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Trends. Perspectives on Provocations: A Serbian Perspective

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The Yugoslav and Serbian governments have been diplomatically castigated for their military and paramilitary ventures into Albania--e.g., setting houses on fire and effecting mortar attacks. In fact, the United States (U.S.) Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, has been cited as stating that these attacks are "provocations" and that Serbian efforts to widen the conflict beyond its boundaries would not be tolerated.

Such statements may seem bizarre from a Yugoslav and Serbian perspective in which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can be seen to be widening a sovereign conflict that belongs only within Serbian borders. U.S. Apache attack helicopters are being sent to Albania, where a special base is being readied from which they will military attack targets in Serbia and, perhaps, Montenegro. Also, NATO personnel in Albania and Macedonia that are engaged in humanitarian efforts and were engaged in peacekeeping efforts can just as easily become the vanguard of a NATO ground force attack into Serbia. Moreover, military assets are being sent from many locations throughout the globe and are currently based in a number of locations for use in NATO military attacks against Yugoslav and Serbian assets in Serbia and Montenegro. Most competent military strategists and tacticians would also surmise that NATO reconnaissance and other covert and clandestine military provocations into Yugoslavia are occurring from Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, and space-based and air-based platforms. And a spokesperson for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has ventured that the Serbian attacks into Albania may have been a "retaliation for an earlier [NATO-related] incident."

Thus, it would seem that what the U.S. Secretary of State terms "provocations" would even more characterize NATO. There are some formidable strategic and moral rationales for a military intervention against Yugoslavia. These rationales are only weakened by the "Serbian provocation" gambit. (See Chermack, S.T., Berman, M., & Taylor, S. P. (1997). Effects of provocation on emotions and aggression in males. *Aggressive Behavior*, 23, 10; DePalma, A. (April 14, 1999). An hour-long attack by Serbs on a post inside Albania. *The New York Times*, p. A15; Dougherty, D.M., Cherek, D.R., & Lane, S.D. (1998). Aggressive responding in the laboratory maintained by the initiation of a provocation-free interval. *Psychological Record*, 48, 591-600; Erdley, C.A., & Asher, S.R. (1996). Children's social goals and self-efficacy perceptions as influences on their responses to ambiguous provocation. *Child Development*, 67, 1329-1344; Ruscher, J.B., O'Neal, E.C., & Hammer, E.D. (1997). The perception of an outgroup after provocation by one of its members. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 137, 5-9.) (Keywords: Albania, NATO, Provocation, Serbia.)