

УДК 94+327.56+341.1/8

## Kosovo and Metohija — history and current developments in the region

*Aleksa Filipović*

*St. Petersburg State University,*

*7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation*

Author is describing history of Serbian land of Kosovo and Metohija and its modern situation after NATO aggression and installing a semi-recognized Kosovo state which was set against interests of peoples of Serbia and became a political present to representatives of Muslim Albania. Special attention is paid to the analysis of historical process of development these Serbian lands and on the basis of this analysis modern Serbian tragedy when the country lost a part of its territory and how it influenced European events an international relations.

**Keywords:** *Kosovo*, Metohija, aggression, Albania, historical, Muslim, Middle Ages, orthodox, islamization, World war, Yugoslavia, clashes.

Kosovo and Metohija and ethnic conflicts between Serbian and Albanian population living there are once again in the headlines of the world news. For many, “Kosovo” is connected with the aggression of NATO forces against Yugoslavia in 1999, for what was the first military action of this bloc, conducted without approval of the UN Security Council. For others, it was a region that for 20 years was sight of sporadic clashes of ethnic Serbs and Albanians, with the always-worried comments made by international community tasked to police the region. But the question of Kosovo and Metohija runs further in history, as it is connected to ambitions of great powers for more than 100 of years, along with the vast mineral and hydrological wealth, as well as strategic position in the South-Eastern Europe.

The name of the region, Kosovo and Metohija, comes from the two words — Serbian word *Koc* (“Blackbird”) and Greek word *Metoh* — “church property”. Literal translation would be “the land of blackbirds and church lands”. In the middle ages, Kosovo and Metohija was a predominantly Serbian-inhabited area, and it was center of the Serbian state from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate was established here under the rule of the Emperor Stefan Dušan. During that time, there was a vast effort by the rulers of Serbia to create a network of Orthodox monasteries and churches in the region. During the

14<sup>th</sup> century, threat of the Ottoman Empire was growing, and in 1389, a “Battle of Kosovo” occurred, where invading Ottoman forces clashed with the combined might of Serbian nobility. This marked a first step of Turkish conquest of the Balkans, and it created an eternal myth of sacrifice and suffering for Serbian people. Although historians argue that the battle was a draw, nevertheless, it caused a blow to the already fragmented Serbian state, and by the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the Balkans was almost under full Ottoman occupation [1; 2]<sup>1</sup>.

On the south of the region, a vast mountains divide land of Kosovo and Metohija from the lands of what is today Albania. These mountains were home to a cattle-breeding nomadic people that Serbs called “Arbanas” — ancestors of modern-day Albanians. Under Ottoman rule, islamization of the Arbanas tribes started, and by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they became a ruling class in the region with distinct social and political privileges [1; 3]. After massive emigration of Serbs from the region in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the abandoned lands were settled by the Albanian tribes in their first colonization effort [1; 4]. During that time, the Albanian nationalism was slowly developing from the tribal organization. The event that was responsible for shaping the national idea of Albanian population in Kosovo and Metohija was establishment of “The League of Prizren” in 1878, in the city of Prizren, a former capital of the Serbian Empire. It called for a resolution of the Albanian question within the frameworks of the Ottoman Empire, but this movement was fully destroyed with the military action from the side of the Ottomans [1; 5].

After the annexation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, Austro-Hungarian Empire had plans to penetrate further into the Balkans, all the way to the bay of Salonika. Wishing to create loyal clients in the region, which at the same time would keep the growing ambitions of the newly-proclaimed Kingdom of Serbia in check, Vienna launched important cultural initiatives: books about Albanian history were printed and distributed, national coats-of-arms were invented and various grammars were written in order to create a unified Albanian language. The most important cultural initiative was the Illyrian theory about the Albanians' origin, which was launched from the cabinets of Viennese and German scientists and it was skillfully propagated in a simplified form. According to this theory, for which reliable scientific evidence has not been found

---

<sup>1</sup> См. также: *Ratković Bojan*. The Battle of Kosovo: Defeat or Victory? // *Serbianna*. 2009. 22.08. <http://serbianna.com/analysis/archives/110>.

to the present day, the Albanians are the oldest nation in Europe created through a mixture of pre-Roman Illyrian and Pelasgian tribes from an Aryan flock (*Volksschwarm*). Thus, a questionable scientific thesis about the ethno-genesis of a nation was turned into the mythological basis for national integration, which in time, became the main pillar of the Albanians' modern national identity [1; 6].

