

Fordham International Law Journal

Volume 23, Issue 2

1999

Article 4

NATO's Actions to Uphold Human Rights and Democratic Values in Kosovo: A Test Case for a New Alliance

Sergio Balanzino*

*

Copyright ©1999 by the authors. *Fordham International Law Journal* is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress). <http://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ilj>

NATO's Actions to Uphold Human Rights and Democratic Values in Kosovo: A Test Case for a New Alliance

Sergio Balanzino

Abstract

On NATO's fiftieth anniversary, we were faced with an unexpected choice: we had to decide whether the notion of common values is only rhetorical flourish or whether it carries real meaning. We made our choice. We decided that values do not only have to be preached, but also upheld. The essay will recount the events leading up to the deteriorating situation in Kosovo and outline the reasons for NATO's decision to take action. Next it will evaluate NATO's success in light of its humanitarian and military goals. Finally it will examine the challenges facing Kosovo and NATO in the future.

NATO'S ACTIONS TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN KOSOVO: A TEST CASE FOR A NEW ALLIANCE

*Sergio Balanzino**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's ("NATO") fiftieth anniversary last year was to be mainly a celebration. At our major summit meeting in Washington last April, our heads of state and government were expected to gather, confirm our mutual security commitments, celebrate NATO successes, and make speeches on our community of values.

The events in Kosovo changed our focus. Suddenly, we were faced with an unexpected choice: we had to decide whether the notion of common values is only rhetorical flourish or whether it carries real meaning. We made our choice. We decided that values do not only have to be preached, but also upheld. This decision is why the Allies supported the effort to achieve a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Kosovo. Indeed, the Rambouillet¹ talks were largely the result of the patient and persistent diplomacy of Allied nations. Our decision to uphold values also explains why the Alliance opted to use military force against the Yugoslav security forces and the government in Belgrade once these negotiations had failed.

We did not enter lightly into the decision to use force. The humanitarian tragedy was not likely to stop within a few days. The military risks to our soldiers would be significant. Civilian casualties might occur. Our important relationship with Russia was likely to suffer. And, last but not least, some people would charge NATO with taking international law into its own hands.

Despite these potential risks and drawbacks, NATO decided to go ahead. It did so for three reasons. First and foremost, we acted to stop the humanitarian tragedy. To stand idly by while a

* Ambassador and Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ("NATO").

1. See Major J.D. Godwin, *NATO'S Role in Peace Operations: Reexamining the Treaty After Bosnia and Kosovo*, 160 MIL. L. REV. 1, 77 (1999) ("With the threat of NATO action looming, the parties negotiated a conditional agreement at Rambouillet, France, on February 23, 1999.")

brutal campaign of forced deportation, torture, and murder took place in the heart of Europe would have opened us to accusations that we proclaimed values that we were not prepared to defend. Imagine the *justified* public outcry if NATO decided to look the other way. The talk of turning Europe into a common political, economic, and security space would have been revealed as empty rhetoric if we had tolerated the barbaric practice of ethnic cleansing on our doorstep. One of the lessons of Bosnia was that acting earlier might have been less costly in the end. We learned this lesson and resolved that we would not repeat that mistake.

Second, all other political and economic means had been exhausted before we reverted to military action. President Slobodan Milosevic's refusal to sign the Rambouillet Accords made it clear that he had no interest in a political solution. He tried instead to create a new ethnic reality on that ground. Any balanced and impartial observer realizes that military force was the only option left to stop him, and, hopefully, make him reconsider his actions. The Allies had no choice but to stand firm, leaving Milosevic without any alternative but to accept robust security arrangements to ensure the return of the Kosovar refugees.

Finally, we acted to prevent a further destabilization in the Balkans. As the U.N. Security Council already confirmed in two important resolutions before NATO used force, the destabilization caused by the onslaught of Milosevic's brutal security forces constituted a threat to the entire region. In this respect, no one should forget that the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo began many months before NATO launched its first strike. It was to stop Milosevic from writing the final chapter in his campaign to systematically depopulate Kosovo that NATO decided it could no longer postpone military action. Milosevic's initiation of genocide would not be the first regional crisis in the Balkans that turned into something far bigger and nastier. With several hundreds of thousands of refugees being driven into neighboring countries by Milosevic's brutal actions, the entire region faced a serious threat of general collapse. Those neighboring countries, which themselves faced serious political and economic problems, had long reached the limits of their ability to cope with this exceptional burden. In short, if it had not been energetically opposed, then Belgrade's policy of deliberate displace-

ment of the Kosovo-Albanians would have resulted in even more instability and bloodshed.

