

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
AND AROUND KOSOVO

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BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE
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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AND
AROUND KOSOVO**

THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2001

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AND AROUND KOSOVO

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COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The Commission met at 2:00 p.m. in Room 485, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, The Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Chairman, presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, CHAIRMAN

Sen. CAMPBELL. The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Hearing will be in order.

Today's hearing of the Helsinki Commission—the first of the 107th Congress—will examine the unfolding developments in and around Kosovo. While there are differing views over the strategic interest of the United States in that region, one fact is beyond dispute—thousands of American soldiers were placed and remain in harm's way in the Balkans. I am a member of the Appropriations Committee that has been to Kosovo twice in the last year and a half and met with many young men and women in the region. My view is that they are doing a terrific job. At the same time, it looks like there has been a transition from our military men and women fighting battles to rebuilding nations. I'm very proud of them, and I want to thank our lead witness today, General Ralston, for being our personal guide when we visit Kosovo.

Given the ongoing violence in Macedonia, and southern Serbia, this hearing will include an assessment of developments beyond the borders of Kosovo and implications for countries in that region. Escalating tensions in the Balkans are the cause for grave concern with serious consequences for continued engagement in the region by NATO, the OSCE, and the United States.

Left unchecked, the latest outbreak of violence threatens to undermine efforts by the international community to bring some degree of order to an otherwise chaotic environment that could lead to an even greater human suffering and hardship.

Initiatives by the OSCE and others on the ground in Kosovo are attempting to make some inroads. A good example, is the OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School, which we did visit earlier this year. The school is providing professional law enforcement training with the aim of establishing a credible civilian police force in Kosovo.

Despite these efforts, the situation in Kosovo appears dismal, sometimes even hopeless. If you are a Serb or a Roma, you cannot move about freely without risking your own life. Many individuals who fled from their homes have not been able to return. There are few institutions in place and functioning which define the parameters through which a civil society can thrive and economic opportunities can be sought. Like other places in the region, corruption is rampant in Kosovo.

I look forward to hearing from the experts assembled this afternoon as we assess the latest developments in and around Kosovo and their implications for NATO, the OSCE and our Nation. First, we have General Joseph Ralston of the U.S. Air Force, serving as the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, who can provide a NATO and military perspective on the current situation. Next we will hear from Ambassador James Pardew, the Principal Deputy Advisor for Kosovo and the Dayton Implementation at the U.S. Department of State, who will tell us about the U.S. policy approaches. Finally, we will have Ambassador Daan Everts of The Netherlands, the head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, who will comment as a person serving in the field and dealing with everything from human rights and police training to institutional development in Kosovo.

The Helsinki Commission is pleased to have such a distinguished panel, and speaking of distinguished people I'd like to introduce members of the Moroccan Parliament, who are here today visiting us in our committee, led by Amad Kadir, the Vice President for the Chamber of Counselors from the country of Morocco. Would you stand please? Thank you, nice to see you here. Thank you. Good to see you.

With that, I'd like to turn the floor over to Chairman Smith. He tells us there will be a vote on the House side in about 20 minutes or a half an hour, but stay as long as you can.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN**

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to congratulate you, Senator Campbell, as our new Chairman of the Helsinki Commission and commend you for holding today's very timely hearing on Kosovo, as well as the region in and around Kosovo.

Senator, I'm confident that as Chairman you will, as you have been for so long, be a champion of human rights and humanitarian concerns. I look forward to serving with you and following your lead as we move forward in these next two years.

Like so many of our hearings, the topic of the Commission's hearing today is very timely. The Commission has held numerous hearings and conducted fact-finding trips over the last several years, which have focused on Kosovo. Again, we find the issues and challenges facing the people of the region on the front page of the news. In fact, I recently joined Speaker Hastert on a trip to Kosovo and Morocco where we were shown great hospitality by the King and by many people within his government. We had a very fruitful dialogue on human rights and economic issues. I join you in welcoming our visiting Parliamentarians.

Kosovo is receiving much attention right now because of the situation in southern Serbia and most recently in Macedonia. Mr. Chairman, I think it is important to go on record, as many have, in condemning the

violence which now threatens Macedonia. Violence is not an acceptable means for addressing grievances, even when those grievances may be legitimate.

In the past, the Helsinki Commission has raised concerns regarding minority issues such as education and citizenship with Macedonian authorities. Certainly, progress has been made in Macedonia and those avenues for achieving additional progress still exist. But, I'm particularly concerned that continued violence by Albanian militants can only threaten those avenues. At the same time, I join those in calling upon the Macedonian authorities to utilize restraint and to abide by the rule of law in enforcing the law.

Basic issues of citizenship and non-discrimination require a principled approach by all sides. Violence is simply not the means to an end.

Among the many issues relating to Kosovo, those which cause so much suffering are the greatest concern to me. There are many missing persons, Serbs, Albanians, and others, and surviving friends and relatives wonder and agonize about their fate. Hundreds of Kosovar Albanians wrongfully languish in Serbian prisons, losing precious time in their lives, not to mention the denial of personal freedoms. Members of minorities in Kosovo do not know what their future or that of their children will be. The situation in and around Kosovo encourages trafficking of enslaved women in the region's horrific and booming sex trade. As you know, and I am sure our witnesses are aware of this, last year the Congress passed landmark legislation to throw the book at traffickers and to try to rescue women from that terrible fate.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that our panel will shed some light on what is being done in response to these volatile issues. We are concerned about the holding of elections, the operation of a free media, the creation of a functioning economy, the establishment of institutions to respond to people's needs—all of these are critical. Of course, mitigation—and really ending the violence—is our number one priority.

I look forward to the testimony presented by our distinguished witnesses. Thank you for being here and for the very real, tangible and constructive role you play in bringing peace to that troubled part of the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you.

We are joined by Senator Voinovich of Ohio, who is serving his first team as a Commissioner, and before we go to our first witness did you have a statement, Senator?

Sen. VOINOVICH. Yes.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Go ahead, why don't you proceed.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
HON. GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, COMMISSIONER**

Sen. VOINOVICH. Thank you.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Chairmen Smith and Campbell for scheduling this hearing to examine recent developments in Kosovo and throughout southeast Europe.

I've been very active in efforts for both peace and stability in this part of the world during the past two years, and it seems appropriate that my first Commission hearing as a member of the Helsinki Commission tended to highlight some problems faced in the Balkans to provide dialogue so that we may effectively act—

I'm glad to be here. I'd like to underscore the importance of continuing to discuss the difficulties faced by those in Kosovo and surrounding areas. As we all are aware, there is still much work to be done to bring a kind of peace, security and prosperity to the Balkans.

Since the end of the war, I've worked on three essential items that I believe will bring peace and stability to that region. First, to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo that continues today. Next, to implement the stability of that, and finally, to support democracy in Serbia, an effort that I began while I was Governor of the State of Ohio.

Along with Senator Specter, I was pleased to have the opportunity to visit with the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kostunica, during a trip to southeast Europe and the Middle East over the holiday vacation. At last, there is a remarkable opportunity for positive change in the FRY, which I hope will serve as a stabilizing force in the region.

I visited Kosovo twice during the past several years, most recently in July as Vice Chairman of the U.S. delegation to the annual meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest, Romania. Along with some of my colleagues I traveled to Kosovo to get an update on the situation there. During the OSCE meeting, I introduced a resolution on southeast Europe and called to the attention of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly the situation in Kosovo and Serbia and made clear the importance of democracy in Serbia. I was pleased that resolution passed, putting the OSCE on record as condemning the Milosevic regime and insisting on the restoration of human rights, the rule of law and free press, and respect for ethnic minorities in Serbia.

I also visited Kosovo in February 2000 and had the opportunity to sit down with the leaders of Kosovo's ethnic minority groups, including leaders in the Serbian Orthodox Church. In addition, I met with the leaders of Kosovo's Albanian community, Mr. Thaci, Mr. Rugova and Mr. Qosja. I urged them to end the cycle of ethnic violence that had decimated the region for so many years. I called on them to establish a new paradigm of respect for minority rights and the rule of law in Kosovo. Only when the violence ends can a new era of hope and stability begin in southeast Europe. Unfortunately, we have not seen an end to the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans. Most recently, we've seen violence in Macedonia and ethnic conflict in the Presevo Valley, and it's still of concern to all of us there.

Through a daily exchange of e-mails from two former Ohio State troopers serving as part of the police force in Kosovo, I keep constant contact about what's happening in Kosovo. I think that the information I get sometimes is better than what maybe the CIA can get.

I am aware of the turmoil that continues to plague Kosovo, as well as individuals on all sides, Albanians and Serbs, and other ethnic groups.

They continue to engage in violent activity. I am saddened to learn that OSCE staff members have been injured in these attacks. I mean, people are not aware of what our OSCE people go through over there today in Kosovo. We must remain engaged and continue to promote peace in southeast Europe and I believe the new Administration understands that.

Given the vast amount of activity in the region during the past few weeks, including the strike in Macedonia, happenings in Kosovo and the looming March 31 certification deadline for continue U.S. assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, this hearing is timely. I have been particularly active in efforts to encourage President Kostunica

and the new government to try to meet the three certification requirements outlined in the fiscal year 2001 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill.

Speaking with officials in Belgrade, as well as President Kostunica and Prime Minister Djindjic, I've been paying close attention to the developments in Macedonia. Again, I'd like to congratulate the Chairman for our activities. I think we're doing everything we can to stabilize that, but for having our troops involved in the activity there.

I thank the witnesses for their willingness to come here before the Helsinki Commission today. I had the privilege of meeting General Ralston during the annual meeting of the NATO Parliamentary in Budapest. General, nice to see you again. Ambassador Everts, we had a wonderful lunch together back in February 2000, and I want to publicly thank you for your leadership and your courage there and the work of the OSCE to try and bring stability to that area.

Thank you.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you.

General Ralston, we'll start with you. You bring a world of experience to this hearing, and we're delighted to hear from you.

I might tell all the witnesses, your complete written testimony will be included in the record, if you'd like to detract from that or abbreviate it you are welcome to do that.

Please, proceed, General.

**TESTIMONY OF GEN. GENERAL JOSEPH W. RALSTON,
SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE (NATO),
UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND**

Gen. RALSTON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before the Commission today. Let me tell you up front, you and all the members that are here today, how much I appreciate you taking the time to visit this very troubled area of southeastern Europe, to visit with our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines that are there supporting our mission.

I'm also pleased to be with my distinguished colleagues today, Ambassador Pardew and Ambassador Everts. We've had the opportunity to work together for a number of years now on these very important programs.

I have a few charts here that I would like to talk from, if I may. I thought it might be useful to put up the first one here. I know while you are focused on Kosovo today I thought it might be useful to talk about the broader region, say a few words about Bosnia, then talk about Kosovo, and then talk about Macedonia from a military perspective. My colleagues will be very happy to talk about the other aspects of it, but I will try to confine myself to that aspect.

Let me start off with our situation in Bosnia. The stabilization force, SFOR, that we call it, the situation has been changed on the ground for the better over the past four years, and let me show you what flows from that in terms of our force levels that are there.

If you notice on the left side of that chart, the tall blue line is where we were in early '96. We had 60,000 troops that went into Bosnia. The red line shows the American troops. We had 20,000 Americans. We were 33 percent of the effort of the 34 nations involved. Every six months, we do a review of the situation on the ground, and then we adjust our force levels accordingly. As you notice, as the situation on the ground

has improved what we've been able to do with the force levels. Today, we have just right at 20,000 overall total troops in Bosnia. The U.S. piece of that is about 4,000, about 20 percent, and I just recently received approval from the Administration for a recommendation that we had made to further draw down some U.S. troops that we didn't need because of the improved situation. For example, Apache attack helicopters, that's a weapon system that I don't think we need right now. We had a lot of maintenance people that went with that, that allowed us to take out maybe 750 people. So, here in a couple of months we will be down to about 3,500 Americans, about 18 percent of that effort. So, I think you can see from that chart that the situation on the ground has improved, that has allowed us to do a significant draw down in forces overall, and an even greater draw down of the American forces, to where we are a small percentage of the 34 nations that are involved in SFOR.

Let me now go to Kosovo. The chart that I have here, the map, shows Kosovo, and notice the little green hatched area that goes around that. That is the ground security zone that you have heard about. Now, if I go back to June of 1999, when the KFOR forces were first going into Kosovo, we established a five-kilometer ribbon around Kosovo inside Serbia for the protection of the KFOR forces. At that time, we did not want the Yugoslav army putting their tanks and artillery up on the line, that would threaten the KFOR forces and reduce the warning time that we would have if things were starting to deteriorate.

Now, there was an unintended consequence of establishing that zone: where we kept the FRY forces out, we didn't have the KFOR forces in there because it's sovereign Serb territory. The unintended consequence was that the Albanian extremists moved into the zone and started doing insurgency attacks.

Now, back on March 8, the North Atlantic Council, in consultation with all of the allies, agreed to the phased-and-conditioned return of this ground security zone back to the FRY. We have done two sections of this. We did the section down just north of the Macedonian border, and that went very well. We did that starting on March 14. On March 24 we gave permission, and then on March 25 the FRY forces moved into the majority of the ground security zone around the northern part of Kosovo.

I might tell you that this has gone extremely well. The FRY forces and the KFOR forces coordinated. We established contact points along the boundary. We had certain conditions that they not bring tanks and artillery into that zone, once again, as a force protection method. The FRY forces told us when they were coming in, where they were going to. They coordinated with us, and it's gone very well.

Now, there are two additional sections over on the eastern border, and these are decisions yet to be taken by the North Atlantic Council. I am due to provide military advice to the Council here in the next few days on our advice as to whether and when we should return these last two sections back over to the FRY.

Overall, let me show you what our force levels were when we started. We had about 47,000 troops at the beginning for Kosovo. The Americans were about 7,000 of that, 15 percent of the effort. Today, we have about 37,000 troops inside Kosovo from 39 nations. Sometimes when I talk to the American public, the American public has the idea that this is predominantly a U.S. operation. I know you know that that's not true, and as when we were in Pristina back in February you saw the

multi-national color of that effort, 39 nations. The United States today, we have about 5,500 soldiers inside Kosovo, about 13 percent of the overall effort.

One thing that I'm particularly pleased inside Kosovo, and we all acknowledge that we still have much progress to make, I completely agree with that, but I believe the work that the OSCE has done under Ambassador Everts and the Kosovo Police Academy that you saw is a real success story. We have been training approximately 300 police officers per month. We now have more than 3,150 locally trained police officers on the street. These are Kosovo Albanian, they are Serb, they are women, they are men, they are minorities. It really is a very good system, and they are doing joint patrols, something that many people thought would have been impossible to do.

I was just meeting with Mr. Haekkerup, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN, and my own personal view is that we need to keep this academy going. They will reach the 4,000 level that was their initial target in the May time period. My own personal belief is that we should continue this, because I think there are much more police needed inside Kosovo, and this is something that I think is a success story and that we need to keep moving on.

Let me now go to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Here is a chart that shows the terrain relief. This is looking from south to north. Notice where Skopje is right at this point here, and notice the mountainous terrain that is to the northeast and northwest of Skopje. This is where the Albanian extremists are operating, in those two areas.

We have a supply route that goes from Thessalonika, the port in Greece, the supplies come over land, up through Macedonia, up through Skopje, and on into Kosovo. Obviously, I am concerned about the violence for many reasons, but not the least of which is the supply line that serves our KFOR troops in Kosovo.

I have asked the military planners at SHAPE to look at alternate supply routes. Let's look at a supply route that comes through Albania. Let's look at a supply route that comes through Montenegro. Let's look at a supply route that even goes through southern Serbia. I need some alternatives. We can't allow ourselves to get into a single thread about supplying our forces.

The other thing that we have done, we have intensified our patrols on the Kosovo border, just north of the Macedonian border, in order to do everything that we can to cut down on the number of arms and armed fighters that go back and forth across that border.

Mr. Chairman, I must tell you that is a very rugged border. It's very mountainous. It's very difficult terrain. The people that live there, frankly, don't know what country they live in, they don't know if they live in Kosovo or if they live in Macedonia. They are going across the hill to visit their brother, or their uncle, or their cousin that's there, and they've gone back and forth across those hills for centuries. So, I don't want to leave the bad impression that that can be absolutely sealed off as a border, I don't believe that it can. However, we are doing a tremendous effort in terms of cutting down on arms trafficking and extremists going back and forth.

The other thing we have done is that we have—I asked the Secretary of Defense and was granted an unmanned air vehicle, the Predator system. It is in theater. It's flying now. We are sharing that intelligence from, not only Predator, but from the German system that's there, with the Macedonian armed forces.

We also have had a rather substantial political effort within NATO. The Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson, the Secretary General of the European Union, Mr. Solana, have gone this week, once again, to Macedonia. We have tried to put the pressure onto the Albanian extremist groups, that this is action that will not be tolerated, and at the same time we have appealed for restraint on the part of the FYROM Government to not go in and attack villages and cause this problem to get even worse.

My own sense is that in the past few days progress has been made. We have a lot of work ahead of us. We need to continue the efforts on a diplomatic and political side, to try to contain the violence that's there.

Mr. Chairman, that's all I have in the way of opening remarks. I would certainly entertain any questions that you may have.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you, General. Before we go on, do you have enough time to stay for a little while?

Gen. RALSTON. Yes, sir, I have all the time you need.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Okay, then we'll try to get through the rest of the testimony and we'll come back and ask you some questions.

Ambassador Pardeu, welcome, and please proceed.

**TESTIMONY OF AMB. JAMES W. PARDEW,
DEPUTY SPECIAL ADVISOR FOR KOSOVO IMPLEMENTATION,
EUROPEAN BUREAU, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Amb. PARDEW. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to be here today to join General Ralston and Ambassador Everts in updating the Commission on the situation in Kosovo. I just recently returned from the region, and I also would like to discuss the implications of the fighting in the neighboring areas.

I have provided a longer statement, Mr. Chairman, which I'll submit.

Sen. CAMPBELL. It will be included in the record.

Amb. PARDEW. I'll summarize very briefly here.

The process for change in Kosovo continues at an impressive pace. Every time I travel there I notice abundant signs of progress. It's important to remember that Kosovo was in ruins when the international community entered there in June 1999. They had expelled more than one million ethnic Albanians from their homes, the economy was destroyed, and there were no functioning laws or institutions of any kind.

UN Security Council Resolution 1244 established a powerful mandate for the international mission in Kosovo, and progress the first year was significant. We, of course, stopped the killing and expelled Milosevic's security forces from Kosovo, returned a million refugees and displaced persons to their homes, provided basic services, began Kosovo's transition to a market economy, established public order, created joint interim administrative structures to allow the Kosovars and the internationals to work together on the day-to-day administration of Kosovo, and we created the Kosovo Police Service under the leadership of my colleague, Ambassador Everts.

More recently, the international community has made further strides toward establishing interim democratic self-government. Municipal elections, again under the leadership of Ambassador Everts, were successfully held in October of last year. UNMIK is working with the Kosovars in the development of a legal framework, a project that we feel is very important. More than 100 UNMIK regulations have been promulgated with the force of law. Preparations have begun for province-wide elections, which we hope to be held as soon as possible, but no later than this fall. UNMIK has begun issuing travel documents, which are now recognized by 20 countries. More than 400 local judges and prosecutors are appointed, 40,000 homes reconstructed.

We have produced 4,000 police and we are looking to increase that number, double that number. A regulation on trafficking of women has been promulgated and 175 victims have been repatriated so far. Human rights ombudsperson, the institution has been established, and currently there are seven daily newspapers, 50 radio stations, and 12 TV stations, three of them are Kosovo-wide.

To achieve these results, our European allies have shouldered much of the burden. As General Ralston said, the United States provides about 13 percent of the total KFOR soldiers stationed in Kosovo. Of reconstruction and recovery assistance, the U.S. share was approximately 15 percent of total donor resources in 2000.

Still, much remains to be done. The city of Mitrovica remains divided along ethnic lines. Ethnic violence continues. The international community has undertaken a number of measures to improve security for Serbs and other minorities and encourage multi-ethnic participation in government. But, most Serbs still live in enclaves and are not participating in a functioning government.

UNMIK has established local community offices in minority communities across Kosovo, and we are providing \$4 million specifically designed for assistance to minority communities.

Unfortunately, a small number of Albanian extremists have taken up arms to forcibly promote their political agenda in Macedonia and southern Serbia, at the expense of the majority of moderate Albanians. The Administration is very actively engaged in working very close with the EU and NATO allies as the situation develops. President Bush released a strong statement last Friday condemning the violence perpetrated by the extremists in supporting the Government of Macedonia. Secretary Powell has spoken with President Trajkovski, and as General Ralston says, Secretary General Robertson and EU high representative Solana have personally been engaged in the situation. I think Mr. Solana has been there three times within a week.

NATO and the Government of Macedonia have improved coordination considerably, including the appointment of NATO's resident senior diplomat, Ambassador Eiff of Germany. NATO is conducting an assessment of Macedonia's security needs which we support. We look to contribute our share to meeting those needs by expediting \$17 million in foreign military financing funds, already in the pipeline.

We will be working with the Congress to increase our SEED assistance by \$5 million this year, for a total of \$38 million for Macedonia, focusing on programs to diffuse inter-ethnic tensions and address Albanian grievances.

One of our senior diplomats, Ambassador Robert Frowick, is in Skopje as a personal representative of the OSCE Chairman in office. He will be working with our Ambassador, Michael Einik, and with Ambassador Eiff, and with EU representatives, to facilitate discussions among political parties on concrete political steps to address the underlying causes of the problems in Macedonia.

We have long-standing commitments to Macedonia, a close friend, invaluable partner of NATO and successful example of multi-ethnic democracy in the region. The Administration will continue its close work to uphold this relationship.

In southern Serbia, ethnic Albanian extremists in the Presevo Valley area also are exploiting the frustrations of the local Albanians, who, in this case, have long suffered under the abusive rule of Milosevic. These insurgents were using the ground safety zone (GSZ), established after the war as a buffer between KFOR and the FRY forces, as a safe haven for guerilla attacks. NATO allies have determined this was intolerable and needed to be addressed urgently. As a result, NATO has accepted in principle a FRY plan to ensure minority rights and improve conditions in southern Serbia, as part of a negotiating process and a phased and conditioned relaxation of NATO's GSZ restrictions. NATO has allowed FRY forces back into most of the GSZ, as General Ralston indicated.

The relaxation of the GSZ has been carried out without major incidents so far. Also, the FRY Government and Presevo Albanians have agreed to a cease fire, although there have been recent violations. And, on March 23, representatives from both sides met face to face for the first time in a process which we hope will evolve into full negotiations.

We are approaching the threat of Albanian extremism in a number of ways. I've mentioned high level diplomacy to ensure that Kosovar Albanians understand the damage being done to Kosovo by the extremists, who use force to promote a political agenda. We are also engaged in high-level support to democratic moderate political leaders in Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia, by promoting reform, minority rights, and a legal framework in elections in Kosovo.

Another element is active measures by UNMIK and KFOR to reduce the ability of the extremists to use Kosovo and the GSZ as a safe haven for extremists. We are insisting on improved human rights situations and living conditions for ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and in southern Serbia. Finally, we are demanding calibrated and proportional security measures by national forces in Serbia and Macedonia, promoting reform of the FRY in Serbia and military establishment of security forces, and we are enhancing the capabilities of the Macedonian forces.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement, and I'll be happy to respond to the Commission's questions.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Okay, we thank you.

Ambassador Everts, if you'd like to continue.

**TESTIMONY OF AMB. DAAN EVERTS,
HEAD OF MISSION, OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO**

Amb. EVERTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's an honor to be in this room and appearing before your Commission, as it is a pleasure to be back in Washington where I served four years at The Netherlands Foreign Service.

I would like to make one general remark and then address very briefly three critical issues, critical as we see it from an OSCE perspective. The general remark echoes, basically, what Ambassador Pardew has just been saying, that we should not belittle the achievements that have been made in the past two years in Kosovo.

I'm probably one of the few, if not the last, surviving internationals still out there. I came on the tail coats of KFOR in June 1999, and the difference between now and then is of course stunning. The society was in ruins, as Ambassador Pardew indicated, and at least what we see now is a very vibrant society in terms of economic activity, in terms of new institutions, democratic institutions, mushrooming, in terms of infrastructure, restored repairs partially by the efforts of the Kosovars themselves. In short, a lot has happened.

Nevertheless, there are problems to be addressed, and I mention them in sequence. One is the continuing plight of the minorities. The other is the continuing high level of violence related to inadequate law enforcement, and the third is the issue of elections, a crucial one that has to be addressed this year as well in order to reduce tension.

On the minorities, the first issue, we have just published, and I brought it with me and it will be publicly released on Monday, next Monday, the seventh report on ethnic minorities that we produced together with UNHCR. It reviews the situation of the various ethnic minorities and clearly the conclusions are somber, if not grim. The overall security is still a very serious issue, basically, forcing the ethnic communities into a situation of isolation and dependence. There's no freedom of movement to speak of, access to public services, to employment, is very limited, if not non-existent.

All of this makes it almost impossible to realize returns of those who have fled Kosovo during and immediately after the war. So, what is needed here, and we recommend this, of course, is robust governance by the international administration, by UNMIK. We are arguing for positive discrimination in certain areas, to make living and working conditions more favorable to the ethnic minorities, and we advocate strong legal procedures, including expansion and the enforcement of the ombudsperson institute. We also would like to see stronger involvement by the ethnic minorities in the overall democratization process, and that includes the elections on which I will speak later.

Regarding the violence, we deplore, as the whole world does, the continuing high level of violence, unacceptable levels. It is ordinary crime, but there's also ethnic crime, ethnic violence, and there is the very worrisome trend of trafficking mentioned by Ambassador Pardew again, which we think should be addressed as a matter of top priority. We have taken some active steps that I could elaborate on if you so request, but it is a scourge that has to be addressed in our view.

Quite a few efforts have been made—again, I should not belittle them—in terms of policing, in terms of reinforcing the judiciary, in terms of expanding prevention programs, but they still fall short of needs, and there is still this lingering sense of impunity that provides too much space and room to criminal elements.

The police corps has been mentioned. It is probably, if I am less than modest, one of the best capacity building projects that I have seen for sure in southern Europe. It has enjoyed great support from yourself, from the United States, as well as from European nations. I think it is at a juncture right now where its future role is to be clarified and de-

cided. For OSCE, we have no doubt that the police school should continue, if not expand its role. International police can only do so much in an alien environment, as Kosovo is to most of the members of the international police. There is a language problem, there's a cultural problem, there's the whole background problem, and substituting international police by well-trained professional democratically trained, domestic Kosovo police is the call of the day. But, this would require decisions for future support and funding.

Lastly, on the elections, we have had a very successful beginning of democratization in Kosovo with the municipal elections of October 2000. They have been remarkable in the sense that they were without the usual flaws, like fraud, and violence, and invalid ballots. All of that was practically absent; they have been very successful by objective standards. The problem is, of course, that they have wetted the appetite for more, and the Kosovo population feels that democratization should not stop at the municipal level, but should continue at the Kosovo-wide level. Hence, the call for Kosovo-wide elections, which we are prepared to undertake. In fact, we are underway with technical preparations, and we should be able to organize the elections in October, but it would require a consensus internationally to go ahead with them. Some influence from this capitol in that direction may be helpful.

What would be crucial for these elections is to be inclusive, to bring those on board that have boycotted, for wrong reasons, the municipal elections. I'm particularly referring to the Kosovo Serb community. We are reaching out to them, and I'm not positive at this time they will join the process. The signals from Belgrade have been positive in this regard, and that should be conducive.

On this issue, let me maybe conclude with one more personal view. I have the feeling that the tension in Kosovo, and the resulting violence and the ethnic violence have partly to do with the uncertainty of the status of Kosovo. Because of the uncertainty, all options are open to those who want to pursue any of them, and that means that you have extremist options on either side, and if I mention the two they would be that on the Serb side, the Kosovo Serb side, there is the dream, if you wish, to simply redress, simply go back and be reintegrated in Serbia as it was. This is Milosevic Kosovo, it's a non-option probably politically and historically, but as long as it is not rebuked, it is not rejected, it will be propagated, and it is propagated by hard line elements. This instills fears on the other side, and is likely to entice violent reactions.

Now, on the Albanian side, the Kosovo Albanian side, you have exactly the opposite, you have there the extreme option of instant and conditional independence, propagated by several values, which is a horror scenario to the Serb community, and so, causes fear, and tension, and violence in that direction.

Excluding these two extreme options would be, in my view, the way to go, so as to limit the space for extreme pursuits, to reinforce the forces in the middle, the forces of moderation which are there. We should be able to promote a dialogue and have the beginning of inter-ethnic cooperation in that middle ground.

So this is, I think, what the SRSG [Special Representative of the Secretary-General], Mr. Haekkerup, is pursuing. He is going the way of [Resolution] 1244 strictly, and going for self-government through elections, without touching on sovereignty issues. Deferring the final status issue would be a way to go forward, to create some calm for years to

come, to develop the democratic institutions further, and create, at least, conditions of ethnic coexistence, if not reconciliation. These improvements may make it possible in a few years hence to address the very sensitive issue of final status as well. Deferring the final status issue and rejecting the regressive, reintegration option would help to move forward on the middle ground.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Because we've got votes on the Senate and the House side, we are going to be having the members of the Commission coming and going. I'm going to try to limit the rounds of questions so we all have a chance.

For those of you who haven't met our new Commissioner, Congressman Zack Wamp from Tennessee, serving his first term on the Commission this year.

Maybe let me start with a few.

General Ralston, when we were in Kosovo in February, we visited one of the places around that ribbon—I think over on the eastern border—that ground security zone which some of the Albanian insurgents had found as a safe haven. Since some of those areas have been turned back, has the insurgency gone down in those areas?

Gen. RALSTON. Mr. Chairman, there were two areas that we turned back. The first one was a very small area—about five kilometers square—just north of the Macedonian border. That one, as I say, went well, essentially without incident, and we have not had any incidents from an insurgency point of view in that one.

The other one that was turned back, starting last Sunday on March 25, around the northern part of Kosovo, has also proceeded, essentially without incident, but there was no significant number of Albanian extremists. So, that was not surprising.

The part that you and I went to, over on the eastern boundary, is part of the zone called Bravo. That will be the last phase to go back, and that's where the bigger problem lies. The greater number of insurgents is in that particular zone. So, that is something yet to come.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you. I'll skip around a little bit in that area and ask about the Macedonian military forces. We understand that they are pretty ill-trained, increasing the possibility of overreacting, and I wanted your assessment of how you think they are handling some problems that may be escalating in Macedonia.

Gen. RALSTON. Yes, sir.

First, we have been working for some time with the armed forces of FYROM. They are trying to do a good job. They are one of our partnership countries. We are working with them in that regard. Their CHOD, Chief of Defense I think is a good man. He is trying to do what is right. He is trying to reform the military, trying to get it better trained and so forth.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Are we actively involved in helping them train?

Gen. RALSTON. We are not there as trainers right now, although we do, we bring officers back to the United States for IMET [International Military Education and Training] and that type of thing, but this is a long process. I don't want to mislead anyone that this is something that can be accomplished in a matter of a month, or six months, or a year. This is a multi-year process, because, remember, this country was under the communist system for decades. It was a throwback to the old

Soviet model, if you will, so a lot has to be changed as to their doctrine, and their training, and the equipment. They have indicated a desire to do that. They are trying to do it. They are not there yet.

One thing that NATO has done, we have sent in an assessment team, and they are assessing the needs of the FYROM armed forces, both about equipment and about training. I hope to have that report back within the next few days, and then once we get that report back then we can distribute that to the various nations and say, okay, who can help them with this piece of equipment, and this one, and this one, and training. So, this is something that we're going to do.

This is not going to happen in the short term, but this is a medium-to long-term effort. Meanwhile, we have done everything we can to encourage them not to overreact, to act responsibly, and not to exacerbate the reasons of why the insurgency is there in the first place.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Speaking of some of the other troops, there has been considerable concern about the situation in the northern city of Mitrovica, and some criticism has been how the French KFOR units there have performed. Could you give the Commission your view of that situation?

Gen. RALSTON. Well, first, I think the situation in Mitrovica is a serious issue, and while right now the world media and attention is down on the Macedonian border it's very likely that in two weeks it will be back to Mitrovica, or it will be over to the Presevo Valley side. This is something that kind of rotates around, depending on where the hot spot of the week is.

The situation that you've got in Mitrovica is, essentially, a divided city. You have about 6,000 Serbs north of the river. You've got about 60,000 Albanians that are south of the river and north of the river. So, it's not exactly right to say that it is split down the middle. Tensions are still there.

I am aware of the criticism that has been made of the KFOR soldiers that are there, that, perhaps, they are not as aggressive as they need to be. That's something that we have addressed, both with the French leaders who are in charge of that particular brigade level. General Cabigiosu, our Commander, Italian Commander of the overall KFOR force, has worked this problem, and he is satisfied that we are moving in the right direction. We are not there yet. We still have a lot of work to do to try to alleviate some tensions that are in that very volatile area.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Okay, and I'm going to yield to try to keep this about five minutes per Commissioner, so we all have an opportunity to do this.

We are joined by Senator Clinton of New York, also a first-term member of the Commission. Welcome, and we'll just go in order of appearance.

So, did you have some questions you'd like to ask, Senator Voinovich? Why don't you proceed and watch the clock since the timer is out, about five or six minutes, and then we'll turn it over to someone else.

Sen. VOINOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There's no question that there's lots of problems in terms of Mitrovica, from what I get every day it's the old west, and there's not too much stability there at all, and it's Serbs killing Albanians, and Albanians killing Serbs, and riots, and it's a very difficult place for anybody to operate. I think something really needs to be done to somehow bring that under control and stabilized.

That being said, the main issue now is the Macedonian border and what's happening in Macedonia. It's my understanding that it's really important that we get responsible leadership from the Albanian leaders. It's my understanding that Mr. Rugova, and Thaci and others have been asked to publicly state that they discourage and disapprove of the activity of the insurgents. They have refused to do it.

On the other hand, it's my understanding that Mr. Xhaferi, who is the leader of the Albanians in Macedonia, a gentleman with whom I've had an opportunity to spend some time, has been acting responsibly. Basically, he has said we are part of the coalition government in Macedonia. We don't approve of this insurgent activity, although we would like to see a little more activity by the Macedonians to make the ethnic Slavic Macedonians to keep the promises that they made when the coalition came together.

I'd like you to comment, all of you if you want to, on whether that is a reflection of reality. How important is it at this time for us to appeal to that leadership to try and bring things under control?

Gen. RALSTON. Let me go first and turn it over to Ambassador Pardew who has worked this personally, but it's my understanding, from everything that I read and what I've seen, that Mr. Rugova, Mr. Thaci, Mr. Haradinaj, have all denounced the violence, and have acted responsibly in that regard?

What you talk about in terms of the Albanian faction as part of the government inside Macedonia, my understanding is they have called for restraint and they have tried to address the problem through the political process. Ambassador Pardew has dealt with this almost on a daily basis, and I think I'd like to have him answer that.

Amb. PARDEW. Yes, Senator. We've engaged these leaders in Kosovo and in Macedonia directly on this issue, to ensure that they understand that this extremist activity by a relatively small number of people is extremely damaging to Kosovo generally, and the Kosovar Albanians particularly.

On March 23, last Friday, Mr. Thaci, Rugova and Haradinaj issued a statement condemning the violence and calling for the extremists in Macedonia to lay down their arms, a positive development. This extremist activity is a direct attack on these moderate political forces, both in Kosovo and in Macedonia. These extremists did not win in the municipal elections last October, in fact, they lost. The population of Kosovo voted overwhelmingly for moderates, and so this small group of people is really tragically attacking the moderate leaders there, who understand that and are trying to work with the international community to bring this to a halt.

Sen. VOINOVICH. I'd just like to make one other comment and then I'll give someone else a chance to ask questions.

I think a couple of you mentioned the number of people in the police department there, and I know that recruiting people to become part of that police force hasn't been easy. Nevertheless, I think I heard a number like 3,400 or 3,500, and if I'm not mistaken when we first talked about this realistically, I think even with you, Ambassador Everts, that if we're really going to get the job done we need, you know, 7,000 or more there. The question I've got is, how is the United States doing in terms of our commitment to that police force, and what kind of support are we getting from our allies that are supposed to make good on their commitment in terms of that police force?

Amb. EVERTS. Yes, Senator.

The KPS, as it is called, the Kosovo Police School, and also Kosovo Police Service, is now up to 3,400 newly graduated police, of whom 40 percent belong to minority communities, which is a good rate proportionate to the share in the overall population, and no less than 20 percent are women, which is completely new in that whole area, in the whole region, to have that high a rate of women participation.

By the way, that last figure is not just quantitatively important, but particularly qualitatively, it has made a tremendous difference in the school environment, in the whole training environment, and on the force itself, and in the work in the streets, the presence of women police. So, we are continuing to promote that.

The question is how to expand the initial planning for training up to 4,000, to be reached in May, and right now talks are underway and planning to see how this is to be expanded. Overall, the need is assessed to be about 8,000 police. Right now, there are some 4,000 international police, and the logical course to follow is to reduce the internationals and increase the domestic police up to that level.

Resources don't suffice for that right now, it's not in the planning yet, so we will have to come back to the OSCE Council and to the individual donors to support this effort. We will do so —

Sen. VOINOVICH. Is the United States doing its part?

Amb. EVERTS. Very much so, not just as a core contributor, as you know you contribute about 12.4 percent to the core contributions, the core budget of OSCE and of large-scale missions like Kosovo, but in addition you are helpful in providing parliamentary contributions as well. I think the interest of the United States, not just the government, but also I have noticed various state governments who have made available individual police advisors and instructors to the school, that support has been very strong, and very much appreciated.

Amb. PARDEW. Senator, the whole police issue is one that we take very seriously. We think it's critical to establishing a stable environment in Kosovo that we establish law and order. As Daan mentioned, we very strongly support the Kosovo Police Service, the indigenous police force, and we believe they should double it to about 8,000, and we are prepared to put some resources into that.

We also—I also should mention the international civil police, for the first time international civil police have a strong mandate which allows them to arrest people and carry weapons in the performance of their duty. There is a total of 4,300 of them in Kosovo, of which the United States contributes 605, as Daan mentioned, from all over the United States, bringing the experience of some of our excellent policemen to this problem. So, this is an area of high priority for the administration.

Sen. VOINOVICH. Good.

Sen. CAMPBELL. We will now move in order of appearance to Congressman Wamp.

Mr. WAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ZACH WAMP, COMMISSIONER

Let me first say how pleased and honored I am to join this Commission and to begin a process of seeing our involvement through to a successful completion in this part of the world, while in the House, and from my lowly perspective, I was not supportive, specifically, of our involvements, I am totally committed to seeing this through to a satisfactory resolution for NATO, and for the United States, for the region,

for the people in each country that belongs to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I thank you all for that shared commitment.

Ambassador Pardew, my first question: about 7 weeks ago I was sitting next to the President of Macedonia when he was here for the National Prayer Breakfast. One of his great concerns that he brought to the United States, and I believe met with Secretary Powell while he was here, was the number of refugees that, basically, moved into his country that they are now responsible for. I want you to address that issue as a compounding effect to the unrest that they now are dealing with, and try to also give me an idea of where these rebels actually come from. I've read conflicting reports of who these folks are, where they come from, and who is backing them. Where do they get their support?

Amb. PARDEW. First, the refugees, Macedonia has been extremely helpful in this entire issue of refugees. When the Milosevic security forces pushed the Albanians out of Kosovo to the tune of a million people, most of them went to Macedonia and showed up along the border area, and the Macedonians were very helpful in helping organize the international effort to assist in resolving that tragedy.

Most of them went back. Some have not. I don't have a precise number on that, but I can get it for you if you would like. UNHCR is working on that issue, and we are working with the Macedonian Government to ensure that they get international assistance to help with that project.

As to who is supporting them, I think their support comes from a variety of sources, although we don't have a great deal of precision on this. Some of it is local. Some of it is funding from criminal activities associated with the extremist activities. Some of it, quite frankly, comes from the Albanian diaspora.

Weapons, you can get weapons anywhere in the region, so weapons, quite frankly, are not a problem if you've got funding. The issue is funding, and the funding seems to be coming from a variety of sources.

Mr. WAMP. Ambassador Everts, what do the people of Kosovo think about these people?

Sen. CAMPBELL. By the way, Ambassador Everts, we are told in the back of the room that we can't hear your voice, would you move that microphone over and speak right into it, please?

Mr. WAMP. What do the people of Kosovo think about these rebels in Macedonia?

Amb. EVERTS. Well, as was indicated before, the great majority is highly inconvenienced and embarrassed by what is happening, both in the Presevo Valley and now in Macedonia. They see that this directly erodes their international good will and standing, with possible negative impact on support, financial, moral and otherwise. So, they don't like it. Most of the leaders have taken this and they have signed a declaration that Senator Voinovich was referring to.

If I may venture an answer to the earlier question, as for where they come from, to us on the ground in Pristina, from what we hear the Macedonian armed groups are largely home grown, with strong support from outside, financially from the diaspora, that it's always easy to be far away and encourage rebellious activities, as you know, it's quite comfortable if you sit in Switzerland and all you have to do is send some money, and leave the fighting to be done by others. So, there is this

rather irresponsible support from outside. No doubt, there are some disenchanted Kosovo Albanians as well, who joined partly for adventurous reasons, partly for idealist reasons, partly for criminal reasons, there's a whole host of motivations there.

But, I would caution against a notion that this is a rebellion or an insurgency exported from Kosovo. That would be most unfair, and as I said earlier, the great majority of Kosovo Albanians, let alone the other communities in Kosovo, do not support this activity because it harms the process of stability, democratization, and a prospect of future, and a peaceful future.

Mr. WAMP. Ambassador Everts, how are the minority communities within Kosovo doing today? Are they solely relying on international assistance? Are they making progress toward independence themselves? What's the status of these minority groups within Kosovo today?

Amb. EVERTS. Well, the general status is not good, not good at all. There are differences between communities. Obviously, the Kosovo Serb community is worst off, it is really prisoners in enclaves and the northern parts north of Mitrovica is practically Serb-run, so there they have direct interaction with Serbia proper, so their situation is completely different.

But, in the enclaves, the conditions are very dire, are very bad, and there's total dependence on the international community and on the KFOR for security.

Some other smaller communities have seen slight improvements. I should say this is true for the Bosniacs, for the Goranis, the Turkish community has generally been free of harassment, not suffering so much as the others. The Ashkhazi and the Egyptian community, small in numbers, are slightly better dealt with on the whole than the Roma. I would say on a scale that Serbs in Roma are worst off, and many of them are still outside the Kosovo boundaries.

At this point of time, we would not advocate their return because their return would put them to serious risk.

Mr. WAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sen. CAMPBELL. In order of appearance, Senator Clinton? Oh, by the way, before you ask questions, we are also joined by Congressman Aderholt from Alabama, and Congressman Crowley from New York, too.

Please, proceed.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
SEN. HILLARY R. CLINTON, COMMISSIONER**

Sen. CLINTON. Thank you very much, I'm very pleased to be a part of this Commission, and very grateful for our panelists today. I want to thank General Ralston for his service and for his continuing leadership on behalf of NATO, and, Ambassador Pardew, thank you for the role that you played in Dayton and after, it seems like it was a long time ago, but there's a lot to show for the efforts that you and others engaged in, and I'm very appreciative of that.

You know, as I look at the map, I'm reminded of the visits I've made to Bosnia and Macedonia and Slovenia and Romania and Bulgaria. I think we are very focused today on what's going on in Macedonia. I appreciate greatly the positive support that NATO and the OSCE and others are providing the Macedonian Government, because I think that they richly deserve that support. The work that they undertook as a

real safety valve during the operations in Kosovo could not have been more valuable at the time, and I was very impressed, during my visits there, by the great lengths to which the Macedonian Government went to try to maintain peace and balance among the ethnic groups there.

Nevertheless, when we look at the map, when we look at Macedonia, I would briefly like to hear from each of you how you assess the overall stability of the region right now. You know, we've seen Serbian troops going back along the borders of Kosovo. We know that there are still a lot of infrastructure needs that haven't been met or repaired, with the bridges being out, with trade not yet resuming its pre-war levels. We know that there are continuing concerns about Montenegro. I would like to hear from each of you, both your overall assessment of what else we should be looking at in the region besides what is currently going on in Macedonia and our continuing efforts in Kosovo, and any other problems that this Commission, or our government, or our allies in Europe, need to have on the horizon that may be arising.

Gen. RALSTON. Senator Clinton, let me address that from a military perspective first, before we go to the others.

One thing that I am concerned about is the fact that we have a single supply route to our forces in Kosovo that goes through FYROM. The vast majority of all of our supplies enter at the Port of Thessalonika in Greece. They must then go over land up through Skopje and into Kosovo. If, in fact, we would lose that supply line then we would be in dire straits.

The Macedonian Government has been a superb friend to NATO and to KFOR, and they have supported us very well. We need to do some things for them. We have had an adverse impact on their infrastructure, on their road system. This is one thing that I believe that the nations need to step up to and improve some of these roads, because we are the ones that have used them and in many cases caused their premature deterioration.

I'm also looking at other supply routes. We can't afford to be dependent upon only one. What can we do through Albania? By the way, there are some roads and bridges that need to be improved there, and that would not only help KFOR but it would help the Albanian people in Albania as well. We also need to look about the possibility of a supply route through Montenegro, from the Port of Barr and come on up through there. I certainly believe that we ought to look at a supply route through southern Serbia, as the situation has improved for the better in Serbia. So, I'm trying to look at it from that particular point of view across the board.

We are doing much better militarily in Kosovo, while we all acknowledge the problems that remain there in terms of the ethnic tension. Militarily, it's doing much better, and I believe the return of the Ground Safety Zone to Serbia is a step in the right direction, a very positive step, and I want us to continue with that. Nevertheless, that's sort of the military assessment, if you will.

Ambassador Pardew?

Amb. PARDEW. Senator, you hit on the key issue for the United States, and that is stability. European stability is a vital interest to the United States. This region is, obviously, in Europe and, therefore, it's extremely important to us. Stability here, however, I describe as a work in progress. Without regard to the military aspects of this, these are fledgling democracies at best, and economies that are trying to recover from a com-

munist past. There are ethnic tensions which we all know about, but almost as important is the communist legacy that they have to overcome at the same time. This is a long-term effort, and I think we have focused the international attention on this properly, but it is by no means resolved. I think the international community has to remain engaged here or the stability which we desire will be disrupted.

So, I think we have to continue to promote democracy, continue to promote economic development, and the concept of tolerance. There are boundaries here, state boundaries here, which some people would like to change those boundaries according to ethnic groups. We think that's wrong. What needs to be adopted here is a concept of tolerance, in which people are citizens of the country no matter what ethnicity they belong to. So, I think it's work in progress.

Sen. CLINTON. I want to underscore something that both the Ambassador and the General said. You know, these supply routes, and the road systems in Macedonia, and in much of the rest of the Balkans, but focus on Macedonia, both because of the supply route that we're relying on and our need to, in my view, really support the Macedonians and provide some assistance to them, is critical in another respect. That is that, you know, Macedonia is a landlocked country. It has very few resources. It was beginning to be a center for American manufacturing, particularly, in the textile area. I worked with some people to try to keep that going during the Kosovar action. The damage that these roads have suffered has severely undercut their economic prospects. I'm very glad that the Ambassador mentioned economic development, and, really, the military imperatives that General Ralston spoke about, combined with the need to try to get that economy going again in Macedonia and in the surrounding areas, I think does argue for some commitment to try and increase the transportation in Macedonia and throughout the region. I appreciate very much your bringing that to our attention.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Congressman Aderholt.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Thank you for being here today, and we appreciate your testimony before this Commission.

General Ralston, I had one question, one brief question to ask you about your thoughts on it. We understand that in the Serbian community in Kosovo there have been complaints that the KFOR has not sufficiently protected the religious society, and has cut back on protection in those areas. Given that many Orthodox churches have been targeted, could you comment on what KFOR is doing in the area and what, in your opinion, will be done?

Gen. RALSTON. It is something that concerns us, because you do have the Orthodox churches that are there, the patrimonial sites, if you will, and that is one of the things that KFOR has been doing, is guarding these sites.

Now, the bad news here is, this ties up many soldiers that are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, trying to do this. One thing that we're working on, and so far it has worked well, is to have the Kosovar Police Service, the KPS, trained to do some of this patrimonial work. This is an infant program, we are crawling here to make sure that this works all right, and maybe Ambassador Everts can talk about that, because this is his program, but it has allowed us to free up some soldiers to go to the border of Macedonia, for example, because as I mentioned before the problems of the week change. It may be the Macedonian border this week, two weeks from now it may be the eastern boundary,

and two weeks after it may be Mitrovica, and so we are constantly shifting forces where we need them. If, in fact, we can get some relief over guarding the patrimonial sites, that gives us more soldiers that we have the flexibility to move.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Ambassador, did you have any comments to make?

Amb. EVERTS. Yes. I would agree with the General that it should be certainly in the longer run a task of domestic police to protect these sites. Right now, of course, there is so much distrust between the communities, that the Serb community would not easily entrust their heritage to the Kosovo Police Service, unless only the minority members of that service would be charged with the task.

Nevertheless, I think the time is about to come, to consider this and relieve KFOR of this, basically, non-military task. So, I think the scope is there, but it requires some talking to the different communities.

In this respect, maybe I should mention that initiatives are underway to bridge the gap between the communities and restore a minimum of trust, and I see some local leaders now joining to tour, in fact, Kosovo and address the different communities on the needs of more tolerance, more cooperation, and trying to build something together for the future.

