

Verbatim Special: The Balkan War

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"It gets under my skin when people say airpower is not working because Milosevic hasn't caved yet. Airpower is doing exactly what we're asking [of it]. The question is, is the strategy working? We made a conscious decision to adopt a strategy which restricts us to airpower alone, and everybody should understand that it will take a lot longer for airpower to be effective under those circumstances."—**Gen. Richard Hawley, commander of Air Combat Command, press remarks, April 29.**

"As Jesse Jackson would say, give peace a chance here."—**Sen. Trent Lott, majority leader, CNN, May 2.**

"[The US and NATO] must seize this moment to take the step to dramatic diplomacy from bloody, protracted war. ... We have the power to bomb. We should have the strength to negotiate. If we take the position of demonization, there is no reason ever to negotiate. We demonize Milosevic. They demonize President Clinton. The cycle of demonization must stop."—**Jesse Jackson, remarks to reporters at Andrews AFB, Md., May 3.**

"My father gave the order to send B-52s—planes that did not have the precision guided munitions that so impress us all today. He gave the order to send them to bomb the city where his oldest son was held a prisoner of war. That is a pretty hard thing for a father to do. ... He knew that leaders were expected to make hard choices in war. Would that the President had half that regard for the responsibilities of his office."—**Sen. John McCain, Senate floor speech, May 4.**

"This is a game with as many innings as we want, and I think [Milosevic] is running out of baseballs."—**Maj. Gen. Charles Wald, Washington Post, May 4.**

"Not having ground troops in place in the region permitted Milosevic not only to accelerate his ethnic cleansing, but it precluded him from having to arrange Serbian defensive forces

differently, to protect both northern and southern borders. So it was foolish of President Clinton to rule out a ground option, but it's a good example of a political leader perceiving political imperatives in a way that hamstringing military success."—**Retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Charles Link, National Journal, May 8.**

"I sense there's some war by committee and trial and error going on in this operation. I subscribe, rather, to the strategy of giving it your best shot from the get-go."—**Gen. Charles Horner, Desert Storm air boss, NJ, May 8.**

"On the MTW capability, Major Theater War capability: As you know, we have always tried to structure our forces in a way that we could handle two nearly simultaneously. We have never been structured to handle three. What we have now in Kosovo is roughly a Major Theater War under way. ... That means that we're at three MTWs rather than just two. And so, we didn't plan for this."—**Defense Secretary William Cohen, Senate Appropriations Committee, May 11.**

"Airpower alone has never been decisive. In Vietnam, for example, the Air Force dropped some 6 million tons of bombs, almost triple the tonnage dropped in World War II, without breaking the North Vietnamese will to resist."—**Retired Army Col. Harry Summers, Washington Times, May 12.**

"Airmen would have liked to have gone after that target set on the first night and sent a clear signal that we were taking the gloves off from the very beginning, that we were not going to incrementalize, that we're not going to try a little bit of this and see how you like it and try a little bit of that and see how you like it."—**Maj. Gen. Michael Short, head of NATO air operations, New York Times, May 13.**

"Airpower alone is capable of rendering [the Yugoslav] military ineffective, and that's what our charter is, that's what our task is, and

that's what we're going to do."—**Gen. John Jumper, commander of US Air Forces in Europe, press remarks at Pentagon, May 14.**

"This air war is different than any we have ever fought. There is a feeling of frustration among the Air Force about the way it's going, but I say, 'Tough. Grow up. That's life.' We aren't in charge. The politicians are in charge because there are other, larger considerations."—**USAF Col. Phillip Meilinger, Naval War College professor, WP, May 16.**

"I remember him [National Security Advisor Sandy Berger] saying once, 'Are we going to bomb Kosovo? Can I explain that to Congress? They'll kill us.'"—**A "senior Administration official, a colleague of Berger's in setting national security policy," WP, May 16.**

