INDEPENDENCE OF KOSOVO

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ABSTRACT

Our main purpose is to present the current situation and problems about Kosovo region. Those problems can cause disturbances in the region and possible influence in the world in general. Kosovo as a territory is very small and it seems very insignificant, but if you try to look at a problem of Kosovo from a brother perspective you can discover that its importance is much bigger than it looks like. Few months ago the United States of America have decided to formally recognize Kosovo as an independent state but doing that many experts will agree that international law provisions has been broken. Recognition of Kosovo has already caused new tensions in the region and even influenced on security of the world. Once again Russia and the USA have put themselves on different sides. One month after recognition of Kosovo Serbian government has fallen. Question is what will happen next?

Key words: Kosovo, War on Kosovo, Future of Kosovo

SHORT OVERVIEW ON HISTORY OF KOSOVO

History of Kosovo is full of events that affected not only Serbia but the whole region. Since 6th century Kosovo valley is populated by Slaves. In 1072 in Kosovo former Bulgarian empire was restored. It concurred this area from Byzantines in 11th and 12th century. In 13th century Kosovo became the center of Serbian Monarchy and staid under its jurisdiction until Kosovo battle in 1389 when it fell under Turkish power. Kosovo as a flag exists since 1455 as a part of Rumelija and it was reformed into vilajet in 1878. During Turkish regency Christian population was converted into Islam, relocated and generally replaced by Albanians, Turks and other Muslims.

After Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913, Kosovo and Metohia were free from Serbian armies. This area wasn’t an issue of conflict between Balkan countries (as it was a case with Macedonia). Expanding of Serbia towards south since 1870’s was coordinated and supported by Austria, to be more accurate, Austro-Hungary which held good relations with the ruling family Obranović in Serbia. Since the beginning of the 20th century and the change of the ruling dynasty in Serbia, Serbian politicians were more interested in Russia and partly France.
Austria was eager not to let Serbia get any sea area although at the end of first Albanian war, Serbian army moves its troupes in the north Albania. As a compromise between the grate powers in November 1912 independent Albania was founded (compromise between Russia and Albania), under jurisdiciion of one German nobleman (after a few rejected offered position). Needles to say, government of the new country was very weak and it was almost impossible to re-instate jurisdiciion over mountain tribal groups. After the World War 1, Albania was under a great politiciainfluence of Italy, Yugoslavia and other regional powers without a possibility of establiising its own politics. Yugoslavian government brought a bit of improvement of this region’s prosperity.

After the break of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Albania ruled almost all Kosovo and thousands of Serbs were exiled. Yugoslavian and Albanian communist resistance movements were very connected.

Albanians in Albania and in Kosovo weren’t in a mood to fight Germans. Memberships in communist party were symbolical and in 1944 there was a riot against Yugoslavian government. To calm the situation, Serbian and Yugoslavian authorities forbid the return of exiled Serbs to Kosovo and Metohia. That could have been the beginning of indulging Albanians. Yugoslavian government was in 1945 convinced that economically weak and underdeveloped Albania will soon become a part of the federation (some believe Metohia was promised to Albania if they joined in). Economical help was also provided (several rail tracks from Vojvodina were dismantled and moved to Albania as a few factories did too). But conflict with USSR stopped these activities.

Government of Yugoslavia was trying to win Albanians’ favor in Kosovo by easiing up. Since the middle 60’s process of gaining higher autonomy in Kosovo, as a part of Serbia, begins. That culminates by 1974 solution when Kosovo had the highest autonomy but under jurisdiciion of Socialist Republic of Serbia.

In the 1970’s, an Albanian nationalist movement pursued full recognition as a Republic within the Yugoslav Federation, while extreme elements aimed for full-scale independence. The ethnic balance of Kosovo tilted as the number of Albanians tripled, rising from almost 75% to over 90%, but the number of Serbs barely increased, dropping from 15% to 8% of the total population. Even though Kosovo was the least developed area of the former Yugoslavia, the living and economic prospects and freedoms were by far greater than under the totalitarian Hoxha regime in Albania.