So, there are glimmers of hope here.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, that's all I have.

Thank you all for testifying today.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Congressman Crowley, if you have some questions.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Senator Campbell, and thank you for allowing me to sit in on this Commission. I'm a member of the International Relations Committee in the House, and I may have an opportunity to ask you at some other point in time in the future some questions, but because time is of the essence this situation changes rapidly on the ground.

I just wanted to follow up with what Congressman Wamp had asked before. One question he asked is, what was the attitude of the Albanian community in Kosovo compared to—what I'd like to know is, what is the attitude of the Albanian people within Macedonia, in terms of support of this insurrection? What is the general feeling there? I wasn't really clear in terms of your answer. You may have given it, but is it overwhelming support, or is it lukewarm? Is it not there, is it generally from outside the country?

Amb. PARDEW. I spoke a couple weeks ago with the Albanian political leaders in Skopje about this, when this was kind of heating up. My impression is, first of all, there are legitimate complaints in the Albanian community about their status as citizens of Macedonia. Legitimate minority rights issues need to be addressed.

Therefore, the people who come up with an extreme agenda have, in some ways, some support psychologically, simply because there are legitimate complaints that they can play on.

The political leadership saw this, not just as an attack upon the Macedonian Government, but also as an attack upon them, because they were working with the Macedonian Government to achieve the rights that they sought, suddenly these extremists popped up and started to seize the agenda and radicalize the population, something that they thought was very dangerous.

I don't think that we had a significant amount of actual support to the extremists. Their numbers, you know, are fuzzy, but they numbered in the hundreds. There could have been a radicalization of the entire population in which thousands of people came to their side. That didn't happen—a positive development. So, we believe that, again, the Albanian population in Macedonia is largely moderate, supports the moderate parties, would like to work through a political process to resolve this, and that they have been damaged, frankly, by these extremists who have decided to take up arms.

Mr. CROWLEY. I understand the issue of the refugees is complicating this regionally in general, but what are the chances of a major installation in Macedonia, what are the chances of the falling of Macedonia? You presented, General, the problems that would present for KFOR and for the region. What are the chances of really that happening?

Gen. RALSTON. Well, it certainly is not zero. There is a chance if the fighting escalates that you will have refugee flows. We've already seen refugee flows. We've already seen, depending on whose estimate you take, anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000, perhaps, that have gone back into Kosovo. There are several more thousands, and I don't know, I've seen a number of maybe 15,000, internally displaced persons that have fled south to Skopje.

So, there is the potential for refugees and displaced persons to go both sides here. This is something that the UNHCR works very hard, we have tried to make provisions inside Kosovo, and I think they are prepared to take about 18,000 refugees should the need arise. We hope that it doesn't. We are trying to do what we can to suppress the violence so that we don't get the refugee flows.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you. You do great work there, by the way, I was in Kosovo just after the bombing campaign, and I can appreciate somewhat what you are dealing with.

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Senator.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Let me ask a few more questions.

Ambassador Pardew, when we were in Kosovo in February, we visited the Police Academy, and frankly I was very impressed with it. I used to be a training officer in a police academy, so I looked at it from that perspective, and I was very interested in what they were doing.

But, the week before we arrived last February there was a bus bombing that killed seven, as I remember. In fact, two days before we got there, if I remember correctly, General Ralston, there were three policemen killed in a car bombing. On the day we were there, a few miles from where we were, there was a car bombing then, too.

I wanted to ask if there had been any progress in bringing to justice the people that were involved in that bus bombing, particularly, and the killing of those policemen, too.

Amb. PARDEW. Well, first, let me comment on the police school. There's a wonderful American over there named Steve Bennet, whom you probably met.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Yes, we met him, very fine man.

Amb. PARDEW. He has done just a magnificent job in running this school.

On the bus bombing, there has been progress. KFOR, in cooperation with UNMIK police, has arrested five suspects in the bus bombing. They are in custody. The investigation continues. I can't give you the exact status of that, but we are very pleased that a very aggressive investigation has taken place and we have suspects in custody.

Some other incidents which you mentioned have not yet—the investigations have not been successful, but we are doing a number of things to improve the capabilities of the police to deal with more sophisticated crime.

When we first went in there, as I mentioned, there was no law, there was no order. NATO fulfilled that task. We are gradually trying to transfer that over to the civilian authorities, with first the international police and the Kosovo police.

But, we need sophisticated police capabilities to deal with some of these more sophisticated crimes. So, the international community has created an intelligence organization at the Kosovo—at the UNMIK level that's just now getting started, to focus police intelligence on some of these areas, and we are also looking at identifying Americans within the 605 that I've mentioned that have special police skills that will improve our ability to investigate some of this more sophisticated stuff.

We went in there with a basic law and order kind of outlook, but we are going to have to increase the sophistication of the police as we deal with this.

Sen. CAMPBELL. We were only there a couple hours, but it was my understanding when they first started that there were some very cool relations between the different ethnic groups coming in as cadets. Nevertheless, it was the women—the Serbian women, the Albanian women—who went to the administrators and said we'd rather be housed together so we can learn to get along. They really took the lead in trying to break that ice. I thought that was very interesting. Maybe the future of peace in that area is not with the men, but with the women.

Let me move down to Macedonia again. The recent violence has predicated some interesting comments. Recently Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov visited the Balkans and he suggested, among other things, that the reported role of the "Western Special Services" in the Macedonian disturbances should be investigated. I don't know if you remember that or not, but what do you make of that statement, and what has been the Russian response to the Macedonian situation?

Amb. PARDEW. I'm not sure exactly what he meant by "special services." There are all kinds of rumors flying around the Balkans. I characterize it as the home of the conspiracy theory, but there are no special operations that I know of engaged in any of this.

Sen. CAMPBELL. He didn't know what he was talking about.

Amb. PARDEW. We share a common interest with Russia in stability in this region. Russian forces are with our forces in both Bosnia and Kosovo, and are doing their job effectively. We are in constant consultations with the Russians. Quite frequently we disagree, however. We disagree in the role of Belgrade in Kosovo and UNMIK. We disagree on the degree of Albanian extremism in the region and so forth, but we have worked through those problems and I think we will continue to do so.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Well, I know we share a common interest, and you know we share a common interest, I'm not sure all the Russians know we share a common interest. In fact, when we were arriving in Kosovo

we were kept circling up in the air by the Russians above Pristina for about a half an hour, and they were telling us that we couldn't land because the runway was snowed in, when we could look out the window and see the darn runway was dry. Fortunately, General Ralston was with us or we'd probably still be circling up in the air. But, he got on the horn and fixed that. The Russian soldiers were very friendly when we finally got off the plane, but they weren't too thrilled with us coming in there, I don't think.

I'd like to ask you, what is the current status of the next elections in Kosovo, and what is the U.S. view of the timing for it?

Amb. EVERTS. As far as the status is concerned, we have begun the technical preparations. What it really involves is that we update the voters' register, and particularly attempt to include those communities that were absent or partially absent during the last municipal elections, and I'm referring to the Kosovo Serb community and the Turkish community.

We plan to have a massive campaign and registration drive in July, and then do all the concomitant work on political party development, registration of parties, campaigning and what have you, issuing all the necessary electoral rules. All of this should lead to elections in the fall. The exact date is to be determined by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Haekkerup, and he has made the announcement of the date dependent on progress made with regard to what is called the legal framework, which is to exactly define the powers of this Kosovo-wide representative body an assembly. So, that work is currently underway by international experts and Kosovar experts, in hopes that work may be finished in a few weeks' time.

Sen. CAMPBELL. The OSCE will monitor those elections, I assume?

Amb. EVERTS. We will organize them, and we will ask, of course, international observation to be done preferably by parliamentarians and observers and by member countries, but it will be a copy of what we did in October and, hopefully, the whole conduct of the elections will be a copy as well, because those were really very good elections, and we expect the best.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Before I ask for Senator Voinovich's second round, there's a lot of attention being given to the hundreds of Kosovar Albanians that were wrongly incarcerated in Serbian prisons. What is the disposition of them? The second part of that question, too, is that large numbers of people on both sides are still missing, both Serbs and Albanians, and can you tell us about the efforts that are underway to address that, and bringing some closure to their families?

Amb. EVERTS. Yes, Senator. This is a real very important and painful issue, and it is one obstacle for improving the relationship between main communities. I mean, the detainees in Serbia proper. There has been release of these political prisoners. They have released 219 under the new adopted amnesty law, to be exact.

Sen. CAMPBELL. 219 of how many?

Amb. EVERTS. Still 436 remain in jail, mostly on frivolous charges of terrorism. This is a major impediment to improving the dialogue between the communities, no doubt about it.

The other issue you mentioned is one of the missing. Again, we are talking about thousands whose fate is unknown, although we are practically sure they have been killed, they are not alive anymore, but we owe to families that certainty, and we have to trace them.

In recent discussions in Belgrade, which I myself had, we came up with the idea to accelerate the work on tracing these missing by organizing maybe a joint task force of Serbs and Albanians to exchange information that is available with the armed forces in Yugoslavia and Special Police, and on the other side in those who are active in the KLA. So, we are trying to move on this issue because it is an extremely painful phenomenon for families that do not see, really, much prospects in cooperation and moving forward with elections or whatever, so long as that fate is so completely unknown. So, we are, if I may make a self-promotive statement, in dire need here of funding to accelerate the tracing of missing. We have received a donation from the U.S. Government, in fact. Nevertheless, that's running out in June, and so we are a little concerned about continuing, let alone expanding, this work, as it is very important, and we are looking for continuation of support.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Considering the rising tensions with the Albanian insurgents and the Serbs again, are you getting any feedback about how the Albanian prisoners are being treated in the Serbian prisons?

Amb. EVERTS. Well, the ones who have been released have all rather bad stories.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Grim stories?

Amb. EVERTS. Yes, this is not the way you treat your prisoners here, I hope, and I'm sure, but, yes, the whole situation, also with the violence around now, has not been helpful generally for the treatment of each other in positions of authority.

So, the more and the earlier we can work on the release of prisoners the better. The proposal has been to remove them all to Kosovo and have international judges determine the fate of those who may have been guilty of ordinary crimes, rather than leave it to Serb judgment.

Amb. PARDEW. Senator, I should add that there is never a high-level meeting with Serbian officials in which we do not bring this issue up.

Sen. CAMPBELL. There are ongoing meetings?

Amb. PARDEW. Yes, I brought it up in Belgrade when I was there a week and a half ago. This is an unnecessary irritant in the relationship. Serbia should have released these people when the government changed, and they should have done it immediately, and it would have been an act of enormous good will among the Albanian community. They chose not to do that. We continue to press them to release these detainees.

We also, there are also Serb missing, and we are concerned about them as well. The International Commission for the Missing is an important organization which we fully support, and right now we are in the process of trying to find a replacement for Senator Dole, who was the head of that, but we fully support this effort on the missing, not just the Albanians, but the Serbs as well.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Senator Voinovich?

Sen. VOINOVICH. Yes. I'd like to just follow up on that point. I know that amnesty law was passed in Serbia, and they released many people. I know when I talked with President Kostunica and Prime Minister Djindjic that I made it clear to them that they need to accelerate that, and, of course, they bring up the political pressure that they are getting because of the fact that there are still Serbs missing, and then this Presevo Valley thing has put pressure on. Nevertheless, I've said, you

do your thing and let the other folks worry about trying to do what they can to identify those Serbs that are missing and try to work on that issue.

I'd like to hit three points. Number one is, one of the things that's concerned me about our involvement in southeast Europe has been that we have not articulated enough its importance to our strategic national security and economic interest, and I'd like each of you to articulate, why should we be there in southeast Europe, and I'm talking about in terms of just the good old US of A in a very selfish—from a very selfish perspective.

Gen. RALSTON. Let me start from a military perspective, and the USA has an absolute compelling interest in NATO. NATO, we are a member of the Alliance, it's very important to us, and if you have instability in this region, we are worried about Macedonia, as we've talked about, and Greece is very worried about the instability there, because they are the next country down. If you have massive refugee flows into Greece, into Turkey, you start a very volatile situation between two NATO allies that are two very good allies of the United States, that are two very good trading partners of the United States, and that is a very selfish interest from the economic point of view, but an even greater interest in terms of NATO. We do not need the instability that would result between the NATO allies.

Amb. PARDEW. Sir, there are any number of secondary interests, but let me talk to two that I think are critically important. The first I mentioned earlier, and that is European security, European stability. We fought two wars in Europe this century. One of them started in this region. We've had a major commitment for 50 plus years with our troops in central Europe, so European security is a vital interest to the United States.

