

Kosovo: What Solutions for Albanians in the “Cradle of the Serbian People”?

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Introduction

Kosovo's potential to create a humanitarian disaster and destabilise European security has been widely understood and recognised. However, it is not only the conflict between Kosovo Albanians and the Belgrade government which concerns international institutions and national leaders world-wide. War in Kosovo and its potential to spill over international boundaries, especially into neighbouring Macedonia which has a large Albanian minority of its own, risks the direct involvement of half a dozen states in the region, including traditionally antagonistic NATO members Greece and Turkey.

The deterioration of the situation, particularly as a result of the massive operations of Serbian security forces, waves of refugees and appearance of Albanian fighting groups clearly changed the *status quo* at Kosovo in 1998. As the spiral of conflict continues, the process of increasing international intervention also gains momentum. The crisis is thus likely to continue in 1999. This article will summarise the current situation and examine several scenarios for the future of Kosovo.

Geographical Setting

Kosovo (or Kosova in Albanian) occupies the southwestern part of Serbia which is the largest republic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Its area is 10,887km² (4,203 sq. miles). Kosovo is bordered by Macedonia on the south and Albania on the west (Figure 1). The population numbers around two million – the exact number is unknown since most of the inhabitants boycotted the 1991 census. According to the previous census held in 1981, however, the population of the province was 1,584,410. Ethnic Albanians, most of whom are Muslims, make up nine-tenths of Kosovo's population, with Serbs accounting for the remainder. In 1974 Kosovo was accorded the status of an autonomous province of Serbia.

The province is rich in mineral resources. Within the former Yugoslavia Kosovo accounted for 75% of the lead and zinc reserves, 79% of the coal, 60% of the silver, 50% of the nickel as well as significant deposits of some other minerals. The best known mine is Trepča in the north of the province (Figure 2).

Background of the Serb-Albanian conflict

In the 14th century, Kosovo (in Serbian) or Kosova (in Albanian) was the heartland of the Serbian medieval kingdom. In 1389 the Ottoman army defeated the Serbs in battle near modern Kosovo's capital, Priština. Memory of this defeat in the “*Battle of Kosovo*” has been fanatically commemorated by the Serbs ever since as a tragic and heroic event.

The ‘Kosovo myth’ has been a critical part of the Serbian collective psyche and historical consciousness. It represents a collection of quasi-historical and poetic reminiscences about the Serbian medieval state and fighting against the Ottoman Empire. The myth concerns struggle against the odds, and is rehashed every time Serbia goes to war.

The Serbian defeat in Kosova resulted in the Ottoman conquest of the entire Serbian state, which disappeared from the political map until the 19th century. When Serbia re-emerged at that time, first as a principality and later as the kingdom, it did so without control over Kosovo which remained part of the declining Ottoman Empire. The “*cradle of the Serbian people*”, as Kosovo is often referred to by the Serbs, was not re-annexed by Serbia until 1913, following the Balkan wars.

When Kosovo was ‘liberated’, the region had a predominantly Albanian population, which was mainly Muslim by religion. Ethnic Albanians were not in favour of becoming part of Serbia and the urban classes of Kosovo Albanians had given birth to the idea of Albanian independence in the 19th century. They did not welcome the territorial arrangements resulting from the Balkan wars which resulted in the division of Kosovo from the newly created Albanian state by an international border. The Albanian desire to secede from Serbia is, therefore, not an aspiration born in the context of Yugoslavia's breakdown in the early 1990s. The roots of mistrust between Serbs and Albanians run deep. Since 1913, when Kosovo was annexed by Serbia as a result of the Balkan Wars, the Albanians have desired escape from Serbian rule.

