
IIT KHARAGPUR MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

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BACKGROUND GUIDE : HISTORIC NATO





Historic NATO

Agenda: The Kosovo Conflict

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the second session of the IIT Kharagpur Model United Nations Conference. We welcome you to the simulation of the Historic NATO, to discuss the situation in the Kosovo Conflict.

President:

Rahil Pereira

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Shravan Suresh

The year is 1999. The republic of Yugoslavia has all but crumbled from within due to ethnic violence, separatist forces and failed agreements. And nowhere has this been more evident than in the bruised and battered region of Kosovo. The incessant tussle between the authoritarian and vicious Yugoslav Government under Slobodan Milosevic, and the belligerent Kosovo Liberation Army, has exasperated the world at large, while humanitarian atrocities have been carried out with impunity.

The UN Security Council has tried to resolve the matter but after negotiations did not lead to fruition, they have handed charge over to the NATO. At this crucial juncture, the delegates of the NATO, must come together to decide what actions can be taken to prevent this regrettable situation from further worsening. Time is not on your side and millions of lives hang in the balance. There are choices that need to be made; choices that are difficult but vital. As the harbingers of world stability, they have to rise to the occasion and help these devastated people salvage their lives.

This guide gives you an overview of the events surrounding the situation in the Kosovo Conflict and the arguments surrounding it. It is not an exhaustive document and we expect delegates to refer to other sources too.

If you have any questions, send us an e-mail. We look forward to intense and constructive debates at IIT Kharagpur.

Regards,

Executive Board.

Timeline

ORIGINS AND TITO'S YUGOSLAVIA:

- ✦ 1815 : Serbian uprisings secure limited autonomy from the Ottoman Empire.
- ✦ 1830-1833 : Serbia gains formal autonomy.
- ✦ 1912 : Serbs gain control of Kosovo in a war against the Ottoman Empire. Fearing they, too, would be partitioned, Albanian leaders in Albania declare an independent state in November
- ✦ 1912 : Borders for the new Albanian state are drawn in 1913. The disputed region of Kosovo becomes part of Serbia.



The map of Yugoslavia at the time of the conflict

- ✦ 1914-1918 : The First World War.

November 1918 : - In the war's aftermath, both Albanians and Serbs lay claim to Kosovo. The newly created Kingdom comprising Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, regains control of Kosovo. As a minority, Albanians are promised extensive rights by minority rights treaties. The Albanians, however, claim the guarantees are never implemented and that the Serbs engage in widespread massacres and repression in the 1920s. The Serbs also accuse Albania of fomenting discontent in Kosovo.

- ✦ 1939-1945 : The Second World War.

April 1941 : The German attack on Yugoslavia. Throughout the war there is strong cooperation between Albanian and Yugoslav communist parties. Josip Broz Tito leads communist partisans to victory in a war with German and Italian occupying forces but also a civil war with non-communist opponents. With the victory of communist parties in Yugoslavia and Albania, there are hopes that the Kosovo question can finally be resolved. Albanian communists first call for the Inclusion of Kosovo into a new Albania. However, under pressure from the stronger Yugoslav movement, the Albanian communists settle for Kosovo's Re-inclusion into Yugoslavia.

Timeline

✦ **1946** : New constitution for the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia) gain relative equality in the country. The Albanians in Kosovo hoped they too would be granted republic status. Instead, Kosovo becomes an autonomous region within Serbia.

✦ **1946 - 1966** : Albanians claim widespread repression by the Yugoslav authorities. At the same time, Albanian numerical superiority increases, becoming roughly 70 per cent of Kosovo's population because of a higher birth rate and the migration of many Serbs from Kosovo.

✦ **1969** : After riots in Kosovo and widespread discontent surfaces, Albanians gain greater control in Kosovo. The Serbian Orthodox Church orders its clergy to compile data on the ongoing problems of Serbs in Kosovo, seeking to pressure the government in Belgrade to do more to protect the Serbian faithful.



Milosevic addresses the crowd in 1987

✦ **1974** : New Yugoslav constitution creates the autonomous province of Kosovo. Albanians gain almost complete control over their affairs. The new constitution, however, falls short of making Kosovo a republic which would include the right of secession.

THE RISE OF SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC

✦ **4 May 1980** : The death of Tito.

✦ **1987 - 1990** : Rise of Serbian Nationalism after the fall of Soviet Russia and the Berlin Wall. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not a part of the Warsaw Pact but pursued its own version of "Communism" under Josip Broz Tito. It was a multi-ethnic state which Tito was able to maintain through a doctrine of "Brotherhood and unity," but tensions between ethnicities began to escalate with the so-called Croatian Spring of 1970–71, a movement for greater Croatian autonomy, which was suppressed. In 1974 there followed constitutional changes devolving some of the federal powers to the constituent republics and provinces. After Tito's death in 1980 ethnic tensions grew, starting from Albanian-majority Kosovo.