That being said, we can't pick and choose which piece of Europe is vital and which is not. This region is part of Europe and, therefore, it falls into that category.

The second is our investment in the North Atlantic Treaty organization, represented by General Ralston. I think if you go back to '95 that institution was in trouble, because of the tensions created over our lack of activity there. So, I think the commitment to NATO, and our national interest in the security of Europe, are the two driving forces, and then there are any number of other reasons. Nevertheless, those are the two primary ones.

Amb. EVERTS. If I have to add anything, it would be that you have played an important role in the recent events there, and it would be absolutely premature to suddenly withdraw. That role has been extremely positive, and right now, because of that role, we have a window of opportunity to really stabilize this most unstable part of Europe, and to reinforce democracy that hasn't been seen there forever.

So, to pull out at this historic moment would be not up to your traditions, I would think, and your international role. So, from my OSCE and European standpoint, it would be nothing less than a disaster if the United States would turn its back to this region at the point when it is about to finally join mainstream democratic Europe.

Sen. VOINOVICH. I'd just like to comment on that, that there are those that feel that things are not right there. They aren't, but just imagine if the Tudjman regime was in power in Croatia today, and Milosevic was still president of Serbia. Where would we be today? I

think we fail to recognize that some marvelous things have happened over there, and we need to do what we can to support those fledgling democracies.

I'd like your comment on how important you think it is that, perhaps, we redouble our effort in terms of the stability path. You mentioned from Thessalonika up through Macedonia, and then into Kosovo, Corridor 8 has been something that the Macedonians and Albanians that would take it from the Adriatic and through Macedonia, do you believe, or I'd like your opinion on whether or not you think that the stability pact has really done the job that they could have done thus far.

I want a candid answer. You know, lay it out, if you think they are doing it fine, but I want a straight answer, please.

Amb. PARDEW. Okay, I'll do my best, Senator.

First, regional integration is key to development here. These countries, fledgling democracies as I described them earlier, cannot function effectively in isolation, and so there is an imperative to have regional integration. That's what the stability pact is all about.

Quite frankly, there are many questions about the viability of the stability pact, whether or not it is moving forward effectively. I don't want to be too critical here, because I think it is an important forum so far, there needs to be resources and more action put into it.

Sen. VOINOVICH. I think, and I'm just commenting, I think that Macedonia, the environment there would be a little bit better had we—that route more quickly with some of the commitments that are being made there. It made it easier for some of these things that the coalition had promised to the Albanian minority.

Sen. CAMPBELL. I am told that we are going to have a vote in a few minutes and we'll be away for a while, so rather than keeping everybody I'm going to ask Congressman Wamp if he has a last question or two. I have about a dozen more. Nevertheless, I'd like to submit those in writing to each of you, if I can, so that we won't have to hold you and come back in. You'll be around here all afternoon.

Go ahead, Congressman Wamp.

Mr. WAMP. I have one final question for the panel. Mr. Chairman, I thought about you last week, I read a book review about a book of a fellow who took his motorcycle and rode through Cuba, and I always think of you whenever—

Sen. CAMPBELL. He had more guts than me.

Mr. WAMP.—a man is riding a motorcycle, but, of course, Cuba is a paradise compared to some of the places we are talking about. Nevertheless, freedom of speech and freedom of movement are really key here, in order to see these fledgling democracies open up.

Tell me about freedom of speech in Kosovo, and tell me about freedom of movement in some of these countries.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Maybe add to that the freedom of the press too, if you would respond.

Amb. EVERTS. Yes, Senator. I think here I have good news, not on the freedom of movement. Freedom of movement for 90 percent of the population is there and guaranteed, and very much enjoyed, but as I said earlier, the ethnic minorities do have great risks in moving around, so that definitely needs to be improved.

Nevertheless, on the freedom of speech, I think Kosovo is enjoying a climate it has never seen before. There is a very likely media landscape. We have now 77 radio stations. We have three Kosovo-wide television

stations, of which two private and one public, but even the public TV is fiercely independent of any official political or government interference. We have shielded that public broadcasting system with a firewall that prevents it from being dominated by any political party or government interest.

Newspapers are also lively by content, and there's quite a number of them, probably too many to be sustained over time, but some international support has helped to bring that pluralism of the media. Some newspapers do show responsible levels of journalism, quite outstanding in a regional perspective. There are the usual lower quality papers as well. The one minimum provision we have made as OSCE, and as part of UNMIK, is to prevent outright hate speech that would endanger individual lives. We have crafted a very careful procedure here that complaints about such material would be heard, and that when there would be punitive action there would be a very serious appeal process, bringing in international expertise to pass final judgment.

In the absence of enforceable laws against libel and slander, that minimum provision to protect people's life, really, be deemed necessary, but it's a provisional measure for 90 days, renewable, but certainly not to last forever.

But, on the whole, I'm very, very encouraged by what I have seen flourish in terms of media.

Mr. WAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sen. CAMPBELL. That's a start.

Thank you.

The rest of the questions will be submitted, if you could respond to those in writing, and we'll keep the record open for 15 days if there are any additional comments from interested parties.

With that, this Commission is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:47 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, CHAIRMAN**

Today's hearing of the Helsinki Commission—the first of the 107th Congress—will examine the unfolding developments in and around Kosovo. While there are differing views over the strategic interest of the United States in the region, one fact is beyond dispute—thousands of American soldiers were placed and remain in harm's way in the Balkans. I have personally met with many of these young men and women who are deserving of our support.

Given the ongoing violence in Macedonia, as well as southern Serbia, this hearing will include an assessment of developments beyond the borders of Kosovo and implications for countries in the region. Escalating tensions in the Balkans are cause for grave concern with serious consequences for continued engagement in the region by NATO, the OSCE, and the United States. Left unchecked, the latest outbreak of violence threatens to undermine efforts by the international community to bring some degree of order to an otherwise chaotic environment and could lead to even greater human suffering and hardship.

Initiatives by the OSCE and others on the ground in Kosovo are attempting to make some inroads. A good example, is the OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School, which I visited earlier this year. The school is providing professional law enforcement training with the aim of establishing a credible civilian police force in Kosovo. Despite these efforts, the situation in Kosovo appears dismal, sometimes even hopeless. If you are a Serb or Roma, you cannot move about freely without risking your own life. Many individuals who fled their homes are not able to return. There are few institutions in place and functioning which define the parameters through which a civil society can thrive and economic opportunities can be sought. Like other places in the region, corruption is rampant in Kosovo.

I look forward to hearing from the experts assembled this afternoon as we assess the latest developments in and around Kosovo and their implications for NATO, the OSCE and the United States. First, we have General Joseph Ralston of the U.S. Air Force, serving as the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, who can provide a NATO and military perspective on the current situation. Next we will hear from Ambassador James Pardew, the Principal Deputy Advisor for Kosovo and Dayton Implementation at the U.S. Department of State, who can talk about U.S. policy approaches. Finally, we have Ambassador Daan Everts of the Netherlands, head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, who can comment as a person serving in the field and dealing with everything from human rights and police training to institutional development in Kosovo.

The Helsinki Commission is pleased to have such a distinguished panel, and we all look forward to your presentations.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN**

First I want to congratulate you Senator Campbell as the new Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, and commend you for holding today's hearing on Kosovo and the region. Senator, I am confident that as Chairman you will be—in the Helsinki tradition—a champion of human rights.

Like so many of our hearings, the topic of the Commission's hearing today is very timely. The Commission has held numerous hearings over the years which have focused on Kosovo and, again, we find the issues and challenges facing the people of the region on the front page of the news.

Kosovo is receiving much attention right now because of the situation in southern Serbia and, most recently, in Macedonia. Mr. Chairman, I think it is important to go on record, as many have, in condemning the violence which now threatens Macedonia. Violence is not an acceptable means for addressing grievances, even when those grievances may be legitimate. In the past, the Helsinki Commission has raised concerns regarding minority issues, such as education and citizenship, with Macedonian authorities. Certainly progress has been made in Macedonia, and those avenues for achieving additional progress still exist. But, I am particularly concerned that continued violence by Albanian militants can only threaten those avenues. At the same time, I join those in calling upon the Macedonian authorities to utilize restraint and to abide by the rule of law in enforcing the law. Basic issues of citizenship and non-discrimination require a principled approach by all sides. Violence is not the means to a just end.

Among the issues relating to Kosovo, those which cause so much suffering are of greatest concern to me. There are many missing persons—Serbs, Albanians and others—and surviving friends and relatives wonder about their fate. Hundreds of Kosovar Albanians wrongfully languish in Serbian prisons, losing precious time in their lives, not to mention the denial of personal freedom. Members of minorities in Kosovo do not know what their future or that of their children will be. The situation in and around Kosovo encourages the trafficking of enslaved women in the region's horrific and booming sex trade.

I am also concerned about the future of Kosovo. Democratic development must proceed. The holding of elections, the operation of the free media, the creation of a functioning economy, and the establishment of institutions to respond to people's needs are all critical.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that our panel will shed some light on what is being done in response to these volatile issues. What progress have existing efforts yielded and what are the prospects for the future in the region, including a description of what the United States and the international community can do to foster constructive change and the rooting of democracy?

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. STENY H. HOYER, RANKING MEMBER**

For well over a decade now, I have been active on issues relating to the former Yugoslavia's violent demise, and the need for an active U.S. role if the international community is to succeed in ending this violence and restoring respect for Helsinki principles. I continue to feel that way and hope the united states will remain actively engaged in the region.

On this Commission, let alone in this Congress, there are a wide variety of views about the role of NATO and the presence of the U.S. military in southeastern Europe generally and in Bosnia and Kosovo in particular. Whether one believes we should be there or not, I think we could all agree that the best solution now is to achieve the progress in the civilian sphere that would establish genuine security in the region and allow our troops not only to come home, but with mission accomplished.

I view this hearing as focusing on that exact point. If we want to see our military commitment to the region conclude, we must work to develop institutions and organize elections that give the people of Kosovo the ability to govern themselves. We must help them create a police service that protects citizens and enforces the law. We must help create a judiciary in which the law is upheld and offenders are held accountable. We must support the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague so that a sense of justice can facilitate ethnic reconciliation and tolerance. We must help stop those who resort to violence, in Kosovo, Macedonia and elsewhere.

It may take time to do these things, but it will take even longer if there is the perception that we are not committed to seeing our goals ultimately realized.

As a former Chairman of this Commission, I also have followed the evolution of the CSCE into the OSCE, of a forum for dialogue into an organization with a presence in the field. I am impressed with the efforts of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and of OSCE missions elsewhere to bring the promises of the original Helsinki principles into the lives of people in need.

There are, Mr. Chairman, many problems in southeastern Europe. To a great extent, these problems could not be resolved effectively as long as the main problem in the region—Slobodan Milosevic—remained in power. His removal by the people of Serbia has created a new opportunity for progress. I hope we will not let this opportunity slip away but will, instead, use it creatively so that, in the not too distant future, our presence and our assistance will no longer be needed. I look forward to what our witnesses have to say in this regard.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, COMMISSIONER**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chairmen Smith and Campbell for scheduling this hearing to examine recent developments in Kosovo and throughout southeast Europe. I have been very active in efforts to promote peace and stability in this part of the world during the past two years, and so it seems quite appropriate that my first official hearing as a member of the Helsinki Commission is intended to highlight some of the problems faced in the Balkans in order to prompt dialogue so that we may effectively act to solve them. I am glad to be here, and I would like to underscore the importance of continuing to discuss the difficulties faced by those in Kosovo and surrounding areas. As we are all well aware, there is still much work to be done in order to help bring a time of peace, security and prosperity to the Balkans.

Since the end of the war, I have worked on three essential items that I believe will bring peace and stability to the region: first, to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo that continues today; next, to implement the Stability Pact; and finally, to support democracy in Serbia—an effort that I began when I was governor of the State of Ohio. Along with Senator Arlen Specter, I was so pleased to have the opportunity to visit with President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Vojislav Kostunica during a trip to southeast Europe and the Middle East over the New Year's holiday. At last, there is a remarkable opportunity for positive change in the FRY, which I hope will serve as a stabilizing force in the region.

I have visited Kosovo twice during the past several years, most recently in July 2000 as vice-chairman of the U.S. delegation to the annual meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest, Romania. Along with some of my colleagues, I traveled to Kosovo to get an update on the situation there. During the OSCE meeting, I introduced a resolution on Southeastern Europe that called to the attention of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly the situation in Kosovo and Serbia, and made clear the importance of democracy in Serbia. I was pleased that my resolution passed, putting the OSCE on record as condemning the Milosevic regime and insisting on the restoration of human rights, the rule of law, free press and respect for ethnic minorities in Serbia.

