

NATO's Kosovo:
How an Ethno-nationalist Conflict
Became an International Humanitarian
Crisis

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Figure 1



http://online.usip.org/analysis/images/content/balkan_map_final.gif (accessed March 7, 2017).

Introduction

NATO's current website describes the bombing campaign of Kosovo from March to June 1999 as "not a mission of choice, but of necessity. The Allies neither invented nor desired it. Events themselves forced this mission upon them."¹ The site explains that these "events" were the growing signs that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević was planning to perpetrate mass ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanian population in Kosovo. Having triggered a NATO operation in 1995 by allowing his military to commit genocide in Bosnia, Milošević's impending annihilation of another Yugoslav population worried the alliance. As a result, NATO greenlighted the bombing campaign in Kosovo to prevent the impending catastrophe. The Kosovo conflict was a humanitarian crisis, and NATO was Kosovo's white knight.

American acceptance of the NATO narrative was vital in justifying the bombing campaign. NATO was and is supported by American funding and political will, both of which require public support. The American understanding of the Kosovo crisis in 1999, therefore, was through the prism of humanitarianism that is described today by NATO and was promoted then by President Clinton and the press. Clinton justified the operation by describing Milošević's intent to perpetrate ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians, emphasizing the responsibility of the international community to act lest the twentieth century becomes known as the century bookended by Holocausts.² The American press, too, presented these rationales, featuring articles and opinion pieces from major to minor newspapers underscoring the necessity of the campaign. As the operation in Kosovo began, it was supported by both Congress and a unified

¹ "A Short History of NATO," *NATO*, <http://www.nato.int/history/nato-history.html>.

² William Clinton, "Address to the Nation on Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" March 24, 1999, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=57305>.

NATO determined to bring Milošević to his knees. The American people proudly defended the NATO bombing campaign, with polls showing a sustained 50+% public approval rating throughout the entire operation.³ This approval was critical for NATO's entrance and ongoing presence in Kosovo.⁴

The American-supported NATO narrative, however, is called into question when the Kosovo crisis is situated within the context of the crumbling superstate that was Yugoslavia, NATO and her interventions in the region, and Kosovo's own history of ethno-nationalist tension. As domestic and international pressures bankrupted Yugoslavia, its leader, Slobodan Milošević, relied on Serbian nationalism to foment support in his disintegrating country. Yugoslavian states seceded like falling dominos until only a rump Yugoslavia remained, desperately clinging to Kosovo, a location of Serbian myth. Serbian legend placed great religious significance on Kosovar land, while its new majority population, the Kosovar Albanians, desired independence from Yugoslavia. The number of militant actions of the Kosovar Liberation Army equaled Serbian military responses, events that the American media would fail to recount in its portrayal of the rising crisis. NATO's operation, therefore, can be characterized as an intervention within a non-ally's sovereign territory in a conflict that was ethno-nationalist rather than anti-humanitarian in nature. To make things worse, NATO intervened on shaky legal grounds, circumventing international law for the first time in its history by acting without a

³ Charles Babington, "Clinton Makes Impassioned Defense of Policy," *The Washington Post (1974-Current File)*, May 14, 1999, <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1707420998?accountid=10226> (accessed March 9, 2017).

⁴ As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would describe to Larry King the evening before the bombing campaign, "Well, frankly, this is a NATO operation. We are the leaders of NATO." "Interview on Serbia on CNN's 'Larry King Live,'" on Department of State's official website, accessed January 18, 2017, http://web.archive.org/web/20000817001651/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1998/98052_8b.html.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) directive nor a UN declaration of genocide in Kosovo.

The NATO narrative becomes even more troubling when the Kosovo crisis is located within the larger Cold War epoch. The Kosovo crisis occurred in the aftermath of the Cold War, with NATO in existential disarray, America's newfound unipolarity, and humanitarian intervention's re-emergence in international law. Humanitarian intervention, defined as actions taken by international groups on states committing violent acts against civilians during wartime, was only established in international law after World War II.⁵ With Cold War politics dominating international policy for the entire middle period of the twentieth century, humanitarianism only reappeared in world politics in the 1990 Gulf War as the cornerstone of the UNSC directive to invade Kuwait. Within a decade, humanitarian intervention had become the primary justification for the United States and NATO to circumvent the United Nations in Kosovo. NATO, too, was established after World War II, in order for the West to form a military defense pact against the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War, the US-Soviet rivalry disintegrated, threatening NATO's very existence by removing its *raison d'être* -- the Soviet Union as detrimental to the free world.⁶ The intervention in Kosovo, therefore, allowed NATO to redefine itself as a humanitarian organization in order to ensure its survival. Thus, the bombing campaign was the political means for NATO and the United States to assert their dominance in world politics in the aftermath of the Cold War. This understanding of the conflict stands in stark contrast to the grand narrative that was (and still is) advocated by these two superpowers.

This thesis takes as its topic the American imagination's transformation of the complex

⁵ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "The institutionalization of cosmopolitan morality: the Holocaust and human rights," *Journal of Human Rights* (3:2), 143.

⁶ Eric Herring, "From Rambouillet to the Kosovo accords: NATO'S war against Serbia and its aftermath," *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 4:3-4, 236.

and messy ethno-nationalist conflict in Kosovo into a neat and manageable humanitarian crisis with a Hitleresque villain. Through the examination of the steady merge of media and political will in the months leading up to the bombing campaign, I will present and analyze the means through which the American public was convinced that the only option was to bomb Milošević. American political will combined with media sensationalization to portray the conflict as the next Holocaust, creating a zeitgeist where the American public preferred expedient action over a measured response. Intervention in Kosovo became a moral imperative, with the media rendering the conflict in black and white. Even as facts emerged during the operation that debunked various rationales for the humanitarian intervention, American support remained fixed, a necessity for a clumsily justified bombing campaign without UN authorization. While Milošević was certainly no hero, the Kosovo conflict was hardly a humanitarian crisis.

Beyond the Kosovo crisis itself, this analysis will also provide the foundations for discussing the ramifications of the conscious and unconscious ways in which press and political will produced an event that changed the field of international relations. On a theoretical level, the Holocaust metaphor propagated by Clinton and others produced a social imaginary within the United States that helped insert an element of “playing the savior” as repentance for American apathy during the Holocaust into American self-understanding. Practically, the Kosovo crisis set a precedent for American intervention with or without UN approval. Airstrikes and other forms of intervention became justified in the name of humanitarianism, a move that established the United States as an international hegemon bearing the moral sword of aid to the exploited. This thesis aims to deconstruct the process by which these transformations occurred in Kosovo, shedding light on a watershed moment in the international community that set the stage for a new

era of global interventionism.

Chapter One will situate the Kosovo crisis within the territory's history, the breakdown of larger Yugoslavia, and greater geopolitics of the twentieth century. By directly questioning the dominant narrative, this chapter will reveal the more complicated international and domestic processes at play in the Kosovo crisis. Chapter Two will analyze the Holocaust metaphor, the theoretical foundation for the media simplification of the conflict. A rhetoric that creates a simple dichotomy of good versus evil, the Kosovar Albanian people versus Slobodan Milošević, the Holocaust metaphor urged American readers to support swift action over a measured response. Chapter Three will examine Račak, a watershed moment for media representation that helped shape the Holocaust metaphor in the American understanding of the Kosovo crisis. Chapter Four will examine the government's solidification of that metaphor in the United States and abroad during the Rambouillet negotiations. With Račak the work of the media and Rambouillet the work of the government, contrasting these two events will also allow me to probe the limits of press and political rhetoric. The conclusion will explore the consequences of the NATO bombing campaign: the effects on former Yugoslavia, the changed world order, the outcomes of a successful Holocaust metaphor, and the future of humanitarian interventions.

Historiography

Perhaps the most famous work on Kosovo preceding the crisis is Sir Noel Malcolm's 1998 *Kosovo: A Short History*, a book that ends with Malcolm acknowledging that propaganda

and myth will be the triggers to war in Kosovo.⁷ While he was only specifically referring to the nationalist propaganda of the Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, Malcolm was entirely correct in assuming that myth would be the basis of conflict. Indeed, all literature on the Kosovo crisis admits the difficulty in distilling the actual events from the truth manufacturing done by the various actors in the conflict. Serbian, Kosovar Albanian, and American perspectives all formed vastly differing accounts in an attempt to promote certain outcomes. Contrasting the largely neutral account of Tim Judah's *Kosovo War and Revenge* with the anti-Serbian historical accounts of Enver Bytyci's *Coercive Diplomacy of NATO in Kosovo* and Sabrina Ramet's *Three Yugoslavias* proved most useful for parsing through the various perspectives on the conflict.⁸ More importantly, the diversity in secondary scholarship helped shape the direction of this thesis by substantiating the basic notion that the Kosovo conflict was quite a messy period of history.

While the vast majority of the literature on the Kosovo crisis speaks of its complexity, it is quite surprising that the thrust of the historical scholarship stays on the surface of these myths, dutifully describing the various primary sources that explain the lead-up to and the actual content of the bombing campaign while failing to analyze the meta-levels of these myths. Few writers delve into the meta-myth, and they all published their scholarship between the crisis's end and the first few years of the twenty-first century. Almost all of these writers are noticeably left-wing, such as socialist writer Michael Parenti and linguist Noam Chomsky. None wrote full books, instead packaging their articles in compendiums such as *The Kosovo News and*

⁷ Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, (New York: NYU Press, 1998), 355.

⁸ Tim Judah, *Kosovo War and Revenge*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).; Enver Bytyci, *Coercive Diplomacy of NATO in Kosovo*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).; Sabrina Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006).

Propaganda War and *Guardians of Power: The Myth of the Liberal Media*.⁹ These works provided a useful entry into American politics and press in 1999 that helped shape my own analysis.

The content of Dimitrios Akrivoulis's "Metaphors Matter: the Ideological Functions of the Kosovo-Holocaust Analogy" informed the theoretical thrust of this thesis.¹⁰ Akrivoulis charts the evolution of metaphors in philosophy that directly informed the American political imagination, a philosophico-historical analysis that explains both how the Holocaust metaphor emerged in and successfully altered the American social space in 1999 to effect the NATO bombing campaign. This thesis is indebted to Akrivoulis's theoretical analysis; by transmuting theory into political reality, Akrivoulis successfully provided the means to analyzing the full extent that the rhetoric of the media and the executive branch of the American government shaped the NATO narrative's obfuscation of the reality in Kosovo.

While this thesis's theoretical content owes a great deal to Akrivoulis's scholarship, I modeled my primary source research and analysis after the axial coding of Mark Wolfram's "Democracy and Propaganda: NATO's War in Kosovo" and Christian Vukasovich and Tamara Dejanovic-Vukasovich's "Humanitarian intervention, a predictable narrative? A comparative analysis of media narratives from Serbia to Syria."¹¹ Utilizing major newspaper databases in

⁹ Peter Goff, *The Kosovo News and Propaganda War*, (International Press Institute, 1999).; David Edwards and David Cromwell, *Guardians of Power: The Myth of the Liberal Media*, (London: Pluto Press, 2006).

¹⁰ Dimitrios Akrivoulis, "Metaphors Matter: the Ideological Functions of the Kosovo-Holocaust Analogy," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* (17:2).

¹¹ Mark Wolfram, "Democracy and Propaganda: NATO's War in Kosovo," *European Journal of Communication* (2008).; Christian Vukasovich and Tamara Dejanovic-Vukasovich, "Humanitarian intervention, a predictable narrative? A comparative analysis of media narratives from Serbia to Syria," *Global Media and Communication*, 12:3, 2016, 311-331. Doi: 10.1177/1742766516653163.

order to analyze moments in the conflict that helped justify the operation in the American consciousness, these scholars provided me a useful model for my own research and analysis.

The majority of the media I consulted were national papers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, regional newspapers like the *St. Louis Dispatch*, and various local dailies. For the political sphere, I accessed all press releases of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and President Bill Clinton regarding the Kosovo crisis. The Congressional archives, as well, were essential to understanding the transformation of state opinion during the conflict.

