

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD
KOSOVO QUESTION

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KOSOVO QUESTION**

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the U.S. foreign policy toward the Kosovo Question, comparing and contrasting the policies of George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, George Walker Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden administrations. The continuity and change of each administration's foreign policies are examined. As shown, various other concerns of the U.S. administrations have kept them reluctant external actors in the Balkans. The thesis argues that there is more of continuity than change among these administrations' policies toward Kosovo Question though in each of them some changes have been noticed, which are indicated in the thesis. The distinction was the Clinton administration's policy that committed itself more than others in Kosovo. The Kosovo Question has long been a geostrategic matter for the U.S. administrations. The thesis argues that the current developmental weakness in Kosovo and the problems associated with international relations of the Republic of Kosovo helped the U.S. administrations to reproduce Kosovo's dependency, which had been the case since 1999, on the U.S. posture on the Kosovo Question. It is likely that the U.S. will continue to make use of Kosovo's dependence on the U.S. in every possible circumstances.

Keywords: Kosovo Question, U.S. Foreign Policy, NATO Intervention, Continuity and Change

ÖZ

ABD’NİN KOSOVA SORUNUNA YÖNELİK DIŐ POLİTİKASINDA DEVAMLILIK VE DEĞİŐİM

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Bu alıŐma ABD’nin Kosova Sorunu’na yönelik diŐ politikasını araŐtırmakta, George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, Geroge Walker Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump ve Joe Biden yönetimlerinin politikalarını mukayese etmekte ve karşılaŐtırmaktadır. Her bir yönetimin diŐ politikasındaki devamlılık ve deĐiŐimler incelenmektedir. AıklanđıĐı üzere, eŐitli kaygılar ABD yönetimlerini Balkanlar’da isteksiz bir diŐ güç kılmıŐtır. Bu tez, söz konusu yönetimlerin Kosova Sorunu’na yönelik politikalarında deĐiŐimden ok devamlılıĐın hâkim olduĐunu ileri sürmektedir, ancak tezde de belirtildiĐi üzere bazı deĐiŐimler de saptanmıŐtır. Asıl farklılık, Clinton yönetiminin diĐer yönetimlere kıyasla Kosova’ya daha ok adanmıŐ olan politikalarıdır. Kosova Sorunu, ABD yönetimleri için uzun süredir jeostratejik bir husustur. Bu tez Kosova’nın mevcut gelişimsel zayıflılıĐının ve Kosova Cumhuriyeti’nin uluslararası ilişkilerine ilişkin sorunlarının, ABD’nin Kosova’nın baĐımlılıĐını yeniden üretmesine destek olduĐunu ileri sürmektedir, bu durum ise Kosova Sorunu’nda ABD’nin gösterdiĐi duruŐ ile 1999’dan beri sürmektedir. ABD’nin, Kosova’nın mümkün olan her durumda kendisine baĐımlı olmasından faydalanmaya devam edeceĐi kuvvetle muhtemel gözükmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kosova Sorunu, ABD Dış Politikası, NATO Müdahalesi,
Devamlılık ve Değişim

Gjyshërit janë aty për të dashur dhe për të riparuar gjërat.

Kushtuar juve, Zija, Shemsedin, Mejreme dhe Nerxhivan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EC	European Community
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUSR	European Union's Special Representative
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICR	International Civilian Representative
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IMP	International Military Presence
ISG	International Steering Group
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KFOR	Kosovo Force

KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
KPS	Kosovo Police Service
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission
LBD	United Democratic Movement
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
LKCK	National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo
LPRK	Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo
LRSHJ	Movement for the Albanian Republic in Yugoslavia
LVV	Self-determination Movement
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MNLK	Movement for the National Liberation of Kosovo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilization and Association Process

SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SOFA	Status of Force Agreement
SMSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YNA	Yugoslav People's Army

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Subject of Thesis

The Balkans has historically been at the center of a variety of wars and conflicts that stemmed from a combination of international and regional factors. The events that took place during the dissolution of Yugoslavia are a clear illustration of such problems in the recent history of the Balkans.

This research will focus on the foreign policy carried out by the United States and the policies of international organizations from the early days of the conflict in Kosovo up to 2022. Although the conflict in Kosovo had started much earlier an effective international response came out only in 1998.

It may be underlined that the only thing that the Albanians in Kosovo wanted was independence, whilst the Serbs wanted to keep them under a simple autonomy. Even in time, they have also degraded the autonomy that was granted under Yugoslavia. This has been the crux of the matter of the Kosovo Question and the responses of international actors and organizations revolved around the conflicting postures. The US foreign policy toward the Kosovo question took into account of this basic conflicting posture and in the course of time evolved into more of a realist foreign policy strategy.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the continuity and change in the United States foreign policy toward the Kosovo Question from the time of George H.W. Bush in

1989 till the current administration of Joe Biden in 2022. The thesis aims to make an effort to contribute to a better understanding of the approaches that each administration has decided to pursue during a given era by pointing out the emphasis that it has placed on its foreign policy. Taking into account both external and internal factors, this thesis seeks to provide an explanation of the continuity and change of the US foreign policy over the time period during which different administrations pursued it.

1.2 Research Question

The objective of this thesis is to examine how the positions of the United States governments vis a vis the Kosovo Question have changed throughout the course of the years from 1993 to 2022. Beginning with the ambitions of Albanians in Kosovo for autonomy, particularly after 1989, and progressing all the way to the development of the eternal dream of independence. Steps and the rationale behind those choices, whether to apply diplomacy or to take armed struggle, are to be looked into. On the other hand, the military intervention and activation in NATO that were carried out during the Clinton administration place a particular focus on this choice. The reasons for the rapid acceptance of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence by the Bush administration, as well as the subsequent backing and promotion of that declaration by the Obama administration, are to be explored. Finally, this thesis attempts to point out to what extent a continuity or change may be discerned in the foreign policy of the Trump to incumbent Biden administrations toward the Kosovo Question.

1.3 The framework of Analysis and Methodology

In this study, a two-pronged investigation is carried out: first, an analysis of the U.S. government's foreign policy toward Kosovo under each administration from 1989 up until the present day, and second, a comparison of the policies of each administration with the goal of determining whether there has been continuity or change. This is done in order to detect the elements of continuity and change while analyzing the factors that led to them. While continuity and change are the core of this research, it also focuses on the internal and external factors and priorities of each administration and the real reasons and assumptions of the preferred policies.

The thesis tackles the study subject from a realist standpoint of International Relations (IR), considering national interests, security dilemmas, and the ultimate objective of the United States to acquire and maintain its hegemony. This may be explained by the US ambition for military base deployment in Kosovo. Exerting its influence on the area inside Europe is another driving force. Lastly, utilizing its military base against Russia and China when required.

In light of this, the primary objective of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive and multifaceted picture of the foreign policy instruments that were selected in order to give a response to the Kosovo Question as well as the causes that led to a policy shift or continuity. A qualitative method has been used in the development of the thesis. As a result, it relies mainly on secondary sources such as articles, papers, books, news, and speeches delivered by each government that had previously been in power in order to provide a picture of differing points of view. In addition, first-hand primary sources such as constitutions, reports, official documents, and statements have been retrieved from online public databases.

1.4 Organization of the Chapters

The organization of this thesis is as follows: after presenting the subject of thesis, the research question and the framework of analysis and the methodology, in the introduction chapter, the second chapter is devoted to clarify the background of the status issue of Kosovo Question that changed over the years from 1945 to 1992.

The third chapter examines and depicts the foreign policies of both G. H. W. Bush and Clinton, comparing and contrasting the two presidents' respective approaches and stances from 1989 to 2001.

Comparing the approaches taken by the two different administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama is the primary emphasis of the fourth chapter, which provides a study of the United States government's foreign policy toward Kosovo from the year 2001 up to the year 2016.

Whether or not continuity or change of the US foreign policy from the Trump to Biden administration, as well as their evolving priorities on the international stage, are the topics covered in the fifth chapter. The last chapter, the conclusion, contains the thesis' closing statements.

CHAPTER 2

THE STATUS OF KOSOVO UNDER THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA 1945-1992

2.1 Introduction

Kosovo was governed by the Ottomans from 1389 until 1912 before being ceded to Serbia in 1913 during the Balkan Wars. Prior to 1913, Kosovo was ruled by a variety of rulers, although it can be argued that Kosovo was inhabited by an overwhelming majority of Albanians, as well as Serbs, Montenegrins, Roma, Croats, Turks, Macedonians, and other ethnic minorities. The vast majority of Albanians are Muslims and speak Albanian. Albanians' desire for autonomy grew over the late nineteenth century, but they went unsatisfied. As Socialist Yugoslavia was created, Kosovo gained autonomy. However, Kosovo's autonomous status has changed over time. This chapter seeks to explain the way in which the status of Kosovo evolved from 1945 to 1992 under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

2.2 Status of Kosovo from 1945 to 1974

The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had been founded in December 1918: whereas it may be noticed from the name that only three nations were recognized.

