

Kosovo serbia and the nato intervention politics essay



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NATO appears to be in a political no-win situation in Kosovo despite the much-touted military victory. To escape that dead end, the alliance must rethink its political goals. NATO continues to insist on a settlement based on autonomy for the Albanians of the Kosovo territory inside Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. But that goal is not only unattainable, it is also undesirable. Does anyone seriously believe that the Albanian Kosovars and the Serbs can live together again after all the bloodletting that has taken place? The interethnic violence that has already occurred in the immediate postwar period confirms how unrealistic that scenario is.

Instead, NATO should pursue a settlement that partitions the province, creating an independent Republic of Kosovo state. This new state would control most of current Kosovo, while the Serbs would retain a slice of north and northwestern Kosovo. The Albanian controlled portion could remain independent or unite with Albania if it chose.

Autonomy is a dead letter because there is no way to reconcile Albanians and Serbs to living together in one country. There is nearly unanimous agreement among Kosovo's Albanians that full independence is the only acceptable outcome. Even the moderate Ibrahim Rugova, an influential Albanian leader who advocates nonviolence, says adamantly that autonomy within Serbia is not enough. (O'Neill 113-118). Serbian brutalities during the spring 1999 military offensive have only strengthened the Albanian insistence on full independence. Albanian Kosovars might be amenable to delaying a final decision on Kosovo's status for three years if, in the meantime, they receive significant autonomy and are protected from the

Serbs by a large NATO force. But when the time is up, they will insist on independence.

The Serbs have demonstrated their attitude toward cohabitation by their savage ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo. The 800, 000 Albanian refugees who fled Kosovo will hardly be satisfied to live indefinitely inside Serbia, whether Kosovo is autonomous or not, unless the United States stations sizable forces in Kosovo to police any autonomy agreement. But we cannot afford to tie our military down doing such police work. The world is full of civil wars, and the whole American military could soon be committed to peacekeeping if we made a general policy of such deployments.

One might argue that the United States could work to reconcile the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs to living together in a multiethnic democracy and thus create the right conditions for the eventual exit of American troops. But that is a pipe dream. Such wars end only with a dictatorship that restores order by military enforcement, or with partition. (Millar and Heath 101-105)

Historical background

Kosovo was settled by the Slavs in the 17th century and occupied by Bulgaria in the 9th century. By the 12th century it was dominated by Serbia. In 1389 the Turks defeated the Serbs and their Balkan allies at Kosovo Polje (central Kosovo). Even though the battle had minor strategic significance, it is romanticized in Serbian lore. At present, Kosovo remains hallowed ground for the Serbs. Paradoxically, Albanians as well revere Kosovo as the birthplace of Albanian nationalism.

From 1389 to 1913, the Ottoman Turks ruled Kosovo. In 1913 it was partitioned between Serbia and Montenegro. After WWI, it was incorporated into Yugoslavia. Following WW II, it turned into a province of Serbia in Marshal Josip Broz Tito's Communist Yugoslavia. Tito, father of the Balkan Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), fearing that a dominant Serbia would intimidate the stability of the nation, gerrymandered the Serbian Republic and created within it the noncontiguous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Though Kosovo had representation in the federal parliament and in its own assembly, the Kosovars on the other hand aspired to full republic status free from Serb oversight. (Vickers 117-122)

The case for a fully independent Kosovo, objectively, is at best moot. At 4,203 square miles, Kosovo is slightly smaller than the state of Connecticut with about half the population (1.6 million). A 1991 estimate specified that 90 percent of Kosovo's citizens were Albanian and 8 percent were Serbs. The remaining minorities were from other Balkan ethnic groups. With the Serbs' migration out of the province during the 1998-1999 war, plus the higher Albanian birthrates, the Albanian majority in Kosovo at present most likely exceeds 90 percent. Kosovo has few natural assets. Before the 1998-1999 crisis, the annual income was about one-third that of the rest of the FRY. At century's end, it was even less than that. (Rezun 52-58)

The Conflict

During the 1980s, the Albanian majority in Kosovo protested old grievances. They campaigned for status as a republic and demanded better living conditions. The minority Kosovo Serbs threatened by the increasingly hostile

attitude of the Albanians, petitioned Belgrade to dismiss Kosovo's Albanian leadership.