Figure 1



On the other side, the Serbs considered the Albanian majority in “*the cradle of Serbian people*” as a result of colonisation and anti-Serbian policy during Ottoman rule. In royal Yugoslavia between the two World Wars, Kosovo Albanians were constantly considered a potential threat to stability of the state. Many Albanians were imprisoned or forced to leave the province, but attempts at colonisation between the two World Wars failed to shift the ethnic balance in the Serbs’ favour. Less openly the same anti-Albanian policy was continued in Kosovo by communist Yugoslavia, especially after Yugoslav-Albanian state relations deteriorated in the late 1940s and in spite of the fact that the region had been given the administrative status of an autonomous region and then became an autonomous province in 1974. According to the 1974 Yugoslav constitution Kosovo (and the other Serbian autonomous province of Vojvodina) nominally remained part of Serbia, but enjoyed all the rights of the constituent republics but one: the right to secede from the federation.

In the period following the Second World War, population changes occurred as well. Kosovo’s Albanian population had the highest birth-rate not only within the federation but within the whole of Europe. On the other hand, the Slavic population (mainly Serbs and some Montenegrins) began to feel isolated as a result of their alienation from the Albanian majority.

From the beginning of the 1980s, the Kosovo Serb movement used a wide range of racist arguments to fuel anti-Albanian sentiment in Serbia and Yugoslavia. They developed propaganda saying that Albanians were making life difficult for the Serbs in order to drive them out from Kosovo. The President of the Serbian communist party, Slobodan Milošević, realised the power of manipulating the increasingly aggressive crowd of Kosovo Serb demonstrators. He used this to overthrow the confused leaders of Serbia, Montenegro and Vojvodina, thus destroying the delicate balance of power within the Yugoslav federation. Milošević mounted an anti-Albanian campaign. He launched direct attacks on Albanians and tried to humiliate them as much as possible. As part of this policy he politically eliminated and even arrested moderate Albanian communist leader Azem Vllasi.

Albanian demonstrations in 1989 and 1990 led to the deaths of several Serbian policeman and dozens of Albanians. Hundreds of Albanians were arrested. Belgrade deployed special police and armoured units of the Yugoslav People’s Army. Leading public enterprises, like the Albanian media and publishing houses, were forcibly taken over and Albanians were fired from their jobs. In September

1990, the Serbian parliament adopted a constitution that effectively abolished Kosovo’s autonomy. At that stage Kosovo’s conflict was, from the international perspective, overshadowed by events in other parts of the dying Yugoslav communist federation.

Segregation in Kosovo

Milošević’s aim during the first half of the 1990s was to pacify the province, while his war machine was occupied in other parts of the federation, namely in Croatia and Bosnia. In a sense he was successful, because the demonstrations ceased. Albanian politicians in the Serbian executive structures collectively resigned, proclaimed the Republic of Kosovo, and constituted their own parliament. Those events marked the beginning of what has become commonly known as the Kosovo Albanian “*parallel society*.” The Albanians did not begin building their parallel political, cultural, educational, health-care and media institutions from the very beginning. Instead, they relocated their abolished institutions to new venues. For example, school classes were brought into private homes. It was estimated that in 1995 the total number of Albanian students in parallel university was 11,000 with university staff numbering 837. In secondary school there were 4,000 teachers and 56,000 students while 14,500 teachers taught 273,000 pupils in primary school (Kostović, 1998: 21).

The organisation of a parallel Albanian society complete with its own institutions emerged as a hallmark of Kosovo Albanians’ resistance to Serbian rule. An alternative taxation system was also introduced to finance other Albanian structures. In the 1990s Kosovo experienced the situation of practical segregation between Serbs and Albanians. Paradoxically, Kosovo Albanians have never felt more oppressed by the Serbs but at the same time they have never enjoyed more freedom to run their own affairs. Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova once described the Albanian parallel system as “*internal liberation*” (Kostović, 1998: 20). Another Albanian leader, writer Shkelzen Maliqi, argued that the “*parallel structures helped contain radicalism and sustain the broad consensus in support of the Albanian policy of peaceful resistance*” (Kostović, 1998: 20). All this was possible because Serb-Albanian relations in Kosovo lack any tradition of tolerance and intermingling. The two communities have learned to live in fear, mistrust and insecurity. Inter-ethnic marriage, the usual indicator of relations between communities, has always been a rarity in the province.

