DISTRIBUTION A:
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

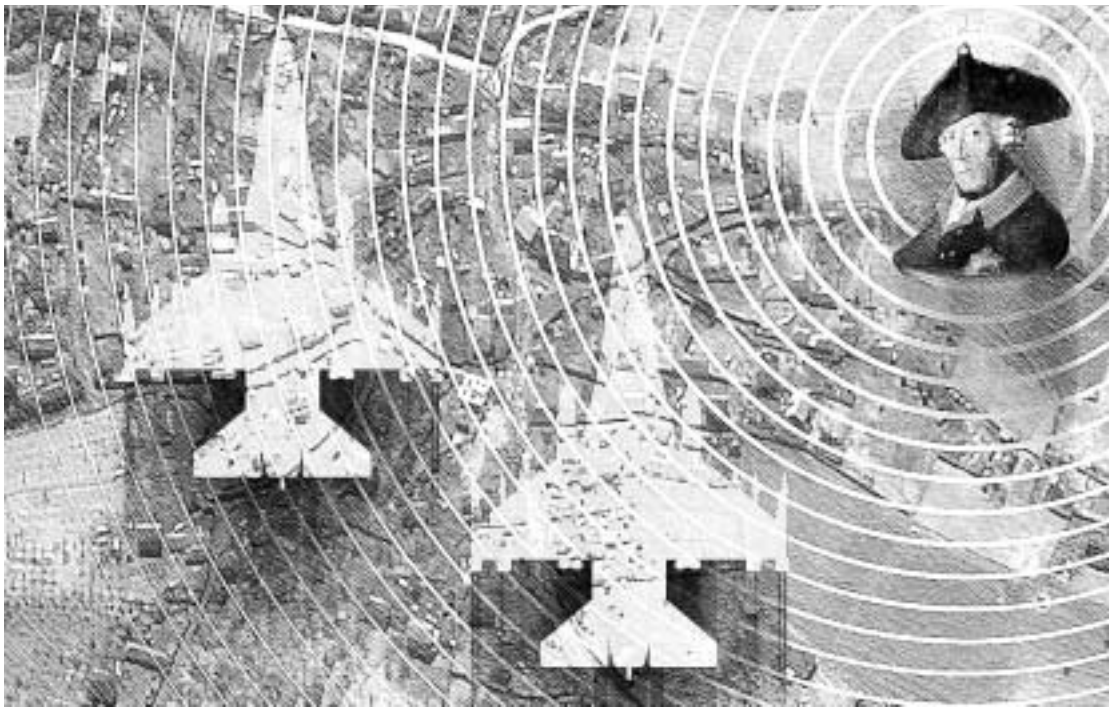
Myths of the Air War over Serbia

Some "Lessons" Not to Learn

DR. GRANT T. HAMMOND

When blows are planned, whoever contrives them with the greatest appreciation of their consequences will have great advantage.

—Frederick the Great



Editorial Abstract: Did airpower win the war in Kosovo? In this companion piece to his article on the Gulf War in the Fall 1998 issue, Dr. Hammond challenges opinions about the success of Operation Allied Force. Airpower may have achieved all the military objectives asked of it, but the resulting end state in Kosovo is unsatisfying. He warns that this apparent "success" of airpower may lead to its erroneous future use in lieu of valid national objectives and strategy.

THIS ARTICLE IS a sequel to my earlier piece "Myths of the Gulf War: Some 'Lessons' Not to Learn" (*Airpower Journal*, Fall 1998), which caused some consternation and discomfited many, for it seemed that I was criticizing airpower. I was not. I was criticizing those who do not understand its strengths and its limitations and who ask it to substitute for strategy. This article takes largely the same myths and tests those propositions against the backdrop of the air war over Serbia and the 78-day

bombing campaign that the United States and its NATO allies engaged in, regarding the fate of Kosovar Albanians and the province of Kosovo.

A representative dictionary definition of *myth* is "a traditional story of unknown authorship, ostensibly with a historical basis, but serving usually to explain some phenomenon of nature, the origin of man, or the customs, institutions or religious rites, etc. of a people; myths usually involve the exploits of gods or heroes; cf. LEGEND." It is also defined as "any fictitious story or unscientific account, theory, belief, etc." and "any imaginary person or thing spoken of as though existing." The headings in this article constitute imaginary beliefs about the air war over Serbia.