From 1929 onwards, this Kingdom was called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, indicating that unification of South Slavs was a priority, as emphasized by Aleksa Djilas:

Yugoslavia is a difficult country to understand. Its many nations, languages, and religions generate centrifugal tendencies. At the same time there exist powerful centripetal forces: the common South Slav origin of the majority of the population is the basis for many ethnic, linguistic, and cultural similarities, and there are also many historical experiences.¹

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1992) was a socialist federation governed by the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, consisting of the representatives from six republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia and two autonomous provinces within Serbia: Kosovo and Vojvodina. As the Article 1 of the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia stated;

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a federal state having the form of the state community of voluntarily united nations and their Socialist Republics and of the Socialist Autonomous Provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, which are constituent parts of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, based on the power of and self-management by the working class and all working people; it is at the same time a socialist self-management democratic community of working people and citizens and of nations and nationalities having equal rights.²

And Article 2 defines the status of republics:

The Socialist Republics are states based on the consists of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Socialist Republic of Croatia, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, the Socialist Republic of Serbia, the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

¹ Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution 1919-1953* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p.1.

² Article 1 of the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1974. <https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Yugoslavia-Constitution1974.pdf>, (accessed March 28, 2022).

and the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo, which are constituent parts of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, and the Socialist Republic of Slovenia.³

Marshall Jozep Broz Tito played an extraordinary role in bringing such diversified nations into Yugoslavia. He rose to power through his struggles against foreign occupiers in the first place and offered a federal administrative structure based on socialist equality among people. This would be called the "brotherhood of people" that enabled Socialist Yugoslavia to sustain the wartime cooperation among diversified nations in Yugoslavia until the early 1980s.⁴

Kosovo's constitutional legal status in the former Yugoslavia may be split into two significant phases: the first, from 1945 to 1974, and the second, from 1974 to March 22, 1989, when the Constitution was amended. Kosovo had a discriminatory position during the first phase, not only with the republics but also with the province of Vojvodina. Vojvodina was defined autonomous region in 1946 Constitution whereas Kosovo was elevated to autonomous region in 1963 under Jozep Broz Tito. It is worth noting that it was formerly known as Kosovo-Metohija. This was modified in 1974, and Metohija was omitted from the name Kosovo. This biased viewpoint derives from the fact that Kosovo, when compared in size and population however it is equal to, for example, Macedonia, Kosovo was not given the Republic status.

Kosovo's legal situation greatly improved after the 1974 Constitution's ratification, when it was elevated to Autonomous Province with similar rights to the Vojvodina

³ Article 2 of the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1974. <https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Yugoslavia-Constitution1974.pdf>, (accessed March 28, 2022).

⁴ David Anderson, "The Collapse of Yugoslavia: Background and Summary," *Parliamentary Research Service*, no. 14 (November 22, 1995).

region.⁵ Tito equalized Kosovo with Vojvodina rather than with other republics via balance policy.

In the first phase of Kosovo's constitutional legal status, Kosovo and Vojvodina were established as autonomous regions within the People's Republic of Serbia in the first Constitution of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1946, later renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963. The People's Republic of Serbia, according to the Constitution adopted on January 31, 1946, includes the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the autonomous region of Kosovo. It did not specify the rights and scope of the autonomous provinces, instead leaving that to the constitutions of the republics within the federal structure. It was the first time that Kosovo was recognized as an autonomous region, and Tito wished to take the consent of the Albanians living in Kosovo and at the same time not alienate Serbia. However, Kosovo's autonomy provided less governing rights than the nations with republics.

2.3 Constitutional Reform and the Enhancement of Kosovo status in 1974

Kosovo's autonomous status was further enhanced during the constitutional amendment in 1974. It was defined as a constitutive element of the Federation but still as an autonomous unit within the Socialist Republic of Serbia.⁶ As a result of the Federal Constitution of 1974, Kosovo was granted *de facto* republic status, but not *de jure* status. Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo were more motivated to struggle for political, economic, social, and cultural equality due to this *de facto* status. Albanian community

⁵ "The Constitutional Position of Kosovo 1945–74," Kosovo and Diplomacy since World War II, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755621750.ch-004>.

⁶ Arber Kuçi, "Kosovo in the Constitution of 1974," *Journal of History and Future* 7, no. 4 (2021): p. 872-879, <https://doi.org/10.21551/jhf.1038932>.

wished to get a full republican status; however, Tito's policy was based on the balance between the republics, and here Tito wanted to improve the status of Kosovo and Vojvodina not to the level of republic status however while using its votes within the federal structure they were given such a right. Kosovo's three languages were recognized as equal Serbian, Albanian and Turkish. This Constitution gave Kosovo an extensive right to control its provincial government.

The 1974 Constitution was a watershed moment in the history of Kosovo Albanians. The Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo had considerable autonomy, which was reflected in the province's socio-economic-political structure and the ability to enact and interpret legislation by the demands of its population. While it held extensive rights at the federal level, even to the point of blocking major proceedings in the case of disagreement, it also enjoyed rights comparable to those of a state feature at the provincial level. Albanians achieved cultural, social, and economic freedom from the 1974 constitution and enjoyed the established self-provincial government. Schools, colleges, and industries were established, fostering a stronger sense of national identity among Albanians in Kosovo, and providing an opportunity for them to make demands for further development of their status.⁷ On the other hand, the potential presented by the 1974 Constitution concerned the Serbian Communist Party elite and nationalist organizations, which started to insist on amending the Constitution and curtailing autonomous rights, particularly following Tito's death in 1980.

2.4 The Dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the Question of Status of Kosovo

In 1974, under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, the Socialist Yugoslav Federation gave Kosovo nearly the same level of voting right at the federal level as Yugoslavia's six republics. Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia's president in 1989, proposed changes to

⁷ Ibid.

Serbia's Constitution that would remove much of Kosovo's rights as an autonomous province. A series of violent demonstrations followed, and on March 3, 1989, in the Republic of Serbia, a state of emergency was declared in the Kosovo province. Thus the government of Serbia took direct control of the province. Only five days later, Serbia's Assembly decided on March 28, 1989, to ratify the proposed constitutional revisions, thereby rescinding Kosovo's political rights. Serbian nationalism was fanned even more in the following years under Milosevic, leading to the breakup of Yugoslavia and the subsequent conflicts in the 1990s.⁸ In reaction to the decision to abolish Kosovo's autonomous status and direct control of Kosovo province by the government of Serbia, Kosovo Assembly decided to withdraw its delegations from the federal government. On July 2, 1990, the Kosovo Assembly proclaimed Kosovo an independent state, recognized only by Albania. Following large demonstrations, a state of emergency with strict security measures was imposed on Kosovo. While rejecting or being barred from Yugoslav institutions, the Albanians in Kosovo developed a "parallel state" to offer education and social services.⁹

2.5 Conclusion

Throughout the Socialist Yugoslavia period from 1945 to 1974, the autonomous status of Kosovo was recognized. However, the 1974 Constitution by enhancing the autonomous status of Kosovo and defining it as a constitutive element of the

⁸ "How Milosevic Stripped Kosovo's Autonomy - Archive, 1989," The Guardian (March 20, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/from-the-archive-blog/2019/mar/20/how-milosevic-stripped-kosovos-autonomy-archive-1989>, (accessed March 31, 2021).

⁹ Besnik Pula, "The Emergence of the Kosovo 'Parallel State,' 1988–1992," *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 4 (2004): p. 797-826, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0090599042000296131>.

Federation while remaining an autonomous unit within the Socialist Republic of Serbia, by simply granting voting rights at the federal level as a constitutive right, satisfied Albanian population until the death of Tito. Later events such as the abolition of Kosovo's rights in the 1974 constitution undertaken by Serbian nationalists paved the way for the Albanian community to work for full republican status, which was not granted. Then Kosovo Assembly declared its independence; however, recognized by only Albania.

CHAPTER 3

THE KOSOVO QUESTION IN THE US FOREIGN POLICY (1989-2001)

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate American foreign policy toward Kosovo throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia era. It explores whether and how the Kosovo Question became a significant concern for American foreign policy during the G. H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton's presidencies. It explores how the NATO operation took place and the formation of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). This chapter points out the major turning points and shifts in U.S. foreign policy toward the Kosovo Question and the involvement of the EU and Russia.