Beginning in March 1981, Kosovar Albanian students organized protests seeking that Kosovo becomes a republic within Yugoslavia. Those protests rapidly escalated into violent riots "involving 20,000 people in six cities that were harshly contained by the Yugoslavian government. During the 1980’s, ethnic tensions continued with frequent violent outbreaks against Serbs and Yugoslavian state authorities resulting in increased emigration of Kosovo Serbs and other ethnic groups. The Yugoslavian leadership tried to suppress protests of Kosovo Serbs seeking protection from ethnic discrimination and violence.

In 1986, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) was working on a document which later will be known as the SANU Memorandum, a warning to the Serbian President and Assembly of the existing crisis and where it would lead. An unfinished edition was filtered to the press. In the essay, SANU criticized the state of Yugoslavia and made remarks that the only member state contributing at the time to the development of Kosovo and Macedonia (by then, the poorest territories of the Federation) was Serbia. According to SANU, Yugoslavia was suffering from ethnic strife and the disintegration of the Yugoslav economy into separate economic sectors and territories, which was transforming the federal state into a loose confederation. On the other hand, some believe Slobodan Milošević used the discontent reflected in the SANU memorandum for his own political goals, during his rise to power in Serbia at the time.
On June 28, 1989, Milošević delivered a speech in front of a large number of Serb citizens at the main celebration marking the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, held at Gazimestan. Many think that this speech helped Milošević consolidate his authority in Serbia.

**OCCURRENCES SINCE 1989 TILL TODAY**

In 1989 the new constitution of Serbia was passed and it reduced authority of autonomous regions. Albanian government representatives rejected to adjust to the new constitutional solution and in 1990 congregation of Kosovo was dissolved. Region starts to disunite and Serbian and Albanian community live separately. In 1991 Albanians pass a referendum for people to choose whether they want Kosovo to become a part of so-called Yugoslavian (con) federation. Great police and army forces accumulated in Kosovo and disobeying of any kind of obligations towards Serbia was tolerated (like not paying utilities, not serving a military etc.) Albanians even had their own football league.

Armed combats of reduced intensities began to form Liberation army of Kosovo (OVK / UCK) and got tensed after the fall of government in Tirana in 1997 after the break of the pyramidal banks fall out when guns from barracks were literary transported by mountain roads over the Serbian border which was really hard to supervise (the reason for this was the fact that both sides of the border were populated by Albanians).

In 1999 in Kosovo United Nations authority was established. Great number of Serbs leaves the region while the rest were concentrated in the north and in a lot of small parts throughout Kosovo. Authority was still dual. Negotiations about a future state of the region didn’t have any effect because one side (Albanian) was aware of the support for its independence project by great world powers and it didn’t want to negotiate or to find a compromise. Independence was declared on February 18th 2008. In May 2008 first local elections in Serbian districts were organized for the first time since 1996. This equalized local authorities in these districts with any other district in Serbia.
**KOSOVO ECONOMICAL SITUATION**

Kosovo has one of the most under-developed economies in Europe, with a per capita income estimated at €1,565 (2004). Despite substantial development subsidies from all Yugoslavian republics, Kosovo was the poorest province of Yugoslavia. Additionally, over the course of the 1990’s a blend of poor economic policies, international sanctions, poor external commerce and ethnic conflict severely damaged the economy. Kosovo's economy remains weak. After a jump in 2000 and 2001, growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was negative in 2002 and 2003 and is expected to be around 3 percent in 2004-2005, with domestic sources of growth unable to compensate for the declining foreign assistance. Inflation is low, while the budget posted a deficit for the first time in 2004. Kosovo has high external deficits. In 2004, the deficit of the balance of goods and services was close to 70 percent of GDP. Remittances from Kosovars living abroad accounts for an estimated 13 percent of GDP, and foreign assistance for around 34 percent of GDP.