Other scholars consulted for this thesis mainly describe the various motives behind actions taken by President Clinton, Secretary of State Albright, and President Milošević in and around the bombing campaign. The works of Michel Chossudovsky and Matthew Cooper, for example, provide useful economic and geopolitical explanations of the NATO operation.¹² Through the scholarship of Daniel Levy and Natan Sznalder that connected humanitarian law to Holocaust rhetoric through Cold War history, I gained a deeper understanding of how the Cold War was an important filter through which the Kosovo conflict and the bombing campaign was transmitted and received in the United States and abroad.¹³ Alan Steinweis and Edward Lenthal both provided important historical background to the rise of Holocaust memory in the United States.¹⁴ Finally, the works of both Babak Bahador and Ekaterina Balabanova provided me the space to explore the ways in which the media altered reality and effected real political change in

¹² Michel Chossudovsky, "Dismantling former Yugoslavia, recolonizing Bosnia," *Capital & Class* 62 (1997): 1-12.; Matthew Cooper, "Yugoslavia and the Betrayal of Democracy." *Open Dialogue Research Journal* (2014).

¹³ Levy and Sznalder, "The institutionalization."

¹⁴ Alan E. Steinweis, "The Auschwitz analogy: Holocaust memory and American debates over intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19:2, (2005).; Edward Lenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Penguin, 1995.

context of the Kosovo crisis.¹⁵

Focusing on the period preceding the bombing campaign, this thesis relies primarily on the shifting language in political speeches and newspaper articles in the United States - a changing perception of the crisis that ultimately substantiated the NATO bombing campaign. Although my thesis utilizes only American primary sources, which limits the scope of this inquiry to the transformation of American perceptions of the Kosovo conflict and ignores the intellectual trajectory of the rest of NATO during the campaign, various secondary and primary material consulted prior to writing this thesis led me to conclude that the United States and NATO shared their narrative. American dominance within the alliance meant that the the perceptions of other major NATO countries on Kosovo in the months preceding the conflict were largely shaped by the United States. Further research on this topic would allow me to fully analyze the various NATO perspectives of the rising conflict and their effects on the American decision to approve the NATO campaign.

This thesis looks at the intersection of political will and media representation in American life to discuss the various means through which the NATO bombing campaign in Kosovo was painted as a humanitarian intervention, gloriously substantiating America's growing role in world politics and fundamentally changing international relations as the new century dawned.

¹⁵ Babak Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West towards War in Kosovo*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2007).; Ekaterina Balabanova, *Media, Wars and Politics: Comparing the Incomparable in Western and Eastern Europe*, (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013).

Chapter 1: Kosovo in Context

A month into NATO's 'Operation Allied Force' in Kosovo, President Clinton issued the following statement with his fellow NATO allies from Washington:

The crisis in Kosovo represents a fundamental challenge to the values for which NATO has stood since its foundation: democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is the culmination of a deliberate policy of oppression, ethnic cleansing and violence pursued by the Belgrade regime under the direction of President Milošević. We will not allow this campaign of terror to succeed. NATO is determined to prevail.

Vital to NATO's continuing bombing campaign in Kosovo, this statement by President Clinton clarified the necessity of NATO's mission while simultaneously reminding fellow allies of NATO's core values. As the superpower of NATO, the United States issued most of the statements regarding the campaign and was in charge of maintaining NATO unity throughout the operation. The United States was also the location of NATO's 50th anniversary in June 1999, a moment of reaffirmation of NATO's goals in the midst of the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo. It was appropriate, then, that Clinton was the one who issued a statement so revealing of the power dynamic at play in the NATO operation. This statement described values that were only ascribed to NATO *after* its authorization of the bombing campaign in Kosovo, an operation that reconceptualized NATO as a humanitarian organization with the United States at its helm, entering the new century as an unparalleled international power capable of circumventing UN law. It also describes Milošević's regime as undoubtedly sinister, bent on destruction.

This chapter will trace a new understanding of the Kosovo crisis and Operation Allied Force that contextualizes the bombing campaign within a larger frame than Milošević's tyranny. The NATO campaign, dependent on the narrative that the crisis was a genocide wrought by the

crimes of Slobodan Milošević, can instead be understood in terms of the breakup of Yugoslavia, engendered in part by larger international processes; the history of NATO, and its newfound existential threat; and the saga of Kosovo itself, with history of ethno-nationalist tensions like other parts of Yugoslavia, as a location where fact and truth-manufacturing often competed.

Part I: the History of Yugoslavia and its Downfall

Established as a monarchy in 1918 in a former Ottoman territory at the close of World War I, Yugoslavia was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes until World War II precipitated the creation of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia under President Josip Tito.¹⁶ It included six states that had their own nationalist histories separate from Yugoslavia: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Along with these states were two provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Governed from the capital city of Belgrade; the seat of Yugoslavia's power was in Serbian land (see Figure 1).

Competing nationalist myths and ideologies in each of the states necessitated Tito to rise to power through rhetoric he had learned as leader of one of the two resistance movements to the Axis powers in Yugoslavia during World War II, the Yugoslav Partisans. The mission of the movement was pan-Yugoslav "brotherhood and unity," language that Tito would use repeatedly to form the ideological backbone of post-war Yugoslavia.¹⁷ With the Partisans' repeated successes, Tito gained popularity among various ethno-nationalities in the territory. Following the war, Tito's Partisans formed the 1945 Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) and won the

¹⁶ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 95.

¹⁷ Matjaz Klemenčič and Mitja Zagar, *Former Yugoslavia's Diverse Peoples*, (California: ABC-Clio, 2003), 204.

majority seat in government, a victory that would be repeated until the end of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Authorized by King Peter II, Tito was nominated Prime Minister and converted the states into a socialist federation of six republics in the 1963 Constitution, calling the country the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹⁸

Tito's popularity only increased as his socialist project in Yugoslavia began to succeed economically through his wily political maneuvering. Especially during the 1950's and 1960's, Yugoslavia's 'brotherhood and unity' was substantiated through economic reforms that managed to produce a booming industrial sector. Preceded by the 1948 Tito-Stalin split that separated Tito's socialism from Soviet communism, Tito instituted economic reforms of industrial exportation and workers' self-management, wherein profits were mutually shared amongst the workers. This profit share helped distinguish Tito's Yugoslavia from the Soviet Union, which on the geopolitical scale signalled non-Eastern alignment.¹⁹ Having already split from the West when he defined Yugoslavia a socialist republic, this non-Eastern alignment allowed Tito to become a buffer between West and East, granting him substantial international power. Creating a coalition of other non-aligned states in 1961 called the Non-Aligned Movement, Tito declared his abstention from the bipolar arms race of the Cold War.²⁰ Tito, therefore, carefully carved a space between the West and the Soviet Union that granted him the strategic geopolitical importance needed for short-term benefits like economic investment for his industrial exportation programs.²¹ This would later backfire, however, with the disintegration of the US-

¹⁸ See Vickers, chapter 7.

¹⁹ Sabrina Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 185.

²⁰ "Background Information," *Non-Aligned Movement*, <http://www.nam.gov.za/background/index.html>.

²¹ Michel Chossudovsky, "Dismantling former Yugoslavia, recolonizing Bosnia," *Capital & Class* 62 (1997): 2.

Soviet rivalry and thus the loss of Yugoslavia's strategic importance.

While much of Yugoslavia's domestic success emerged from Tito's economic development programs funded through his geopolitical games, Tito's popularity, called "Titoism," did not overshadow Croatian disgruntlement to additional reforms on Croatian tourism that required shuttling enormous amounts of Croatian monies to Belgrade.²² This reform triggered the Mass Movements in 1971 and the Croatian Spring, with Croatian nationalists declaring that Croatian tourism supports the entire Yugoslavia and especially the Serbs.²³ In response, Tito purged the Croatian Communist Party and muzzled any protests related to ethnic-nationalism. A further testament to his political intelligence, Tito tempered his harsh response with the 1974 Constitution that provided more autonomy to the states and the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. This short period of quasi-independence, however, would only fuel later protests in the region, especially as these years were accompanied by harsh repression under Tito's extensive secret policing system, a restrictive media, and assassinations.

With his death in May 1980, Tito's authority no longer restrained the increased ethno-nationalism fueled by the autonomy granted by the 1974 Constitution, and Milošević's rise to power only ignited rising tensions as he used the same tactics that had been decidedly unpopular in his predecessor's reign.²⁴ That Milošević also spewed Serbian nationalism did not help his cause either. While Milošević's bellicose speech helped win him the presidency as Serbia, with few internal goods for a successful economy, was desperate to continue the superstate, it also led

²² Ramet, on page 263, describes how "even slight differences in interregional economic standards may awaken sharp feelings of resentment which catalyze, where they coincide with ethnic divisions, surges of nationalism."

²³ "YUGOSLAVIA: The Specter of Separatism," *Time Magazine*, <http://content.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,905720,00.html>.

²⁴ Enver Bytyci, *Coercive Diplomacy of NATO in Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 14.

to an explosion of ethnic tension in more independent states. In a period when the highest government leaders knew to shy away from any mention of nationalism, Milošević was a man of the Serbs, triggering further ethno-nationalist divide.²⁵

Milošević was not the only trigger of Yugoslavia's demise: the Cold War's end in the late 20th century meant the loss of Yugoslavia's geopolitical importance and the ghosts of Tito's heavy borrowing returning to haunt Belgrade. Only in 1989, with the US-Soviet rivalry at its end, did the IMF restructure its loan to Belgrade in a move that slashed the Yugoslav economy.²⁶ The IMF was not an outlier example. In 1984, the Reagan administration circulated an internal "Secret Sensitive" National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 133) titled "United States Policy Towards Yugoslavia" that also called for a more critical approach to Yugoslavia's economic interests.²⁷ Much of the international restructuring of Yugoslavia was obvious. Along with the IMF, the Financial Operations Act of the World Bank liquidated socially owned banks, bankrupting 248 businesses and damaging another 889 to the extent that more than half a million viable workers were laid off from a total workforce of 2.7 million.²⁸ Yugoslavia's bankruptcy intensified growing ethno-nationalism among Croats, Bosnian Muslims, and other groups like the Kosovar Albanians. In 1987, for example, Slovene public opinion considered independence from Yugoslavia a better option for "greater economic growth," and even with a blanket offer of economic assistance from the European community if "there was to be a political compromise" between Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, the ethno-nationalist tensions were heightened to such

²⁵ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 342.

²⁶ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 209.

²⁷ Matthew Cooper, "Yugoslavia and the Betrayal of Democracy," *Open Dialogue Research Journal* (2014). <http://orientalreview.org/2014/12/28/yugoslavia-and-the-betrayal-of-democracy/>.

²⁸ Chossudovsky, "Dismantling Former Yugoslavia," 2.

degrees that compromise was impossible.²⁹ Yugoslavia's downfall, therefore, can be understood in context of the Cold War's end. Yugoslavia lost its strategic Cold War geopolitics, and the once prosperous superstate disappeared as a result.

With Yugoslavia's growing cracks, Croatian and Slovenian declarations of independence in 1991 and Bosnia and Herzegovina's declaration in 1992 ignited the Yugoslav Wars, expanding the Yugoslav problem from elite international institutions to the center of media concern worldwide. Stories of eye-gouging, genital mutilation, and massacres were the sudden and inescapable subject of breakfast table news.³⁰ The media attention to the large independence movements meant that smaller territories, like Kosovo, felt neglected by the international community.³¹ As Milošević became famous for his hardline response to these secession attempts, ethnic cleansing and refugees, rising ethno-nationalist tensions, and internal propaganda all became synonymous with Yugoslavia. This Yugoslavia heightened international fears of a second Holocaust, especially after the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, which was declared a genocide by the UN. A month after Srebrenica, the UN authorized the NATO bombing campaign "Operation Deliberate Force" in Sarajevo, Bosnia, ending the war through a humanitarian intervention.

The Kosovo crisis, then, appeared after an exhausting series of wars in the eyes of the international community with many actors already defined by the Bosnian War. Indeed, the very fear that the crisis in Kosovo would culminate in genocide was accentuated by Srebrenica and

²⁹ Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2009) 15-16.

³⁰ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 1.

³¹ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 19.

the NATO bombing campaign in Bosnia.³² When the international community awoke to horrifying news of a massacre in Račak, Kosovo in January 1999, these fears were confirmed, driving a hastily held diplomatic negotiation that ended in NATO bombs. Yet, unlike the Srebrenica genocide that the UN International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia (ICTY) “established beyond a reasonable doubt,” Račak would not be included in the sustained criminal charges against the Milošević regime, a clear disparity of evidence between Bosnia and Kosovo that lies at the heart of Chapter Two.³³ In a foreshadowing of what was to come, U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, in his memoir *To End a War* on the Dayton Conference that concluded the Bosnian War, described that “there will be other Bosnias in our lives - areas where early outside involvement can be decisive, and American leadership will be required...the world will look to Washington for more than rhetoric the next time we face a challenge to peace.”³⁴ In other words, the Bosnian War left the American government - with NATO at its command - poised as first responder to international crises, especially in Yugoslavia. This positioning, coupled with the end of the Cold War, meant that the Kosovo crisis collided with a NATO more than willing to act quickly, a NATO ready to dismantle the villain of Bosnia permanently.