In 1912, following the Balkan wars, Kosovo and Metohija were liberated from the Ottomans, and territory re-joined Serbian kingdom once again. After the First World War and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the new protector of Albanian interests became Italy, which desired to limit the dominance of the eastern Adriatic coast for the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (renamed Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929). The “Kosovo committee” was established by the Albanian emigrants who struggled for a “Greater Albania”, and it was financed by the Italian government. Under Mussolini's patronage, Albanian emigrants from Kosovo and Metohija, the pro-Bulgarian IMRO movement and the Croatian Ustashe forces, coordinated their actions against Yugoslav kingdom and finally during the fascist invasion, helped in its speedy defeat in April 1941. After its defeat, Yugoslavian territories were given to a number of satellite pro-Nazi states, with Kosovo and Metohija, and a part of western Macedonia becoming a part of Albania, which was under Italian occupation since 1939. The Serbian population found itself victims of the punitive actions of various Albanian militias, with especially murderous violence coming from the infamous Albanian SS “Scanderbeg” division [1; 7].

With the liberation of Yugoslavia by Josip Broz Tito's communist partisan movement and Soviet Red Army, ethnic Albanians started a rebellion at the beginning of 1945. After the rebellion was crushed, Tito decided that Kosovo and Metohija will remain a part of Serbia within the new Soviet type federal system. Communist Yugoslavia was organized as a federation on the Soviet model, with establishment of new nations after 1945, such as Macedonians, Montenegrins and Bosnian Muslims, as a way to establish ethnic balance opposed to the political and military domination of the Serbs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Kosovo and Metohija was at first an autonomous region, as defined by 1946 Constitution, and then autonomous province within Serbia, as per 1963 Constitution<sup>2</sup>. Finally,

---

<sup>2</sup> Устав Федеративне Републике Југославије, 1946. [http://www.arhivyu.gov.rs/active/sr-latin/home/glavna\\_navigacija/leksikon\\_jugoslavije/konstitutivni\\_akti\\_jugo-](http://www.arhivyu.gov.rs/active/sr-latin/home/glavna_navigacija/leksikon_jugoslavije/konstitutivni_akti_jugo-)

it became an autonomous province only formally linked with Serbia, as per constitutional amendments 1968–1971 and 1974 Constitution, with competencies that were hardly any different from those of the republics (lacking only the right for self-determination) [1]<sup>3</sup>.

The systematic Albanization of the province of Kosovo in the administration, the judiciary and the police was followed by education of ethnic-Albanian population on school manuals imported from Albania, imbued with nationalist mythology and hate towards Yugoslavia. The theory of the Albanians as descents of Illyrians, the oldest people in the Balkans and therefore natives in Kosovo, became a simplified political program of national discrimination — all the non-Albanian population were considered as intruders on indigenous Albanian soil [1; 6; 2].

This all led to the frustration by the Serbian population, and provided a basis for Slobodan Milosevic's rise to power in 1987, who presented himself as a protector of Serbian national interests. The ethnic Albanians responded with a relentless series of strikes and demonstrations aware of the fact that the abolition of the autonomy based on the 1974 Constitution, meant, in fact, the abolition of all elements of Kosovo statehood. Their actions only strengthened Milosevic positions as the Serb national leader. The results were the limitation of autonomy, unrest and police repression in Kosovo and Metohija [1].

Starting in the 1990s, ethnic Albanian separatists waged a campaign of terrorism against Yugoslavian security forces and non-ethnic Albanian civilians in Kosovo, forming the armed terrorist group called “Kosovo Liberation Army” (KLA). The Yugoslavian government crackdown against the KLA was not criticized initially because even the U.S. State Department recognized it as a terrorist organization, given its attacks on Serbian police, military, and civilians [8]. Nevertheless, even though the KLA engaged in attacks on Serbian population in Kosovo, conducted reprisals against ethnic Albanians who “collaborated” with the Serbian government, and bombed police stations and cafes known to be frequented by Serb officials, (killing innocent civilians in the process), by 1999, the KLA received financial and logistical support from United States and other Western countries [9].

