The Controversial Recognition of Kosovo's Secession and the Unconvincing Rhetoric of Labelling It a "Unique" Case Have Backfired Earlier than Expected.

The Warnings

"Separatist regions like the Basque country or Abkhazia might not resemble Kosovo right now – as Washington is quick to note – but by explicitly stating the merits of Kosovar self-determination and independence, Washington is essentially creating an innovative code, only to make the cipher publicly available. Current and future separatists merely have to manufacture the same conditions and sequence that have compelled the West to embrace an independence Kosovo: terrorize locals, trigger government crackdowns, incite a rebellion and lure in foreign intervention and commitment to rebuild. Once militants get this far, Kosovo will no longer be unique – even by Washington’s peculiar standards – and areas that share Kosovo’s characteristics will be equally deserving of independence."

- David Young, Christian Science Monitor

"Whatever trickery the West uses to override UN Security Council Resolution 1244 – which kept Kosovo in Serbia – the proclamation of the new state will have incalculable long-term consequences: secession movements from Belgium to the Black Sea via Bosnia, on relations with China and Russia, and on the international system as a whole."

- John Laughland, The Guardian

"Kosovo: Coming soon to a theater near you."

- Michailis Firillas, Haaretz, Israel

"Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s claim that “Kosovo cannot be seen as a precedent for any other situation in the world today” misses the point. It is doubtful that separatists from Xepjiang to Catalonia will accept the niceties of Rice’s argument that Kosovo is exceptional due to its political and legal history. It is much more likely that these separatists will view the conflict for the precedent that it is: the carving off of a sovereign state’s territory in favor of an ethnic and religious minority threatening violence -- a model to be replicated elsewhere."

- James E. Palmer, Detroit Free Press

"The EU and the US can write in a million documents that Kosovo is a unique case, the facts on the ground worldwide will prove that mantra to be a farce."

- Vladimir Chizhov, Russian ambassador to the EU

"By recognizing the unilateral independence of Kosovo, a taboo will be broken ... All those who are favoring independence in the world will be encouraged by the fact that the only thing that remains to be done is to convince the USA and Europe that their fight is a just cause."

- Dmitri Trenin, Carnegie Foundation

"What Kosovo does is set to a precedent that suggests that in certain cases, there is a moral imperative that allows the often arbitrary lines of states to be redrawn. And this will be felt not only in Abkhazia, but in unrecognized territories and separatist movements across the world."

- Shujin Walker, The Prospect

"The Kosovo precedent is a terrifying precedent. In essence, it is breaking open the entire system of international relations that have prevailed not just for decades, but for centuries. And it will undoubtedly bring on itself an entire chain of unforeseen consequences."

- Vladimir Putin, Prime minister of Russia

"The ‘Kosovo precedent’ is a convincing confirmation that the resolution of regional conflicts is not necessarily based on the principle of state’s territorial integrity. The 17-year period of South Ossetia’s independence confirms its viability, we demands only the legitimization of our sovereignty in accordance with the charter of the United Nations."

- Resolution of the Assembly of South Ossetia

"If Kosovo can be independent, so can Abkhazia."

- Sergei Bagapsh, President of Abkhazia

"We are saying loud and clear that we have never planned to recognize Kosovo, nor do we plan to do so in the future. The solution for Kosovo was a hasty one."

- Mikhail Saakashvili, President of Georgia

The Denial

"The EU Council of ministers conclusions putting the way for the recognition of Kosovo’s secession from Serbia due to its “uniqueness”."

- The Kosovo Compromise Project - August-September 2008

"The Council reiterates the EU’s adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, inter alia the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and all UN Security Council resolutions. It underlines its conviction that in view of the conflict of the 1990s and the extended period of international administration under SCR 1244, Kosovo constitutes a sui generis case which does not call into question these principles and resolutions."

Press conference by former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke; French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and president of the Russian Duma Committee of Foreign Affairs Konstantin Kosachev on whether Kosovo is a precedent:

Holbrooke: “Russia has to adopt an identical position to the one which have the US and the EU, that Kosovo is a unique case. There is no precedent!”

Kouchner: “Holbrooke is absolutely right. We did not have a choice … when two communities cannot speak to each other, but they only speak through arms, there is no choice but to separate them!”

Kosachev: “You are absolutely wrong on Kosovo. It is a terrible precedent!”

- Shaun Walker, The Prospect

"Kosovo rid the West of time and space for maneuver and political influence in Transcaucasia."