Part II: NATO and its History

An alliance of twelve member states funded and governed largely by Washington, NATO formed after World War II as a Western military bloc against the Soviet Union.³⁵ NATO

³² Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 102.

³³ “Cases,” *ICTY*, <http://www.icty.org/en/action/cases/4>.

³⁴ Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 372.

³⁵ Gregory Shank, “Commentary: Not a just war,” *Social Justice* 26:1 (1999).
<https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-55541542/commentary-not-a-just-war-just-a-war-nato-s-humanitaria>.

embodied a desire to progress militarily and economically with the end of Nazi Germany and the emergence of the Soviet threat. All major expansion of NATO during the Cold War period occurred upon provocation by the East. The atomic bomb of 1949 and the Korean War in 1950, for example, produced the creation of an official NATO headquarters in Rocquencourt, France and NATO's first ever Secretary General, Lord Ismay. With the end of the Cold War, NATO desired to open its alliance to members of the Warsaw Pact, and so created various cooperation councils.³⁶ By 1999, NATO had 18 member states.

On NATO's current website, however, NATO claims a much broader vision of its *raison d'être*. NATO's revisionist history claims that "the Alliance's creation was part of a broader effort to serve three purposes: deterring Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration."³⁷ While NATO was certainly created to counteract Soviet aims and integrate European states into a broad international alliance, NATO's mission of fighting against spreading nationalist militarism only emerged *after* the Kosovo bombing campaign in 1999. Only in Kosovo did NATO greenlight a military campaign without UN approval, an act that signaled a major expansion in NATO political power and mission.

In an explicit nod to NATO's shifting mission, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright described on the eve of the Kosovo bombing campaign that "I think we all know why NATO was founded, and it was founded to deal with a single threat by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw pact. With the end of both and the fact that NATO, I think, is the most remarkable military

³⁶ Shank, "Commentary."

³⁷ "A Short History of NATO."

alliance of all time and is necessary still, NATO obviously has to change its mission.”³⁸ In a direct contradiction of NATO’s current revisionist history, Albright conceded the role of the Kosovo crisis in NATO’s hugely expanding mission. Following the loss of the Soviet Union as the enemy to blame for NATO’s huge military-industrial gains, the Kosovo crisis also appeared at the historical moment when the United States became the sole international superpower. Only as the international hegemon could the alliance the US funded and empowered so blatantly skirt international law that required a Security Council directive for a bombing campaign.

As described in the introduction, NATO justified the bombing campaign as a humanitarian intervention. In NATO’s own words, the “Allies hesitated to intervene in what was perceived as a Yugoslav civil war. Later the conflict came to be seen as a war of aggression and ethnic cleansing, and the Alliance decided to act.”³⁹ This description of the Kosovo crisis reduces the Yugoslav civil wars to a single crisis, whereby the vastly different republics, peoples, and histories of the region were dangerously amalgamated to form a singular Yugoslavia dominated by Serbian oppressive forces. This simplification is what made the villain of one crisis, Milošević, into the villain of all Yugoslav crises. Furthermore, this history fails to account for NATO itself at this historical moment. During the escalation of the Kosovo crisis, NATO’s 50th anniversary loomed, a semicentennial marred by NATO’s existential quandary. A successful campaign in Kosovo, with a veritable villain formed by the Bosnian War and the genocide in Srebrenica, meant the reconception of NATO as an international humanitarian police force.⁴⁰

³⁸ “Conference on ‘Kosovo’,” on Department of State’s official website. Accessed January 18, 2017, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000816235139/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990325a.html>.

³⁹ “A Short History of NATO.”

⁴⁰ Tim Judah, *Kosovo War and Revenge* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 233.

While this analysis looks at larger international politics to understand NATO's decision to bomb Kosovo, it does not discount the reality of mass suffering in Kosovo. As a response to the crisis in Kosovo, the UN sanctioned Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: Kosovo Verification Mission (OSCE-KVM), the only international organization in Kosovo documenting real-time both before and during the campaign, described the situation in Kosovo as "overwhelmingly Kosovo Albanian suffering, at the hands of the Yugoslav and Serbian state military and security apparatus" in its 700 page account of the crisis.⁴¹ Without denying the suffering that occurred in Kosovo, it is also clear that Washington substantiated the campaign through the media sensationalization of the Kosovo crisis, to be discussed in Chapters Three and Four. There was a media-political connection, unified in its vilification of Milošević and Holocaust rhetoric, that justified the campaign. With the NATO campaign emerging in this analysis as a clear political gain for the alliance (and Washington), the next section will spoil the possibility that the Kosovo crisis was a real humanitarian catastrophe, thus setting up a new lens for the process in which the media and NATO sold the bombing campaign to international audiences - namely by contextualizing Kosovo as the next Bosnia and the next Holocaust.

Part III: the Kosovo Myth

The notion that Kosovo would be another Bosnia, besides sensationalizing the events, simplified the root of the crisis, which was an ethno-nationalist conflict between Kosovar Albanians and the Serbian regime. Some pinpoint the start of the crisis to the early 20th century

⁴¹ OSCE *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told - An Analysis of the Human Rights findings of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission October 1998 to June 1999* (Warsaw, 1999), 13.

when Serbia conquered the land of Kosovo from the Ottoman Empire, stirring the beginnings of the Albanian resistance movement.⁴² Others see the conflict's beginning in Milošević's pro-Serbian nationalism igniting Kosovar Albanian resistance.⁴³ The difficulty in unraveling this story has as much to do with propaganda as it does with the nature of ethno-nationalism itself, a myth-generating machine that needs epic history to root its current conflicts in age-old legends.

In Kosovo, demands for the land are shrouded in myth, with rights for the territory grounded in claims of religious sanctity and ethnic majority. For Serbians, Kosovo is a land of legends. Serbian history tends to claim that the Albanians only arrived in Kosovo at the start of the 20th century, repopulating quickly and clamoring for control over a territory historically Serb. One such history claims that the "people who lived in Kosovo were overwhelmingly Serb until barely a few generations back."⁴⁴ Serbian claims for Kosovo are grounded in religion, as the seat of Serbian orthodoxy has been in Kosovo since the twelfth century. Added to this claim is the mythic tale of the June 1389 war in Kosovo Polje, wherein Prince Lazar of the Serbs killed the Ottoman Sultan.⁴⁵ An entirely opposite rendering of the conflict understands the Kosovar Albanians as the historic inhabitants to the land and the current ethnic majority. The Kosovar Albanians, though largely arriving in Kosovo in the early 20th century, are descendants of Illyrians who have historically occupied the area of Dardania - which included Kosovo - until the 12th century's influx of Serbs moved the seat of medieval Serbian Orthodoxy to Kosovo and banished this population to Albania. The Kosovo conflict, therefore, has been the product of

⁴² Bytyci, *Coercive Diplomacy*, 20.

⁴³ "A Short History of NATO," wherein NATO's history places the tragedy solidly on the shoulders of Milošević.

⁴⁴ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 2.

⁴⁵ Bytyci, *Coercive Diplomacy*, 4.

centuries, with a clear example of this long-lasting tension being the establishment of the League of Prizren in 1870, forged because of the threat posed by “the imperial ambitions of its northern neighbor, Serbia.”⁴⁶

Somewhere between these two mythic histories, however, is the crisis in Kosovo: a brewing conflict between ethnic Serbs and a growing ethnic Albanian majority who had been living alongside each other for at least a hundred years under Serbian control. Similar to the 1970s Croatian nationalist uprisings, scattered suppressions of Kosovar Albanian protests were tempered by the 1974 Constitution. Upon Tito’s death in 1981, demonstrations for complete Kosovar autonomy occurred amidst widespread ethno-nationalist calls for independence across the states and ended in the jailing of many Kosovar Albanian leaders, an event that provided the basis for the later creation of the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA).⁴⁷ Originally designated a terrorist organization by the United States government, the KLA would be responsible for heightening the crisis in 1998 and 1999 in a clear provocation of NATO to gain independence from Belgrade by fomenting international concern.⁴⁸ As detailed in the *Washington Post* in April 1999, “US intelligence reported almost immediately [in 1998] that the KLA intended to draw NATO into its fight for independence by provoking Serb forces.”⁴⁹

Before the active violence of the KLA in 1998, the Kosovar independence movement was largely pacifist, sharply distinguishing the Albanian movement from the Serbian response. With Milošević’s rise, classic Yugoslav repression of ethno-nationalism took on a more sinister tone in

⁴⁶ Bytyci, *Coercive Diplomacy*, 8.

⁴⁷ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 38-40.

⁴⁸ Chossudovsky, “Dismantling Former Yugoslavia,” 22.

⁴⁹ Barton Gellman, “The Path to Crisis: How the United States and its Allies Went to War.” *Washington Post*, Sunday April 18 A-1.

Kosovo, especially as much of his nationalist rhetoric was tied specifically to the Serbian myth of Kosovo.⁵⁰ In a famous speech given in Priština, Kosovo in 1986, he told the Serbs “no one should beat you,” thereby alerting the Kosovar Albanians to his unsympathetic views towards Kosovar autonomy.⁵¹ With little hope to legal pathways to independence, especially with officially sponsored hate propaganda emerging from Milošević’s office, the Kosovar Albanians passively resisted Belgrade by abstaining from the national election.⁵² Upon Milošević’s victory and the establishment of the 1990 Constitution, Albanians were barred from elite positions in Kosovo and all Albanian cultural, linguistic, and educational departments were removed, spurring the creation of a parallel Albanian education system.⁵³

The independence movement responded with a secret referendum that overwhelmingly voted for Kosovar independence, thereby making pacifist leader Ibrahim Rugova the President of the Kosovar Albanian rogue state.⁵⁴ Political analyst Tim Judah characterized this period as “dull and bizarre”: there was a mass exodus of Albanians seeking asylum in other countries that was equal to the mass exodus of Serbs to greater Serbia; the implosion of Albania in 1995 created routes for the accession of cheap arms for the Kosovar resistance; and, while arms were flowing into the territory and Serbian police presence increased, Rugova drove around Priština in a presidential Audi although his presidency was illegitimate in the eyes of greater Yugoslavia.⁵⁵

In 1998, growing tensions boiled over as the KLA began to actively work against the Serbian regime. Catalyzed by the UN withdrawal of sanctions on Belgrade with the conclusion

⁵⁰ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 350.

⁵¹ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 52.

⁵² Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 381.

⁵³ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 496.

⁵⁴ Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*, 250.

⁵⁵ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 73.

of Dayton, the KLA feared that Kosovo would be forgotten as the international community repaired its relationship with Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ This strategy worked, and, following a violent cycle between the KLA and the Serbian police, the UNSC issued Resolution 1199 on Kosovo in 1998 that called for an immediate ceasefire and an international monitoring presence.⁵⁷ As winter approached, Holbrooke and Milošević pursued talks that provided momentary peace. These talks were more of a pause than a solution, however, as Kosovar independence was not discussed.⁵⁸

Fearing no solution would emerge from a cessation of violence, the KLA continued to intensify its tactics in hopes that harsh Serbian responses would provoke international intervention. One such example was the lead-up to Račak, to be described in depth in Chapter Three. A Serbian massacre of Kosovar Albanians sensationalized in the international press that conjured images of Srebrenica, Račak catalyzed the stalled American government into action. While only 45 were found dead, and later confirmed to be mostly KLA militants, Račak was depicted as a genocide of civilians. Račak began NATO's later justification that the Kosovo crisis was a genocide that claimed more than 10,000 Kosovar Albanian lives. Later, forensic experts would find fewer than 2,000 graves of mostly Serbs. James Bisset, former Canadian ambassador to the region, stated in 2004 that "Canada participated in a series of NATO-sanctioned war crimes against Yugoslavia...there were more civilians killed in Serbia by the NATO bombing campaign" than the graves discovered that justified it.⁵⁹ The aftermath of Račak was the Rambouillet negotiations. As described in Chapter Four, Rambouillet's failure, blamed

⁵⁶ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavia*, 270.

⁵⁷ "Resolution 1199." Accessed on the NATO site.

<http://www.shape.nato.int/resources/site7423/general/documents/unscr1199.pdf>

⁵⁸ OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova*, 32.