Timeline

At this time, Slobodan Milosevic became leader of the Serbian Communist Party. He became a hero overnight in Serbia when in 1987 he went to Kosovo to quell the fears of local Serbs amidst a strike, by Kosovar Albanian miners, which was paralyzing the province. In a famous speech televised throughout Serbia, he told the waiting crowd of angry Serbs, "You will not be beaten again."

To the Serbs, the coming of Milosevic was more to restore their place in the world after deep historical grievances rather than against the recent oppressions of Albanians. Starting in 1988, the Anti-bureaucratic revolution led to the resignation of the governments of Vojvodina and Montenegro and to the election of officials allied with Milošević.

The constitutional commission worked for three years to harmonize its positions and in 1989 an amended Serbian constitution was submitted to the governments of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Serbia for approval. Kosovo and Vojvodina assembly members were forced to pass the constitution

In March 1989, Milosevic announced an anti-bureaucratic revolution calling a massive rally attended by more than a million Serbs at Kosovo Polje, the exact location of the historic battle fought on June 28, 1389.

•January

Police use tear gas, truncheons and water cannon on thousands of Kosovar Albanian demonstrators.

The unrest escalates and on January 28 police shoot dead at least 10.

•February

Yugoslavia sends troops, tanks, warplanes and 2,000 more police to Kosovo.

By the end of the month more than 20 people have been killed and a curfew imposed.

•July

Kosovar Albanian legislators in the province declare independence. Serbia dissolves the Kosovo assembly. Strikes and protests continue.

1991: The Bosnian war begins.

•June 25, 1991

Slovenia and Croatia declare independence from Yugoslavia. Two days later, the Yugoslav army attacks Slovenia, withdraws after a 10-day

•July

Serb-Croat skirmishes escalate into war between Croats and rebel Serbs, backed by the Yugoslav army, in Croatia.

•October 8, 1991

Yugoslavia asks for UNHCR's assistance and two weeks later the U.N. Secretary-General designates the organization as the lead humanitarian agency in the crisis.

Timeline

1992: War breaks out in the Balkans

In 1992, conflict engulfed Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war was predominantly a territorial conflict between local Bosnians and Croats backed by Zagreb, and Serbs backed by the Yugoslav People's Army and Serbia.

•January

The Vance-Owen peace plan proclaimed UN controlled (UNPA) zones for Serbs in territory claimed by Serbian rebels as the Republic of Serbian Krajina and brought an end to major military operations

On 9 January 1992, the Bosnian Serb Assembly adopted a declaration proclaiming the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina



The UNPROFOR in Bosnia

•February

The Croatian War of Independence would result in U.N. Security Council Resolution 743 on 21 February 1992, which created the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in accordance with the Secretary-General's report S/23592 of 15 February 1992.

•February – March

The multi-ethnic Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was inhabited by Muslim Bosnians (44 percent), Orthodox Serbs (31 percent) and Catholic Croats (17 percent), passed a referendum for independence on 29 February 1992 and 1st March 1992. This was rejected by the political representatives of the Bosnian Serbs, who had boycotted the referendum and established their own republic. Following the declaration of independence, the Bosnian Serbs, supported by the Serbian government of Slobodan Milošević and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), mobilized their forces inside the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to secure Serbian territory, then war soon broke out across the country, accompanied by the ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian population, especially in Eastern Bosnia.

Timeline

SERBIA VS KLA

The Sijekovac killings in March 1992 resulted in killing of around 47 Serbs in the village of Sijekovac near Bosanski Brod, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The deaths were allegedly unlawful, and there have been allegations that the casualties included not just soldiers but civilians.

•April–May 1992

Fierce attacks raged in eastern Bosnia as well as the north-western part of the country. In April attacks by the SDS leaders, together with field officers of the Second Military Command of former JNA, were conducted in eastern part of the country with the objective to take strategically relevant positions and carry out a communication and information blockade. Attacks carried out resulted in a large number of dead and wounded civilians.

The Graz agreement was a partition agreement signed between Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić and Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban on 6 May 1992 in the city of Graz, Austria. The agreement publicly declared the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Republika Srpska and the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia. The largest group in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnians, did not take part in the agreement and were not invited to the negotiations.

On 24 May 1992 Kosovar Albanians held unofficial elections for an assembly and president of the Republic of Kosovo. Writer Ibrahim Rugova is elected president of the self-proclaimed republic.

•June 1992

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) originally deployed in Croatia had its mandate extended into Bosnia and Herzegovina, initially to protect the Sarajevo International Airport. In September, the role of UNPROFOR was expanded to protect humanitarian aid and assist relief delivery in the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to help protect civilian refugees when required by the Red Cross.

The Croat–Bosniak War was a conflict between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the self-proclaimed Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia supported by the Republic of Croatia that lasted from June 19, 1992– February 23, 1994, caused by the Karadžić and Graz agreements and the previously-unified Croat forces turning on the Bosnians.

•August 1992

In August 1992, HOS leader Blaž Kraljević was killed by HVO soldiers, which severely weakened the moderate group who hoped to keep the alliance between Bosnians and Croats alive.

•October 1992

In October 1992 the Serbs captured the town of Jajce and expelled the Croat and Bosnian population. The fall of the town was largely due to a lack of Bosnian-Croat cooperation and rising tensions, especially over the previous four months.

Serb and ethnic Albanian leaders in Kosovo held face-to-face peace talks for the first time in three years.

Timeline

SLIDE TO WAR

•December 1992

US President George H.W. Bush issued the so-called 'Christmas warning', promising immediate American military action against Serbia if it should intervene in Kosovo.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was among the first of the international organizations to address the human rights situation in Kosovo. In late 1992, CSCE observer missions were established in the three minority dominated areas in Serbia as well as Macedonia. The war in Bosnia continues, as "ethnic cleansing" spreads. NATO threatens airstrikes to defend "safe areas" created to protect Muslims.

•January 2, 1993

International mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen unveil plan to divide Bosnia into 10 provinces, mostly along ethnic lines. The plan is accepted by Bosnian government but rejected by Bosnian Serbs.

January 11, 1993: Peace talks on the Vance-Owen plan start in Geneva.

•March 1993

Bosnian Croats and Muslims begin fighting over the 30% of Bosnian not already in Serb hands.

•April-May 1993

U.N. Security Council declares six "safe areas" for Bosnian Muslims: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde.

•May 1993

The National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo was founded as an underground movement on 25 May 1993 in Pristina by a faction of the dissident Marxist-Leninist organization People's Movement of Kosovo (LPK), the founding base of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrilla movement.

•July 1993

Yugoslavia kicked out the long-term Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) monitoring mission from Kosovo and elsewhere, and then denied visas to United Nations personnel and to Amnesty International after they indicated a desire to visit Kosovo.

Preliminary agreement reached in Geneva for creating three states in Bosnia for Muslims, Croats and Serbs. Talks collapse after Serbs violate cease-fire.

•February 5, 1994

•More than 60 people killed and some 200 wounded as a mortar shell slams into downtown marketplace in Sarajevo. Days later, NATO demands Bosnian Serbs withdraw heavy guns from around Sarajevo or face air strikes

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•March 18, 1994

Bosnia's Muslim-led government and the Bosnian Croats sign an accord brokered by the USA, ending their war.

•May 13, 1994

An international peace plan that envisions eventual partition of Bosnia is reached. The plan is accepted by Bosnia government in July but rejected by Bosnian Serbs in August.

Timeline



The memorial at Srebrenica

1995

•May 24-25

After Serbs ignore U.N. order to remove heavy weapons around Sarajevo, NATO attacks Serb ammunition depot. Serbs shell "safe areas," including Tuzla, where 71 people are killed.

•July 11

Possible one of the worst acts of the war occurs in the summer of 1995 when the Bosnian town of Srebrenica came under attack by forces commanded by Ratko Mladic. Srebrenica was a UN-declared safe area and guarded by a lightly armed Dutch contingent. This did not deter Mladic, who was intent on taking over the enclave. Over a few days in mid-July, more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslim males were executed by Mladic's troops. The rest of the town's women and children were driven out to nearby Tuzla.

•July 25

Serbs take Zepa "safe area". Thousands of civilians flee.

•August 4

Croatia launches massive assault on rebel Serbs and retakes most of remaining Serb-held land in Croatia, sending up to 180,000 Serbs fleeing.

•August 15

Washington begins intensive effort for a new peace plan

•August 30

With a failed UN mission, the credibility of NATO waning, and facing a retreat of UN peacekeepers, President Clinton took the lead in August 1995 and launched a limited bombing campaign against Bosnian Serb positions.

Timeline

- **September 8**

Negotiators agree to divide Bosnia into Serb and Muslim-Croat entities within one state. Meanwhile, Bosnian government, Croats retake much of northern, western Bosnia from Serbs.

- **September 20**

NATO halts airstrikes after Serbs withdraw heaviest weapons around Sarajevo.

- **October 11**

Sixty-day cease-fire takes effect ahead of peace talks due to start in Dayton, Ohio, on November 1.

- **November 1**

U.S.-sponsored peace talks open in Dayton, Ohio, with the presidents of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. Agreement is reached for the peaceful integration of remaining Serb-held land in Croatia and to strengthen the Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia.

- **November 13**

International tribunal indicts six Bosnian Croats for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

- **November 16**

International tribunal indicts Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Gen. Ratko Mladic for a second time, this time charging them with genocide over alleged massacres at Srebrenica.

- **November 21**

In Dayton, Ohio, Balkan leaders agree on a comprehensive settlement to the 43-month war in Bosnia.

Timeline

1996

•January 9

The longest humanitarian airlift in world history which fed Sarajevo for 3 1/2 years ends.

•February 1996

The shadowy Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) claims responsibility for a number of bombings and attacks against Serbian police and state officials, and Albanians loyal to Serbia.

•September 14, 1996

Bosnia and Herzegovina's first post war elections confirm wartime hard-line leaders in power, dashing hopes for a speedy return of refugees.

1998

•February

US diplomat Robert Gelbard publicly calls KLA "without any question a terrorist group" -- a comment which some observers say Milosevic interprets as a green light to continue repression.

•March

Rugova's shadow government reportedly urges Kosovar Albanians to defend themselves against the Serbs.

After KLA attacks on police, Serb security forces massacre over 50 members of the Jashari family in the village of Prekaz. In following weeks, tens of thousands rally in Pristina to protest massacre. Serbs respond with counter-demonstrations.

In Rome, Madeleine Albright declares "We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia."

"Contact Group" countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia) meet in London to discuss Kosovo. In a tense meeting, Gelbard meets with Milosevic in Belgrade.

Ibrahim Rugova re-elected "president" of Kosovo with 99% of vote in controversial elections boycotted by increasingly popular Kosovar Albanian hard-liners.

UN Security Council resolution 1160 condemns Yugoslavia's excessive use of force, imposes economic sanctions, and bans arms sales to Serbia.

•April

FRY closes borders with Albania and Macedonia.

In national referendum, 95% of Serbs reject foreign mediation to solve the Kosovo crisis.

•May

Gelbard meets with KLA officials in Switzerland. Ambassador Christopher Hill is named the US Special Envoy to Kosovo. Dayton Accord negotiator Richard Holbrooke travels to Belgrade. Talks lead to first-ever meeting between Rugova and Milosevic on May 15, though dialogue quickly breaks down.

Timeline

• **28 May, 1998**

Rugova and other Kosovar Albanian officials arrive in Washington to meet with Clinton, Gore, Albright and advisors. In 29 May, a meeting is held in the Oval Office; Rugova seeks Clinton's support for the Kosovar Albanians' cause.

• **31 May, 1998**

As many as 20 Kosovar Albanians are killed in retaliation for death of a Serb policeman near Glogovac.

• **1 June, 1998**

Rugova meets UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan in New York, requests UN/NATO intervention.

• **11 June, 1998**

At NATO ministerial meeting, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen urges NATO defense ministers to begin conceptual planning for potential intervention in Kosovo. Ministers decide to "send a signal" to Milosevic by conducting air exercises in the region.

• **12 June, 1998**

Foreign ministers of Contact Group, plus Canada and Japan, meet in London and level more economic sanctions on FRY.

• **15 June, 1998**

In the "Balkan Air Show," 85 NATO warplanes fly over Albania and Macedonia in show of force aimed at Milosevic.

• **16 June, 1998**

Milosevic and Yeltsin meet in Moscow, issue joint statement approving idea of diplomatic observers in Kosovo.

• **23-24 June, 1998**

Holbrooke meets with Milosevic travels to Kosovo, to talk directly with KLA commanders.

• **6 July, 1998**

Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission begins monitoring operations in the province.

• **Early August 1998**

Serbian forces intensify their summer offensive, attack KLA and Kosovo Albanian villages in Drenica region, driving thousands into the hills.

• **1-2 September, 1998**

At Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Moscow, Albright & Foreign Minister Ivanov together call for negotiations and an end to Serb offensive.

• **5 September, 1998**

Former Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) and Asst. Sec. of State John Shattuck travel to Kosovo & Belgrade.

Timeline



• **9 September, 1998**

Serb police begin to pull bodies of Kosovar Albanians and Serbs from a canal near the village of Glodjane. At least thirty-four bodies are eventually discovered, and suspicion falls on the KLA.

• **23 September, 1998**

UN Security Council approves Resolution 1199 demanding cease-fire, Serb withdrawal and refugee return and calling for unspecified "additional measures" if Serbia refuses to comply.

• **24 September, 1998**

In Vilamoura, Portugal, NATO Defense Ministers give NATO's Supreme Commander permission to issue an activation warning (ACTWARN) -- the first real step in preparation for airstrikes.

• **26 September, 1998**

After more than a dozen Serb police are killed in fighting with the KLA, Serb security forces kill 35 villagers - including 21 members of a single family - in and around Gornje Obrinje.

• **30 September, 1998**

At principals committee meeting, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pushes for airstrikes against Serbia. Administration briefs Capitol Hill on the plan. Meeting Congressional resistance, the Administration notes it has no plans to send ground troops to Kosovo, even as peacekeepers.

• **5 October, 1998**

UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan reports FRY violations of UNSCR 1199.

• **12 October, 1998**

NATO approves an "activation order" (ACTORD) authorizing preparations for a limited bombing campaign.

• **13 October, 1998**

After more than a week of negotiations, Holbrooke secures the "October Agreement." Agreement calls for Serbian compliance with UN Resolution 1199, a cease-fire, troop withdrawals, elections, substantial autonomy for Kosovo and other confidence-building measures. NATO temporarily suspends - but does not rescind - its ACTORD to allow for Serbian compliance.

• **16 October, 1998**

Milosevic agrees to allow unarmed OSCE cease-fire monitors - the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) -- into Kosovo. NATO extends ACTORD deadline until 27 October.

• **24 October, 1998**

NATO Supreme Commander Gen. Wesley Clark and Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Gen. Klaus Naumann travel to Belgrade. Milosevic agrees to reduce FRY forces in Kosovo to pre-March 1998 levels.

Timeline

- **27 October, 1998**

In what appears to be a vindication of NATO's strategy, Serbia withdraws thousands of Serb security forces from Kosovo. Thousands of Kosovar Albanians begin to descend from the hills as winter threatens.

- **November, 1998**

Unarmed international KVM monitors under American Ambassador William Walker begin deploying in Kosovo.

- **13 November, 1998**

Serbia warns Macedonia against allowing NATO to position troops on its territory.

- **December 1998**

Border clashes and skirmishes in Kosovo draw new US condemnations. NATO approves and begins deploying in Macedonia an "extraction force" (XFOR) to defend peacekeepers in Kosovo.

- **23-27 December, 1998**

FRY security forces battle KLA and attack villages near Podujevo.

1999

- **15 January, 1999**

At meeting of top US foreign policy advisers -- the "Principals Committee" -- Albright pushes for US/NATO military ultimatum, but is frustrated by colleagues's resistance.

Both Sides Of The Coin

PRO-SERBIAN ARGUMENTS

Suppression of Serbs in the 20th century

The Serb action was a result of a century of anti-Serb sentiments and anti-Serb riots throughout the 20th century.

The term 'Anti-Serb' was used in the literary and cultural circles since before World War I. Croatian writers Antun Gustav Matoš and Miroslav Krleža had casually described some political and cultural figures as "Serbophobes", meaning that they perceived an anti-Serbian animus in a person's behaviour.

The Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in 1914 led to angry Croats and Muslims in Sarajevo to engage in violent anti-Serb demonstrations, and this led to a deep division along ethnic lines that was unprecedented in the city's history. The crowd directed its anger principally at Serb shops and at residences of prominent Serbs and the New Serbian Orthodox Church. Many Serbs were killed that day by crowd violence.

Taking advantage of an international wave of revulsion against this act of "Serbian nationalist terrorism", Austria-Hungary gave Serbia an ultimatum which led to World War I.

Prior to and during the extermination campaign against the Serb people during World War II, mass propaganda was initiated by the Germans and their Croatian and Albanian collaborators as to dehumanize the Serbs and to justify their extermination just as had been done to the Jews previously.

It was popularized before World War II by Mile Budak, the chief architect of the Ustaše ideology against Serbs, and during World War II there were mass hangings of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia, as part of the Holocaust and the Ustaše's persecution of the Serbs.

In the aftermath of World War II and the seizure of power by the Yugoslav Partisans, Josip Broz Tito's communist Yugoslavia was established. The new regime repressed nationalism of any culture that was deemed to be a threat to the state. Serbian nationalism then developed during the 1960s by intellectuals such as Dobrica Ćosić and challenged the state-sponsored policies of Yugoslavism and "Brotherhood and Unity". Tito's later expulsion of the nationalist-leaning Serbian communist official Aleksandar Ranković in the 1960s was perceived as an attack on Serbian nationalism. After the ousting of Ranković, Serbian nationalist intellectuals increasingly began viewing Yugoslavia as a detrimental experience for the Serb nation.

The local Albanian-dominated ruling class in Kosovo had been asking for recognition of Kosovo as a parallel republic to Serbia within the Federation, and after Josip Broz Tito's death in 1980, the demands were renewed. In March 1981, there were protests demanding independence of Kosovo. Subsequently the situation rapidly escalated into extremely violent mass-riots across the province spreading across 6 major Kosovo cities displacing and killing thousands of ethnic Serbs who had been living in Kosovo for centuries.

During the 1980s, thousands of Serbs and Montenegrins left Kosovo, largely due to the economic situation and repression by the Kosovo Albanian government and population. "57,000 Serbs have left Kosovo in the last decade" due to murder, rape and persecution – wrote the New York Times in 1982. Slobodan Milošević gained political power by pledging to discontinue this repression.

Both Sides Of The Coin

Serbia's right to self defence against KLA

Milosevic's military action against Kosovo was a result of the campaign of the Kosovo Liberation Army (active since 1996) against Yugoslav security forces and ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. With the formation of the Kosovo Liberation Army, a large number of the Kosovo Albanians became radicalized.

For most of its lifetime, KLA was classified as a terrorist organization by many countries including the United States, UK and France. It was a result of years of observation of KLA actions.

The KLA is funded largely by drug-running and more notoriously organ trafficking. There were several cases of kidnappings and disappearances in the region. There are several prison camps in central and northern Albania in 1999 where the Kosovo Serbs kidnapped for organ harvesting are held. In a notorious incident, several hundred Serb and Roma civilians who were taken across the border into Albania were killed in a "Yellow House" near the town of Burrel and had several of their organs removed for sale on the black market.

While the world media is focusing on sad events like the Racak massacre (committed by Serbs), little attention was being paid to the reasons why Serbs were influenced to commit such crimes. In the last few years, in villages under Albanian control, the militants drove ethnic-Serbs from their homes. While "experts" speak of "atrocities", there was no mention of Glodjane, Klecka or Orahovac. Mass graves have been unearthed by monitors and Serbian authorities in Kosovo, where dead and decomposed bodies of civilians including women and children (as young as 7 years) have been found. It has to be understood that the Serbian armed forces are a stabilizing force in Kosovo and such massacres will increase with their departure.

Concentration camps like the Llapushnik prison camp in Kosovo under KLA control which is operational in early 1998 and inmates were subject to intimidation, imprisonment, violence and murder. The victims were mostly Serbs, but also included Serb-sympathizing Albanians, which is reportedly the site of 23 Serbian deaths. It was only after the Serbian army began its advance that the camp was abandoned.

It can be inferred that the Serbian actions were intended to protect their countrymen and the actions of KLA were nothing less than the worst forms of human rights abuses. Because they cannot be subject to international laws as applied to nations, simply because they are terrorists!, the Serbian Government has the right to act in its own defence.

Both Sides Of The Coin

No Legal Basis for Intervention

The UN was founded on the principle of national sovereignty. States could and should be sanctioned for acts of aggression against other states, but within their borders they were free to do what they liked. Chapter seven of the UN Charter says that states can be sanctioned for actions which are a “threat to peace.” This allows the UN to take into account the spillover effects of domestic policies-if, for example, they produce floods of refugees or destabilise other states. But human rights abuse per se is not a ground for intervention (Pinochet's Chile was never sanctioned). This is for the good reason that there is no international agreement on the standards to be upheld and the means to uphold them.

Moreover if UN and UNSC procedures are bypassed by Nato, it may send a clear message to all countries that force, not law, governs international affairs. Then it will be inferred than in the post-Cold War era UN no longer protects states from invasion, all governments which can, will acquire weapons of mass destruction to deter or repel foreign invasion, bringing in a deadly arms race.

Both Sides Of The Coin

PRO-KLA ARGUMENTS

The KLA uprising was a final attempt by the majority Albanians in Kosovo to overthrow the Serbian authority, which was representative of foreign oppression, something unacceptable to the deeply nationalist society that sought to assert itself as a distinct entity in the Yugoslav setup. The outfit was the result of an amalgamation of nineteenth-century nationalism, Serb repression (particularly the Milosevic government's actions like curtailing Kosovar autonomy), and the post-adolescence impatience of the large cohorts of Albanian youth in exile. The organisation existed in different forms for a long time and finally in the mid-nineties, took on the present name and carried out its first widely known attacks in February 1996, against police stations and Yugoslav government officers, alleging that they had killed Albanian civilians as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign. Its campaign against Yugoslav security forces and ethnic Serbs from Kosovo precipitated a major Yugoslav military crackdown which led to the Kosovo War of 1998–1999. KLA's activities, and the consequent response by the Serb militia and Milosevic's forces, has prompted an exodus of Kosovar Albanians/Serbs and a refugee crisis that might require the NATO to intervene militarily in order to stop what is widely identified as an ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing by both the parties.

The Serbian government, among several others, calls the KLA a terrorist group, although its clumsy efforts at counterterrorism have actually widened the support base for the KLA among the Kosovar Albanian diaspora. The US initially sided with the Serbs and identified the KLA as a terrorist group, but later on, cultivated diplomatic relations with the KLA leaders. The viewpoint that it is an out and out terrorist outfit has been put forth by several academics and human rights groups, which have put it in the dock for serious abuses, including abductions and murders of Serbs and ethnic Albanians considered collaborators with the state. Elements of the KLA are also responsible for post-conflict attacks on Serbs, Roma, and other non-Albanians, as well as ethnic Albanian political rivals; widespread and systematic burning and looting of homes belonging to Serbs, Roma, and other minorities and the destruction of Orthodox churches and monasteries; harassment and intimidation designed to force people from their homes and communities; elements of the KLA are clearly responsible for many of these crimes. The US is said to have delisted it recently, from its list of terrorist groups, and is lobbying with the French to follow suit. It has been opined that such a support for an outfit like the KLA, would only embolden those who seek to use terrorism to obtain representation.

To the large numbers of Albanians, the KLA were freedom fighters. The success of the KLA, despite apparently insurmountable odds, lay in its ability to clearly identify its political goal as the primary one, and to direct and channelize the feelings of Albanian nationalism towards it. Its fight against one of the most formidable military machines of the second half of the twentieth century was accomplished by several thousands of Kosovar Albanians driven by the fear of disruptions and eventual termination of their lives and livelihood – a feeling nurtured by Milosevic's attempts to counter the KLA attacks in Kosovo, and the ethnic cleansing that followed. The west has desired diplomatic solution, and Milosević abstinence from the Rambouillet talks so far, has only helped the KLA retain the moral high ground in Kosovo, despite obvious war crimes, and persecution.

Attempts At A Solution

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE THE CRISIS

While the war in Yugoslavia raged and spilled over from one republic to another, Kosovo was regarded as an internal issue of Serbia in the opening months of the crisis. Until 1997, only a few weak efforts were made to bring Kosovo onto the agenda of the main international actors. While the Badinter commission “gave a green light” for the secession and subsequent recognition of the Yugoslav republics as independent states, Kosovo was regarded as part of Serbia, regardless of the “quasi-republican autonomy” that had lasted until Milošević illegally abolished it in 1989. As the entire negotiating process on finding a peaceful solution for the Yugoslav conflict was conducted under the framework of the principles envisaged in the Badinter Commission report, the position of Kosovo was at best marginal. The first serious attempt to internationalize the Kosovo question was made at the London Conference, 1992, where the key issue was the ongoing war in Bosnia. The attempt came from the Serbian side, more precisely from the then Yugoslav Prime Minister Panić. He tried to raise the issue of Kosovo as a means to overthrow Milošević and weaken his position in the international community. Although the Kosovo question was initially side lined during the London Conference in the fall of 1992, the ICFY Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities, headed by German Ambassador Geert Ahrens, set up a Special Group on Kosovo and by means of silent diplomacy tried to mediate between Belgrade and Priština. Nevertheless, it was impossible to tackle serious political issues, including grave human rights violations in these talks. Negotiations were primarily focused on educational issues, the reopening of schools and universities, and adjusting school programmes to meet Albanian national needs. Although vague, these early CSCE attempts to recognize problems in Kosovo and to prevent violence should be noted. A decision at the 15th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the CSCE, held in Prague on 14 August 1992, established three Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandžak and Vojvodina. According to this decision, the missions had the mandate of: promoting dialogue between the authorities concerned and representatives of the populations and communities in the three regions; collecting information on all aspects relevant to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and promoting solutions to such problems; establishing contact points to solve any problems identified; and to help provide information on legislation relating to human rights, minority protection, media freedom and democratic elections.

It is interesting to note that the first serious threat of unilateral US military intervention in Serbia arose because of the situation in Kosovo. Partially in response to intelligence information that Milosevic was planning to escalate the conflict in Kosovo, the Bush administration warned Milošević (on 29 December 1992) that the United States was prepared to take unilateral military action, without European cooperation, if the Serbs were to spark a conflict in Kosovo or Macedonia, or if they were to use the JNA to escalate and extend the Bosnian conflict into neighbouring areas. Believing, after the events of 1991-1992, that Milošević had the desire and the capability to expand the war, this sudden threat was meant as a deterrent to contain the conflict within existing lines. The threat, known as the “Christmas warning”, was given in the form of a brief message conveyed through the US Embassy in Belgrade.

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EVENTS FROM 1997-1999



The talks in Rambouillet go on

The New York Round Table was held between 7th to 9th April, 1997 to encourage negotiations and a plausible settlement of crisis between Serbian and Albanian leaders. But it too failed to achieve its objective. On one side, opposition leaders from Serbia insisted that they did not have the capacity to negotiate with the Albanians. On the other, Albanian leaders insisted on the independence of Kosovo, the one request that was simply not acceptable to the Serbian side. The outcome of the roundtable was a joint declaration emphasizing the importance of democratization in both Serbia and Kosovo. The conclusions were:

Military conflict escalated after the "Drenica massacre" in the end of February. By that time, the international community decided to take a much more active role. Based on their previous experience with Bosnia, internationals took a much more aggressive position toward Serbia than before. Initial plans were made at the Contact Group meeting in early March 1998, where the leaders of the six great powers tried to find an answer to Milošević's offensive.

The US and UK were standing by the position that a swift and harsh reaction was necessary, with opposition coming from France, Italy and Russia, who refused to consider military intervention. Germany acted as a "mediator" between the groups. In the end, the parties agreed to measures consisting of:

A comprehensive arms embargo against the FRY, including Kosovo, a refusal to supply equipment to the FRY which might be used for internal repression or for terrorism, the denial of visas for senior FRY and Serbian representatives responsible for repressive action by FRY security forces in Kosovo, and a moratorium on government-financed credit support for trade and investment, including government financing for privatisation, in Serbia. Russia refused to deny visas or impose a moratorium on credit support. As Milošević did not comply with the demands of the Contact Group members, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1160 imposing an arms embargo on Yugoslavia and calling for autonomy and "meaningful self-administration" for Kosovo. The Security Council warned that "additional measures" were possible if no progress was made towards reaching a peaceful solution.

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Despite clear threats from the West, Milošević used the summer to completely overrun the KLA. The answer from the West was severe. On 13 October 1998, NATO authorized air strikes if Serbian security forces did not withdraw from Kosovo within 96 hours. After a period of intense negotiations, US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke, representing the Contact Group, and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, under threat of the NATO activation order, reached an agreement based on the demands made in Resolution 1199. While the agreement was never published, its major points addressed the reduction of forces and the deployment of monitors.

While the reliability of Milošević's commitments to this October arrangement can certainly be questioned, many saw an evident contradiction between Holbrooke's supposed assurances and KLA actions. This provided the FRY with substantial grounds to doubt the sincerity of "the West". KLA actions undoubtedly exerted strong internal security pressure on Belgrade to renew full-scale counter-insurgency efforts. The UNSCR 1203, also acting under the mandate of Chapter VII, endorsed and supported the two agreements reached on June 15 and October 16, which were concerned to the verification of the compliance of FRY and the other parties involved in Kosovo crisis in relation to what was required in UNSCR 1199. It is important to highlight, though, that the UNSCR 1203 maintained its consideration of the conflict in Kosovo as a threat to regional peace and security.

The event triggering the renewal of the negotiating process was the killing 45 Albanian civilians during an operation led by Serbian police forces in the village of Račak on 15 January. On 29 January 1998, ministers representing the Contact Group, gathered in London and demanded that representatives of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanians come together under international auspices for face-to-face talks in Rambouillet, France. Furthermore, on 30 January, the North Atlantic Council issued a statement lending its support to the Contact Group initiative and threatening a forceful response in the event of non-compliance. It also granted NATO Secretary-General Solana full authority to approve air strikes against targets within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia if events so merited. The Rambouillet peace plan was created by the Contact Group, and it was modelled to resemble the Dayton accord. It consisted of a political and a military component. The political part of the Rambouillet accord called for an immediate cessation of hostilities; the partial withdrawal and demilitarization of all armed forces inside Kosovo; guarantees of civil rights; and a peace settlement that would grant Kosovo expanded autonomy within Yugoslavia in the short term and allow for a binding referendum on the province's final status after 3 years. The military part of the agreement (security annex B) provided for the province's occupation by a NATO-led international force, with a right of access to the entire territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

A daunting task lies ahead for the members of the NATO as they try to work out the best possible solution to this ongoing crisis. The warring sides may already be beyond the point of no return, or at least approaching it. Every major decision or announcement made in the council will be subjected to more scrutiny and examination by the international community, because of the high stakes involved.

Delegates would be well advised to keep in mind the seminal **Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States**, signed at Montevideo, Uruguay, in December 1933. It lays out the definition, rights and duties of statehood, which is particularly relevant because of how it deals with issues of interfering in the affairs of other nations and infringing upon their sovereignty. It is important to remember that solutions proposed by the delegates should be within the realm of international feasibility, and in keeping with the codices of international law.

Both Serbia and the Kosovo Liberation Army have been greatly affected by this conflict and both have their reasons for wanting it to continue. Nations that are negotiating will have to find a way to sidestep the animosity that these two entities have for each other, and to strive for a resolution in an impartial manner. With people in Kosovo still dying in great numbers every single day, time is not on their side.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Which side has a greater right over Kosovo – the Albanians or the Serbians?
2. Can a solution be found where both races live in co-existence?
3. What can be done to stop the relentless wave of killings by the Serbian Army and retaliation by the KLA?
4. Who will be held accountable for the atrocities committed and how? Will officials from both sides be taken to task?

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