---

slavije/ustav\_fnrj.html; Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963. <http://mojustav.rs/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Ustav-SFRJ-iz-1963.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1974. <http://mojustav.rs/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Ustav-SFRJ-iz-1974.pdf>.

In February 1999, NATO proposed so-called Rambouillet Agreement, which initial idea was to broker peace between Yugoslavia and ethnic Albanians living on Kosovo and Metohija land. Soon, it was apparent that it was used as ultimatum of United States towards the Yugoslavia as the “Appendix B” of the treaty demanded full access of NATO military personnel on the territory of Yugoslavia, full legal immunity of NATO forces for any crimes committed on the territory of the Yugoslavia, access to full telecommunication and radio service of the country, as well right to impose change to any infrastructure they see fit [10]<sup>4</sup>. The Yugoslavian side decided to refuse this ultimatum, as it was nothing less than a full occupation of Yugoslavia by the NATO forces, and not at all peace deal between Serbs and Albanians, as it was originally presented. This was used as a pretext of Western governments and media to show that Yugoslavia rejects diplomatic solution, and that only military intervention is a valid option to stop the “humanitarian” crisis on Kosovo and Metohija [11].

On 24<sup>th</sup> March of 1999, NATO forces started operation “Merciful Angel”, that lead to 78 days of war with Yugoslavia<sup>5</sup>. NATO aggression was responsible for the war crimes committed against the civilian population of Yugoslavia, with more than 2500 dead and 14.000 wounded. NATO forces launched 1.300 cruise missiles and dropped over 37.000 cluster bombs, targeting TV stations, schools, hospitals, residential buildings, bridges, trains and buses<sup>6</sup>. In addition, NATO forces dropped around 10 to 15 tons of depleted uranium on the territory of Yugoslavia, which is responsible for massive epidemic of cancer among the population of Serbia and Montenegro [12]. War ended with signing of so-called “Kumanovo agreement” between NATO and Yugoslavia, which saw retreat of Yugoslavian security forces from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, and establishment of the KFOR (“Kosovo Force”), NATO-led security force<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> См. также: Appendix B from the Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo Rambouillet, France, 1999. February 23. [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/990123\\_RambouilletAccord.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/990123_RambouilletAccord.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Хабаров А. Операция «Милосердный ангел»: уран для Косово // Вести.ru. 02.03.2014. <https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=1339216>.

<sup>6</sup> Janković Andriana, Božović Nenad, Latas Aleksandar, Janačković Branko. Da se ne zaboravi: 19 godina od NATO bombardovanja Jugoslavije // Blic. 2018. March 24. <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/da-se-ne-zaboravi-19-godina-od-nato-bombardovanja-jugoslavije/mxn3wx6>.

<sup>7</sup> Bataković Dušan T. Surviving in Ghetto-like Enclaves: The Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija, 1999–2007. [http://www.batakovic.com/en/full-story/21/2012/02/22/surviving-in-ghetto-like-enclaves\\_-the-serbs-of-kosovo-and-metohija\\_-1999-2007.html](http://www.batakovic.com/en/full-story/21/2012/02/22/surviving-in-ghetto-like-enclaves_-the-serbs-of-kosovo-and-metohija_-1999-2007.html).

Kosovo and Metohija were soon divided between ethnic Albanians and Serb-dominated north, and isolated enclaves south of the river Ibar<sup>8</sup>. United States military base on Kosovo, “*Camp Bondsteel*”, was established shortly after the war near the city of Uroševac (Урошеваци), and it is considered second largest U.S. military base in Europe<sup>9</sup>. Besides being strongpoint of United States armed forces in South-Eastern Europe, it also served as a CIA “black site” for holding suspected terrorists, with the knowledge of leading EU member states<sup>10</sup>.

