

THE US ROLE IN STOPPING THE SERBIAN BARBARISM IN KOSOVO

Fehari Ramadani¹

¹*Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tetova*

Abstract

The Kosovo war of 1998-1999 was the most terrible in the history of Europe post-World War II. Since Kosovo's Serb occupation during the First Balkan War (1912-1913) and until the final departure of the Serbian regime from this region (1999), the majority of population, i.e. the Albanian one, was facing systematic violence of the government in Belgrade. The persecution of the majority of population in Kosovo from the Serbian state authorities culminated in 1998-1999 when Serb state violence reached the proportions of genocide. Serbian government's goal was to cleanse the territory of Kosovo from Albanian population, a goal sought to be achieved by forced dislocation, killing and assimilation of Albanians. U.S. and Western Europe diplomatic efforts to stop the state barbarism of Belgrade on Kosovo Albanian population through dialogue with the Serbian government ended unsuccessfully. Serbian reluctance, forced the US along with 18 other NATO countries, to intervene militarily to prevent this policy. They realized, as will US President Bill Clinton state, "that in the Balkans inaction facing cruelty simply creates other madness". NATO intervention saved many lives, it stopped the massacres and ethnic cleansing and created the necessary conditions for the establishment of lasting peace and building of a society without ethnic, racial and religious hate.

Keywords: *USA, Kosovo, Serbia, stopping of barbarism, peace implementation*

*"We cannot understand the liberation of Balkan nations without the assistance received from the Great Powers"*¹ **Stavro Skendi**

The termination of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans during the First Balkan War (1912-1913), did not bring freedom to half of Albanian people. The Ambassadors Conference in London, which was convened to solve the issues caused by the war between the Balkan Allies and the Ottoman Empire, recognized the independent Albanian state but it will include only half of the Albanian population and territories. Most of these territories, which remained outside of the independent Albania's borders, were given to Serbia. Kosovo Albanians were sentenced by six Great Powers of the time which replaced the existing Ottoman rule with a more inhumane one: the Serbian rule*.

With the Ambassadors Conference's decisions, Kosovo Albanians were forced to face, for nearly a century, an obligatory state cohabitation with Serbs. The relations of Albanians with them

¹ Stavro Skendi. 2000. *Zgjimi kombëtar shqiptar 1878-1912*. PHOENIX & Shtëpia e librit dhe komunikimit, p. 421.

* Kosovo has always been an Albanian land. It has historically been inhabited by Albanian majority. During the Ottoman rule, there has never been any Serbian riot of an anti-ottoman character. During the second half of 19th and the beginning of 20th century, Albanians have risen up several times against the Ottoman Empire. It was in Kosovo where the Albanians, for the first time, proclaimed their autonomous state in January 1881. It was the Kosovo Albanians who fought against the Ottoman state in 1899-1900, 1910, 1912. Nevertheless, from 1912 to 1999, the Kosovo Albanians were subject to a consistent persecution by the Serbian state.

have traditionally been conflicting. These relations were as a result of Serbian ethno - phobia against Albanians deriving from “*Nacertanije*”, the essential document of the Serbian national ideology. The primary premise of this project was the ethnic purity and expulsion of Albanians, as different by blood, language, culture and religion.

From 1912 to 1999 denying the national and human rights to Kosovo Albanians by the Serbian state was the most common thing. The period of Serbian rule was continuously accompanied by violence and terror on the Albanian population which, at certain stages, reached up to apartheid. The aim of this policy was to force ethnic Albanians to move from their homes and leave them under Serbian occupation.

The political position of Albanians was improved by the Yugoslav constitutional amendments in 1974. By these amendments, Kosovo becomes “*politically and autonomous territorial unit*” and “*constitutive element of the Yugoslav Federation*”. By this time, the position of Kosovo was similar but not the same to the position of Yugoslav republics. Similarly to the republics, Kosovo and Vojvodina* had the right to veto in the Federal Assembly².

However, this situation did not last long. In the late 80s of the last century, with coming to power of the nationalist wing in Serbia, Belgrade began again the discriminatory policy towards Kosovo. By adopting the amendments of SR of Serbia constitution, on March 23rd, 1990, the Serbian parliament unconstitutionally abolished the autonomy of Kosovo.