NATO pursued military actions until President Milosevic conceded to the demands of the international community:

- a verifiable cessation to all military action and the immediate end to the killing;
- the withdrawal of Serb military, police, and paramilitary forces;
- the deployment in Kosovo of an international military presence;
- the return of all refugees;
- the establishment of a political framework for Kosovo on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords.

I believe that NATO's actions in Kosovo met many of the traditional conditions of the "Just War:" military action came after all peaceful means of modulating the crisis had been exhausted; the military means used were strictly proportionate to the objectives pursued; every effort was made to minimize civilian casualties by targeting military objectives; and, finally, the good that the conflict achieved outweighed the inevitable price that had to be paid based on the number of Kosovar refugees who have returned to their homes today. In short, the conflict opened the way to a political solution in Kosovo and provided an immediate solution to alleviate human suffering. These goals had been elusive before the use of force. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, the countries of the European Union, and NATO all agreed: Without taking all of these steps there could be no peaceful multi-ethnic democratic Kosovo in which all of its people live in security.

Clearly, NATO's Kosovo operation was a major challenge in the history of the Atlantic Alliance. For the first time, a defensive alliance launched a military campaign in order to avoid a humanitarian tragedy outside its own borders. For the first time, an alliance of sovereign nations did not fight in order to preserve its territorial integrity, or to conquer territory, but to protect the values on which it was founded. And, despite many difficulties, it prevailed.

NATO's actions in Kosovo have sparked a debate about the relationship between values and interests, and between humanitarian needs and state sovereignty. It is a debate that will remain with us for a long time to come. Interventions, such as those

carried out by the Alliance in Kosovo, raise difficult questions. What is the appropriate legal basis to use force, especially if a U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing the use of force cannot be obtained? At which stage do dictators abusing the rights of their citizens forfeit their right to have their country's sovereignty respected? What type of atrocity or systematic abuse of human rights should trigger a military intervention? In the current environment, it is not easy to give clear and consistent answers to these questions. But the international community is now confronting these issues head on as we have seen at this year's U.N. General Assembly. The international community will no doubt also continue to operate on a case-by-case basis. Nonetheless, it is now clear that the protection of the rights of people, and not the rights of states, is becoming in the 1990s the new guiding principle of international relations. NATO cannot and has not ignored this important evolution. It has become an intrinsic part of the Alliance's transformation since the end of the Cold War ten years ago.

Throughout the 1990s, NATO has been transforming itself to serve the security needs of all the peoples of Europe, not only its own citizens. With the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to the Alliance in March 1999, NATO ended Europe's Cold War division for good. With its policies of partnership and outreach, NATO created a security framework that engages two dozen non-NATO nations in permanent political consultation and military cooperation. The two main mechanisms of this framework are the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. By helping to bring the armed forces of our Partner countries under democratic control and fostering a cooperative approach to security among them, NATO is helping to reduce the potential for armed conflict in Europe—and thereby enhancing human rights and individual freedoms. Democracy can prosper only in conditions of security. NATO through its partnerships is helping to provide that security. And with an institutionalized NATO-Russia relationship, we acknowledge the relevant role of Russia in the emerging Euro-Atlantic security architecture. In short, throughout the 1990s NATO has been instrumental in managing Europe's security evolution—a testament both to the vitality of the transatlantic link as well as to its ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

If there was a flaw in this emerging cooperative security

framework, then it was the fact that parts of the Balkans remained outside the framework. The Balkan question, having never been fully resolved over the course of this century, returned with a vengeance when the violent collapse of Yugoslavia led to a series of wars.

These wars constituted the greatest challenge to European security since World War II. Apart from causing countless humanitarian tragedies, they constantly threatened to escalate beyond their point of origin, destabilizing wider regions. The causes of these wars were manifold. While no one denied the existence of economic crises and ethnic and religious fault lines, the systematic exploitation of these differences—and their conversion into violent nationalism—was the result of a deliberate policy, with Serb President Slobodan Milosevic quickly emerging as the chief manipulator.