- Regnum, Moscow

"It is impossible at the same time to recognize Kosovo’s independence from Serbia and repeat relentlessly that the territorial integrity of Georgia must be respected over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. If one does not recognize the territorial integrity of Serbia in Kosovo, he’d better keep quiet about the territorial integrity of Georgia."

- Dmitry Rogozin, Russian Ambassador to NATO

"The Kosovo case has become a nightmare. The new international law, which the West wanted to create with this case has now turned against its authors and their interests."

- Die Presse, Vienna

The Aftermath

"Who will believe appeals to respect the territorial integrity of Georgia by those who only a few weeks without any shame destroyed the territorial integrity of Serbia when they recognized Kosovo?"

- Javier Ruperez, ABC Madrid

"The recognition of Kosovo was a foolhardy, poorly thought through policy which may reverberate violently all over the world for decades. This is not to defend Russian actions in Georgia but it does show how the Americans, Brits and others want things both ways - and it also shows how the recognition of Kosovo has destroyed the hallowed concept that you don’t change borders through force."

- Tim Marshall, Sky News

"Bush administration officials repeatedly stated that Kosovo was a unique case, apparently believing that they could define what Kosovo’s independence meant to others."

- Paul J. Sanders, U.S. News and World Report

"The subjectivity of international factors in assessing the conditions on the ground, general inconsistency in respecting international law and the double-standards of the great powers were all crucial factors in the developments that led to Kosovo’s proclamation of independence. After Kosovo, we should expect other separatist movements – both outside and inside of Europe."

- Oliver Ivanov, Serbian State Secretary for Kosovo and Metohia

"Kosovo rid the West of time and space for maneuver and political influence in Transcaucasia."

- Die Presse, Vienna
**10 Key Relationships for Kosovo’s Stability**

1. **Pristina and Kosovo Serbs**
   - What’s at stake: Kosovo Serbs are resisting Pristina’s authority and are supporting Belgrade’s state institutions. Without acceptance by Kosovo Serbs, there can be no full territorial integrity or sovereignty of Pristina.
   - Expected dynamics: Pristina’s actions are likely to be too-dilute. It will reject all institutions created by Belgrade, social licensing appeal to the Kosovo Serbs (through the international presence) to get closer to Pristina in order to resolve practical problems. It will refuse to recognize Kosovo’s sovereignty, but it will not accept its parallel existence – which was the concept of “two Germanies” already proposed (and rejected) in Belgrade by the German/EU mediator in the Troika process, Wolfgang Ischinger.
   - What’s at stake: The appearance of EULEX and/or the survival of Utumevic, a former Kosovo Serb leader, are crucial for Kosovo’s stability.

2. **Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs**
   - What’s at stake: In current circumstances, Belgrade has two strategic goals: Kosovo Serbs as a loyal and vital interlocutor, and Kosovo (and Kosovo Serbs) as an instrument to pressures Belgrade through the international community (the Troika) and on Kosova Serbs to keep under control.
   - Kosovo Serbs and EU
   - What’s at stake: Within Kosovo, Pristina’s Serb citizens have already declared their independence, so Kosovo’s national issue will not be resolved. The main strategic goal of Belgrade is to keep Kosovo within its territorial integrity, while the national issue will be resolved internally, in a process of compromise with the EU.

3. **EU, UN and Kosovo**
   - What’s at stake: The EU’s perspective to keep Kosovo from being an independent state and to continue its integration process. Kosovo’s secession are encouraged by Kosovo Serbs, who support Belgrade’s state institutions created by Belgrade, which have not recognized Kosovo’s sovereignty.
   - Expected dynamic: EU’s united policy on Kosovo, the deal among the EU countries on UDI, and the recognition of Kosovo’s secession. Serbia shows that it wants to resolve Kosovo’s issue, while Brussels is likely to continue its policy of “constructive disagreement”.

4. **Serbia and Moscow**
   - What’s at stake: Serbia’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
   - Expected dynamics: Financial support and political influence of Russia, China, Brazil, and India, which have undermined the UN Security Council. They are likely to support Kosovo, while Brussels is likely to continue its policy of “constructive disagreement”.

5. **Countries which do and those which do not recognize Kosovo**
   - What’s at stake: Serbia’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
   - Expected dynamics: Financial support and political influence of Russia, China, Brazil, and India, which have undermined the UN Security Council. They are likely to support Kosovo, while Brussels is likely to continue its policy of “constructive disagreement”.

