevic was a modern-day Hitler, Yugoslavia’s counterinsurgency campaign against the KLA was analogous to Nazi aggression against Czechoslovakia and Poland, and any attempt to resolve the crisis on terms Belgrade might accept was “appeasement.”⁴¹ And it was hardly reassuring to hear Clinton say, on the very eve of the bombing campaign, that he “had just been reading up on the Balkans.”⁴²

Underestimating the Opponent’s Resolve

Like the Vietnam War, Kosovo is an asymmetric conflict in that the United States and its NATO allies enjoy an overwhelming qualitative and quantitative military superiority over their adversary. But military superiority is not always the factor that determines success in war. As the Prussian military theorist Karl von

Clausewitz reminds us, war is the use of military means to achieve political objectives. Hence, political factors—the opposing parties’ will and resolve and their respective interests and stakes in the conflict—are crucial factors affecting a war’s outcome. In that sense, like Vietnam, Kosovo is an asymmetric conflict because “the balance of resolve” favors the opponent, not the United States and its NATO allies.

Just as U.S. policymakers failed to understand the historical roots of Vietnamese nationalism and Vietnam’s history of resistance to foreign powers, the Clinton administration failed to understand anything about Serbian history and nationalism. By naively portraying Serbian policy on Kosovo as the arbitrary whim of one man, Slobodan Milosevic, Washington failed to recognize that *no Serbian leader* was likely to give up Kosovo or accept a *diktat* forced on Belgrade by outside powers. Because the Clinton team failed to understand Kosovo’s special meaning for Serbs, it underestimated Serbia’s determination as a nation to hold on to that province.⁴³

Moreover, the administration should have known that, in combination, the effect of the bombing, Serbia’s history of fierce resistance to attacking foreign powers, and the importance of Kosovo made it all but certain that the effect of the NATO air campaign would be precisely the opposite of what President Clinton and Secretary Albright said it would be. Far from cracking Belgrade’s resolve, the NATO bombing unified the Serbian nation and strengthened its determination to resist NATO and defend the Serbian homeland.⁴⁴

In 1965 U.S. policymakers thought that by mounting a gradually escalating air campaign against North Vietnam the United States could break Hanoi’s will to prosecute the war in the south. They were tragically mistaken. The unification of Vietnam was far more important to Hanoi than was the defense of South Vietnam to Washington. Simply put, the outcome of the war in Vietnam was far more important to North

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Vietnam than it was to the United States. The North Vietnamese consequently were prepared to pay a far higher price to prevail than was America. That was the fatal flaw in the Johnson administration's belief that American coercion could erode Hanoi's resolve. Indeed, as McNamara acknowledged in a November 1965 memorandum to President Johnson, it was the asymmetry in the respective motivations of Washington and Hanoi that undermined U.S. strategy. Speaking of North Vietnam's will to fight, he wrote:

Nothing can be expected to break this will other than the conviction that they cannot succeed. This conviction will not be created unless and until they come to the conclusion that the U.S. is prepared to remain in Vietnam for whatever period of time is necessary to assure the independent choice of the South Vietnamese people.⁴⁵

The Clinton administration made a similar mistake about Kosovo. No one who has any familiarity with Balkan history could reasonably have thought that a token bombing campaign would force Belgrade to accept a diplomatic agreement that left in doubt its future hold on Kosovo. Similarly, no one who has any familiarity with Balkan history could reasonably have thought that a prolonged bombing campaign would easily break the will of the Serbian nation to resist foreign military coercion. Of all its many miscalculations, one of the biggest made by the Clinton team was the belief that in initiating hostilities with Belgrade the United States and NATO were undertaking a *mano a mano* duel with Milosevic. Instead, they were embarking on war with an entire nation. It should be no surprise that the bombing has failed to force Belgrade quickly to submit to NATO's (or more accurately, Washington's) terms with respect to Kosovo.

