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the territorial integrity of the State primarily because it believes in strict compliance with the principles of international law, stability and predictability in international relations. Russia regards Western actions as setting a precedent in the Balkans and Kosovo's self-proclaimed sovereignty as affecting the unrecognized states in the post-Soviet area.

The NATO command makes no secret of the fact that such language as "European prospects" for Belgrade is being used to prevent Serbia from moving "under Russia's wing." Russia can offer Serbia an alternative to EU membership by including it into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The CIS and CSTO charters make provisions for enlarging these organizations by taking in any sovereign states, subject to approval by all member countries. Russian MPs have indicated that they will be responsive to such an initiative on the part of Belgrade. A new union, experts are convinced, would be beneficial both to the Serbs and to Russia.

Other foreign policy options include keeping the Kosovo issue within the UN framework, as well as the possibility of Belgrade's appeal to the International Court of Justice to take immediate action to suspend Kosovo's recognition pending a court ruling.

There is a pressing need to strengthen stability as a key factor in funneling international political processes into the generally and traditionally acceptable channel of international law. The Russian Federation stands firm on unreserved compliance with international law, primarily the principles of international law in foreign politics.

NOTES

¹ *Die Welt*, 17.02.2008.

² Mappert-Niediek, Norbert.//*D'e Zeit online*, 18.02.2008.

³ Schmid, Thomas./AD/e *Welt*, 18.02.2008.

⁴ *Washington Post*, 20.02.08.

⁵ Kornelius, *StefanJ/Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 19.02.2008.

⁶ Rahr *A.IIRossiiskaia gazeta*, 19.02.08.

⁷ Paulus, *AndreasJ/Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 16.02.2008.

⁸ Bothe, *MichaeU/Tageszeitung*, 17.02.2008.

⁹ Posener, *MsaIIDie Welt*, 20.02.2008.

Kosovo Situation Analysis Conducted at the Institute of Europe, RAN

Winners and Losers

Aleksei Gromyko, Deputy Director

HAS KOSOVO'S SELF-PROCLAIMED INDEPENDENCE opened Pandora's box or given the other separatist movements in Europe and the rest of the world the green light? Is the entire situation surrounding Kosovo "unique" and is Yugoslavia's disintegration really over and have the western Balkans finally embarked on the road to peace and stability?

Slobodan Milosevic's policy was largely mistaken and the bombings of Yugoslavia in 1999 amounted to an unlawful and disproportionate use of force by NATO. The war could have not taken place at all had Yugoslavia's internal problem not coincided with the unfavorable external circumstances.

First, Russia was at the lowest point ever in history after the USSR collapsed and was not an independent actor on the world arena. Second, Western strategists' minds were consumed with then-fashionable humanitarian intervention concept preached by Tony Blair with the passion of a missionary. Third, NATO was at a crossroads of its post-Soviet history feverishly looking for a rationale for its further existence convincing to itself and the world public.

Who stands to gain from the situation? In the first place, it is the Albanians. In the second, it is the United States, which pulled a brilliant PR stunt thanks to Kosovo. Third, it is the North Atlantic Alliance, for which Albania, grateful to its Kosovo brothers and sisters and now a member of this military bloc, will not stint on its own troops. Fourth, it is the other separatist movements for whom the uniqueness of the Kosovo situation argument isn't worth a damn. Fifth, it is the countries that see international law as a hindrance to reaching their narrow national goals. No wonder Turkey had waited for the declaration of Kosovo's independence before its army invaded northern Iraq.

Who stands to lose from independence of Kosovo? It is Serbia and dozens of the countries (Christian, Muslim or any other), which face the problem of separatism, including above all Spain, Romania, Cyprus, Russia, Turkey, Iraq, China, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and many African countries. Those who also stand to lose from this are many countries that

perceive no danger in the Kosovo precedent. Countries like Great Britain, for example. Yes, it has been possible to settle the Ulster problem, at least for a while, but the example of Kosovo is heartwarming indeed for the IRA irreconcilable or Scottish nationalists. The European Union clearly stands to lose because the differences over Kosovo only delay the putting in place of a common foreign policy and security. Another loser is the UN whose Charter and resolutions have once again been disregarded by Washington, London and a number of other major capitals.

There is of course a favorable scenario among the scenarios of a further course of events: the Serbs will accept the situation and the Albanians will stop at what they have gained, the Balkans will become stabilized, and separatists of every stripe will come to realize that Kosovo is a unique case. Recent years (Afghanistan, Iraq) and even months (Somalia) brought some graphic examples of how things may not go as planned, how the use of military force and coercion prove futile in the settlement of conflicts of various nature. What if the Serbs should not accept the situation and the Albanians not stop at what they have gained and the separatists fail to realize the fact?

