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Press Conferences

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by Mr Jamie Shea and General Giuseppe Marani

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Jamie Shea: Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to our daily operational up-date. After the break of the Washington Summit; I'm delighted to be once again joined by General Marani up here on the podium for the SHAPE operational up-date. Things are getting back to normal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Serbia is a country which throughout its history has had some bitter and tragic experiences standing up to external dictatorships. It did this heroically in 1915 and then again during the dark days of the Second World War. The problem of course for the Serb people today is not to vanquish an external dictatorship, but an internal dictatorship.

Now over the last few weeks we have had an impression that the support of President Milosevic is virtually total, that the whole country is radicalised behind a form of extreme nationalism, that there is no opposition, that nobody dares to speak out. But I believe that this unity, based on fear, is beginning to fragment in Serbia today and opposition from within the country to the campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and to the course of confrontation with the international community, that that opposition is beginning to grow. In other words, beneath the permafrost there are some green shoots of democratic recovery.

Now as you all know, Vuk Draskovic was the first major Serbian politician and a Vice Prime Minister of the regime to break ranks with Milosevic, and repeatedly on three occasions in recent days. He has accused Milosevic of lying to his own people, of isolating the country and of heading on a meaningless confrontation course with the international community. He' also advocated a military force inside Kosovo in conjunction with the United Nations. And since the statements by Vuk Draskovic, we have become increasingly aware that other politicians across Serbia are also beginning to feel increasingly uneasy about the direction in which their country is going, and they're speaking out also in support of the Montenegrin government, which has come under marked pressure from Belgrade in recent days, as you know, particularly to merge its security forces with the Second Yugoslav Army. And therefore, Montenegro is no longer the only centre of organised resistance to Milosevic's rule.

Yesterday, there was a demonstration by several thousand people in the Serbian town of Kacak, led by the Mayor, Velimir Iullic, and let me quote you what he said. He said: "With this prayer, we have joined the

democratic forces and the whole people of Montenegro, who persistently resist the warmongering policy of Belgrade." Now, the Mayor of Kacak is from an opposition party whose election victory in 1996 in the municipal elections was recognised by Milosevic only after months of night by night pro-democracy demonstrations that many of you of course will remember very well; it was a demonstration that people power does indeed exist within Yugoslavia today. And the fact that he has chosen to raise his voice at this time is a sign that democracy in Serbia has not been extinguished and that there are many brave people who are willing to take the risks to their own personal well-being, as well as to their political futures, to speak out against the extremist and destructive policies coming from Belgrade.

Let me give you some other examples in recent days. Mr Nenad Canak, the Serbian leader of the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, who has said: "Belgrade is trying to open some sort of talks again without any change in their position. I think they are in a serious panic. We knew 10 years ago that what is happening now with the NATO airstrikes had to happen for the simple reason that he who lives by the sword will die by the sword."

Let me give you another example, Mr Goran Selenovic, the leader of Serbia's main Social Democratic Party, the Civil Alliance. Now his party has been broken up and he himself has been drafted into the armed forces, yet yesterday he said: "The manner in which Belgrade managed the Kosovo crisis and the talks in France were the prelude to the grave devastation of the country. Any proposal to overcome the current crisis must involve essential political changes."

Or take the example of Mr Miodrag Vukovic, a leading figure in the party of President Djukanovic of Montenegro. He has spoken up in support of Draskovic's comments as: "courageous and politically responsible. A different democratic Serbia is emerging from the underground. Draskovic's voice encourages Montenegrin citizens in the belief that the promising looking Serbia has not been defeated."

Now I realise that these of course are isolated, if nonetheless brave figures, but they are political leaders, they represent political undercurrents inside the country and I find it significant that they have chosen this particular time to begin to raise their heads above the parapet. It suggests that the tide may be beginning to turn against President Milosevic.