The road to the 1995 Dayton Agreement need not be recounted here. Suffice it to say that when the international community finally became engaged in Bosnia and pushed the country towards a sustainable peace, it did more than simply demonstrate that outside intervention can make a difference. The NATO-led International Implementation Force (“IFOR”) united more than thirty nations, including Russia, in a unique coalition for peace that became the symbol of a new cooperative approach to security.

IFOR became the NATO-led Serbian Implementation Force (“SFOR”) after one year, but NATO’s approach to building security in Bosnia has not changed. We know fully well that there can be no peace without justice. We have therefore cooperated extensively with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia² (“ICTY”). At first many believed that this tribunal would be ineffective and that Realpolitik would soon replace Moralpolitik, as so often in the past. The ICTY proved them wrong. With NATO’s assistance this tribunal has shown it has real teeth. Over half of the seventy publicly indicted war criminals in Bosnia have been placed in its custody in The Hague. Nineteen were physically detained and transferred to The Hague by NATO troops, sometimes at some considerable physical risk. Lately, those detained have been more and more

2. *Statute for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia*, S.C. Res 827, U.N. SCOR, 48th Sess., 3217th mtg, U.N. Doc. S/RES/827 (1993).

senior, disproving the notion that only the “small fry” would face justice. Although I regret as much as anyone that Karadzic and Mladic are still at large, I am confident that they too will be brought to trial in the not too distant future.

As they see more and more other indicted war criminals taken to The Hague, they have become more isolated. As long as indicted war criminals run free, their presence can only poison the atmosphere in Bosnia and hold up the necessary process of reconciliation. The past must be acknowledged frankly and freed of dangerous myths if it is to be overcome. Therefore, the success of the ICTY is in our common interest, not only for long term peace in Bosnia but also as a deterrent to all dictators who may be tempted to mistreat their citizens in the future, wherever they may be. The process of justice may not be perfect, but war criminals can no longer act with impunity as the international community moves to establish a permanent international criminal court.

While developments in Bosnia took a turn for the better after 1995, developments in Kosovo took a turn for the worse. Ever since Milosevic eliminated the autonomy of this province in the late 1980s, the potential for unrest among its large Albanian majority had been growing. Predictably, the increasing unrest strengthened those who advocated violence to achieve independence. During the course of 1998, fighting between the Kosovar Albanians and Serb forces increased, with the latter adopting a strategy that increasingly resembled the kind of ethnic cleansing that had occurred in Bosnia.

As a result, neighboring nations, in particular Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia³ (“FYROM”), were faced with the specter of instability caused by large numbers of refugees. Equally worrisome was the crisis’ implications for the Bosnian peace process: to allow Belgrade’s campaign of ethnic cleansing to continue unabated would have put the entire project of a multi-ethnic Bosnia at risk.

NATO had been taking measures to support the stability of those neighbors, to avoid a spillover conflict. Both Albania and FYROM made use of the consultation opportunities provided by the Partnership for Peace. NATO held exercises in both countries and advised them on how to control their borders and cope

3. Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

with the influx of refugees. The Alliance also began to draw up a number of contingency plans for the eventual support of an international force.

Yet the situation inside Kosovo deteriorated further. In Fall 1998, 300,000 Kosovar civilians fled their homes. Fifty thousand of them fled to surrounding forests and mountains. With the approach of winter, many refugees were likely to die from cold or starvation. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1199 of 23 September ("Resolution 1199") spoke of "an impending humanitarian catastrophe" and characterized the developments as "a threat to peace and security of the region." Since the Security Council could not agree on a military response, the chances for inducing a change from outside remained slim.

Thus, we were faced with the prospect of witnessing a deliberately engineered humanitarian disaster in a region bordering on NATO and European Union territories. If we wanted to avert this unfolding tragedy, and stabilize that volatile part of Europe before the end of the twentieth century, then we had to face up to the Kosovo crisis in full.

For a while it seemed that a set of bold initiatives by the international community would be able to avert this tragedy without military intervention. With the endorsement of the Contact Group, U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke negotiated the sending of unarmed OSCE-observers into Kosovo to verify Belgrade's compliance with Resolution 1199. NATO would provide the OSCE observers with air surveillance, while the so-called NATO Extraction Force deployed in FYROM would help evacuate the observers in case things should go wrong. NATO had also supported Holbrooke's mission by putting military pressure on Belgrade: On October 12, 1998, the North Atlantic Council had agreed to the so-called Activation Order ("ACTORD") for air operations against Serbian military assets.