Besides heavy presence of international peacekeeping and security forces, incidents between Serbian and ethnic Albanian population on Kosovo and Metohija continued to occur<sup>11</sup>. In March 2004, during the full presence of 20.000 members of international forces in Kosovo, ethnic Albanian population initiated a pogrom of ethnic Serbian population. 4,012 Serbs were driven from their homes, more than 900 houses belonging to Serbs, Romas and other minorities were set on fire, six towns and ten villages were ethnically cleaned, while 35 Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries from medieval times were destroyed and desecrated<sup>12</sup>.

In 2008, ethnic Albanians declared unilateral independence in 2008 without referendum, but with the support of USA and majority of EU countries. Serbia Russia and China were among the majority of countries that rejected this move, and Serbia sought international validation and support for its stance — that the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence is “illegal” at the General Assembly of the United Nations. In 2010, International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled out that “that the adoption of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Camp Bondsteel: Inside Look at US Military Enclave in Balkans // Sputnik News. 2016. March 28. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201603281037105115-camp-bondsteel-serbia-kosovo-military-camp>.

<sup>10</sup> Clandestine Camps in Europe Everyone Knew What Was Going On in Bondsteel // Spiegel Online. 2005. December 5. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/ clandestine-camps-in-europe-everyone-knew-what-was-going-on-in-bondsteel-a-388556.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Chamberlain Gethin, Pancevski Bojan. Ethnic ‘cleansing’ threat to Serbs in Kosovo // The Telegraph. 2007. December 2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/1571265/Ethnic-cleansing-threat-to-Serbs-in-Kosovo.html>; Fisk Robert. Serbs murdered by the hundred since ‘liberation’ // The Independent. 1999. November 24. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/serbs-murdered-by-the-hundred-since-liberation-1128350.html>; Bird Chris. Serbs flee Kosovo revenge attacks // The Guardian. 1999. June 12. <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1999/jul/21/guardianweekly.guardianweekly11>.

<sup>12</sup> 11 years since “March Pogrom” of Serbs in Kosovo // B92. 2015. March 17. [https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2015&mm=03&dd=17&nav\\_id=93505](https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2015&mm=03&dd=17&nav_id=93505).

declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate general international law, Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) or the Constitutional Framework [adopted on behalf of UNMIK by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General]”, and that “consequently the adoption of that declaration did not violate any applicable rule of international law”<sup>13</sup>.

Following several years of sporadic clashes between the ethnic-Serbs and the Albanians in the province, EU brokered a treaty between Serbian government and the “government of the Republic of Kosovo”, the so-called “Brussels agreement” in 2013, by which Serbia was bound to withdraw its parallel institutions from municipalities with Serbian majority. In return, Association of Serbian Municipalities was to be established, which would give limited self-governance to Serbs within legal framework of “Republic of Kosovo”<sup>14</sup>. This agreement came under lot of critic, as it looked like that Serbia indirectly recognized independence of “Republic of Kosovo”<sup>15</sup>.

The “Republic of Kosovo” is today recognized as an independent state by 112 members of the United Nations, and 23 members of the European Union. Countries that are not recognizing Kosovo independence, besides Serbia, include Russia, China, and India, majority of African and South American countries, as well as Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania, and Greece as EU member states. It also became a member of IMF and World Bank Group in 2009, European bank for reconstruction and development in 2012 and South-East European Cooperation Process in 2015<sup>16</sup>. Never-

---

<sup>13</sup> ICJ rules on Kosovo's Declaration of Independence // The Hague Justice Portal. <http://www.haguejusticeportal.net/index.php?id=11906>.

<sup>14</sup> *Nasković Đorđe, Cimili Zana*. Tri godine Briselskog sporazuma, još dosta otvorenih pitanja // N1. 2016. April 19. <http://rs.n1info.com/a153319/Vesti/Vesti/Tri-godine-Briselskog-sporazuma.html>; Haradinaj želi da ospori Briselski sporazum // PTC. 2017. November 29. <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/politika/2954785/haradinaj-zeli-da-ospori-briselski-sporazum.html>.

