

# Kosovo, Ten Years After the NATO Bombing of Serbia, the Question: To What End?

TEN YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE US-led aerial bombardment by forces of a number of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states of Serbia on the pretext — subsequently found to have been massively flawed by deliberately contrived or faulty “intelligence” — of stopping the “oppression”, even “genocide”, of the ethnic Albanian population of the Serbian province of Kosovo.

I was in Serbia for the NATO bombings, just as I was in the former Yugoslavia frequently during the wars set in train there following the end of the Cold War.

Today, Kosovo is a name which, to most of the world, has come and gone. It is recalled as a few anguished moments of television coverage, neither ever understood nor even explained. The dust, it appears, has settled on this part of the Balkans; the turbulence, as far as a disinterested world is concerned, has subsided; the substance of the dispute forgotten, before even it was known.

But the affair leading up to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) from Serbia on February 17, 2008, is not over. It set in train a series of events which transformed the entire Black Sea/Caspian Sea energy basin and its network of energy supply from the Caucasus and Central Asia to Europe. We have yet to see the final outcome of this. It was an affair, too, which, from its earliest gestation as an overt secessionist movement in the beginning of the 1990s, highlighted inept and corrupt policy management in Serbia, the European Union, the United States, and the United Nations. It was as if no-one could understand the ramifications of their actions.

Yet it was not an unforeseeable outcome which transpired in the Balkans. To be precise, it was an outcome which this writer, and his team at the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), forecast and hammered at the rump Yugoslav Government and the Serbian leadership as early as 1992. Our statements to senior officials in the then-Yugoslav Government of Pres. Slobodan Milošević that the Serbian area of Kosovo and Metohija, the South-Western Serbian region of Raška

(Sandak), and the Preševo Valley would soon become centers of agitation for independence, and that the US would back such claims, were met in Belgrade with incredulity.

We were told that the information we conveyed could not possibly be true: these were internal Serbian areas; there was only (at that time) a smattering of anti-Government hostility by those Muslims and Albanians who had supported the Bosnian and Croatian moves for independence from Yugoslavia. And besides, why would the US Government do this? Had Serbia not always been a close ally of the US, proving its loyalty particularly in World War II?

The die, however, had been cast. The incoming US Clinton Administration of 1993 to 2001 — or, rather, US President William Clinton personally — had already thrown in its lot with the Albanian “lobby” in the US. President Clinton himself had, even in his days as Governor of Arkansas, been shown to have made questionable deals with the Albanians, a pattern which persisted for many years. Moreover, even as Governor Clinton was preparing his race for the US Presidency, the Albanian and Bosnian lobbies in the US and Europe had, with the help of billions of dollars of funds gained from narco-trafficking and other crimes, made the case in the Western media: “Serbs bad, Muslims good”.

The pattern of US support for the Kosovo Albanian separatists was not about to be changed. Furthermore, it received enormous support from other quarters, including private financiers such as George Soros, who stood to benefit financially from the independence of Kosovo from Serbia. What is of current interest is that the US Secretary of State since early 2009 is the wife and partner of former Pres. Clinton: Hillary

Clinton. It is unlikely, then, that the pattern of US support for Kosovo, and against the Serbs of Kosovo and the remaining rump of Serbia, will change.

My organization, the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), had then, and has now, no stake in the outcome of affairs in the Balkans. No Serbs serve on our staff, or our board of directors, and the Serbian Government has never contributed to the operations of ISSA or tried to influence its writings. We wrote things as we saw them, and, in the many tours of duty of Serbia and elsewhere in the Balkans by this writer and his colleagues, we saw much, and published much, doing so as even-handedly as possible. No-one, however, wanted even-handed intelligence gathering or analysis; the pressure was to conform to the mainstream media view, which was, not surprisingly, to become the mainstream political view in the West.

Our forecasting proved accurate. Kosovo was to be forcibly ripped from Serbia, although not with the global acquiescence which Washington had believed possible. The campaigns simmering outside Kosovo and Metohija, in Raška and the Preševo Valley, would move to the front burner. And the Kosovo UDI would set a precedent which would come back to haunt the United States and the European Union (EU), particularly when the Russian Federation backed the resistance by South Ossetia and Abkhazia to the military invasion against them by a US-backed Government of Georgia, in August 2008.

Russia immediately recognized the declaration of sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, citing the precedent of Kosovo's US-backed UDI, even though, in fact, South Ossetia and Abkhazia had never been integrated into Georgia, whereas Kosovo had indeed been an integrated heartland component of Serbia. The Kosovo precedent which saw the collapse of the Georgian initiative to seize South Ossetia and Abkhazia was more than mere tit-for-tat: it has totally transformed the pattern of energy trading which supports the viability of the European Union.