3.2 G. H.W. Bush's Approach to the Kosovo problem in Yugoslavia

When G. H. W. Bush took office in January 1989, the world was changing quickly. The nation of Yugoslavia was in the process of collapsing and was on the verge of descending into ethnic violence. Somalia's government was disintegrating, leaving the nation in turmoil due to the collapse. The Berlin Wall was down on November 9, 1989. In 1989, the Chinese authorities reacted aggressively and brutally against students who

were demonstrating in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, demanding change.¹⁰ President G. H. W. Bush talked of establishing "a new world order" as rapid developments taking place on the global stage.¹¹ This "new world order" would follow the fall of real socialism in the USSR.

While there was uncertainty regarding the destiny of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, President Bush followed a cautious and status quo oriented foreign policy, aiming to keep the United States' engagement in international affairs to a bare minimum. As the Cold War came to an end, unfortunately, other conflicts began to erupt, requiring the attention of the United States, the most pressing of which was Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which occurred on August 2, 1990.¹² One of the goals U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War was the establishment of the "new world order," which for East Europe meant receiving assistance in the process of transition immediately following the cessation of direct influence from the Soviet Union.

President Bush tackled foreign policy with the traditional conservatism and pragmatism that have marked his presidency.¹³ He did not hurry into new activities or policy changes but instead allowed himself time to think about the policies of the government he served. He did it with complete conviction and resolve as soon as he took action. His previous experiences had provided him with valuable foreign policy

¹⁰ Joyce P. Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p.117.

¹¹ "The Other 9/11: George H.W. Bush's 1990 New World Order Speech," Dallas News, August 25, 2019, <https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2017/09/08/the-other-9-11-george-h-w-bush-s-1990-new-world-order-speech/>. (accessed August 10, 2022).

¹² Joyce P. Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p.117.

¹³ Ibid.

knowledge, and he could draw on a vast network of connections in the international community.¹⁴

As Yugoslavia started to disintegrate, the Bush administration intended to convince the country's constituent nations to abstain from violence, maintain Yugoslavia's territorial integrity, if not possibly embrace a democratic process that would assist the country's peaceful breakup. However, there was no discussion of deploying U.S. troops to Yugoslavia, which, unlike Iraq, Bush did not see the disintegration of Yugoslavia as an essential strategic priority of the US because Serbia lacked Iraq's capabilities and potential to damage America's vital interests, such as oil supply.¹⁵ On the other hand, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 713¹⁶ in September 1991 as a response to violence in Yugoslavia, which marked the beginning of the Yugoslav conflicts. The Resolution notes that the fighting was causing a great loss of human life and material damage. As a result of the resolution, Yugoslavia is subject to an arms embargo, which prohibits any supply of weapons and other forms of military equipment.¹⁷ The embargo was defended by President Bush.¹⁸ On the other hand, the embargo served for Serbia's advantage since the country had a huge number of weapons left over from the Yugoslav army and had a robust arms sector. The Bush

¹⁴ Ronald E. Powaski, "The 'Enlightened Realism' of George H. W. Bush, 1989–1993," in *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), p. 16.

¹⁵ Ibid p.44

¹⁶ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 713 (25 September 1991) UN Doc S/RES/713

¹⁷ "Un Arms Embargo on Yugoslavia (FRY)," SIPRI, October 16, 2012, https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/yugoslavia/yugoslavia-1991, (accessed March 31, 2021)

¹⁸ George F. Will, "A Dog in That Fight?," Newsweek (March 14, 2010), <https://www.newsweek.com/dog-fight-183518>, (accessed April 1, 2021).

administration made it plain, in the iconic words of then-Secretary of State James Baker, that they "don't have a dog in that fight."¹⁹ However, the truth is that the stability of NATO and Europe were at risk.

For the Bush administration, the collapse of Yugoslavia opened up an avenue for two significant discussions: the first was to democratize the region, and the second was to maintain Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Because the primary concern of US foreign policy was not the Balkans, the Bush administration wanted to leave the disintegration of Yugoslavia to the UN and the EU. Still, the UN and the EU demonstrated excessive weakness and disability at the time without a concrete plan to end the conflict.²⁰ As a consequence of the new international order and the UN's political and diplomatic inability to act by a new order, before he left office, Bush took unprecedented steps to avoid a war in the Balkans. Even though the U.S. foreign policy priorities were not the Balkans as the Middle East and the dismemberment of the USSR were priorities, there were no complete absences of involvement by the Bush administration in the Balkans, but the Bush administration applied diplomacy or threat of use of force. He warned on December 25, 1992, Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic saying that if he incited violence in Kosovo, he would use military force. This was known as Bush's "Christmas Warning," which occurred in 1992.²¹ This was due to the fact that the United States was already worried about the burgeoning war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and did not want to see a new component of armed conflict add to its complexity. Because of this, Albanians in Kosovo had high regard for George H.W. Bush. In the memory of former President of the United States George H. W. Bush, flags were lowered to half-staff throughout Kosovo upon his passing in

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Alfred Marleku, Bejtush Gashi, and Valon Krasniqi, "The Role of US in the Security of Kosovo," *Revista De Stiinte Politice*, no. 54 (2017): pp. 38-48.

²¹ Ibid.

2018. The letter he sent to Milosevic advising him not to launch a conflict in Kosovo became famous and brought him much attention.²²

In Kosovo, the Serbian dictatorship had complete authority over the country's affairs until 1990s. Ethnic Albanians' rights and liberties were severely weakened due to the changes in the status of Kosovo under Serbia which sparked the resistance and finally led to Kosovo War in 1999, as detailed below.²³ Bush employed diplomacy instead of sending troops to Kosovo or pressuring NATO partners to act. The administration encouraged Serbia and Yugoslavia regions to participate in democratic procedures to avert war and reminded Yugoslavia that any violent meddling in Kosovo's affairs would be confronted with American military power. While cautious and pragmatic, he managed to look strong and aggressive while avoiding the political ramifications of another overseas military deployment. The elections in November 1992 were one of the many reasons why George H. W. Bush maintained a cautious stance toward the Balkans. He was considering the idea of the notion of running for office again and sending United States soldiers to a place where American interests were not at imminent risk would pose political and economic dangers and be costly.²⁴ However, the circumstance was not like that at all. Bill Clinton was able to win the election by putting the focus on the situation in Bosnia. The United States' strategy toward the Balkans started to take shape shortly after the new administration took office.

²² “Day of Mourning in Kosovo for Bush, Seen as Hero for 1992 Letter,” Reuters (December 5, 2018), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kosovo-usa-bush-idUSKBN1O41MY>, (accessed April 1, 2021).

²³ Charles King, “U.S. Foreign Policy in Kosovo A Brief Introduction from Bush to Biden,” 2021, https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/D4D_PB_U.S.-Foreign-Policy-in-Kosovo_ENG-1.pdf, (accessed April 15, 2021).

²⁴ Matthew A. Baum, “How Public Opinion Constrains the Use of Force: The Case of Operation Restore Hope,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2004): pp. 187-226, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2007.00236.x-i1>, p.189.

3.3 Change in the US Policy toward Kosovo Question: the Clinton approach

When Bill Clinton took office in 1993, he announced his Grand Strategy as "Engagement and Enlargement," which claimed that the US would involve other nations in dealing with a wide range of global concerns while simultaneously working to increase the number of democracies with free-market economies.²⁵

Due to the Cold War's conclusion, he faced several problems. Somalia was the scene of the first significant foreign issue that the Clinton administration had to deal with. President George H.W. Bush had dispatched soldiers into Somalia to secure food supplies before he entered the office, but it quickly became a violent struggle. The Clinton administration, after handling the problem, turned over the Somali mission to the United Nations and declared that the U.S. would not engage in future UN operations unless US interests were in jeopardy, as shown by the slaughter in Rwanda when the US did not act and decided to focus on domestic matters. He adopted a very different approach to the Haitian situation since the presence of around 1000 US nationals in Haiti directly damaged US interests, as did the threat that tens of thousands of Haitians might escape their country and sail to the US if peace and order in Haiti were not restored.²⁶

While criticizing George H. W. Bush for failing to stop Serb assaults on Muslim and Croatian minorities in Bosnia, Clinton felt obligated to engage in another humanitarian disaster in Yugoslavia.²⁷ Compared to the Bosnian crisis in terms of both timing and content, the American response to the Kosovo issue seems swifter and more forceful.

²⁵ Ronald E. Powaski, "The 'Enlightened Realism' of George H. W. Bush, 1989–1993," in *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), p. 57.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.61-65

²⁷ Joyce P. Kaufman, "Chapter 6 - The Post-Cold War Period," in *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), p. 181.