Within weeks it became clear that Milosevic did not keep to the agreement. Instead, he intensified his campaign using a strategy of piecemeal military assaults, thus hoping to remain below the threshold of triggering outside intervention.

When the international community brought the parties together at Rambouillet, France, in February 1999, it was clear to everyone concerned that this would be the last opportunity for a comprehensive settlement. Addressing the North Atlantic Coun-

cil on January 28, 1999, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said as much, referring to “the need to use force, when all other means have failed” and warning that “we may be reaching that limit, once again, in the former Yugoslavia.”

The proposals put forward at Rambouillet by the Contact Group—and endorsed by the Security Council and NATO—were a genuine attempt to create a compromise that would not only be fair, but also politically viable: Kosovo would remain part of Serbia, yet with wide-ranging autonomy status. Most Serb forces would withdraw and the KLA would be disarmed. A NATO-led force would be deployed to implement the agreement.

Given the urgency of a solution, and the intransigence of the parties, tight deadlines had to be set. And, given Belgrade’s poor track record for keeping agreements, NATO threatened air strikes if Milosevic would not sign the compromise.

After difficult negotiations, the Kosovar Albanians signed the agreement on March 18, 1999. Milosevic, however, rejected it. Indeed, while negotiations were taking place, the substantial build-up of Serbian forces in and around Kosovo indicated that Belgrade was preparing a large-scale offensive against the KLA. Quite obviously, Milosevic had never intended to accept a political solution. On March 24, 1999, NATO began its operation “Allied Force.”

As the above makes clear, “Allied Force” did not come out of the blue. It only came about after all diplomatic means had been exhausted. Still, it was a decision the Allies did not take lightly. Everyone involved knew about the risks: for the first time in NATO history there would be a sustained military action outside NATO territory, against a sovereign state; there would be accidental civilian casualties, and we would risk casualties of our own. The operation would inevitably burden our relationship with Russia. And last but not least, we would end up with a long and expensive commitment to the future of Kosovo.

We decided that these risks were worth taking. For not to act would have meant that the Atlantic community legitimized ethnic cleansing in its immediate neighborhood. Having remained passive in the face of a conflict that, as British Prime Minister Tony Blair put it, seemed like “a throwback to the worst memories of the 20th century” and would have undermined the

whole value-system on which our policies are built. Inaction in the face of the plight of the Kosovars would have cast doubt on the sincerity of our policies, on the credibility of our institutions, and of the transatlantic relationship. Bosnia had taught us as much: indifference can become more costly than engagement. As President William Clinton put it in his Address to the Nation on March 24, 1999: "If we and our allies were to allow this war to continue with no response, President Milosevic would read our hesitation as a license to kill." Thus, in deciding to go ahead with "Allied Force," the commonly made distinction between defending values and interests was never really an issue: In Kosovo, *defending our values had become a strategic interest.*

The Kosovo campaign clearly was not a "war" in any traditional sense. Rather, NATO action was a last resort to compel Belgrade to end a humanitarian disaster it had created, and to accept the demands set by the international community: an immediate ending of violence and repression; the withdrawal from Kosovo of the military, police, and paramilitary forces; the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence; the return of all refugees; and the establishment of a political framework agreement for Kosovo on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords.

Contrary to widespread criticism, the air campaign achieved its goals. Having seriously underestimated Allied resolve, President Milosevic accepted the demands of the international community on June 3, 1999. After seventy-eight days, without any casualties of its own, NATO had prevailed. A humanitarian disaster had been averted. About one million refugees subsequently returned safety and in record time. The ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians had been reversed even if the NATO forces in Kosovo faced a new challenge of protecting the Serb and other minorities remaining in Kosovo.

The military-technological prowess NATO demonstrated in "Allied Force" was noteworthy in and of itself. Never in history has a campaign been so painstakingly designed with the imperative to avoid civilian casualties. Out of 23,600 bombs and missiles delivered by Allied aircrafts, only twenty failed to hit their targets, a level of accuracy never achieved in any previous air campaign. Of course, I accept that the twenty failures produced some tragic results and reminded us that even the most carefully conducted conflicts can never be accident free. Nevertheless,

NATO went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that ending the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians did not produce more suffering than necessary. But perhaps, the most significant achievement lies elsewhere: the Allies held together. Nineteen democracies, including NATO's three new members, stood firm, knowing that this was more than a question of preserving NATO credibility: it was a question of whether our vision of a democratic and humane Europe could prevail over a policy of intolerance and xenophobia.