The failure of Georgia to prevail in its



Post-strike bomb damage assessment photograph of the Kragujevac Armor and Motor Vehicle Plant in Crvena Zastava, Serbia, used by US Joint Staff Director of Intelligence Rear Adm. Thomas R. Wilson during a press briefing in the Pentagon on April 22, 1999, on NATO Operation *Allied Force*.

war against South Ossetia and Abkhazia carried with it the failure of US influence in the Eastern Black Sea region. The first casualty was US influence in Azerbaijan, the key hub on the Western shores of the Caspian Sea for oil and gas — including transshipped oil and gas from Central Asia — through Georgia to the Black Sea and on to Western Europe.

The Government of Azerbaijan, which had relied on Western support to assist its long-sought freedom from Russian (then Soviet, then Russian again) control, was now shown to be in a vulnerable position. The US had failed to extend its writ East of the Black Sea, and Azerbaijan now had to accommodate the Russian Federation.

Azerbaijan Pres. Ilham Aliyev, immediately after the collapse of the Georgian military misadventure and after a short — and as it turned out, badly undertaken — visit to Baku by US Vice-President Richard Cheney, had to fly to Moscow and come to terms with Russia's reaffirmed regional authority. Azerbaijan would, henceforth, ship some of its energy through Russian pipelines and routes, limiting the independence which Caspian and Central Asian energy producers had hoped to achieve.

The Georgian collapse at the same time ended some of the growing centrality which Turkey was gaining in the Caspian/Black Sea basins' energy hub.

And Western Europe's dependence on Russia for energy became more complete.

This is the overriding outcome of the US support for Kosovo's independence, quite apart from the longer-term precedent it set for national sub-units in other countries seeking independence. Those who took heart from the Kosovo secession included, among others, the Turkish Government in its quest to wrench Northern Cyprus from the Republic of Cyprus; the Armenians who wished to seize control of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan; the Algerians who wished to take Moroccan Sahara from the Kingdom of Morocco; and so on.

Ultimately, it also supported the cause of the creation of a new Kurdish state out of Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and part of Syria. It gave encouragement to the cause of Quebec's separation from Canada. The list goes on.

The US State Department, locked into support for the Albanians because of the corruption linking Albanians to the Clinton leadership, has said that the case of Kosovo's independence was "*sui generis*": unique unto itself, and not a precedent for any others.

The reality, of course, was that the Kosovo affair was *sui generis* only in the minds of State Department officials, and one must wonder at what they were thinking, drinking, or smoking, to make such a statement without blushing.

THERE HAVE BEEN a number of cases of cratogenesis — the birth of nations — in the post-Cold War period: Timor Leste, Eritrea, Kosovo, Montenegro, all the former Soviet states, and so on, without counting the reassertion of independence of former colonies such as Croatia, Slovenia, and so on. The question, however, is how these fit within the original framework of the United Nations and the later, often mutually contradictory, Helsinki Accords, which talk first about the sanctity of sovereign borders and then about the rights of peoples to self-determination.

The reality is, of course, that the rigid structures proposed by the creation of the United Nations in 1945 were to freeze the global *status quo* achieved by the victorious powers of World War II. The UN, however, failed to adapt, and the constant societal evolution which had moved from tribalism through to post-Westphalian forms of sovereignty in the 20th Century, was supposed to remain frozen. The UN Charter somehow hypothesized that mankind had achieved the ultimate definition of nationhood and global governance, and would adapt no more.

The process failed to account for the reality that the global population would grow (from 2.5-billion in 1950 to 6.83-



German Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung arriving for a two-days visit to Priština, Kosovo, on February 20, 2008, the day that the German Government announced it would recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. It was Germany's earlier recognition of Croatian independence which sparked the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Balkan wars.

billion in mid-2008); that the Cold War which had its genesis in World War II would end and lead the world from bipolarism back to multipolarism. And that technology, globalization, and growing wealth would transform social patterns, expectations, and needs.

The world, nonetheless, clings only to what it knows or believes: the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and so on. Even Rome crumbled and collapsed. And yet we failed to learn from that how to manage great change. Had we learned, we would have moved from success to success; instead, as with the collapse of Rome, we face, yet again, a return to some form of Dark Age, in which we see economic collapse attend political confusion and malaise. And with that comes a decline in investment, a decline in education and healthcare, and a decline, then, in lifespan expectancy and in the quality of life.

