

The Kosovo War and the End of the Yugoslav Tragedy

Edit Bregu

Vice Dean, Head of Scientific Research and International Relations Department, Senior Lecturer,
Faculty of Law, University College Wisdom

Abstract

In the Balkans, the process of nation-state building took place mainly after the fall of the great empires and was accompanied by escalation of violence, genocide of one nation against another, armed conflict and war. In the course of the turbulent history of the Balkans, we can find many examples that coincide with the efforts to homogenize the population, the creation of nation-states, involving all the inhabitants of the same nation, and this has been accompanied by mass expulsions, unprecedented expressions genocide, as well as a lot of violence, expropriation, etc. In this aspect, the most dramatic example occurred in the last decade of the XX-th Century, when the Serbs forcibly expelled and exercised genocide on the Albanian population of Kosovo, with the sole purpose of their departure, the homogenization of its territory, in an attempt to realize the "Načertanije politics". This and other facts will aim to analyze and describe this paper. In fact, the fall of Yugoslavia had begun as early as, in the 1980s, it took the form of a multidimensional and regressive collapse, rapidly due to the coming to power of the nationalist and speculative ruling classes in the republics of the former Yugoslavia, who found in nationalism a new mechanism for legitimizing arrogant and uncontrolled power. The Balkans has been, is and will be the object of study and research of various scholars in all fields. These and other aspects will be addressed in this paper.

Keywords: Balkans, former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, war, nationalism.

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

1. Introduction

Nearly four years of war, 1992-1995, in Bosnia, marked a bitter and painful balance of human losses and material damage, while more than two million other innocent civilians were forced to flee their homes and country for fear of war. The cause of the beginning and the end of this war is considered the complicating crisis of political, social, ethnic and religious factors, the complexes of the distant and recent past, as well as those of greatness history, supported by military ones. This crisis had gripped the former Yugoslavia since the Croatian war and the fall and shattering of the "myth" of "holiness" and the cult of eternity of the former Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia. The Bosnian war, dubbed the "Long War", ended after the Dayton Peace Accords on November 21, 1995, ending the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict but not the war in the Balkans. Another conflict would not be long in coming as he had begun to prepare and was boiling for a long time. This was the conflict or the Kosovo War, which was on the verge.

2. Body of paper (TNR 14pt., bold)

1 In one of the most dramatic and well-prepared events according to a careful scenography in the modern history of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia, on June 28, 1989 arrived by helicopter at the gloomy shrine of Gazimestan, which was located on a plateau near Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. The building of Gazimestan, a concrete tower, is the monument of the famous Battle of Kosovo of 1389 (Cohen, 2010). Despite the end of the Bosnian War, the spiral of violent conflicts challenging the fragile peace and security of the Balkan region was not over. In the background of the peninsula was contoured a new, violent conflict, which would not be long in coming. In this conflict, the Serbian state appeared harsher and more determined because of the nationality and religion of the Albanians, with the aim of never allowing secession from Serbia and the Federation. One more reason for this savagery and determination was the fact that, unlike the others, Kosovo did not have the status of the republic of Yugoslavia, but only that of the Autonomous Province and Serbia's claims in this case were not at all to preserve the Federation, but to maintain the territory where Kosovo lies. Thus, Kosovo is a special case, built on genuine nationalist grounds. Indeed, the anti-Serb movement in Kosovo had early origins, but it became more apparent in the 1980s, with demonstrations and peaceful movements that were violently suppressed by the repressive Serbian government. According to the Kosovar scholar Jusuf Osmani, after the demonstrations of 1981, the Yugoslav government, respectively the Serbian government, entered a new plan in order to recolonize Kosovo with a Slavic population, namely organizing the alleged action of the return of Serbs and Montenegrins displaced from Kosovo (Osmani, 2010). During these years, the efforts of the Serbian government to mobilize the people in the light of the propaganda that had in its heart the slogan "Unique Serbia" were also present. Several years in a row, hundreds of anti-Albanian rallies and demonstrations were organized. To make nation-list turns, chauvinist marches and demonstrations were organized by the Serbian Government in Kosovo, Serbia and in front of the Serbo-Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade. Their slogans were: Kosovo is Serbia, Kosovo is the