6. **Pristina and UN**
   - What’s at stake: Kosovo’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
   - Expected dynamics: Financial support and political influence of Russia, China, Brazil, and India, which have undermined the UN Security Council. They are likely to support Kosovo, while Brussels is likely to continue its policy of “constructive disagreement”.

7. **EU and UN**
   - What’s at stake: Kosovo’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
   - Expected dynamics: Financial support and political influence of Russia, China, Brazil, and India, which have undermined the UN Security Council. They are likely to support Kosovo, while Brussels is likely to continue its policy of “constructive disagreement”.

8. **Belgrade and Moscow**
   - What’s at stake: Serbia’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
   - Expected dynamics: Financial support and political influence of Russia, China, Brazil, and India, which have undermined the UN Security Council. They are likely to support Kosovo, while Brussels is likely to continue its policy of “constructive disagreement”.

9. **Kosovo’s Compromise Project**
   - What’s at stake: The implementation of the Anti-main plan, at least in the Albanian-dominated areas of Kosovo.
   - Expected dynamics: The ethnic Albanian leadership will follow Belgrade’s advice in finding the key elements of the Anti-main plan. However, a possible EU incapacity to provide a clear EU path to Kosovo due to national disagreements on recognition, as well as possible compromises between the EU and Belgrade at the situation of the Kosovo Serbs could result in the extension of its Albanian dominance. This frustration is likely to increase since the catastrophic socio-economic situation in Kosovo will not and cannot be resolved by the EU.

10. **Kosovo**
    - What’s at stake: Kosovo’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
    - Expected dynamics: Kosovo’s recognition of Kosovo’s sovereignty and its position in the Western Balkans and in Europe.
    - The Kosovo Compromise Project

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The Kosovo Compromise Project

BLURRED RESPONSIBILITIES IN KOSOVO

By attempting to bypass both international law and the United Nations, those international actors supporting Kosovo’s independence have contributed to a reconfiguration of UNMIK and the responsibilities and mandates of the international presence in Kosovo, undermining the very clarity and stability that independence was intended to bring.

Confronted to those on-going disputes, the establishment of a Kosovo Serb Assembly and the entering into force of Kosovo’s Constitution on June 15th has further clouded the notion of empirical sovereignty in Kosovo. The international community’s confidence failed to freeze and plan for such legal political and technical obstacles to consolidating peace and stability in Kosovo, making further fragmentations and mandates’ ambiguity inevitable.

The deployment of the EU’s most loaded rule of law mission has been severely delayed due to uncertainty about the legal framework. Under Ahtisaari’s plan for internationally supervised independence, UNMIK – the EU’s largest civilian crisis management mission, endorsed to train and monitor police, customs officials and judges – and the international civil-military office (ICOM), established to supervise and facilitate dialogues between Pristina and Belgrade on issues of practical concern.

While UN’s new program allows for “increased operational capabilities in the areas of international policing, justice and customs throughout Kosovo’s establishment and operation of EU-led ‘Kosovo’s’” task force is increasing its scope under Government of Kosovo’s present strength “of 16,000 peacekeepers.” It remains unclear, however, both NATO and the Kosovo Security Force will work together with the EU mission in the absence of agreed frameworks, and the international presence in Kosovo until the issue of its impending partition.

This confusion is demonstrated best in the Assembly, which will serve as a transitional body. In June, Kosovo Serbs established a parallel institution in the north of Mitrovica, composed of delegates from 20 municipalities defined on the basis of local elections held in Kosovo in 2006. The Assembly, which will serve as a mediator between Kosovo Serb municipalities and the Government of Kosovo, was, after its inaugural plenary, condemned as illegitimate by all international actors.

Until the UN Security Council decides otherwise, Resolution 1244 remains in force. Combined with weak recognition of Kosovo’s independence, especially in the Balkans – and along the Andes on the spot where corridor X north-south almost already exists – Kosovo projects for the US and EU’s most important Middle American states have only been symbolic gestures. Kosovo has none of Europe’s rich revenues in coal, zinc, lead and lignite estimated according to a World Bank report to be $13 billion. The state of Zulia in north-west Venezuela is neighboring the most important Middle American states: the maze of the Orinoco fault. The base of Arauca is situated on the border with Venezuela. Meanwhile, a number of primary importance: at the intersection of corridors and X and close to the crucial point between the Panamanian and South South Stream pipeline project and the Washington-sponsored plan for the AMRO corridor on corridor between US and Trinidad and Tobago approved the construction of an aero-road basin that would “ensure the link” on Venezuela’s international corridor which connects with the gulf of Guayaquil in Ecuador.