The driving political force of the Kosovo Albanian independence movement was the Democratic

League of Kosovo or *Lidhje Demokratike e Kosoves* (LDK), led by Ibrahim Rugova. In September 1991, the LDK organised a referendum on independence for the “*Republic of Kosovo*” which won 90% support. General elections followed in May 1992.

Rugova articulated a strategy of non-violence for which he has been widely praised but more recently increasingly criticised. His aim was to gain the support of the West by practising moderation and patience. He also counted on the huge disproportion in birth rates between Serbs and Albanians. In the long-term perspective Belgrade was bound to lose this ‘demographic war’.

Nevertheless, many Albanians think that Rugova went too far in advocating peaceful policies and in his firm control of Kosovo’s Albanian population. He was welcomed in Western capitals but was never promised support for Kosovo’s independence. He appeared to be an acceptable partner for Milošević, too. Milošević tolerated Rugova as long as he kept Albanians quiet. On the other hand, Rugova was provided space for what he believed was adequate Albanian policy. Due to the disciplined Albanian strategy of non-violence, Kosovo stayed quiescent for the most of the nineties. In international circles it was believed that another post-Yugoslav conflict would be avoided – sooner or later Serbia must become democratised and Albanians would then be reintegrated into society. But the situation changed in early 1998, when it became obvious that significant elements of the Kosovo Albanians had altered their strategy and started to engage in anti-Serbian military activities.

The Kosovo Liberation Army

For almost a decade, Rugova has had almost complete control over all Albanian activities. Consequently, the only options available to Albanians were either to support peaceful but fruitless policy advocated by Rugova, or to reap the dubious advantages of collaborating with the Belgrade regime. The third option – military response – was long awaited and logical after a decade-long and frustrated independence struggle.

Serbs have been pretending since the end of the 1980s that the Albanians do not exist. Albanians on the other side have totally disregarded the Serbs. The bizarre situation would have continued were it not for the Kosovo Liberation Army, which believes that violence is the only response to years of Serbian terror in the province.