Over the next ten years Kosovo experienced a military occupation by the Serbian regime. All institutions, such as police, army, justice, education etc., were directed and commanded by the members of Serbian community which represented about 5% of the overall Kosovo population. Serbian became the official language. The nation which represented the majority of population was deprived of schools, hospitals and other public institutions. All autonomous regional institutions such as the Parliament, the Government, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the National Academy of Science and Arts etc., were suspended or scattered. The Albanians were removed from their job places (teachers, judges, doctors, university professors etc.) all the power belonged to the Serbian minority. In 1990 Serbia suspended the Albanian policemen in Kosovo and brought around 2500 Serbian police officers from Belgrade. On July 5th, 1990, the Serbian police took Prishtina’s radio and television service by force. All 1300 Albanian journalists and technicians were fired. The only remaining newspaper in Albanian language *Rilindja* was banned the following month. The offensive which Milosevic started in July of 1990 was the establishment of an apartheid regime. The National Library of Kosovo was taken and a considerable amount of books was transferred to Belgrade, while another portion was destroyed in a paper recycling factory. The apartheid was founded within a few months. About 250,000 Albanians fled Kosovo

* The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisted of six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia) and two autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina). All eight of these units, according to the Constitution of 1974 were part of the Federation. The representatives of each unit had equal rights in the federal bodies. During the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia in the years 1991-1999, seven units became independent, except Vojvodina, which remains part of Serbia.

² Arsim Bajrami. 2001. Sistemi kushtetues i Republikës së Kosovës. Pristine: Artini, p. 48; Arsim Bajrami. 1988. Neka aktuelna pitanja u vezi sa postupkom revizije Ustava SFRJ i Ustava SRS. In Naša zakonitost, no. 5/88. Zagreb, p. 570-575.

between the years 1990-1993. The Serbian government was exercising this discriminatory policy at a time when even in Southern Africa the apartheid was forbidden by law. Yet, such a regime was alive in Europe at a time when even the Berlin³ wall had fallen.

When former Yugoslav republics declared independence, the leaders of the European Union did not address the Kosovo issue. By the end of 1991, when the USSR was disintegrated and Milosevic proved powerless to maintain "*territorial integrity of Yugoslavia*", the European Union leaders endorsed the principles of recognition of the states emerging from these federations. At the meeting of December 16th, 1991, the European Union Council of Ministers and a Commission chaired by the Frenchman Robert Badinter adopted certain principles:

1. Only states that had formerly had the status of a republic would be recognized as independent states;

2. No change of borders of the republics will be accepted without prior consent of parties concerned, etc.

According to "*Badinter's principle*" Kosovo was treated as a Serbian territory and Albanians as a minority although they represented over 90% of the overall population of Kosovo. This proved that the European Union rather accepted unfairness than face Serbian dissatisfaction⁴.

During the time of severe Serbian provocations, the Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova managed to keep two million compatriots in the path of peaceful resistance⁵, hoping that the international community would intervene and stop the Serbian state oppression on the ethnic Albanian population. But the non-violent resistance of Kosovo Albanians had no result. Although its leaders still hoped on support from Western countries, European leaders ruled out the possibility of using force to force Milosevic to relinquish his discriminative policy. One of the main leaders of EU of the time, the French president François Mitterrand had stated: "*We will never fight against Serbs*"⁶. This inept attitude of Europeans further encouraged Serbia to expand its state violence in Kosovo and other ex-Yugoslav areas.

Since the peaceful resistance proved unsuccessful, Albanians were forced to go to an armed war*. The violence and terror used by the Serbian government was ever increasing. As in Bosnian case, in Kosovo too, the American persistence was needed to force Serbians cease the massacres.

³ Compare: Serge Métais. 2006. *Histori e shqiptarëve nga ilirët deri te pavarësia e Kosovës*. Tirana: 55, p. 366, 376, 381-385; Bill Clinton. 2000. *Ne luftën, Ju paqen*. Tirana: Newspaper "Albania", p. 18. (Clinton's speech, addressing the American nation, related to the NATO bombing on March 24, 1999); Stipe Mesiq. No date. *Si është shkatërruar Jugosllavia*. Zagreb, p. 29-37; Warren Zimmermann. 1996. *Burimet e një katastrofe*. Tirana: Besa, p. 79, 80.

⁴ Serge Métais, op.cit., p. 374-375.

⁵ Warren Zimmermann, op.cit., p. 79, 80.

⁶ Serge Métais, op.cit., p. 387.