The most crucial factor that prompted American involvement in the Kosovo conflict was the region's great potential for instability to spread. There was a chance that the crisis would destabilize the whole area and, by extension, Europe, with the participation of the Albanian community in Macedonia, Greece, Albania, and Kosovo. In addition to ethnic Albanians in the area, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, the United States, and other states were probable participants in the conflict.

One another factor was that Washington left the settlement of the Bosnian issue to Europe in the initial stage, and European capitals failed to prevent the conflict.²⁸ The Bosnian conflict revealed that the U.S. has worldwide power and that issues cannot be handled without Washington, even in Europe. Therefore, the Clinton administration took the lead in Kosovo. Kosovo, a small territory, was essential for the U.S. because a Serb victory would have been tough for Washington's strategic supremacy in the Bosnian conflict would have been obscured, and Russian influence in the area would have grown.

The Albanian presence in the area also contributed to Kosovo's strategic significance for the Clinton administration. In addition to laying the framework for a long-term alliance with the Albanians in the area, the fact that the United States actively supported the Kosovo Albanians throughout this crisis will also facilitate the formation of a long-term alliance with the Albanians in the region. In other words, within the context of the expansion of the European Union, the United States would always have the Kosovo card if they were isolated from the area.

Another reason the U.S. has become involved with the conflict in Kosovo is that it is a precedent-setting move for future American military actions. Humanitarian action in Kosovo following the UN's late engagement in the Bosnian conflict via NATO would have increased the US's power in future operations in this context. Furthermore, if the

²⁸ Ben Cohen, "Why Europe Failed to Halt the Genocide in Bosnia," WRMEA, October 20, 2021, <https://www.wrmea.org/1993-april-may/why-europe-failed-to-halt-the-genocide-in-bosnia.html>, (accessed April 15, 2021).

United States were to lead intervention in Kosovo on humanitarian grounds, it would have a good impact on the global image of the United States.

Later in his presidency, Clinton would have his most significant foreign policy success in Kosovo, which exemplified his commitment to strategic action.

3.3.1 Dayton settlement and Kosovars' disappointment

Undoubtedly, the relationship between the Serbs and the Albanian Kosovars was strained by several external factors. These included the links of certain social circles and religious groupings, as well as the current activity of prominent political figures and their historical antecedents. The conflict that ensued may be traced back to the various conditions surrounding the hostilities' commencement. These traits did not all have the same effect on the onset of violent conduct in society.

The Contact Group was founded after the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN), and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, now OSCE) failed to end the Bosnian conflict. This Group was established in April 1994 by France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, four of which are permanent members of the Security Council. With the escalation of hostilities in Kosovo in 1998, Italy joined the Contact Group.²⁹

There have been several conferences and meetings about the Yugoslav Crisis, starting with the Brioni, Lisbon, the Hague (1991), London, and Geneva (1992-1995), and concluding with the Dayton Conference (1995). Despite the high hopes of Kosovar Albanians, these conferences and debates addressing the Yugoslav crisis focused on a

²⁹ Qerim Qerimi, "An Informal World: The Role and Status of 'Contact Group' Under Internal Law," *Chicago-Kent Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol. 7, 2007, n.d.

range of other topics to find a solution, but they did not address the Question of Kosovo.³⁰

The date November 1, 1995, marked the beginning of the Dayton conference. At Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on the outskirts of Dayton, Ohio, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, Serbian President Milosevic, and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, as well as representatives from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the European Union (EU), met. This location was chosen to limit the participants' ability to negotiate through the media rather than at the bargaining table.

The peace conference was presided over by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and it was co-chaired by Carl Bildt, the Special Representative of the EU, and Igor Ivanov, the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia.

On December 14, the parties and witnesses the U.S. President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister John Major, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed the General Framework Agreement, which included 12 annexes.³¹ “The agreement required Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to fully recognize each other's sovereign equality and handle conflicts peacefully.”³²

³⁰ Dr.Sc. Ramë Buja, “Kosovo – from Dayton to Rambouillet,” *ILIRIA International Review* 1, no. 1 (July 2016): p. 7, <https://doi.org/10.21113/iir.v1i1.196>.

³¹ J. Slaon, “The Dayton Peace Agreement: Human Rights Guarantees and Their Implementation,” *European Journal of International Law* 7, no. 2 (January 1996): p. 207-225, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.ejil.a015510>. See also, Mustafa Türkeş, Ş. İnan Rüma, Sait Akşit ve D. Arıkan Açar, "Kriz Sarmalında Bosna-Hersek: "Devlet Krizi"", (Cycles of Crises in Bosnia-Herzegovina: the 'State Crisis', Boğaziçi Üniversitesi-TÜSİAD Dış Politika Forumu Araştırma Raporu DPF 2012-RR 02, pp. (1-55)

³² Article I of the Dayton Agreement

“Furthermore, the parties undertook to fully protect human rights and the rights of refugees and displaced people.”³³ “Finally, the parties undertook to actively cooperate with all institutions, including those authorized by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in carrying out the peace treaty and investigating and prosecuting war crimes and other breaches of international humanitarian law.”³⁴ The peace agreement that brought Bosnia and Herzegovina war to an end, which failed to refer to and address the Kosovo Question, was widely considered as one of the reasons for the beginning of hostilities in Kosovo in 1996.³⁵

Many of the explanations that include the Dayton Accords as a contributing component in the equation of ethnic tension do not demonstrate that the accords played a significant effect in the onset of the war. The accord had a far more significant impact on the situation than is generally acknowledged. However, while the resolution successfully aimed to bring the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina to a halt, it had other unexpected implications on surrounding nations, including a negative impact on the Albanian community in Kosovo. The unintended repercussions of the Dayton Accords were an essential factor in the commencement of the Kosovo War.³⁶ Also, it is crucial in the sense that the Albanian community in Kosovo was expected at least to give a reference to the Kosovo case, but it was not which was due to Serb insistence to exclude Kosovo issue from the accords and external power’s desperate need for result and unwillingness to jeopardize anything to affect this.

³³ Article VII of the Dayton Agreement

³⁴ Article IX of the Dayton Agreement

³⁵ Christopher Carson, “The Dayton Accords and the Escalating Tensions in Kosovo,” *Berkeley Undergraduate Journal* 26, no. 1 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.5070/b3261016222>.

³⁶ Ibid

The similarities between the ethnic tensions that occurred in Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as the resolution of the problem through the mediation of the international community, gave the Albanians of Kosovo hope that their problem would be resolved because of the international community's intervention. However, they did not elaborate on how Albanians in Kosovo felt alienated from the international community.³⁷ It was particularly disappointing for the Kosovar Albanian's leader, Ibrahim Rugova, who had been able to ease some of the tensions within the country at the time of the Dayton Accords by implying to his core supporters that their interests were the deep concerns of U.S. foreign policy at the time of the Dayton Accords.³⁸

Following the signing of the Dayton Accords, most of the sanctions imposed against Yugoslavia because of the bloodshed were lifted as members of the international community sought to restore normalcy to their relations with Belgrade. They interpreted these activities as being in the interests of Belgrade and damaging to the struggle for independence among Kosovar Albanians. The easing of economic restrictions by the United Nations and the European Union served as a symbolic endorsement of the conduct of Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian government. It was in 1996 that the European Union restored commercial relations with Yugoslavia and suggested that its member countries diplomatically recognize Milosevic's rule, which was implemented in 1997.³⁹ The only country that did not totally lift its economic sanctions against Yugoslavia was the United States, which retained an "outer wall" of sanctions in place owing to the risk of a conflict in the province of Kosovo. The easing economic sanctions against Yugoslavia and the diplomatic recognition of Milosevic's

³⁷ Dr.Sc. Ramë Buja, "Kosovo – from Dayton to Rambouillet," *ILIRIA International Review* 1, no. 1 (July 2016): p. 7, <https://doi.org/10.21113/iir.v1i1.196>.

³⁸ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

³⁹ Enver Hasani, "The 'Outer Wall' of Sanctions and the Kosovo Issue," *Journal of International Affairs* III, no. 3 (September 1998).

dictatorship by many countries was a tremendously symbolic setback for Albanian Kosovars.

For the first time, the notion of an "outer wall" of sanctions was made public by the US State Department on November 23, 1995. It stressed that a resolution would be filed in the UN Security Council to abolish the weapons embargo on the former Yugoslavia governments. Trade restrictions against Serbia will be lifted, but they may be reinstated if Serbia or any other Serb authority fails to achieve its duties under the Peace Agreement substantially. Sanctions would stay in place until Serbia solve several other issues, including Kosovo and cooperation with the War Crimes Tribunal.⁴⁰ As previously stated, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) has been required to fulfill the exact requirements as the other former Yugoslav republics, except the highly particular ones derived from the Dayton Peace Accords (especially the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal on former Yugoslavia). FRY has been tasked with ensuring the rule of law, democracy, and respect for human and minority rights inside its boundaries.