NATO's cautious prosecution of the air campaign (which places a far higher priori-

ty on minimizing Western casualties than on military effectiveness) and Washington's repeated insistence on ruling out the use of ground troops suggest that the United States and the alliance are not prepared to pay much of a price in blood to prevail in this conflict. That is not to suggest that Washington and the alliance should escalate the conflict. On the contrary. But the reluctance to incur casualties demonstrates what should have been obvious to policy-makers before they stumbled into war: while NATO is supposedly fighting for its "values," the Serbs are fighting for their homeland. The Serbs are likely willing to pay a much higher price for the latter than the United States and the other NATO members are willing to pay for the former.

NATO's Air War Leads to Tragedy

In believing that either the mere threat of air strikes or a token bombing campaign would force Belgrade to submit quickly, the Clinton administration clearly erred. But, equally important, it failed to foresee the consequences of the initiation of the air campaign. On March 20, President Clinton said that unless Belgrade agreed to the Rambouillet accords, NATO would need to use air power to prevent what he described as Serbian atrocities against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo: "Make no mistake, if we and our allies do not have the will to act, there will be more massacres. In dealing with aggressors in the Balkans, hesitation is a license to kill. But action and resolve save lives."⁴⁶ However, at the time the bombing commenced, there were no widespread atrocities, or ethnic cleansing, under way in Kosovo. The bombing was initiated to force Belgrade to sign the Rambouillet agreement. The bombing was not initiated to stop ongoing ethnic cleansing because there was none when the air campaign commenced. Administration and NATO claims to the contrary are, simply, untrue.

Triggering, Rather Than Preventing, Ethnic Cleansing

When the president spoke those words, there was, in fact, no large-scale campaign being mounted against Kosovo's ethnic Albanians by the Yugoslav army. The mass expulsion of ethnic Albanians from the province, and the reports of widespread atrocities, did not occur until *after* NATO commenced its air campaign. Although *New York Times* columnist William Safire, echoing the administration and NATO, calls this a "big lie,"⁴⁷ it is quite easy to document the chronology of events (in large part by using the coverage of Safire's own newspaper).

As had been widely reported, Belgrade obviously had a contingency plan to drive the ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo and had made preparations to implement that plan.⁴⁸ Planning is one thing, however; implementation is another. (NATO, for its part, began planning for possible military action against the Serbs in June 1998.) Prior to March 24, 1999, Belgrade was restrained from putting its plan into effect by the presence of European civilian monitors on the ground in Kosovo. This is not to say that there was no violence in Kosovo prior to the commencement of NATO's air campaign. Clearly, there was. However, the operations of the Yugoslav army up to that point were directed at rooting out the KLA from its strongholds, not at expelling ethnic Albanians from Kosovo.⁴⁹ On March 20, the *New York Times* reported that there were no more than 20,000 ethnic Albanian refugees in Kosovo. Moreover, they were attempting to flee the fighting between the KLA and the Yugoslav army and were not targets of deliberate ethnic cleansing.⁵⁰

The massive expulsion of ethnic Albanians, and the consequent humanitarian disaster, began only after NATO commenced bombing. Indeed, the Clinton foreign policy team was explicitly warned by both the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community that (1) Belgrade would respond to NATO air strikes by undertak-

ing a forcible mass expulsion of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians and (2) the bombing campaign would not be able to stop the Yugoslav army from driving ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo.⁵¹

The event that opened the door for the Yugoslav forces to move from counterinsurgency to population expulsion was the withdrawal of the monitors who had been deployed in Kosovo as part of the October 1998 cease-fire. As one monitor said on March 19: "There is a lot of tension in the area. But while they [the monitors] stay where they are, things are more or less O.K."⁵² The monitors were withdrawn the next day, to ensure that they would be out of harm's way when the bombing campaign began. The administration was told by the intelligence community, and by its own diplomatic representative in Kosovo, William Walker, that withdrawal of the monitors would be taken by Belgrade as a green light to proceed to drive ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo.⁵³

In the interval between withdrawal of the monitors and commencement of the air campaign, Yugoslav forces stepped up their offensive against the KLA. They still did not, however, engage in an ethnic cleansing campaign. Indeed, just two days before the alliance launched its air strikes, NATO officials were asking the KLA to desist from terrorist attacks against Serbs in Kosovo so as not to give Belgrade a pretext to engage in ethnic cleansing.⁵⁴ On the day the air campaign began, and in the days that immediately followed, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo expressed fear that the NATO action would trigger an upsurge in Serbian violence against them.⁵⁵ Those fears were justified, and on May 10, the U.S. State Department released a 30-page study titled "Erasing History: Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo" that admitted the ethnic cleansing began *after* the bombs started falling on Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ In fact, the study states:

Since the withdrawal of the KVM [the Organization for Security and

Having contributed to the humanitarian catastrophe, the Clinton administration was unprepared to deal with it.