In southern Africa, the base which could be used in the Andes is belangervant which connects with Central Asia. In this geo-strategic context it is thus easy to understand US efforts to implant bases in Kosovo – controlling the Balkans – and along the Andes on the Kolumbo-Ecuador-Bolivia corridor.

Since 1999, the strategy of the American government has been to translate the Balkans into key elements of its policy in the Western Hemisphere, with thePanamanian and South Stream pipeline project and the Washington-sponsored plan for the AMRO corridor on corridor between US and Trinidad and Tobago approved the construction of an aero-road basin that would “ensure the link” on Venezuela’s international corridor which connects with the gulf of Guayaquil in Ecuador.

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**WHY THEY SAY “NO” TO KOSOVO’S SECESSION**

**LIST OF COUNTRIES WHICH RECOGNIZED KOSOVO**

1. Afghanistan...........Feb 08
2. Costa Rica
3. Albania
4. France
5. Turkey
6. United States of America
7. United Kingdom
8. Australia
9. Senegal
10. Latvia
11. Germany
12. Estonia
13. Italy
14. Denmark
15. Luxembourg
16. Peru
17. Belgium
18. Poland
19. Switzerland
20. Austria
21. Iceland
22. Sweden
23. Netherlands.............Mar 08
24. Iceland
25. Slovenia
26. Finland
27. Canada
28. Japan
29. China
30. Hungary
31. Croatia
32. Sweden
33. Ireland
34. Austria
35. Norway
36. Marshall Islands......Apr 08
37. Saudi Arabia
38. Burkina Faso
39. Lithuania..............May 08
40. San Marino
41. Czech Republic
42. Libya
43. Serbia/Montenegro.....Jan 08
44. Colombia..............Aug 08
45. Bolivia

**LIST OF COUNTRIES WHICH DON’T RECOGNIZE KOSOVO**

1. China
2. India
3. Sri Lanka
4. Vietnam
5. Indonesia
6. Singapore
7. Philippines
8. New Zealand
9. Ireland
10. Lebanon
11. Russia
12. Georgia
13. Armenia
14. Azerbaijan
15. Afghanistan
16. Algeria
17. Tanzania
18. Libya
19. Egypt
20. Mali
21. Ivory Coast
22. Angela
23. South Africa
24. Spain
25. Portugal
26. Slovakia
27. Portugal
28. Spain
29. Portugal
30. Spain
31. Portugal
32. Spain
33. Portugal
34. Spain
35. Portugal
36. Spain
37. Portugal
38. Spain
39. Portugal
40. Spain
41. Portugal
42. Slovakia
43. Romania
44. Greece
45. Cyprus
46. Montenegro
47. Bosnia and Herzegovina

**WHY THEY SAY “NO” TO KOSOVO’S SECESSION**

Algeria

*There are international laws and they must be respected!*

Mourad Medelci, Foreign Minister

Angola

*We express solidarity with Serbia in reaction, and opposed support for Kosovo's secession at the OIC summit.*

Celso Amorim, Foreign Minister

Argentina

*Don’t recognize Kosovo, which has declared its independence without the consent of the international community, and would set a dangerous precedent that would seriously threaten our chances of a political settlement in relation to the Balkan islands.*

Jose Tulio Ezcurra, Foreign Minister

Azerbaijan

*We recognize the independence of Kosovo only if this is supported by an agreement with Serbia.*

Leyla Aliyeva, Foreign Minister

BRK

*The unilateral move taken by Kosovo will lead to a series of consequences.*

Jorge Teixeira, Foreign Minister

China

*The unilateral move taken by Kosovo will lead to a series of consequences.*

China is deeply worried about its security and negative impact on peace and stability in the Balkans.*

Yuan Shao, Foreign Minister

Cyprus

*Greece is in favor of achieving consensus and mutually-acceptable solutions through dialogue and negotiations, unmediated by third parties.*

Mikis Theodorakis, Foreign Minister

Georgia

*“We will not recognize Kosovo’s independence. I think everyone in Georgia, regardless of political orientation, is committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be fully respected by all states.”*

