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The United States in the Balkans: There to Stay

As the first anniversary of NATO's victory against Serbia approached this past spring, Congress moved to memorialize the event by legislating a pullout of U.S. troops from the Kosovo peacekeeping operation that followed the successful conclusion of the war. Although the immediate effort to mandate the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Kosovo was narrowly defeated on the Senate floor, the debate in Congress suggested widespread unease on both sides of the aisle about the open-ended U.S. commitment to the Balkans. This growing unease reflects the pervasive belief on the Hill and elsewhere that an inadequate European effort in Kosovo after the war is needlessly prolonging the U.S. presence in the region. In some quarters, it also comes from a conviction that our allies needlessly interfered with, and prolonged, last year's air war. Finally, many members of Congress believe that, with the war over, Europeans should now be able to handle a problem that is, after all, in their backyard.

We reject these views on all counts. In some ways, they originate from a belief that the Balkans do not really matter to U.S. national interests—a belief we consider ill advised on strategic grounds. But in other cases, they are simply wrong factually. Whatever the faults of NATO's strategy prior to, during, and after the Kosovo war—and there were many—none of them can be blamed on the allies alone. At each step of the way, Washington was a willing participant—indeed, the dominant character—in the unfolding drama. U.S. armed forces deserve most of the credit for the military victory of Operation Allied Force, but U.S. policymakers deserve at least their fair share of the blame for mistakes made en route to that victory. If the allies

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were reluctant to use force prior to the war, or proved unwilling to offer large forces for peacekeeping duty in case of a cease-fire agreement, the Clinton administration and Congress were at least as hesitant. And the strategy of gradual escalation during the war was primarily a U.S. invention. It suited the sentiment of most allies as well—that is true. But it was first and foremost a strategy made in the United States. As for the contributions to postwar Kosovo, Europe is carrying the lion's share of the economic and military burden in the region. That is as it should be, of course. But it needs to be recognized by more Americans than now understand, or care about, the real facts of the matter.

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The U.S. effort in the Balkans—involving less than 20 percent of the total number of troops and about 10 percent of the economic aid costs—is neither large nor inappropriate. The United States is engaged there not because Europe is shirking its duty but because the stability and security of the region are of real U.S. interest. These interests are partly humanitarian, but they are at least as much strategic. For decades, the United States deployed hundreds of thousands of troops to safeguard the security of Western Europe. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became possible to extend the stability and security that NATO countries long enjoyed to the rest of Europe—to build a Europe that was "whole and free" (in President George Bush's words) and "undivided, peaceful, and democratic" (as President Bill Clinton has urged). That is not just a noble sentiment, but a vision with deep strategic meaning. Such a Europe is more likely to be a partner of the United States in meeting the many challenges of the global age, and much less likely to pose a threat to U.S. interests.

At the height of the debate about the U.S. military presence in Kosovo in spring 2000, a number of members of Congress declared their unhappiness with allied efforts over the last year and a half in the Balkans. This sentiment reflects the view that the European allies are largely to blame for the supposed mess in the Balkans—that their political micromanagement of the war effort needlessly prolonged the fighting and that their refusal to provide more money, materiel, and manpower for the current Kosovo operation is needlessly prolonging the stay of U.S. forces. In this article, we review the history of the past couple of years in the Balkans to argue that this U.S. criticism of Europe's efforts there, though widely held, is deeply flawed. We focus on the spring 1999 air war and the diplomatic prelude to it and conclude with an assessment of the proper U.S. role in postwar Kosovo.