I would also like to explode the myths surrounding the Kosovo issue. Myth one says the issue is unique. They see its uniqueness in that NATO and the United Nations are involved in the settling of the conflict inside the country. As regards the very nature of the conflict between the Serbs and Albanians, this is a classic example of ethnic separatism.

Myth two is that Kosovo's independence is a reward for fighting against genocide committed by Serbs. The only thing is that no proof of genocide (the intent to destroy in whole an ethnic group) has even been found for the simple reason that there was simply no genocide. You will recall that there is nearly universal recognition of genocide committed by Turks against Armenians or by Germans against Jews. If the acts of war crimes (war crimes were committed by both warring sides in Kosovo and generally in the recent Balkan wars) are sufficient proof of genocide committed against Kosovo's Albanians, we should also recognize that Israelis are carrying out genocide against Palestinians and that Americans and their allies are carrying out genocide against Iraqis, that the British subjected to genocide Catholics in Northern Ireland and so on. Few people doubt the absurdity of these claims, but an exception is made for ethnic Albanians.

Myth three is that Kosovo's independence is a way to promote democracy. Is a Kosovo of 2008 more democratic than was a Kosovo of 1999? It is rather more clannish, nationalistic and ethnically cleaner, more militarized and more professional in terms of drug trafficking, but what democracy has to do with it? While the world public would not recognize as democratic the referendums on independence, for example, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia because of the refugee problem, why few people come to consider why 200,000 Serbia refugees didn't take part in the elections in Kosovo? There was ethnic cleansing

in Kosovo, but it was only against Serbs, not Albanians. Instead of consolidating democracy in Serbia itself, Kosovo's independence is clearly dealing a blow to it. Who could have imagined not so long ago that such originally pro-Western politicians as Vojislav Kostunica or Boris Tadic would have to move closer to the position of the radical Serbian nationalists?

Myth four is Kosovo's viability as an independent nation. This is the weakest link in the arguments of the advocates of Kosovo's separation. Having declared independence, Kosovo has not become a more or less viable entity at least because the de-facto (military, political and economic) protectorship over it has grown even stronger and the motivations of the separatists' leadership that has attained the main objective for proving its viability have weakened. Besides, whereas many nations and organizations around the world recognized the existence of the Kosovo problem and were in sympathy with Kosovo's Albanians, many of them now do not recognize Kosovo as an independent nation and are perhaps more in sympathy with the Serbs.

Myth five is that Kosovo's independence will appease Albanian nationalism. The confidence of the "builders" of new nations and democracies in the ability to control spontaneous nationalist movements in a clannish and criminalized environment is puzzling.

Myth six is that Kosovo's independence has been recognized in consequence of having exhausted all possible alternatives to settle the conflict. It is possible that the Ahtisaari plan has outlived its usefulness, it is possible that the US administration's patience has given out, but what has this to do with the difficult talks between the Serbs and Albanians? They argue that the talks were too long and inconclusive. How long? Longer than the Northern Cyprus problem has been in existence, or since 1974? Or longer than the Palestinian problem, since 1948?

If the powers that be had been telling Kosovo's Albanians for ten years on end "try to get from the Serbs as many concessions as you can and agree" instead of "don't agree with the Serbs under any circumstances," what would the talks have ended in? The thing is that whereas in resolving, for example, the Ulster issue the external players (Ireland, USA) were helping the reaching of agreement between the feuding sides (Catholics and Protestants), in Kosovo the external players (USA and its allies) did all to see the talks fail.

Russian diplomats were in an extremely difficult situation. In the context of the Kosovo problem, Russia finds itself between the hammer of separatism in the North Caucasus and the anvil of "unrecognized states" in the former Soviet Union. Moscow advocated strict observance of international law and talks between Pristina and Belgrade for as long as it would take to reach a compromise. The other countries, however, took a different course of action thinking that, as far as they are concerned, every law has a loophole. Russia is right insisting on fair rules of the game in looking for a balance between the territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. But could you win if the other play-

ers use marked cards? Up to this moment, Russia wore white gloves to deal with the Kosovo problem, but will the circumstances make it roll up its sleeves and recognize the uniqueness of the unrecognized states where the Soviet Union used to be?

Will Kosovo Become a Sustainable Nation?