The propositions that follow represent commonly accepted assertions by, if not all, at least a large segment of both the American public and sectors of the American military. Once again, this is a cautionary note about the public's unfounded faith in the ability of the American military in general—and the US Air Force in particular. It is not a question of the military's ability to demonstrate its prowess in high technology as well as great tactical and operational skill—and to do so while sustaining low casualties. This it can do exceptionally well. But it is unrealistic to ask the military to do everything we ask simultaneously with other ongoing operations, poorly formulated strategies, and nonexistent visions of conflict termination and a better peace. Military capability is no substitute for viable strategy. The frequent use of military capabilities degrades them over time without reinvestment on a substantial scale.

There was much good that flowed from the air war over Serbia. Ethnic cleansing was eventually halted, the Kosovars returned to what was left of their homes, and a modicum of order was restored. In that, NATO did not fail. But the whole operation was made up as we went along and left much to be desired.

It Was a War

This was not, strictly speaking, a war.

—Gen Wesley K. Clark
Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
NATO briefing, 16 September 1999

It was murder, ethnic cleansing, rampant looting and destruction, rape and pillage, guerrilla attacks, random firefights, and an air campaign. It was almost ritualized war, a demonstration effect that would lead to negotiations in three to five days. It began as "a drive-by shooting with cruise missiles," as one analyst called it.[1] It was a contest between a 19-member coalition and the rump of Yugoslavia over the sovereign territory of one of its provinces, which remains a part of Yugoslavia (Serbia) but is occupied by NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops and is neither independent nor autonomous. It became a serious matter when it was clear that NATO's capability and existence were at stake. These then became the real objectives in the application of force.

NATO's actions in the air war over Serbia and Kosovo were a series of extended raids, an air campaign, or an "air siege," as Gen John Jumper, USAF, described it. But the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs in their Operation Horseshoe was wanton murder and terrorism, and NATO's destruction of Serb infrastructure was undertaken with great care regarding collateral damage. Although both sides tried to kill the forces of their adversary, the contest had little of the fierce, large-scale, random death that we have come to associate with war. We need a better term to describe what happened there. As Anthony Cordesman has commented, "One of the lessons of modern war is that war can no longer be called war."[2]

It's Over

Now they have . . . a job to keep the peace in the Balkans. It is quite possible that this job will last half a century too.

—Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*

Whatever "it" was, it's not over. The cycle of revenge killings, the animosity and hatred, the migration of refugees, and the military occupation of Kosovo continue, albeit with over 30,000 troops of a different military in place. What's more, KFOR forces are likely to be there for an extended period of time. Indeed, there is no "exit strategy," no end of military occupation, no conviction that if KFOR left, the bloodbaths would not immediately erupt again—just with different majorities and minorities. Indeed, it has spilled over into neighboring provinces and countries. One can hardly say it is "over," whatever that might mean.

The violence associated with the problems of Yugoslav secession and succession will likely continue. Some people go so far as to argue that actually a wider war will likely occur in the future—or at least larger issues will evolve out of the ones that remain unsettled.[3] Albania, Montenegro, and Macedonia have all been destabilized to different degrees as a result of NATO's action in Kosovo. Italy, Greece, and Turkey have strong feelings about issues raised in the area and the treatment of various refugees. Bulgaria's support for overflights was a welcome addition to NATO's air campaign. The entire area will be affected for some time to come, and—given a history of divergent goals and aspirations—stability does not seem to be a hallmark of the region.

We Won

Winning means what we said it means: Serbs out, NATO in, and Albanians back.

—National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, 2 June 1999

But was that the test of winning? Those things have been accomplished—but to what end? If by "winning" we mean we stopped ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, we did not. It increased during the air campaign but eventually ended as the Serbs departed. If by this we mean we established an independent Kosovo, free of the clutches of Slobodan Milosevic and the Serb state, we did not. The ill-fated and wrongly named Rambouillet Accords did not contain even the promise of a future referendum on Kosovar independence. If by this we mean that we changed the Serbian regime and dispatched Milosevic, we obviously did not. Thus, there are no guarantees that the current situation can be sustained indefinitely. NATO is occupying the sovereign territory of another country. For how long?

Just what did we accomplish? We got the Serbian army and national police to leave Kosovo. We have NATO's KFOR troops in the province performing largely constabulary duties to try to prevent arson, rape, murder, looting, and smuggling. As the Albanians have returned, the Serbs have fled, and ethnic cleansing now runs in reverse. Some two hundred thousand Serbs have left the area, and feuding has increased among the factions representing the Kosovar Albanians. Does that mean we won? Protecting the Kosovar Albanians seems to be a problem, even with the Serb military gone, and protecting the Serbs who remain in the area is a more difficult problem still.