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

heart of Serbia, Kosovo is Serbian holy land, we will fight for this place of old Serbian land", Serbia do not leave Kosovo from your hand, etc, (Osmani, 2010). But the powerful secessionist movements from Serbia and the Yugoslav Federation itself, with which he had nothing to do, began with the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, revealing the efforts of many of the Yugoslav republics to secede from the Federation. Among them was the Autonomous Province of Kosovo. Efforts by Kosovars to realize this aspiration date back to 1990. But the issue became more concrete by the end of 1994, when Slovenia and Croatia had gained secession and independence, and as Bosnia approached war and bloodshed, and also to the independence. Exactly this year, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) appeared and began to act, seeking the realization of the aspiration of the Kosovar people for secession and independence from what was left of the former Yugoslav Federation (Johnsen T. W, 1995). The anti-Serb and pro-independence movement in Kosovo, in essence according to KLA and its War scholar James Pettifer, was the first successful insurgent movement in Europe since World War II (Pettifer, 2013). In December 1996, as the KLA began to take shape, the activity of its formations against the Serbian police and military forces within certain areas in the territory of Kosovo began. This activity significantly alarmed the Serbian authorities because they had lost control almost completely in some areas of Kosovo, on the northeastern border with Serbia. While during the last period of Summer and the beginning of Autumn, there was an increase in the momentum of the Kosovar uprising on the ground in Kosovo, at a time when in its background, in Albania was created an unstable situation, started after the popular rebellion armed forces of the spring of 1997 (Glenny M, 2007). During the year, the appearance of the KLA can be considered that of seven weeks ago, when a series of spectacular attacks on police barracks, the night of September 10-11, they set fire to buildings up to 150 km around and destroyed several MUP vehicles (Pettifer, 2013). Moreover, on October 16 of the same year, anti-tank weapons were used for the first time in a conflict near the village of Deçan (Pettifer, 2013). The KLA began to expand its ranks and to form and consolidate its combat formations, especially in March 1998, when its hostilities began to take the form and content of a real liberation war (Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, 2008). Gradually, in addition to the significant increase in ranks, organization of armaments, gaining combat experience and combat leadership, the KLA with its units took control of more than half of the country. From the progress and increase of the force as well as the achievements of the KLA, the Serbian forces felt surprised and endangered in the matches with it, during which there were great losses from both sides, Serbs and Kosovars. In one of these fights, the prominent leader Adem Jashari was martyred, who became the emblem of resistance against Serbian forces. Adem Jashari was killed along with 21 other family members. In the summer of 1998, in an attempt to bring the situation under control, the Serbian army launched a general offensive campaign during which it occupied villages and areas liberated by the KLA. The Serbian army carried out violent cleansing of Kosovar civilians. In response to these violent purges, the United States warned of an intervention by NATO forces to stop the Serbian campaign aimed at an ethnic cleansing followed by the mass expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo. Faced with a very serious American