* The Kosovo war began on February 28, 1998, after Serb forces' attack on villages in Likoshan and Qirez of Drenica. It ended on June 11, 1999. The war developed between the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (then, the Confederation of Serbia and Montenegro) and the Kosovo Liberation Army. From March 24, 1999, to June of that year, Serbia was facing NATO air strikes. During the war, around 1 million Albanians were evicted from their homes, about 15,000 people were killed, of whom 2,400 KLA fighters while the rest were civilians. During the war, about 5,000 people went missing.

In the beginning of March 1998, in Prekaz*, a country in central Kosovo, the Serbian paramilitary units furiously attacked the ethnic Albanian population and killed dozens of people. Whole families were burned inside their houses. Among the victims were women, children and old people; thousands fled Kosovo. This was the most outrageous violence Serbia had undertaken in Kosovo since World War II⁷. The beginning of the war between KLA and Serb government forces and the increase of the Serbian state's violence on civilian population put the American diplomacy in motion. The meeting of US diplomat, Richard Holbrook with some representatives of KLA, on June 23rd, 1998, was a meaningful sign that the Americans were recognizing the legitimacy of the Albanian armed resistance. Driven by the western public opinion as well, at the beginning of October, the western leaders aggravated their tone. The threats of an immediate NATO intervention made Richard Holbrook force Milosevic declare ceasefire on October 13, 1998⁸. The ceasefire which Milosevic was forced to declare under the American pressure was temporary. The Serbian leader was determined to implement his plan*. During the first days of 1999, Serbia carried out a military action on a large scale aiming the extermination and expulsion of Albanians. On January 15th the Serbian forces killed around 45 Albanians in Recak⁹. On January 16th, William Walker, the chair of OSCE, visited Recak and accused Belgrade immediately. He knew the killings were not a result of paramilitaries. The Americans had given him the telephone

* On 5, 6 and 7 March, 1998 in Prekaz, 56 Albanians were killed, of whom 21 were members of the closest family of Shaban Jashari (the father of the legendary commander Adem Jashari). Among the killed were 15 children, aged 7 to 16, and 17 females. Among the massacred were elders aged up to 74 years. All the victims identified and unidentified were buried by police on March 10th, without respecting any traditional norms or funeral regulations and without any forensic expertise conducted. (See: <http://www.albeu.com/kryetitull/mos-harro-lufta-dhe-masakra-e-prekazit-permes-25-fotosh-foto-18/235546/>).

⁷ Madeleine Albright. 2004. *Zonja Sekretare-autobiografi*. Tirana: Duda, p. 441.

⁸ Compare: Serge Métais, op.cit., p. 400; David L. Phillips. 2015. *Çlirimi i Kosovës-Diplomacia këmbëngulëse dhe ndërhyrja e SHBA-ve*. Tetovo: ArbëriaDesign, p. 151.

* Serbia had decided to assimilate Kosovo. According to a plan prepared earlier, Serbia intended to force the majority of Albanians to leave Kosovo and not allow them to return there again ever. This plan was known as "Horseshoe". The plan "Horseshoe" was discovered by the Bulgarian Secret Service and through the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was presented to NATO countries. In an editorial, the journalist of the Belgrade daily "Danas", Miroslav Filipović, who was also the correspondent of the Agency France-Presse and an analyst of the Institute Rapporteur on War and Peace, based on the reports of officers of the Yugoslav Army who participated in the Kosovo war, claimed that members of the Yugoslav armed forces have made mass murders against Kosovo Albanians. "The existence of the plan "Horseshoe" is mentioned several times and ... is belied by the government. My knowledge of this plan dates back to the mid 70's", stated Filipović.

"A group of Serbian communists began to worry about what would happen to the Serbs when Tito died. How to maintain Yugoslavia and communism ... and how to get rid of the Albanian invasion? Then the project idea "Horseshoe" was developed; a plan that consisted of as many horseshoes as there were Albanian villages".

This plan envisioned that, around every Albanian village, armed people in the form of a horseshoe should be deployed, with an opening towards Albania and inhabitants would be given a period of a few dozen minutes that to flee their homes with their essentials. Then the village would be burnt, while properties robbed and obliterated. In the "open" section of the "Horseshoe" documents and money would be taken from the people and their selection would take place. Thus, several thousands of people would emigrate from Yugoslavia to Albania. The destruction of houses and the monstrous crimes, which would accompany the plan, would discourage even the most determined to return. (For more see: Bardhyl Mahmuti. 2015. *Mashtrimi i madh*. (Second edition). Tetovo: Çabej, p. 241, 243, 244).

⁹ Madeleine Albright, op.cit., f. 458; Serge Métais, op.cit., p. 401. (See the May 24th, 1999 Indictment, amended on June 29 and October 29, 2001, *Le Monde*, February 12, 2002); David L. Phillips, op.cit., p. 160; Nazmi Maliqi. 2001. *Gjurmë politike*. Skopje: Grafoteks, f. 58.

recordings of the conversation between the Yugoslav deputy prime minister Nikola Sainovic and the general Sreten Lukic where the first instructed the latter, in charge of Kosovo security, to “*act fiercely*” in Recak. The operation was conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ special units¹⁰.

This massacre made the American diplomacy accelerate the steps in finding a solution to the Kosovo issue. In the negotiations in Rambouillet, the American leaders, especially the state secretary Madeleine Albright, had understood that a military intervention is the only solution. Nevertheless, taking in consideration Russia’s attitude as a member of the “*Contact group on ex-Yugoslavia*” (with USA, UK, France, Germany and Italy) the Americans gave peace its last chance. The peace talks between Albanians* and Serbs* under international* guidance began on February 6, 1999, in Rambouillet. Madeleine Albright thought that the American project drafted at the end of 1998, should serve as the basis for an agreement. According to that project, Kosovo would remain the province of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), but it would provide a “*substantial autonomy*” which would actually give all internal attributes of a state. It will organize democratic elections, which will lead to the creation of a “*regional government*” dominated by Albanians. The issue of independence would be discussed only after three years of the new status. NATO troops would be deployed to Kosovo to guarantee the implementation of the agreement¹¹. The Rambouillet conference for the first time acknowledged the right to self-determination although not expressly. Based on the document “*three years after the entry into*

¹⁰ Serge Métais, op.cit., p. 402.

* Kosovo delegation representatives: Ibrahim Rugova, Fehmi Agani, Bujar Bukoshi, Edita Tahiri, Idriz Ajeti, Mark Krasniqi, Hashim Thaçi, Jakup Krasniqi, Azem Syla, Ramë Buja, Xhavit Haliti, Rexhep Qosja, Hidajet Hyseni, Mehmet Hajrizi, Veton Surroi dhe Blerim Shala. The twenty-nine-year-old Hashim Thaci, who was the Director of the Political Directorate of the Kosovo Liberation Army, was elected head of the delegation. (See: Bardhyl Mahmuti, op.cit., p. 97; Madeleine Albright, op.cit., p. 463-464).

* The Serbian delegation consisted of Slavs, Muslims, Turks and Roma, ostensibly to show Milosevic’s commitment to the ethnic diversity. The composition of the Yugoslav delegation to Rambouillet: Ratko Marković, Serbian deputy Prime Minister and head of the delegation; the deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Government, Nikola Šainović; the deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Vladan Kutlešić; the vice-chair of the Serbian Parliament, Vladimir Štambuk. The delegation also included “representatives of national communities who wish to live in Serbia and Yugoslavia”. Milosevic and his wife Mirjana Markovic chose Vladimir Štambuk - chairman of the Socialist Party of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija as representative of the Kosovo Serbs; two representatives of the Turkish community, Zejnelabedin Kurejš and Guljbehar Rauf Sabovic; a representative of the Gorani community Ibro Vajt; a representative of the Muslim community, Refik Senadovic; a representative of the Roma community, Luan Rama; a representative of the Egyptian and Ashkali community, Qerim Abazi and two representatives of the Kosovo Albanians, Faik Jashari and Sokol Qysja. The “two representatives of the Kosovo Albanians” were presented by Milosevic as political representatives. Faik Jashari, according to the Serbian regime, was the chairman of the Kosovo Democratic Initiative, and Sokol Qyrja, the chairman of the Democratic Reform Party. In fact, neither of them had a political party, they even did not represent their families. According to an article in the Belgrade newspaper “Vreme”, dated February 13, 1999, Faik Jashari’s family distanced from this member of the Serbian delegation and stated that he could not represent them politically. (See: Madeleine Albright, op.cit., p. 464; Bardhyl Mahmuti, op.cit., p. 95-97).

* The chairs of the Rambouillet talks were appointed by the Contact Group: Robin Cook- foreign minister of the United Kingdom and Hubert Védrine - the French Foreign minister. Daily negotiations coordinated by the troika composed of the United States Ambassador Chris Hill, EU representative Wolfgang Petrisch and Russian Ambassador Boris Mayorski (Madeleine Albright, op.cit., f. 463; Bardhyl Mahmuti, op.cit., f. 98, 103).

¹¹ Serge Métais, op.cit., p. 404.

force of this agreement, an international meeting to determine the mechanisms for a final settlement of Kosovo, based on the people's will, would take place”¹².

The achievement of the agreement was very difficult. No party agreed to what was offered. The Albanians were not ready to accept anything less than independence since everything else represented a deviation from the centenary ideal for which entire generations had fought. Moreover, they could not agree to remain part of a state which had massacred their compatriots. On the other hand, Serbs, hoping on Russia's support, opposed the presence of any kind of foreign military troops within the territory of Kosovo.

The American diplomacy, led by the state secretary Albright, played an important role in convincing the Albanian delegation to sign the agreement. Furthermore the European diplomats rather pressured the Albanian delegation than they tried to convince them. The foreign Italian minister Lamberto Dini, *“who always maintained a critical attitude towards KLA”*, wrote Albright, had insisted that the head of the Albanian delegation, Hashim Thaci not only should accept the framework agreement but give up an independence-related referendum. According to the state secretary, *“This was unfair. The proposal we presented, Albright notes, requested that Kosovars are encouraged and not abandon their independence aspirations”¹³*. In the efforts to persuade Thaci to sign the agreement, Albright said: *“...if he thought we would bomb the Serbs even if the Albanians rejected the agreement, he was wrong. On such a case, we would never manage to ensure NATO support”*. On the other hand, the State Secretary said that *“if you say yes and Serbs say no, NATO will strike until the Serb forces are out and NATO forces are in. You will have security. And you will be able to govern yourselves”*. Thaci answered that the aim of KLA was the war for independence and that it would be very difficult for them to give up on such a thing. Albright had answered that *“you don't have to give up but be realistic. This is a three year agreement...This is your chance. Grab it, because it will never come again”¹⁴*. Americans made it clear to the Albanian delegation that the agreement won't interfere in organizing a referendum. The signing of the agreement by the Albanian delegation and its rejection by the Serbian delegation cleared the path for NATO military intervention which would force Serbia to remove its military, police and paramilitary troops from Kosovo.

The Albanian delegation had requested an assurance from Albright that the United States would actually be part of a peace building power and that they would not have to rely solely on Europe. They all shared the thought related to the need of a referendum related to the independence¹⁵.

Although the agreement did not meet their requests, the Albanian delegation, on the American insistence and the after Albright's promises, on March 18th 1999, signed the agreement of 82 pages, in a five-minute ceremony which was boycotted by both the Yugoslav delegation as well as the Russian interlocutor¹⁶.

¹² Mimoza Cika-Kelmendi. 2012. Kosova si çështje evropiane. Tirana: Naimi, p. 242.

¹³ Madeleine Albright, op.cit., p. 468.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 470.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 465.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 470.

Milošević refused to sign the Rambouillet agreement, because he thought that USA and NATO allies' threats could not be implemented in practice. He was convinced that the lack of unity between allies and their fear of the Russian reaction would not allow the Alliance attack on Serbia. "*Milošević started the war with the hope that the unity of the 19 member countries of NATO will be undermined ... and with the confidence that Russia will not remain in the framework of anti-NATO rhetoric, but would take certain actions*"¹⁷, although his predictions proved wrong.

In a conversation that Albright had with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Igor Ivanov, regarding the possibility of a military intervention by NATO against Serbian positions, the Russian diplomat replied that "*Russia cannot allow the use of force against Slavic brothers*". In the efforts to convince the Russian diplomat, the Secretary of State expressed the conviction that the Albanians would not give up arms before NATO went there to protect them, while Milosevic would never allow the North Atlantic Alliance to be placed there. Albright emphasized that the Europeans were concerned about the Russian reaction if NATO would act without the Security Council approval, but "*I couldn't not trust this to the Council since Milosevic knows that you (Russia – my note) will use veto against use of force*". Ivanov continued to oppose air strikes against Serbs. "*That is totally unacceptable. NATO has no right to attack a sovereign state*"¹⁸.