Pavel KandeV,

Head of the Ethnic and Political Conflicts Sector

THE WARINESS OF THE SERBIAN AUTHORITIES who refrained from extremely destabilizing measures such as economic embargo and energy blockade or activities to affirm their clout in the Serb-populated northern part of the province are evidence that they would rather draw the line at political and diplomatic moves. Equally moderate was the conduct of the leaders of the republic of Serbia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is in clear contrast with their former resolute rhetoric. At the same time, the widening political crisis in Belgrade, the collapse of the ruling democratic coalition and government, whatever its final result is, is not going to make Serbia more amenable. All this makes it possible to assume that the "period of transition" may after all be relatively calm, which does not mean that lasting stability will arrive in the region.

Lacking recognition from Serbia and UN decision, the legitimacy of Kosovo's independence and the EU mission will remain questionable. The conflicting jurisdictions of the UN, EU, the authorities of Kosovo and Serbia turn this piece of land into a zone of total lawlessness, which will breed daily conflicts in such practical matters vital for its population as boundaries, citizenship or property rights.

The so-called Albanian question is going to be an even harder test of stability in the Balkans. Kosovo's independence is going to make things even worse. The granting of "controlled" independence to the province doesn't solve any difficult problem there. It is hard to say which of these problems - demographic, economic or social - will prove the bigger obstacle on the road to a credible and democratic state. It is absurd to hope for European standards of conduct even if because of the Africa-like birth rate (the child-woman ratio is 7,8; more than half of the population are under 25 years of age; 30,000 people are added annually to the job market). Most European governments have by now seen how pressing this problem is in their African and Muslim suburbs, while Kosovo as whole is one such suburb. In the absence of more or less reliable statistics, the rate of unemployment is estimated as being between 50 percent and 60 percent or higher, with most of the people employed in providing services for the international missions and in the newly established government institutions.

The province, always subsidized by Yugoslavia's socialist government is most likely to continue to depend on subsidies. Its extremely underdeveloped

industry is at a standstill. Its exports constitute 3 percent of its imports and customs duties make up 70 percent of the budget. Despite the fertile soil and favorable climate, its agriculture mainly consists of people growing crops for their own consumption. A mere 10 percent of its agricultural units can be classed as commodity producers with 15 percent or 20 percent of other farms that can be described as semi-commercial. Kosovo has too many agricultural workers and excessive manpower resources. 47 percent of the population is the poor and further 13 percent live in abject poverty. It is not coincidental that, according to recent polls, some 50 percent of the young people would like to leave their country. At the moment, 17 percent of Kosovars live in other countries.

During the UN protectorship, Kosovo has gained a stable reputation of Europe's transit point for drugs, smuggled goods and trade in humans. EU experts find that the volume of illicit operations stands at nearly one billion euros, the same as Kosovo's annual budget. Given the very low standard of education and workforce training and the extremely undeveloped infrastructure, few people would want to invest their money there and investments cannot resolve the province's acute socioeconomic problems. Potential investment targets are power production and mining which are capital intensive but which do not create many jobs.

The social pressures on the authorities in the newly formed state will be mounting but the authorities will no longer have the absence of sovereignty as the lightning rod. Therefore, Kosovo will be easing off internal pressures through the tried and tested method of external expansion.

The process of external migration, as neighboring Macedonia and Montenegro get Albanized, will be growing spontaneously. The integration of Albanians will not take place, however. They are against mixed marriages, their political parties are strictly on the ethnic basis, and where Albanians come to settle, they actually oust people of other nationalities in a short space of time (as it happened in Kosovo and Macedonia). The Albanians' archaic social self-organization (a big patriarchal family, unquestionable loyalty to clannish solidarity and the traditional "common law" standards and the vendetta are still deeply rooted in tradition) is evidence that they live in a different historical time, unlike the other peoples in the region, which does explain why they cannot exist side by side.

Therefore, after a brief lull, the "Albanian question" will flare up with a vengeance once again in the neighboring states. Many in Serbia and Russia are inclined to see in an independent Kosovo a "taliban" state. And these fears are not without foundation considering the smooth-running "business relations" with Afghanistan in the field of drug trafficking. It is no accident that Kabul was among the first to recognize Kosovo's independence. It seems that a better analogy for Kosovo is Sicily, and this of course doesn't make Europe any happier.