⁵⁹ "Canadian Diplomat Claims NATO War Crimes," *B92 Focus*, May 20, 2004.

http://www.b92.net/english/news/b92_focus.php?yyyy=2004&mm=05&nav_id=28447

entirely on Milošević, gave the go-ahead for the NATO bombing campaign that ended the Kosovo crisis in June 1999.⁶⁰ With the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and Milošević's acceptance of the Rambouillet terms, a NATO-led peacekeeping presence called "KFOR" entered in late 1999 and left only after Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008.⁶¹

The understanding of the Kosovo crisis that emerges from this contextualisation is that it was overwhelmingly an ethno-nationalist conflict, not a humanitarian disaster. The KLA overtly violated human rights and international law in order to incite Serbian violence and international intervention, events rarely mentioned in the American press and completely erased from the humanitarian narrative. This erasure will be problematized in the next chapters by the American media and government's having sensationalized the events. Although the UN never declared the conflict a humanitarian disaster, NATO was able nevertheless to legitimize its bombing operation through a unified media-political machine, sensationalizing the events in Kosovo and vilifying Milošević. Indeed, the later ICTY investigation penalized Milošević for a miniscule portion of what was described by the international press during the crisis.⁶² The next chapter will lay the groundwork of this analysis by examining the foundations of the media and the state's approach to Kosovo, namely in claiming Kosovo as metaphor to the Holocaust and Milošević as Hitler, a singular villain that became the scapegoat of NATO's military campaign, justifying NATO's continued existence.

⁶⁰ Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 515.

⁶¹ This record of the events is corroborated in Judah, chapters 1 -3; Vickers, chapters 8 and 11; and the OSCE-KVM background chapter in *Kosovo/Kosova*.

⁶² Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 2.

Chapter Two
Milošević the Nazi:
The State and the Media's Holocaust Metaphor

There were tremendous casualties of the 78-day NATO bombing campaign on Serbia. 5000 Yugoslav civilian lives were lost, and \$100 billion of damages resulted from the bombing of 33 hospitals, 344 schools, and 144 major industrial plants.⁶³ Despite these great losses, support for the campaign only increased as Yugoslav casualties mounted. When the strikes began on 24 March, 50% of Americans supported the campaign. In mid-April, a Gallup poll showed that number had increased to 61% of Americans.⁶⁴

This poll is even more surprising given the revelation in early April 1999 that Washington, through the support of media reporting, had invented "Operation Horseshoe," a fake Serbian plan to commit systematic genocide that constituted the lynchpin of the narrative of Serbian moral evil.⁶⁵ Operation Horseshoe began as hearsay, an undercurrent of media reportage in 1998 and 1999 that served as the perfect example of Milošević's villainy. Managing to pass as military intelligence, the fake plans for genocide were confirmed by the CIA, the US Department of Defense, the British Foreign Secretary, and the Federal Defense Ministry in Germany.⁶⁶ Even when Operation Horseshoe was proven patently false, American support remained fixed.

President Clinton proudly described this phenomenon, telling reporters in early May: "I think [the American people] understand that there is a great difference between ethnic cleansing and mass slaughter and [other] ethnic conflicts, which are so prevalent in other parts of the

⁶³ Edwards and Cromwell, *Guardians of Power*, 97.

⁶⁴ Babington, "Clinton Makes Impassioned."

⁶⁵ R Jeffrey Smith and William Drozdiak, "Serbs' Offensive was Meticulously Planned," *Washington Post (1974-Current File)*, April 11, 1999.

⁶⁶ Wolfgram, "Democracy and Propaganda," 160.

world."⁶⁷ Clinton's characterization of the American public points to the underlying rhetoric that surrounded the conflict; because there was a tacit understanding that the nature of the Kosovo crisis was a Serbian campaign of mass murder, even when facts came to light that disproved various examples used to create that rhetoric there was still the sense that the crisis could become another Holocaust.

Media sensationalization intertwined with political desires as they worked to create humanitarian myth. Much of the facts the media had at its disposal, for example, came from the federal government, the only source of information on Kosovo during this period. As historian Mark Wolfgram describes, government propaganda was an incredibly pervasive presence in the simplification of the crisis in Kosovo. Because this conflict occurred overseas and within a foreign language and culture, the media could only write within the theoretical confines structured by the government's output - even when journalists reacted critically to information released by the federal government on foreign affairs.⁶⁸ This does not necessarily mean, however, that the media was controlled by the government; the opposite was also true. For example, it was the media's early depictions of the Kosovo conflict that ultimately spurred Washington to remove KLA from its designated terrorist list. During the course of the Bosnian War, the West began to act only when Holocaust symbolism in the media began to horrify the public conscious.⁶⁹

This chapter lays the theoretical foundation for how this interwoven media-political

⁶⁷ Charles Babington, "Clinton Makes Impassioned Defense of Policy: [FINAL Edition]," *Washington Post*, 14 May 1999: A25.

⁶⁸ Mark Wolfgram, "Democracy and Propaganda: NATO's War in Kosovo," *European Journal of Communication* (2008): 155.

⁶⁹ Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 297.

complex successfully gathered public support both before and throughout the NATO bombing campaign through the creation of the Holocaust metaphor and the vilification of Milošević. Through media simplification, failure to launch the bombing campaign would only result in another Holocaust, a terrifying future that had to be stopped at any cost. This blank check provided the campaign the support it needed to succeed and, in the process, the tools to redefine NATO. With the consequences of the Holocaust metaphor so severe, support for the bombing campaign remained steady even through the emergence of factual evidence that dismantled the humanitarian narrative. From the historical occurrence of the Holocaust to a metaphor replete with political implications is a translation pregnant with meaning that underwrote the abstraction necessary to parallel Kosovo to the Holocaust.

Part I: The Holocaust Metaphor

A rhetoric used to legitimize war, the Holocaust metaphor places an absolute moral judgement on any crisis. Following the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Holocaust became a foundational piece for newly minted post-war humanitarian law.⁷⁰ An extreme limit of morality, the Holocaust was defined as the clearest encapsulation of true evil. The utilization of the Holocaust through metaphor, therefore, is a useful rhetorical device to cast current conflicts in the shape of the absolute evil of the Holocaust. The Holocaust metaphor has the additional force of being a nagging reminder of the international community's failure to respond to genocide in a timely fashion. It was the perfect

⁷⁰ Daniel Levy and Natan Szalder, "The institutionalization of cosmopolitan morality: the Holocaust and human rights" *Journal of Human Rights* (3:2): 143.

linguistic weapon to create a singular enemy: Hitler, or, in Kosovo's case, Milošević. Not only is the Holocaust metaphor able to oversimplify a distinction between the innocent and the guilty, it also urges an expediency of action over bureaucratic red tape.

The translation of the Holocaust into a political metaphor by the media seemingly utilizes one of two possibilities described by political scientist Eugene Miller. Metaphors, according to Miller, can be verificational or constitutival. Two theories of metaphors in political usage, the former is defined as metaphors being empirically testable in political reality. In other words, metaphors as verificational means that metaphors succeed through reality's defense of their truth content. The latter is a methodological principle of how political reality is organized. Metaphors as constitutival means that metaphors shape reality.⁷¹ To describe the media's distortion of the Kosovo crisis in terms of verificational or constitutival metaphor use, then, is to fall into a deep theoretical binary that desires to discuss the distortions at play when using a metaphor rather than the social reality that preceded this semantic move and the larger social function of the metaphor in that reality.

In order to move beyond Miller's binary to ground Kosovo within its historical context and not just within the distortions of Holocaust rhetoric, my analysis closely aligns with the imaginative work of Slavic scholar Dimitrios Akrivoulis. In "Metaphors Matter: The Ideological Functions of the Kosovo-Holocaust Analogy," Akrivoulis moves beyond Miller's verificational/constitutival binary through the use of the social imaginary. He begins by tracking the evolution of imagination from being prescriptive to descriptive and from solely visual to also

⁷¹ Eugene F. Miller, "Metaphor and Political Knowledge," *American Political Science Review* (73 - 1: 1979), 155–170.

verbal. This evolution, Akrivoulis points out, occurred alongside the introduction of hermeneutics into phenomenology by philosopher Paul Ricoeur, a phenomenon that laid the philosophical foundations for contextualizing metaphors in the social space. In Ricoeur's work, *Symbolism of Evil*, imagination is the "capacity of language to open up new worlds" that "transcend the list of our *actual* world."⁷² Thus, the metaphor cannot be verified as it never suggests that the two situations compared are identical, and nor can it be constitutive, as it instead indicates an imaginary already at work within the social order. A political metaphor, then, is a semantic innovation every time it is employed, no matter how slim the dissimilarity between the two events the metaphor is comparing, yet it also indicates the evolution of our social reality that allows for the metaphor to function as a legitimate linguistic move.

The Holocaust metaphor in the Kosovo crisis, then, is a metaphor that necessarily emerged from within American social realities to shape those realities anew. The emergence of the Holocaust as a vital political metaphor occurred particularly in a decade when the new millennium was fast approaching, the United States had emerged as the sole international superpower, and NATO, in turn, was searching for a new *raison d'être*. The Holocaust dramatized the Kosovo conflict in absolute moral terms in a country, America, with the history of being the deciding factor in the victory against Nazi Germany. The metaphor, therefore, speaks more about American consciousness than it does the Kosovo crisis.

The Holocaust appeared in the American social imaginary in the early 1990s. Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), Robert Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (1997), and countless

⁷² Paul Ricoeur, "Myth as the bearer of possible worlds" in Richard Kearney (ed.), *States of Mind: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 243. Emphasis in original.

documentaries had already placed the Holocaust before American audiences. Alongside articles describing Serbian atrocities occurring in Kosovo were adverts describing the Holocaust documentary to air that evening on television.⁷³ Holocaust studies entered high schools and universities.⁷⁴ The Holocaust Museum in Washington opened in 1993, telling a specific narrative of the Holocaust to its visitors, emphasizing international bystanderism as a contributing fault to the evil and scale of the Holocaust.⁷⁵ At the inauguration of the museum, Nobel Prize Winner Elie Wiesel used part of his speech to pointedly highlight the parallels between the events described in the museum and the “bloodshed” occurring in Bosnia.⁷⁶

Indeed, the American social context provided the means for the creation of the Holocaust metaphor in the Kosovo crisis. More than just the Holocaust, however, Kosovo was also understood by Americans within the context of the recent intervention in Bosnia. The Bosnian War provided an important precedent to the depths of Milošević’s depravity and the need for international aid.

Part II: The Srebrenica Genocide

While the Kosovo crisis and the Bosnian War seem identical, with many of the same actors and the same calls of genocide and ethnic cleansing, there is a major distinction between the two: the UN acted in Bosnia, declaring Srebrenica a genocide and authorizing a NATO

⁷³ "Other 34 -- no Title." *The Washington Post (1974-Current File)*, Sep 30, 1999.

⁷⁴ Alan E Steinweis, “The Auschwitz analogy: Holocaust memory and American debates over intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19:2 (2005), 276.

⁷⁵ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznalder, “The institutionalization of cosmopolitan morality: the Holocaust and human rights” *Journal of Human Rights* (3:2): 153.

⁷⁶ Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York: Penguin, 1995), 262.

campaign, yet remained silent on Kosovo. The later ICTY trial would condemn Milošević for almost all of his alleged war crimes in Bosnia. This was not the case with Kosovo, with the ICTY convicting Milošević for a fraction of the crimes the United States had accused of him.

The Srebrenica genocide occurred after years of brewing conflict between the majority Bosnian Muslim population and the minority Bosnian Serb population desperate to keep Bosnia a state of Yugoslavia. It was only when Milošević's army increasingly used ethnic cleansing as a war tactic, however, that the UN became involved. Declaring zones of the country "safe areas" under Danish peacekeepers, the UN parceled out small territories to the beleaguered civilian Bosnian Muslims to ensure their safety. One such area was Srebrenica, in Eastern Bosnia. In July 1995, however, Srebrenica fell to the encroaching Serbian forces that, in victory, immediately murdered somewhere up to 8,000 Bosnian Muslims. While accounts differ as to whether this was in cold blood or whether the Muslims were lightly armed and in flight, the situation was critical. In one day, thousands of men were systematically killed. Important for the later Kosovo crisis, while Srebrenica was the worst case of ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia, the Western nations did little but murmur their disapproval for what had occurred.⁷⁷

Srebrenica became the symbol of Milošević's aggression and the failure of the Western nations to respond to ethnic cleansing quickly and appropriately. Indeed, Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General of the UN, would describe Srebrenica as the worst crime on European soil since World War II.⁷⁸ In 2005, at the conclusion of the ICTY trial, the Srebrenica massacre was

⁷⁷ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 120-121.