This unique Allied cohesion has also been crucial for establishing consensus on the legal basis and legitimacy of NATO's actions. In October 1998, the ACTORD had already raised the difficult issue of whether NATO could threaten the use of force without an explicit U.N. Security Council mandate to do so. Allies agreed that NATO could—for it had become abundantly clear that such a step was the only action that could prevent a humanitarian disaster.

It was equally clear, though, that such a step would constitute the exception from the rule, not an attempt to create new international law. An Alliance with nineteen democratic member states, each of them a member of the United Nations, three of them permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, has a vital interest in a predictable international order. The specific circumstances of the Kosovo crisis, however, defied all traditional categories. One particular challenge was to overcome the paralysis of the U.N. Security Council, which was unable to establish a common position on the Kosovo crisis and therefore to take the necessary action.

Indeed, no one put it better than the Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan. In a speech in Geneva on April 7, 1999, he recalled the meaning of the U.N. Charter, noting that "the rights and ideals the United Nations exists to protect are those of peoples No government has the right to hide behind national sovereignty in order to violate the human rights or fundamental freedom of its peoples." Even if NATO, as mentioned earlier, had no specific Security Council resolution to authorize the use of force, I think it significant that when one country tried to introduce a motion in the Security Council to condemn NATO, only three of the fifteen Security Council members supported it, and therefore it was not put on the agenda.

The cohesion and solidarity of the Allies was one key factor, and the support lent to NATO actions by its partner states was another. Indeed, NATO's fiftieth anniversary Summit in Washington on April 24-25, 1999, became a resounding demonstration of this solidarity. All partner countries present, including those neighboring Serbia, supported the actions of the Alliance.

The indictment of President Milosevic and four other members of the Serbian government by the International Tribunal on War Crimes in The Hague was yet another confirmation that NATO actions were not the preoccupation of a few, but did indeed represent a wider international cause. Currently, NATO troops are cooperating actively with the International Criminal Tribunal. They are guarding dozens of war crimes sites in Kosovo to prevent any tampering with evidence. Last October, French troops serving with the NATO-led Kosovo Implementation Force (or "KFOR") arrested four Serb war crimes suspects following a long and painstaking investigation into a massacre committed in Djakovica last April. NATO will do all it can to help ensure that those guilty of war crimes are brought to justice. NATO governments and those of its partner countries are also ready to arrest any indicted war criminal who enters their territories. I would hope that once Serbia becomes a true democracy the indicted war criminals concealing themselves there will also soon discover that they have no hiding place.

Allied cohesion and determination also helped to draw Russia back into a common solution. When Russia, in the framework of the G-8, essentially reaffirmed the demands of the international community and supported by NATO, Milosevic had no potential allies left. On June 3 1999, he accepted the terms. On June 10, the former Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana, suspended "Allied Force." That same day, Security Council Resolution 1244 set the stage for the NATO-led Kosovo Implementation Force, designed to create the secure environment for other organizations to begin their work. Heeding the lessons of Bosnia: diplomacy and military pressure must come together, or as Frederic of Prussia once remarked, we may be trying "to play music without instruments."

And yet another lesson of Bosnia will be heeded: the need to look beyond the immediate aftermath of the conflict and to engage in a comprehensive rebuilding of the region. One of the centerpieces of NATO's Washington Summit was its Southeast-

ern Initiative, which is now supporting the Stability Pact drawn up by the European Union. Together, these initiatives signaled a comprehensive commitment to establishing a viable political and economic order—not just in Kosovo, but across Southeastern Europe.

It is evident that in Kosovo proper, the challenge is perhaps even more difficult than in Bosnia. For one thing, there is no Dayton Peace Agreement to which all the parties have agreed and which provides a clear road map for the future of the province. Given the persisting hatred between the parties, no one harbors any illusions that reconciliation could be achieved within a few years. But the people deserve a chance, and they will reconcile even less if NATO and the international community are not there to help them. Despite well-publicized problems, many Kosovar leaders realize that a democratic multi-ethnic society is the only viable solution in the long term. Indeed, the rapid return of refugees much faster than anyone expected, including some from Serbia, has been the most surprising, positive development since the deployment of KFOR.