"We are at our maximum advantage in an air campaign. We have a 100-to-1 power ratio over Milosevic. We hit him every day, and every day we hit him harder, and the cost to us has been, thank God, relatively minor. [If Clinton had pressed for a ground war in Kosovo], we would have been paralyzed by a debate in NATO, and paralyzed, in my judgment, by a debate in this country by what was, at that point, a hypothetical, distant option."—**Berger, WP, May 16.**

"Where [the Powell Doctrine] needs to be updated is on the question of whether or not military force can be used for more limited purposes than the decimation of the enemy. It cannot mean that we have no choices between nothing and everything."—**Berger, WP, May 16.**

"The truth is bitter. The truth is sad, but the truth is we are right to choose force in the Balkans."—**Daniel Cohn-Bendit, prominent German Green Party leader, WP, May 16.**

"I don't believe you can win wars by tossing bombs around like popcorn."—**Sen. Diane Feinstein, WT, May 16.**

"We've let them [NATO's European members] play Tom Sawyer with us too long. They let us paint their fence."—**Rep. Barney Frank, Army Times, May 17.**

"I would have argued for a campaign that, if it couldn't include ground troops, then don't take away also the threat of ground troops."—**Retired Army Gen. Colin Powell, a former JCS Chairman, National Press Club address, May 17.**

"They [Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopters] are like the old Alfa Romeo sports cars. High performance but also high maintenance—and high risk."—**A "NATO official," Los Angeles Times, May 17.**

"The vast bulk of this military operation is being carried out by US forces, although Kosovo is a very long way from Kansas. Their commitment and leadership is something for which President Clinton should be praised, rather than the sneers he receives from the right in this country [Britain]."—**British Prime Minister Tony Blair, NYT, May 18.**

"I ... always said that we intend to see our objectives achieved and that we have not, and will not, take any [military] option off the table."—**President Clinton, press remarks, May 18.**

"I don't think that we or our Allies should take any options off the table, and that has been my position from the beginning—that we ought to stay with the strategy that we have and work it through to the end."—**Clinton, press remarks, May 18.**

"The end of the war must be sought through dialogue, not military victory."—**Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, press remarks in Brussels, May 18.**

"[Germany] rejects the sending of ground forces. That is the German position, the German position supported unanimously by the members of the German parliament."—**German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, NATO press conference, May 19.**

"The first lesson when dealing with the Balkans is not to send mixed signals. We don't believe it makes sense to change our strategy just at the moment when there is some light at the end of the tunnel."—**Michael Steiner, chief foreign policy advisor to German chancellor, WP, May 20.**

"When the Apaches were two

weeks late in getting to Albania, it was clear the Army was scraping the bottom of the barrel. Those birds are stiffed [sic] up and polished for a public relations war. The only thing they're good for is cannibalization."—**A "retired Army officer," Wall Street Journal, May 20.**

"Tell me, is Kosovo really such a big conflict that it required that all the power of NATO—which now commands two-thirds of the world's military forces—should be aimed at it?"—**Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, WP, May 20.**

"Milosevic will get only what he has earned, which is the contempt of humankind. He and his cronies will remain subject to indictment by the War Crimes Tribunal."—**Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, USA Today, May 21.**

"We are constrained by our Allies. Will the public support this? Will the European public support this? I don't know if the war is calibrated, but the rhetoric is calibrated. It's a constant challenge to articulate what the US interest is, why we're doing this, both in terms of NATO Allies and simple right-and-wrong questions. We look at this on a daily basis."—**White House spokesman Joe Lockhart, NYT, May 22.**

"I just don't think Bill Clinton wanted to have a major ground war on his watch."—**Powell, NYT, May 22.**

"They [Administration policy-makers] believe that Somalia demonstrates conclusively that you cannot have any casualties. They take this as a matter of faith."—**Ivo Daalder, former National Security Council staff member in Clinton Administration, NYT, May 22.**

"As an airman, I'd have done this a whole lot differently than I was allowed to do. We could have done this differently. We should have done this differently."—**Short, Miami Herald, May 22.**

