This chapter now turns to the second key element essential for a CNN effect—impact on government foreign policy. In the second chapter, four tests in relation to the government and its policy were introduced for validating cases of the CNN effect. This chapter focuses on the first two of these tests—the quantitative and the coding tests. The next chapter focuses on the last two tests—the policy substance and the linkage tests. This division is made because the first two tests review the 15-month period before NATO intervention in Kosovo in its entirety, while the latter two review the period over seven phases, discerning the periods before and after the events meeting the media criteria for the CNN effect. As such, this chapter is subtitled “The Macro Review,” while the next chapter is subtitled “The Micro Review.”

Before beginning the analysis, four terms need to be defined in the context of this study—“Western,” “government,” “actions,” and “attitude.” “Western” refers to the United States and the EU, with greater emphasis on the former.1 “Government” refers to the following six institutions: the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. White House, the Contact Group, NATO, and the EU Council.2 “Actions” refer to two activities: the issuance of press releases and statements by these institutions in which the majority of the content (50 percent or more) refers to the Kosovo conflict, and acts of diplomacy specifically aimed at dealing with this crisis. “Attitude” refers to how Western governments position themselves between the two sides in the Kosovo civil war, in terms of the frame adopted, the assignment of blame, and references made to the need for a military intervention as a solution to the conflict. Throughout the rest of this chapter, whenever these terms are used, they refer to the definitions outlined here.

B. Bahador, The CNN Effect in Action
© Babak Bahador, PhD 2007
The Quantitative Test

This section begins with a quantitative review of all the Kosovo-specific Western government actions, which are recorded and accumulated on a weekly basis from January 1, 1998 to March 24, 1999. These findings are first analyzed and then compared to media activity over the same period in order to answer the question “who leads whom?” Finally, government actions are distinguished between those that are diplomatic and those that are policy oriented, in order to gain additional insights into the nature of government actions over time.

Throughout the 15-month period preceding NATO intervention, many developments occurred in the Kosovo civil war. A review of all government actions over this period on a weekly basis, however, shows that only seven periods garnered a significant number of government actions, as outlined below and in graph 6.1 and table 6.1:

1. The Drenica massacre of late February and early March 1998 and its aftermath
2. NATO’s Operation Determined Falcon involving air exercises around the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in mid-June 1998
3. The third week of September, after the passage of a UN Security Council resolution and NATO activation warning
4. Beginning of October and lasting for two weeks. Based on government reactions to the Gornje Obrinje massacre and attempts to broker a cease-fire and monitoring agreement
5. Mid-January lasting for two weeks after the Racak massacre
6. Mid-February lasting for two weeks during the Rambouillet Conference
7. The week preceding the beginning of the NATO intervention involving final diplomatic efforts to avoid conflict

In relation to the media criteria outlined in the fifth chapter, three of the seven periods of heightened activity are closely linked to the incidents in Drenica, Gornje Obrinje, and Racak. In the first case, the Drenica massacre broke the uneventful months of January and February and sparked a pattern of Western activities involving three phases that would repeat after other massacres. The first phase involved shock and condemnation, as manifested through press releases and statements; the second was highlighted by the introduction of some form of imposed solution; and the third entailed a relatively quiet