<sup>15</sup> *Karabeg Omer*. Da li je Srbija Briselskim sporazumom indirektno priznala Kosovo // Radio Slobodna Evropa. 2013. April 21. <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/most-rse-da-li-je-briselskim-sporazumom-srbija-indirektno-priznala-kosovo/24964279.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Press Release: Kosovo Becomes the International Monetary Fund's 186th Member // IMF. 2009. June 29. <http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/14/01/49/pr09240>; Kosovo Joins World Bank Group Institutions // World Bank Group. 2009. June 29. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,contentMDK:22230081~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>; Shareholders and Board of Governors // European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. <http://www.ebrd.com/shareholders-and-board-of-governors.html>; *Maccarty Charles*. Kosovo becomes

theless, “Republic of Kosovo” is still not member of the UN, which would fully confirm its legal status as an independent country.

There are opinions that the real value of this region for the Western interests lies in its mineral wealth, with just the deposits of the lignite coal estimated to be around 14.7 billion metric tons<sup>17</sup>. It is followed by Lead and Zinc deposits (58.7 million tons), Nickel (13 million tons), Bauxite (2.7 million tons), and Magnesite (3 million tons)<sup>18</sup>. Back in 1998, American journalist and political writer Sara Flounders wrote that the conflict that was brewing on Kosovo and Metohija was “the war about the mines” and “mineral wealth”, and that this was the primary reason why KLA was trained, financed and equipped with high-tech weapons by U.S. and Germany<sup>19</sup>. In 2016, Canadian-based energy firm Envidity Energy Inc, chaired by retired US General and commander of NATO bombing of Yugoslavia Wesley Clark, got the permit from “Government of Republic of Kosovo” search for coal on more than a third of Kosovo’s total territory<sup>20</sup>. This can be seen as one of the evidence that some of the war goals of US and NATO were indeed mineral riches of Kosovo region, and that the retired commander of NATO forces got his reward for the part he played in these events.

In January 2018, one of the most prominent leaders of Serbs on Kosovo and Metohija, Oliver Ivanović, was shot dead in front of his office in the town of Kosovska Mitrovica, which once again raised the tensions between the Serbian and the Albanian population<sup>21</sup>. After the NATO aggression in 1999, Oliver Ivanović took up senior position in the newly-formed Serb National Council, where he stayed until 2001. He later served in Serbia’s Kosovo Coordination Center and as state secretary in Serbia’s

---

South-East Coop. Process member. 2015. May 23. <http://news.videonews.us/kosovo-becomes-south-east-coop-process-member-2318649.html>.

<sup>17</sup> 2014 Minerals Yearbook: KOSOVO [ADVANCE RELEASE] // U.S. Department of the Interior/U.S. Geological Survey. 2016. <https://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2014/myb3-2014-kv.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> *Tzanetakou Nefeli*. Kosovo: Attention focused on mineral wealth // IBNA. 2018. February 22. <http://www.balkaneu.com/kosovo-attention-focused-on-mineral-wealth>.

<sup>19</sup> *Flounders Sara*. Kosovo: 'The war is about the mines' // Межведомственный аналитический центр. 30.07.1998. [https://iacenter.org/folder04/kosovo\\_mines.htm](https://iacenter.org/folder04/kosovo_mines.htm).

<sup>20</sup> Brothers in Profit: How to Make Money on NATO Bombings of Yugoslavia // Sputnik News. 2016. September 17. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201609171045409350-kosovo-clark-albright>.

<sup>21</sup> Oliver Ivanovic shot six times, dies of his wounds // B92. 2018. January 17. [https://www.b92.net/eng/news/crimes.php?yyyy=2018&mm=01&dd=16&nav\\_id=103274](https://www.b92.net/eng/news/crimes.php?yyyy=2018&mm=01&dd=16&nav_id=103274).



specially designated Kosovo Ministry. He has also served as a deputy in Kosovo “parliament”. In 2014, he was detained by “Republic of Kosovo” authorities on suspicion of war crimes. He was convicted to 9 years in prison, but his conviction was overturned on appeal. Ivanović had spent over three years in jail before being released. He was also a leader of the “Freedom, Democracy, Justice” Initiative, a political organization active in Serbian-dominated areas in Kosovo. His political activity has led him into conflict with officials of “Republic of Kosovo” government, but he also didn’t support the policies of the current government of Serbia<sup>22</sup>.