The chief of the Serbian Communist Party, Slobodan Milosevic, capitalized on the crisis. When called upon to subdue a mob of rioting Serbs, he instead further incited them by invoking the myth of the battle of Kosovo Polje, which centuries before had made the land Serb. He replaced senior officials in the Kosovo Communist Party and, in 1989, declared a state of emergency in the province. The subsequent rioting in Kosovo resulted in several deaths shortly thereafter. Belgrade imposed on the province a new constitution that abrogated its autonomous status.

Kosovar Serbs, living an uneasy existence as minorities in Kosovo, were at the time leaving in alarming numbers. Milosevic imposed measures to counter this exodus and to encourage Serbs to immigrate to Kosovo. From primary to university levels, school curriculums were purged of Albanian history, language, and culture. The university system was underfunded and suspected " separatist" university professors were dismissed. Belgrade also dismissed the bulk of the Albanians from the Kosovo police (MUP).

In 1990 the Albanian Kosovars responded by creating a separatist government and a constitution independent of Belgrade. In 1992 Ibrahim Rugova was elected president. A parliament (which failed to meet for fear of the Serbian police) was also elected. Belgrade, embroiled in war in Bosnia, chose to ignore these separatist initiatives and, internationally, Albania was the only state to recognize the contrived republic.

The shadow Kosovar parliament, drawing on financial support from Albanian expatriates, instituted a de facto system covering both education and health care. Notwithstanding Belgrade repressive techniques, Rugova and his party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), were dedicated to nonviolence. In fact, Rugova was criticized for his lack of aggressiveness, and many contended that had he been more forceful during the 1990s war in Bosnia, the Kosovars could have won their independence while Belgrade was distracted. Contrastingly, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), active since 1993, rejected the pacifist approach and launched a series of attacks upon the Serb-dominated Kosovo police. By 1997 the KLA was engaged in a guerrilla war against the Serbs in Kosovo. (Nardulli, Perry, Pirnie, Gordon, and McGinn 199-202)

In early 1998, the MUP mounted operations against the KLA. The attacks had little effect other than to rally the Albanian population to the guerrillas' cause and to undermine Rugova's strategy of nonviolence. The FRY army and police tactics were simple: seal off routes of egress from a town and then shell it continuously for a period of days. The double objective was to inflict casualties and to drive out the Albanians through the escape routes that were left open. Once it appeared that all residents who would evacuate had left, the Serbs would sweep the area and assemble those remaining for a processing that often resulted in torture, rape, and murder. Towns and villages were plundered, livestock killed, and homes destroyed. Once an area had been cleared, the Serb forces would move to another sector leaving a cadre behind to harass and intimidate any Kosovars who remained or returned. Many Kosovars did not return. By the fall of 1998, the United

Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that there were nearly 300, 000 Kosovar refugees. Two-thirds of those remained in Kosovo; 20, 000 had fled to enclaves in Serbia. More than 20, 000 Kosovars fled to Albania, nearly 42, 000 to Montenegro, and some 7, 000 to Bosnia. Smaller numbers fled to Turkey and Slovenia. (Taillon 210-213)

Following the failure of peace initiatives in 1998 and early 1999, and in an action designed to halt FRY actions in Kosovo, on March 24, 1999, NATO launched air strikes that lasted 78 days. Belgrade declared a state of war in Yugoslavia. On June 20, FRY forces had essentially withdrawn from Kosovo, and Operation Allied Force was declared a success and was terminated. NATO then deployed an international peacekeeping force (KFOR) to provide stability and security for all Kosovars. The following year, municipal elections were held in Kosovo in October. A month later, in November 2000, elections in the FRY installed Vojislav Kostunica as president, replacing Milosevic, and several of the economic sanctions that had been imposed upon the FRY over the past decade were lifted. (Brown 67-72)