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

warning, S. Milosevic was forced to stop the campaign. This happened on October 13, 1998, when he declared a forced ceasefire and promised to withdraw part of the military forces from the territory of Kosovo. But on January 15, 1999, the brutal Recak massacre took place, in which 45 Kosovo Albanians were massacred, for which the head of the UN Monitoring Commission denounced Belgrade as a member of the massacre. A few days later, another important event would take place, on February 6, 1999, the "Contact Group for Yugoslavia", took the initiative to open Albanian-Serbian negotiations to resolve the crisis. The meeting was held in the castle of Rambouillet, in France according to the project designed by the US, it was to serve to reach an agreement. The draft agreement provided for Kosovo to remain "part of the Federal Yugoslavia, but would "enjoy" substantial autonomy (Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, 2008). Meanwhile, democratic elections would be possible in Kosovo, while the issue of independence would be discussed only after three years. Meanwhile, in order to maintain the situation, special NATO forces would be deployed in Kosovo, which could be a guarantee for the normal progress of the above agreement. But the leaders of the Serbian side did not accept this agreement. At the end of February 1999, the talks were interrupted, but as soon as they resumed, fighting resumed in Kosovo. On March 19, as the Albanians signed the agreement, the Serbian side rejected it (Osmani, 2010). And, even before the ink on the document was signed by Kosovars, Serbian forces resumed a major offensive under a plan for ethnic cleansing of Kosovo territory. As a result, within a few days, nearly one million locals were forced to flee their homes. The emigrants settled mainly in Albania and Macedonia. The expulsion of the indigenous Kosovar population from the Serbo-Slavic police and military vehicles was biblical and medieval in modern times! It seemed as if the dinosaurs had not yet disappeared with all their vices and ferocity! In response to this biblical, violent displacement, on March 23, 1999, the NATO Euro-Atlantic Alliance launched a powerful bombing campaign in Kosovo and Serbia, announced. Yugoslavia was exhausted by the explosive (cumulative) effect of air strikes, which were difficult to resist. Milosevic's forces were forced to withdraw from the province, which was immediately occupied by KFOR (Gordon IV John, and MC Ginn John G., 2002). Hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanian refugees were allowed to return to their homes, and humanitarian destruction, so horrific at first, was prevented. The conflict, in itself, had been curbed and, in a short time, its impact on the surrounding region had not been allowed to spiral out of control. NATO reaffirmed its capacity to stand united in the face of adversary, to fight and to triumph. On the 50th anniversary of the Summit, held in April 1999, at a low point in the military campaign, a new strategic concept was adopted that supported peace support operations, and reconfirmed the commitment to build a NATO re as the center of security and architecture of the European War. In clear military terms, and despite the unresolved debates over strategic solutions, his work on war efforts was exemplary, in conclusion, combined with the absence of any fatally proven NATO combat event. Inside, it was not clear that NATO had positioned itself effectively to win peace. But despite his miscalculations and weaving, Milosevic also remained in power. The Air Force finally proved sufficient to force Serbia to withdraw but also opened the door to a significant ground force engagement, an operation dubbed "United Guard", with

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

a challenging mission ahead. The Alliance had committed itself to administering what, in fact, became a Balkan protectorate. After insisting on the military withdrawal of the entire Yugoslav Army and the police apparatus that had been responsible for maintaining public order in the past, KFOR was left alone to manage the cauldron boiling with pleasure! In the first phase of the war, NATO airstrikes failed miserably to prevent Serb atrocities against Kosovo Albanians. Just one year after the start of the KFOR mission, only about 30 of the 200,000 Serbs living in the province were left, while many of them withdrew to the Serb border in the North (Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, 2008). The victory of Kosovar Albanians led to the opposite campaign of ethnic cleansing, which also affected minorities, and which brought out the Alliance's goals to recreate an authentic multicultural movement. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formally merged in September 1999, with a small remnant of 5,000 members (3,000 active and 2,000 reservists) converted to the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) tasked with facilitating the suffering of destruction, search and danger, as well as with the reconstruction of infrastructure. NATO hoped to use Operation Alliance Forces to illustrate the new security concept, to sanction operations and to promote regional stability, but war-related trauma combined with costs and risk, as well as an open-closed disclosure of ground forces made it clear that the operation would be considered an "emergency" rather than a model (Grant R. G., 2011). The final status towards which Kosovo was heading remained ambitious, with the prospect of full independence or reintegration, but in a cultured and tolerant Serbia. A prominent American commentator, noting the contradictions between NATO goals and the tangible result of the campaign, described the war against Yugoslavia as a political act, and at the same time "as a perfect failure"! The side effects of the conflict were also significant. The accident at the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was a blind military action and a diplomatic disturbance of the first order that Beijing did not hesitate to use. Staying at the Russian company in Pristina was threatening (Malcolm N., 2001). The main bridges over the Danube brought back to attention images of the devastation of World War II, something that not all Europeans would allow to happen again. The imbalance of forces in the area and the virtual absence of accidents, was noticed by some as a reflection of the use of violence, which moralized itself as right and, meanwhile, was unrestrained by the consequences that had transferred "the hopes that governed the morality of war ", in itself. Ironically, military effectiveness may have contributed to destroying America's image as an arbiter whose power was put at the service of humanitarian purposes. Serbia was heading into a dark hole. America's relations with European alliances were also strained, although NATO had triumphed in conflicts, the long-term effects on Alliance cohesion were potentially negative (Malcolm N., 2001). The inevitable complications of the war coalition and the gaps in military strikes between the US and European alliances led to some questionable questions as to whether the Alliance could be an effective instrument for waging war. Europe read the lessons in its own way and led to the awakening of the conflict, while the European Union moved with a new goal towards the project of European security and political independence, a long-term commitment to strategic independence with serious implications for the transatlantic agreement, which had always stood as a NATO base.