I also visited Kosovo in February 2000, and I had the opportunity to sit down with leaders of Kosovo's ethnic minority groups, including leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In addition, I met with leaders of Kosovo's Albanian community, Thaci, Rugova and Quojsa. I urged them to end the cycle of ethnic violence that has decimated the region for so many years, and I called on them to establish a new paradigm of respect for minority rights and rule of law in Kosovo. Only when the violence ends can a new era of hope and stability begin in southeast Europe.

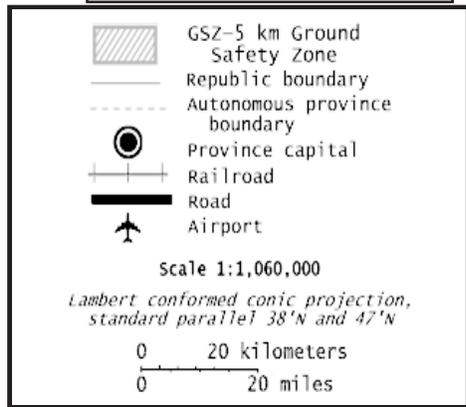
Unfortunately, we have not seen an end to ethnic conflict in the Balkans. Most recently, we have seen violence in Macedonia, and ethnic conflict in the Presevo Valley is still a concern of President Kostunica's government as well as members of the international community. Through a daily exchange of e-mails with two former Ohio state troopers serving as part of the U.N. police force in Kosovo, I am aware of turmoil that continues to plague Kosovo, as well. Individuals on all sides in Kosovo—Albanians as well as Serbs and other ethnic groups—

continue to engage in violent activity, and I am saddened to learn that OSCE staff members have been injured in attacks. We must remain engaged and continue to promote peace in southeast Europe.

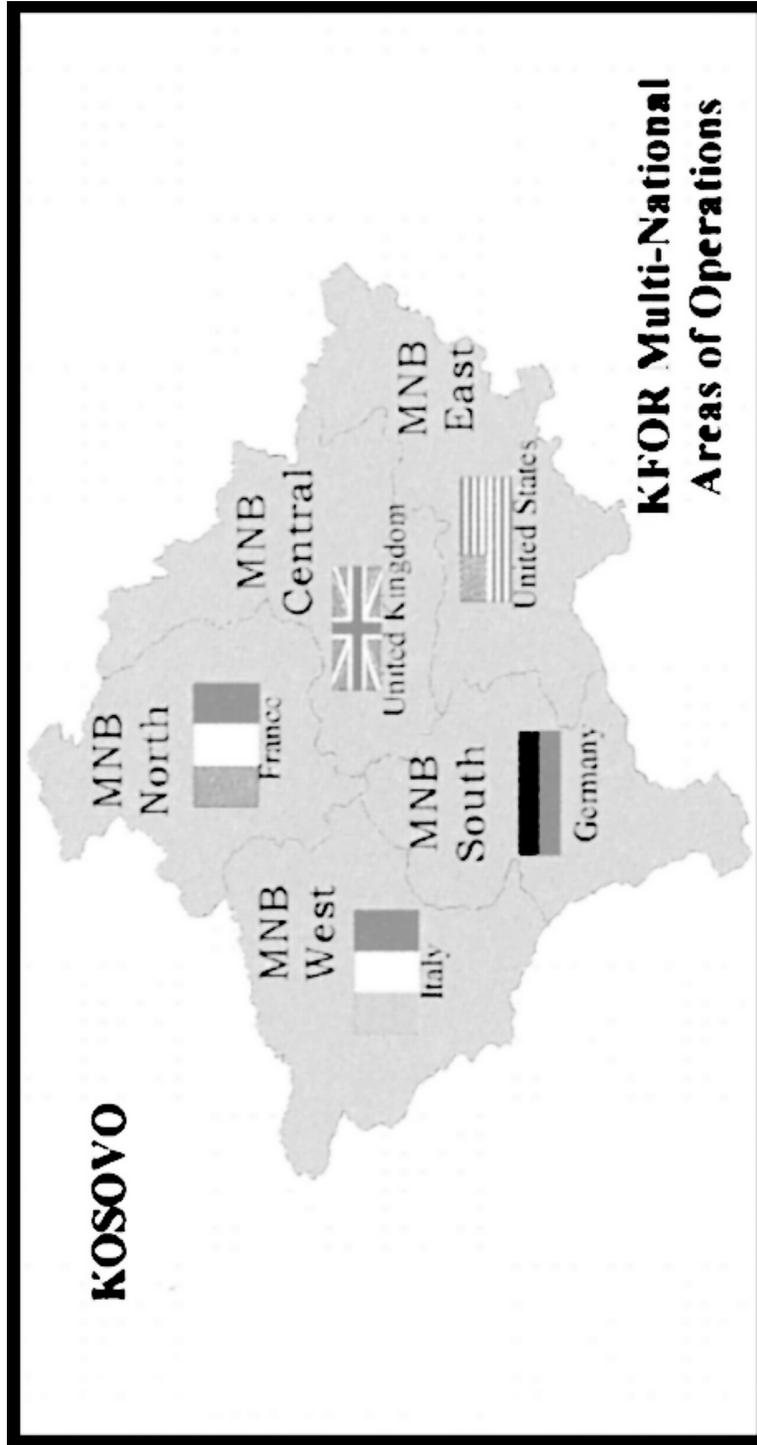
Given the vast amount of activity in region during the past few weeks—including the strife in Macedonia, happenings in Kosovo and the looming March 31 certification deadline for continued U.S. assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—this hearing is very timely. I have been particularly active in efforts to encourage President Kostunica and the new government in the FRY to meet the three certification requirements outlined in the fiscal year 2001 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, speaking with our officials in Belgrade as well as President Kostunica and Prime Minister Djindjic, and I have been paying close attention to developments in Macedonia. I thank the witnesses for their willingness to come before the Helsinki Commission today. I had the privilege of meeting General Ralston during the annual meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Budapest last May, and in February 2000, I enjoyed having lunch with Ambassador Everts in Pristina. It is good to see them both again, and I look forward to hearing their testimony, as well as the insights of Ambassador Pardew.

PREPARED SUBMISSION OF GEN. JOSEPH W. RALSTON,
 SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE (NATO),
 UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND

Kosovo Briefing Map



Enhanced detail of Kosovo map key.





The boundaries and names used in this map do not imply official recognition by the United Nations.

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Kosovo border |  Serb communities |
|  Municipal border |  Roma communities |
|  Main road |  Albanians outside Kosovo |
|  Railway |  Main border crossing |

(Key continued on next page)

General location of minority groups according to KFOR, UNHCR, and OSCE. Estimated remaining minority populations as of February 2000 given below.

Pristina, Obilic, Kos, Polje 17-20,00 Serbs 2,500-3,500 Roma	Pec, Klina, Istok 3,500-4,000 Roma
Kosovska Kaminca 10-11,000 Serbs	Prizren 4-5,000 Roma
Gnijilane 12,500 Serbs	Djakovica, Decani 7,000 Roma
Urosevac 4,200 Ashkalija 300-500 Roma	Presevo, Bujanovac, Medveda 60,000 Ethnic Albanians
Lipljan 1,500 Roma	

**PREPARED SUBMISSION OF AMB. JAMES W. PARDEW, DEPUTY
SPECIAL ADVISOR FOR KOSOVO IMPLEMENTATION,
EUROPEAN BUREAU, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be here today to join General Ralston and Ambassador Everts in updating the Commission on the situation in Kosovo nearly two years after the NATO air campaign expelled Milosevic's security forces. I will also discuss the implications of fighting in neighboring areas. I have just returned from the region, and would like to share my impressions of the progress we have made and the challenges that remain.

The process of change in Kosovo continues at an impressive pace; every time I travel there I notice abundant signs of progress. It is important to remember that Kosovo was in ruins when the international community entered the scene in June 1999. More than one million ethnic Albanians had been expelled from their homes; the economy was completely destroyed; and there were no functioning laws or institutions of any kind. We have come a long way since then. Everyday life is increasingly returning to normal. Children are going to school; Kosovars are governing at the municipal level and working closely with UNMIK at the province-wide level; trained Kosovar police are now visible on the streets.

In the region, the fall from power of the Milosevic regime last October has led to the emergence of a new democratic government in Belgrade and new opportunities to address outstanding problems in Kosovo and neighboring regions. We now have new, more promising authorities in Belgrade to approach on problems such as ethnic conflict in Mitrovica, Kosovar Albanian political prisoners in Serbia, or the status of Serbs in Kosovo. We are working daily to seek ways of using this new opportunity.

But, as always, serious challenges remain. In Kosovo, ethnic tensions continue, and Serbs and other minorities are not fully integrated into the society. The Kosovar Albanian extremists who failed to win support in recent municipal elections have turned to the use of force to promote their agenda in northern Macedonia and southern Serbia. These insurgencies threaten to destabilize the region and to undermine seriously the support of the international community to Kosovo.

KOSOVO

UN Security Council Resolution 1244 established a powerful mandate for the international mission in Kosovo. The resolution authorizes UNMIK to establish democratic self-governing institutions to govern Kosovo during the interim period until final status can be determined through a political process. Bernard Kouchner, who led this effort as the original head of UNMIK, was superb. His long list of accomplishments included the successful municipal elections last October. Former Danish Defense Minister Hans Haekkerup took charge of the mission in January, and is preparing for province-wide elections in 2001. We strongly support the holding of Kosovo-wide elections this year in order to empower the Kosovars to be responsible for democratic institutions in the interim period. Rapid progress toward self-government in the context of UNSCR 1244 will help lower these anxieties, thereby reducing support for extremists.

EARLY PROGRESS

The international community during its first year faced enormous challenges in establishing its own presence and developing, in the chaos of post-war Kosovo, the basic elements of a functioning society. Though we often wished implementation could move forward more quickly, it is truly remarkable what was accomplished in the first 365 days:

The intervention by the international community stopped the killing and expelled the Milosevic security forces from Kosovo.

International agencies helped return over one million refugees and displaced persons to their homes. The international community ensured that no Kosovar went without food and warm, dry shelter during the first winter, avoiding a potential humanitarian catastrophe.

Basic services were provided to some degree in most areas, schools were opened, basic health care was made available, and civil workers were paid.

The international community began Kosovo's transition to a market economy with a hard currency monetary system and a new Central Bank. A micro-credit bank was established and began to assist in the financing of small start-up businesses.

KFOR and UNMIK together began to establish public order, under a new system designed to promote a rule-of-law society.

UNMIK created the Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS), in which Kosovars and internationals work together on the day-to-day administration of Kosovo. The JIAS replaced the parallel Kosovar structures that had sprung up after the NATO Air Campaign.

KFOR oversaw the demilitarization and disarmament of the KLA. The former KLA handed in 10,000 arms during the demilitarization process; 3,800 other small arms were subsequently collected and destroyed. The international community created the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), a civil emergency services organization of 5,000, to employ former KLA in useful public service efforts.

UNMIK and OSCE created the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), an indigenous, multi-ethnic police force. More than 1,000 new recruits were graduated from the OSCE police school in the first year.

RECENT PROGRESS

More recently, the international community has made major strides toward establishing interim, democratic self-government, as called for in UNSCR 1244:

Municipal elections were successfully held on October 28, 2000. All Albanian-majority municipal assemblies and the three UNMIK-appointed assemblies in Serb-majority municipalities have elected their leadership and begun work.

UNMIK is working with Kosovars on the development of the Legal Framework that will define the province-wide institutions that will govern Kosovo during the interim period.

UNMIK has published more than 100 regulations with the force of law.

OSCE has begun preparing for province-wide elections, which it hopes to hold in the fall.

Many Kosovars had been unable to travel because FRY forces had deliberately destroyed their passports and other identification documents during the war. UNMIK recently began issuing travel documents, which are now recognized by 20 countries. Work is underway on an ID card for Kosovo residents.

UNMIK has appointed more than 400 local judges and prosecutors, and trials are being conducted in all five district courts and some lower courts. UNMIK has also appointed 10 international judges and five international prosecutors to the district courts, and one international judge to the supreme court.

The international community has assisted in the reconstruction of nearly 40,000 of the estimated 100,000 houses destroyed or damaged during the war, while many Kosovar families have rebuilt on their own. UNMIK officials believe that no emergency shelter assistance will be required for next winter.

The OSCE-run police school has graduated nearly 3,700 Kosovar police trainees. The school is on track to reach its original target of 4,000 by May. UNMIK and OSCE plan to significantly increase the KPS beyond the 4,000 target and are working to determine the appropriate staffing level. UNMIK police have transferred basic patrol responsibilities to more than 1,600 KPS recruits while continuing to provide oversight.