The regional media reported that Mr. Ivanović came under pressure, intimidation and smear campaign created by the official Belgrade during the “Republic of Kosovo” parliament elections at the end of 2017. Four members of Ivanović’s party withdrew from the candidate list, while the Srpska Lista (officially supported by the president of Serbia) became dominant political representative of the Serbian population. Few months before his death, he publicly expressed concerns about the heavy presence of criminal elements in his hometown of Kosovska Mitrovica, and threats he faced from them<sup>23</sup>.

Even though there were political disagreements between Mr. Ivanović and official Belgrade, his assassination was called “an act of terrorism” by the president of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić<sup>24</sup>. Unfortunately, eight months after the assassination of Oliver Ivanović, there are no suspects nor it is known who might have ordered the assassination.

The latest developments in the region suggest that there is a possibility of both Serbian and ethnic-Albanian representatives to negotiate “territorial exchange” between Serbia and “Republic of Kosovo”, as it is evident from president Vučić’s speeches<sup>25</sup>. The idea of land-swaps includes Serbia receiving back under its controls smaller, northern part of Kosovo and

---

<sup>22</sup> *Janjevic Darko*. Who was Oliver Ivanovic, the murdered Serb politician in Kosovo? // Deutsche Welle. 2018. January 16. <http://www.dw.com/en/who-was-oliver-ivanovic-the-murdered-serb-politician-in-kosovo/a-42168200>.

<sup>23</sup> Top Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic shot dead // BBC. 16.12.2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42701712>; Glavne Vučićeve poruke u Kosovskoj Mitrovici: Ne priznajemo Kosovo, rešenje ni na vidiku! // Sputnik Srbija. 2018. September 9. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/politika/201809091117124203-vucic-mitrovica-trg-obracanje>.

<sup>24</sup> Glavne Vučićeve poruke u Kosovskoj Mitrovici: Ne priznajemo Kosovo, rešenje ni na vidiku!

<sup>25</sup> Vučić: Neće dozvoliti podelu Kosova // N1. 2018. July 25. <http://rs.n1info.com/a406756/Vesti/Vucic-o-podeli-Kosova.html>; *Wagener Volker*. Serbia and Kosovo moot

Metohija which is settled by majority of ethnic-Serbs still living in the province, while the “Republic of Kosovo” would receive two or three bordering Serbian municipalities where ethnic-Albanians constitute a majority of population<sup>26</sup>. Surprisingly, the main patrons of ethnic Albanians and “Republic of Kosovo”, the United States, signaled a shift in their “no border change” policy recently, as John Bolton, the US national security advisor, stated that “if Kosovo and Serbia reach an agreement that is satisfactory to both of them, I think that we (US) would unquestionably support them”<sup>27</sup>. Around same time, several news reports and opinion pieces published in the New York Times, Washington Post, BBC and Politico are in their message supportive to the idea of the partition, stating that establishing borders on the principle of ethnic division could be solution in this case to the frozen conflict between the Serbians and the Albanians<sup>28</sup>. On the other hand, Serbian Orthodox Church, opposition parties and a part of the Serbian public strongly oppose any such deals, as it would lead to final recognition of “Republic of Kosovo”, loss of any right to re-integrate the whole province back to Serbia, loss of national and cultural heritage and potential exodus of Serbian population that reside in the ethnic-Albanian dominant parts of the province<sup>29</sup>. Additionally, German Chancellor Angela Merkel for now expressed her disagreement for any border change

---

map redraw in historic land swap // Deutsche Welle. 2018. September 6. <https://www.dw.com/en/serbia-and-kosovo-moot-map-redraw-in-historic-land-swap/a-45389705>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Bolton: U. S. would support agreement between Serbia and Kosovo // The Washington Post. 2018. August 24. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/bolton-us-would-support-agreement-between-serbia-and-kosovo/2018/08/24/a76a4126-a7bd-11e8-ad6f-080770dcddc2\\_video.html?utm\\_term=.db947135d64e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/bolton-us-would-support-agreement-between-serbia-and-kosovo/2018/08/24/a76a4126-a7bd-11e8-ad6f-080770dcddc2_video.html?utm_term=.db947135d64e).