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

Victories of war could give rise to ambitious outcomes and unintended consequences. Operation "Alliance Forces" was a success in military-operational terms, but was fought as a limited war and concluded with a tactical compromise. It provided what might be a typical case study which Clark describes as a "modern war waged for ambitious purposes of regional stability," where "opponents were insignificant and the issues raised did not threaten the immediate survival of the Great Powers. Such conflicts would rarely take on unambitious national commitments, and they would continue to represent military plans with particular challenges and responsibilities. Such strategies will need to include diplomacy, building an effective coalition, access to military capabilities including across the spectrum of conflict, and a long-term commitment to peacebuilding. The lack of such strategies had been a chronic failure of Western diplomacy. Kosovo's western engagement represented yet another opportunity to move towards crises and get responses in effective ways, and this can thankfully be achieved. At the end of the conflict in Kosovo, it can be said that the model of aggressive and fanatical Serbian nationalism and that of the Balkans in general appeared in the most typical way. It summarized and presented the entire arsenal of conflict used historically in the Balkans. It involved from the armed conflict, massacres, savage genocide, cleansing and mass displacement of the population, to ideological warfare with all its myths and symbols. Serbia still claims that Kosovo is its "heart" and "cradle" and that it is a "historical inspiration" on which the foundations of the Serbian nation are built! Today's territorial claims are strongly related to claims produced by the historical thought of times dating back to the depths of the Middle Ages, even earlier, holding the future of these countries' hostage. For its part, NATO was quick to declare that Belgrade had capitulated and that the peace agreement fully corresponded to the terms of the ceasefire (Marzo Magno A., 2001). Addressing the nation of Kosovo and the cessation of hostilities on June 9, US President Clinton affirmed that "the demand for a united international community has been met", and hailed a "victory for a saved world, for the values of high democratic, and for a stronger America. " Clinton also vowed to defend engagement work in an effort to build peace in a war-torn province.

Methodology

Through this paper, I managed to use a qualitative research methodology, with primary and secondary data which are the result of reviewing a fairly extensive contemporary and archival literature regarding to the purpose of the study that this topic will follow to the researchers. The implementation and realization of the goals and objective, this study tries to achieve through the implementation of a scientific Methodology where the base is in-depth research and comparison, and analysis through the facts arising from archival sources in the historic area, documentary collections, as and utilization of assets, documentary material and published domestic and foreign historical literature. The primary research is based on quantitative research through archival sources in the Central Archive of the Republic of Albania, as well as foreign literature British, Serbian, Italian etc.,.