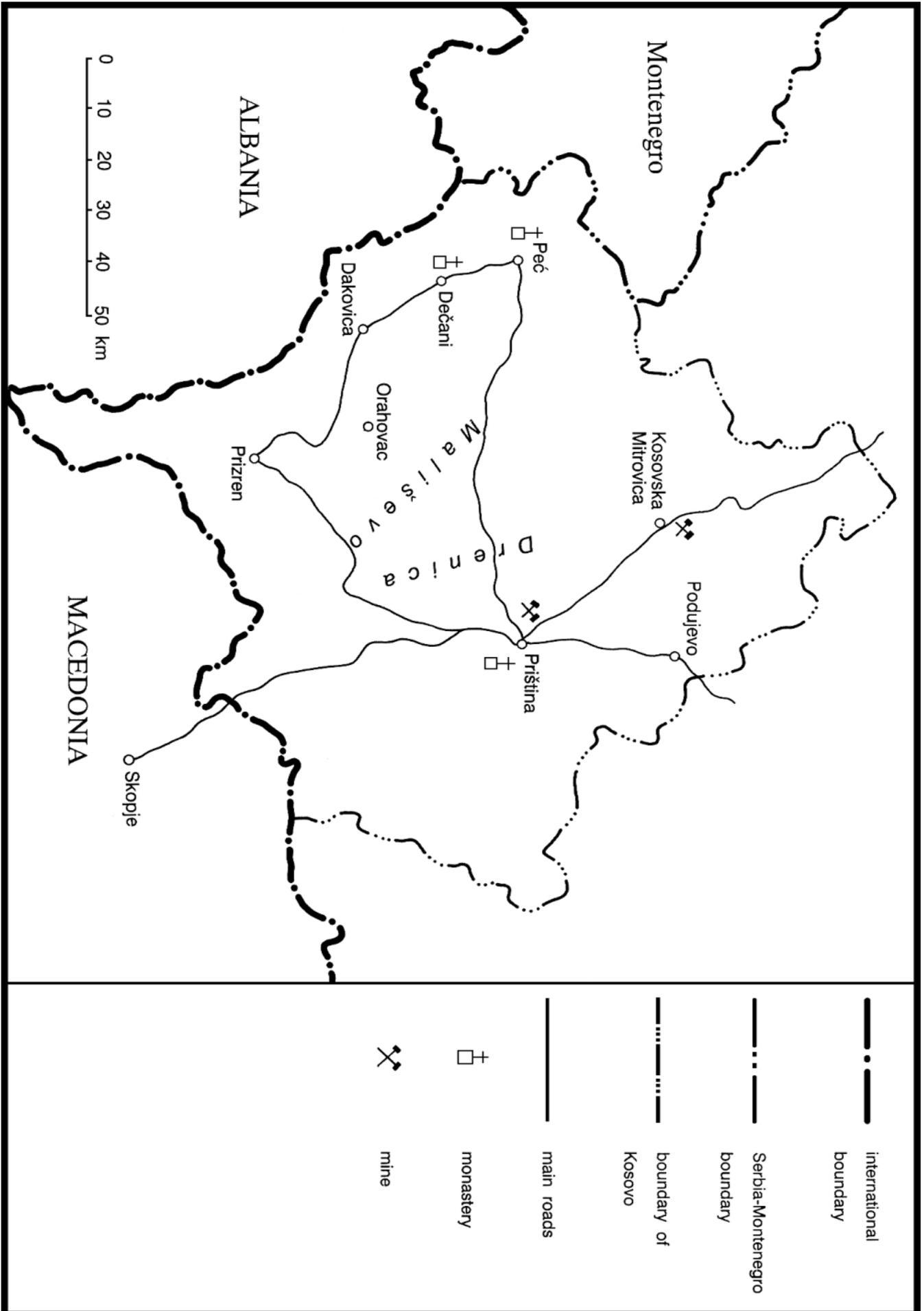
The organisation called the “*Kosovo Liberation Army*”, or *Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves* (UCK) in Albanian, was founded in 1993 with the aim of

attacking Serbian institutions in Kosovo. By late 1997, the UCK was believed to have been associated with about 40 actions, but it did not make its existence public. Finally, in November 1997, the UCK publicly confirmed the existence of an armed Albanian grouping.

Until recently little was known about the UCK’s internal structure, troop strength and their equipment. Perhaps it may be better to describe the UCK as a loose network of militias, rather than a single body with clear chains of command and subordination. There are three main groups, each one having its own separate agendas and loyalties (Kusovac, 1998b). The first group is centred on Drenica region, the first proclaimed “*free territory*.” The second group established itself around Malisevo. In military terms the most successful group so far is the one operating in the Djakovica (Gjakove) region, in the mountains along the Albanian border. This group suffered the heaviest military losses, but it forced the Serb side to involve the Yugoslav army which proclaimed a five-kilometre security strip along the border (Figure 2).

After initial successes early in 1998, the UCK experienced several serious reverses. The turning point in its fortunes was an unsuccessful attack on the town of Orahovac (Rahovec), after which Serb forces organised a counter-offensive that inflicted further serious casualties. In late July, Orahovac, a small town in the southwest of Kosovo, was briefly taken over by the UCK. Capturing the town was rather easy, but defending it proved rather more demanding. When the Serbs launched their counter-offensive, with armour and heavy artillery, the UCK fighters resisted only symbolically. Had there been less rivalry among commanders, better coordination, and more discipline, the town could perhaps have been taken and even held. Such a military success would have convinced Kosovo Albanians and the international public that the UCK was really an organised army, not just a loose coalition of fighting groups.