NATO's Hesitant Air Campaign

The standard criticism of NATO's air campaign heard in official Washington—both on the Hill and in the Pentagon—goes something like this: In spring 1999, NATO's war effort was hampered by political interference from the 19 member countries. Both the gradualism of the air campaign and the failure to strike at strategic targets in Belgrade early and decisively were apparently because this was a war fought by committee. Absent such micromanagement, the argument continues, the U.S. Air Force would have struck hard at Belgrade on day one—it would have gone for the "head of the snake" in air war commander Lt. General Michael Short's words—and inflicted a decisive blow against Slobodan Milosevic. Instead, NATO opted for "lowest common denominator tactics," as retired Admiral Leighton "Snuffy" Smith has recently charged. "The way Kosovo was executed was Vietnam times 19." And according to Defense Secretary William Cohen, "if we were to carry out and act unilaterally, we would have a much more robust, aggressive, and decapitating type of campaign. ... The difference here, of course, is that we're acting as an alliance."[1] Our interviews with policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic after the war, however, as well as a fair reading of the public record of what happened during the conflict, lead to the clear conclusion that criticisms of the allies are misguided.

There is no doubt that the United States and its allies got off to a very poor start in Operation Allied Force and could have lost the war as a result. When NATO bombs began to fall, U.S. leaders publicly emphasized that they did not envision ground combat or even an extensive bombing campaign. Under these circumstances, Milosevic felt free to further intensify his brutal operations against the Kosovar Albanians. NATO was powerless to do anything about it and would have been powerless to stop genocidal-scale killings had the Serbs reverted to their Srebrenica tactics of four years before. Had Milosevic hunkered down, moreover, rather than stepping up the forced expulsion of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population, he might well have prevailed, according to alliance officials whom we interviewed. Just as it had in the four-day Desert Fox strikes against Iraq in December 1998, the United States, along with its partners, might have declared victory and stopped the bombing after a few days, negotiated settlement or not. Conducting a limited dose of bombing, with no provision or even planning for stepping up the alliance's military activities in case it failed, was a very poor way to use force.

In the words of U.S. Admiral James Ellis, commander of NATO's southern forces during the war against Serbia, "we called this one absolutely wrong." He went on to say that NATO lacked not only a coherent campaign

plan and target set, but also the staff to generate a detailed plan when it was clear one was needed.[2]

But NATO's bomb-and-pray strategy was designed in Washington. Reflecting a conviction on the part of President Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and others that Milosevic was bound to give up quickly, NATO planners generated only three days' worth of targets for the air campaign. The commonly accepted view within Washington policy circles was that Milosevic would, at the outer limit, be capable of withstanding no more than a couple weeks of bombing—roughly what he had shown the stomach for in Bosnia in 1995 before giving up. U.S. officials were wrong to compare Bosnia to Kosovo—among other things, Bosnian Serbs were starting to lose the war on the ground even before the NATO bombardment began, and Milosevic had made clear before the bombing started that he wanted a deal on Bosnia and would deliver the Bosnian Serbs to accept it. But U.S. officials did indeed have the conviction that the situations were similar and would require comparable doses of U.S. military power. As Clinton revealingly stated a month into the NATO bombing campaign,

> The reason we went forward with the air actions is because we thought there was some chance it would deter Mr. Milosevic based on two previous examples—number one, last October in Kosovo [more on that below], when he was well poised to do the same thing; and number two, in Bosnia, where there were 12 days of NATO attacks over a 20-day period.[3]

The Clinton administration was also in the habit of using force in small, demonstrative doses, claiming that it had "degraded" or "damaged" an enemy's capabilities, declaring victory, and ending its combat operations regardless of the broader strategic implications of the outcome achieved. As noted above, it had done so with the United Kingdom in December 1998 against Saddam Hussein over the impasse concerning weapons inspections (which have still not resumed as of this writing) and against Osama bin Laden's terrorist network a few months before that. Clinton conveyed a similar mindset, and used similar language, in his Oval Office speech on Kosovo. During the second week of the war, Cohen described the air campaign's goals as demonstrating "resolve on the part of the NATO alliance [or] failing that, to make him pay a serious substantial price for" what Milosevic's forces were doing in Kosovo.[4] The weakness implicit in such comments was surely not lost on Belgrade. Yet, it was first and foremost Washington, not Brussels, Paris, or anywhere else in Europe, that was sending the message.