Democratic Power Sharing after a Major Ethnic Conflict Has No Precedent

The history of Yugoslavia since 1991 shows that ethnic separation breed's peace, while failure to separate breeds war. Slovenia seceded with little violence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and has since been at peace with itself and its neighbors. The key to its peace is its homogeneity: 91 percent of the people are Slovenes; fewer than 3 percent are Serbs. Croatia fought a bloody war of secession from 1991 to 1995, which was finally resolved when Zagreb expelled most of Croatia's sizable Serb minority at gunpoint. That expulsion

set a poor example of how groups should separate, but it did bring an end to the Serb-Croat conflict. Separation did not end the deep hatred between Croats and Serbs, but it did stop the violence between them.

Bosnia saw fierce fighting among Croats, Muslims, and Serbs from 1992 to 1995, then an uneasy peace under the Dayton Accords. Dayton created a confederal Bosnia in which the three hate-filled groups were supposed to live together. Refugees were to be returned to their homes, and central Bosnian political institutions were to be built. However, Dayton has failed, quietly but quite completely. Few Bosnian refugees have returned to homes in areas where they are in the minority. Indeed, members of all three ethnic factions have left their homes since Dayton, because the boundaries it established made them minorities where they lived. (Dempsey 28-30)

Moreover, Bosnia still has no functioning central government. The Croat-Muslim Federation, which is supposed to be running half of the country, is a sham. The Bosnian Croats, who have effectively joined Croatia proper, largely refuse to cooperate with their Muslim partners. The Serbs likewise remain firmly committed to partition. Most observers agree that a savage new war would erupt if the large NATO peacekeeping force were withdrawn from Bosnia. (Lyon 17). New ethnic cleansing would be likely. Croatia and Serbia might divide Bosnia between them, suppressing the Muslims by force and leaving them stateless.

Conclusion

Now Kosovo has been consumed by a war that stems from hatreds born of the great cruelties that Albanians and Serbs inflicted on each other in the <https://assignbuster.com/kosovo-serbia-and-the-nato-intervention-politics-essay/>

past. The war could have been avoided if they had been separated by political partition at some earlier point, when Slobodan Milosevic might have been more amenable to the idea. Under what circumstances would the Serbs accept such a partition today? The NATO bombing has seemingly exacerbated rather than reduced Serbian nationalism. Although the bombing campaign eventually compelled Belgrade to accept a dictated peace settlement, there is no evidence that the Serbs have abandoned their goal of keeping Kosovo part of Serbia. (Goodwin 29). NATO can prevent a renewed attempt by Belgrade to regain control of the province only if alliance peacekeeping troops garrison Kosovo indefinitely. (Badsey and Latawski 89-95)

Annotated Bibliography

Badsey, Stephen., and Latawski, Paul. Britain, NATO, and the Lessons of the Balkan Conflicts, 1991-1999; London: Frank Cass, 2003. This book examines the broad impact of the dissolution of the former Republic of Yugoslavia, and in particular the role of NATO. It provides a survey of issues ranging from the historical roots of conflict in the region and the influence of the Second World War through to humanitarian-military relationships in the course of NATO's campaign over Kosovo.

Brown, Neville. Global Instability and Strategic Crisis; New York: Rutledge, 2004. The essence of this analysis is that, diverse though the threats to Peace and Liberty are, a triad of menace looms up very obviously. Its components are the weaponization of Space, especially in pursuance of

missile defense; ecological disruption, especially climate change; and biowarfare.

Dempsey, Gary. " Rethinking the Dayton Agreement: Bosnia Three Years Later," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 327, December 14, 1998. This article gives an overview of the Dayton Agreement's failure.