You have heard the report of nine Generals having been placed under house arrest. You have also heard reports that morale is cracking inside the armed forces in Kosovo. The UCK have reported to us, via Nato governments, that they have found a large number of uniforms that have been cast aside by members of the armed forces who have deserted. Many young men are refusing to obey the call-up, several of them have fled to the Republika Srpska, or have fled to Hungary and have tried there to obtain visas to go abroad, even though they risk very drastic sanctions if they are caught evading military service. And we know that in a special decree issued just two days ago, the Belgrade government has put all of the private TV and radio stations in Serbia under military control and forced them all to broadcast the Radio Television Serbia

programme, and Mr Draskovic himself has been the victim of that and has protested against it. And we know that the Kosovo Liberation Army in the meantime is getting numerically stronger and we have reports that as many as 12,000 have now been infiltrated back into Kosovo. They continue to take losses, they don't have a great deal of equipment, nor a great deal of training, but they are continuing to fight and harass the Serb forces.

And perhaps most interestingly of all, in the last 24 hours, a member of the Socialist Party, Mr Lilic, on a trip to Libya, has also begun to suggest that the solution for the country is some kind of political force, international force, under the United Nations inside Kosovo, the very internationalisation of the Kosovo crisis that Milosevic has been refusing now for several months. And at the same time, the party headed by his own wife, Mrs Markovic, JUL, has now issued a statement saying that Belgrade would be prepared to accept a UN presence in Kosovo.

Now it's too early to know exactly what these possible overtures mean, but they do suggest that some people are beginning to look for an exit strategy, that they need a way out and that therefore they have at some time to recognise the reality and cooperate with the international community, and we shall be obviously tracking very closely those, do I dare again call them green shoots of recovery and cooperation, over the next few days. So there is a democratic Serbia lurking in the underground and we hope very much that it will be increasingly strong and increasingly vocal, as it was after the municipal elections in the autumn of 1996, in coming days.

At the same time, NATO continues to give itself the tools to finish the job. We've had in the last 24 hours a series of new forces coming. As you know, the United States has called up some reservists, over 2,000, Canada has announced it is sending 800 troops and 8 CF-18s to the theatre, Turkey is preparing a force of 1,000, it was announced this morning, to be ready also for a NATO-led peace implementation force in the area. Hungary has granted the use of its air bases for tanker refuelling aircraft which will shortly be arriving. So clearly NATO is getting stronger all the time. I expect further measures in the next few days to give ourselves all of the capabilities we need to push this through until we arrive at a successful conclusion.

I'd now like to ask General Marani to give you the operational up-date for the last 24 hours. Thank you very much.

General Marani: Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. NATO's air campaign is moving systematically and progressively to attack, disrupt, degrade and ultimately destroy Mr Milosevic's military and special police forces, his sustaining infrastructure, command and control and other targets associated with his system of repression. Our Allied campaign is working.

NATO forces' support for non-governmental organisations and governmental institutions of Albania and FYROM continues and contributes significantly to the relief efforts in these countries.

In the last 24 hours, there were 15 aid flights flown into FYROM with 17

tons of food and water, 25 tons of tents and 37 tons of general stores. To Albania, there were 28 aid flights, delivering 57 tons of food and water, 63 tons of medical supplies and 180 tons of tentage. This brings to date the following totals delivered by NATO: 3,174 tons of food and water; 794 tons of medical supplies, and 1,719 tons of tentage.

Now turning to Serbian ground operations in Kosovo : Serb forces continued to conduct counter-insurgency operations in the Podujevo, Glopocica and Suva Reka areas, as shown on the map. They also continued their effort to interrupt the UCK resupply lines in western Kosovo, on the Albanian border, as shown here. UCK guerrilla operations continued through Kosovo, as depicted on the map.

Turning to Serbian air force activity, Serb air defence activity was light. Two shoulder-launch surface to-air-missiles in addition to anti-aircraft artillery fire. No FRY air force fixed wing activity was noted and once again, we had no NATO aircraft losses.

I will now turn to Nato operations. Yesterday, Allied aircraft attacked the following target sets: strategic command and control facilities and nodes of communication.

This is a video of an earlier attack against the Ivanjica radio relay site, one element of the command and control structure. The integrated air defence system was again targeted, as shown. Petroleum storage and production facilities continue to be targeted, including the facilities at Pristina and Pozaga.