The refugee crisis has overwhelmed Albania and Macedonia and threatens to destabilize both of those countries.

Cooperation in Europe's Kosovo Verification Mission monitors] on March 19, 1999, Serbian military, paramilitary, and police forces in Kosovo have committed a wide range of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

In late March 1999, Serbian forces dramatically increased the scope and pace of their efforts, moving away from selective targeting of towns and regions suspected of KLA sympathies towards a sustained and systematic effort to ethnically cleanse the entire province of Kosovo.⁵⁷

The Administration's Culpability

The factual record is clear: not until NATO began its bombing did Belgrade's objective in Kosovo change from counterinsurgency to a campaign to expel the province's ethnic Albanians. As the great baseball manager Casey Stengel once said, "You could look it up." It was not until the air campaign had been under way for several days that the first reports of expulsions and atrocities began to surface.⁵⁸ It was in response to the refugee situation in Kosovo after commencement of the bombing that, on March 28, the alliance announced a purported switch in its bombing strategy: from attacks on Yugoslavia's air defenses to attacks on Yugoslav units on the ground in Kosovo in order to halt the expulsion of ethnic Albanians.⁵⁹

Having contributed to the humanitarian catastrophe, the Clinton administration, notwithstanding its after-the-fact public statements to the contrary, was unprepared to deal with it.⁶⁰ If the administration and NATO *really* had anticipated that the air strikes would lead to the mass expulsion of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, one wonders why the infrastructure was not already in place to feed, shelter, and provide medical assistance to them.

Disastrous Effects throughout the Balkans

The administration also must bear responsibility for its failure to anticipate the political consequences of its bombing policy, which have undermined its broad objectives in the Balkans. The refugee crisis has overwhelmed Albania and Macedonia and, notwithstanding the administration's claim that its policy would stabilize the Balkans, threatens to destabilize both of those countries. Albania, Europe's poorest country, is utterly incapable of absorbing, even temporarily, the influx of nearly 400,000 ethnic Albanians who have sought refuge there. Macedonia is similarly incapable of coping with the nearly 200,000 who have poured over its border with Kosovo.

Creating Dangerous Stresses in Macedonia

Moreover, the ethnic Albanian refugees jeopardize Macedonia's fragile domestic balance. Before the air campaign, ethnic Macedonians constituted some 70 percent of Macedonia's population, ethnic Albanians approximately 25 percent, and Serbs and other groups made up the remainder. If significant numbers of Kosovo refugees remain in Macedonia, that could trigger ethnic conflict between the Macedonian majority and ethnic Albanians in that country.⁶¹ It also might cause Macedonia's ethnic Albanians (who are concentrated in the northern and western part of the country) to attempt to break away and unite with their ethnic brethren in Kosovo and Albania in the creation of a new "Greater Albania" (the emergence of which the United States officially opposes).

Indeed, Macedonia's president Kiro Gligorov has warned that if NATO broadens its air campaign or uses ground forces, it could easily lead to a wider war, with his country in the middle.⁶² Macedonia's stability also is jeopardized because the Kosovo conflict has cut the country's vital economic links with Yugoslavia. Before the onset of

NATO's bombing campaign, more than 80 percent of Macedonia's exports went to or passed through that country. The disruption of those markets has made an already poor country even poorer.

Undermining a Fragile Peace in Bosnia

The administration's policy of bombing Yugoslavia to achieve Balkan stability is in danger of backfiring in other ways as well.⁶³ Rather than preventing a widening regional conflict, U.S. and NATO action is coming perilously close to causing the war to spill over into Bosnia. In the first days of the Kosovo conflict, U.S. troops attached to the Bosnian Stabilization Force actually extended the war to Bosnia by cutting a Serbian railway line that ran through Bosnian territory. Moreover, even before the air strikes, tensions in Bosnia were running high because of recent decisions by Western authorities to award the town of Brcko to the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government, and because of the decision to remove the elected head of the Serbian Republic in Bosnia.⁶⁴ Since the air strikes, Bosnian Serbs have manifested overt (though, so far, largely nonviolent) hostility to the NATO peacekeeping forces. The post-Dayton "peace" in Bosnia, though much touted by the Clinton administration, has been precarious from the start.⁶⁵ Certainly, the Kosovo war has not improved the outlook for Bosnia.

Problems for Montenegro, Albania, and Other Countries

Montenegro also has been swept up the conflict as a result of the NATO bombing. Although Montenegro is nominally part of Yugoslavia, Montenegro's government is hostile to Milosevic and has tried to remain neutral in the conflict. Montenegro's attempt to stay clear of the war is being undermined by U.S. and NATO bombing of targets in its territory. As Montenegro is drawn ever more deeply into the war as a consequence of NATO actions, the possibility of a Serbian ouster of its government also increases.⁶⁶

The NATO bombing campaign also has

increased the odds that Albania will be drawn into the war, although, to be fair, that was a possibility even before the air strikes because the KLA used Albanian territory as a staging base for its insurgency against the Serbian authorities in Kosovo. However, since the air strikes commenced, there has been an increased number of border skirmishes between the KLA and Yugoslav forces. As U.S. and NATO forces continue to use Albanian territory as a forward base of operations, the risks of Albania's involvement in the conflict will grow. Indeed, NATO, the KLA, and the Yugoslav army clash with increasing intensity in Albania every day that the war continues.⁶⁷

The U.S.-led NATO bombing campaign has had a whole host of other unanticipated consequences, all of which belie the administration's declared policy. For example, although the United States claims to seek stability and economic progress in the Balkans, its destruction of the Danube bridges in Yugoslavia has blocked one of Central Europe's most vital economic arteries. The closure of the Danube to traffic has affected every nation either upstream or downstream of Yugoslavia, causing serious (and growing) economic hardship.⁶⁸

Cluster Bombs for Peace

Despite repeated U.S. and NATO pronouncements that the alliance has "no quarrel with the Serbian people," its decision to attack such targets as the Yugoslav power grid and Serbian television clearly sends a contrary message. Indeed, by conducting a bombing campaign that it knows will cause widespread "collateral damage" (the military's Orwellian euphemism for civilian casualties), NATO apparently hopes to cause enough terror and pain among Yugoslavia's civilian population to force Belgrade's capitulation.⁶⁹

Finally, the Clinton administration and NATO have claimed that one of the bombing campaign's objectives is to prevent "humanitarian tragedy" in Kosovo. (The administration has made that claim notwithstanding that NATO military offi-

Macedonia's president Kiro Gligorov has warned that if NATO broadens its air campaign or uses ground forces, it could easily lead to a wider war, with his country in the middle.

Destruction of the Danube bridges in Yugoslavia has blocked one of Central Europe's most vital economic arteries.

cers, in a rare moment of candor, finally have admitted that the air campaign will not succeed in halting the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.)⁷⁰ However, the alliance's concern for the plight of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, and for limiting civilian casualties, is belied by its apparently indiscriminate use of cluster bombs in Kosovo itself. Contrary to NATO claims, it now is apparent that in addition to Serbian actions, the bombing of Kosovo by the alliance has been a major cause of the refugee outflow from that province.⁷¹ As one reporter on the ground in Kosovo has noted, people there, both Serbs and ethnic Albanians, now "are left to wonder whether Kosovo has become a free-fire zone."⁷²

A Policy Fiasco

On March 25 President Clinton declared, "Our purpose is to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe or a wider war."⁷³ But NATO's air campaign clearly helped to create the very tragedy it ostensibly was intended to prevent. Kosovo's ethnic Albanians were far better off before the air strikes than they are today. Policymakers are responsible for the reasonably foreseeable consequences of their actions. The Clinton administration was told that expulsion of ethnic Albanians was the likely consequence of air strikes. It elected to go ahead anyway, notwithstanding that its air power strategy was neither intended to stop, nor capable of stopping, the expulsions once they began. With respect to the humanitarian tragedy in Kosovo, the Clinton administration bears a major share of the culpability. Belgrade pulled the trigger, but by withdrawing the monitors and initiating the air strikes, the Clinton administration handed the Yugoslavians the gun.⁷⁴

Having gone to war for the declared purposes of preventing a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo and preventing Balkan instability, the Clinton administration caused the very consequences it sought to prevent. The United States and Western Europe (not to mention the Balkan nations) now find themselves far worse off than they were

before the conflict started. They are embroiled in a military conflict with no end in sight, and they face the formidable task of dealing with vast dislocation in the Balkans when the conflict does end.

Conclusion: Good Intentions Do Not Excuse Incompetence

Regardless of how the U.S.-NATO war against Yugoslavia turns out, it already has been a political disaster. The Clinton administration naively stumbled into war without thinking through the consequences of its actions. Instead of assuming that Belgrade would knuckle under quickly, Washington needed to consider what would happen if Yugoslavia chose to resist. The administration's policy transformed the low-intensity conflict in Kosovo into the very humanitarian disaster it sought to prevent. The administration's policy, intended to stabilize the Balkans, has had precisely the opposite effect: Bosnia is simmering with unrest; Belgrade is threatening to overthrow Montenegro's pro-Western government; Yugoslav and Albanian forces have exchanged fire; and the flood of refugees into Macedonia threatens that nation's precarious ethnic and political balance.

The administration still has no coherent postwar political plan for Kosovo. Washington and Western Europe are rightly cognizant of the dangers of an independent Kosovo, but by its actions the alliance has aligned itself with the KLA, which will settle for nothing less than independence. Lacking an overall strategic concept, the administration adopted a policy that may entangle the United States in the Balkans for years to come, as it seeks to deal with the war's daunting political, strategic, economic, and humanitarian legacies. In October 1964, then undersecretary of state George W. Ball wrote a memorandum for President Johnson pointing out the dangers that lay ahead if the United States plunged into an open-ended commitment in Vietnam: "Once on the

tiger's back we cannot be sure of picking the place to dismount." One might have expected the Clinton administration to have learned something from the Vietnam episode in this regard.

Over the longer term, the administration's Kosovo policy has jeopardized relations with Russia, which already were under great strain because of NATO's expansion.⁷⁵ Even before the alliance intervened in Kosovo, Moscow felt threatened by NATO's eastward expansion, which it viewed as a violation of the assurances given by Washington during the German reunification negotiations. Both because it projects the alliance into a region of strategic concern to Russia and because it belies Washington's claims that the new, enlarged NATO is a purely defensive alliance, the Kosovo episode has heightened Moscow's apprehensions. U.S. policy has caused an upsurge of anti-American sentiment in Russia and could strengthen the hand of nationalist forces in Russian domestic politics. In strategic terms, the Kosovo intervention is likely to push Russia to seek alliances to counterbalance American power. Today, Russia's capabilities and its options are limited. In the future, however, Russia may well reclaim its former great power status. If the administration's Kosovo policy proves to have sown the seeds of a new confrontation with a resurgent Russia, it will have been a geopolitical blunder of the highest order. Similarly, the bombing of China's Belgrade embassy has caused serious deterioration of the already troubled relations between Washington and Beijing.

In making foreign policy, nations must be guided by what the sociologist Max Weber called the "ethic of responsibility." In layman's terms, the ethic of responsibility restates the familiar injunction that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. That is, policies must be judged by their consequences, not by the intentions that underlie them. Measured by that standard, the Clinton administration has failed miserably.

Notes

1. The options for dealing with the refugee crisis include creating safe havens for the refugees inside Kosovo, resettling them permanently in Albania and Macedonia (or other countries), and eventual repatriation (which requires that they be taken care of until such time as it is safe for them to return home). All of those options are fraught with difficulties. For a useful overview, see "Refugees: Exporting Misery," *The Economist*, April 17, 1999, pp. 23-27.