⁷⁸ Kofi Annan, "MAY WE ALL LEARN AND ACT ON THE LESSONS OF SREBRENICA", SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL, IN MESSAGE TO ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY." *United Nations*. July 11, 2005.

unanimously ruled a genocide.⁷⁹ In 1995, however, little was done to assist the Bosnian Muslims after the genocide. It was only at the tailend of August, when a Serbian missile killed 37 people in a Sarajevo market, that NATO received authorization from the UNSC and bombed the Bosnian Serb military apparatus.⁸⁰

When the Kosovo crisis emerged, the American state was determined that another Srebrenica would not occur under its watchful eye, buoyed by an American public that had a voracious appetite for Yugoslav news. When the Račak massacre shocked American audiences in January 1999, it meant that Washington had failed once again to stop another Holocaust. A bombing campaign was seen as imperative to ensure that there would be no more suffering, unlike what had occurred after Srebrenica in Bosnia. As Clinton described in his speech the night before the bombing campaign began,

Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative...in the center of it all a dictator in Serbia...[Bosnia] was genocide in the heart of Europe -- not in 1945, but in 1995...we learned that in the Balkans, inaction in the face of brutality simply invites more brutality..we must apply that lesson in Kosovo before what happened in Bosnia happens there, too.⁸¹

Thus, the Holocaust metaphor took on a triple meaning in the depictions of the Kosovo crisis. The Holocaust metaphor meant utter and complete vilification of Milošević and the Serbian cause as well as a call for international expediency. It also referred to Bosnia, and the failure of the West to respond appropriately to Srebrenica.

To the media's credit, more than one narrative of the Kosovo crisis was presented to American audiences. Indeed, it would be a disservice to the United States media to claim that all

⁷⁹ "Cases," *ICTY*.

⁸⁰ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 121.

⁸¹ "President Clinton's Address on Airstrikes Against Yugoslavia," *The New York Times*. March 24, 1999.

journalists swallowed the Holocaust metaphor wholesale in regard to the situation in Kosovo. Many articles throughout 1999 argued exactly the opposite, declaring the use of the Holocaust as a metaphor to Kosovo an oversimplification of the complexity in the region and a reduction of the moral atrocity that was the Holocaust. Yet, all of these same articles that argued against using the Holocaust metaphor never left the trap that is the Holocaust metaphor. An article titled “Remember Srebrenica” in the *Washington Post* in March 1999, for example, attempted to transcend the metaphor. When referring to the overall debate occurring between the hawks and the doves regarding the use of Holocaust language to talk about the Kosovo crisis, it says:

You may want to quibble about comparisons to the Holocaust. Serbia is not Nazi Germany, and Slobodan Milošević, the ogre of the moment, is not Adolf Hitler...These are all distinctions. The fact remains, though, that the West stood by as people were slaughtered in Europe - not for what they did but for who they were.⁸²

Written three days prior to the NATO directive to bomb Serbia, within a month of the breakdown of the Rambouillet peace talks, and three months after the massacre at Račak, this article, as its title clearly indicates, was also written as a memorial to Srebrenica. Like countless other articles of this period, the author critically engages with the metaphor while failing to question the underlying historical conditions that allowed the metaphor to emerge in the social imagination. Because the imaginary “had already functioned at the levels of legitimization and integration,” the Holocaust metaphor was deeply integrated into all journalism of this period.⁸³

This theoretical chapter is perhaps the most important clarification of the purpose of this work. I am not advocating for an alternative history of Kosovo through a lessening of the guilt of

⁸² Richard Cohen, “Remember Srebrenica,” *Washington Post*, March 23, 1999.

⁸³ Dimitrios Akrivoulis, “Metaphors Matter: the Ideological Functions of the Kosovo-Holocaust Analogy,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* (17:2), 226.

Milošević as a perpetrator of war crimes. Similarly, the next chapter does not serve as a searing expose of government propaganda. Rather, this chapter underscores the most fascinating part of this research, tearing down the boundaries that political metaphors create and questioning what allowed that structure to be built in the first place. These metaphors functioned within the narratives of Kosovo placed before American audiences, and they arrived due to specific historical conditions that emerged in the social imaginary, a locus of domestic and international moments that have already been considered to some degree in the previous chapter. The function of this imaginary is the focus of the next two chapters, and it will simultaneously seek to further uncover the domestic politics at work that ensured the success of the Holocaust metaphor, the justification of the bombing campaign, and the future of NATO.

Chapter Three: The Media's Representation of Račak

“Yugoslavia was a media-generated tragedy. The Western media sees international crises in black and white, sensationalizing incidents for public consumption.”⁸⁴ Two weeks into the NATO bombing campaign, retired Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, former first Force Commander and Head of Mission of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1993, wrote this searing account of the events he had witnessed unfolding in Kosovo. Having served in the region during the formative year of Bosnian secession and the acceptance of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia into the United Nations as member states, Nambiar wrote from the perspective of having witnessed the “fatal flaws of US/NATO policies in the troubled region.”

Nambiar described Kosovo as a powder keg awaiting explosion, a Clintonian metaphor that Nambiar subverts in his account. President Clinton had used the metaphor a month previously to urge the American public to wholeheartedly support the NATO bombing campaign. Appearing on national television on the eve of the operation, Clinton called Kosovo a powder keg set to plunge Europe into yet another twentieth century war, thus contextualizing the crisis within the larger frame of the two World Wars.⁸⁵ Alluding to the Holocaust without ever calling it by name, Clinton declared that the powder keg of Kosovo must be disarmed in order to prevent the next humanitarian disaster. Nambiar, by contrast, took Clinton's metaphor and used it to contextualize the intervention in Kosovo within the breakdown of Yugoslavia engendered in

⁸⁴ Satish Nambiar, “The Fatal Flaws Underlying NATO's Intervention in Yugoslavia” *United Services Institution of India Documents* (New Delhi, 1999).

⁸⁵ William Clinton, “Address to the Nation on Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).”

part by American political desire. This subversion pointed to an entirely different villain: a bumbling, error-prone NATO, led by the United States. Shockingly different from the regular fare of analysis of the Kosovo crisis, this account failed to cross the Atlantic from Lieutenant General Nambiar's home in India.

Nambiar's report criticized the American media's wholesale acceptance of the government's humanitarian narrative of Kosovo, a perspective Nambiar knew to be a perversion of the ethno-nationalist conflict that Kosovo was in reality. Press and politics were deeply intertwined, with the media acting as the middleman between the government and the American public to create the social conditions in which diplomacy without bombs became close to inconceivable in the months prior to the NATO campaign. Chapter Two described the Holocaust metaphor, a rhetoric that contained the Srebrenica atrocity in its narrative of expedient action in the face of moral depravity. Chapter Three and Chapter Four will trace how that metaphor was constructed in the American representations of the two landmark events in the formation of the NATO narrative: the Račak massacre and the subsequent Rambouillet negotiations.

This chapter will look at Račak in an analysis of the media's formation of the Holocaust metaphor. The first event in the Kosovo crisis where Holocaust rhetoric emerged to devastating effect, Račak sent shockwaves through American audiences by proving that the United States had failed once again to stop a genocide. While the historical record of Račak contains many inconsistencies, the media singularly represented Račak as a massacre. The media transformed a complicated event into a massacre replete with links to the Holocaust, a representation that so horrified American audiences that the only appropriate responses were war diplomacy or bombs. It was the media, therefore, that brought the Kosovo crisis to the fore of American consciousness

through the sensationalization of Račak, which, in turn, influenced the political sector to ultimately agree to Operation Allied Force. From American audiences to their Congressmen, the continuing atrocities that the horror of Račak promised elevated the need for the bombing campaign.

Part I: Kosovo and the CNN Effect

News coverage remained quiet and relatively steady as the situation in Kosovo escalated in the latter half of the 1990s. In 1998, the United States was preparing to resume normal relations with Yugoslavia following the secession of many of her member states. The KLA was still designated a terrorist organization. As fighting increased over the course of 1998, the cycle of violence prompted a series of diplomatic negotiations concluded in the Holbrook-Milošević Agreement in October 1998, a perceived coup for the United States. Though it set a temporary ceasefire that urged Serbian government to withdraw most of its troops fighting in Kosovo, this agreement resolved none of the deeper problems of the conflict, such as Kosovar independence.⁸⁶

In less than a year, the United States committed a complete about-face. The KLA would lose its designated terror status and receive a seat at the Rambouillet negotiations. The United States, followed by NATO, would ally with the KLA and condemn the Serbian cause. War seemed inevitable, with a whopping 97% of American political documents on Kosovo in 1999 making some sort of reference to the very real possibility of military intervention.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Concurrent Resolution, 106th Cong. 1 (1999).

⁸⁷ Babak Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West towards War in Kosovo* (New

This rapid and intense reversal of policy coincided with an enormous spike of Kosovar appearances in the United States media that began at Račak, an uptick that closely shadowed the CNN effect - a phenomenon originally described by scholars in conjunction with the first Gulf War. CNN was the only media outlet able to send news from within Iraq to the outside, catapulting the new media company into fame as its daily, 24-hour coverage of the war made CNN the top media resource on Iraq. CNN's domination of American knowledge of the Gulf War penetrated even the highest of state offices, with George Bush reportedly remarking that he received more news from CNN than from the CIA.⁸⁸ This daily, unstoppable onslaught of coverage produced a deeply interactive media-policy bridge. Especially with the media's general tendency to release only footage that tugs on the heartstrings of viewers, the instantaneous exposure to events abroad triggered American audiences to call for immediate shifts in policy, calls that the government felt obliged to take. When Boris Yeltsin briefly shuttered the Russian parliament in October 1993, for example, the elite members of the State Department eschewed normal activity for an entire day to focus instead on how the executive branch should appropriately react on television. The intensity of the State Department's response would have never occurred before the CNN effect; the reaction would have been to gather facts and wait.⁸⁹

The power of the media in the Kosovo crisis, then, had the coupling of the CNN effect with the Holocaust metaphor described in the previous chapter. The CNN effect meant that the mechanics of media coverage, i.e. the speed of delivery and the emotional quality of

York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 112.

⁸⁸ Bahador, *The CNN Effect*, 6.

⁸⁹ Bahador, *The CNN Effect*, 8.

the footage, enforced the need for expedient action. American eyes read first-hand accounts of Kosovar Albanian refugees recorded by the OSCE-KVM in camps in Macedonia and Albania describing the bloodshed, rape, and pillage performed by the hands of Serb aggressors. Compounding the CNN effect was the Holocaust rhetoric used by the media. The Holocaust metaphor described the need for swift and harsh responses to the humanitarian catastrophe occurring once again in Yugoslavia. Though this metaphor would be jointly constructed by the media and the government, it was the media's double call for the conflict's swift end at Račak that urged the American public to support the commitment of American military forces and funds to the NATO bombing campaign. The idea that ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia was unstoppable without international intervention was popularized with the media's representation of Račak, necessitating the political approach of diplomacy or bombs.

Part II: The Sensationalization of Račak

When compared to previous coverage of the Kosovo crisis, the media's treatment of the Račak massacre was a clear tipping point in the formation of the NATO narrative. There were two massacres in 1998 that both received little attention by the American media. The first was in the Drenica region, reaching American audiences fairly quickly and receiving 19% of leading headlines in major news outlets. The second was in Gronje Obrinje on September 26th, 1998 that received 47% of headlines. Račak was a watershed event, receiving 70% of all leading coverage across the United States from its immediate aftermath

and up until the bombing campaign ended.⁹⁰ From this data, it appears that each massacre accrued more coverage than the last, with Račak receiving so much reportage in January 1999 that the Kosovo crisis could no longer be ignored by American audiences and politicians - the CNN effect was in full swing. Račak's meteoric rise to the center of media attention in the months prior to the campaign was also assisted by its clear evocation of the Holocaust. There was an astounding level of detail received from Račak in comparison to these earlier massacres. Stories from refugees and images of bodies lying in a ditch at horrifying angles disturbingly echoed the Holocaust.⁹¹ As the Račak massacre placed the Kosovo crisis as a top news segment for the rest of 1999, the government was forced to take action against Milošević's regime in order to assuage the fears of the American public.