This is a video of a previous attack against the fuel facility.

We again targeted lines of communication, including the bridges at Milosevo, Tristinik and Kosmaica. Serbian forces infrastructure were struck, such as the army training areas at Surdulica and the army barracks at Belgrade. We also attacked fielded forces in Kosovo, including multi-launch rocket systems, armoured vehicles, mortars, radars, military storage areas and a MUP command post, as shown on this video. We await full battle damage assessment of these attacks. Weather prevented further attacks on other planned targets.

Yesterday, SACEUR discussed the Serb reinforcement of the VJ forces in Kosovo. There has been some misinterpretation of this reinforcement. Let me clarify its significance. It in fact demonstrates two points. First, the Serb military cannot make good the losses the air campaign has inflicted on their forces in Kosovo. The Serbs are unable to reconstitute their forces in Kosovo and must rely on reinforcement with new units from outside Kosovo. Second, it demonstrates yet again Milosevic's miscalculations. He thought he could defeat the KLA in a short 5 - 7 day operation with his existing forces on the ground. This, as the reinforcement and duration of his operations in Kosovo shows, was completely wrong and is further testimony to the success of the air campaign.

That concludes the operations briefing for today. Thank you.

Question, Newsweek: General Marani, is there any indication or can you

tell us if any of the bombing raids being run by NATO now have dropped down to lower altitudes, if there are there any operations either being conducted by the Apaches, or by A-10s, or by Harriers, any planes that have dropped down below the three mile limit in altitude?

General Marani: As you can understand, we will adapt and we are adapting our tactics to the existing conditions. Now, stating exactly what is the operational altitude, or the dropping altitude, of our aircraft is not a gift that I want to make to the gunmen of FRY. But what I can tell you is that of course we are adapting our tactics to the existing environment and the three miles, when it's necessary it is three miles, when it's not necessary it is less than that.

George Foris: Jamie, you were mentioning that the voice of the opposition is getting stronger and stronger, but are you sure that it means that those persons would be ready to accept these five points? For example, Mr Draskovic in Rambouillet was quite against the presence of the international forces and the referendum in three years time and things like that, so they are perhaps against Milosevic but do you have any signal that they would be more co-operative in terms of the final solution?

General, do you have any recent information on what went wrong in Surdulica, where civilian casualties were taken and do you have any figures of how many casualties?

Jamie Shea: George, it's too early to say of course just how bold and how widespread these green shoots of democratic recovery are going to prove to be, of course, but we wish them well because they are in the interests not only of the international community, but also of the future of Serbia itself.

Let us say that a NATO-led peace keeping force in Kosovo would be there as much to guarantee the rights of Serbs in Kosovo as the rights of other communities. And the whole point of this political strategy that led to Rambouillet was to keep Kosovo in Yugoslavia, in other words to arrive at a solution which would enable the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia to be preserved because obviously the policy of confrontation and sectarianism was driving Kosovo, we all know this, in the opposite direction, away from autonomy and towards an aspiration to independence that the international community did not support. So clearly, there is nothing anti-Serb in what the international community is proposing, indeed an international presence in Serbia, in Kosovo, would be something which would undoubtedly stabilise the situation in the country overall, I believe so.

So I would not say that Mr Draskovic accepts at the moment perhaps the idea of a NATO-led presence, but what I do know is that the rhetoric is changing, even among members of the government, away from what we heard a few days ago where the statement was that members of such an international military force could only come from friendly countries and would have to exclude countries which have been participating in Operation Allied Force, towards statements which say an international presence under the UN would be acceptable if it included Russia. Now there is a big difference there and I see that as a sign that a sense of

realism is beginning to dawn, and people are looking for a way out and realise that they have to be more flexible. But it's too early to say.