Mikheil Saakashvili, President

Germany

*If we were to recognize Kosovo, which has declared its independence without the consent of the international community, we would set a dangerous precedent that would seriously threaten our chances of a political settlement in relation to the Balkan islands.*

Dietrich Stadelmann, Foreign Minister

India

*India considers Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence illegal.*

V. V. Pratap Singh, Foreign Minister

Iran

*“Kosovo is not some independent territory, it is an integral part of Serbia where Serbs, Muslims and members of the Albanian ethic minority live.”*

Velayati Ali Akbar, Foreign Minister

Iraq

*“If we were to recognize Kosovo, which has declared its independence without the consent of the international community, we would set a dangerous precedent that would seriously threaten our chances of a political settlement in relation to the Balkan islands.”*

Don Le Loung Minh, Ambassador to the UN

Israel

*“I do not exclude the possibility that Slovakia will recognize Kosovo’s independence, as it is currently discussing the issue.”*

Robert Fico, Prime Minister

Italy

*“There are international laws and they must be respected.”*

Irene Plati, Foreign Minister

Japan

*“We express solidarity with Serbia in reaction, and opposed support for Kosovo’s secession at the OIC summit.”*

Masaaki Yamazaki, Foreign Minister

Kazakhstan

*“Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence is a terrible precedent that may open a whole chain of unpredictable consequences to other regions in the world.”*

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister

Korea

*“Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence is a terrible precedent that may open a whole chain of unpredictable consequences to other regions in the world.”*

Kim Jong-Il, President

Libya

*“Libya supports the position of the UN Security Council, which has rejected Kosovo’s declaration of independence.”*

Miguel Angel Moratinos, Spanish Foreign Minister

Macedonia

*“To recognize Kosovo is in contradiction with international law and calls to continue negotiations for a proper resolution within the framework of the international law.”*

Yanez Valentin, Deputy Foreign Minister

Mexico

*“We must recognize Kosovo’s independence if Serbia does. A peaceful solution must be sought through dialogue and negotiations, under the auspices of the UN and the legal framework of the UN Security Council resolution 1244.”*

Carlos Andrade, Foreign Minister

Moldova

*“The Kosovo issue should be solved through dialogue and negotiations, under the auspices of the UN and the legal framework of the UN Security Council resolution 1244.”*

Davit Bakradze, Foreign Minister

New Zealand

*“Libya supports the position of the UN Security Council, which has rejected Kosovo’s declaration of independence.”*

Libya

*“We are deeply worried about its security and negative impact on peace and stability in the Balkans.”*

Yuan Shao, Foreign Minister

Nicaragua

*“A joint session of Parliament voted not to recognize Kosovo’s independence by 357 to 27.”*

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Netherlands

*“The Kosovo issue should be solved through dialogue and negotiations, under the auspices of the UN and the legal framework of the UN Security Council resolution 1244.”*

Davit Bakradze, Foreign Minister

North Korea

*“If we were to recognize Kosovo, which has declared its independence without the consent of the international community, we would set a dangerous precedent that would seriously threaten our chances of a political settlement in relation to the Balkan islands.”*

Dietrich Stadelmann, Foreign Minister

Norway

*“Serbia retains the right to decide on its own future.”*

Ingrid Heggelund, Foreign Minister

Pakistan

*“I do not exclude the possibility that Slovakia will recognize Kosovo’s independence, as it is currently discussing the issue.”*

Robert Fico, Prime Minister

Peru

*“We are deeply worried about its security and negative impact on peace and stability in the Balkans.”*

Yuan Shao, Foreign Minister

Philippines

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Robert Fico, Prime Minister

President of the European Commission

*“Serbia retains the right to decide on its own future.”*

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister

Romania

*“Romania will not support the position of those countries that recognize Kosovo’s independence.”*

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister

Russia

*“Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence is illegal. Kosovo is not some independent territory, it is an integral part of Serbia where Serbs, Muslims and members of the Albanian ethic minority live.”*

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister

Slovenia

*“We express solidarity with Serbia in reaction, and opposed support for Kosovo’s secession at the OIC summit.”*

Celso Amorim, Foreign Minister

South Africa

*“South Africa calls for further negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo and requests that every effort be made to reach a conflict resolution that will lead to a series of consequences.”*

Miguel Angel Moratinos, Spanish Foreign Minister

Spain

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Ivan Drulovic, Prime Minister