While Račak began the process of making the bombing campaign inevitable, the historical record is much more doubtful of the reported massacre that occurred in Račak on 15 January, 1999. According to most scholars, there had been a marked increase of attacks between the Serbian police force and the KLA in the weeks prior to the event. In mid-December, the Serbian army killed 36 KLA men. That evening, six Serbian teenagers playing pool were shot in Peć. The KLA denied involvement. Five thousand Serbs came to the funeral and thousands protested in the capital, Pristina. The OSCE-KVM would later report that in the weeks prior to Račak, 21 people died in random violent acts in urban areas, deaths that seemed to be a violent escalation of the back-and-forth between Serb and Kosovar

⁹⁰ Bahador, *The CNN Effect*, 98.

⁹¹ Louisa Goulimaki (Photographer). (1999, January 16). *Yugoslavia-Kosovo-Massacre* [digital image]. Retrieved from the European Pressphoto Agency.

Albanian forces.⁹² On 15 January, fighting burst forth around the village of Račak, a town that had also acted as a key KLA fortress whence to attack Serbian police. The KLA withdrew and the Serbian forces entered the city. The OSCE-KVM was denied access to the village, only to be permitted entrance the next day to witness the remains of the sordid events of January 15th. When the OSCE-KVM returned on the 16th, the leading member of the commission, William Walker, immediately accused the Serbian government of responsibility for the death of 45 Kosovar Albanian civilians. As he would detail in the OSCE-KVM report, the bodies were executed at close range through means that included decapitation and eye gouging, with the tortured corpses moved between various locations.⁹³ It was Račak “and its immediate repercussions, which precipitated the next initiative,” i.e., the Rambouillet negotiations. Rambouillet’s breakdown would ensure the bombs of March.⁹⁴

The media immediately adopted Walker’s condemnation of the Serbian regime. The *New York Times* broke the story on 17 January, quoting Walker as saying it was an “unspeakable atrocity,” a “crime very much against humanity. It looks like it was done by people who have no value for human life.”⁹⁵ Describing the scene, the *Times* reported a scattering of 45 Kosovar Albanian bodies “shot or mutilated,” with some of the dead found “with their eyes gouged out or heads smashed in. One man lay decapitated in the courtyard of his compound.” This horrifying account traveled from the *New York Times* outward, from

⁹² Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 192.

⁹³ OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova*, 625.

⁹⁴ OSCE, *Kosovo/Kosova*, 32.

⁹⁵ “Mutilated Kosovo Bodies found After Serb Attack.” *New York Times*, Jan 17, 1999, Late Edition (East Coast).

central media to regional newspapers. Not a single article deviated from the official story.⁹⁶ In the *Washington Post*, for example, the same language was used. “Some had their eyes gouged out or their head smashed...[the bodies] were discovered scattered on a hillside and heaped together in a gully near Račak.”⁹⁷ In the regional papers, like the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the same was true, with the *Post-Dispatch* describing the “dozens” dead in Račak.⁹⁸

While the media spoke in a clear and singular voice of the atrocity committed by the Serbian regime, there were many problems with the official account that would be obfuscated by the widespread and immediate agreement that the dead in Račak were massacred. Neither Walker nor the *Times* mentioned the KLA base at Račak nor the prior escalation of the conflict by both sides. The massacre was not reported real time, and only American monitors had access to the scene the day after the massacre. Walker condemned the Serbs immediately, though there had not yet been enough gathering of evidence to make that claim.⁹⁹ An independent team of Finnish forensic experts would later find that the dead were killed by gunfire, not decapitation.¹⁰⁰ Further investigation lowered the number of civilian casualties significantly by raising the number of KLA deaths to 36 of the 45 dead. The reported massacre in Račak could have possibly been a gunfight between Serb and Kosovar forces.

⁹⁶ Wolfgram, “Democracy and Propaganda,” 158.

⁹⁷ Guy Dinmore, “Villagers Slaughtered in Kosovo 'Atrocity'.” *The Washington Post (1974-Current File)*, Jan 17, 1999.

⁹⁸ “Dozens are Found Dead in Kosovo Massacre; US Officials Blames Government Security Forces,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Jan 17, 1999, Early Five Star Edition.

⁹⁹ David Roberts, “Kosovo toll disputed, experts say,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 29, 2001.

¹⁰⁰ MP Djuric, “Anthropological Data in Individualization of Skeletal Remains From a Forensic Context in Kosovo --A Case History” *Journal of Forensic Science* (49: 3, 2004).

The large disparity between the initial account of casualties in Račak and the numbers declared by later investigators became a constant issue for American reporting of the Kosovo crisis overall, an issue that resulted from the CNN effect and the need for a clear metaphor to the Holocaust. Following the bombing campaign, the Finnish forensic team from the Račak massacre was sent back to Kosovo with the expectation that they were to stay in the territory for months, as estimates numbered the dead in the tens of thousands. In less than one month, the Finnish team would announce their investigation finished after having discovered only a small fraction of the expected statistics.¹⁰¹ American audiences were shocked. The bodies they found would be almost entirely identified as non-civilian combatants, likely KLA fighters or Serbian police. The media's description of the level of conflict failed to match what had actually occurred, from Račak until the campaign's end.

The media's misrepresentation of the Račak massacre had huge effects, horrifying American audiences so drastically as to singlehandedly change the course of the crisis. As human rights advocate Judiah Armatta described, Račak was the worry that "Milošević was planning on murdering Kosovar Albanian civilians in a systemized attack to ethnically cleanse the region," a worry that ensured immediate and swift international responses.¹⁰² In its aftermath, the message that Račak represented was clear. As written in the *New York Times*, "fifty years after Auschwitz was liberated, after the world said 'never again,' the 'never' happened again. This time there were TV and videotape, surveillance satellites – the very things that some argued would have prevented the Holocaust: If only we knew. This

¹⁰¹ Charles Radin, "Number of Missing Kosovars is Challenged," *Boston Globe*, Apr 21, 1999. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/405282048?accountid=10226>.

¹⁰² Judith Armatta, *Twilight of Impunity*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), 70.

time though, we did.”¹⁰³ Račak was picture proof that the political actors had moved too slow in the previous years to prevent another Holocaust and that the Holbrook-Milošević Agreement was a laughable farce of a diplomatic negotiation. With Srebrenica haunting the American public conscious, Račak sowed the fear that the United States would fail once again to quickly respond to war crimes in Yugoslavia before things grew even more deadly. *USA Today* reported that “the Serbs, for the umpteenth time, sent in military forces to slaughter scores of civilians...either we do now what we should have done in the early 1990s -- that is, a complete and uncompromising forced liberation of Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia from Slobodan Milošević and his henchmen -- or we should prepare ourselves to be witness to further such acts of racial butchery.”¹⁰⁴

While the media used the Holocaust metaphor to link Račak to Srebrenica, that comparison, like the number of casualties reported, was greatly exaggerated. This powerful correlation grabbed a deep hold on the American consciousness, but in a simple comparison of numbers, Srebrenica and Račak were vastly different events. 8000 Bosnian Muslims were killed in one day in Bosnia, 45 Kosovar Albanians civilians - or, perhaps, nine - were killed in Račak. Despite these hugely differing numbers, Račak was declared a second Srebrenica, another example of the United States government’s failed diplomacy. As the *New York Times* would cogently put it on 25 January, 1999: “Like the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of thousands of Muslims in Bosnia, which so horrified the world that it finally moved to end the killing,

¹⁰³ Cohen, “Remember Srebrenica.”

¹⁰⁴ Ronald Richards, “Letters,” *USA Today*, 20 Jan 1999: 12A.

Račak has become a symbol of Serb aggression.” A symbol, indeed, but not a reality.¹⁰⁵

Part III: the Power of the Media

While the reality of Račak was certainly complicated, the symbol of Račak was powerful: a double call of the media for harsh expediency that influenced real political change by igniting a stagnant Congress. Račak became the means for Secretary of State Albright, known for her personal hatred of Milošević’s regime, to successfully promote military intervention as the sole solution to the Kosovo crisis.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the crisis hit newsstands in 1999, a year when President Bill Clinton faced impeachment following the revelation of his sex scandal with Monica Lewinsky. Many scholars attest that foreign policy in this period was shaped by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, with Clinton retaining only the final authorization of policy.¹⁰⁷ Though a powerful figure in policymaking, this power was not enough for Albright to successfully form a coalition of politicians against Milošević before Račak. Only after the media’s representation of Račak and the emergence of widespread public condemnation of the Serbian regime did Congressmen agree to Albright’s stance on Yugoslavia, that Milošević listens to bombs and not diplomacy. Congressman Joe Biden, for example, gave a speech in Congress to this effect:

For the American people and many in Congress, the horror wrought by Milošević was brought home in horrific fashion when images of the massacre in the village of Račak were transmitted around the world in January 1999. Forty-five Kosovar Albanians were slaughtered, and the pictures of their corpses galvanized public

¹⁰⁵ Steven Erlanger, “Final Kosovo Killings Harden Resistance and Jolt West” *The New York Times* (A: 1, 1999, January 25).

¹⁰⁶ Albright, “Press briefing en route.”

¹⁰⁷ Eric Herring, “From Rambouillet to the Kosovo accords: NATO’S war against Serbia and its aftermath,” *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 4:3-4, 228.

opinion.¹⁰⁸

The media's representation of Račak shaped American public opinion, forcing Congress to act quickly and appropriately to the scale of horror in Kosovo promised by Račak, later providing the political power necessary for the Executive branch to greenlight a bombing campaign without UN approval. The Holocaust metaphor meant that the only solutions to the crisis were diplomacy or bombs, thus heightening the stakes of the Rambouillet negotiations, backed by the force of the bombing campaign that would ensue if the negotiations failed. The discussions in Congress only acknowledged force after Račak. For example, directly following a description of the Račak massacre, the Speaker of the House of Representatives described:

The danger of inaction far outweighs the risk of action. If we can learn any lesson from both World War I and World War II, it is that the U.S. can and must take a leadership role to stop tyranny and atrocities that threaten innocent people and the free world.

This is a direct example of the power of metaphor described in Chapter Two. Congress was willing to condemn the Kosovo crisis as another Holocaust because of the social reality created by the Holocaust metaphor purported by the media through its description of Račak. The media's role in the formation of the NATO narrative is palpable: its sensationalization of Račak created the social space where the Holocaust edged ever nearer as the destiny of Yugoslavia. The United States had to intervene quickly, with Rambouillet or bombs. The air of expediency, coupled with the Holocaust, made the media's representation of Račak a formative moment in the creation of the NATO narrative that legally underwrote the operation from March till June.

Though this claim may seem to overestimate the level of consequence of the media's

¹⁰⁸ Babadok, *CNN Effect*, 154.

representation of Račak as another Holocaust, the power of the press over public imagination can also be seen in the few media sources that managed to acknowledge the inconsistencies of the dominant narrative of Račak. For example, the central French newspaper, *La Monde*, reported an entirely different version of the events on 15 January. On January 21, *La Monde* reported that the so-called massacre had in actuality been a gun battle between the KLA and the Serbian police, not unarmed civilians versus Milošević's army. *La Monde* also contended that it seemed impossible the police could dig a trench and kill villagers at close range when they were under attack from the KLA forces in the village the entire time.¹⁰⁹ *La Monde* concluded that it was highly unlikely that a massacre had actually occurred. Directly following this account of Račak, French Ambassador to Yugoslavia Gabriel Keller would describe to the French press that there was something odd about the massacre and Walker's immediate condemnation of Serbia. With French media reporting the unlikelihood of the Račak massacre, French politicians remained wary of condemning Milošević's regime. All that would reach American soil of this wariness, however, would be the various political views of the international community, rather than the inconsistencies presented in their presses that bespoke their viewpoints. For example, following Keller's pronouncement of Račak's inconsistencies, the *New York Times* only described his politics: "Given the different opinions in NATO as to who is most to blame for the growing violence of the last three weeks, any consideration of airstrikes was unlikely today."¹¹⁰

Therefore, though various international political perspectives were represented in American media, the events themselves were singularly represented, a presentation that had

¹⁰⁹ David Roberts, "Kosovo toll disputed, experts say," *The Globe and Mail*, January 29, 2001.

¹¹⁰ *New York Times*, January 18, 1999.

serious consequences. In an axial coding of *New York Times* articles on Račak between 14 and 22 January 1999, scholars Christian Vukasovich and Tamara Dejanovic-Vukasovich found 29 mentions of war crimes in the nineteen articles that spoke of the massacre. In their analysis of 53 *Associated Press* articles on Račak, they found that NATO credibility, a theme that would become significant with the Rambouillet negotiations, appeared already as early as January 1999 after Račak.¹¹¹ Račak marked the beginning of the condemnation of the Serbian regime and raised the crisis to a level impossible to be ignored by the American government.