In the long run, the UCK cannot lose. UCK fighters can always revert to fighting if political talks come to nothing. As was expected by most analysts, the UCK renewed attacks on Serbian security forces at the very end of 1998, and showed that the cease-fire during autumn 1998 was successfully used to advance equipment and arms supply as well as to regroup and reorganise fighting units. The mountainous terrain along Kosovo’s border with



Albania and Macedonia makes it difficult for any army to stop guerrillas from crossing it. On the political field the UCK has chosen its representative. Their choice among political leaders was Rugova's rival Adem Demađi, who is known as "Kosovo's Mandela." Because of his uncompromising standpoints Demađi spent 26 years in political imprisonment.

Developments in 1998

The conflict in Kosovo escalated during 1998, into open armed confrontation. In February the area known as the Drenica (Drenice) triangle, a stronghold of the UCK, had passed out of Serbian government control. The months of March and April witnessed a worsening of the situation with violent incidents spreading to a wider geographical area. Serbian security forces answered with operations which intended to wipe out UCK-controlled areas. These entailed serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

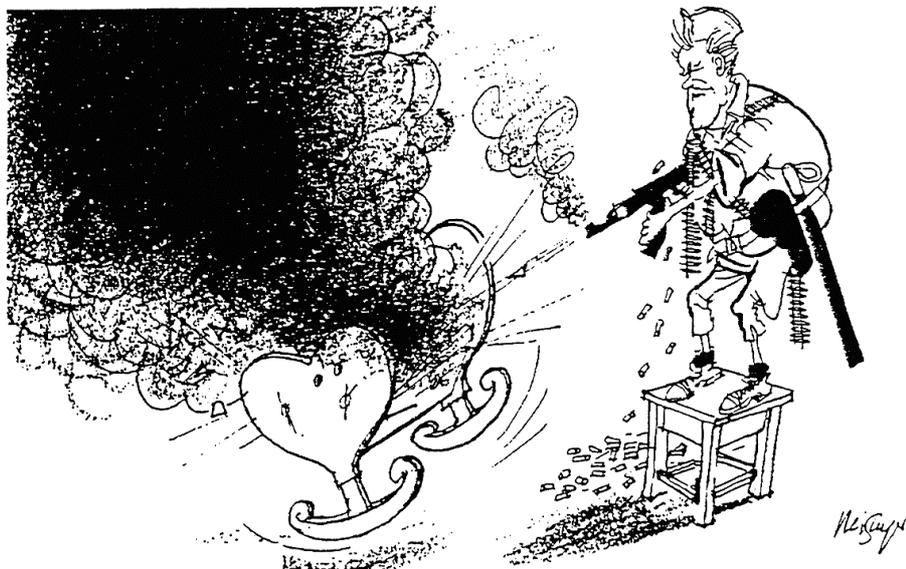
Confrontation also spread beyond the Drenica region into the Deđani (Deđan) and Djakovica areas bordering on Albania. Since then the Yugoslav military presence has increased along the border, in an effort to stem the alleged flow of weapons and "terrorists" entering from Albania. Late in May Serbian security forces launched an offensive

against these municipalities during which villages were heavily shelled. The operation caused a large refugee movement into northern Albania, but did not break the UCK activities.

In July the UCK attempted to expand its control to urban centres, while consolidating control over a number of rural areas in western and central Kosovo under their control. The UCK was encouraged by a reduction in the activities of the Serbian security forces which was the consequence of international pressure on Belgrade. But at the end of July Serbian forces launched an effective offensive, retook former UCK-controlled areas, including the town of Orahovac and the so-called liberated areas of Drenica and Mališevo (Malishevė), and regained control of the main roads, namely Priština-Peć (Peje) and Priština-Prizren (Prizren).