But let me make one thing clear : whereas Belgrade has to be flexible, NATO is not going to negotiate on its key conditions, we are not going to meet Yugoslavia half-way on those, and for a very good reason, because we've had the experience before of compromise deals worked out with Milosevic that proved untenable, that collapsed within a matter of weeks, which then took us back to the status quo ante and often in worse circumstances than when we had signed those agreements in the first place, agreements which were really unverifiable with no effective implementation. So we have been there before, we are not going to go back there, so we are going to stay rock solid on our fundamental principles, we believe they are reasonable and the Serbs should see them as reasonable as well. They offer the only way out for Yugoslavia at the present time and therefore it 's in the interests of Yugoslavia to accept them.

General Marani: I can only confirm what this morning has been said by Mr Shea.

Question: circumstances?

General Marani: The circumstances, how can I say what has happened, if you put it into context, is the fact that as General Clark said yesterday, after more than 4,000 attack sorties, one bomb went astray. We told you initially that although we put all our effort in avoiding collateral damage, things like this can happen and in fact they happened. Over so many bombs dropped, so much activity, then I would say that our efforts to prevent collateral damage are quite successful, within human limits of course.

Margaret Evans, CBC : Jamie, you mentioned the UCK, you said that 12,000 had been infiltrated back into Kosovo. Are you saying that that is in addition to the UCK forces that are already there, can you give us a clearer idea on the number? And General Marani, can you tell us what's happening with the integrated air defence system, you said it was targeted again, we were told more than a week ago by British defence officials that the system was no longer integrated, have they managed to repair it, what's the status there please?

Jamie Shea: Margaret, on the UCK, the information I have is that without knowing the exact number, but they have at least 12,000 inside Kosovo, it's difficult of course to know the exact number in the present circumstances, they are still able to operate, albeit under obviously very difficult conditions. They claim in fact to have taken a number of prisoners from the Yugoslav army, but of course only one such prisoner has been handed over to Allied authorities in Tirana, that's the Yugoslav Lieutenant of course that you know about already and who I add is being treated very humanely by the United States authorities. They are trying also to create two corridors from Albania into Kosovo which can be used of course not only as resupply circuits but for the evacuation of refugees and displaced persons in the safest circumstances. So that's all I have at the moment for you on that one.

General Marani: Going back to the integrated air defence system, any air defence system, to work at its best, has to be integrated. As you realise, in a conflict there is a contest between the destruction that are made and the reconstruction that is made on the other side. If you want, as was stated a few days ago, if you want an integrated air defence system to remain this articulated, we must keep up with the reconstruction and therefore periodically target that system again in order for it to remain non-effective.

Doug Hamilton, Reuters: General Marani, something I don't quite understand, General Clarke was quite clear yesterday, he said there were about 40,000 Yugoslav troops and special police in Kosovo, that they were being reinforced, they were getting help from the Second Army in Montenegro, he said that this pattern could continue and we could at any given moment actually see more troops in Kosovo rather than less before NATO in the summer was able to intensify its attacks with more aircraft. In other words, he was saying that Milosevic has not seen fit to withdraw a single soldier so far, despite 4,400 airstrikes. What are you saying now to clarify this?

General Marani: What I'm saying is that if Milosevic wants to put more soldiers in Kosovo, that is his decision, as well as it is his decision not to comply with the demands that have been put on to him by the international community. But let me say that more soldiers means more targets for us and if he wants to play this game, we are ready for it.

Jamie Shea: Doug, I think it's also a sign of desperation that he ploughs in the forces, day in and day out, and still is unable to subdue the UCK or to be in a position where he feels he has effective control over his own province. I think it's very telling that with 40,000 troops in a place the size of Wales, he is unable to be in a position where he feels he has effective control, so I interpret it as a sign of desperation and ultimately counter-productive.

Jake Lynch, Sky News: Jamie, is this the moment where NATO could help political figures like Mr. Draskovic by indicating its preparedness not to amend or compromise on the five essential conditions but perhaps to reconsider some terms of the Rambouillet accords like for example the unfettered free movement of international troops throughout the whole of Yugoslavia or their complete immunity from local civil, criminal and administrative law and is it not the case that any leader, Mr. Draskovic or anyone else, would find it very, very difficult to agree such conditions?