The media representation of the Račak massacre catalyzed the need for swift action, action that took the form of the Rambouillet negotiations whose failure resulted in the only other possible response: bombs. The CNN effect and the Holocaust metaphor created the formidable Serbian foe in the media's account of Račak, laying the foundations for a strict diplomatic policy to deal with Milošević's regime. The media, therefore, pushed the political sector into action, giving Albright the necessary tools to convince Congress that the Rambouillet negotiations had to be backed by the force of a bombing campaign. Račak framed the Kosovo conflict as a humanitarian crisis threatening to become a second Holocaust, a contextualization of the crisis that deeply infiltrated the American social imaginary continuing through Rambouillet and its breakdown, and the subsequent bombing campaign.

¹¹¹ Christian Vukasovich and Tamara Dejanovic-Vukasovich, "Humanitarian intervention, a predictable narrative? A comparative analysis of media narratives from Serbia to Syria," *Global Media and Communication*, 12:3, 2016, 311-331.

Chapter Four: The Rambouillet Ultimatum

In his 1999 address, Clinton described that “with our NATO allies, we are pressing the *Serbian government* to stop its brutal repression in Kosovo, to bring *those responsible* to justice, and to give the people of Kosovo the self-government they deserve.”¹¹² A year later, Clinton described the crisis as follows: “Slobodan Milošević unleashed his terror on Kosovo.”¹¹³ These two speeches illustrate the transformation of Clinton’s language regarding Kosovo from careful diplomatic talk to outright condemnation, a dramatic transition that marked the evolution of the state’s use of the Holocaust metaphor from the immediate aftermath of Račak to the bombing campaign itself. While the media’s representation of Račak certainly established the social space for the government to utilize Holocaust rhetoric when describing Kosovo, only at Rambouillet did the state explicitly denounce Milošević’s regime through Holocaust language in a bid to unify NATO and justify Operation Allied Force.

Indeed, the evening before the strikes were set to begin, President Clinton legitimized the bombing campaign by referring to the indisputable fact that Milošević refused to even “discuss key elements of the agreement.”¹¹⁴ By placing the blame for the campaign on Milošević, Clinton made Milošević the scapegoat for Operation Allied Force. The press adopted the government’s explicit vilification of Milošević by declaring that it was Milošević’s psychological state - his incalculable desire for Kosovar Albanian bloodshed that drove his lack of will to negotiate with international peacemakers - that undermined the talks

¹¹² “Transcript: Clinton’s State of the Union Speech,” *CNN*, Jan 19, 1999.

<http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/01/19/sotu.transcript/>. Emphasis added.

¹¹³ William Clinton, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union,” *American Presidency Project*, Jan 27, 2000. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=58708>.

¹¹⁴ William Clinton, “Remarks,” March 23, 1999, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=57294>.

and caused the bombing campaign. The negotiations proved that, while the United States had tried its utmost to avoid a bombing campaign, Milošević had not. The Executive branch described Milošević as a man who would never negotiate over Kosovo; if NATO did not act quickly, more Račaks, and certainly another Srebrenica, would occur.

While the state's narrative of Rambouillet heroicized Washington and NATO through the condemnation of Milošević, an analysis of the terms set out in the Rambouillet negotiations by the Executive branch unveils critical information missing from their description of Rambouillet. An analysis of the terms of the negotiation expose layers of politicking and rhetoric that trapped the Belgrade representatives in a situation where signing the agreement would have been tantamount to forfeiting sovereignty. Though the Executive branch characterized Rambouillet's failure as the fault of Milošević, scholars of the crisis describe the negotiations as Albright's pretense for the bombing campaign.¹¹⁵ Noam Chomsky explains Milošević's entrapment through a global comparison, that "it is hard to imagine that any country would consider such terms, except in the form of unconditional surrender."¹¹⁶ No negotiating team in Greater Serbia's position would have signed the Rambouillet agreement; Milošević was in a lose-lose situation. While Milošević was given an agreement that he could not possibly sign without forfeiting Kosovo and relinquishing Yugoslavia's sovereignty, his refusal to sign the Rambouillet agreement was used as the key legitimizing factor for the ensuing bombing campaign.

This chapter will look at Albright and Clinton's vilification of Milošević at Rambouillet.

¹¹⁵ Bahador, *CNN Effect*, 210.

¹¹⁶ Peter Goff, *The Kosovo News and Propaganda War* (International Press Institute, 1999), 98.

Their condemnation did more than simplify the conflict into the Holocaust metaphor, as discussed in Chapter 2; this vilification served the state in a specific role, completing the white knight narrative accepted by NATO allies and the media from Rambouillet until the end of the bombing campaign. Chapter Three analyzed the media's representation of Račak and its political consequences in the social imaginary that predicated the Rambouillet negotiations on the threat of the bombing campaign. This chapter will contrast the rhetoric at Rambouillet against the terms of the negotiations in order to understand how that threat became a reality, how Executive will unified NATO and the American public in support of the operation through Holocaust language in the humanitarian narrative. Rambouillet was a key moment in the process of justifying the bombing campaign. The Executive politicking at Rambouillet sealed the fate of the Yugoslavs.

Before preceding, a quick methodological point: Rambouillet, in this chapter, acts as a useful shorthand to describe the entire diplomatic period between Račak and the bombing campaign. While the Rambouillet negotiations technically lasted only through the month of February, talks continued in Paris for most of March. The use of the term "Rambouillet," therefore, will stand in for this entire period of negotiation prior to the operation.

Part I: The Terms Revealed

The Rambouillet negotiations began on February 6th, 1999, in the immediate momentum produced by Račak. Brought to the negotiation table were Belgrade representatives and Kosovar representatives that included KLA leadership, like Hashim Thaçi, and other important political figures of the Kosovar Albanian community, like the pacifist rogue

President, Ibrahim Rugova. The Contact group for the negotiations were the diplomats involved in the Dayton Conference to end the Bosnian War, established by the 1992 London Conference on the former Yugoslavia: the United States, Great Britain, and Russia.¹¹⁷ As Rambouillet continued, the talks grew increasingly fruitless. Before the hopeful eyes of the American public, reports of the negotiations spoke of its impending failure.

The condemnation of Milošević was a useful rhetorical device to shift the blame for the bombing campaign from the American policies hidden in the terms set out by envoys to Belgrade's refusal to sign the treaty. The terms of Rambouillet called for a complete military occupation of Kosovo (and possibly the rest of rump Yugoslavia) by NATO. NATO was to "constitute and lead a military force" that would establish and deploy itself in and around Kosovo, "operating under the authority and subject to the direction and political control of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) through the NATO chain of command."¹¹⁸ Belgrade, then, would have to effectively agree to NATO military control whose borders would be later dictated by the alliance. These were terms that Belgrade could not possibly sign. Indeed, Albright reportedly told journalists off the record that "we intentionally set the bar too high for the Serbs to comply. They need some bombing, and that's what they are going to get."¹¹⁹ Upon Belgrade's expected rejection of the Rambouillet terms, the United States described the failed negotiations as Milošević's inability to act diplomatically and declared the need for bombs.

The problem for Washington, however, was that the Kosovar Albanians, the perceived

¹¹⁷ Ekaterina Balabanova, *Media, Wars and Politics: Comparing the Incomparable in Western and Eastern Europe* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), 63.

¹¹⁸ Noam Chomsky, "United States." Ed. Peter Goff, *The Kosovo News and Propaganda War* (Vienna: International Press Institute, 1999), 97.

¹¹⁹ Eric Herring, "From Rambouillet," 228.

victims of the humanitarian disaster in need of international intervention, refused to sign the agreement as well. After finding no mention of Kosovar independence anywhere within the treaty, the Kosovar Albanian representatives declared the terms as unpalatable as did Belgrade. American policy, historically, had held that the issue of Kosovar independence was a domestic problem for the Yugoslavs. This stance continued at Rambouillet, with Albright and her diplomatic team reluctant to declare the necessity of Kosovo's complete independence, an act that would reverse American policy on Yugoslavia by more than 60 years. That American diplomacy was so misguided when dealing with the perspectives of Belgrade and the Kosovar Albanians at Rambouillet speaks well to the complete misconnection between the desires of the international political community and the actual ethno-nationalist conflict in the region. This micro-example best articulates the American ambivalence towards finding a viable solution to the Kosovo crisis without bombs.

By the end of the allotted time for negotiations at Rambouillet, no one had signed - not even the supposed victims of the NATO narrative. The United States scrambled to reconvene in Paris, France from the 15th to the 19th of March in order to create terms that the Kosovar Albanian representatives would sign, thus justifying the bombing campaign as the fault of Milošević. As the leader of the KLA, Thaçi leveraged his political capital by telling American negotiators that the Kosovar Albanian representatives would sign only if an independent Kosovo was added to the terms of the agreement.¹²⁰ Kosovar delegate Pleurat Sejdiu would later describe the "open secret" that Albright had privately pleaded with Thaçi to sign the agreement in order

¹²⁰ Chomsky, "United States."

for NATO to have the political leeway to bomb the Serbs.¹²¹ When the negotiations reconvened in Paris, appendices were inserted into the agreement that “three years after the entry into force of this Agreement, an international meeting shall be convened to determine a mechanism for a final settlement for Kosovo.”¹²² While this murky language was far from what the Kosovar Albanians had envisioned, it was still a major victory for the Kosovar Albanians.

With the Kosovar Albanian acceptance of Rambouillet, the NATO narrative was complete and the bombing campaign began. On the same day the peace talks concluded, all OSCE-KVM monitors were removed from Kosovo. Five days later, the NATO campaign began, ending on the 10th of June upon Serbian withdrawal from Kosovo. The formal ceasefire was signed on the 20th of June. Only with the ceasefire did the media begin describing the details of the Rambouillet Agreement in their explanation of the next steps for peace in Kosovo. And this coverage, as Chomsky described, was not “even close to accurate.”¹²³

The terms of the negotiations anticipated rejection by the Belgrade representatives and completed the NATO narrative. In other words, the government utilized Holocaust rhetoric to obscure the terms of the Rambouillet negotiations: terms that trapped Milošević and reversed over 60 years of American policy on Kosovo. While the media’s representation of Račak formed the conditions of diplomacy or bombs in the American social imaginary, the Executive branch’s transference of Rambouillet’s failure from its own shoulders to Milošević’s wrongdoings was what ultimately ensured the bombing campaign.

¹²¹ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 212.

¹²² Chomsky, “United States,” 97.

¹²³ Chomsky, “United States,” 98.

Part II: Milošević as Distraction

The government's vilification of Milošević began slightly before the Rambouillet negotiations in an effort to shape the negotiations themselves as predicated on threats of force. This threat was authorized by NATO through Albright's multiple meetings with NATO allies in the weeks before Rambouillet, constantly reminding the NATO alliance that Milošević only listens to coercive diplomacy.¹²⁴ "History is watching us," Albright told the Contact group before Rambouillet, adding a direct allusion to the Holocaust along with her condemnation of Milošević's character.¹²⁵ Throughout the talks, Albright carefully pursued the bombing campaign amongst NATO allies without ever finalizing the operation, a careful dance around the NATO bylaws that required a unanimous vote before the pursuance of any NATO action. Knowing that one veto at any moment would stop the campaign, Washington exerted pressure on its allies only when NATO appeared ready to stand united behind the bombing campaign. This pressure occurred at Rambouillet, with Milošević villainized and NATO emerging as a white knight.

The campaign's growing inevitability can be seen in the evolution of Albright's language in public speeches. On February 14th, for example, Albright addressed the press: "*Both sides assured me that they recognize that the time is short and that the killing must stop. The parties are well aware of the consequences...The threat of NATO air strikes remains real.*"¹²⁶ With calm language and equal treatment of both sides of the conflict, Albright's speech here contrasted

¹²⁴ Jane Perlez, "The Terrible Lesson of Bosnia: Will it Help Kosovo?" *New York Times*, Feb 01, 1999, Late Edition (East Coast).

¹²⁵ Barton Gellman, "The Path to Crisis." *The Washington Post*, Apr 18, 1999, <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1707851704?accountid=10226> (accessed March 9, 2017).