Serbian advances were marked by heavy destruction and massive movement of the Albanian population. In early September, following the Serbian summer offensive, and six months after the beginning of the fighting, the estimated number of dead reached 1,000 while 250,000 persons had been displaced. Serbian forces were widely criticised because of their disproportionate use of force (see Cartoon 1). They clearly targeted the civilian population and their actions were usually described as constituting 'scorched earth' tactics.

Cartoon 1



Kosovo—the cradle of the Serbian people.

Source: Reproduced by kind permission of *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, Croatia, 1/7/98.

Military defeats in more conventional clashes during summer, and the loss of control over sizeable portions of Kosovo, prompted the UCK to return to guerrilla tactics. During the autumn of 1998, military activities were replaced by diplomatic efforts. Although the results were poor, increased diplomatic activity provided a ceasefire on the ground.

International mediation

Kosovo has long been on the agenda but international institutions never went further than expressing concern and issuing statements aimed at Belgrade, while advising the ethnic Albanians to be patient. Only the brutal Serbian armed intervention in March 1998 brought Kosovo dramatically into focus. Two statements will illustrate promises given by leaders:

“We believe that in 1991 the international community stood by and watched ethnic cleansing and the dismemberment and really watched how the people of Bosnia were attacked... We don't want that to happen again this time”, the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said in March 1998 (Steele, 1998: 19); and,

“We don't want another Bosnia in Kosovo”, the US President said the following month (Steele, 1998: 18).

Yet, despite the relatively quick (verbal) response at the time, reactions have been indecisive. As a result, Yugoslav President Milošević has been left, as ever, to dictate events and create ‘new realities’ on the grounds. As in Croatia and Bosnia earlier, the destructive results are proving almost irreversible and the cost of reconstruction enormous. In a situation where the Serbs are incomparably stronger militarily, and where spiralling mistrust has left the Serbs and Albanians without the capacity to talk to each other, the great powers’ insistence on dialogue is nothing less than indirect support for the *status quo* in the troubled province.

The West called for negotiations. After Milošević rejected Europe’s preferred intermediary – Spain’s former prime minister Felipe Gonzalez – the US sent its ‘ace’ to the Balkans. Triumphant at Dayton, Richard Holbrooke shuttled between Belgrade and Pristina in April 1998 and achieved, seemingly, some results. He did persuade Ibrahim Rugova to sit down with Milošević for talks, but this did not stop Milošević from ordering what is known as the ‘Dečani offensive’ in May when the Yugoslav army attacked villages on both sides of the Peć-Djakovica

road. As a result, nearly 100,000 people became refugees, and a quarter of them fled into the mountains of Albania. Others remained within Kosovo determined not to leave their lands. At that point, the West seemed to be shocked and ready for air strikes and NATO intervention against the Serbs:

“We have set out a clear choice for President Milošević. If he chooses peace and reconciliation, then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can be accepted into the family of democratic nations of modern Europe. If he chooses repression and ethnic confrontation, then he will himself condemn his country to deepening and continuing isolation”, said British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook (Steele, 1998: 19).

However, the only thing that NATO really did was to hold air exercises over Albania and Macedonia. The excuse for inaction was found in Russia’s refusal to back and authorise the intervention.

Russia’s refusal was not the only reason, however. Among other reasons were the usual American unwillingness to send ground troops to Kosovo and the West’s refusal to commit itself to what would in reality be an alliance with the UCK. The fear in that regard is perfectly illustrated by the following comment on the part of one NATO planner that, *“We cannot become UCK’s air force”* (Steele, 1998: 21).

Following the so-called summer offensive of Serbian forces, NATO threatened Belgrade with air strikes, although no-one ever specified against which targets and with what expected results. Richard Holbrooke appeared again and brokered what is known as Holbrooke-Milošević agreement which provided for a ceasefire in Kosovo. The agreement, reached on 13 October, has been monitored by observers deployed nominally under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (see Cartoon 2). The agreement provided a necessary break in hostilities in order to ease the humanitarian situation and was also designed to offer additional time to find a durable political solution. The Serbian side tried to present this as the final solution, being not far from their initial standpoints, but in reality this stage probably merely represents the beginning of a lengthy peace process. Then in stepped Christopher Hill, US ambassador to neighbouring Macedonia, another American mediator but with a different approach and style. As a result of Hill’s quiet diplomacy, an extended version of peace plan – known as the ‘Hill plan’ – appeared.