Thanks to KFOR's widespread presence and even-handed approach, the level of violence has subsided. By detaining perpetrators of violence and confiscating unauthorized weapons, KFOR has demonstrated that it is determined to provide for the security for *all* inhabitants of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic background.

One of the biggest challenges has been the demilitarization process of the Kosovo Liberation Army ("UCK"), which was supervised by KFOR. Following consistent Allied pressure, the UCK complied with the terms of the June 21 Undertaking on Demilitarization and handed in all required weapons. Meanwhile, the U.N. Mission to Kosovo ("UNMIK"), in close coordination with KFOR, is establishing a multi-ethnic civilian emergency corps closely modeled on the French *Sécurité Civile*. The Kosovo Protection Corps ("Corps") will be prepared to respond to any natural or accidental disaster; undertake search and rescue missions; provide humanitarian assistance; assist with demining; and contribute to rebuilding infrastructure and communities. Overall political authority of the Corps will rest with the United Nations, but KFOR will assume an active monitoring and supervisory role. Many former UCK fighters have already come forward to join the new Kosovo Police Force as part of their over-

all integration into civilian life. Other former UCK fighters are volunteering to join the new Kosovo Police Force.

Indeed, cooperation between KFOR and UNMIK goes far beyond the UCK's transformation and integration, reinforcing a central lesson of Bosnia about the need for close civil-military cooperation. Looking ahead, KFOR will continue to carry out a number of supporting tasks until the international civil presence is able to take over fully. The tasks are numerous: from creating a new Kosovo police force to establishing effective border controls and new democratic political structures.

Naturally, all of the above will take much time and effort. Also, there is still no agreement on the long-term political future of Kosovo. In the meantime, however, the international community is doing its best to assure the future of a multi-ethnic society. But let there be no doubt: the ultimate responsibility rests with the local population—ethnic Albanians and Serbs alike. They must put aside their mentality of hatred and do their part to achieve a lasting peace. The international community can assist, but will not allow a culture of dependency to develop. Democratic values cannot be imposed from the outside, but can only be derived from the willingness of political leaders to take full responsibility for the future security and prosperity of their communities.

KFOR will have to stay for as long as it takes to get the job done. As with SFOR in Bosnia, which will soon enter its fifth year, NATO troops cannot leave while there is still even a small risk of a relapse into armed conflict. Peace must be self-sustaining. Such a long-term military presence will have its costs. Yet these costs pale in comparison to the Cold War spending levels. Security in Europe still comes with a price tag, but it remains affordable. And, as we have learned again and again, the price of indifference can be far higher than that of engagement.

The Kosovo crisis proved both a vindication and a challenge for NATO. It was a vindication because it reaffirmed the logic of NATO's post-Cold War reform, emphasizing the need to have partners, the need for strong relations with Russia, the need to maintain NATO's military competence, and the need for a transatlantic approach to European security.

The Kosovo crisis also provided a resounding affirmation of our new approach to security, based on the primacy of human

values—values not only endorsed by the nineteen Allies, but also by NATO's partners. Never before has the notion of interdependence of security become so dramatically visible. And never before in NATO's fifty year history has the notion of the Alliance as a community of values been expressed more clearly.

Yet Kosovo was also a challenge. Not only did it confront NATO with a unique combination of political, military, legal, and moral issues that were without precedent, but it also presented Europe with a strong reminder of its military shortcomings. Future military operations will place a premium on both European and North American Allies having the capabilities and technologies to allow them to act together in an effective and cohesive way. If human rights are to be upheld through military action, then the NATO Allies will need high-tech military capabilities to ensure that they can perform these missions as quickly and as effectively as possible, and at the smallest human cost for all concerned.

I admit that as we enter the millennium, we would have liked to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this Alliance last year in different circumstances. We all would have preferred to highlight Europe's achievements rather than concern ourselves with a region in which this continent shows its darkest side. But in having decided to become engaged, to make peace and long-term stability in the Balkans our concern, we have sent a strong signal that in our Atlantic community values have meaning. This is the central message of the new NATO—a message that will reinforce the many initiatives that the Alliance will undoubtedly undertake in years to come to better protect the human rights of its citizens and secure the entire Euro-Atlantic area.