Convinced that without the UN Security Council approval NATO cannot act, in the days following the signing of Rambouillet, Milosevic launched a wide-scale ethnic cleansing action in Kosovo. This prompted NATO military intervention against Serbian positions. On March 23, 1999, the NATO Secretary General, Javier Solana had ordered the Supreme Commander and European Ally, US Army General Wesley Clark to begin air operations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On March 24, NATO began a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia (Serbia).

Had it not been the determination of Americans, especially Madeleine Albright and Bill Clinton, it is not certain that Europe would have taken any action to stop this barbarism. In his address to the nation that president Clinton delivered on March 24, 1999, among other things he said: "*We learned that in the Balkans, the inactivity against ferocity simply creates other ferocities. However the determination makes armies stop and people are saved from death*". The American motto became: "*Serbs out, NATO in, refugees home*". If our allies and we would continue without a response, Milosevic would interpret our reluctance as a license to kill. More massacres would happen, tens of thousands of other refugees, more victims¹⁹.

After the NATO bombing began, Milosevic ordered that his forces in Kosovo burst in a campaign of terror, which surpassed in size, as well as speed the "*ethnic cleansing*" he committed in eastern and northern Bosnia in 1992²⁰.

¹⁷ Gabriel Partos. 2001. Kosovo: mënyra të reja për të ndaluar një konflikt të vjetër. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 102; See also: Sonja Biserko. 2001. Fundi i lojës në Ballkan. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 255.

¹⁸ Madeleine Albright, op.cit., p. 461-462.

¹⁹ Bill Klinton, op.cit., p. 22. (Fjalimi i Klintonit, drejtuar kombit amerikan, për goditjet ajrore të NATO-së, 24 mars 1999).

²⁰ Noel Malcom. 2001. Të drejtat e Kosovës. Në *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 96.

This was not a spontaneous reaction to the airstrikes, but a project prepared earlier. According to Susan Sontag* the damage NATO strikes caused to people were incomparable to “*the suffering of hundreds, thousands of people in recent years who have been victims of Serbian ethnic cleansing programs. Even violence differs from violence, and not all wars are inhumane*”²¹.

The beginning of strikes enraged Serb leaders. They intensified their extermination campaign against Albanian civilians. Serbian security forces gathered Albanian civilians in groups, killed them with automatic weapons and then set them on fire. They say to Albanians: “*Go away or we will kill you!*”. They separated families then loaded buses and trains with people. Some of them departed to the borders, others were killed. Serbs confiscated the identification document and property proofs, thus seeking permanent deletion of the presence of these people from their land. “*We must not allow something like that happen*”, said President Clinton in his speech at the Air Force Base in Barsdeil (Louisiana). “*We should oppose it*”²². Some of the opponents of bombing considered that Serbia had forced 1 million Albanians to flee Kosovo due to NATO strikes. The Balkan history expert Misha Glenny stressed that “*the exodus of Kosovo Albanians was not caused by NATO*”. But that its actions have aggravated the problem²³.

The beginning of NATO attacks on police and military targets, without the mandate UN Security Council, also caused different reactions. The issue mostly discussed was related to the bombing legitimacy. The bombing opponents put emphasis on the violation of the sovereignty of an independent state. To them, the preservation of state sovereignty was more important than saving human lives. However, the ones who supported this action were a majority. Regarding the intervention of NATO, Václav Havel* stressed that the only reason that led to the bombing of Serb targets was “*... an entirely humanitarian interest*”. By this action, the NATO countries gave precedence to human rights over state sovereignty. Namely, this makes the “*attack on the Yugoslav Federation legitimate, even without the UN mandate*”²⁴. One of the most famous French philosophers, Alain Finkielkraut wrote that “*NATO's intervention was inevitable...*” because “*only a military defeat of Serbia would make a political solution possible*”²⁵. The historian and well-known American political scientist, Paul Kennedy, wrote: “*The principles of the rule of law, national self-determination and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights do not tolerate ethnic cleansing, as the one which happens day and night in Kosovo*”²⁶. The Spaniard Javier Balas, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for photography, wrote that on UN and the “*legitimacy*” stands “*the*

* Susan Sontag-one of the renowned American writers of the time.

²¹ Susan Sontag. 2001. Shekulli 21 ka filluar në Sarajevë. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 94.

²² Bill Klinton, op.cit., p. 42. (Klinton komunikon mbi Kosovën, në Bazën e Forcave Ajrore në Barsdeil, Baza e Forcave Ajrore, Luiziana-Fragmente nga transkripti i Shtëpisë së Bardhë)..