<sup>28</sup> *Kupchan Charles A.* An Offensive Plan for the Balkans That the U.S. Should Get Behind // The New York Times. 2018. September 13. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/13/opinion/kosovo-serbia-land-swap.html> commentsContainer; *Johnson Carter.* Kosovo and Serbia might redraw their border. Could this keep them from going to war? // The Washington Post. 2018. September 10. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/10/kosovo-and-serbia-might-redraw-their-border-could-this-keep-them-from-going-to-war/?utm\\_term=.856abdd1a930](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/10/kosovo-and-serbia-might-redraw-their-border-could-this-keep-them-from-going-to-war/?utm_term=.856abdd1a930); *Prelec Marko.* A Balkan border change the West should welcome // Politico. 2018. August 23. <https://www.politico.eu/article/a-balkan-border-change-the-west-eu-should-welcome-kosovo-serbia-land-swap>; *Delauney Guy.* Kosovo-Serbia talks: Why land swap could bridge divide // BBC. 06.09.2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45423835>.

<sup>29</sup> *Knezevic Gordana.* 'Cybermonk,' Bane of Nationalists, Likens Serbia-Kosovo Territory Swap To 'Ethnic Cleansing' // Radio Free Europe. 06.09.2018. <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbian-abbot-likens-territory-swap-to-ethnic-cleansing-/29475725.html>; *Mitropolit Amfilohije* odgovorio na pitanje: Šta znači podela Kosova // Sputnik Srbija.

in the Balkans, while Russian ambassador to Serbia, Alexander Chepurin, stated that for Russia, any agreement between two sides is agreeable, as long as it is understood that Russian Federation is strongly adhering to the Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council, that only Belgrade and representatives of ethnic Albanians can agree about status and the degree of autonomy of the province and that the Belgrade has to be free from the pressure coming from the West<sup>30</sup>.

The question about future of Serbia and its province of Kosovo and Metohija remains as open as ever. Any decision made by the leadership about potential land-swap agreement has to be confirmed by a referendum from both sides, Serbian and the ethnic-Albanian — and for now, parts of both publics are vocal against such agreement. Perhaps the time has not yet come to propose definite option for resolution of this territorial and ethnic conflict, which is rooted much farther in the past than just a few decades, which is the usual perception of this conflict. Nevertheless, it is perhaps needed to say that if Serbia recognizes the independence of Kosovo and Metohija, it will not lose only its holy land and cradle of Serbian state, but also a vast mineral wealth that, if exploited properly and with care for the environment, can bring much needed revival to Serbian economy and standard of living. But for that, Serbia needs more political and possibly financial support in the form of increased investments from its traditional allies in safekeeping of its sovereignty and territorial integrity — Russia and China, as they are the only countries that can successfully provide the counter-balance to the Western influence and ambitions in this region.

## References

1. Ratković Bojan. Kosovo-Metohija: The Serbo-Albanian Conflict. *EЛЕКТРОНСКА БИБЛИОТЕКА КУЛТУРЕ КОСОВА МЕТОХИЈЕ. Пројекат Растко*. [https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/batakovic/batakovic-kosovo\\_eng.html](https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/batakovic/batakovic-kosovo_eng.html).
2. Batakovic Dusan. The Kosovo Chronicle — Kosovo and Metohia, a historical survey. *EЛЕКТРОНСКА БИБЛИОТЕКА КУЛТУРЕ КОСОВА МЕТОХИЈЕ Пројекат Растко*. [https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/kosovo\\_chronicles/kc\\_part1b.html](https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/kosovo_chronicles/kc_part1b.html).

---

2018. June 28. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/politika/201806281116279851-amfilohije-kosovo-podela>.

<sup>30</sup> *Cerovina Jelena*. Kosovska “crvena linija” podelila Zapad // Политика. 2018. September 11. <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/410976/Kosovska-crvena-linija-podelila-Zapad>; Čepurin: Kosovo da se vrati u pravno i državno polje Srbije // Sputnik Srbija. 2018. September 10. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/rusija/201809101117135186-kosovo-cepurin-srbija>.