"Airpower is very seductive to American leaders, because it combines our love of technology with our distaste for the bestial aspects of land warfare. You do it nice and cleanly. Nobody gets their feet muddy. A pilot flies over at 15,000 feet, kills only those people that need to be killed, flies home, and has a cold beer with a beautiful lady. This is not a new concept."—**Rich Dunn, a retired US Army colonel and now analyst with the Center for National Security Studies, NYT, May 22.**

"I don't have a good feel for knowing how close they are to breaking, but I'll tell you that, if we do this for two more months, we will either kill this army in Kosovo or send it on the run."—**Short, WP, May 24.**

"Bombing ... is oppression. If the bombing is done with the notion that our own blood is not to be shed, it is obscene."—**Norman Mailer, WP op-ed article, May 24.**

"Quite frankly, these little boo-boos, where you're hitting a KLA headquarters, where you're killing innocent citizens, I think is hurting the image of the military, which is unfair."—**Lott, AP, May 24.**

"For Clinton himself, it [Allied Force] is an anti-war movement's sort of war. Out of one side of his mouth, he says that he fights in behalf of a 'moral imperative.' Out of the other side, he says, 'Hell no, we won't go!'"—**Peter Collier, National Review, May 24.**

"I had adequate opportunity to make my views known and to raise all the issues I wanted to raise. I had concerns about whether airpower would do it [defeat Serbian forces] by itself. [Others] felt that air [power] might do it."—**Gen. Dennis Reimer, US Army chief of staff, AP, May 26.**

"As one who came away from the Vietnam War with at least the expectation that we now knew what not to do, it is astonishing to see this return to feckless incrementalism, the absence of coherent policy, and a void of political leadership. Maybe you had to be there."—**Robert McFarlane, Reagan national security advisor, 1983–85, LAT op-ed article, May 26.**

"I think it was Napoleon who said, 'If you want to fight a war, make sure it's against a coalition.'"—**Reimer, NYT, May 27.**

"The world has never in this decade been so close as now to the brink of nuclear war."—**Russian negotiator Viktor Chernomyrdin, WP op-ed article, May 27.**

"The [NATO] decision to attack the entire nation has been counterproductive, and our destruction of civilian life has now become senseless and excessively brutal."—**Jimmy Carter, NYT, May 27.**

"The President made the sine qua non of American involvement that there would be no casualties, but that's misguided. Polls and past experience

suggest the American people would accept 25 to 50 deaths. ... There's nothing wrong with conducting wars by polls. You just have to ask the right questions."—**former Clinton advisor Dick Morris, WP, May 27.**

"[When Serb air defense operators refused to turn on their radars], that's when we realized that nobody wanted to eat a HARM missile for Slobodan Milosevic."—**Short, WP, May 28.**

"This is the equivalent of [an] MTW, an air campaign, at least, so it's a major campaign on the part of the Air Force."—**Cohen, DoD briefing, May 28.**

"I think this has been a good learning experience for NATO itself."—**Cohen, DoD briefing, May 28.**

"Milosevic is a sinking ship. If you were around him in Belgrade, I'm not sure you'd hitch your star to a sinking ship, to mix a metaphor." —**Berger, NYT, May 29.**

"I would say the air campaign is working. We've always said there are theoretical limits to an air campaign, and all military analysts have pointed this out. But every operation has to be approached with the unique circumstances in which it's conducted and for its own specific political purposes."—**US Army Gen. Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, WP, May 30.**

"The catastrophic effects of NATO's air war against Serbia have subverted the Clinton Administration's declared humanitarian intentions."—**Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor of The Nation, WP op-ed, May 31.**

"When the peacekeeping force goes in there, the overwhelming majority of people will be European. ... When the reconstruction begins, the overwhelming amount of investment will be European."—**Clinton, remarks at Arlington Cemetery, May 31.**