We Accomplished Our Objectives

Operation Allied Force was an overwhelming success. We forced Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw his forces from Kosovo, degraded his ability to wage military operations, and rescued over one million refugees.

—Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry H. Shelton

As above, just what was our objective? If it was only driving the Serb military out of Kosovo, we did so. But nearly every public pronouncement on the air campaign and its objectives listed other goals critical to our success—or, more correctly perhaps, to Milosevic's defeat. According to the Kosovo/Allied Force after-action report to Congress, "From the onset of the operation, the United States and its NATO allies had three

primary interests: *Ensuring the stability of Eastern Europe . . . Thwarting Ethnic Cleansing . . .* [and] *Ensuring NATO's credibility*" (emphasis in original).[4] The first cannot be determined little more than a year out from the conflict, the second increased as we went to war, and the third is true if one believes that the test is NATO's making good on its threats. The aftermath of the encounter, however, remains to be seen.

We can't say we "won" because we did not accomplish the established goals. As stated by President Bill Clinton, these were "to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course, to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo."[5] It is not clear that NATO military action caused Milosevic to withdraw; the ethnic cleansing began in earnest after the air campaign began; and the degree to which Yugoslav fielded forces were degraded is hotly debated but seems far less than initial claims. No territory has officially changed hands. No war was declared, and no peace treaty has been signed. Hostilities continue although the Serb military and paramilitaries have left Kosovo.

Technology (PGMs) Won the War

Overall, the pinpoint accuracy of the NATO air forces' delivery of precision-guided munitions against fixed targets in the Serbian theater was very impressive.

—Headquarters USAF, Initial Report, *The Air War over Serbia*

We used a significant number of precision-guided munitions (PGM) in this war—indeed, 35 percent of all the munitions used were PGMs.[6] And we exhausted much of our stocks of certain kinds of PGMs. The planes delivering the ordnance; the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of unmanned aerial vehicles; the prevalence of laser-guided bombs; the use of ordnance guided by the Global Positioning System; and our ability to utilize PGMs more effectively were all greatly enhanced since the Gulf War. So too were the far less costly, simple, and reasonably effective acts of deception used by the Serbs. But in a distressing preview of potential information operations by future adversaries, incidents of collateral damage—only 20 out of 23,000 strikes—had a major impact on both NATO and world opinion.[7] It may well be that media superiority is more important than air superiority and that the PGMs which matter most are precision-guided messages.

Definitive "effects and effectiveness" studies of the aerial munitions used during the 78-day air campaign have yet to be released, but it seems that the reality of the original claims will have to be discounted—by exactly how much remains to be determined. We did well against civilian infrastructure—less well against a dispersed enemy already in place, not on the move, and well camouflaged among the civilian population of Kosovo. The precise reasons for the ultimate Serbian withdrawal remain unclear; one cannot assert that PGMs won the war. Coalition perseverance, Russian arm-twisting, internal Serbian political disagreements, failure to crack NATO's political cohesion—all may have played an important role in that decision. We just don't know.

The "Vietnam Syndrome" Is Over: US Military Might and Prestige Are Restored

NATO wanted to use military power as a bargaining lever, and you know what? It worked—and we didn't lose a single airman in the process. . . . [Milosevic] ran out of options. None of that would have happened without airpower.

—Gen Wesley K. Clark

Depending on what one's test of this proposition is, it may or may not be true. If we judge success on the basis of loss of American lives in combat, it was an unparalleled success. If, however, we judge success on the basis of accomplishing political and military objectives, some doubts are raised. Moreover, taking the land-combat forces off the table at the outset does not bode well for future conflicts. It is right to prefer to fight from technological advantage. It is wrong to preclude any option at our disposal from the outset. The ghost of Vietnam lingers in the leadership's not wanting to risk casualties. This is particularly true when it is not clear in the minds of the American public that the application of force is clearly in America's self-interest.

But the "base instinct" of force protection, represented not only by the concern for US and NATO losses in the air war over Serbia but also by the unseemly building of Camp Bondsteel—a little Fortress America in the middle of Kosovo for US troops based there—gives lie to the notion of escaping casualty phobia. As Jeffrey Record has declared, "Minimizing risk—force protection—has become more important than military effectiveness. The Vietnam syndrome thrives, and Allied Force's spectacular 78-day run without a single American or allied airman killed in action will stand as a beacon to future Presidents who want to use force without apparent risk."[8] Another analyst points out that if future adversaries see the reaction to casualties as a vulnerable center of gravity for the United States, then they will exploit it.[9]

We Can Do It Again If Necessary

Is NATO to be the home for a whole series of Balkan protectorates?