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United States

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United Kingdom

*“There are international laws and they must be respected!”*

Miguel Angel Moratinos, Spanish Foreign Minister

Vietnam

*“Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence is illegal. Kosovo is not some independent territory, it is an integral part of Serbia where Serbs, Muslims and members of the Albanian ethnic minority live.”*

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister

**OTHER STATEMENTS**

**TOPICS OF INTEREST**

**NEW YORK TIMES**

*“The act could set unmanageable precedents for the conduct of international relations, the established global order and sovereign rights and could undermine a grave threat to international peace and security.”*

Miguel Angel Moratinos, Spanish Foreign Minister

*“Kosovo’s declaration of independence is a terrible precedent that may open a whole chain of unpredictable consequences to other regions in the world.”*

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister
KOSOVO’S “INVISIBLE” GHETTOS

THE UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE HAS WORSENED THE ISOLATION OF THE KOSOVO SERBS. CONDEMNED TO THEIR “EN-CLAVES” SINCE 1999, THEIR FUTURE IN THE PROVINCE IS CONSIDERED WITH SERIOUS DOUBT.

The Kosovo Compromise Project

Keep an eye open, in turn if necessary, every night. Badelen Djinji, the mayor of Goraždevac, keeping telling this to his neighbors, repeating it like a mantra. “If you fall asleep, you never know whether you will wake up alive.” His custom has nothing to do with paranoia. In 2001, two kids, Fatmir Dukić and Vanjo Jov免費, were killed in broad daylight in the Bucht, a small river in which they were swimming with friends as they were used to do every summer. Since then, the 2,400 Serbs of Goraždevac have hardly once dared to leave their doors, avoiding whenever possible the terrible isolation of the Serbs in their village. Left to their own resources, the Serbs have the choice between exile and madness. On the spot, the few doctors and nurses working in the clinics of the enclave, emphasize the increase of nervous pathologies, especially among young children. Having no access to medicines, people suffering of chronic diseases or cancer cannot be treated. In the absence of antitabacs, alcohol and cigarettes are there to evacuate the souls. In Brezovica, in the halls of former ski centre hotels, now turned into a displaced persons’ home, we meet pale, hollow-faced and skinny bodies supported by crotches.

The Red Cross of Serbia is the only body bringing some relief aid here, providing soup for the poorest. Here, a humanitarian and health drama is going on right under our noses of international NGOs which do not seem to care too much for it. In April this year, when Russia sent urgent food aid in several convoys to the enclaves, some people giggled maliciously, imagining that the convoys were filled with ammunition and not rice.

And yet, the last Serbs remaining in Kosovo have not even strength enough to fight. Their ultimate fate is to be forgotten by Belgrade. The Red Cross will carry on because they think there is nothing more to lose. But the young?

Mario Bay is a French reporter.

Kosovo Serb population 1999

Kosovo Serb population 2008

APHORISMS

“A black cat crossed our way. The next day my wife...” - Radeklo Zekić

“We will not listen to the voice of reason, nor to the voice of the future. We will also vote for change.” - Alekandar Čotrić

“Every conflict can be solved in a peaceful manner.” - Medo Jovanović

“Its not true what they are saying about us. We have never been turned into a place of refuge. We have never pursued the Albanians. They are the ones who pursue us.” - Aleksandar Čotrić

“Why did you call me?...” - Aleksandar Čotrić

“We are learning from our mistakes and profiting ourselves from our catastrophe.” - Aleksandar Čotrić

“People are not women, women are not objects.” - Zdenko Đaković

“Nobody knows who finds first, but they didn’t hesitate to shoot back!” - Aleksandar Čotrić

“Everybody is yelling at us.” - Aleksandar Čotrić

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End of the document.
Neither East (N) or West

Although a dominant majority of Serbs want to join the EU, they are skeptical about NATO and they are absolutely against the independence of Kosovo. Things became even more complicated with Kosovo receiving open support not only from the USA and NATO, but also from the EU.

The Serbian general public is practically neither East – nor West. Serbia has today a new pro-EU government, a majority of its population is in favor of European integrations, but if Brussels and Washington pursue the policy of supporting Kosovo's secession and pressing Serbia into recognizing it, it should be no surprise if "Euro-skepticism" becomes a dominant feeling.

After the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000, EU membership appeared to be the majority of Serbian public as a goal without an alternative. This was due to the EU's determination to push Serbia by some European politicians in the case of the downfalls of Milosevic. No, Serbia did not opt for Europe because of money. It did so because it saw Europe as its natural surroundings, and almost all of us from the Serb intelligentsia were Westerners.