Back to the Legal Field

Alia Yazykova, Senior Research Fellow

THE "PROBLEM OF KOSOVO" results from the decades of confrontation between the two Balkan ethnic groups. As we see it today, it results from the attempts to solve it forcibly, without taking into account the interests of the Albanian ethnic minority (1999) and the Serb ethnic minority (2008). In both cases, force was used leading to crude violations of existing legal standards. The declaration of Kosovo's independence touched off mass protests among the Serb population in the province, which can easily deteriorate into an armed resistance on ethnic grounds and an attempt to separate its northern areas.

The problem of Kosovo is now the main factor on the political scene in Serbia. The attempts at compromise solutions with the European Union against the backdrop of seeking better relations with Russia greatly complicated the January-February presidential elections. The deployment in Kosovo of the EU mission, after Boris Tadic was reelected as president, sparked a government crisis in Serbia because the EU mission was seen as "railroading" the earlier rejected Ahtisaari plan with its "controlled independence" idea. Serbian politicians reiterated their resolve to protect their country's territorial integrity with all available means save the use of military force. The marches in Belgrade ruled out the possibility of concessions with regard to any forms of independence for the province of Kosovo, which is regarded, in no uncertain terms, as the historical basis of Serbian statehood. At the same time, the split in Serbia's ruling clique widened. Premier Vojislav Kostunica decided to hold early parliamentary elections on May 11, because, early in March, the coalition cabinet turned down the draft resolution of the National Assembly (parliament) of Serbia on Kosovo. The draft said that Serbia would not be forming closer relations with the EU in the event Brussels recognized Kosovo and sent a EU mission there bypassing the UN SC. Kostunica and representatives of the Democratic Party of Serbia and the New Serbia party backed the resolution, but it was opposed by pro-Europe cabinet members from the Democratic Party, G17 Plus who support President Tadic. They believe that Serbia cannot afford giving up plans to join the rest of Europe and steer toward self-imposed isolation.

The Kosovo problem is now one of the knottiest crises in world politics leading to further worsening of relations between Russia and the USA and increasing the discord in the positions and actions within the European Union. As for the United States, it is making no special effort to encourage Kosovar Albanians and thereby not only improving its negative image in the Islamic world but also securing the role of an ally and protector of all Albanians. After NATO opened its doors to Albania this past April, it becomes possible to form new NATO troop contingents to be dispatched to the hot spots in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Balkans policy can also play a role in the presidential cam-

paign in the USA where there is a well-organized Albanian community of half a million.

Kosovo's independence means for the European Union that it takes over the responsibility for stabilizing not only the regions adjacent to Kosovo but also for stabilizing the entire western Balkans where one can hear the calls for redrawing the existing boundaries between Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania to be followed by unifying the lands settled by Albanians. By way of retaliation, similar moves cannot be ruled out not only on the part of the Kosovar Serbs, but also on the part of the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which can unleash streams of refugees who would engulf Europe, as they did in 1999.

The unilateral declaration of independence still does not signify it is recognized worldwide. The nations opposing it include, in addition to Russia and China as permanent members of the UN SC, but many other countries which see in the policy of the USA and European Union a whole range of violations of the principles of international law. Incidentally, the breaking of laws doesn't eliminate them. Under the circumstances, Russia has the possibility to halt the process of de-jure recognition of Kosovo's independence. It has blocked the recognition of Kosovo's independence in the UN SC and directly charged the European Union with encouraging separatism in Europe and the rest of the world.

Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin is convinced that compliance with Resolution 1244 on Kosovo would create the necessary prerequisites for "getting the situation back into the legal framework, looking for a mutually acceptable negotiated solution regarding the future status of Kosovo." The resolution is still in effect: the UN and its Security Council remain within the framework of international law, "and no moves by individual Security Council members change this reality." During its rotating UN Security Council presidency in March, Russia submitted a draft statement to the UN Security Council with a proposal to restart dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on the future status for Kosovo with assistance from the international community. Many Security Council members supported the principal idea of the Russian draft.

Stirring up the Beehive of Neighbors

Liubov' Shishelina, Chief Research Fellow

THE WORLD POWERS more than once used the strained ethnic relations in Eastern Europe, which found itself in the 20th century between two opposing centers of power, for their own geopolitical goals. Repeated attempts to redraw the borders and resettle populations during the first half of the century left a deep mark in the minds of modern East Europeans. The attitudes of these countries to the declaration of Kosovo's independence were influenced not only by the pressures exerted by the USA and its allies, but also by their own ideas of fairness. The first factor was of great importance to Poland and the former Soviet Baltic

republics which promptly recognized Kosovo's independence. Being slow to recognize it on the part of the Czech leadership can well be attributed to President Vaclav Klaus's reasonable fears that the Kosovo precedent would trigger new regional conflicts. Besides, the Czech Republic was swept by a wave of mass protests under the slogan "Kosovo belongs to Serbs." However, the "Slavic solidarity" factor, the Czech and Polish press wrote much about, had no impact on the decisions made by the leadership.

Slovenia's "yes" produced a diplomatic scandal for the USA, after a foreign ministry official of Slovenia, which took over the EU rotating presidency in January 2008, leaked information that the USA had orchestrated the Kosovo independence recognition sequence.

Romania and Slovakia said their resolute "no" while Bulgaria, Croatia and Hungary were among the last to recognize Kosovo's independence after wrenching hesitations. The second factor played the leading role there now.

When President Klaus mentioned the "domino effect" he had in mind not only the ramifications of the Benes decrees which still cloud the Czech Republic's relations with its neighbors, Hungary and Germany, but also the renewed debates over the postwar expulsion of Hungarians and Germans from Czechoslovakia. Admittedly, the problem of post-war territorial settlement at the time, when these countries were members of the Eastern bloc, was accompanied, in a phrase of local historians, by "imposed or autosuggested silence." It was especially painful to Hungary, which lost under the Trianon Treaty of 1920, half of its population and two thirds of land. (This settlement pattern was practically used again after WWII.) The spell of silence was interrupted in the 1980s by the process of democratization started in Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and promising statements from Western politicians, on the other. For example, criticizing the policy of Nicolae Ceausescu in Transylvania, French President Francois Mitterrand spoke in January of 1990 of unfair and ill-defined borders drawn after 1919 and 1945. In 1993, the problem of the region's borders was readdressed by French Premier Edouard Balladur as part of the preparations for drafting the Pact of Stability in Europe. Some politicians in Eastern Europe did believe that the protection of Western democracies gave them a chance to settle amicably the longstanding disputes. (At the same time, nothing, naturally enough, was being said about the protracted conflicts in Western Europe.)

We can state today that the joining of NATO and the EU is no guarantee of stability in the region. The settlement of conflict situations depends as before on the will of East European politicians alone. These determined efforts in the early 2000s helped to ease tensions for some time in Hungarian-Slovak relations. During the last year or two years, relations between the leadership of Slovakia and the ethnic Hungarians, who live in close-knit communities in the country's south, have worsened once again, for which reason the Kosovo precedent is viewed in Slovakia as a potential threat to territorial integrity of the comparatively young Slovak state.

The situation in Serbia's Vojvodina can be seen as rather alarming. The local Serbs, as a "preventive measure," demonstrate to the local Hungarians, from time to time, their readiness to clamp down on "Hungarian nationalists." Hungary, for its part, more than once tried to alert to this the special commissions of the EU and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

We must also mention Germany's special stance. In the summer of 2007, the German ambassador to Budapest said in a statement that after the solving of the Kosovo question would come the turn of Vojvodina. It remains to be seen whether it would or would not come (especially now that there is a political crisis in Hungary), but it is obvious by now that his statement has further strained relations between Hungarians and Serbs in Vojvodina.

The present situation in Transylvania can be described as more peaceful. Following the failed referendum on dual citizenship for expatriates in Hungary in 2004, the Transylvania Hungarians felt very hurt and dissociated themselves from Hungary. Besides, their integration into Romania's politics has been rather successful until recently. Yet, despite the absence of "dangerous activities" among Transylvania's Hungarians, the Romanian leadership rather resolutely spoke against the recognition of Kosovo's independence.

Hungary recognized Kosovo's independence, but there is a dual attitude to the Kosovo precedent in the country. On the one hand, the Hungarians still suffer from the impact of Trianon regarding it as a deep national trauma. They sympathized with the Serbs, from this viewpoint. On the other hand, Kosovo's independence, as a precedent, gives the Hungarians the hope for attention from the international community to their national problem. U.S. Ambassador to Hungary April Foley hinted at this when she was putting pressure on Hungary's foreign ministry. She went so far as to promise the Hungarians broad participation in the Kosovo settlement to gain experience in resolving national minority issues. But it is absolutely obvious that involving Hungary into the Kosovo settlement will even further worsen the already tragically tense Serbian-Hungarian relations and the situation in Vojvodina.