—Henry Kissinger

Even attempting to do so would be highly unlikely. But fear exists that NATO may well have to deal with the "spillover" from Kosovo into Montenegro, Macedonia, or Albania and that conflicts in the region are not yet over. Because NATO has put out a marker once and declared itself concerned to the point of military action over stability on its periphery, "having another go"—as the Brits say—is a definite possibility. In effect, Kosovo has become a ward of NATO—it is not formally a protectorate, is technically still part of Yugoslavia, and has no promise of either autonomy or independence. How long will that be acceptable? It is almost a foregone conclusion that future conflict in the region will erupt. What NATO does about it is another matter.

Adding the thrust of NATO's new "strategic concept" unveiled at the 50th anniversary celebration in Washington to its commitment to "crisis management" and the possibility of a new command for the Balkans seems virtually to guarantee further disruption and a NATO response. The problem is that the alliance may not hold together, China and Russia may be even more hostile to such action than before, and the rest of the world may not sit idly by while another instance of a "new imperialism" is conducted on the world's televisions. Applying force in the southern Balkans again may be a very risky proposition, both militarily and politically. One may also see it as another test of NATO's existence, if not its credibility. As an article in US Naval Institute *Proceedings* suggested, it may only be "halftime in Kosovo."[10]

Others Paid for the Cost of the War

[The Center for Strategy and Budgetary Assessment] estimates that the deployment of seven thousand US peacekeeping troops to Kosovo would cost about $2–3.5 billion a year. This figure reflects the incremental costs of the operation (i.e., the additional costs that would be incurred by the US military, above normal peacetime costs, as a result of conducting the operation). It does not include all of the costs associated with providing humanitarian assistance to Kosovar refugees or rebuilding homes, fac-

tories, and other facilities damaged or destroyed during the NATO air campaign.

—Center for Strategy and Budgetary Assessment, July 1999

Like buying a horse, the cost is ongoing. Even with European members of NATO agreeing to assume most of the cost of the rehabilitation of Kosovo after the war and with United Nations Resolution 1244 for the UN to assist in doing the same, it will cost the United States a minimum of $2 billion a year for a US contingent of seven thousand peacekeepers in the region. That is on top of an estimated $3 billion for the US share of Operation Allied Force. Thus, despite getting a pretty good deal—we pay for the war, you pay for the aftermath—US costs for Kosovo will approach $9 billion by the end of the current fiscal year. As long as we stay there, the costs will mount, and staying there may become the next test of NATO's credibility and existence, as unintended in the aftermath as they were in the conflict itself.

The implicit deal was that if we would do the bulk of the air campaign, the Europeans would provide the postwar funding for reconstruction and development. Little in the way of such funds has been received more than a year after the end of the conflict. Few people, if any, think that significant progress can be made in less than five to 10 years. Pessimists say 50 years is more likely. At a clip of $2 billion a year plus the cost of the war, the cost to the United States is on the order of $13 billion (low end) and $28 billion (high end). Splitting the difference, something on the order of $20 billion would be required, and that does not count foreign aid for refugee resettlement, rebuilding of infrastructure, housing, training of police, establishing a criminal justice system, and so forth. NATO's humanitarian impulse will be a very expensive proposition, and the US share—however small compared to the total—is not chicken feed.

Unlike Our Past Wars, the Air War over Serbia Represents an Almost Unblemished Record of Success, Superior Military Performance, and Accomplishment

[Reporter, repeating General Wald's assertion incredulously]

Q: Of all the bombs we've dropped, 99.6 percent have actually hit the target out of the 20,000 bombs. What percentage?

A: Maj Gen Charles F. Wald: 99.6 percent.

—Pentagon briefing, 2 June 1999

One is reminded of the old saying that there are lies, damn lies, and statistics. The Air Force is good—very good—at what it does. But it is simply not that good, claims to the contrary notwithstanding. First of all, what is the definition of a target? A factory is different from a desired mean point of impact, and a target set is different from a target. A lot of targeted SA-6s and Serb vehicles were not hit. There are always blemishes and failures—things that can be done better and results that are less than satisfactory. We had trouble with deception and decoys. We expended a lot of ordnance on mythical targets or radar sites that weren't there. We certainly did not have the success rate that General Wald claimed unless one wants to work backward and say that if there were only 20 errant bombs or missiles out of 23,000 launched, one can assume that all the others that didn't miss egregiously must have hit. Then we might get such a figure. But it is overreaching in the extreme to argue in this manner.