**FUTURE OF KOSOVO**

*Future of Kosovo is more than uncertain. There are a few possible scenarios:*

**Scenario 1 (The worst scenario)**

Research and recent historic events show Kosovo can cause a new war and will always be a potential threat in the region. Radicals’ win of the elections in Serbia may be the cause of new escalations of violence in Kosovo. Serbs in Kosovo may take the matter in their own hands and, believing in the support of Serbian government, begin to cause riots which were already seen in that area in the 90’s. With Radicals on the power predictions are riots will not only burst in Kosovo but also throughout the region. USA started lots of problems by acknowledging Kosovo and being the first to make a precedent in the history of law. They made it possible for other counties and states to declare their independence. Now there’s no reason for Republic of Serbia in Bosnia to secede or for Serbs in Croatia to try to do the same (in order to please their everlasting desire to found a “Great Serbia”). This type of action in the region would cause a new war and a new crisis of great proportions. During the writing of this paper no political party in Serbia put together a government meaning this development is for now and in the near future still possible.

**Scenario 2**

There is a possibility of division of Kosovo which would cause rage of both Serbs and Albanians due to the fact that Serbs populate the north of Kosovo and the greatest sanctums are located in the south. Albanians may approve north to separate but they would demand a part of Prêsevska valley Serbs also require. Division of Kosovo could establish a temporary appeasement but no sides would be satisfied in long terms.

**Scenario 3 (The most probable scenario)**

Everything stays only at the diplomatic games level. Kosovo has been recognized by around 40 countries and it cannot become a member of United Nations (UN) or many other international organizations. Kosovo remains an “autonomous” country but it hasn’t been
acknowledged by a lot of great powers (Russia, China etc.) and it’s not that independent. Serbian diplomacy continues their grasping for the return of Kosovo and the story continues in definitely (exp. China and Taiwan). These developments are considered most realistic and this scenario is expected to overcome the others. Actually, this scenario will hopefully bring a peaceful solution and stagnation of problems with Kosovo. The fact that both sides tend to play it safe and neither one has any interest in new conflicts emerging, gives emphasis to this idea. Although Russia generally supports Serbia in its tendencies to get Kosovo back, it’s aware of the fact that new conflicts could lead it into an awkward position meaning it should get involved into a war it’s not prepared for at this point. (Example 1914)  

CONCLUSION

Once again we are witnesses of world politics being dictated by powerful empires whose only aims are exceeding their military forces and political powers. It is believed the only reason USA supported Kosovo and insisted on its acknowledgment is the fact they can now establish their military troupes in this area. From this and former moves USA made, their intentions to control world politics and make decisions about everything that goes on in the world is obvious. 

Seen without bias it is clear that Kosovo was part of Serbia for a long period of time and it is an origin of Serbs. But there was a change in composition of population due to rightful immigration of other nations. As a result of above mentioned it is considered Albanians in Kosovo may and should have autonomy of their own, but there was no reason for secession. Many believe there has been a precedent in international law and that now the same thing could happen elsewhere (Bosnia and Herzegovina-Republic of Serbia, Russia - Chechnya, Belgium - Flandreau, Spain and France - Bascia…). This development really disturbed the stability of the region and similar occurrences could disturb the whole world and the new world war would be unavoidable. 

Again it is seen how just one country, led by its own interests, could effect world decisions while the rest of the world can just watch USA rule the globe by itself and “implement democracy” wherever they wish. 

Is it even necessary to ask what will happen if Alabama, Texas or any other state did the same? There’s no need to comment that. The only reminder necessary are occurrences happened after Southern states seceded in 1861. It is interesting how there are never the same rules for anything in the world but they are created by whoever has the power.

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1 Russian empire had to support Serbia and by doing so it started WW1 and it was neither military or economically ready for it. Consequences of this war were defeat, collapse of Russian empire in 1917 and bringing communism in power of Russia.
REFERENCES:


