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Serbia and Pre-independent Kosovo: A Look Back into 2008

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Serbia and Pre-independent Kosovo: A Look Back into 2008

*The story about Kosovo being a part of Serbia is a completely insane, weak-minded and paranoid piece of fiction.*¹

Miloš Vasić, journalist

A geographic area located in the southern part of Serbia, bordering with Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, Kosovo has been a center of conflict for a long time. Recent events have put it into the spotlight, but we can go at least a couple of decades back in time and see the roots of the current conflict. I shall give only a brief summary.

After World War II, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was ruled by a *locksmith*, Josip Broz Tito, who began establishing his power even during the war. After the war's end, his Communist Party got control over Yugoslavia². The country was split into 6 socialist states (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia). Yet the crucial move was the establishing of the 1974 Constitution. By the Constitution, Tito had split only Serbia into *provinces*, giving the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo the same powers as that of a federal state. It made decision making in Serbia very difficult, because two parts (Kosovo and Vojvodina) became as influential as the whole, with powers on the federal level. With Slobodan Milošević's coming to power in the late eighties and the rise of nationalistic thought, the powers that Kosovo had on a federal level were to be revoked. This was not seen well by the Kosovo population, the majority of which is Albanian, and so a group of Albanian miners went to strike and started protesting against the losing of federal power. Milošević used the situation to his advantage and with the help of the media represented himself as the protector of Kosovo Serbs. He gave strong impetus to Serbian nationalism while Albanian nationalism was growing in Kosovo already on its own. It was not long before both sides started arming themselves. Milošević sent various paramilitary formations to ethnically cleanse Kosovo from Albanians, while the Albanian side formed the Kosovo Liberation Army (*Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*), a terrorist group dedicated to, in turn, ethnically cleanse Kosovo from Serbs. The conflict was gradually developing until it was finally noticed by the international community, the most notable intervention of which was NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999³.

Kosovo has during the years become a mythical land for most of the Serbs (see: Mythologization and the kingdom of Heaven). Indoctrinated by false history that was introduced by nationalists, a great deal of Serbs now consider Kosovo to be the 'heart of Serbia', even though over 90% of the Kosovo

population is Albanian⁴, not to mention that the province is located on the very periphery of Serbia itself, not possessing any major resources whatsoever. Some eight hundred years ago, the part of Serbia now known as Kosovo was the center of the Raška Monarchy, the kingdom that later developed into Serbia, slowly moving its borders to the north under Turkish rule. There are also a number of monasteries and churches important to the religious part of the citizens of Serbia (we need to have in mind that a vast majority of them are Christian orthodox) located in present-day Kosovo, and that represent one other reason why Serbs are not willing to cede Kosovo to the Albanians, who are mostly Muslim.⁵

The special envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the future status process for Kosovo and the former president of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, proposed a well-detailed plan for Kosovo's gaining of independence, but was strongly opposed by Belgrade. This is of small wonder in lights of Ahtisaari's placing the blame for everything that has happened during the wars on the Balkans solely onto Serbs as a nation (see: Further sources of distrust). Thierry de Montbrial, the director of the French Institute for Foreign Relations, stresses the fine diplomatic approach that needs to take place instead, with a positive overall tone:

If everybody invests some effort towards finding the solution, and if the final plan is presented in a way that is acceptable for the Serbs, and if Serbia should be given a great reward at the same time, I think that the independence of Kosovo would be more or less accepted in Serbia. Naturally, the big prize would be Serbia's joining the European Union.⁶

From a completely different point of view, one of the recommendations to the Council of Ministers of the European Union by the European Parliament was that the '(...) integration of Serbia into the European Union and the final status of Kosovo are separate questions, which should be dealt with separately' and [the Parliament] warned that 'every attempt to connect those two is counterproductive'.⁷

The biggest opponent of the independence of Kosovo on the world stage is Russia, which has good diplomatic relations with Serbia and its nationalist core, holding the power of veto in the United Nations Security Council. Dominic Moisi, Deputy Director of the French Institute for International Relations and professor at the College of Europe in Natolin, Warsaw, asks whether Russia is 'going in the wrong direction' concerning the Kosovo issue, trying only to prove that it is still a force to be reckoned with:

Russia will make a veto in the United Nations Security Council about the plan of Martti Ahtisaari, which proposes a controlled independence for the Serbian province of Kosovo, announced the deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Vladimir Titov.⁸

Serbia officially counts Russia as an ally on this matter as Russia seems to be 'taking side' with Serbia, at least from the point of view of Europe. How much that actually helps the situation is highly debatable. Official Russia is actually taking side not with Serbia, but with the Serb nationalist core, as the insistence on Serbia not letting Kosovo go is only denying the country a European future. As already mentioned, it had been members of the Radical Party and of the New Serbia party that held pictures of Putin when obstructing the promotion of *Pešćanik*.

Numerous officials, groups, *troikas* and various delegates and ambassadors from the countries of the European Union have been active in trying to help the Kosovo problem during 2007, yet it seems that there is no progress at all, as the Serbian government officially rejects any idea that even remotely mentions a type of, smaller or greater, overseen or not, independence for Kosovo. The only propositions by the Serbian government were not very well defined ideas of semi-controlled independence 'based on the Hong Kong model' or the 'Åland Islands model', but the idea was rejected. The only political party in Serbia not lobbying for the keeping of Kosovo is the Liberal-democratic Party, while the others only celebrate any unsuccessful attempt of the international community to give Kosovo any type of independence.

The already mentioned intensive repeating of the collocation 'sovereignty and territorial integrity' whenever possible, from the side of Serb politicians, in the case of Kosovo reaches new levels. The Serbian Ambassador in the United States, Ivan Vujačić, has in the Wall Street Journal on one occasion stated that Serbia wants 'its *sovereignty and territorial integrity* respected' on the issue of Kosovo.⁹ The Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vuk Jeremić, claims that if some states should officially support Kosovo's independence, 'Serbia would have no choice than to re-evaluate its relations with all who would endanger our [Serbia's] *sovereignty and territorial integrity*'.¹⁰ The President of Serbia, together with the Prime Minister, has stated that Marti Ahtisaari's proposal for Kosovo's independence is 'unacceptable because it violates *territorial integrity and sovereignty* of Serbia'.¹¹ The Prime Minister's advisor in 2005, Aleksandar Simić, noted that the Prime Minister should insist on 'the obligation of the Security Council to respect *territorial integrity and sovereignty* of Serbia', on the same topic of Kosovo. In the article from the newspaper *Danas*, 'Serbia ready for new negotiations', dated July 24th 2007, the proposition for a resolution about 'a fair solution of the question of Kosovo' was printed, in which '*sovereignty and territorial integrity*' was mentioned three times in an unchanged form. The listing can go on; this is but a short selection. As Jelena Milić of the Forum for International Relations noticed, '[t]he right to sovereignty have those states who respect human rights and the rule of law'.¹²

This situation essentially reminds on the pre-bombing circumstances in Yugoslavia in 1999. The international community and NATO were threatening

Milošević by bombing if he should not comply. Nobody actually expected of Milošević to have complete disregard for the lives of Yugoslavia's citizens; nobody expected him *not to yield* under the threat of bombing.¹³ Thus the bombing began and still, Milošević was expected to realize that the country was being devastated and to yield only after a couple of days. His complete disregard to do anything on that matter was soon clear and the country continued to suffer the bombing for almost three months. What is highly similar with the present day Kosovo situation is the following. It seems that the international community is trying to nudge Serb officials into accepting Kosovo's independence by actively pushing in that direction. All the innuendos and the implicative moments of this persistence should serve as a prod in the desired direction for the Serbian government. I do not think that the government even realizes it is being 'nudged', or if it realizes, it does not care; the complete affair is becoming, so to say, ridiculous. An article from France24, dated October 14th 2007, describes the situation rather well:

Serb and Kosovo Albanian officials failed to break the deadlock over the future of the breakaway Serb province on Sunday but agreed to meet again in a week for new negotiations. Neither side budged from their original positions ahead of a Dec. 10 cut-off point for the talks, after which the Kosovo Albanians have threatened to declare independence anyway. 'The Serbian side once again presented their views of a substantial autonomy ... Of course, the Kosovo side rejected entirely the Serbian position', Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu told a news conference after four hours of talks in Brussels. Serbian Minister for Kosovo Metohija Slobodan Samardžić told reporters: 'We did not approximate our positions. We stay where we stand'.¹⁴

The officials 'failed to break the deadlock', as 'neither side budged'. As Ljubiša Rajić of the Belgrade Faculty of Philology noted, '[i]nstead of focusing on important things, we are beating around the bush about whether Kosovo should be like this or like that'.¹⁵ The Radical Party is the first one to openly and with all force possible attack any option that is even close to a sort of independence for Kosovo (see: Political parties in Serbia). Aleksandar Vučić, a high-ranking member of the Radical Party explains his views:

The journalists, analysts and critics who earn their daily bread by praising the European Union, NATO and the sundry Atlantic integrations started a hysterical campaign against everybody who, shame on them, think Kosovo is more important than the Atlantic and to whom Serbia, for Heavens sake, is not Serbia without Leposavić, Gračanica and Peć. The insolence and disregard of those who earn their bread by working for various Atlantic, government and, un particular, non-government organizations is so great that they no longer feel ashamed of making publicly known their belief that the loss of a part of the territory is unavoidable, or that this does not really matter any more as all of us will live long and rich lives in the to us all so dear European Union and our armies, the Serbian and that of the Shiptars,¹⁶

will fight, side by side, heroically, under the fold of NATO, against the ragtag criminals who, screw them, happen to have oil and gas on their territory, and what good are they to them when we, Shiptars and Americans, do not have them. This campaign of unbridled Atlantic breadwinners would have been dangerous and sad had it not been, above everything, funny. Namely, should any elementary school graduate perform a cursory analysis of Tadić's and, say, Šutnovac's statements, on the manner of use our army, he would easily, with no hesitation, arrive at the conclusion that we do not really need the army save for their engagement in firefighting activities. After all, we do not even need the state. All this will be supplied by the big European brother watching over us attentively, taking a bit of our territory away, killing some of our children, but at the end, he embraces us and tells us, unequivocally, that he loves us deeply and cannot live without us. Of course, we must not even think that, while killing our children and taking away pieces of our territory, they had something bad for us in their minds. Heaven forbid! All this is all for our good, for the good of our Atlantic and other integrations.¹⁷

Going back to the problem of ambivalence, we may notice a rather similar situation here. The Serbian government claims often that joining the European Union is one of its prime directives; even the official website of the Government states the same. All the government officials claim regularly that joining the Union is their desired course of action, yet nothing tangible is being done. There is no impulse from the Serbian side of the negotiations, as the Serbian government is simply only rejecting ideas coming from European officials. Similar to the general opinion of the public in which it is clear that the majority nowadays really wishes to join, there is no will to cooperate or to actually change anything in order for that goal to be achieved. The Prime Minister, Koštunica, on the eve of the hundredth day of the forming of the 2007 Government, stated:

We have prevented the Security Council of the United Nations to acknowledge Kosovo as independent and we have managed to permanently, not only for now, remove the danger that the Security Council should ever reach a decision about ripping off a part of our territory. It is a success that we achieved together with the Russian Federation, as we have together succeeded in starting a new negotiation process which Marti Ahtisaari is no longer a part of.¹⁸

Koštunica then continued, mentioning – as one might have guessed – *territorial integrity and sovereignty* of the Republic of Serbia, and that the most important achievement of the new Government is that they have not let Kosovo go. Thus, the ‘most important’ is not raising the quality of life or improving the educational system – it is keeping a minor province where almost no Serbs dwell a part of Serbia.

While the Serbian government is strictly opposing any ideas about Kosovo other than simply not acting at all, Timothy Garton Ash, the Oxford historian, stated a lucid fact, one that everybody tends to forget even though it

might be the single most important one, one that I would like to emphasize as much as possible:

For Kosovo, the objective is not the establishment of a nation, not even of a state, but the *establishing of an EU member state. The same goes for Serbia*. This means that the European leaders must have a vision and courage to say that they are for further enlargement as this is the only thing that will ensure a peaceful and stable Balkan region and, with this, make the whole of Europe stable and free.¹⁹

Nicholas Sarkozy, the president of France, has stated a similar idea, invoking responsibility from all sides (including Europeans), addressing Serbs, Kosovars, Russians and Americans, emphasizing that the countries of the Balkans have a European future ahead of them:

(...) who should understand that this difficult issue is first of all to be solved by Europe, (...) [and Europeans] have to be united because it is the countries of the EU those who have take care of the basic obligations, and according to that, the costs as well, because the future of the Balkan region in the long run is in the EU.²⁰

The obstinate conduct of the Serbian government in its relation to the Kosovo issue goes so deep that the very Constitution of the Republic of Serbia has been tailored so that Kosovo is protected on all levels, which is my next topic. Yet, in order to fully explain the problem of Kosovo, one has to understand the extreme mythologization that has taken place in order to make Kosovo as 'important' as it is.

Another fact that may need further emphasis is realizing that reaching an 'agreement' on the Kosovo issue is most probably impossible. This, yet, depends on how one defines 'agreement'. It is often said, in layman circles, that an agreement between two opposing sides is the solution which none of the sides is satisfied with, and I am afraid that may well be the case of Kosovo. The Serbian government is too obstinate to allow Kosovo independence, while the Kosovo Albanians do not wish for anything *but* independence. Some solution will surely be found, that is, Kosovo will either gain independence, controlled semi-independence or none at all; none of the sides will be satisfied, no matter what the result. One should not confuse a *solution* with an *agreement*. As the Slovenian historian Božo Repe, specializing in the history of the countries of former Yugoslavia, states, 'Kosovo is an unsolvable problem'.²¹

The constitution and the ideological power of Kosovo

I would like to point out the amount of the damage such a constitution might cause to Serbia in the European Union²².

Aleksandar Molnar, professor of sociology of law
at the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy

The newest Constitution of the Republic of Serbia introduces even more problems to the integration process. Vladimir Todorić, an expert on the law of the European Union, explains that ‘the Constitution, as an incoherent ideological muddle, based on political give and take, reflects [Serbia’s] relations with the European union’.²³ The Constitution was made under the direct influence of the Kosovo problem and reflects the current nationalistic attitude of the government. The very preamble of the Constitution states that Kosovo is a part of Serbia, sending a clear message to the European community that is posed on giving Kosovo independence:

Considering the state tradition of the Serbian people and equality of all citizens and ethnic communities in Serbia, Considering also that the *Province of Kosovo and Metohija* is an integral part of the territory of Serbia, that it has the status of a substantial autonomy within the sovereign state of Serbia and that from such status of the *Province of Kosovo and Metohija* follow constitutional obligations of all state bodies to uphold and protect the state interests of Serbia in *Kosovo and Metohija* in all internal and foreign political relations, the citizens of Serbia adopt the CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA.²⁴

Petar Luković, one of Serbia’s most prominent liberal journalists, vents his steam by asking why the very preamble of the Constitution states

(...) in 56 places, that Kosovo is a part of Serbia? What’s the point of that addition – including Kosovo and Metohija? What if some snafu were to happen in Sandžak, or what if the people of Pirot started protesting, if they started burning tires in the tire factory – what is the president going to swear upon the next time? Will he say – including Pirot and the tire factory? Where is the whole in that, a part can’t be bigger than the whole.²⁵

The situation nowadays reminds easily of the times of the 1974 Constitution, when Kosovo gained powers on the federal level, making a part as powerful as the whole. Nowadays, Kosovo has got the same power, so to say,

but on an *ideological* level. Vera Marković from the Socio-democratic Union expresses her worries about the influence such a constitution might exert on Serbia itself, saying that '[t]his Constitution makes it impossible for us to join the European Union, because it says that international agreements are recognized only if they are not in collision with our Constitution'.²⁶

The Constitution, as such, gives the Serbian government full discretion to act however it chooses, should Kosovo become 'threatened'. In practical terms, this gives the Serbian government official permission and obligation to use force should anything happen on Kosovo to help its separation. Vesna Pešić states her worries: 'I look at it very dramatically, as the consequences of such a passing of the Constitution are unclear, and they can lead us to new wars'.²⁷ The government considers the 'loss of Kosovo' as 'trading with provinces', as Božidar Đelić, the Vice-president of the Government of Serbia, said:

'Serbia does not trade with Kosovo and Metohija and will never accept the independence of its province' said yesterday in Moscow the Vice-President of the Government of Serbia, Božidar Đelić. At the press conference following the meeting with the key people in the Russian Administration charged with cooperation with Serbia – Sergei Shoigu and Georgi Poltavchenko – he pointed out that Serbia appreciates very much the principled policy of Russia and the insistence on a compromise solution for Kosovo and Metohija in accordance with the international law. 'Thanks to, primarily, the stand of the Russian Federation, we have real negotiations' said Đelić and added that the compromise between Belgrade and Priština was the only possible and desirable solution and it inaugurates a period of peace not only in the Balkans but also in the whole of Europe. The greatest risk, however, is the possible application of double standards by some countries, warned Đelić. 'It is necessary to stimulate both parties and it is not advisable to determine the outcome in advance and promise one of the parties that it will, no matter what happens at the negotiations, achieve its goals' said the Vice-President of the Government of Serbia.²⁸

The Prime Minister Koštunica claimed that, if any state should acknowledge a separate Kosovo after a possible 'group of separatists' decided to proclaim Kosovo autonomous, it would be considered as 'damage', and that damage has to be 'paid back':

If someone makes damage, considering the circumstances, you have to respond by inflicting the same amount of damage. Thus, you are protecting your own *integrity* and something that is the dignity of the state and its every citizen.²⁹

It is precisely that kind of political instability and infantile 'if you punch me I will punch you' reasoning that the European Union cannot allow itself (see: A comparison). A good representation of the Kosovo situation is given in

the paradoxical headline of an article from the *Danas* newspaper – ‘We are not letting Kosovo go, but it will be independent’.³⁰

The British paper *Guardian* explained how, by proclaiming Kosovo as an instance around which main national instances lie, in ‘such a scary manner so well known from the time of Milošević,’ Serbia literally ‘stuck a finger into the eye of the world’.³¹

In November 2007, a group by the name of Active Center (*Aktivni centar*) started a campaign in Serbia by the name of ‘Solidarity and responsibility – Kosovo is Serbia’ (*Solidarnost i odgovornost – Kosovo je Srbija*). The vice president of this group, Petar Petković, explained how

Kosovo and Metohia represent a territory that is the embodiment of our identity: spiritual, cultural, religious and national. The question of Kosovo is a national question that concerns all of us and our futures, because the society that is not interested in its state will not be able to face other problems that pressure us.³²

At this point, one should be reminded of the fact that almost no Serbs live in Kosovo (less than 10% of the population), as well as that it is a minor province, located on the southernmost part of the country. The problem with this particular group (though it is not militant in nature, but civil), is that it gathers a huge number of well-known celebrities to support the cause that carries Serbia further away from the Union.

What needs further emphasis is the fact that as the time goes by, it seems that the European Union is slowly lowering its criteria as regards Serbia’s integration. The delivering of the Hague inductees and the solving of the Kosovo problem have been made the most important issues if Serbia was to join the Union. Nowadays, both of those criteria are being reevaluated, even though Karla del Ponte stays adamant in her insistence for the delivering of the Hague inductees. The question remains – are those criteria going to stay or not. Lotte Leicht, the EU advocate of the Human Rights Watch, stated:

‘Commissioner Rehn is rewarding Serbia even as it harbors a general accused of genocide’, said Lotte Leicht, EU advocate at Human Rights Watch. ‘This sends the message that the EU is prepared to let those who commit horrific crimes wait out justice and ignores the victims of horrific atrocities committed in the heart of Europe’.(...) ‘The EU should not offer the prospect of membership to a state that is violating the Genocide Convention’, said Leicht. ‘EU member states should not sign the stabilization agreement until Mladić is where he belongs: in The Hague answering for his crimes’.³³

Kosovo's independence. The 'heart' of Serbia and the 2008 elections.

On February 17, 2008, Kosovo proclaimed independence, throwing Serbia into a state of utter chaos.

A new state emerged from the long and bloody unraveling of Yugoslavia when the Serbian province of Kosovo declared independence on Sunday. Its ethnic Albanian leaders promised to embrace Kosovo's embittered Serb minority and forge a multiethnic, democratic nation. 'From today onwards, Kosovo is proud, independent and free', Prime Minister Hashim Thaci said in an address to parliament. The move was immediately condemned by Serbia and its ally Russia. But the United States is expected to quickly recognize the new state, as is most of the European Union, in return for an agreement by Kosovo's leaders to submit to European Union supervision. Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said his country, which regards Kosovo as the cradle of its civilization and home to some of its most treasured Orthodox churches and monasteries, would never recognize the unilateral declaration. 'For as long as the Serbian nation exists, Kosovo will remain Serbia', Kostunica said in a nationally televised address from Belgrade, Serbia's capital. 'We do not recognize the forced creation of a state within our territory'.³⁴

The quote above explains the situation in which Serbia found itself quite well. Happy countenances of thousands and thousands of people from Kosovo could be seen on almost every major television throughout the world. Those countenances, however, were completely ignored by the official Serbia, as the nationalist started to represent Kosovo as the 'heart of Serbia', and those European countries that have recognized Kosovo's independence started to be represented as embodiments of utter evil, as they 'did not respect Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity' (again). A strong campaign by the name 'Kosovo is Serbia' was thus started, that led the country into political turmoil. Russia did not make its promised veto.

Organized mostly by the members of the Serbian Democratic Party and the Serbian Radical Party, a huge meeting was held in front of the Parliament in Belgrade, after which violence and vandalism occurred. Rioters went on a violence spree throughout the city, demolishing windows where they saw fit, but concentrating primarily on the embassies of those countries that have recognized Kosovo's independence. While the Prime Minister Koštunica judged the meeting as 'fantastic',³⁵ while there was information that the police was ordered not to interfere:

Politicians are responsible for the riots in Belgrade. The most responsible person is the Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, who took the role of the Minister of police as well, since Dragan Jočić is in the hospital. A safety plan for the protest should have been made as it was possible to predict what was

going to happen. The consequences are obvious – Belgrade has been demolished again, and the police showed up only after two hours (...).³⁶

The independence made a huge gap between opposing political forces in Serbia. The Serbian Democratic Party, led by Koštunica, formed a coalition with New Serbia (a smaller party led by Velimir Ilić) and took an even more nationalistic stance, reminding very much on Nikolić's. The relations between The Democratic Party of Serbia and the Democratic Party took a severe downturn, as the Democratic Party (led by Tadić), continued insisting on Serbia's joining the Union, while Koštunica applied a new type of rhetorics.

Koštunica's rhetorics, from that point on, consisted of a thesis-switching in which he tried to represent the European Union as an entity that has collectively acknowledged Kosovo's independence, even though it has not. The Union even cannot accept (or not accept) a newly emerged country, as such decisions can only be made by individual countries. Still, Koštunica's prime tactics continued to be the same.

Kosovo still remains a hot issue, used mostly by populist demagogues in public speeches and for forming popular public policies.

REFERENCES

1 'Ta potpuno ludačka, slaboumna i paranoidna fikcija o tome da je Kosovo deo Srbije (...)' *Ibid.*

2 Tito organized so-called 'democratic' elections right after the war. Should one ask older people in the countries of former Yugoslavia, they would most probably recall how democratic these elections actually were. The referendum was about whether the country should stay a monarchy or should it introduce the new, Communist government. Two boxes were posted on election places, one for the monarchy and one for Communism. The 'red' one was the first one in line. Every voter received a small ball which can fit into the palm without being seen if it still remained there after being dropped into one of the boxes. The voters should then take the ball and place the hand first into the communist box and then into the monarchy box. Supposedly, no one should know whether somebody put his ball into the one or the other box, yet if you chose not to put the ball into the Communist box, everybody present could hear that the ball was not bouncing inside the first box, so it would be clear he was not voting for the Communists. What's more, after putting your hand into the Communist box, a member of the Communist Party would come to shake your hand – your right hand, where the ball had been. Those who did not want to shake hands – having voted for the monarchy – were abused and maltreated afterwards; many of them had had their carriers destroyed or their lives taken.

3 See the BBC video 'Death of Yugoslavia'.

4 The Albanians are considered to be one of the oldest people in Europe by some historians. In his History of the world, written in the 2nd century of the Old Age, Polybius mentions a city by the name of Arbon, located in present day Albania. They are considered to be the ancestors of the Ilyrian tribes that have lived there before the coming of the Germanic, Slavic, Hungarian and Ottoman peoples to Europe. Pliny mentions an Ilyrian tribe with the name of Olbonensis in 1st century n.a, which reimburses that statement. Furthermore, Ptolemy, an astronomer/geographer from Alexandria draws a map of that day's Ilyria, with the city of Albanopolis. He also mentions the tribe Albanoi, who lived there. The Albanians, as they are today, are first mentioned in the form of Arbanitai or Arbanon by Anna Comnena in the 11th century. The Byzantine historian Michael Attaliates mentions an Albanian uprising in Constantinople in 1043 in his History, written in 1079-1080. It is also mentioned that in Dubrovnik (Ragusa), present day Croatia, a rather large community of Albanians have also lived, as stated by a certain Matthew, describing a happening that included some Albanians: '*Audivi unam vocem clamantem in monte in lingua albanesca*' (I heard a voice crying in the mountains in the Albanian language). Apart of the most tangible theory, namely, the theory of Illyrian ancestry, two other theories have been debated – the possibility of Dacian and Thracian ancestry. I shall not go deeper into this as it is a topic of a broader debate. What's more, the most probable answer to the question of Albanian ancestry is the same as that of any other ethnical group – mixed ethnical origin. As Vladimir Georgiev says, 'Daco-Mysians, Thracians, Greeks, pre-Greeks, Macedonians, Phrygians and Illyrians formed, therefore, the main substratum that underlies the Balkan peoples of today.' (V. Georgiev, *The Slavonic and East European Review* 44, no. 103, 1960, pp. 285-297)

5 An Albanian minority with orthodox religion also exists. Those people are known by the name of *Goranci*, but they are not influential as their numbers are minimal.

6 'Ako svi ulože napor da iznađu rešenja, i ako finalni plan izlože na način prihvatljiv za Srbe, i ako u isto vreme daju Srbiji veliku nagradu, mislim da bi nezavisnost Kosova bila manje-više prihvaćena u Srbiji. Naravno, velika nagrada je ulazak Srbije u EU' in: *Danas*, <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

7 Brisel - Evropski parlament ocenio je da su 'integracija Srbije u Evropsku uniju i konačni status Kosova odvojena pitanja na kojima se mora raditi pojedinačno' i upozorio da je

'kontraproduktivan svaki pokušaj da se to povezuje'. Danas 26 June 2007, <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

8 'Русия ще наложи вето в Съвета за сигурност върху плана на Марти Ахтисаари, който предвижда контролирана независимост на сръбската провинция Косово, обяви вчера зам. външният министър на Русия Владимир Титов. From: Dnevnik <http://www.dnevnik.bg/show/?storyid=334110>.

9 Politika 29 August 07 at <http://www.politika.co.yu>.

10 Danas 29 August 07 at <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

11 Danas 12 March 07 at <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

12 'Dakle, pravo na suverenitet imaju države koje poštuju ljudska prava i vladavinu prava.' In: Lukić, Svetlana and Vuković, Svetlana, ed: Pešćanik FM, book 1-7, Elvod print.

13 The scholar Branimir Anzulović, on the issue of the NATO bombing, explains that '[t]here was a lot of ignorance in the West among politicians and specialists about the area. Therefore, everybody is, to some degree, responsible for the tragedy in the Balkans.' From: The Lapis magazine at <http://www.lapismagazine.org/archives/L09/anzulovic-interview.html>

14 France24 international news channel at <http://www.france24.com>.

15 'Umesto da se usredsredimo na važne stvari, mi mlatimo praznu slamu o tome da li će Kosovo biti ovakvo ili onakvo.' In: Lukić, Svetlana and Vuković, Svetlana, ed: Pešćanik FM, book 1-7, Elvod print.

16 Calling the Albanians 'Shiptars' is the standard way of showing disrespect towards this ethnical group in Serbia.

17 'Новинари, аналитичари, критичари и остали, који свој хлеб зарађују хвалећи Европску унију, НАТО и свакојаке атлантске интеграције, кренули су у хистеричну кампању против свих којима је, срам их било, Косово важније од Атлантика, а Србија им, забога, и није Србија без Лепосавића, Грачанице и Пећи. Безобразлук и безобзирност ухлебљених у разне атлантске, владине, а посебно невладине организације, иде толико далеко да се више и не стиде да јавно саопште свој став о неминовности губитка дела територије, али нам то и није важно пошто ћемо, сви заједно, да живимо богато и дуговечно у свима нам драгој Европској унији, а наше армије, српска и шиптарска, бориће се, раме уз раме, јуначки, под окриљем НАТО, против белосветских зликоваца који, мајку им њихову, имају нафту или природни гас на својој територији, а шта ће то њима, кад ми, Шиптари и Американци, то немамо на нашој. Та кампања разударених атлантских ухлебљеника била би опасна и жалосна да, више од свега, није смешна. Наиме, ако било који свршени основац само површно анализира изјаве Тадића и, рецимо, Шутановца, о начину употребе наше војске, јасно ће и без икаквог двоумљења доћи до закључка да нам Војска, сем за протипожарне интервенције, није ни потребна. Уосталом, ни држава нам више није важна. Све то замениће нам велики европски брат који нас помно гледа, мало нам отима територију, мало нам убија децу, али нас на крају, ипак, загрли и недвосмислено саопшти како нас много воли и како не може без нас. Ми, разуме се, не смемо ни да помислимо како су, убијајући нам децу и отимајући нам територију, нешто лоше желели да нам учине. Таман посла. То је све у нашу корист, наших атлантских и иних интеграција.' From Politika, 11 September 2007 at <http://www.politika.co.yu>.

18 'Sprečili smo da Savet bezbednosti UN usvoji novu rezoluciju koja bi omogućila priznanje nezavisnog Kosova i uspeli smo da trajno, a ne samo trenutno, otklonimo opasnost da SB bilo kada donese odluku o otkidanju dela naše teritorije. To je uspeh koji smo postigli zajedno sa Ruskom Federacijom, kao što smo zajedno uspeli i da pokrenemo nov pregovarački proces u kojem Marti Ahtisari više ne učestvuje (...)' from: Danas 31 August 2007 at <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

19 'Cilj za Kosovo nije izgradnja nacije, niti čak izgradnja države, već izgradnja države-članice EU. Isto važi i za Srbiju. To znači da evropski lideri moraju da imaju viziju i hrabrost i da kažu da žele dalje proširenje, bog toga što će jedino to obezbediti miran i stabilan Balkan, a time i celu Evropu učiniti stabilnom i slobodnom.' From: Danas, 19 February 2007, at <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

20 '(...) koji treba da схвате да је ово тешко питање пре свега у надлежности ЕУ, (...) као и Европљанима који морају да буду јединствени зато што су земље ЕУ те које морају да снесу основне обавезе, па према томе и трошкове – и зато што је будућност балканског простора на дуже стазе у ЕУ.' In: Politika, 28 August 2007 at <http://www.politika.co.yu>.

21 Danas, 3 November 2007 at <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

22 'Samo bih napomenuo koliku štetu ovakav ustav može imati za Srbiju u Evropskoj uniji.' In: Lukić, Svetlana and Vuković, Svetlana, ed: Peščanik FM, book 1-7, Elvod print.

23 'Ustav kao nekoherentna ideološka mutljavina zasnovana na političkoj trgovini odražava i naše odnose sa Evropskom unijom.' *Ibid*.

24 'Полазећи од државне традиције српског народа и равноправности свих грађана и етничких заједница у Србији, полазећи и од тога да је Покрајина Косово и Метохија саставни део територије Србије, да има положај суштинске аутономије у оквиру суверене државе Србије и да из таквог положаја Покрајине Косово и Метохија следе уставне обавезе свих државних органа да заступају и штите државне интересе Србије на Косову и Метохији у свим унутрашњим и спољњим политичким односима, грађани Србије доносе Устав Републике Србије,' from: Ustav Republike Srbije (The Consitution of the Republic of Serbia), 2007, official translation, with errors in English, taken from the website of the Serbian government (www.srbia.sr.gov.yu). My italics.

25 '(...) на 56 места стоји да је Косово део Србије? Чему служи тај додаток – укључујући и Косово и Метохију? Шта ако се у Сандžаку desi neka pizdarija, ili se pobuni narod Pirotа, počne да pali gume u fabrici guma – на шта će да се zakune predsednik sledećeg puta? Hoće li reći – укључујући и Pirot и фабрику guma? Pa ge je tu ta celina, ne može deo да bude veći od celine.' In: Lukić, Svetlana and Vuković, Svetlana, ed: Peščanik FM, book 1-7, Elvod print.

26 'Ovim ustavom je onemogućeno да uđemo u Evropsku uniju, jer u njemu стоји да се прихватају међународни уговори, ukoliko nisu у koliziji са našim ustavom.' *Ibid*.

27 'Ја на то гледам веома драматично, jer су posledice ovakvog donošenja ustava nejasne, mogu нас довести до novih ratova.' *Ibid*.

28 'Србија не тргује Косовом и Метохијом и никада неће прихватити независност своје покрајине, изјавио је јуче у Москви потпредседник Владе Србије Божидар Ђелић. Он је на конференцији за новинаре, после сусрета са кључним људима у руској администрацији за сарадњу са Србијом – Сергејом Шојгуом и Георгијем Полтавченком – истакао да Србија изузетно цени принципијелну позицију Русије и залагање за компромисно решење за статус Косова и Метохије која уважава међународно право. „Захваљујући превасходно позицији Руске Федерације имамо реалне преговоре”, рекао је Ђелић и додао да је компромис између Београда и Приштине могућ и једини пожељан и да он отвара период мира не само на Балкану, него и у целој Европи. Највећи ризик, међутим, представља могућа примена двоструких стандарда неких земаља, упозорио је Ђелић. Потребно је подстицати обе стране и није целисходно унапред одређивати исход и обећати једној страни да ће она, ма шта се деси на преговорима, достићи своје циљеве, истакао је потпредседник српске владе.' From Politika, 20 September 2007 at <http://www.politika.co.yu>.

29 'Ако вам неко нанесе штету, с обзиром на околности, ви му морате узвратити одређеном штетом. На тај начин чувате сопствени интегритет и нешто што је достојанство државе и сваког грађанина,' from: Politika, 31 August 2007 at <http://www.politika.co.yu>.

30 Danas, 3 November 2007 at <http://www.danas.co.yu>.

31 'Proglašavajući Kosovo i Republiku Srpsku glavnim nacionalnim interesima u, kako ocenjuje Gardijan, "zastrašujućem maniru tako poznatom iz vremena Slobodana Miloševića", Srbija je bukvalno "zabila prst u oko" svetu.' Found at: B92 online at http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2007&mm=11&dd=13&nav_id=271974.

32 Politika 11 November 2007 at <http://www.politika.co.yu>.

33 The Human Rights Watch at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/11/06/serbia17261.htm>.

34 'Independence is proclaimed by Kosovo', The Washington Post at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/17/AR2008021700176.html>

35 'Tadić sazvaó Savet za nacionalnu bezbednost', Danas 23 feb

36 Beograd - Za nemire u Beogradu odgovorni su političari. Najodgovorniji je premijer Vojislav Koštunica, koji je preuzeo i ulogu ministra policije, od kada je Dragan Jočić u bolnici. Za protest je trebalo da bude urađen bezbednosni plan jer se moglo predvideti šta će se desiti. Posledice su očigledne - Beograd ponovo demoliran, a policija se pojavila tek posle dva sata - kaže za Danas Goran Petrović, poslednji načelnik Resora Državne bezbednosti MUP Srbije. Na pitanje novinara Danasa da li postoji odgovornost državnog sekretara MUP Srbije Mirjane Orašanić, Petrović je odgovorio da ona ne može ništa da uradi, "kao uostalom ni direktor policije". Kako Danas saznaje, Mirjana Orašanić je prekjue, u vreme skupa i nemira, bila u Crnoj Gori. Sagovornik Danasa, koji je želeo da ostane anonimn, ukazuje da su sve ingerencije ministra policije Jočića prenete na Mirjanu Orašanić, što potvrđuje i činjenica da je ona prisustvovala sednici Vlade Srbije umesto ministra Jočića. Izvor Danasa tvrdi da "po Zakonu o policiji u odsustvu ministra policije ili zbog njegove sprečenosti sva ovlašćenja, prava i obaveze prelaze na državnog sekretara". Direktor policije je, kaže isti izvor, "neposredni starešina - on operativno rukovodi, ali po rangu nije ministar". I. Pejčić, J. Čolak