Pentagon officials seemed generally more interested in limiting U.S. involvement in another Balkans conflict than in doing their utmost to caution the White House and State Department about the risks of their preferred strategy. The United States did not even do any unofficial, private contin-

gency planning about what to strike next should Milosevic not comply with NATO's plans for a quick war. Fear of casualties also drove the preferred U.S. strategy of minimalism—especially by restricting NATO aircraft to fly above 15,000 feet to reduce the risk to pilots, at a time in the conflict when doing so put them above heavy clouds and thus unable in any significant way to have an impact on the war against civilians on the ground. Finally, most top U.S. military brass opposed any efforts by NATO headquarters to prepare the necessary plans for conducting a ground campaign if it should come to that.

Just before and just after the war began, Washington went out of its way to suggest that it envisioned nothing more than a short period of limited air strikes. In mid-March, the United States elected not to keep the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* in the Mediterranean/Adriatic region, where it could have contributed to the war. Instead, Washington sent it briefly to the Persian Gulf (on March 14) to replace the carrier *Carl Vinson* there, and later sent the *Enterprise* home. The Pentagon did so on the grounds, first, that it needed a carrier in the Persian Gulf at all times and, second, that crews had already spent their planned tours at sea and deserved to return to their ports and families on schedule. Although the first concern is strategically valid, the Navy ultimately deployed the carrier *Kitty Hawk* from Japan to the Gulf, and could have done so earlier had planning been better. And the second concern, understandable at one level for the well-being of crews and their families, is hardly the type of action a country bent on sustained military action would customarily take. The Navy did not have another carrier, the *USS Theodore Roosevelt*, within bombing range of Serbia until April 5.

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Although the United States had far more capability available, NATO based only a modest air armada near Serbia on March 24—just 350 planes were deployed for combat within range of Serbia. That was less than the 410 NATO had in the region in October 1998. It was only one-third of the number ultimately necessary to win the war. It consisted of 10 percent the number of coalition aircraft that participated in the air war in Operation Desert Storm and about one-fifth the number that the United States would now plan to deploy to a major regional conflict. Again, in size the air armada most closely resembled Operation Desert Fox and was not much larger than what NATO had employed in the 1995 bombing campaign in Bosnia to protect the remaining safe areas there.

The United States also publicly telegraphed its view that the air campaign would be short. As Albright put it on the *Lehrer Newshour* the first

night of the war, "I don't see this as a long-term operation. I think that this is something ... that is achievable within a relatively short period of time."[5] The president himself made sure to underscore publicly that the U.S. and NATO commitment to the fight was limited by ruling out the use of combat troops to achieve the alliance's objectives.

The allies cannot be blamed for most of these decisions. They certainly did not force the United States to pull its carrier out of the Mediterranean before the war began. Several probably would have allowed the United States to forward-station more fighters on their territory as a precaution prior to the war's initiation. U.S. military planners could have prepared plans for more extensive bombing operations, either under NATO auspices or independently as the situation demanded. But no one in Washington wanted them to do that. Similarly, it was Washington rather than the allies that objected in 1998 to detailed NATO planning for the possibility of using ground forces in a combat mode against Serbia and Clinton who ruled out their use on March 24, 1999.

There is no denying that if Kosovo was America's war, the aftermath is Europe's peace.

What about once the war really got going? Is it not true that the allies slowed and restricted Washington's preference to rapidly escalate? Here again, the answer clearly is no. First of all, NATO as an institution hung together remarkably well. In the course of the war, the alliance maintained strong solidarity—although most of its principal members, including the UK, France, Germany, and Italy, were run by left-leaning governments and another, Greece, had a population that was overwhelmingly sympathetic to Serbia. It made most decisions quickly, delegating much authority to its secretary general and supreme military commander while allowing a proper amount of political intercession by its chief members over major targeting decisions. Drawing encouragement, resolve, and political cover from each other, its various members were able to withstand impassioned Russian and Chinese protests against the war and to use force without explicit approval of the United Nations (UN) Security Council.