The collapse of the Albanian's government due to the economic crisis in 1997 indirectly impacted the situation in Kosovo, which contributed to the escalation of the conflict.⁴¹ As the situation's architect, President Sali Berisha was subsequently ousted from power, and he was unable to internationalize the Kosovo problem until 1997. It should be noted that President Sali Berisha was well admired in Kosovo and an outspoken advocate for the country's independence from Yugoslavia. Due to the political breakdown induced by the collapse of the pyramid scheme investment, Albania also lost control of its security system, resulting in a constant supply of

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Paul Kubicek, "Albania's Collapse and Reconstruction.," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (March 1998).

weapons into the Kosovo area. Prior to then, a large number of illegal market transactions occurred along the border between Albania and Kosovo.⁴²

In addition, there was the perception that there was too much to negotiate on other critical issues. No one wanted to alienate Milosevic, who had forced the Bosnian Serbs into accepting the compromises necessary for the Dayton agreement, and whose continued cooperation was considered necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the Dayton accord, among other reasons that Kosovo never made it to Dayton. And because of Ibrahim Rugova, who has arguably become a victim of his success, it was believed that there was no pressing need to address the issue that had been raised previously. So, in Kosovo emerged different political groups. At the same time, Ibrahim Rugova, a pacifist representing that wing, argued against the arms struggle, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and favored the arms struggle.

The answer to the question of why the international actors hesitated to take a stand in the Kosovo Question is answered by Richard Caplan.⁴³ He stated that “the central powers are split, like Russia refusing to support many penalties and some governments preferring to take more positive incentives. But it should be noted that the interested parties are more united now than in Bosnia because of the lesson learned. For example, Britain and France rejected the air strikes in Bosnia, and the consequences were obvious; at latter indicated their backing for armed action. Moreover, the U.S. and NATO, absent from the early stages of the conflict in Bosnia, have assumed a central

⁴² Chris Jarvis, “The Rise and Fall of the Pyramid Schemes in Albania,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1999, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.880625>. See also D. Arıkan Açar, *Albania: Anatomy of A Traumatic Transition*. Unpublished MSc Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2000.

⁴³ Richard Caplan, “International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo,” *International Affairs* 74, no. 4 (1998): p. 745-761, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00043>.

role in the current crisis. However, the Contact Group's disagreements have sometimes hindered it from responding decisively.”⁴⁴

Also, Serbian sovereignty is an obstacle. Even though its actions are not purely internal, not all humanitarian actions are legal or appropriate, especially those requiring force. The powerful nations worried about the consequences of violating Serbian sovereignty, not just for the Balkans but also for the global order. Lastly, the international community and Milosevic share some essential goals. Most of the opinion leaders were vehemently opposed to Kosovo's independence. A separate Kosovo would make it easier for separatist groups to win over integrationist forces in Bosnia, threatening the fragile peace they have built there. More importantly, many countries fear that an independent Kosovo could destabilize Macedonia, where the Albanian minority, which makes up at least a quarter of the population, is similarly dissatisfied with its status and may join a Kosovar state. Or a newly independent Kosovo may seek union with Albania. Finally, an independent Kosovo might be a positive model for other European self-determination movements. Milosevic and the international community share a common objective in defeating militant separatist forces in Kosovo, even if they disagree on the means and framework of a viable solution. To be sure, the major countries have been reluctant to adopt actions that would completely undercut Belgrade's grasp over Kosovo.⁴⁵

All the factors described above help to understand why the Albanians in Kosovo were dissatisfied with the Dayton Accord that disregarded any reference to the Kosovo Question. As a result of the lifting of trade sanctions by the European Union and the United Nations, as well as many other countries granting diplomatic recognition to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under Milosevic rule, the indirect impact of the collapse of the Albanian government in 1997, the international community's reluctance to even mention it because it was believed that there was no pressing need to deal with

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Richard Caplan, “International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo,” *International Affairs* 74, no. 4 (1998): p. 745-761, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00043>.

it, forced Kosovo Albanians to the other paths to achieve the everlasting goal of freedom and independence.

3.3.2 Drift to arms struggle

Albanians expected that Dayton was more than just a squandered opportunity to try to bring about a settlement in Kosovo. It also directly impacted the course of events that eventually culminated in NATO's military campaign four years later. As previously stated, Rugova had successfully convinced his people to refrain from using violence in their campaign for independence until the Treaty of Dayton was signed. This policy, however, was entirely undermined by the failure to even bring up the subject of Kosovo at Dayton, which opened up an avenue to the subsequent escalation of Albanian military activities, which in turn provoked or justified increased Serbian repression.⁴⁶

While serving as President of Kosovo in the years preceding the war, Rugova was a staunch supporter of Albanian nationalist causes and an advocate for the independence of the province and had hoped and declared that Kosovo's independence would be accomplished peacefully, by soft civil disobedience, without armed opposition or an independence war. On the one hand, it brought spiritual serenity, while on the other, it brought instability. It stifled the grandest and most feelings of sacrifice, putting off any genuine possibility of freedom and independence. The former Yugoslavia showed us that such a position was unrealistic, unfounded, and illogical. Meanwhile, Kosovo Albanians hoped the world would recognize their peaceful stances as Europe and the world continued to observe the macabre activities in war arenas. His support for the

⁴⁶ Peter Russell, "The Exclusion of Kosovo from the Dayton Negotiations," *Journal of Genocide Research* 11, no. 4 (2009): p. 487-511, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520903309537>.

country's independence movement was also unwavering, and he was a staunch believer in the possibility of a peaceful resolution.⁴⁷ The Dayton Conference dashed all hopes of Albanians that something peaceful could be done to resolve the Kosovo issue; in the same way, Kosovo continued to trace its path of peace, subordination, and humiliation after the conference. When it came down to it, it was realized that other routes should be taken to achieve the ever-elusive goal of freedom and independence.⁴⁸ It was only when Kosovo Albanians began to think differently than they had been thinking up to that point that it became a distinct issue. They began to conceive and behave the same way as all other nations striving to engage in and obtain their freedom, with the most sublime and priceless sacrifice of all, the liberation struggle, as their model.

While other options were being considered, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which had begun to engage in coordinated attacks in 1996 actively, targeted several Serbian police stations and stabbed many officers during that year and the following year, respectively emerged.⁴⁹ In the 1980s, the two political organizations, MNLK (Movement for the National Liberation of Kosovo) and LRSNJ (Movement for an Albanian Republic in Yugoslavia), afterward renamed LPRK (Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo), saw armed resistance as the most effective means of gaining Kosovo's independence. Even though LPRK's efforts were impeded by the Serbian regime's assaults and Rugova's popularity, it did not forsake its program. Their first assaults on Serbian police were deemed terroristic. LPRK members went to Albania for military training, but many of them were detained or murdered when they sought to return to Kosovo once their training was complete. As early as August of 1993, the

⁴⁷ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

⁴⁸ Dr.Sc. Ramë Buja, "Kosovo – from Dayton to Rambouillet," *ILIRIA International Review* 1, no. 1 (July 2016): p. 7, <https://doi.org/10.21113/iir.v1i1.196>.

⁴⁹ Tim Judah, "Kosovo in Yugoslavia," *Kosovo*, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/wentk/9780195376739.003.0005>.

LPRK convened a conference at which it decided to change its name, reexamine its doctrine, and explore creating an armed force. Due to their affinities with Albanian communists and Yugoslav communists, the LPRK was labeled Marxist or communist in general, resulting in a schism at this gathering. The LKCK (National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo) refused to forsake their communist beliefs, but the LPK (Popular Movement for Kosovo) agreed to abandon Marxist philosophy. The LKCK wants a revolt, whereas the LPRK favors guerilla warfare. Kadri Veseli, Hashim Thaci, Xhavit Haliti, and Ali Ahmeti initiated preparations for the military. Since the Albanians had never had an army, the term Kosovo Liberation Army was adopted in December 1993 to express their aspiration for one shortly. Kosovo's liberation is also part of the process of independence from Serbia.⁵⁰

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) got tremendous spiritual and financial support from the Albanian diaspora and used its funds to purchase weapons. Particularly after the pyramid investment scheme collapsed and turned out to be a street fighting where people took weapons from military storage depots and sold them out to KLA staff.⁵¹ As soon as the KLA began its actions, the United States labeled them a terrorist organization, which, the US argued, would encourage Milosevic to legitimize his oppressive policies. It was not much, but it was enough for the United States to begin

⁵⁰ Klejda Mulaj, "Resisting an Oppressive Regime: The Case of Kosovo Liberation Army," *Studies in Conflict; Terrorism* 31, no. 12 (September 2008): pp. 1103-1119, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100802510660>.