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

Conclusion (TNR 14pt., bold)

The development of the conflict's series of the years ninety of the twentieth century in the Balkan region, which arose in the protracted process of dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, identified and highlighted some special, typical Balkan phenomena. They, of course, have their explanation. Thus, the long experience of countries in transition to democracy has proven that that of the Balkan states was longer and, at the same time, more difficult. This was probably because the Balkan countries, especially some of them, have found it extremely difficult to sever strong ties with the past. And, in this case, one of the fundamental causes of this phenomenon must surely be sought in the non-replacement of all the staffs of the ruling elites of the past. Following and concretization of this phenomenon, it has been noticed that there are still areas or environments where people of old staffs (nomenclatures) operate and manage. They hinder and do not allow their replacement with people who bring a European mentality and phenomenon towards democratic institutions and the rule of law. Even reaching this choice seems somewhat distant and difficult. This, according to some observers of Balkan affairs after the nineties of the twentieth century and to this day, occurs because there is no complete and realistic study of the communist past of the Balkans, a past that essentially conveys a populist performance mentality and strong ethnic-nationalist content. According to the well-known scholar Samuel Huntington: "It also happens that the peoples of the Southeastern Balkans, coming from a long Ottoman rule, lack the" charm "of Western European civilization. "Essential parts of this charm are federalism, renaissance, enlightenment, industrial revolution and the French one! In fact, it is both interesting and paradoxical to hear that some scholars of Balkan history have described it with the term "Ancient Europe". While this region is exactly that part of Europe, in which the history began more than two thousand years ago. According to another particular point of view, the Balkan region is considered as the territory in which the synthesis of the Eastern Roman Empire with that of the Greek culture are crossed and produced, which constitute, in the end, the bases of what is called European identity, which inspires and also attracts the peoples of the Balkan countries to become part of their integration. But even today in the territory of the Balkans or otherwise in Southeast Europe, there are negative phenomena of the nature of corruption, social problems, human rights, manifestations of typical Balkan ethno-nationalism that, together, damage the still fragile democratic institutions. of the countries of the region. At the same time, if those phenomena become prevalent and get out of control, they can risk producing and generating new crises and conflicts. This is a lesson both historical and current so as not to fall into the trap of the past and look forward to Europe. Meanwhile, nowadays, all the countries of the Western Balkans are doing a lot to become part of the European Union, where they see their future secure.

3rd International Academic Conference on Research in
SOCIAL SCIENCES

10- 12 June, 2021

Berlin, Germany

Acknowledgment

This paper is an output of the science project of the Public Law Department and the Scientific Research and International Relations Department at the Law Faculty at University College Wisdom. A special thanks goes to the Historian Prof. Ferit Duka, member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Albania; Prof. Teki Kurti, Historian; Prof. Naim Mëçalla, Vice Rector of University College Wisdom and Prof. Elmaz Sherifi for their continuous support.

References (TNR 14pt., bold)

- Cohen Lenard J., (2010). *Milosheviç, misteri i pushtetit*. AHS, Tiranë.
- Osmani J, (2010). *Kolonizimi Serb i Kosovës*. ERA, Prishtinë.
- Pettifer J, (2013). *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*. ONUFRI, Tiranë.
- Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar, (2008), *Botim i Ri*. Vëllimi 2. KRISTALINA–KH, Tiranë.
- Glenny M, (2007). *Histori e Ballkanit 1804-1999*. Toena dhe IDK, Tiranë.
- Gordon IV John, and MC Ginn John G., (2002). *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo, 1999*. Rand, Santa Monica.
- Grant R. G., (2011). *1001 Battles that changed the course of history*. Quintessence Editions Ltd, London.
- Malcolm N., (2001). *Kosova një histori e shkurtër*. (Përkthim). Koha Ditore dhe Shtëpia e Librit, Tiranë.
- Marzo Magno A., (2001). *La Guerra dei dieci anni. Jugoslavia 1991-2000: I fatti, i personaggi, le ragioni dei conflitti*. Il Saggiatore, Milan.
- Johnsen T. W., (1995). *Zbërthimi i Enigmës së Ballkanit: Historia në funksion të politikës*. Instituti i Studimeve Strategjike, Tiranë.