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BALKAN ACTION COUNCIL URGES NATO INTERVENTION, GROUND TROOPS IN KOSOVO

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WASHINGTON—The Executive Committee of the Balkan Action Council issued the following statement today calling on the Clinton administration to lead NATO military intervention, including ground troops, in Kosovo:

“Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic has massively violated a NATO agreement and committed serious atrocities in Kosovo, challenging the credibility of NATO, American leadership of the alliance and the legitimacy of the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal. The massacre of at least 45 Kosovo Albanian civilians by Serb forces, Serbia’s attempt to expel U.S. Ambassador William Walker, the head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, and Serbia’s denial of entry to Tribunal Prosecutor Louise Arbour to investigate the massacre have effectively scuttled the October agreement between Milosevic and Richard Holbrooke.

Now NATO’s credibility is on the line. Diplomatic efforts alone will only lead to more violence. Milosevic, who calculates that he can discount NATO threats and American diplomacy, has left the alliance with no option but to intervene forcefully in Kosovo and Serbia proper to prevent a resumption of full-scale conflict. We urge that the administration take the following steps to resolve the crisis:

1. Temporarily withdraw the international monitors immediately to prevent Belgrade from using them as hostages and clear the ground for NATO military intervention.
2. Use NATO air power in sustained attacks on Serbian police, paramilitary units and military forces in Kosovo to compel their withdrawal back to Serbia proper.
3. Deploy NATO ground troops and reintroduce the OSCE monitoring mission to Kosovo to forestall a return to violence.

4. Impose and enforce with NATO forces an interim settlement in Kosovo that restores the elements of pre-1989 autonomy.

(Signed) Morton Abramowitz, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Frank Carlucci, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, William H. Taft, Paul Wolfowitz”

The Balkan Action Council is a nonpartisan, independent nonprofit organization.