Cartoon 2



Source: Reproduced by kind permission of *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, Croatia 4/5/98

This mid-November version of the peace plan provided for agreement on the future status of Kosovo whereby the province would be granted wide-ranging autonomy. According to the plan, Kosovo's population would elect its own legislature and president and a provincial parliament would also establish a supreme court. The province would also have its own police force, ethnically structured in accordance with a census to be held under international supervision after the signing of the agreement. Foreign affairs as well as monetary and defence policies would remain under Yugoslav government control. The Yugoslav army would still be deployed along the borders of Kosovo and would have the right to patrol a ten-kilometre-deep border area, but would not have the right to arrest anyone in the province. A modified version of the plan was announced early in December.

Both sides rejected Hill's plan. The Serbian side stated that the plan was not in accord with the Serbian proposal, while Albanian representatives found the plan far below their lowest acceptable requirements. Adem Demaqi, political representative of the UCK, warned that Albanians and the UCK would not accept "solutions that are nothing but a continuation of the slavery and that referendum is only guarantee for durable solution" (*Vjesnik*, 6/12/1998). The UCK headquarters also stated that they would not accept "solutions asking Albanians to live in an anti-Albanian and non-democratic state without future such as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." They also stated that they would continue their self-government and cooperation with international observers (*Vjesnik*, 6/12/1998).

Future Scenarios

What scenarios can be envisaged as eventual solutions for nearly two million ethnic Albanians living in the "cradle of the Serbian people"? Which is the best solution to stop terror against civilians and to ensure an acceptable political solution for the Serbs? Is it possible to reconcile full independence, which is the scenario favoured by the Albanians, and the *status quo*, which is the most suitable solution for the most of the Serbs who still insist that Kosovo is their "internal affair"?

Four scenarios for future solution are offered:

Administrative autonomy; Kosovo as an autonomous province of Serbia; the re-establishment of the 1974 constitutional status

This is not very likely, primarily because it is unacceptable to Albanians. This 'solution' is well below the aspirations and expectations of Kosovo Albanians. It also fails to match the level of solutions preferred by the international community. It is potentially acceptable only to the Serbs, especially if the level of autonomy granted to Kosovo would lack any effective significance. The Serbs are perhaps ready to grant national rights to Kosovo Albanians in the fields of education and language as well as participation in local and central government. Serbian politicians and most of the population agree that Kosovo should remain ruled exclusively from Belgrade. Albanians, on the other hand, have expressed a total and unconditional desire for autonomy which would mean complete independence from Serbia and, possibly, from Yugoslavia. At the moment, Serbian politicians can only accept a deal under which autonomy would have no real significance. Albanian leaders, on the other side, need a deal which would only abstractly keep Kosovo within Serbia and Yugoslavia. The gap between the two concepts seems irreconcilable.

Kosovo as the third federal unit within Yugoslavia, equal to Serbia and Montenegro

This is the scenario favoured by the US and NATO and it would probably gain wide international support including that of Russia. It is, however, unacceptable for local actors. The Kosovo Albanians have stated several times that nothing less than independence can meet their needs. It is possible to imagine Rugova negotiating on the above basis, but then it is hard to imagine him having all-Albanian support in doing so. The UCK have clearly rejected this solution. The Albanians have radicalised their standpoint during 1998, yet if international pressure was large enough they would probably accept federal status within Yugoslavia as a transitional solution. Belgrade opposes giving Kosovo the status of a full Yugoslav republic. If this

option were to be adopted, Kosovo would stay within Yugoslavia, but the “*cradle*” would be cut from Serbia. Montenegro is also firmly against this proposal because from their perspective it would decrease Montenegro’s status as Serbia’s sole partner within the rump-Yugoslav federation.