The allies did have some influence over the details of the air war as it unfolded. But that hardly constituted interference, and it was modest in scope and significance. The North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's central decisionmaking body, placed the decision to start the bombing campaign in the hands of the secretary general on January 30, 1999. Once the bombing started and it became clear that limited air strikes were not effective in per-

suading Milosevic to abandon his quest, the NAC quickly met and approved moving to the second phase of the air campaign, broadening target sets below the 44th parallel in Serbia. Within six days of the war's commencement, moreover, the NAC had approved targeting of military assets throughout Yugoslavia—thus, in effect, approving implementation of much of the third and last phase of the campaign plan. At no time did the NAC interfere with, let alone veto specific target sets in, the bombing campaign.

The right to review targeting from that point on was reserved to two U.S. allies only—the UK and France—as well as the United States. As for these individual allies, Prime Minister Tony Blair insisted that London have the right to veto targets to be hit by U.S. B-52 bombers flying from British soil. President Jacques Chirac requested the right to review possible targets in Montenegro. Together with Clinton, the two European leaders demanded the right to veto targets that could cause high casualties or could affect large numbers of civilians—principally targets in Belgrade. As the political leaders most responsible for the conduct of a war, it was entirely appropriate that they be accorded a role in the decisionmaking process. No war should ever be fought without clear political guidance provided by those who are ultimately accountable for its conduct. Moreover, they affected the war plan in its details, not in its basic course. As General Wesley Clark put it a year after the war, he welcomed this political "micromanagement"—for he, and his fellow men and women under arms, did not want the responsibility for attacking highly sensitive targets or putting civilians at risk when doing so.

The Prelude to War

For all the attention given to debating the conduct of the war, there is every bit as much to scrutinize about how NATO tried to prevent war in the year before hostilities erupted. And on this issue, the allies have a better record than the United States, primarily because several of them at least were willing to put a large peacekeeping force into Kosovo to quell the escalating conflict between Milosevic's extremists and the growing Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) while the United States was not willing until very late in the game, when it was probably too late.

After Milosevic's forces drove or scared 300,000 ethnic Albanians out of their homes in the summer of 1998, NATO realized it had a huge crisis on its hands. Backed by the threat of NATO airstrikes, Richard Holbrooke managed to convince Milosevic to reduce his forces in Kosovo and allow in unarmed international monitors. This policy had humanitarian benefits, as it enabled the ethnic Albanians to return from the hills to their homes before winter set in. But it also sowed the seeds of its own demise because the

lack of a serious international security presence meant that the Kosovar rebels were bound to move into the vacuum Holbrooke had convinced Milosevic to create in Kosovo.

Why did Holbrooke settle for so little? Part of the reason was that Milosevic would not have easily assented to any NATO-led military force on Serbian territory, and a quick solution was needed to prevent tens of thousands from perishing in the Kosovar hills. But much of the reason was that Washington had decided that there could be no NATO—read, U.S.—troops on the ground, even in a noncombat mode. Not only did the October 1998 accord fail to stop the escalating cycle of violence in Kosovo, it risked giving Milosevic ready-made Western hostages whose presence within Serbia could impede any further threats of force being made against him.

Even if it had taken the possibility seriously, the Clinton administration was convinced that, with its dim view of U.S. involvement in Bosnia, Congress was sure to reject any consideration of ground forces. In explaining why the administration had not considered deploying ground forces in October, Cohen later told the Senate Armed Services Committee:

> At that time, you may recall there was great discontent up here on Capitol Hill. If I had come to you at that time and requested authorization to put a ground force in—U.S., unilaterally, acting alone—I can imagine the nature of the questions I would have received. You'd say, "Well, No. 1, where are our allies? And No. 2, who's going to appropriate the money? No. 3, how long do you intend to be there? How many? How long? How much? And what's the exit strategy?"