²³ Misha Glenny. 2001. Kur viktimat kthehen në kërcënim. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 208.

* Václav Havel- one of the most famous dissidents of Eastern Europe, playwright, President of the Czech Republic in the period February 2, 1993-February 2, 2003.

²⁴ Václav Havel. 2001. Edhe unë ndjehem shqiptar. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 38.

²⁵ Alain Finkielkraut. 2001. E pashmangshme. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 86.

²⁶ Paul Kennedy. 2001. NATO merr përsipër prapësitë historike të Ballkanit. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 217.

Charter of Human Rights and the legitimacy of protection of victims from the Hitler of the end of this century”²⁷.

In the last decade of the 20th century, in the territories of the former Yugoslavia a series of wars developed and the cause of all these were Serbs. The genesis of these wars was in Kosovo, when Serbia set one of the most inhumane regimes of European history after World War II. Milosevic actions in Kosovo, *"recall the times of fascist SS"*²⁸, wrote the Italian writer and journalist Arrigo Levi. *"The war in Yugoslavia started in Kosovo since ten years and normally it ends there. It all started with the apartheid establishment in this European country"*²⁹.

The mission of the USA and NATO allies was to stop the Serb barbarism over the Albanian population in Kosovo. Their goal was of mere human nature, bringing an end to a state violence and settle peace. *"NATO does not want to invade Belgrade, but to establish control in Kosovo and bring back the population that has left"*³⁰.

Shimon Peres, the former Israeli foreign minister, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, wrote *"that the objective of the United States and NATO is not the destruction of Yugoslavia, but above all to avoid violence and to give an end to discrimination"*³¹.

The Serbs' inhuman treatment toward Albanians has started in the 80s of 20th century. The last US ambassador in Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmermann, notes that in the first weeks of his stay in Belgrade he realized the inhuman treatment the Serbs did to Albanians. *"Trampling the rights of Albanians by Milosevic, according to the last US ambassador to the former Yugoslavia, was almost completely acceptable by the Serbs"*.

An advocate of Serbian nationalism became the Serbian Academy of Sciences, which in 1986 drafted a memorandum by which the Albanians are treated as a Muslim army to which destroying the Serbian culture was the only aim³². The barbarity of the Serbian regime on the Albanian population was supported by the majority of Serbs. Nor the Serbian opposition opposed the government's actions on Kosovo Albanians. The Croatian publicist Slavenka Drakulić rightfully stated that *"If the opposition forces in Serbia, had something in common with Milosevic, it was only their attitude towards the Albanians"*³³. According to the Ambassador Zimmerman *"The Serbian Orthodox church..."* was accomplice to the political leaders *"by involving its believers in their racist plans"*³⁴. Mira Milosevic, a Serbian journalist who lived in Spain, although admits that *"the only language Milosevic understands is force"*, yet she does not agree with the NATO attack³⁵. There were few voices in Serbia that did not support this genocide. The well-known Serbian human rights activist, Sonja Biserko, during the bombing of emphasized that the Belgrade regime has made clear the war goals: *"cleansing of Kosovo from Albanians. The ethnic*

²⁷ Havier Balaus. 2001. Z. Frutos, Milošević nuk është Hajdi. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 262.

²⁸ Arrigo Levi. 2001. Aleanca është e paprekshme. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 212.

²⁹ Alain Finkielkraut, op.cit., p. 87.

³⁰ Arrigo Levi, op.cit., p. 213.

³¹ Shimon Peres. 2001. Ç'mendojmë ne, Nobelistët e Paqes. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 220.

³² Warren Zimmermann, op.cit., p. 17.

³³ Slavenka Drakulić. 2001. Përse Serbia është kaq e pamëshirshme. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 246.

³⁴ Warren Zimmermann, op.cit., p. 210.

³⁵ Mira Milosheviq. 2001. Milosheviqi dhe ne, serbët. In *Lufta kundër luftës*. Tirana: Ora, p. 229.