This scenario’s likelihood obviously depends on international mediators. They can perhaps impose this solution on both sides, but then the international community would have to be ready to support its implementation.

Independent Kosovo

This scenario is, unsurprisingly, favoured by the Albanian side. The Kosovo Albanians’ desire to break away from Serbia predates Milošević’s rule and will outlive it. No package of self-governing rights is likely to stop the Albanians from pursuing their goal by non-violent or violent means. Kosovo Albanians would probably favour independent status to the annexation of Kosovo by Albania as the differences between Kosovo, which may be regarded as more modern and open, and Albania, which suffered almost half a century of near-total isolation, are already big enough to warrant such separation. Besides, according to Kosovo’s leaders, the current socialist government in Tirana has not shown enough enthusiasm towards backing Albanians in Kosovo.

An independent Kosovo is not acceptable to the Serbs. It was in Kosovo that they provoked the beginning of the break-up of Yugoslavia. In the meantime, they have lost the bulk of former Yugoslavia. One by one the former republics gained independence because they rejected Serbian hegemony. The loss of Kosovo would therefore be considered a national catastrophe. President Milosevic, who promoted himself into a national leader on the basis of his activities in Kosovo, would finally lose his remaining credibility. This solution is perhaps acceptable for Montenegrins, but they certainly are not a decisive factor.

A subvariant of the ‘independence’ solution would be the international protection of Kosovo, although the province would nominally be within Serbia. Such a solution would probably be combined with a redrawing of Kosovo’s borders, which leads into the fourth scenario.

Partition of Kosovo; Serbia/Yugoslavia would keep part of the province and agree with independent status for the remainder

This may be an acceptable scenario to Serbs, especially if viewed as a long-term solution (resolving the ‘Albanian question’ forever). Keeping Kosovo within and under Serbia is unsustainable in the long run. Partition appears as a realistic solution for the Serbs. It would be especially acceptable if Belgrade could impose a territorial solution according to its heart’s desire. Division could be followed by an exchange of population. This would mean that almost all of the near two million strong Kosovo Albanians would be excluded from Yugoslavia.

In territorial terms, Belgrade would seek to redraw the existing provincial boundary in order to retain key areas of historical significance as well as economically important areas, such as Kosovska Mitrovica with its nearby Trepča mining area within Serbia. They would probably argue that in return for the major concession of their agreement to let the Kosovan Albanians leave Yugoslavia, they would at least have to be compensated with deciding the terms of the division. The partition of Kosovo has already been publicly discussed by the Serbian Academy of Sciences. This is very significant in the light of that institution’s pedigree as a think-tank of Serbian national and nationalistic strategy. The most extensive discourse on the partition of Kosovo available to date is Serbian scholar Branislav Krstić’s 1993 book *Kosovo between historical and ethnical right*. The book was published in Belgrade and considered three variants of division. Unsurprisingly, several Albanian intellectuals have vigorously objected to Krstić’s proposals. In order to make the discussion available to a wider audience, Albanians translated part of the discussion into English and published it in 1994 as a summary in the Albanian weekly *Koha* (The Time).

For Albanians, Kosovo is indivisible. None of their leaders are likely to accept any variant of division, especially not division dictated from Belgrade.

The international community can also hardly accept the division of Kosovo. This solution would run directly against the widely acceptable principle of stable international boundaries. Since in the case of Kosovo, division would be accompanied with massive and unjust population transfer, it seems even less acceptable.

Conclusion

After almost a decade of no contact between the conflicting sides and with at least half of the province deeply engulfed in armed confrontation, it is questionable whether a mutually acceptable solution is possible at all. In a situation such as Kosovo, it seems that the solution can be only imposed from the outside. Therefore, the peace process in 1999 can only be dictated by the serious involvement of international community.

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