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I appreciate the invitation to give testimony before the Committee today and welcome your continuing interest in Balkan peace efforts. The decade-long, U.S.-led effort to achieve sustainable peace in southeastern Europe is poised for significant further progress only if the U.S. maintains its leadership role and the momentum for change this generates. Congress can help support this process.

It would be presumptuous of me to provide a report card of the Bush administration's efforts in southeastern Europe after only six months in office. So, let's be presumptuous. Pessimists—including some in the administration—critical of the U.S. investment in stabilizing southeastern Europe have been trumped by the success of Serbia's democratic forces, their decisive transfer of Slobodan Milosevic to the Hague tribunal, and the impact that the newly appointed U.S. special envoy has already had on the negotiating process in Macedonia.

You recall the effort by senior officials to insert a European area code before the 911 international emergency number. That required, however, the collective amnesia of everyone who witnessed the consequences of European failures to broker Balkan peace settlements while U.S. coaches worked their playbooks on the sidelines. European politicians and diplomats are now the first to acknowledge that the real action begins when the U.S. quarterback takes the field and starts calling the plays.

A root cause of the administration's hesitation over what to do in the Balkans has been a preoccupation with letting force levels define policy. Led by the army, the U.S. military has perceived conflict prevention, peacekeeping and even combat as threats to readiness and budget planning. This negative agenda tends to drive policymaking and deserves more skepticism than it normally receives.

The first order of business, therefore, is to congratulate the administration for a willingness to begin munching on its own words regarding the marginal significance of the Balkans to U.S. interests. They are slowly, incrementally moving beyond the goal of treating the Balkans as an arena to shift American political-military burdens to the allies.

There are two reasons for the incremental shifts in the administration's Balkan policies. First, they have found that engagement can succeed, bringing them political credit and positive media attention, while also making the overall regional mission seem that much more attainable and the burdens and sacrifices of the American people justified.

The use of assistance conditionality to leverage the arrest and extradition of Milosevic has boosted the self-confidence of those in the administration who argue that American leadership can make a vital difference in stabilizing southeastern Europe. It helped that few in Washington—apart from you in Congress who legislated this tool into existence—expected it to work, that the previous administration had resisted conditionality legislation on their watch, and that the Europeans supposedly waiting to receive the handoff from Washington opposed conditionality and predicted that U.S. risk-taking would backfire.

The departure of Milosevic with little apparent damage to the reformers who removed him makes other U.S. objectives in the region seem attainable rather than unreachable and lends the weight of conviction to U.S. policy and leadership. It also defines the two competing political visions in

Serbia and the most effective Serbian partner of the West. The non-nationalist reformers led by Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic did all the heavy lifting to arrest and then transfer Milosevic. The devoutly nationalist federal Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica revealed his lack of political integrity by publicly supporting the passage of an extradition law while privately pressuring the Constitutional Court to block Milosevic's transfer. Kostunica, with his nationalist dreams, legalisms, and Milosevic-era supporters, will remain a threat to the reform effort for the indefinite future.

If Djindjic judges it to be to his advantage in Serbia, he should be invited to Washington soon to meet the president, be treated as a reliable democratic partner, receive fresh promises of assistance, and take that walk in the Rose Garden that can enhance the aura of statesmanship of foreign leaders. I hope he would be well received in Congress as well.

Washington should listen carefully to Djindjic's views about the future of Yugoslavia. He speaks for those Serbs who see the stabilizing effects of possibly letting go of Montenegro by the end of this year. The U.S. should discard a policy inherited from the Milosevic era and adopt a neutral stance on the independence of Montenegro and the future of the Milosevic-created Yugoslav federation.

If the Milosevic breakthrough was a carrot to the administration to rethink its Balkan policies, the crisis in Macedonia has been the stick. Precipitated in February, and not anticipated by any Balkans experts, myself included, the crisis caught the administration with its disengagement showing and no basis for blaming the problem on its predecessors. As a testing ground for European leadership, moreover, four months of non-stop, European-led diplomacy resulted in the National Liberation Army (NLA) of Macedonian Albanian fighters at the gates of the capital and Macedonia's national unity government near collapse. A full-fledged civil war that might draw in neighboring states against their own better judgment and our interests seemed imminent.

What a difference an American special envoy can make. When the administration belatedly responded to the gravity of the crisis by dispatching Ambassador James Pardew, one of the most talented professionals in the State Department, to Macedonia, the diplomatic tempo changed almost overnight. Within a week a NATO-brokered ceasefire was signed by the NLA and Macedonian army and, in coordination with the European special envoy, former French defense minister Francois Leotard, a U.S.-EU comprehensive framework plan was presented to Macedonian Slav and Albanian political leaders. NATO also announced support for deploying a force into Macedonia for a limited period to receive the weapons of the NLA once a political agreement had been reached.

We should not underestimate the difficulty of the task before Pardew and Leotard. They must find a formula that preserves the integrity of the Macedonian state and the rights of its Macedonian Slav majority while ending constitutional, legal, economic and cultural discrimination against its ethnic Albanian minority, who constitute about one-third of the population. Restoring comity between the two communities will not be easy: each side is convinced that the other wants to partition the country or create a federation of two ethnic entities. The Albanians believe that only Western diplomatic intervention can salvage an agreement, placing their trust in the Americans while privately disparaging the EU as anti-Albanian. Macedonian Slavs barely tolerate the diplomats and criticize the whole concept of a diplomatically brokered agreement. The level of rage among Macedonian Slavs boiled over two weeks ago into an attack on parliament, the government and Western diplomats.