France Returns to Europe through the "Kosovo Window"

Sergei Fedorov, Senior Research Fellow

GENERALLY SPEAKING, the French justify their recognition of Kosovo's independence on the grounds of moral considerations and the impossibility to find a different way out of the deadlock. The idea that Kosovo's independence was declared by actually bypassing the UN and in breach of international law emphasized by Russia and Serbia is dismissed by the French Foreign Minister who says he understands this interpretation, but thinks it unfair.

Considering the bloody nature of the ethnic conflict in Kosovo (the crimes are mainly blamed on Serbs and the country's former leaders) and the

irreconcilable positions of Belgrade and Pristina, Europe, they think in France, had no other choice but to "correct the fundamental mistake of Milosevic and accept this independence as the lesser of the worst decisions." The specificity of the Kosovo conflict rests, according to Paris, on the degree of its cruelty, the bringing in of NATO troops and the intervention of the international community in the shape of the UN.

If we look for areas of agreement between external and internal policy, France's recognition of Kosovo's independence can be, to some extent, seen as a carrot dangled in front of the Muslim community in France whose impact on the country's policy will be growing. By now Islam is already France's second religion, with Muslims accounting for nearly 10 percent of the population. We cannot say whether the mass riots in the autumn of 2005 in the problem suburbs of Paris and other major French cities were or were not directly influenced by the religious factor. Still, no one can guarantee that this influence will not be there in the future.

The government in Paris perceives no threat of a knock-on effect citing the uniqueness of the Kosovo case. Strangely, Paris has no fears even about a possible spike in activism of the Corsican and Breton nationalists.

France's activism with regard to the Kosovo issue was very much in tune with the main goal of the French foreign policy - to bring France back into Europe after the failed referendum on a draft EU constitution in May of 2005, which weakened the country's position in the EU. It was important for the country's new leadership to prove that France was not simply returning, but that it is ready once again to take over the role of a European leader capable of proposing a program of further European integration.

An important component of the program, France thinks, should be the building of a "political Europe" and a "European defense" - France's long-held dream - as a European supplement to NATO. The recognition of Kosovo's independence under EU supervision and the sending there of 1,800 police officers, judges and customs officers in addition to 1,500 KFOR troops constitute a trial run of the new European defense and security policy.

The recognition of the former Serb autonomous region made it possible for France to solve one more delicate problem - to assuage the hurt France caused the United States by blasting its war in Iraq. The shift in the French policy towards Atlantism is evidence of the rethinking of the traditional policy of Gaullism in its foreign policy. It is obvious that France cannot stick to its old strategy of independence based on the principle of being equidistant from the two superpowers now that the world is no longer bipolar. The celebrated slogan of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" has now been replaced with the slogan of a "united Europe together with the Balkans" and the idea of a "Mediterranean community" to back up France's political leadership in the expanded European Union.

Will the situation in the Balkans, in Europe and around the world

become more stable and international relations more trusting in the wake of the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence and its recognition by the majority of the leading countries of the West? Unlike the government in Paris, most French experts and journalists are inclined to doubt this. For example, Hubert Vedrine, former foreign minister in Jospin's government and a shrewd analyst, thinks that the smaller states like Kosovo are economically and politically unviable and they cannot lead to stability in the Balkans.

Russia's position in the final stage of the Kosovo saga encountered thinly disguised irritation in Paris. The French foreign minister thinks that Moscow's stubbornness runs counter to the opinion of the majority of the international community and threatens Russia with political isolation. Bernard Kouchner, an ardent advocate of humanitarian intervention, said in a statement that Moscow's political appetites are aggressive and sometimes even cruel, at least on the verbal level. He is at the same time confident that political wisdom and some appetite for European culture will prevail in Serbia and that would motivate it to move closer to Europe rather than to Russia. This stance of France, according to Jean-Pierre Chevènement (he was a defense and interior minister under Mitterrand), deals a blow at a united Europe, "a Europe of our fathers, a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, a Europe which wants to think that Russia is not a steppe settled by Tatars with fierce eyes, that Slavs are also Europeans - let's be consistent - including Orthodox Slavs."

In the long term, peace can be maintained only by admitting to the EU the western Balkans, including Albania. What is the probable impact of membership of this part of Europe (with a population of 22 million) on European identity which is being discussed so much in Brussels? Can we regard the lure of EU membership as the solution to all the difficult ethnic and religious differences and conflicts? At least, Spain's example does not inspire Brussels with optimism. Brussels is now hostage to its own policy.

The recognition of Kosovo's independence changes the rules of the game on the international arena. This invalidates not only the Yalta and Potsdam treaties, but also the Helsinki agreements.