Jamie Shea: Well, those conditions operate in Bosnia and I don't think you would argue for one minute - that by the way is under the Dayton Agreement - that that in any way is being counter-productive in Bosnia or is impeding the reconstruction of Bosnia, quite the reverse. If NATO forces enter any area, it will be under legal arrangements and rules of engagement which ensure that they can carry out their mandate in an unfettered way completely but obviously the circumstances of the deployment is something that is going to have to be looked at closer to the time, as you can well imagine.

But I want to reiterate once again that as far as the five core principles are concerned and which you are very familiar with, Jake, we're not

going to compromise on them because to show any flexibility would not only give Milosevic the feeling that he can negotiate, he can try to seek a way out, he can play cat and mouse and prolong the agony when we want to shorten the agony to the extent that we can but would lead to a messy arrangement which Milosevic would try to undermine and we would be back to square one within a matter of months. We went through that in October, where the international community believed it had an agreement and one month or two months later the fighting resumed, the international verifiers on the ground were increasingly hampered in going about their business, Milosevic was surreptitiously reintroducing forces into Kosovo and preparing for his offensive, so as I say, we have learned the lesson there and we're not going to repeat that in the future.

Mark Laity, BBC: Two points: could you give us an update on where you are on reaching an agreement on the oil embargo and second, could I push a little bit on the Surdulica incident, do you have any more details as to what caused it, technical malfunction, cloud or something of that kind and also there are reports which there were two bombs that missed. You said one, are you certain it is just one or is there some doubt as to whether it was one or two?

Jamie Shea: Well Mark, first question to me: on the "visit and search" regime, this is still being worked by the Military Committee and it hasn't yet arrived on the table of the North Atlantic Council but I anticipate it will do very soon and I'll give you a daily update as to its progress. The Military Committee is looking of course at the strictly military aspects and the Ambassadors will have to look at the political aspects, particularly the legal basis, once they have the documents and they'll get to that very soon.

Now as I mentioned yesterday, this is a complicated business, we have to define the zone of operations, we have to calculate the number of ships that would be required, we have to calculate how the rules of engagement would work in specific cases, of course. We also have to see, following the decision of the Heads of State and Government in Washington, how we would limit the impact on Montenegro, which is something, as you know, which features specifically in the Summit declaration. So there are some complicated things, as the Secretary General explained, when we announce this and implement it, we have to be sure it's going to work and that all of the various aspects are being looked at in advance but we're going at it quickly, the Military Committee has it again today and as soon as it's with the Council, I'll let you know and as soon as we have a broad-based concept of operations, I'll comment on the details further.

As for the incident yesterday, I'll ask General Marani to comment on that.

General Marani: When I said that we confirmed the bomb that Mr. Shea was talking of this morning, I did mean that we can confirm that one bomb went astray. We cannot exclude that, as you say, another bomb could have been in the same conditions and therefore have caused some collateral damage but what we can confirm is that one bomb hit outside the target area.

Antonio Esteves Martins, RTP: Thank you Jamie. I'd like to go back to what the Secretary General said a while ago concerning the feeling of the

other countries of the area not to change borders and what you just said repeating that the Alliance always wants to keep Kosovo inside Yugoslavia. Is it realistic now to address to the Serbian democrats a message as clear as this, that Kosovo remains part of Yugoslavia after we go back to the table, that is still the idea inside the Alliance?

Jamie Shea: Absolutely. The alternatives are two, Antonio, either partition and we know that partition would re-open the border issue in the whole of the area. What would be the impact on Republic Serbska of partition and historical precedents for partition have not been very favourable, quite frankly, they have often led to antagonism rather than constituting a solution to a political problem.

Secondly, partition suggests that the only stability in the Balkans is on the basis of mono-ethnic statelets and yet we know that democracies tend to be multiethnic societies because multiethnicity breeds a culture of tolerance, of understanding, of a spirit of compromise, a spirit of willing to understand if not always embrace the values of your neighbours and our future for the Balkans is in a multiethnic Balkans because ethnic groups live on each other's territories. We know this, there are Egyptian and Muslim, Turkish communities inside Kosovo, even some Croat villages believe it or not - I didn't realise this myself until today when I learned this.

Similarly, Bosnia, all the countries of the area, Yugoslavia itself is a highly multiethnic society if you look at Sanjac, if you look Vojvodina and the rest and so partition is simply a recipe to form monoethnic states that would be stabilising for the area. The second thing is independence for Kosovo but that would create many of the same issues.

So no, our formula is for far-reaching autonomy following a transitional period in which of course Kosovo would have to be under the protection of the international community and would have to be reconstructed and it's more likely, in my view, for Yugoslavia to go in a democratic way if part of Yugoslavia is already a multiethnic, democratic society under the influence of the international community. We would have a better chance than if it were hived off completely because as we found, any kind of partition tends to encourage the extremist parties rather than the democratic parties in the states that survive.

Neil King, Wall Street Journal: Jamie, for weeks we heard rather detailed stories from here about the condition of the displaced people within Kosovo, we heard about diseases, we heard about possible starvation. There's been a noticeable lack of such information, especially in Washington, it was rather dramatic. Does that underline the fact that these people's lot has gotten better, which of course isn't likely to be the case, or does it actually underline a certain helplessness on NATO's part to actually come to the aid of these people? **Jamie Shea:** Well Neil, this is of course a key question that you ask. We know from the UNHCR that has been receiving people as they crossed the borders into Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that they are not starving, not yet, but they are undernourished and they obviously do show the effects of wear and tear, they are in worse physical condition - we know this - than the people who left at the outset of the current crisis about a month ago, so clearly there is reason for concern. On the other hand, two

Greek NGOs have managed to get some food in and some doctors, particularly into Pristina hospital, 19 trucks went just the other day. They have found by the way in the hospital several people suffering from shrapnel wounds, which suggests that they have been bombarded in the hills and have been forced to leave and I reported on this earlier, so there is concern about their condition.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is trying to gain access to Kosovo, Mr. Samaruga discussed this in Belgrade on Monday with Milosevic, and we hope very much this can happen because by far the best immediate answer is for international relief organisations to have the sort of access that the Greeks have been managing to achieve. I've even seen, incidentally, a report that a Red Cross convoy of 12 trucks and two cars is going today from Nis to Pristina of the Yugoslav Red Cross, which is an interesting development and additionally, a further Greek humanitarian convoy is scheduled into Kosovo on 30 April so it seems that some limited supplies are getting in and I know that certain neutral countries are also looking at being able to play a role in this respect.

But again, I have to come back to the fundamental point: the only way that we are going to resolve this is to stop the fighting at the end of the day, otherwise we are tackling the symptoms of the problem, albeit necessary because it's always necessary to try to feed people or relieve their suffering, rather than the root causes which is the repression by the paramilitary forces.

NATO for its part - and I want to stress this as the Secretary General did - is not excluding action of its own. Our action is basically in two areas, first of all the extent to which we can use our intelligence resources to monitor the movements of these internally-displaced persons and try to locate where they are better than we can, at least as far as they are in groups which could be identified through aerial reconnaissance; and secondly, we are still considering this whole business of air drops, despite the obvious operational difficulties that you're well aware of and as soon as either of those two comes to fruition I'll report on that.

Question: My first question has to do with representations that were made yesterday regarding the tankers. The statement was made that we are seeing ten tankers offloading 24 hours a day. Reports from the scene from journalists who are there are saying that they see very little activity in Bar and certainly not bring on the scale of a 24-hour offloading. I wonder if you could clear up the discrepancy there.

And the second question has to do with remarks that General Klaus Naumann made yesterday in which he suggested there was a flaw within the strategy of the campaign and that flaw was that NATO was dealing with a reasonable man and that a responsible person would not let their country be bombed into rubble; he thinks that now the reality of the intransigence of Mr. Milosevic seems to almost militate for a rethinking in the campaign asking the **question:** How does relentless bombing lead to the political goal, lead to the objective of removing his troops from Kosovo?