Goodwin, Jason. " Learning from the Ottomans," New York Times, June 16, 1999, p. 29. Discusses that indeed, the commander of Yugoslavia's third army, Gen. Nebojsa Pavkovic, has said that Yugoslav forces could be sent back to Kosovo " at any moment" if the UN and NATO are judged to be failing to protect the province's non-Albanian populations and secure Yugoslavia's borders. Preparations for the return of a certain number of members of the Yugoslav army and the police to Kosovo-Metohija are in full swing, adding that such a move was legitimate under the military-technical agreement with NATO commanders.

Lyon, James. " Most of Dayton Peace Accord Is Failing, Balkan Expert Says; Three Ethnic Groups in Bosnia 'Essentially Refuse to Cooperate,'" Baltimore Sun, July 23, 1999, p. 17A. In this article a policy analyst Lyon with the International Crisis Group summarize that within a year after the international community leaves Bosnia it will explode unless the international community is able to create structural reform here that is long lasting-and that will not happen under the current policy.

Millar, Dan P., and Heath, Robert L. Responding to Crisis: A Rhetorical Approach to Crisis Communication. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Associates, 2003. The book describes a rhetorical approach to crisis <https://assignbuster.com/kosovo-serbia-and-the-nato-intervention-politics-essay/>

communication. To help set the tone for that description, this chapter begins with a review of definitions of crisis, moves to offer a rhetorical definition of crisis, and then explores the intellectual, theoretical, and best practices implications of this approach to crisis planning and response.

Nardulli, Bruce R., Perry, Walter L., Pirnie, Bruce., Gordon, John., and McGinn, John G. *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo*, 1999; Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2002. Following the 1999 Kosovo conflict, the Army asked RAND Arroyo Center to prepare an authoritative and detailed account of military operations with a focus on ground operations, especially Task Force Hawk. In response, the Arroyo Center delivered a classified report for use by the Army Staff and others with an interest in the Kosovo conflict. This document is an unclassified version of that report.

O'Neill, William G. *Kosovo: An Unfinished Peace*; Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002. This text builds on the efforts of the International Peace Academy to bring serious research and policy-development writing to scholars and practitioners alike. Importantly for the UN and other international organizations, Bill O'Neill provides both useful conclusions at the end of his text and some specific recommendations for a variety of actors.

Rezun, Miron. *Europe's Nightmare: The Struggle for Kosovo*; Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001. This book gives a brief introduction of Kosovo. Slobodan Milosevic had not yet come to a showdown with the West for control of that province. With each successive conflict, it seems, the situation in the Balkans becomes more and more complicated. This is evident in *Europe's Nightmare: The Struggle for Kosovo*, which indicates how the number of players has

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increased exponentially. This book is about the pathos of war, about very lifelike-but not always sane and rational-things.

Taillon, Paul J. *The Evolution of Special Forces in Counter-Terrorism: The British and American Experiences*; Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001. This book discusses that The United States and its allies technically may have achieved a military victory against Yugoslavia, but it is an empty victory. NATO's "reward" for its triumph is to become Kosovo's guardian for years and probably decades-the most thankless and pointless mission imaginable. Instead of having one Balkan protectorate (Bosnia), the alliance now has two. Indeed, one could make the argument that NATO actually has four protectorates, given the extent of its political and military presence in Macedonia and Albania.

Vickers, Miranda. *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*; New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. This book discusses that the break-up of Yugoslavia and the collapse of communism in Albania in 1991 brought the Albanian national question and the issue of the unification of the Albanian population of the former Yugoslavia with that of Albania to the fore. This in turn could have potentially explosive consequences for the other ethnically-mixed regions of southeastern Europe.

Welsh, Jennifer M. *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. This book is the culmination of a series of seminars that were held at the University of Oxford in October-December 2001, and reflects subsequent revisions by and discussion among the contributing authors.

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