⁵¹ Mustafa Türkeş and Sait Akşit, "International Engagement, Transformation of the Kosova Question and Its Implications," *Milletlerarasi*, 2007, pp. 001-036, https://doi.org/10.1501/intrel_0000000138.

talks with the KLA.⁵² Soon after, before NATO bombed Yugoslavia, American intelligence agents helped train the Kosovo Liberation Army.⁵³

3.4 Failure of diplomacy in October 1998 and the Rambouillet Conference 6 February – 22 March 1999

The Rambouillet Agreement, officially the Interim Agreement on Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo, was a proposed peace agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and a delegation representing the Albanian majority population of Kosovo. The Rambouillet process is the culmination of almost a year of so-called resolutions made by the UN and others denouncing the violence in Kosovo.⁵⁴

Since 1998, the American strategy has shifted away from a focus on resolving the issue via dialogue between the parties, as was the case from 1992 to 1995. The reason for this was that Serbia's anticipated contribution to the solution of the crisis did not arrive until that date, nor did its aggression against Kosovo Albanians, which amounted to ethnic cleansing.

The conflict escalated in early 1998 when the FRY army attacked several villages in Drenica. When the conflict intensified, the UN Security Council enacted Resolution

⁵² Alpaslan Özerdem, “From a ‘Terrorist’ Group to a ‘Civil Defence’ Corps: The ‘Transformation’ of the Kosovo Liberation Army,” *International Peacekeeping* 10, no. 3 (2003): pp. 79-101, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310308559337>.

⁵³ Athan G. Theoharis and Richard H. Immerman, *The Central Intelligence Agency: Security under Scrutiny* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), p.65.

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State), https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/regions/eur/ksvo_ambouillet_text.html, (accessed April 18, 2021)

1160, which called on all members to join an arms embargo against Yugoslavia and Kosovo and urged the conflicting parties to engage in a meaningful dialogue regarding the political status of Kosovo.⁵⁵

Several times, FRY authorities and the Kosovo Albanian community, represented by Ibrahim Rugova, met to form a settlement. Still, it failed due to the rapid intensification of fighting in Kosovo, which weakened the chances of a settlement. Rugova had no authority over the KLA, while Milosevic oversaw his army and security.

On September 30, 1998, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1199, which made participation from the international community a prerequisite for future discussions.⁵⁶ After the crisis got worse, the US started indirect talks with the help of the Contact Group. These talks were led by Christopher Hill⁵⁷, the US ambassador to Macedonia, and Jim O'Brian, who works for the US Department of State. On October 1, 1998, the first draft of a settlement for Kosovo was made. The Kosovo side did not accept it because the agreement was subjected to a comprehensive evaluation after three years to improve its implementation and to consider proposals by either side for additional steps, which would require a mutual agreement for adoption. The main reason why the agreement did not work was that it could only be changed or ended after three years with the agreement of all parties, and since it did not attempt to define

⁵⁵ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1160 (31 March 1998) UN Doc S/RES/1160

⁵⁶ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1199 (23 September 1998) UN Doc S/RES/1199

⁵⁷ Marc Weller, "The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo", *International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (1999): p. 211-251, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00069>.

Kosovo's legal position in any manner.⁵⁸ There was no stipulation in the text that would serve the ultimate objective of Kosovar Albanians of independence of Kosovo.

Richard Holbrooke, the American special envoy who had mostly negotiated the Dayton Peace Accords with Milosevic, was sent to Belgrade on October 6, 1998.⁵⁹ He was supported by a growing agreement among NATO members that military intervention may be necessary. Serbia agreed to a ceasefire on October 13, 1998, and the withdrawal of security forces from Kosovo in exchange for the threat of an air attack by NATO. Concluded with the consent of Yugoslav authorities to approve the presence of a mission to be created in Kosovo by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM).⁶⁰ In the resolution that was passed on October 24, 1998, UNSC Resolution 1203, it was emphasized to the Serbian authorities that it was their duty to guarantee the safety of the KVM.

Although Milosevic first promised to decrease his military presence in the area; however, he later did the reverse and boosted the Serbian military presence in the region, violating the agreement with Holbrooke. In an interview made with the Secretary of State Madeline Albright, she stated: "... we were willing to use force if Milosevic did not come to a political settlement. However, it wasn't clear enough to Milosevic how much force we would use. He did come to an agreement that

⁵⁸ Marc Weller, "The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo", *International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (1999): pp. 211-251, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00069>, p.219.

⁵⁹ James Gow, "Kosovo after the Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement. What Now?," *The International Spectator* 33, no. 4 (1998): p. 17-22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729808456830>.

⁶⁰ Eric Herring, "From Rambouillet to the Kosovo Accords: NATO's War against Serbia and Its Aftermath," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 3-4 (2000): p. 224-245, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642980008406901>. See also, Açar, Arıkan D. Small State Playing the Asymmetric Game: Continuity and Change in the Albanian Foreign Policy. *Unpublished PhD Thesis*, Middle East Technical University, 2008.

Ambassador Holbrooke brokered.... But the Serbs cheated on everything in the agreement, and the Kosovars got radicalized. It was clear to me that we'd have to take stronger action..."⁶¹, which can be assumed that the military intervention card was on the table. It must be noted, on the other hand, it was predicted that she was a staunch supporter of the Kosovo military intervention in 1999.

After Serbian troops attacked the town of Racak in the middle of January 1999, the international actors led by the USA decided to warn Yugoslavia with NATO airstrikes if the warring parties did not promptly comply with the international demand. Around 45 people, including nine insurgents, were killed. A request was made for an impartial inquiry to examine the crime scene and identify what transpired. Several days later, the Serbs bombarded Racak and removed the bodies. With evidence in hand, the remains were transferred to Pristina for an autopsy. The same day, Milosevic's dictatorship refused International Court Tribunal of Yugoslavia chief prosecutor Louise Arbour's entrance to Kosovo. Using a Belarusian team, the Yugoslav authorities conducted autopsies. A group of Finnish forensic pathologists conducted a second examination two weeks later; the bodies were released in early February. Investigations have been unable to ascertain what occurred in Racak beyond the fact that 45 people were killed. As the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia denied Tribunal investigators access to its territory due to the Tribunal's lack of jurisdiction, it is conceivable to indict Serbs for mass murder based on particular sources. The fact that Milosevic's authority refused Louise Arbour entry into Kosovo the day after the massacre was manifest.⁶²

⁶¹ "Interviews - Madeleine Albright | War in Europe | Frontline," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/albright.html>, (accessed April 20, 2021).

⁶² Audrius Šaras, "The Massacre That Lead to a NATO Bombing," (June 17, 2020), <https://historyofyesterday.com/the-massacre-that-lead-to-a-nato-bombing-9054463d3f5a>, (accessed April 30, 2021).

Soon after, the Rambouillet summit on Kosovo was assembled on February 6, 1999. Even though the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) dominated Kosovo Albanian politics, it comprised just a third of the delegation, with the remaining seats divided between the KLA and LBD (United Democratic Movement) and two independent delegates, with KLA (Hashim Thaci) in the lead in Rambouillet.

The Contact Group had already established a draft proposal⁶³, and it was anticipated that the two delegations would provide feedback on them. Even under the threat of air strikes, the Yugoslav delegation did not accept the transnational occupation of Kosovo by NATO-led forces because it included the unrestricted use of all of Yugoslavia's territory and resources. Secondly, the Yugoslav delegation did not accept the mentioning of the future independence referendum as the resolution mechanism after the three-year transition period.⁶⁴ On the other side, the Albanian delegation from Kosovo will only accept the terms of the agreement when they have been amended to include wording referring to the desire of the people of Kosovo, the independence.

When viewed from the perspective of the Yugoslav delegation, Milosevic had substantial reasons for wanting to maintain Serb control and dominance of Kosovo, as the majority of Serbs had a solid attachment to the province due to the presence of numerous sanctuaries of the Serbian Orthodox church and relics from the former Serb medieval kingdom. In addition, Milosevic's political character was intimately tied with the Serb supremacy in Kosovo since he had gained notoriety by promising a crowd of Kosovo Serbs who had been protesting their abuse by Kosovo Albanians.⁶⁵ Milosevic

⁶³ Eric Herring, "From Rambouillet to the Kosovo Accords: NATO's War against Serbia and Its Aftermath," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 3-4 (2000): p. 224-245, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642980008406901>.

⁶⁴ Florian Bieber and Daskalovski Židas, "Rambouillet: A Critical (Re)Assessment," in *Understanding the War in Kosovo* (London: Routledge, 2009).