My own view is that the ethnic Albanians, publicly perceived as seeking partition and union with Kosovo, are in fact more strongly committed to the concept of a joint state than some Macedonian Slav leaders, who continue to prepare public opinion for the implications of various leaked partition maps. Perceptions will change, however, and the negotiations move into high gear only when the Albanians drop their demand for an ethnic veto. Neither Macedonian Albanians, Kosovo Serbs nor Bosnian Serbs should have an ethnic veto, which I oppose in principle anywhere in the Balkans.

But the most difficult challenge to surmount may be assuring implementation of a settlement rather than reaching agreement itself. The Macedonian Slavs may sign a brokered peace agreement and decide later how much of it they want to implement. If agreement is reached and the diplomats depart after toasting their success rather than stay to monitor the follow through, words on paper will likely not be translated into deeds in practice, the NLA will return, and conflict will ensue.

Pardew thus requires more than incremental changes in American policy. He needs active help from senior political levels of the administration, in particular the involvement of Secretary Powell as appropriate and a commitment by the administration to participate in a NATO peacekeeping force that would remain in Macedonia for an unspecified duration of time beyond the 30-day disarming period now foreseen. U.S. troops should operate beyond the logistics and support role that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld outlined Monday.

You in Congress and on the Committee, we in the NGO community, and the American people have much riding on the outcome of crisis diplomacy in Macedonia. Negotiating and implementing an agreement would establish a precedent in the region—success at preventing conflict and preserving moderate options, rather than dealing with the consequences of conflict and spending years to resuscitate the moderate political center. Every administration talks about conflict prevention, but it would be an enormous advance if the Bush administration could actually achieve it.

This still leaves us with Bosnia and Kosovo. In Kosovo, the administrations will have elected partners to work with following the November 17 parliamentary elections. Washington should deal constructively with the new Kosovo leaders as they seek to establish and expand their self-governing authority. To build on the momentum of electoral progress, Washington should announce that the U.S. will not support the return of Belgrade's authority to Kosovo, and will seek international support for conditional self-determination that links independence to establishment of genuine democracy, minority rights, and acceptance of the current border with Macedonia. Assuming that Kosovo makes progress toward meeting these conditions, the Kosovars should be able to exercise their self-determination within three more years, which would effectively mean independence.

Bosnia presents different challenges. Belgrade's courageous and principled decision to extradite Milosevic has been followed by statements from Bosnian Serb officials that it is time for them to move against Bosnian Serb indictees. The West can either treat Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and the other Bosnian Serb indictees as ripe fruit that will fall off the tree of their own accord, thereby requiring no extra effort or risk by SFOR, or help the Belgrade reformers and Bosnian Serb moderates by apprehending them. My own view is that the West should apprehend these two leading indictees—Mladic, after all, is reportedly hiding out in the American-patrolled zone of Bosnia.

The ascendancy of non-nationalist democratic forces in Serbia also means that the West can finally begin to move beyond the Dayton peace accords. Dayton ended the Bosnian conflict but produced an agreement that gave the Bosnian Serbs an ethnic veto and enabled them to act virtually as a separate entity. It is time to make Bosnia one country again, end the farce of a tripartite and dysfunctional presidency, remove ethnic vetoes, and return all refugees to their original homes should they wish to do so.

Establishment of a Bosnia whole, free and integrated into Europe on that basis will require Western steadiness of nerve and finesse. This is not the time to be cutting back on U.S. forces there. The Bosnian Serbs will have to accept that their political future lies in Bosnia, but that their cultural and commercial links to Serbia can be maintained. The Bosnian Croats will need firm oversight and management. Nationalists in Croatia lately seem determined to win back some of the political ground they have lost, and ethnic Croat nationalists on both sides of the Bosnian-Croatian border often work together to further their anti-democratic causes.

In conclusion, I suggest that the timing is right and momentum is building for major progress toward stabilizing southeastern Europe, if the Bush administration uses active engagement to prevent further conflict, lock in democratic change, and help manage the possible independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. The administration should accept that Europe is capable of acting as a somewhat more effective partner of the U.S. but lacks the capacity for taking the lead politically, militarily or diplomatically to resolve serious regional crises, nor is it in our interests to let them prove that point, as almost happened in Macedonia. Since no Balkan peace settlement has worked without the deployment of U.S. and NATO troops, Washington should apply that practice to Macedonia and stop discussing policy goals in Bosnia or Kosovo solely in terms of trimming U.S. force levels.

The ultimate success of U.S. policy in southeastern Europe will be determined by the ability of the transatlantic community to harness the two great engines of potential Balkan stability and conflict—Serbian and Albanian nationalism—to democratization and economic recovery. This will require a massive economic assistance program for Serbia implemented with some urgency, a commitment to conditional independence for Kosovo, and greater U.S. responsibility for brokering a Macedonian settlement that balances the survival of the Macedonian state with full citizenship and economic participation for its ethnic Albanian minority.