The operational performance of the air forces involved in the air war over Serbia—US Navy and allied as well as US Air Force—was exceptionally good. But those forces attempted to prevent something that airpower cannot do. An F-15E pilot cannot—unless he is very lucky, not just skillful—prevent a man with a Zippo lighter from burning his neigh-

bor's barn or house or prevent another man with a knife from slitting a neighbor's throat. Doing so indirectly by attacking targets in Serbia was slow. Meanwhile, the terror in Kosovo continued. We should celebrate their skill in attempting to prevent what airpower could not ultimately prevent. But we should not overreach.

The Promise of Airpower Was Finally Fulfilled

Now there is a new turning point to fix on the calendar: June 3, 1999, when the capitulation of President Milosevic proved that a war can be won by airpower alone.

—John Keegan
London *Daily Telegraph*, 6 June 1999

What promise of airpower? If by this we mean Giulio Douhet's claim that airpower is both necessary and sufficient to win a war, it appears it may have occurred—but we can't yet be sure. Stating that this is so is a case of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. There is no guarantee that this is the case. It appears that it *may* have at last been true. The application of airpower for 78 days over 37,000 sorties without loss of life in combat and only the loss of two planes (not counting the pilots and helicopters lost in the ill-fated Task Force Hawk) was truly remarkable. But we failed to destroy much of the fielded forces in Kosovo and instead destroyed civilian infrastructure in Serbia.

A host of other reasons could have entered Milosevic's strategic calculus and caused him to cave in to NATO demands. Even then, he got better than he would have gotten at Rambouillet. But we don't know why he did what he did. Did questionable targeting play a role? Did Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin's visit do the trick? Did the absence of Russian support carry the day? Was he getting tired of getting his country bloodied for no real gain? Was there no chance to inflict casualties on NATO—his only real hope to crack the coalition? We don't know and may never know with certainty. Claiming it was due to airpower, although possibly true, may be overreaching. In any event, I would argue that the promise of airpower had been fulfilled long before the air war over Serbia. It was certainly demonstrated in the Gulf War, and one can make a solid case that it was demonstrated much earlier, in World War II.

Here I add a myth to those addressed in my earlier article. It is the most important one for us to ponder.

The United States and NATO Accomplished Their Strategic Purpose through the Use of Military Force

Our objective in Kosovo remains clear: to stop the killing and achieve a durable peace that restores Kosovars to self-government.

—President Clinton, 22 March 1999

This is an important point. There was both a strategic failure in the disconnect between political and military objectives and a military failure in focusing on outputs rather than outcomes. The strategy adopted by NATO could reasonably guarantee neither the halt of ethnic cleansing nor self-governance for the Kosovars and a stable peace. Operation Horseshoe, the Serbs' ethnic-cleansing campaign, began in earnest after the bombing began, not before. Indeed, the agreement ending the 78-day bombing campaign places the future of Kosovo under UN auspices, where both China and Russia—opponents of NATO action to begin with—have vetoes in the Security Council. So, although some basis may exist for claiming another military triumph, it has not resulted in political victory. The purpose of going to war is to achieve a better state of peace, hopefully a durable one.

As Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon put it, "The stated goals of the bombing campaign were the three Ds: demonstrating NATO resolve, deterring attacks on the Kosovar civilians, and failing that, degrading the Serb capacity to inflict harm on the Kosovars.

But the military objectives of the bombing campaign were only indirectly related to the overriding political objective of achieving 'a durable peace.'"[11] The military objectives were perhaps achievable through the means applied, but the political ones were not. Taking the ground option off the table was poor strategy intended more to assuage Congress amid political crisis at home than to deliver a message to an international adversary. Having the military focus on its military objectives, however divorced from political requirements, is not a good precedent. The civilian political leadership and the military must jointly fashion strategy and specific goals. To allow a circumstance by which every successful "hit" against a Serbian military asset could be claimed as a degradation of Serb military capability may have been accurate semantically for the "spin doctors" of public relations. But unless this directly led to a durable peace, it was irrelevant to the political purpose.[12]

Epilogue

The air war over Serbia was a masterful demonstration of airpower skill in terms of its military operational employment. The inherent advantages of airpower—perspective, speed, range, flexibility, maneuver, mass, and precision lethality—have both good and bad attributes. They make airpower too easy to use. The United States possesses the world's only full-service, "24/7" air force. That's a priceless advantage. It also makes airpower a ready military tool that can be deployed and employed quickly; relatively cheaply, at least in terms of lives placed at risk; and often, as testimony to policy convictions. It exists simultaneously—or so we think—as deterrent, offense, and defense. But that is just the problem. As Eliot Cohen has suggested, airpower is like modern courtship. It gives the appearance of commitment without necessarily the substance.[13] But if it is unhinged from strategy and political consequence, if it is merely used to punish and not coerce, if more is asked of it than the nation is willing to contribute, then airpower is squandered.