⁶⁵ Stephen T. Hosmer, "He Assumed Accepting Rambouillet Terms Would Endanger His Rule," in *The Conflict over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001).

continued to use Kosovo to shore up his waning political position in Serbia, using the Kosovo crisis to stoke nationalist feelings, galvanize popular support, and divert attention from Serbia's other grave issues.⁶⁶

Milosevic undoubtedly realized that, given his long public commitment to the defense of Serb sovereignty and hegemony in Kosovo, he would run a serious risk of massive widespread criticism if he were to pull back on this issue. This was likely the primary reason Milosevic never made a real effort to negotiate a comprehensive solution at Rambouillet. The position of NATO soldiers in the FRY was one of the provisions of the Rambouillet Agreement that had FRY and Serb delegates been interested in genuinely reaching a solution, would have been deemed unacceptable as part of the final provision of the Rambouillet Agreement. "Along with their vehicles, boats, aircraft, and equipment," as stated in Chapter 7, Appendix B, NATO forces were granted "free and unfettered travel and unobstructed access throughout the FRY including related air space and territorial seas."⁶⁷ Noting that Appendix B of the Rambouillet agreement was inserted at the last minute, it may be assumed that the United States did not wish to reach a compromise and thus precipitating collapse of the negotiation between the Albanian and Serb delegations at the Rambouillet in Paris.

On the other hand, the Kosovo Albanian delegation was not interested in signing as the proposed agreement did not refer to a referendum for independence. However, to avoid a total failure of the meeting, the emphasis was on the Kosovar Albanians, who were required to sign an agreement for NATO to act. Madeleine Albright devoted a large portion of her time during the last three days of the discussions to pressuring the Kosovar Albanians to sign the agreements. The KLA Hashim Thaci refused to sign, and as the delegation pledged to make all decisions unanimously, this meant that Kosovo would reject the agreement. Hashim Thaci endured many hours of Albright's

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "The Rambouillet Text - Appendix B," *The Guardian*, April 28, 1999, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/apr/28/balkans12>. (accessed May 21, 2021).

manipulation as the member of the delegation who was the most adamant in his reluctance to sign the treaty. She says in her memoir: “I tried a variety of tactics. First, I told Thaci what a great potential leader he was. When that didn’t work, I said we were disappointed in him, that if he thought we would bomb the Serbs even if the Albanians rejected the agreement, he was wrong. We could never get NATO support for that. ‘On the other hand,’ I said, ‘if you say yes and the Serbs say no, NATO will strike and go on striking until the Serb forces are out and NATO can go in. You will have security. And you will be able to govern yourselves.”⁶⁸ Despite the efforts of Albright, Thaci was unable to accept the agreements. Before February 23, he had decided not to sign the agreement. However, after consulting with the political and military leaders of Kosovo, he changed his mind and agreed to sign the agreement on 18 March. On the side of Serbs, as Appendix B was not acceptable to the Serbian leaders, the delegation decided to leave Rambouillet without signing the agreement. This ensured that Albright’s diplomacy worked properly. Six days later, on March 24th, 1999, NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia started.⁶⁹ It should also be emphasized that Kosovo was coerced into signing the agreement, particularly by Secretary of State Madeline Albright, the one who included Appendix B. It may be presumed that the military deployment would not be feasible if the Kosovo party was not required to sign the agreement, therefore it was simple for the American government to legitimate its intervention by obtaining approval from the Kosovo party.

⁶⁸ Madeleine Korbelt Albright, *Madame Secretary: A Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), p.406.

⁶⁹ Tobias Wille, “Representation and Agency in Diplomacy: How Kosovo Came to Agree to the Rambouillet Accords,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22, no. 4 (June 2017): pp. 808-831, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-017-0120-2>.

3.5 NATO Military Intervention in 1999

The US House of Representatives voted, by a vote of 219-191, a nonbinding resolution on March 11 in favor of Clinton's proposal to deploy U.S. soldiers to Kosovo if a peace deal was not achieved; supporters of the president contended that the United States had a moral duty to halt a genocide that may spark a wider conflict.⁷⁰

Two rounds of international-mediated negotiations in Rambouillet, France, in February and Paris, France, in March 1999 failed to resolve the impasse and exhausted all diplomatic options. This opened up a military intervention by NATO. Operation Allied Force began on March 24, 1999, and finished on June 10, 1999, a total of 78 days. After Yugoslavia agreed to evacuate its armed troops, police, and paramilitaries on June 10th of that year, a solid international civil and security presence was established in the region.⁷¹ And in the evening of March 24, 1999, President Clinton addressed the country about the NATO attack on Yugoslavia. The objective is to safeguard thousands of innocent civilians in Kosovo from a military onslaught, he added. He also emphasized that “Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative. It is also important to America's national interests. Take a look at this map. Kosovo is a small place, but it sits on a major fault line between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, at

⁷⁰ “NATO Begins Bombing Serbia, March 24, 1999,” POLITICO, <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/03/24/this-day-in-politics-march-24-1231269>, (accessed May 31, 2021).

⁷¹ NATO, “Kosovo Air Campaign (March-June 1999),” NATO, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49602.htm. (accessed June 6, 2021).

the meeting place of Islam and both the Western and Orthodox branches of Christianity.”⁷² Highlighting Kosovo’s geopolitical and cultural significance.

For the first time, NATO took military action without obtaining UN Security Council authorization. China and Russia had made it clear that they would use their veto rights in the council to prevent the council from authorizing the operation.⁷³

NATO’s member nations are inclined to intervene in Kosovo because they regret failing to stop the atrocities in the former Yugoslavia early in the conflict. NATO’s Operation Allied Force, which began on March 24, was proclaimed from the outset to be premised on the notion that certain crimes were so grave that a state responsible for them may be liable to military intervention, notwithstanding the concept of sovereignty. During the air campaign, NATO leaders stressed five goals that Milosevic had to agree to: a verifiable end to all fighting and killing, the withdrawal of all Serb military, police, and paramilitary forces from Kosovo, the deployment of an international military force, the return of all refugees and free access for humanitarian aid, and a political framework for Kosovo that built on the Rambouillet Accords.⁷⁴

⁷² “Transcript: Clinton Addresses Nation on Yugoslavia Strike,” CNN (Cable News Network), <https://edition.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/03/25/clinton.transcript/>. (accessed June 12, 2021).

⁷³ “NATO Begins Bombing Serbia, March 24, 1999,” POLITICO, <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/03/24/this-day-in-politics-march-24-1231269>. (accessed June 12, 2022).

⁷⁴ Adam Roberts, “NATO’s ‘Humanitarian War’ over Kosovo,” *Survival* 41, no. 3 (1999): p. 102-123, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339912331342943>.

3.5.1 Legal Concerns Regarding NATO's Operation Allied Force

Answering the issue of whether or not Operation Allied Force was legitimate is a challenging undertaking to do. There are just two exceptions to the UN Charter's general prohibition on the use or threat of force. First, according to Article 42 of the Charter, if the Security Council determines that the measures outlined in Article 41 are insufficient or have proven to be inadequate, it may use air, sea, or ground forces to preserve or restore international peace and security. This may include protests, blockades, and other activities by the air, sea, or land troops of United Nations members.⁷⁵ Second, Article 51 allows for the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense in an armed assault on a United Nations member.⁷⁶ Whereas when we look at Articles 42 and 51, it does not legalize the NATO intervention in Kosovo.

Legal worries are caused by the fact that the Security Council has not given authority under the UN Charter. Operation Allied Force is not legal for many, but for some, its legitimacy was justified for humanitarian reasons. Serb authorities committed widespread and egregious abuses of fundamental human rights in Kosovo. The UN, OSCE, and non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch and others have all published reports and resolutions on the situation in Kosovo that paint a picture of widespread, indiscriminate attacks on civilians and property as the forced displacement of large numbers of civilians.⁷⁷ "During 1998 and the first few months of 1999, there was a significant displacement in Kosovo. 200,000 Kosovar Albanians were internally displaced, almost 70,000 fled the province to neighboring countries and Montenegro, and 100,000 Yugoslav nationals, mostly Kosovo Albanians, sought

⁷⁵ Charter of the United Nations, Article 42.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Article 51.