¹²⁶ Madeleine Albright, "Press briefing following meeting with Contact Group on Kosovo," Department of State, February 14, 1999. <http://web.archive.org/web/20000816235515/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990214a.html>. My own emphasis.

dramatically with her choice of language as Rambouillet breaks down: “the Serbs alone will be responsible for the consequences. I would just like to remind President Milošević that NATO stands ready to take whatever measures are necessary.”¹²⁷ Here, the fault lies entirely with the Serbs, and with Milošević specifically. With the strikes then set for authorization, Albright appealed to the Holocaust metaphor, telling NATO and the American public:

This century has been the bloodiest, and the blood has been spilled because the free people did not understand well enough how to stop tyranny and evil and ethnic cleansing and genocide early enough. We now have an opportunity to gather together the lessons of the twentieth century and stop this before it totally spins out of control.¹²⁸

As the campaign began, Albright switched to personal history as means to legitimize the operation with a humanitarian narrative already cemented:

There is one reason only that we have moved from diplomacy backed by the threat of force to the use of force backed by diplomacy. That reason is President Milošević...I think that we have an opportunity to learn from the mistakes that our predecessors made, the slowness of responding, of not dealing with wars or problems when they were small and coming in -- I am somebody who was liberated by Americans, but I think that if things had been done earlier, not so many lives would have been lost.¹²⁹

Flying weekly between different countries to keep allies in consensus, Albright was in the difficult position of creating and maintaining NATO unity throughout the bombing campaign. Albright enforced NATO unity through clear reminders of what is at stake: “I think [Milošević]

¹²⁷ Madeleine Albright, “Remarks on Developments in Kosovo prior to meeting with members of Congress,” Department of State, March 18, 1999,

<http://web.archive.org/web/20000816235221/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990318.html>.

¹²⁸ Madeleine Albright, “Interview on PBS Newshour with Jim Lehrer,” Department of State, March 24, 1999, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000816235158/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990324.html>.

¹²⁹ Madeleine Albright, “Press Conference on ‘Kosovo,’” Department of State, March 25, 1999, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000816235139/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990325a.html>.

is smart. I think he's smart and cagey and cares only about himself."¹³⁰ When reports surfaced in April that Italy and Greece were growing uncomfortable with the campaign, Albright both assured the media that the operation was "backed by 19 countries of NATO in a truly remarkable unified way," and travelled to Italy and Greece herself to ensure their continued compliance with Washington's agenda.¹³¹ NATO's unity became a key theme in American media in this period.¹³² Clinton, too, called on NATO allies to remain firm and united against the Yugoslav oppressor. In one speech, for example, Clinton characterized NATO as a "united alliance" of "nineteen democracies [coming] together and [staying] together through the stiffest military challenge in NATO's 50-year history."¹³³ As what would become a dogmatic assertion during the operation, President Clinton and Albright would repeatedly remind the alliance through assuring the American media that NATO remained united over the necessity of the intervention.¹³⁴

Part III: Milošević's Psychology

Albright and Clinton's condemnation of Milošević filtered into the press. The media began to chronicle Milošević's early life, providing his biography to readers for the first time in

¹³⁰ Madeleine Albright, "Interview on Kosovo on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" with Diane Sawyer," Department of State, March 26, 1999,

<http://web.archive.org/web/20000816235133/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990326.html>.

¹³¹ Madeleine Albright, "Interview on ABC-TV's "This Week" with Cokie Roberts, George Will, and Sam Donaldson," Department of State, April 18, 1999,

<http://web.archive.org/web/20000816234901/http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990418.html>.

¹³² Vukasovich, "Humanitarian intervention, a predictable narrative?"

¹³³ "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS; Clinton's Remarks on Balkan War: 'We Have Achieved a Victory,'" *New York Times*, June 11, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/11/world/crisis-in-the-balkans-clinton-s-remarks-on-balkan-war-we-have-achieved-a-victory.html>.

¹³⁴ Vukasovich, "Humanitarian intervention, a predictable narrative?"

the history of the Kosovo crisis. Importantly, this did not just occur in the United States, but also in the *Irish Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, and various other presses in NATO countries.¹³⁵ Describing his megalomaniacal father and the suicides of his close family members, the media successfully vilified Milošević as not just a Serbian nationalist who hated Kosovar Albanians but as a man with a sordid past. On February 2, 1999 at the start of the Rambouillet negotiations, the *New York Times* interviewed Aleksa Djilas, a self proclaimed biographer of Milošević. “He doesn’t care much about Kosovo,” Djilas remarked. Milošević has “little emotional attachment to the kind of Serbian nationalism he has manipulated for the last ten years.”¹³⁶ A month later, a *New York Times* article described how Milošević in his youth was a “pudgy loner,” and his father committed suicide while he was still in college.¹³⁷

The *Christian Science Monitor* gave a concise reason for why his biography had suddenly become the fodder of American media: “Critical to the success of [Rambouillet]...is the political psychology of Mr. Milošević. An understanding of his personality and political behavior suggests the confrontation is likely to be protracted.”¹³⁸ The media’s reconceptualization of

¹³⁵ Phil Reese, "Haunted by the Past," *The Guardian (1959-2003)*, Apr 24, 1999. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/188216891?accountid=10226;> Misha Glenny, "Slobodan's Basic Instinct," *The Observer (1901- 2003)*, Apr 18, 1999. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/478059216?accountid=10226;> Ian Traynor, "A Talent for Playing with Fire," *The Guardian (1959-2003)*, Mar 27, 1999. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/188272601?accountid=10226;> Jonathan Eyal, "Man in Brown Suit Who Rode the Balkans Tiger," *The Irish Times (1921-Current File)*, Apr 03, 1999. <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/526212304?accountid=10226;> Chris Stephen, "Reclusive Strongman Holds Key to Kosovo," *The Irish Times (1921-Current File)*, Feb 20, 1999. [http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/526165670?accountid=10226.](http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/526165670?accountid=10226;)

¹³⁶ Steven Erlanger, “Milošević Advantage: In Talking Peace He Can Win Big,” *New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.] 02 Feb 1999: 7.

¹³⁷ MICHAEL T. "For Serbs, Apparatchik Appeals to Nationalist Pride to Become a Hero." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Mar 28, 1999.

¹³⁸ Kenneth B. Dekleva and Jerrold Post, "Slobodan Milošević: Why the Crisis could Last." *The Christian Science Monitor*, Mar 29, 1999.

Milošević as a personality even managed to justify the lengthy nature of the Rambouillet negotiations - as a further proof of Milošević's psychology rather than the failure of the Contact group to create viable terms for a ceasefire. Albright and the rest of her diplomatic team were completely absolved of blame in the press; Milošević's biography illuminated that it was his psyche that could not handle diplomacy.¹³⁹ The media accepted the Executive branch's vilification of Milošević wholesale in the form of a psychological assessment of his character.¹⁴⁰ It was Milošević who was to blame for any and all casualties of the ensuing bombing campaign, even if it was NATO who technically carried out the operation.

Rambouillet built off the social imaginary of inevitability generated by the media's representation of Račak. The Executive branch manipulated the Rambouillet negotiations both in its terms and in its representation to the public. Albright entered the negotiations armed with terms impossible for Belgrade to sign, understanding that the crisis narrative dictated the necessity of the bombing campaign upon Rambouillet's failure. To conceal that politicking, Albright and Clinton, followed by the media, declared Milošević the new Hitler, transforming the metaphor into the nature of the Kosovo crisis itself. Albright used that rhetoric when publicly describing her diplomatic negotiations with the NATO allies to convince them of the operation's necessity. Rambouillet, then, was the moment in which the NATO bombing campaign became unequivocally understood as a humanitarian necessity, not an American construction - the final piece to fully legitimize the operation.

¹³⁹ Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, 228.

¹⁴⁰ Susan Sontag, "Why Are We In Kosovo," *New York Times*, May 2, 1999.
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/03/12/specials/sontag-kosovo.html>.

Conclusion:

The manner in which American politics and press managed to produce a humanitarian narrative of the Kosovo crisis is crucial to understanding the consequences of the NATO bombing campaign. Operation Allied Force marked the end of Yugoslavia's slow demise. Many current Yugoslavs speak of former Yugoslavia with lament, citing economic problems in their new states, an utter lack of geopolitical power as sliced-up countries, and anger at the international community for intervening within their own sovereign territory in Kosovo. Since the purpose of the bombing campaign was to halt Milošević, a singular demon assigned total blame for the Kosovo crisis, the method of choice was airstrikes, a military tactic that could not possibly protect a civilian population. 'Collateral damage' of the campaign continues to be felt today in Yugoslavia: billions of dollars in damages, 5000 casualties, tens of thousands of homes destroyed, national memory of over 200,000 ethnic Serbs forced to leave Kosovo, and the sharp economic downturn as the end of the Yugoslav Wars marked the beginning of the small independent states of former Yugoslavia slowly rebuilding their economies - making the 2008 worldwide economic crash a disaster for much of the region.¹⁴¹ In my own travels within the former superstate, I encountered rampant Yugo-nostalgia.¹⁴²

“Under Tito, everybody had a car, had an apartment. There was enough, and no one made too much. We didn't all make the same amount of money. If you were the head of the business, you'd make twice as much or three times as much as the worker, but it wouldn't be like it is now. Today, one of my son's, a doctor, makes 100 dollars an hour. My other son, a driver, maybe makes 100 dollars a month.

¹⁴¹ Edwards and Cromwell, *Guardians of Power*, 97.

¹⁴² “Yugo-nostalgia” was popularized by Nichole Lindstrom in “Yugonostalgia: Restorative And Reflective Nostalgia In Former Yugoslavia,” *L'Europe du Cnrrre-Est*, 32, Nos. 1-2 (2005), 227-237. http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/journals/18763308/32/1-2/18763308_032_0102_s011_text.pdf?expires=1492357616&id=id&accname=id23008&checksum=E4EA2C60DE657D2BA4F57584BBBDAB83.

How is that fair? Why should one son be making so much money? It's too much money. He can never be happy.”¹⁴³

Aside from engendering issues within Yugoslavia itself, the humanitarian narrative had huge impacts on international politics by setting a new stage for global interventionism. NATO was reimagined as an organization with humanitarian values at its core. The overwhelming support for the NATO bombing campaign overrode the need for a UNSC directive, a precedent that expanded the responsibilities of the international community well beyond the previous decades. In 2005, in response to the Kosovo intervention, UN member states unanimously adopted the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), establishing the foundations for international preventative action against governments murdering their civilians wholesale.¹⁴⁴ The airstrikes in Libya and the current bombardment of Syria can both be understood as emerging from this new political order.¹⁴⁵ It is quite unsurprising that many articles describe the current crisis in Syria as another Holocaust.¹⁴⁶ US Presidential war powers have increased tremendously with the Kosovo precedent, with humanitarian intervention a viable doctrine to circumventing international law. Indeed, even as debates weigh the viability of the Kosovo precedent, the fact

¹⁴³ Slobodan Simonević, interviewed by Jacqueline Fogel. Lipljani, Montenegro, August 23, 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Lloyd Axworthy and Allan Rock, “Looking back at Kosovo can move the Syria conflict forward,” *The Globe and Mail*, Aug 26, 2013. www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/why-looking-back-at-kosovo-can-move-the-syria-conflict-forward/article13946893/.

¹⁴⁵ Charlie Savage, “Was Trump’s Syria Strike Illegal? Explaining Presidential War Powers,” *NYTimes*, April 7, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/07/us/politics/military-force-presidential-power.html?_r=0.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Satloff, “Syria and the Holocaust: Putting ‘Never Again’ to the test,” *Washington Post*. May 3, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/syria-and-the-holocaust-putting-never-again-to-the-test/2016/05/03/3e52496c-0e55-11e6-8ab8-9ad050f76d7d_story.html?utm_term=.039a233ae9b6; Sigal Samuel, “Does Israel Have a Special Duty to Stop a ‘Holocaust’ in Syria?” *Atlantic*. April 8, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/04/israel-responsibility-stop-syria-holocaust/522318/>.; Laura Tavares, Text to Text: Comparing Jewish Refugees of the 1930s With Syrian Refugees Today, *NY Times*, Jan 4, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/04/learning/lesson-plans/text-to-text-comparing-jewish-refugees-of-the-1930s-with-syrian-refugees-today.html?_r=0.

that these conversations even exist in the social reality speaks to the level of penetration the humanitarian narrative had on American political consciousness.

This thesis traced the solidification of the humanitarian narrative in the American imagination through the use of Holocaust rhetoric by the American media and Executive branch. Through this process, I have endeavored to provide an alternative historical account of Kosovo that speaks to its complicated nature simplified by political will and the media. Račak and Rambouillet were both represented entirely differently from their realities as means of justifying the bombing campaign that ensued. The humanitarian narrative was American in the making yet blamed entirely on Milošević through Holocaust language. The practical and theoretical consequences of that narrative and the process of its construction will be felt for decades to come.

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