3. Radovanović Milovan. Kosovo and Metohia — A Geographical and Ethnocultural Entity in the Republic of Serbia. 1995. *Пројекат Растко*. <https://www.rastko.rs/istorija/srbi-balkan/mradovanovic-kosovo.html>.
4. Terzic Slavenko. Kosovo and Metohija in the Serbian history / Historical institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. *Пројекат Растко*. <https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/sanu/Kosovo.html>.
5. Bogdanović Dimitrije. The Kosovo Question — Past and Present, Old Serbia and Albanians. 1999. *Пројекат Растко*. <https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/sanu/old-serbia.html>.
6. Dimitrije Bogdanovic. Книга о Косову. Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Monographs. Vol. DLXVI. Belgrade, 1986. *Пројекат Растко*. [http://novi.uciteljne-znalica.org/PDF/arhiva%20autora/991\\_Bogdanovi%C4%87,%20Dimitrije%20-%20Knjiga%20o%20Kosovu.pdf](http://novi.uciteljne-znalica.org/PDF/arhiva%20autora/991_Bogdanovi%C4%87,%20Dimitrije%20-%20Knjiga%20o%20Kosovu.pdf).
7. Terzic Slavenko. Kosovo, Serbian Issue and the Greater Albania Project / Historical institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. *ЕЛЕКТРОНСКА БИБЛИОТЕКА КУЛТУРЕ КОСОВА МЕТОХИЈЕ*. *Пројекат Растко*. <https://www.rastko.rs/kosovo/istorija/sanu/GrtAlb.html>.
8. *Fulton John R.* NATO and the KLA: How the West Encouraged Terrorism. *Global Security Studies*. Fall 2010, vol. I, issue 3. <http://globalsecuritystudies.com/NATO%20and%20the%20KLA%20TWO.pdf>.
9. *Scott Peter Dale*, The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire, and the Future of America. Berkley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007. [https://books.google.ru/books?id=op39ymd2um0C&pg=PA131&redir\\_esc=yv=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ru/books?id=op39ymd2um0C&pg=PA131&redir_esc=yv=onepage&q&f=false).
10. Becker Richard. *Chapter 22. The Rambouillet Accord: Pretext for a War of Aggression*. Межведомственный аналитический центр. [https://iacenter.org/warcrime/22\\_rambo.htm](https://iacenter.org/warcrime/22_rambo.htm).
11. Sotirović Vladislav B., Kosovo's "Independence": Dilemmas of NATO's Aggression in 1999. *Global Research*, 2018, March 7. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/kosovos-independence-dilemmas-of-natos-aggression-in-1999/5631283>.
12. Hänsel Rudolf. Aftermath of the US-NATO War on Yugoslavia. The Unspoken Impacts of Radioactive Depleted Uranium Ammunition?. *Global Research*, 2017, December 24. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/aftermath-of-the-us-nato-war-on-yugoslavia-the-unspoken-impacts-of-radioactive-depleted-uranium-ammunition/5623803>.

Author's information:

*Aleksa Filipovich* — Master of IR; [aleksa.filipovic89@gmail.com](mailto:aleksa.filipovic89@gmail.com)

## Косово и Метохија — историја и современно развој региона

*Алекса Филиповић*

*Санкт-Петербургски државни универзитет,  
Росијска Федерација, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Универзитетска наб., 7–9*

В статье представлена история сербских земель Косово и Метохия и их современное состояние после агрессии НАТО, что привело к появлению признанного государства Косово, которое было создано вопреки интересам народов Сербии и по сути стало политическим подарком представителям мусульманской Албании. Большое внимание уделено анализу исторического развития сербских земель, на основе этого анализа раскрыта трагедия современной Сербии, которая потеряла часть своей исторической территории, показано, как это отразилось на событиях европейского региона и международных отношений.

**Ключевые слова:** Косово, Метохия, агрессия, Албания историческая, Албания мусульманская, Средние века, православие, исламизация, мировая война, Югославия, столкновения.

Контактная информация:

*Алекса Филипович* — магистрант; [aleksa.filipovic89@gmail.com](mailto:aleksa.filipovic89@gmail.com)