"Nothing has been more disturbing to conservative Kosovo hawks than the identity of their allies. To be supporting a foreign policy backed by Christopher Dodd; to be seated in a cheering section next to David Bonior; to find oneself applauded by Ted Kennedy. ... It is truly enough to cause us to rethink."—**El-liott Abrams, assistant secretary of state in Reagan Administration, NR, May 31.**

"A welfare mother has to account for

every dime, but the sky's the limit with the Pentagon."—**Rep. Jim McGovern, WSJ, June 2.**

"Our policy is not to coordinate with the KLA. ... We are not operating in coordination with the KLA. We are not serving as their air force."—**Cohen, press remarks, June 2.**

"I don't see any difference in the behavior of NATO and of Hitler. ... NATO wants to erect its own order in the world, and it needs Yugoslavia simply as an example."—**Alexander Solzhenitsyn, remarks to reporters in Moscow, AP, June 2.**

"We have no clue how many precious targets Milosevic has or when he'll fold."—**A "top NATO airman," WP, June 3.**

"You can make it very painful for the enemy, but, as well as the Air Force performed in Desert Storm, it was the Army that rolled across the border. You can't win wars solely through airpower."—**Maj. Gene Roles, EC-130 ABCCC operations officer, NYT, June 3.**

"I don't think there's anybody among the Chiefs saying, 'By God, if we don't invade Kosovo, it will be a travesty.'"—**A defense "official," NYT, June 3.**

"Federal government [of Yugoslavia] has adopted a peace proposal by the envoys of the Russian Federation and the European Union, since it guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, disables a terrorist and separatist activity, and halts the aggression on our country, the suffering of the civilians, and demolishing of the national treasure. Federal government estimates to be of especial importance that the decision is being transferred to the United Nations, on the basis of the UN Charter."—**Dispatch from Tanjug, the official Yugoslavia news agency, June 3.**

"No matter where we are today, we're there because of the steady, professional, and strong application of airpower over the last 10 weeks. That is what has produced the reported progress out of Belgrade."—**Bacon, DoD briefing, June 3.**

"We must have clarity that the Serbian leadership has fully accepted these conditions and intends to fully implement them."—**Clinton, White House statement, June 3.**

"We have been in touch with various members of the Kosovar Albanian community, including the KLA. ... It is our expectation that they will demilitarize, ... on the basis of the Rambouillet agreements."—**Albright, news briefing, June 3.**

"We don't want this to simply be an exercise in paper promises. There must be performance."—**Cohen, remarks to reporters, June 3.**

"The main thing is that we have managed to bring the Balkan [peace] process into the UN legal plane."—**Chernomyrdin, Tanjug, June 3.**

"Slobodan Milosevic is Yugoslavia's legitimate president. This is the choice of the Yugoslav people, and we all shall deal with him."—**Chernomyrdin, Tanjug, June 3.**

"That [removal of Milosevic from office] is not part of the terms that NATO set out in the beginning. That question is left open."—**Clinton, ABC's "Good Morning America," June 4.**

"The only acceptable deal with Slobodan Milosevic is one that offers him safety in exile in exchange for his agreement to step down and hand power to Serbian democrats. Milosevic must be driven from power—vertically or horizontally."—**Sen. Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, NYT, June 4.**

"When we look back on this conflict, the air war may be considered the easy part. It is going to be much harder to get these people to forget the violence and live in peace."—**A "senior NATO military officer," WP, June 4.**

"We [the Allies] have taken ownership of the Balkan problem. I kind of imagine Milosevic smiling and saying, 'We tried to deal with the Kosovars and the KLA; now let NATO try.'"—**John J. Mearsheimer, University of Chicago professor, NYT, June 4.**

"The war has ended."—**Col. Gen. Svetozar Marjanovic, Yugoslav negotiator, to reporters after June 9 signing of NATO peace terms.**

"A few moments ago I instructed Gen. Wesley Clark to suspend NATO's air operations against Yugoslavia."—**NATO Secretary General Javier Solana, announcement in Brussels, June 10.** ■