It seemed to us that, with the fall of Milosevic, the disagreements between Belgrade and the West were forever resolved. It seemed to us that a slogan "Neither East – nor West" was going to define our peace and prosperity with a head of democratic Serbia would stand shoulder to shoulder with its Western friends and we would be united in marching towards a brighter future.

But it did not turn out that way. Although Serbia extruded itself to the European Union, a majority of its people is in favor of European integrations, but if Brussels and Washington pursue the policy of supporting Kosovo's secession and pressing Serbia into recognizing it, it should be no surprise if "Euro-skepticism" becomes a dominant feeling.

The Serbian elite is not united in its view towards the EU. In Serbia's case, some of the most important countries of the EU have already recognized Kosovo's independence. The EU has no wish to expect that Serbia would not face in the nearest future a demand for "resolving negligible-risks-tunnel".

The second part of the slogan is "Euro-skepticism". It is symbolized by the opposition from the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and the Serb Radical Party (SRS). The strategic goal of this group is not to wait for a strategy in which, after years of talks with the EU, Serbia finds itself in a situation in which it must recognize the annexation of Kosovo. This group believes that Serbia must already now get a "clear answer" from Brussels about the status of Kosovo.

But the closeness of the stands arising from the Kosovo crisis and the dominating contribution of Russia in opposing the recognition of Kosovo has increased the doubts and skepticism towards the EU. The EU country insisting on a single addition to the current political and economic problems of Serbia is a lack of a clear exit condition and Serbia – if it maintains its current status as an EU candidate – might never obtain anything.

But even the overcoming of this tepidness of the EU and NATO was not enough for some huge shift and realignment of Serbian foreign policy, which never did coincide to a great extent to public mood and opinion, but it could become a trigger for general geopolitical balancing.

Why unification of this might appear, on top of being increasingly repudiated by the ever more direct pressure the West is applying on Belgrade to give up Kosovo and "turn to the future", this point about "two parallel processes" still managed to have a strong impact on the majority of the Serbian electorate – and not only as a result of aggressive marketing, but also because it reflects the real ambivalent longings of the same body of the electorate.

Finally, however, the slogan 'Neither East – nor West' for the pre-election campaign, the message will be very hard to translate into an operational foreign policy, especially in conditions of intensified political pressure from Western capitals, and it is highly likely that the Serbian political elite will as well as the electorate would in the near future again face the dilemma Kosovo or the EU – only with sharper differences.

In short, the Serbs care about Kosovo, the EU and Western foreign policy as well as its public opinion into a state of almost nightmarish chaos. Serbian officials, like most of the citizens, have declared themselves in favor of entering the EU, and at the same time, oppose the independence of Kosovo – which this EU in its maturity recognizes, supports and finances.

In short, the Serbs care about Kosovo, which they also care about the EU, and the aid the EU, aided by the USA, is in fact taking Kosovo away.

This slight eddy situation was reflected in the division "Kosovo and Europe", cast by the ruling political coalition between President Boris Tadic and used in this last electoral campaign.

It is not important either if the European Commission or all other states have a different voice. It is enough for one single EU country insisting on a single additional condition and Serbia – if it maintains its current status as an EU candidate – might never obtain anything – will never be able to join the EU.

The Serbian elite is not united in its view towards the EU in the context of the Kosovo issue. There are now two clearly discriminating groups.

The first one is in favor of Serbia's EU accession includes 35 chapters, and each of these can be blocked by one of the 27 EU members at their beginning or end. Crudely put, this amounts to 1890 possible halters of blocking one's country's accession to the EU.

It is thus of little importance if, in the near future, only Britain and France officially remove this additional condition to Serbia. It is not important either if the European Commission or all other states have a different voice. It is enough for one single EU country insisting on a single additional condition and Serbia – if it maintains its current status as an EU candidate – might never obtain anything – will never be able to join the EU.