Jamie Shea: OK, well, thank you for that question. I think that the first point about Bar is that we have given you the information we have. I

have obviously not been in the lucky position of being on the dockside in Bar for several years but we do know that Milosevic has brought in tankers and I have even statistics on the amount of oil that he may have been able to gain over the last few weeks. We also know, by the way, that he is trying to commandeer from Montenegro control over Montenegro's domestic supply of oil and fuel, particularly in Bar itself; it's a sign, I believe, of how difficult the situation has become regarding fuel supplies, the price of gasoline has shot up, there has been a decree promulgated by the government to take over civilian stocks of fuel, petrol stations have been commandeered, buses in Belgrade and other cities are operating at far less than full capacity in order to be able to purloin fuel, so clearly there is a great need there.

As far as General Naumann is concerned, I saw his remarks. I don't quite interpret them the same way as perhaps you do. I think the first point is that we are very, very far away - and will remain very, very far away - from reducing Yugoslavia to rubble, quite the contrary. We are taking every precaution in what we are doing with our targeting, to strike only at military targets and of course Milosevic can prevent even more destruction by agreeing right away.

This brings me to the second point, is he an irrational leader? Well, his habit in the past is that when he really does see that there is no way out, when he knows fully well that the international community is united and fully determined, he does, even at the 11th hour - or shall I say the 11.3/4 hour? - seek a way out so I wouldn't quite credit the idea of an irrational leader who is, if you like, going to go down in a kind of Wagnerian, if you like, ending. No, I wouldn't do that and I think at the end of the day there are enough people around Milosevic to persuade him to do the opposite, to stop that before it happens.

The next remark is that this is an air campaign which is slightly different from what you may have seen in the past and therefore I wouldn't judge this air campaign by necessarily the parameters of previous air campaigns. It's highly accurate, it's progressive, it's moving against the Serb forces in Kosovo. Over the next few weeks, many additional capabilities are going to come in and I don't think we should sort of write the history books of the air campaign before we've lived through this period. We will succeed in diminishing very dramatically indeed the capabilities of the Serb forces through the air campaign. There isn't really any other way which would do it faster and more successfully, quite frankly, at least I haven't seen another way. There are other suggestions but when you study them, they're not quite the panaceas that they may seem at first sight.

Ekrem Krasniqi, Zeri: I will go back to the final solution you were talking a little bit before about Kosovo. Since '91, the Albanian people have been asking for independence, since '89, Serbia has refused everything which is more than autonomy, even autonomy and hearing you talking about partition, I would like to know which is the message of the NATO Allies to Albanians after 13 months ethnic cleansing, especially the last months. Are you saying that the message of NATO is: Forget independence, accept autonomy or we will put in front the partition of Kosovo?

Jamie Shea: Well, I think what most Albanians want, quite frankly, if I can interpret them, is to be able to go home, to get on with their lives, to go back to farming their fields or working in their offices or whatever, to reconstitute their families, to be able to carry out the basic functions of citizens in any democratic society without worrying that in the middle of the night somebody is going to come knocking on their door and order them out at gunpoint and strip them of their possessions, take away their menfolk or mistreat their women and then confiscate their identity papers and throw them across the border. I think what most Kosovar Albanians want is simply to lead, like all of us, a normal life in which the state is the protector of the human rights of its citizens and not the oppressor of the human rights of its citizens, where it's the law that applies rather than the law of the jungle and that is exactly what the international community is going to do, we are going to provide that protection which is going to make that happen and I think that that is, at least as far as I see it, the key aspiration of the Kosovar Albanian people. We continue to believe that the best future is in a far-reaching form of autonomy which will give all of the constitutional guarantees that the Kosovar Albanians want without independence being necessary.