There is a double-edged sword in the apparent success of airpower. Able to be deployed and employed far from America's shores in support of US policy, it is often first to the fight. However imperfect an instrument to effect specific policy change on the ground, it is better able to apply force as testament to will than most of the other forms of military force—naval and land. That said, although it can readily be used, that may be its damning sin as well as its saving grace. Unless tethered appropriately to strategic intent and policy ends, it may be misapplied. Moreover, it is a finite resource. The people, platforms, and munitions are all perishable assets with both quantitative and qualitative limitations. And as forces get smaller, the ability to do several different types of air missions simultaneously over a long period of time becomes more and more difficult.

Airpower is a precious asset. Merely because it *can* be used does not necessarily mean it *should* be used. When it is used, it should be used appropriately to maximize its inherent capabilities. A nearly flawless operational application of airpower cannot substitute for a flawed strategy. Similarly, a less than desirable end state cannot be laid at the door of airpower alone. Most importantly, if airpower is to be the preferred tool of American force in service of statecraft, then it must be properly resourced in order to accomplish the task. At the moment, it is not. The US Air Force cannot be the principal custodian of airpower, responsible for the control and exploitation of space as well as air, *and* the custodian of information superiority and defense for the US military against cyber attack—with a budget share once dedicated to air superiority alone.

If the UN, NATO, and the United States seek to rely on airpower to address future problems in the international arena, then it needs to be better supported with investments in physical, financial, and human capital. This is even truer of our allies than ourselves. Coalition war may soon become a fiction as fewer and fewer current or would-be allies are able to acquire and utilize the tech-

nology involved in future air campaigns. If these are not forthcoming, then the capabilities will become hollow, and airpower will become incapable of fulfilling the tasks asked of it. It matters less whether these are of a lethal nature (as in the Gulf War and Operations Deliberate Force and Allied Force) or nonlethal nature (as in military operations other than war or humanitarian relief operations). Airpower is finite and ultimately limited.

In a curious sort of way, the myths of the air war over Serbia are part of the problem, not part of the solution in sustaining our investment in airpower. Claiming more than is its due is to be avoided. As the joint force air component commander himself—Lt Gen Mike Short, USAF, Retired—has commented about the air war over Serbia, "This was little more than random bombing of military targets that achieved victory by happenstance."[14] That is, luck may have had as much to do with our success as skill. Next time out, more attention to strategy and strategic effect and less on application of force to "demonstrate resolve" without regard to second- and third-order consequences would serve us all well. □

Notes

1. An oft-quoted and paraphrased remark made originally by Franklin C. "Chuck" Spinney at an Army War College Strategy Conference, April 1999.
2. Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile War in Kosovo" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 8 July 1999), 9.
3. See the essays contained in *NATO's Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War,* ed. Ted Galen Carpenter (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2000), particularly those by Radu, Mearsheimer, Dempsey, and Rizopoulos.
4. Message from Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry H. Shelton that accompanied their *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report: Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 31 January 2000), 1.
5. President Bill Clinton, 24 March 1999 Statement of Objectives, quoted in Headquarters United States Air Force, Initial Report, *The Air War over Serbia: Aerospace Power in Operation Allied Force*, April 2000, 5.
6. Cordesman, 9.
7. Ibid., 34.
8. Jeffrey Record, "Operation Allied Force: Yet Another Wake-Up Call for the Army?" *Parameters* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1999–2000): 16.
9. Earl H. Tilford Jr., "Operation Allied Force and the Role of Air Power," *Parameters* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1999–2000): 37.
10. Maj Gen J. D. Lynch Jr., "Truth in Kosovo: Is It Halftime?" United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* 125, no. 8 (August 1999): 2.
11. Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2000), 210.
12. Ibid., 211.
13. See Eliot Cohen, "The Mystique of Airpower," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 1 (January/February 1994): 109.
14. Comments made in an address to the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., 23 August 2000. Used with permission.

The theory of war and strategy is the core of all things.

—Mao Tse-tung, 1954