*cleansing of Kosovo Albanians once again testified the atrocity and barbarity of the Serbian war machine. The people in Serbia are demonstrating a massive denial of the crime that is happening before the eyes of the whole world*³⁶. The Serbian barbarity against Albanians, which aimed ethnic cleansing, made that they destroy everything that came forward and was not Serbian. The French philosopher and sociologist Andre Glucksmann, while describing the devastation that Serbian army was carrying out, among other things wrote: *"the ethnic cleansing acts on bodies and souls; kills people for the sole reason because are not born as Serbs; violates symbols, memories, and hope. Whoever has not lost their lives, to lose every reason to live! This has been the main command of the obliterators, which in the name of a <Greater Serbia> conduct a frightening racial war"*³⁷. On the question by the bombing opponents that on whose behalf air strikes against Serbia were undertaken? Glauksmann said, *"In the name of urgency. Milosevic turned civilians into slaves"*³⁸.

The blame for the terror Serbs exercised over Albanians in Kosovo cannot be attributed solely to Milosevic or to a narrow circle of people around him. It was an unrestrained campaign of the Serbian people against all others who did not belong to their ethnicity. *"It is not at all true that what Serbs do can be attributed only to the madness of a dictator, wrote Umberto Eco, but it derives from the millennial ethnic hatred, which includes Serbs, as well as other Balkan ethnicities..."*³⁹.

The United States, along with 18 NATO allies intervened in Kosovo because they wanted to end Serbian barbarism over Albanian population. Their goal was halt massacres and the ethnic cleansing. Their goal was human. They aimed to build sustainable peace; a Balkan where peace, economic development, coexistence would prevail; a society in which there would be no room for ancient ethnic, racial and religious hatred. The ever increasing engagement of USA in different parts of the world, aimed no territorial benefits, but to strengthening peace, freedom and security⁴⁰. After 78 days of bombing, the US and NATO allies decisiveness to force Milosevic to withdraw from Kosovo, was crowned with success. On June 9, 1999, the Serbian government was forced to sign its troops' withdrawal from Kosovo. The peace that came as a result of air strikes opened the way for the Albanians expelled end masse from their homes to return. Serbian forces withdrew from Kosovo within 11 days from the end of conflict⁴¹. Immediately after the agreement NATO forces settled in Kosovo. Kosovo would be divided into five sectors (American, British, German, Italian and French). The US succeeded in hindering Russia's efforts to provide special sections for it, as it was seen by Washington as a Russian attempt to divide Kosovo.

³⁶ Sonja Biserko, op.cit., p. 257.

³⁷ Andre Glauksmann. 2001. Europa e Re lind në Prishtinë. In Lufta kundër luftës. Tirana: Ora, p. 263.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 264.

³⁹ Umberto Eco. 2001. Kur lufta është një armë e zhveshur. In Lufta kundër luftës. Tirana: Ora, p. 82.

⁴⁰ Bill Klinton, op.cit., p. 46. ((Fragmente nga komentet e Presidentit Bill Klinton drejtuar Shoqërisë Amerikane të Reporterëve të Gazetave lidhur me situatën në Kosovë. San Francisko-Kaliforni, më 15 prill 1999); ibid, p. 51.(Fragmente nga komentet e Presidentit Bill Klinton drejtuar Shoqërisë Amerikane të Reporterëve të Gazetave lidhur me situatën në Kosovë. San Francisko-Kaliforni, më 15 prill 1999).

⁴¹ Gabriel Partos, op.cit., p. 105.

Conclusion

Removal of Serbian military-police and paramilitary forces from Kosovo, NATO's deployment of troops and return of over 1 million displaced Albanians to their homes was the most human act that the North Atlantic Alliance had undertaken during its 50-year history. USA alongside with their allies with their military intervention returned hope to Kosovo Albanians, gave them the opportunity to continue to live freely in their own country; it ended the Serbian state barbarism on Albanian autochthonous population. The deployment of NATO armed forces in Kosovo, for Albanians ended the period of imprisonment, forced displacement, torture, murder, etc., and a new era began, that of establishing a free and democratic society; a society where the place of conflict will be occupied by coexistence and economic development. Fear was now replaced by hope and enthusiasm.

The persistent USA diplomacy and their consistent support to Kosovo helped Kosovo achieve independence, which is the best solution in the Balkan journey to freedom. Although it is not the accomplishment of the dream the Albanian patriots had when they declared the Independence of Albania, since to them, Kosovo was an “*ethnic Albanian land*”, without which, no Albanian independent state could be imagined. Nevertheless, Kosovo's secession from Serbian claws was an enormous human achievement for the American diplomacy.

By their action of using air strikes to halt the Serbian barbarism on Albanian autochthonous population in Kosovo, the United States showed that a world led by them is a world of fewer conflicts and violence and more democracy and economic growth.