Cohen concluded, "And that would have been the extent of the debate and probably would have received an overwhelming rejection from the committee."[6]

The implication that a decision to deploy ground forces in the region would have involved the United States acting on its own is wrong. The UK had already made the decision to deploy ground forces, and together the two key countries could have made a powerful and probably decisive case to the other allies for a NATO decision to deploy combat troops to implement any agreement that ended the fighting in Kosovo. Indeed, key allies awaiting the result of Holbrooke's negotiations with Milosevic expected that the outcome would be the deployment of a force like the Stabilization Force in Bosnia. As NATO secretary general Javier Solana recalled, throughout October he had "kept insisting on the importance of getting NATO involved ... not only in the air but also on the ground."[7] The problem, then, was not allied reluctance, but the U.S. refusal to consider the deployment of ground troops.

What about the immediate prelude to war in early 1999, before and during the Rambouillet negotiations between Serbs and ethnic Albanians convened in France? It is true that, in the months prior to the initiation of

Operation Allied Force, the European allies were hesitant about bombing Serbia. But their skepticism was well grounded.

Contrary to initial indications from U.S. officials, key NATO allies insisted that force should not simply be threatened to punish Belgrade for its actions in Racak and violation of the October agreement. Instead, the threat of force should serve to promote a distinct political objective—including a clear notion of how the conflict in Kosovo could be settled and how the KLA could be prevented from exploiting any action NATO took against Serbia and making the situation worse. It is difficult to argue with that logic.

Second, with the experience of the previous October still fresh in many minds, the allies were concerned that they alone would be responsible for whatever emerged in the aftermath of NATO's bombing campaign. In particular, they worried that NATO troops would have to go into Kosovo to stabilize the situation and enforce a peace without U.S. participation. Fearing a repeat of the disastrous experience in Bosnia, all allies (including the UK) made it clear that they could not support air strikes unless Washington was prepared to participate in whatever NATO ground operation would follow. Again, it was a very fair position.

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In response to these European concerns, the United States refined its proposed strategy to gain NATO support. U.S. officials agreed to condition the threat of air strikes against Serb forces on KLA moderation and, ultimately, on the Kosovar Albanians' acceptance of the political deal that was on the table. The result was a coherent strategy, one that tied the stick of military action to clearly definable behavior at the negotiating table.

Getting to "yes" on the ground-force issue took Washington longer. In private, U.S. officials indicated that the United States would participate in a NATO force deployed to enforce a negotiated agreement. In public, however, reflecting the administration's sensitivity to congressional opinion on the subject, official statements were far more circumspect. For example, on January 26, 1999, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger stated that Clinton remained opposed to deploying U.S. ground forces. As for their possible participation in a force policing a negotiated settlement, Berger indicated, "We would have to look at that under those circumstances in consultation with Congress. Obviously, we've had no decisions along those lines."[8] And although Cohen and General Henry Shelton indicated on February 3 that the Pentagon was planning to make 2,000–4,000 troops avail-

able for participation in a possible Kosovo Force (KFOR), Clinton said the following day that "no decision has been reached." It was not until February 13, one full week into the Rambouillet conference, that Clinton used a regular Saturday radio address to announce his decision that "a little less than 4,000" U.S. troops might participate in KFOR.[9] If Milosevic was watching this hesitancy in Washington—as he surely was—he had little reason to fear that any eventual air strikes would be sustained and serious.

The War's Aftermath

Much of the congressional criticism of the continued U.S. presence in Kosovo derives from the belief that, if the Kosovo war was largely a U.S. military feat, the Kosovo peace should primarily be Europe's responsibility. This belief is shared by the Clinton administration and, indeed, by the Europeans themselves. It is entirely proper for Europe to take the lead—militarily, financially, and politically—in forging the conditions necessary for stability and security in Kosovo and in the rest of the region. The problem is not that Europe has failed to live up to this responsibility but rather that many in Congress and elsewhere have failed to appreciate the extent to which it is in fact doing so. By whatever measure of burden sharing one wants to use, Europe is doing its fair share. There is no denying that if Kosovo was America's war, the aftermath is Europe's peace.