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The main problem of this part of the elite is, however, lack of a clear exit strategy. It doesn't have a plan about what it should do if Belgrade gets a "no" answer from Brussels. What can Serbia really do if Brussels asks for a clear exit strategy? It doesn't have a plan about what it should do if Belgrade gets a "no" answer from Brussels. What can Serbia really do if Brussels asks for a clear exit strategy?
"Europe had made great mistakes in the Balkans. The question is: how is it possible that such an important principle as territorial integrity can be ignored?"
- Carlos Papoulas, President of the Republic of Greece

“We consider Kosovo as a dangerous and unfortunate precedent. Europe will pay for it for decades. It’s obvious that a whole host of other separatist regimes will exploit it to justify their own desire for legal status.”
- Dmitry Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation

“Romania supports only those tasks which are based on UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and do not in any sense imply recognition of Kosovo.”
- Traian Basescu, President of the Republic of Romania

“The question of status of Kosovo must be solved in line with the norms of international law, with the leading role of the United Nations, and based on an agreement of the sides … The unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo is against UN Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council, which, until a new decision by this organization is made - must remain the legal basis for the resolution of the Kosovo problem. Russia, India and China call for the resumption of talks between Belgrade and Pristina under the framework of international laws to seek a solution for the Serbian territory.”
- Joint statement by Russia, China and India

"I pledged that the United States will continue to work with those nations that have not recognized an independent Kosovo in order to convince them to do so as quickly as possible."
- George W. Bush, President of the United States of America

“We do not have the intention, nor will have it in a foreseeable future to recognize Kosovo.”
- Vaticyan Cardinal, Valter Casper

"The unilateral declaration of the independence of a part of the Serbian state and the recognition of that secession, are contrary to the norms and principles of international law: state sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders."
- Resolution adopted by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) in Tokyo

"And the question that we should now address to the USA and the European Union is the following: What would you say, you who have recognized the independence of a region of Serbia - a region without national flag or anthem, without historical tradition as a nation - if we, Catalonians, were to declare independence? We DO have a historical tradition, we have the oldest national anthem in Europe, we have an ancient national flag, our own language and culture. Would you support us in the same way you supported Kosovo?"
- Xavier Hereu, El Periodico

“Five months after the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo Albanians on February 17th, the situation in this former Serbian province resembles every day more to a frozen conflict, an embarrassment to the European Union which is trying to save the face of its foreign and security policy.”
- Christophe Chatelot, Le Monde

“A large number of states have not recognized it, and that means that Spain must avoid walking on razor’s edge and keep in Kosovo a mission that is contrary to the UN law.”
- Beatriz Rodriguez-Salmones, Member of Parliament, Spain

"Courts in Kosovo frequently failed to take into account ethnically motivated factors, which were the cause of many of the crimes. Suspects convicted of serious crimes, such as setting alight religious monuments or injuring people, including policemen, often received lenient sentences, many of which were suspended.”
- Report of the OSCE

"Kosovo has a problematic human rights record. Violence, impunity for common and political crimes, intimidation and discrimination are commonplace. If that is to change, Kosovo's government, with the help of the United States and its EU partners, must make human rights a top priority.”
- Human Rights Watch

"Kosovo will be largely dependent on EU aid, and in the meantime nobody knows if the new entity is really viable, or if it is going to be a ‘failed state’ whose economy will go on being largely based on corruption and organized crime.”
- Eric Bonse, Europe’s World

"Heroic represents the highest value controbang flow and, since the mid-1990s, ethnic Albanian traffickers have been said to control the trafficking of this commodity west into Europe ... Past estimates suggested that ethnic Albanian traffickers controlled 70 percent or more for the heroin entering a number of key destination markets, and they have been described as a 'threat to the EU' by the Council of Europe.”
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the report "Crime and its Impact in the Balkans"

“Even after independence, Kosovo’s status is far from being resolved, and the splits amongst its population are only likely to get wider.”
- Harry de Quettievile, The Daily Telegraph

“Another fine mess in Kosovo… For weeks it has been an uncomfortable secret in Brussels that the European Union’s law and order mission in Kosovo is stuck in a political, diplomatic and legal morass… You can safely add Kosovo to your list of long-term trouble spots on the EU’s periphery.”
- Tony Barber, The Financial Times

Welcome to Kosovosvetta ................................................................. p.1
10 Key Relationships for Kosovo’s Stability ....................................... p.2-3
UDI at IC) .................................................................................. p.3
Blurred Responsibilities in Kosovo .................................................... p.4
World Map: Why They Say No to Kosovo’s Seccession ......................... p.5
Kosovo’s Invisible Ghettos ............................................................... p.6-7
(N)either East (n)or West ............................................................... p.8-9
Kosovo and the Rise of Serbia’s Euroskepticism .............................. p.10
Kosovo Verbatim ......................................................................... p.11
Kosovo Verbatim ......................................................................... p.12

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