UNMIK has promulgated a regulation on Trafficking in Women, and the Kosovo Judicial Institute will conduct seminars on the regulation this spring.

UNMIK established a Human Rights Ombudsperson's Institution and appointed Polish human rights lawyer Marek Antoni Nowicki to the post.

There are currently seven daily newspapers, more than 50 radio stations, 12 TV stations (three are province-wide) operating in Kosovo.

To achieve these results, our European allies shouldered most of the burden. Other NATO countries supply the bulk of KFOR's troops, with the U.S. providing 5,600 KFOR soldiers stationed in Kosovo, about 14 percent of the total. Similarly, the Europeans are the leading donors of reconstruction and recovery assistance. U.S. development assistance to Kosovo was approximately 15 percent of total donor resources in 2000. The program will continue at this proportional level in 2001 per congressional mandate.

KOSOVO CHALLENGES

Still, much remains undone. The northern region and the city of Mitrovica are divided along ethnic lines, Serbs to the north, Albanians to the south. UNMIK and KFOR are unable to fully assert their authority north of the Ibar River. We have urged the new Belgrade government to encourage Mitrovica Serbs to cooperate with the international community. FRY officials have shown interest, and we are hopeful we can make progress.

Ethnic violence continues, despite the overall downward trend in violence. The February 16 bomb attack on a bus carrying Kosovo Serbs was a brutal and cowardly reminder that a small but dangerous extremist minority in Kosovo continues to pursue its agenda through violence. I am happy to report that KFOR and UNMIK have arrested suspects in the bombing.

Most Serbs continue to live in enclaves, protected by KFOR and cutoff from the society at large. Serbs overwhelmingly boycotted the October 28 elections and have kept their distance from preparations for Kosovo-wide elections. Few Serbs have agreed to participate in the judicial system, and Serbs cannot get a fair trial before Kosovar judges in a system plagued by ethnic bias.

The international community has undertaken a number of measures to improve security for Serbs and other minorities and encourage multi-ethnic participation in governance. UNMIK last June signed a compact with Kosovo Serbs on additional measures to protect their freedom of movement and fundamental rights, including the establishment of a Special Security Task Force. Last year, the U.S. pledged \$4 million to support minority communities, including support for efforts to help pave the way for the return of displaced Kosovo Serbs. The U.S. will provide additional funding this year for programs to promote stabilization of ethnic minority communities in Kosovo. UNMIK has established Local Community Offices in minority communities across Kosovo.

Though Serbs in the northern municipalities boycotted the October elections, UNMIK appointed Serb representatives to the municipal assemblies, and intends to hold by-elections there this year. UNMIK and OSCE have also successfully recruited minorities for the KPS: about 16 percent of the KPS is composed of Serbs, Bosniaks, Roma, and other minorities.

Organized crime and corruption complicate the international mission at every turn. UNMIK currently has limited capacity to tackle organized crime, but has established a Criminal Intelligence Unit to focus on the issue. We are working closely with our allies to provide expertise and other resources.

Unfortunately, we now find ourselves unable to fully focus on completing the job in Kosovo because we are faced with ethnic Albanian violence in Macedonia and southern Serbia. The insurgents in these two regions are manipulating valid grievances in the local Albanian communities, but the political instigation is coming from Kosovo. The vast majority of Kosovars are moderates who want to live peacefully within their borders; Kosovar voters soundly rejected extremist parties in the October elections. But these extremists have found places where their violent message resonates.

VIOLENCE IN MACEDONIA

The administration is very actively engaged and working very closely with the EU and NATO allies as the situation develops. President Bush released a statement March 23 strongly condemning the violence perpetrated by the extremists and supporting the democratic, multi-ethnic government of Macedonia. Secretary Powell has spoken with President Trajkovski, with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson and with EU High Representative Solana, and has been consulting closely with his other European and Allied counterparts to assist the democratically elected, multiethnic Macedonian government in countering the violence perpetrated by the extremists.

NATO and the Government of Macedonia have improved coordination considerably, including through NATO's appointment of a resident senior diplomat—Ambassador Eiff of Germany. NATO is conducting an assessment of Macedonia's immediate security needs, which we support. We will look to contribute our share to meeting those needs by

expediting \$17 million in Foreign Military Financing funds already in the pipeline. We will be working with Congress to re-allocate funds within the SEED account to increase our assistance for Macedonia by \$5 million this year, (for a total of \$38 million) focusing on programs to defuse interethnic tensions and address Albanian grievances.

One of our senior diplomats, Ambassador Robert Frowick, is in Skopje as personal representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office. He will be working with our Ambassador Michael Einik, with NATO Ambassador Eiff, and with EU representatives to facilitate discussions among all political parties on concrete political steps to address underlying causes of the crisis.

The international community must not allow the small group of extremists in Macedonia to destabilize the government and upset the delicate ethnic balance there. Their goals are to capture the popular political agenda and to provoke government forces to overreact, thus gaining support from the Albanian population. They seek a settlement that would put northern Macedonia beyond Skopje's control, allowing them to operate without regard for borders.

The President has made clear our strong support the efforts of President Trajkovski and the Macedonian government to uphold democracy and the rule of law. We have encouraged the government to respond proportionately to attacks by extremists and to exercise restraint, taking all possible steps to avoid civilian casualties. At the same time, we are encouraging the government to launch a broad-based dialogue with elected representatives of the Albanian community to address legitimate concerns. While we strongly oppose any dialogue with insurgents, who have rejected democracy and the political process in favor of extremist, terrorist violence, we have voiced our strong support for the dedication and commitment of Prime Minister Georgievski and Arben Xhaferi, head of the ethnic Albanian coalition party, and other moderate elected leaders as they work toward a political solution which preserves the coalition and upholds democracy.

We have a long-standing commitment to Macedonia—a close friend, invaluable partner of NATO, and successful example of multiethnic democracy in the Balkans. The Administration will continue its close work to uphold this commitment.

SOUTHERN SERBIA

Ethnic Albanian extremists in the Presevo Valley region of southern Serbia also are exploiting the frustrations of local Albanians, who, in this case, have long suffered under the abusive rule of Milosevic. These insurgents were using the Ground Safety Zone (GSZ), established after the war as a buffer between KFOR and FRY forces, as a safe haven for guerrilla attacks. NATO allies determined this was intolerable and needed to be addressed urgently. As a result, NATO has accepted in principle a FRY plan to ensure minority rights and improve conditions in southern Serbia as part of a negotiation process and a phased and conditional relaxation of NATO's GSZ restrictions. NATO allowed the FRY back into portions of the GSZ, a five-kilometer strip running along the Serbia side of the boundary with Kosovo. The relaxation of the GSZ has been carried out without any major incidents so far. The FRY government and Presevo Albanians have reached a cease-fire, though there

have been sporadic violations, and on March 23 representatives from both sides met face-to-face for the first time in a process we hope will evolve into a negotiation.

PRESSURING KOSOVAR LEADERS

The insurgents in Macedonia and southern Serbia are few in number and have a limited support base at this point. But they have proven capable of threatening the region's fragile political landscape. They rely on support from within Kosovo, as well as from the ethnic Albanian diaspora. Moderate Albanian leaders in Kosovo are afraid to challenge them head on, for fear of appearing weak in defense of ethnic Albanian interests.

But these insurgencies are poison for Kosovo. They threaten to dry up international support and disrupt efforts to establish provisional self-government under UNSCR 1244. We are hammering this message home with Kosovar leaders every day. We must work together to contain these extremists for the benefit of Albanians in Kosovo, Macedonia and southern Serbia.

STRATEGY

We are approaching the threat of Albanian extremism in a number of ways:

Diplomacy to ensure the Kosovar Albanians understand the damage being done to Kosovo by extremists who use force to promote their political agenda.

Support to democratic, moderate political leaders in Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia by promoting reform, minority rights, an Legal Framework and elections.

Active measures by UNMIK and KFOR to reduce the ability of extremists to use Kosovo and the GSZ as safe havens for insurgents.

Improving the human rights situation for ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and Serbia.

Demanding calibrated and proportional security measures by national forces in Serbia and Macedonia; promoting reform of the FRY/Serbian security forces, and enhancing the capabilities of the Macedonian security forces.

Focusing on programs to defuse inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic tensions in flashpoint zones.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I will be happy to respond to the Commission's questions.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMB. DAAN EVERTS,
HEAD OF MISSION, OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

KOSOVO: ENDING THE IMPASSE

What has happened to the Kosovo Albanians? In March 1999 they were the world's favorite oppressed people, chased from their land, overcrowding refugee camps, worthy of a NATO-led military intervention. Two years later, the tide has turned. No longer collective victims of Serbian state oppression, Kosovo Albanians are now perceived as collective villains oppressing Kosovo Serbs and instigating violence in South Serbia and Macedonia. Have indeed angels become devils or is this another case of historical expectations turned into disappointment?

Impartial observers would agree that the 20th century has not been kind to the Albanian population in Kosovo. Their plight under militant pan-Serbian policy reached new severity in the 1990's after Milosevic abrogated the relative autonomy that Kosovo enjoyed in the eighties—with its own constitution and Albanian-dominated parliament and government. What he imposed in its stead, has been qualified as an apartheid regime. Western response was deafening silence. In terms of failed conflict prevention, Kosovo stands out as a prime example.

What was the reason of this not so benign neglect? Perhaps an element of ethnic prejudice? But by origin Albanians are as authentically European as any of their neighbors and, in fact, predated the Slav population in the region. Yes, their language is distinctly different and outside Germanic or Romanic mainstream, but so are Finnish or Hungarian. Is it the religious divide? Most Albanians are Muslim, but they are—and always have been—remarkably relaxed and non-fanatic with regard to their religion. Great forefather Skenderbegh started off as Orthodox, converted to Islam and ended as Catholic. True, some Albanians have 'distinguished' themselves in the pursuit of crime in Western European countries, contributing to a negative image. But should we judge an entire population by its renegades? The only objective fact that can explain, but not justify, the Serbs' prejudice, is the demographic threat posed by the historic, higher growth of the Albanian population, leaving an ever-shrinking Serb share of the Kosovo population (to only 15% in early 1999).

Now that the pendulum has swung and Kosovo Serbs have become the community in distress, the question is what can be done to end the vicious circle of violence. One thing is clear. As long as there is no minimal certainty where Kosovo is heading as an entity, chances for creating a civil society with room for all ethnic communities are slim indeed. Leaving all options for the future open, encourages extremist pursuits on both the Serb and Albanian side causing fear in both communities. This fundamental uncertainty is a main cause of the continuing tension and ethnic violence in Kosovo.

On the Serb side, the extreme option is reintegration of Kosovo in Serbia as an integral province. A return to the *status quo ante* of Milosevic, with a return of the Yugoslav army, the special police and Serb dominance in all spheres of life. As long as this option is publicly propagated by Serb hardliners, all Kosovar Serbs are viewed as a potential fifth column, ready to revive the nightmare of the past. The other, Albanian extreme is instant and unconditional independence. A horror scenario to the Kosovar Serbs, who even in current circumstances, with an omnipresent UNMIK and KFOR, see their basic rights denied.

The answer, then, lies in narrowing the range of options to the middle ground, where interests overlap and mutual respect and understanding can develop. This requires clear signals on three sides with regard to the course to follow in the next few years, without locking in the subsequent, ultimate status of Kosovo. The new Belgrade, true to its democratic aspirations, should unequivocally preclude a return to Milosevic's Kosovo and signal the Kosovo Serbs to actively participate in building a democratic, self-governing Kosovo—in conformity with UN resolution 1244. With international support they should be able to secure at least a proportional share in the self-governance and ensure that their community interests are safeguarded. The Kosovar Albanians should accept to defer the issue of Kosovo's final status. They should realize that the world is prepared to not only foster self-government in this phase, but also to provide vitally needed financial, military, institutional and political support. Thirdly, the international community must be unambiguous in consolidating this democratic, self-reliant Kosovo, through support of the enabling legal framework, now under discussion, and the Kosovo-wide elections for a representative assembly later this year. Denial of instant independence to Kosovar Albanians should have its counterweight in firm rejection of regressive or partitionist policies on the part of the Kosovar Serbs.

Kosovar Albanians are neither angels nor devils. Neither are Kosovar Serbs. There are extremist and fanatic fringes on both sides, spurred on by current uncertainty and international ambiguity. If the three sides agree on provisional self-governance for the imminent future, the question of final status becomes less acute and may be addressed more rationally, dispassionately and fruitfully in a few years hence, under conditions of improved confidence and tolerance.

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