If one looks at the economic and military contribution the United States and Europe have made to peace and stability in the Balkans over the last decade, it is evident that Europe has carried much of the load. In terms of nonmilitary assistance—including development and humanitarian assistance—Europe has spent three times what the United States has (nearly $17 billion vs. $5.5 billion).[10]

As for the military contribution, the percentage of U.S. ground forces in the Balkans during the past decade was zero from 1992 through 1995 (the Europeans' contribution increased steadily over that period, increasing from 7,500 in early 1993 to 16,000 by late 1995). U.S. ground forces reached their peak, 35 percent of NATO's total, in the Implementation Force operation in Bosnia in 1996. Todat, the U.S. share in Bosnia and Kosovo is just under 20 percent of the NATO total. In other words, Europe has carried the vast bulk of the military burden in the Balkans during the 1990s—typically 75 percent or more—and continues to do so at present.

This same picture is evident when one examines other contributions to the postwar effort in Kosovo.[11] The European Union is by far the largest donor of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Kosovo, providing more than $3 billion for civilian programs in 1999 and 2000, compared to

$900 million for the United States over the same period. European support for Kosovo's consolidated budget (used to run the administration of the territory) is similarly 75 percent of the total (compared to a U.S. contribution of 13 percent).

The one area where the European contribution in postwar Kosovo has fallen short—and which accordingly has been the subject of greatest attention on the Hill—concerns civilian police, who are vital for maintaining order there. Of the more than 3,600 police officers deployed in Kosovo as of the end of May 2000, European countries (excluding Russia) contributed almost 1,000 officers and the United States 540. Not only is the relative European contribution much smaller than in other areas (especially because the EU countries provide only 700 officers), the fact that the total number of officers in Kosovo falls more than 1,000 short of what the UN administration in Kosovo deems necessary is also a cause for serious concern.[12]

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This police shortfall needs to be kept in perspective. The notion, common in the Pentagon and on the Hill, that it explains the continued need for substantial numbers of U.S. troops in Kosovo is incorrect. Given the security climate in and around Kosovo, KFOR will still be needed—at or near its current strength—for some time, even if more police are deployed. At the same time, there is no doubt that European countries can and should do more in the area of policing, something the EU itself recognized when it announced in June 2000 that its members are committed to being able to deploy up to 5,000 police officers for peace support operations of this kind by 2003, including 1,000 officers within 30 days.

All this shows that, in Bosnia and Kosovo today, European countries are doing their share. Complaints about the United States doing too much, and the allies falling short, are not backed up by the facts. On the most important question concerning the deployment of military forces into the region, there is no question that the allies are doing all that should be required of them. By whatever measure one uses—troops as a percent of population, troops as a percent of gross domestic product, raw numbers of deployed personnel, or budgetary costs of the operation—the allies not only do more, they do far more, than we do.

To be sure, that is as it should be. The United States provided most of the firepower in winning last spring's war against Serbia. It flew 60 percent of all combat sorties and dropped 80 percent of all precision-guided munitions

used in Operation Allied Force. The allies still flew 40 percent of all combat sorties, and key countries like Italy provided bases without which the war could not have been fought. Still, they did not do enough, and in the future they will have to do more. Moreover, looking around the world at places like Korea, Taiwan, and the Persian Gulf, the U.S. armed forces do much more than their fair share, and the European allies do not contribute enough, particularly in the Persian Gulf region, where their interests are every bit as great as America's.