In all this, Kosovo was an example of the indulgence of a superpower, the United States, because of massive corruption by a number of politicians in the US and in the United Nations structure. ISSA highlighted, and documented, how, for example, the key UN official involved in "managing" the Kosovo issue, was bribed by Kosovo Albanians. German intelligence officials monitored the case, amassing significant evidence of the financial corruption of the official, former Finnish Pres. Martti Ahtisaari, and the evidence was shown to other NATO member governments. Despite this, the UN's own office for investigations — which contacted ISSA for the details — refused to follow up the evidence against its own official, who was later to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

And in all of this, we have not even touched on the issue of the internal criminality of the group of Albanians who seized a section of someone else's land and turned it into a country with

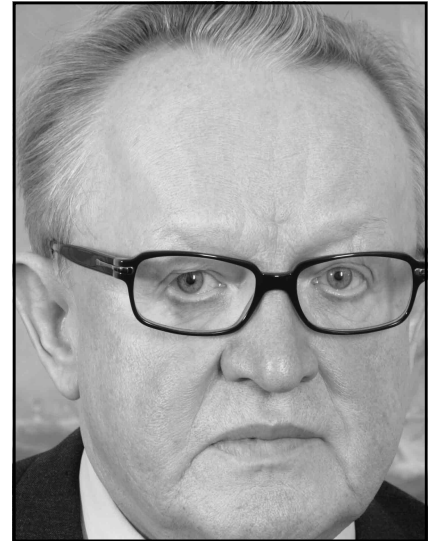
some degree of international recognition. Our organization, ISSA, documented, time and again, the extent of involvement by Kosovo Albanians — linked to the supposedly defunct (but now pervasive culture) of the UÇK, the *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*, or Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA/UÇK) — in a wide range of criminal and terrorist activity which has greatly

undermined Western Europe, and now, increasingly, Eastern Europe.

The UÇK, or KLA, by whatever name it or its sub-groups now choose to be called, have been at the forefront of narco-trafficking, white slaving, and weapons trafficking in Western Europe and, increasingly, in North America. Given the US and British governments' support for the KLA, it is difficult to get official acknowledgment of the fact that the KLA is at the heart of much of the violent crime in Europe today, as well as in the US, let alone to get acknowledgment of the fact that the KLA provided, or facilitated, much of the explosives, training, and matériel used by Islamist terrorists in Spain, Britain, Morocco, and elsewhere. European and other governments do acknowledge, however, that the "Albanian mafia" has grown to dominate organized crime, without questioning where it gets its safe-havens, its narcotics, or its human flesh for trafficking.

**T**HE WORK OF ISSA's investigators on the ground in the Balkans has resulted in massive files of data, much of which formed the basis of intelligence estimates for a number of governments who subscribe to ISSA's Global Information System (GIS) or its unclassified journals, such as *Defense & Foreign Affairs* publications.

Friends and contacts died in the collection of the data, and yet it is now difficult to name one politician, or one newspaper editor, who would, when faced with incontrovertible evidence, change his mind and now refute the superficial and inaccurate reporting undertaken on the Balkans. Others, complicit in the transformation of values which the Kosovo case represented (along with the companion usurpation



UN-appointed representative in Kosovo, former Finnish Pres. Martti Ahtisaari: The UN failed to properly investigate extensive allegations of financial irregularity which allegedly paved the way for Kosovo's to unilaterally declare its independence. Ahtisaari was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

of justice in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere in the Balkans), merely shrug their shoulders: what can we do?

I will not here recite all of the evidence we brought to deaf ears and blind eyes through the 1990s and beyond. Neither will I cite all the instances in which my colleagues and I witnessed the smugness and corruption inside Serbia and outside it which caused the collapse of values and integrity of NATO, and the end of the moral supremacy of the West. That does not imply that those who opposed the West, or NATO, gained in moral stature in this whole affair. They did not, but they profited greatly by the decline of the West's supposed commitment to high values, and to its allies.

We have all been demeaned by the corruption which has touched our systems. We have been brought into contact, and, indeed, into partnership, with the callous depravity of those who traffic in narcotics, human beings, and the corruption of hierarchies which have taken centuries to build. We have allowed this because we would not read history, and because we valued immediate gratification beyond wisdom.

We have all become aged and tired by this hypocrisy, to the point where we have lost the moral authority to demand that the youth of today — those among the four-billion extra humans who have appeared on the planet since 1950 — learn from history and build upon the structures we had been handed by our own ancestors.

With Kosovo, the modern world, East and West, abandoned virtue. ★