The reforming of international institutions, including the UN, becomes a matter of practical urgency.

A Lose-Lose Situation

Vladimir Shveitser, Chief Research Fellow

YUGOSLAVIA, COBBLED TOGETHER on the basis of treaties resulting from WWII and imbued with ideology prevailing in the wake of the Nazi defeat, was not meant to be, right from the outset, a nation to last for many centuries. I recall my admiration with that country when, in the late 1960s, I discussed it with a Macedonian. His reaction stunned me: "This is all thanks to Tito. When the mar-

shal is no longer around, there'll be no peace, there'll be a war of all against all." Centrifugal tendencies in Yugoslavia were in evidence as early as in the communist era. When the entire structure of "real socialism" collapsed together with the Berlin Wall and the Soviet communist putsch, the debris especially painfully hurt the peoples who were herded into a federation of autonomous provinces like Kosovo. Besides, the autonomy was taken away from the Kosovars (both Albanian and Serbian!) by the nationalist, at its worst, regime of Milosevic. The comparison that instantly comes to mind is what Georgian nationalist Zviad Gamsakhurdia did with regard to Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We at the same time discover that the contention that "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia" has little credibility. What then do Russians think of Kiev known from their history books as "the mother of Russian cities"? Generally speaking, is it right to superimpose the historical matrix on modern-day ethnic relations? If we do, the entire map of Europe, and not just of Europe, would have to be redrawn.

The divorce between Montenegro and Serbia was the penultimate act in the conflict in former Yugoslavia. The developments along the borders of the European Union could not leave indifferent the countries that initiated new formations of strategic importance. The bombings of Belgrade in 1999 and the bringing in of NATO troops, in addition to everything else, added up to the sad result of the insufficient use, in combating the Milosevic regime, of all measures of a diplomatic nature. The method of peacemaking is puzzling and less than clear. Whereas it became possible in Bosnia to persuade more or less the three ethnic and religious groups to leave intact the government system and not to further break up the small state with mixed populations in many places into smaller entities, the West opted for a different course of action in Kosovo.

Generally speaking, Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan are unlikely to go down in diplomatic history as models of reasoned solutions of the West and the USA, above all. During that period Europe put forward no new Metternichs or Talleyrands. As a result, force gave rise to opposing force and the external presence could not deter big and small instances of ethnic cleansing. In Kosovo, it was the Serb population that was driven out from its own territory.

It is evident that the developments surrounding Kosovo are clearly not in favor of Russia's internal and external policy. There are hardly any people who can claim that giving up on Yeltsin's "take as much sovereignty as you could handle" will for all times become the principle for a fraction of the elite of Russia's ethnic autonomous entities.

In terms of foreign policy, there is a new spiral of problems surrounding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia's attempts to strengthen ties with the unrecognized territories can give another impetus to politicians in Georgia who can't wait to see their country joining NATO. As for chances to have an impact on what already happened in Kosovo, Russia's initiatives can only consist of diplomatic moves. Stronger ties to Serbia, which will be looking up to the EU

despite all the negative aspects of the Kosovo problem primarily in terms of social and economic considerations, will hardly make Russia a more important player in the Balkans.

If the Kosovo precedent touches off hard-to control ethnic processes in the Balkans, the same problems may arise in many rather comfortable countries of Western Europe some time down the road, even if this appears unlikely today. It is obvious that the creation of an independent state of Kosovo, planned as an act of Balkan and European stability, does not look as such in the near and longer term.

"Parade of Sovereignties" and Redivision of the World

Dmitry Furman, Chief Research Fellow

THE RECOGNITION OF KOSOVO'S INDEPENDENCE is a manifestation of the global tendency of the gradual erosion of the order established after WWII on the principle of territorial integrity of states and the virtual "ban of secession." The erosion of the old order is gradually being replaced with a new order whose outlines are impossible to predict. One aspect of this process is a changed attitude to secessions.

What is a "nation" and what are the boundaries within which it has the right to self-determination, what is its "historical territory," does migration on its territory of other peoples that became the majority there undermine the principle of territorial integrity? These and other such questions have no definitive answers.

The "ban on secessions" played an important part in the maintenance of peace. It is terrible even to imagine the consequences if the colonial empires were to be crumbling in the way Austria-Hungary was and if the arbitrary boundaries between African states drawn by the colonizers were to be established on the basis of self-determination of nations. But at the moment, the ban on secessions is clearly weakening because, in effect, it establishes a hierarchy of nations some of which have and others do not have the right to their statehood. It stands to reason that in case the unfair but clear law is in conflict with the sense of justice which is hard to formalize, preference should be given to the law to prevent a chaotic war of "all against all."