But overall we have little to complain about in the Balkans. The Europeans have been spending about three times as much as the United States has for military operations and economic support over the past decade. They suffered dozens killed during the UN mission in Bosnia early in the 1990s, while we stayed out. They are doing most of the work to keep the peace in the region today. Finally, although all NATO troops in the Balkans are performing well, the Europeans are doing at least as well as the Americans. Most are not eschewing difficult and dangerous situations—as the Pentagon leadership has sometimes required U.S. troops to do out of excessive, and counterproductive, fear of casualties.

Europe's Peace Is America's Peace Too

During the congressional debates on Kosovo in spring 2000, one theme resonated through the Senate and House chambers—the United States is involved in the Balkans only temporarily and until such time when Europe can take over. As Senator Robert Byrd (D–W.Va.) wrote in the *New York Times* justifying his amendment that urged the withdrawal of U.S. forces by July 2001,

> The United States should take steps to turn the Kosovo peacekeeping operation over to our European allies. NATO undertook the Kosovo mission with an understanding that Europe, not America, would shoulder the peacekeeping and reconstruction duties. The United States, with its outstanding military forces and weaponry, effectively won the war; the European allies were to keep the peace.[13]

Aside from a sense of fairness and burden sharing, many in Congress were driven to this conclusion on the basis of their belief that stability in the Balkans is ultimately a concern for Europe rather than the United States. "The Balkans," as Senator Pat Roberts (R–Kan.) sought to remind the Europeans during the Senate debate, "are in your ball park."[14]

Although it is undeniable that Europe has a major interest in shaping the future of the Balkans, it is also true that the United States has an interest in creating a Europe that is undivided, peaceful, and democratic. Washington

has been heavily invested in this effort ever since the United States entered World War II. That investment has paid off—in a stable, prosperous, and democratic partner in Western Europe. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States and its European allies have been partners in a joint enterprise to extend the stability and security they have long enjoyed to the rest of the continent. Building this new Europe requires real effort—by helping erstwhile Communist countries making the difficult transition to becoming market democracies, promoting human rights and the rule of law in societies where neither have been safeguarded, and opposing organized violence whenever it is used to retard the emergence of stable, secure, and peaceful societies. A key element in this effort has been NATO's involvement in the Balkans, where the end of the Cold War resulted in a surge of nationalist violence rather than a commitment to democratic and economic reform.

KFOR will still be needed—at or near its current strength—for some time.

In all of these efforts, the United States and its European allies—both old and new—have been willing partners. And the role of the United States has been important, as well as unique. We are, after all, still the world's only military superpower, and European security still is most dependable when the United States plays its proper role as the alliance's leader. That does not mean that we need always provide the lion's share of the troops, money, or effort; indeed, today in the Balkans we are doing none of the above. But it does mean that, as long as a peaceful and democratic Europe is threatened by the prospect of organized violence in the Balkans, getting the job done will require a U.S. military presence alongside the much larger European contributions.

Notes

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2. Admiral James O. Ellis, "A View from the Top," briefing slides, summer 1999.
3. "Press Conference by the President" (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, April 24, 1999). A widely read National Intelligence Estimate issued in November 1998 similarly concluded that "the October agreement indicates that Milosevic is susceptible to outside pressure." Elaine Sciolino and Ethan Bronner,

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10. "The European Union, Kosovo, and SE Europe," fact sheet issued by the European Commission Delegation in Washington <http://www.eurunion.org/legislat/extrel/formyugo/Kosovo/Kosovoppt.ppt>; and U.S. General Accounting Office, *Balkan Security: Current and Projected Factors Affecting Regional Security* (Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, NSIAD-00-125BR, April 2000), 87.
11. See "The European Union, Kosovo, and SE Europe," and United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo,* S/2000/538, June 6, 2000.
12. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo,* 30-31.
13. Robert C. Byrd, "Europe's Turn to Keep the Peace," *New York Times*, March 20, 2000, p. A23.
14. *Congressional Record,* 106th Cong., 2nd sess., 2000, S3898.