2. Michael Dobbs, "After the Bombs Fall, What Next? Concern Raised about Alternatives if Belgrade Refuses to Yield," *Washington Post*, March 24, 1999, p. A1.

3. "Interview with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright," *Online Newshour*, March 24, 1999. As a U.S. military officer involved in the air campaign said of the Clinton administration's foreign policy team: "It was representational bombing. They didn't think it was necessary to go whole hog. They thought it would be over in a week." Quoted in Doyle McManus, "Debate Turns to Finger-Pointing on Kosovo Policy," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1999, p. A1.

4. Quoted in *ibid*.

5. Both President Clinton and Secretary Albright denied that the United States was unprepared for the refugee problem. "President Clinton and Secretary of Defense Cohen Statement on Kosovo," White House, Office of the Press Secretary, April 5, 1999; and "Madeleine K. Albright, Interview on *Meet the Press*, April 4, 1999," Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, April 5, 1999.

6. Clinton admitted on the eve of conflict that he "was reading up on the Balkans." See Maureen Dowd, "No Free War," *New York Times*, March 31, 1999, p. A25.

7. For a persuasive, thought-provoking argument that America's civic nationalism is not as different from other nationalisms as America's historical mythology suggests, see Benjamin Schwarz, "The Diversity Myth: America's Leading Export," *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1995, p. 57.

8. For development of this argument, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

9. The best recent book on Serb history, which carries the story forward to the mid-1990s, is Tim Juddah, *The Serbs* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997). See also Barbara

Policies must be judged by their consequences, not by the intentions that underlie them. Measured by that standard, the Clinton administration has failed miserably.

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10. Ibid., p. 84.
 11. "The Balkans Survey," *The Economist*, January 24, 1998, p. 15.
 12. Ibid.
 13. On the growing insurgency in Kosovo in early 1998, see Tracy Wilkenson, "Anti-Serb Militancy on the Rise in Kosovo," *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 1998, p. A1; Chris Hedges, "In New Balkan Tinderbox, Ethnic Albanians Rebel against Serbs," *New York Times*, March 2, 1998, p. A1; Chris Hedges, "Ravaged Kosovo Village Tells of a Nightmare of Death," *New York Times*, March 9, 1998, p. A3; Tracy Wilkenson, "Kosovo's Rebels Are Armed and Ready," *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1998, p. A1; and Chris Hedges, "Ranks of Albanian Rebels Increase in Kosovo," *New York Times*, April 6, 1998, p. A3.
 14. Chris Hedges, "Gun Battles in Serbia Raise Fear of 'Another Bosnia,'" *New York Times*, March 6, 1998, p. A3.
 15. Quoted in Steven Erlanger, "Albright Tours Europe to Whip Up Resolve to Punish Serbia," *New York Times*, March 9, 1998, p. A3.
 16. Tracy Wilkenson, "In Kosovo, U.S. Envoy Hears Dire Warnings," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1998.