The ban prevented much bloodshed, but the number of people who died in the postwar period in the name of maintaining the ban (in Biafra, Abkhazia, Darfur, Chechnya, or elsewhere) now runs into hundreds of thousands, if not millions, and continues to climb.

Besides, internal affairs of states take on an international dimension: instability in Asian and African countries unleashes streams of refugees and acts of terrorism in European capitals. In this situation, the intervention in separatist conflicts by the international community is unavoidable which, of course, leads

to separating the ethnic groups pitching into each other and, naturally, to encouraging actual secessions that no one would recognize, however.

A new status quo can only be gradually arrived at through consensus of the world community, consisting of the stronger and more developed countries through separate conflict situations before this status quo becomes finally written into international legal documents. There are a growing number of precedents, each of which is held up as "exceptional" and this erodes the general rule. Notwithstanding Serbia's impassioned protests, Kosovo has been recognized by the leading Western countries despite the fact it was not a constituent republic. Serbia is not Russia or China, which possess nuclear weapons, but a weak and isolated country which cannot do anything.

The Serbs' resistance is attributed not only to "greed" but also to the sense of injustice - why is a piece of land being taken away precisely from them, why the principles applied to Kosovo are different from those applied to Bosnia and Herzegovina? As for Russia's backing the Serbs, it is no mere reflection of "interests." Russia's motives include also indignation at real injustice, "double standards" and the quite justifiable fear of the destruction of the stable world order.

The new always appears in a form that seems imperfect and doubtful legally and ethically. No one wants to end up "gone with the wind." And every time the opponents make those who promote new rules look for arguments and combine the new rules with the deep foundation of legal systems. If there is no negation and reinterpretation of the old legal rules, if there is no opposition to this negation and reinterpretation, the development will not be based on law. Conservative criticism of the new is often just and always necessary in order that the new should become firmly established in an appropriate rather than random and ludicrous form.

The dispute surrounding Kosovo will peter out with time, and the Serbs will give in and recognize Kosovo before all the rest will give in. However, opposing to Kosovo's recognition is necessary and it serves the purpose. And whatever Putin's motives are when he says that it is hypocrisy and lies to announce the Kosovo situation as unique, he is right. And when he says it is necessary to formulate single rules of conduct, he is once again right. Those advocating recognition for Kosovo should respond to him by seriously trying to formulate and validate new rules concerning the right of nations to self-determination rather than by merely arguing that Kosovo is a special case.

"We Can Discuss What We Are - Brothers or Cousins"

Juan Antonio March Pujol, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Spain to the Russian Federation, was a guest of honor at the latest meeting of the Five o'Clock international club.

The Five o'clock Club was initiated by V.E. Churov, chairman of the RF Central Electoral Commission (CEC), as a venue for unofficial discussions of current international issues. Meetings are held in the CEC conference hall.

The following took part in the discussion: V.E. Churov, chairman of the RF Central Electoral Commission; Ambassador Yu. V. Dubinin; S. M. Rogov, director of the US and Canada Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences; and I. B. Borisov and E. P. Dubrovina, CEC representatives.

Yu. Dubinin

AMBASSADOR JUAN MARCH PUJOL has a long diplomatic career. He was assigned to work in Moscow after several years as the Spanish representative to the UN Office at Geneva. There, Mr. Pujol initiated a project that will without a doubt leave a prominent mark in the history of the famous Palace of Nations.

Mr. Ambassador proposed that the huge plafond in one of the palace's best halls be painted by Miguel Barcelo, a major modern Spanish artist. He comes from Catalonia, the homeland of many a renowned painter. Mr. Pujol's idea was endorsed by Spanish King Juan Carlos I, and was approved last year by the UN Office at Geneva.

The reconstruction and painting of the hall is currently in progress. When it is complete, the hall will be renamed the Human Rights Chamber and the Alliance of Civilizations. Incidentally, as is known, the words "alliance of civilizations" is the name of another major initiative, which was put forward by Spain at the UN, and which was unanimously supported.

We are happy to welcome His Excellency Mr. Pujol at our club, congratulate him on his beautiful initiative, and wish him every success in his activity in Russia.

Juan Antonio March Pujol

ALLOW ME TO THANK YOU for the kind words about my work in Geneva. It seems to me that the UN will acquire yet another wonderful masterpiece. I would like to point out that this project has become possible due to close coop-