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Trends. Black, White, and Shades of Grey: A Perspective on Kosovo

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Yes. There have been brutal crackdowns by Serbian police and paramilitary forces against individuals of Albanian ethnicity in Kosovo province. And at least some of these crackdowns qualify as human rights violations. The United States Government (USG) is taking a correct stance in trying to effect multilateral initiatives to prevent or at least minimize these violations. However, USG difficulty obtaining support from leaders of the so-called Contact Group--viz., Russia, Italy, France, and Germany--that are overseeing events in the former Yugoslavia may be significantly related to behavioral analysis that suggests human rights violations and escalating violence are being effected by the Kosovo Liberation Army as well.

For example, members of the Liberation Army (1) engage in terrorism; (2) fight interspersed among women, children, and other noncombatants; and (3) directly or indirectly provoke violence against noncombatants. In addition--although not a human rights violation--the Liberation Army is receiving outside personnel, monetary, weapons, and propaganda support from sources outside the former Yugoslavia in an arms race with a government that virtually all international legal authorities recognize as sovereign. Moreover, although by no means justifying the murder of noncombatants, many of these noncombatants are force multipliers through providing material and psychological support of the Liberation Army.

All actions of the Liberation Army may be politically and morally justified in view of the decisions and actions of Slobodan Milosevic, his supporters, and even his opponents within Serbia. However, to make the case that there is a crisis between the pure and the tainted, the forces of Good and the forces of Evil misses the point. There is a sequence of political violence that threatens peace and stability of other countries as well as the rump Yugoslavia. This can best be dealt with a more realistic view of the aggressors on all sides--one that is less influenced by integrative simplicity, a split imago, or politics as usual. (See Blos, P. (1976). The split parental imago in adolescent social relations: An inquiry into group psychology. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 31, 7-33; Hedges, C. (March 25, 1998). Serbs renew crackdown on Albanian villages in Kosovo. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Suedfeld, P., & Granatstein, J.L. (1995). Leader complexity in personal and professional crises: Concurrent and retrospective information processing. *Political Psychology*, 16, 509-544.) (Keywords: Human Rights, Kosovo, Serbia, Violence, Yugoslavia.)