 17. John-Thor Dahlburg, "NATO Will Stage Mock Raids to Pressure Serbs," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1998, p. A9; and Craig R. Whitney, "NATO to Conduct Maneuvers to Warn Off Serbs," *New York Times*, June 12, 1998, p. A1.
 18. Steven Lee Myers, "NATO Threat to Intervene in Kosovo Fades," *New York Times*, July 16, 1998, p. A12.
 19. Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Urging NATO to Step Up Plans to Act against Yugoslavia," *New York Times*, September 24, 1998, p. A8; Norman Kempster and Craig Turner, "Reports of Massacres in Kosovo Spur Warnings," *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1998, p. A1; and Steven Erlanger, "NATO May Act against Serbs in Two Weeks," *New York Times*, October 2, 1998, p. A1.
 20. John-Thor Dahlburg and James Gerstenzang, "Kosovo Agreement Could Stave Off NATO Airstrikes," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1998, p. A1; and Steven Erlanger, "Clinton Presses Yugoslavs As NATO's Role Is Hailed," *New York Times*, October 14, 1998, p. A11.
 21. Paul Watson, "Rebels Moving In on Kosovo As Serbian Forces Pull Back," *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1998, p. A1. Many Western analysts regarded the cease-fire skeptically. Noting that winter would reduce hostilities in any event, they speculated that large-scale fighting would break out again when spring brought improving weather conditions. Jane Perlez, "Kosovo's Battles Appear Headed into the Chill of Winter," *New York Times*, October 18, 1998, p. A8.
 22. Steven Erlanger, "Among Rebels' Officer-Trainees, No Sign Kosovo Fighting Is Over," *New York Times*, February 18, 1999, p. A1.
 23. Barton Gellman, "How We Went to War," *Washington Post*, National Weekly Edition, April 26, 1999, p. 6-9.
 24. Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo (Rambouillet agreement), February 23, 1999, www.balkanaction.org/pubs/kia299.html.
 25. See Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 57-67.
 26. Quoted in John-Thor Dahlburg and Tyler Marshall, "U.S. to Pressure Sides at Kosovo Peace Talks," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1999, p. A1.
 27. The United States made vague threats to withdraw its support from the KLA, and thereby make it more difficult for the KLA to obtain arms. That was essentially a hollow threat. The KLA was well financed by the ethnic Albanian diaspora in North America and Western Europe, and hence able to purchase arms overtly, or covertly, on the international arms market. Moreover, Albania itself was awash in weapons, many of which ended up in the KLA's hands.
 28. Thomas W. Lippman and Dana Priest, "NATO Agrees to Target Belgrade; Russian Mission to Milosevic Fails; More Strikes in Kosovo Planned," *Washington Post*, March 31, 1999, p. A1; and Olivia Wood, "We Are on the Brink of Military Action; U.S. Envoy Struggles to Find Kosovo Solution," *Toronto Star*, March 23, 1999, p. A10.
 29. Norman Kempster, "U.S. Presence in Kosovo Would Be Open-Ended," *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 1999, p. A1; Paul Watson and Tyler Marshall, "U.S. Steps Up Pressure on Milosevic," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1999, p. A1; and Elizabeth Becker, "No 'Stonewalling' on Kosovo Peace, Milosevic Is Told," *New York Times*, February 20, 1999, p. A1.