I think what has happened in the past - and I can understand the reason for this - is that many Kosovar Albanian intellectuals and politicians have decided that independence was necessary because they saw that they could not within Yugoslavia have these guarantees of their ethnic identity but not so much of their ethnic identity, their basic individual human rights and therefore it was, if you like, an extreme alternative. But once autonomy becomes possible - and Rambouillet by the way is a very, very far-reaching form of autonomy, it is very difficult to see anything in constitutional practice elsewhere in the world that quite goes this far - they have most of the trappings of full self-government that they will be content with. The problem is not so much independence versus autonomy, the problem is how can you live in a democratic Serbia with your human rights being protected? That's the fundamental problem, at least the way I see it.

Dominique Thierry, RFI: General, could you give us an update on the deployment of the Apaches and the accompanying sets of multiple rocket launchers, Bradleys and are the Americans going to replace the one that burned down and in which condition could they operate if you are still not controlling the air space in Kosovo? Could you risk deploying them if portable missiles are still being launched on a daily basis against NATO planes?

General Marani: Controlling the air space doesn't mean that there isn't the slightest possibility that a manned portable missile can be fired. Of course, controlling the air space means other things: that other aircrafts cannot operate in that air space, that anti-aircraft system cannot operate or if they do operate, they have to do it with the very great risk of being immediately destroyed. This is controlling the air space.

Of course, there are risks in this operation but let me say that the Apache is not the weapon, the Apaches are part of an integrated system composed of many parts, including aircraft, including sensors, including the Apache, including everything that NATO can provide to make their operation safer and more effective.

Of course, the Apache has a very specialised role and this is why they have been brought into theatre. They are all there, they are getting organised to start operating. As I told you, it's an integrated operation, they need to be interfaced with all the other components to operate safely and effectively and this is why it takes some time but believe me, this is a very small time compared also with the historical records.

Question: Le Gnral Clark a dit hier que l'OTAN est en train de gagner et que Milosevic est en train de perdre mais est-ce que chaque jour qui passe n'est pas au contraire une victoire de Milosevic dans sa guerre contre la population civile au Kosovo et si la fin l'OTAN gagne bien sr est-ce qu'il y aura assez de Kosovars au Kosovo pour constater la victoire ?

Jamie Shea: Moi je ne pourrai jamais caractriser ce qui se passe au Kosovo, le nettoyage ethnique, les exactions contre la population civile comme une victoire quelconque; c'est une trs macabre dfinition de victoire mais vous savez que parfois dans des conflits, cela a toujours t le cas dans l'histoire, il y a un point tournant, quand les jeux sont faits mme si, si vous voulez, la victoire finale prend encore du temps mais partir de ce moment -l; partir d'un certain moment le rsultat final devient inluctable. Ce n'est pas une question de "si" c'est une question de "quand" et je pense que nous avons atteint, nous avons dpass ce point culminant. Maintenant notre devoir c'est d'essayer d'courter le dlai qui reste au maximum.

Il reste toujours 1 million peu prs de Kosovars au Kosovo donc je crois que oui finalement il restera beaucoup de gens. Ils seront dans un tat trs dlicat c'est certain , il faudra reconstruire les maisons, les aider reconstruire leur vie, je croire qu'ils dpendront de l'aide internationale et surtout de la nourriture internationale au moins pendant deux ans parce qu'il faudra au moins deux ans pour reconstituer les rseaux de distribution et le cheptel, le btail et la production agricole. C'est tout fait certain il restera une grande tche.

Mais nous allons pouvoir rapidement renverser le nettoyage ethnique rapidement malgr les vacuations provisoires la plupart des gens reste proche du Kosovo, ils veulent retourner, ils vont pouvoir retourner rapidement et donc je crois que finalement nous allons pouvoir trs bientt atteindre nos objectifs et finalement commencer donner au peuple Kosovar une certaine justice. Je sais qu'ils ont beaucoup soufferts mais au moins ils auront la garantie que c'est fini; que cette fois c'est fini, qu'on va tourner la page et qu'ils vont pouvoir construire leur avenir d'une communit ethnique sur une base de protection donne par la communit internationale et a c'est ma dfinition de la victoire. Merci beaucoup.

Jamie Shea: Ladies and Gentlemen, we will be back tomorrow for the usual update at 3 p.m. so let me wish you a very pleasant afternoon in the meantime. Thank you!