30. Jane Perlez, "Talks on Kosovo Break Down; Deadline Is Today," *New York Times*, February 23, 1999, p. A1.
31. Jane Perlez, "Kosovo Albanians, in Reversal, Say They Will Sign Peace Pact," *New York Times*, February 24, 1999, p. A1; Norman Kempster and John-Thor Dahlburg, "Kosovo Talks End with Only Partial Plan to Halt Revolt," *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1999, p. A1; Carlotta Gall, "Envoys Push for Talks As Kosovo Fights On," *New York Times*, March 6, 1999, p. A5; Philip Shenon, "U.S. Says Kosovo Rebels Are Ready to Sign Peace Pact," *New York Times*, March 9, 1999, p. A3; Carlotta Gall, "U.S. Official Sees 'Collision Course' in Kosovo," *New York Times*, March 10, 1999, p. A1; and Craig R. Whitney, "In New Talks on Kosovo, NATO's Credibility Is at Stake," *New York Times*, March 14, 1999, p. A14.
32. Erlanger, "Among Rebels' Officer-Trainees."
33. Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo. Emphasis added.
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36. Russell Weighly, *The American Way of War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).
37. Jeffrey Record, *The Wrong War: Why We Lost in Vietnam* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998), p. 105.
38. Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflicts," *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (January 1975): 175-200.
39. Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. 29.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 322.
41. Owen Harries, "Madeleine Albright's 'Munich Mindset,'" *New York Times*, December 19, 1996, p. A29.
42. Federal News Service, "Remarks by President Clinton to AFSCME Conference," Washington, March 23, 1999.
43. All reporting by Western journalists inside Yugoslavia indicates that, predictably, NATO's bombing has unified the Serbs (including those previously opposed to Milosevic), hardened their antagonism toward the United States and NATO, and steeled their resolve to resist the alliance's military pressure. See David Holley, "Serbs Rally around Their Leader," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1999, p. A20; Steven Erlanger, "NATO Planes Step Up Attacks on Serb Troops: Unity in Belgrade," *New York Times*, March 29, 1999, p. A1; Paul Watson, "Strikes Stir Up Nationalist Passion," *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1999, p. A1; Paul Watson, "Many Prestina Serbs Shurg Off Air Strikes," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1999, p. A1; and Carlotta Gall, "Embassy Attack Followed by Defiance toward NATO," *New York Times*, May 10, 1999, p. A10.
44. On Secretary of State Albright's misjudgments leading up to the bombing campaign, see Thomas W. Lippman, "Albright Misjudged Milosevic on Kosovo," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1999, p. A1; and Jane Perlez, "An Embattled Albright Tries to Fend Off Her Critics," *New York Times*, April 7, 1999, p. A1.
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48. R. Jeffrey Smith and William Drozdiak, "A Blueprint for War: The Serbs' Military Campaign Was Meticulously Planned Months Ago," *Washington Post*, National Weekly Edition, April 19, 1999, p. 6.
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52. Quoted in Gall, "New Floods of Refugees."
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60. For the statements of President Clinton and Secretary Albright that the United States was not caught off guard by the refugee crisis, see McManus.
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62. "Macedonian President Warns of Wider War," Reuters, April 11, 1999.
63. Vernon Loeb, "War over Kosovo Turns Balkan Bit Players into 'Front-line' States," *Washington Post*, April 24, 1999, p. A19; and Blaine Harden, "The Teetering Balkans," *New York Times*, April 15, 1999, p. A1.
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67. Paul Watson, "Border with Albania Is 3-Way Battleground," *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1999, p. A1.
68. Robert Wright, "Blocked Danube Hits Countries Right across the Continent's Income Range," *Financial Times*, April 19, 1999, p. 2. Even NATO members like Hungary are not immune from the effects of the Danube's closing. See John Tagliabue, "Front-Line Hungary Feels Anxiety," *New York Times*, May 2, 1999, p. A14.
69. Michael Dobbs, "Deconstructing Yugoslavia," *Washington Post*, April 25, 1999, p. A1; and Daniel Williams, "NATO Bombs Serbia into Darkness," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1999, p. A1.
70. Norman Kempster, John-Thor Dalhburg, and Janet Wilson, "'Ethnic Cleansing' Unstoppable, Top NATO Official Says," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1999, p. A16.
71. Steven Erlanger, "Fleeing Kosovars Dread Danger of NATO Above and Serb Below," *New York Times*, May 4, 1999, p. A1.
72. Paul Watson, "NATO Bomb Kills 17 More Civilians," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1999, p. A16. Watson has been in Kosovo since hostilities began, and his reporting merits Pulitzer Prize consideration. His first-hand accounts have belied NATO's claims about the effectiveness of the air campaign, and they probably were decisive in forcing NATO to retract its denials (1) of bombing a refugee column near Djakovica and (2) of bombing residential areas in several towns in Kosovo. Recent stories have documented how the use of cluster bombs has caused widespread civilian casualties, especially among children playing with unexploded bomb canisters. Paul Watson, "Not So Smart Weapons Are Terrifying

Civilians," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1999, p. A1; and Paul Watson, "Cluster Bombs May Be What Killed Refugees," *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1999, p. A1; and Paul Watson, "Unexploded Weapons Pose Deadly Threat on Ground," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1999, p. A1.

73. Quoted in John-Thor Dahlburg and Paul Richter, "2nd Wave of Allied Firepower Pounds Yugoslavia; Serbs Continue Assaults," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1999, p. A1.

74. As a West European diplomat admitted after

the first four days of bombing, "We have to confront the possibility that the air campaign, by forcing the independent observers and Western journalists out of Kosovo, has given the Serbs a sense that they can do whatever they like without anyone being able to prove that they did." Apple.

75. See Michael Wines, "Hostility to U.S. Is Now Popular with Russians," *New York Times*, April 12, 1999, p. A1; and David Hoffman, "Cold War Feelings Rekindled in Russia," *Washington Post*, National Weekly Edition, April 12, 1999, p. 17.

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