⁷⁷ Florian Bieber and Daskalovski Židas, "The UN in Kosova: Administering Democratization?," in *Understanding the War in Kosovo* (London: Routledge, 2009).

asylum in Western Europe." ⁷⁸ However, the UN Charter severely limits the right to wage war since nothing causes more human suffering than war.⁷⁹ After the war, a list showed that more than 13,500 people died or went missing during the two-year conflict.⁸⁰ The Yugoslav and Serb forces forced between 1.2 million⁸¹ and 1.45 million Kosovo Albanians to leave their homes.⁸²

Even though the Security Council did not delegate the use of force authorization against the FRY, it passed some resolutions that should be considered. Its resolution 1160 said that if there were no positive steps toward a peaceful resolution of the situation in Kosovo, it would have to think about taking more steps.⁸³ Several experts say that "additional measures" could have hinted at a future armed enforcement action

⁷⁸ "War Crimes in Kosovo," Under Orders: War Crimes in Kosovo - 4. March-June 1999: An Overview, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/kosovo/undword-03.htm>. (accessed June 27, 2021).

⁷⁹ Mary Ellen O'Connell, "Responsibility to Peace: A Critique of r2p," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4, no. 1 (2010): p. 39-52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970903541671>.

⁸⁰ Milka Domanovic, "List of Kosovo War Victims Published," Balkan Insight, May 28, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2014/12/10/kosovo-war-victims-list-published/>. (accessed July 7, 2021).

⁸¹ Heike Krieger, *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law: An Analytical Documentation, 1974-1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.90.

⁸² *Kosovo/Kosova - As Seen, As Told, An Analysis of the Human Rights Findings of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission October 1998 to June 1999* (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 1999).

⁸³ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1160 (31 March 1998) UN Doc S/RES/1160

under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.⁸⁴ In resolution 1199 in 1998 that came after, the Council said that the situation in Kosovo was "a threat to peace and security in the region."⁸⁵ Other parts of this resolution also show that the UN and NATO secretary generals were worried about the same things. NATO left open the possibility of using force if the crisis in Kosovo did not end: "decides, should the concrete measures demanded in this resolution and resolution 1160 (1998) not be taken, to consider further action and additional measures to maintain or restore peace and stability in the region;"⁸⁶

Also, on March 26, 1999, two days after the air strikes started, Russia, Belarus, and India sent a proposal to the Security Council condemning what NATO had done. However, most of the Council members voted against the proposal.⁸⁷ It may be noted that neither did the UN Security Council legally authorize the NATO operation in Kosovo nor legally condemn NATO.

One of the major problems is the; lack of codification in humanitarian intervention in the UN charter, and NATO was not the proper military organization to address such humanitarian issues as it represented only the interests of its members and served in the most case for the interests of the USA. Obviously, people at large were left between the not good two choices, UN Charter that lacked proper codification for humanitarian

⁸⁴ Florian Bieber and Daskalovski Židas, "The Theory of Humanitarian Intervention with Special Regard to NATO's Kosovo Mission" in *Understanding the War in Kosovo* (London: Routledge, 2009). p.152.

⁸⁵ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1199 (23 September 1998) UN Doc S/RES/1199.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, para.16.

⁸⁷ "Security Council Rejects Demand for Cessation of Use of Force against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United Nations (United Nations), <https://www.un.org/press/en/1999/19990326.sc6659.html>. (accessed July 14, 2021).

intervention and the NATO intervention that was not legal; indeed, both of which were inappropriate.

3.5.2 The UN in Kosovo

The main goal of the peace plan, made by the seven most industrialized countries in the world and Russia, is to put peace efforts under the control of the United Nations.⁸⁸ The story of how NATO got the Russians to agree to the Kosovo deal is just as important as how they got Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to agree. Officials from the United States and Europe tried to get President Boris Yeltsin's Russia to use its power with Yugoslavia, an ally, to get the concessions that would bring peace. Negotiators thought that to do this, they had first to show Russia that its long-term security interests were with the West, not its Slavic brothers in Belgrade.⁸⁹

The three envoys spoke about a peace plan to end the Kosovo war. Former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, leading Russia's mediation efforts in Yugoslavia, was joined in his meetings with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic by US Deputy

⁸⁸ CNN (Cable News Network) [http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9906/03/kosovo.peace.07/index.html#:~:text=BELGRADE%2C%20Yugoslavia%20\(CNN\)%20%2D%2D,facilitate%20the%20return%20of%20refugees](http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9906/03/kosovo.peace.07/index.html#:~:text=BELGRADE%2C%20Yugoslavia%20(CNN)%20%2D%2D,facilitate%20the%20return%20of%20refugees). (accessed July 16, 2021).

⁸⁹ William Drozdiak, "The Kosovo Peace Deal," The Washington Post (WP Company, June 6, 1999), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1999/06/06/the-kosovo-peace-deal/8d8de6c4-561c-4bd9-af60-6937ec438028/>. (accessed July 27, 2021).

Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari the latter played the EU's role.⁹⁰

Russia backed Yugoslavia's demand that no foreign soldiers, particularly those from NATO nations, be permitted on Yugoslav land. Since the beginning of the conflict in March, Chernomyrdin has been on a shuttle diplomacy mission, going between Belgrade and Washington in pursuit of a peace accord between the Serbs and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo demanding autonomy or independence. The Group of Eight foreign ministers endorsed a paper outlining the "basic principles" for resolving the Kosovo conflict.⁹¹ The G-8 proposal asks for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force in the Serbian region, where the Yugoslav military headed by Serbs has purportedly undertaken a campaign against the ethnic Albanian population.

⁹²

When Chernomyrdin joined Talbott and Ahtisaari for their final round of discussions outside Bonn on June 6, 1999, the Americans hoped for a settlement that would send the two envoys to Belgrade for the ultimate confrontation with Milosevic. Russians stood firm. Russian military advisors accompanying Chernomyrdin were concerned with NATO's role in a Kosovo peacekeeping force. Sergeyev, Chernomyrdin's adviser, said the long talks were needed to convince the Americans that a Yugoslav departure would be difficult unless NATO ceased bombing. Talbott repeatedly called the White House while the envoys worked until midnight. Near daybreak, they recognized they couldn't satisfy Russia's command issue and made it a footnote. By dawn, when things

⁹⁰ "Envoys on Kosovo Confer in Moscow," Google News Archive Search (Google), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1842&dat=19990521&id=amweAAAIBAJ&sjid=ackEAAAIBAJ&pg=1491%2C3090623>. (accessed July 30, 2021).

⁹¹ The Washington Post (WP Company) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/june99/plantext03.htm#TOP>. (accessed August 8, 2021).

⁹² "Finnish Leader to Join Chernomyrdin on Belgrade Visit," CNN (Cable News Network), <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/14/kosovo.diplomacy.01/>. (accessed August 9, 2021).

seemed bleakest, Chernomyrdin appeared to have received orders from Yeltsin's staff to reach a deal and go to Belgrade. "There were still unsolved concerns, but everyone understood it was best to get Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari to Belgrade before the sun set," a senior German official stated.⁹³ "We had to convince Milosevic to withdraw his forces and bring in a NATO-led peacekeeping force. We believed we'd resolve command issues with the Russians later."⁹⁴ Ahtisaari read the two-page paper to Milosevic and his allies during a four and half-hour meeting. He said subsequently that reading the text aloud alongside Chernomyrdin was vital to let Milosevic know they represented "a unified front" between Russia and the West.⁹⁵ After addressing all queries and saying this was Milosevic's best offer, Ahtisaari encouraged him to discuss the conditions with his administration and respond the next day. The following morning, the Yugoslav parliament rubber-stamped its decision and summoned Ahtisaari to Milosevic's office. Chernomyrdin called Talbott in Bonn to tell him the Yugoslavs approved the paper. Albright opposed premature celebrations and past-tense war discourse at State. She responded, "Don't tell me we've reached our goal."⁹⁶ Humanitarian activity is needed. The White House grimly acknowledged the massive challenges ahead.

Following the ceasefire agreement on 10 June 1999, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been authorized by Resolution 1244 (1999) of the United Nations Security Council. UNMIK was assigned the unusual task of administering a whole area and establishing institutions of self-government from scratch.

⁹³ "Russia's Concession Led to Breakthrough," The Washington Post (WP Company), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/inatl/longterm/balkans/stories/diplomacy060699.htm>. (accessed August 12, 2021).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

While the United Nations is assigned the leading role in the mission, its components are delegated to several other international organizations. The OSCE is responsible for institution building, the European Union (EU) for reconstruction and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees supervised humanitarian assistance (UNHCR). KFOR is tasked for creating and preserving peace and security in Kosovo.⁹⁷

The United Nations looked to be the best option for all sides because of various political issues. UN was seen as a "neutral" party capable of aiding a peace process and competent in handling post-war issues like the repatriation of refugees and rebuilding by Western powers. As a member of the UN Security Council, Russia can have more significant influence over future events and remain an active participant. This was deemed acceptable by Russia. Belgrade accepted this for two reasons: First, even in the best-case scenario, NATO bombing would stop, and UN peacekeepers might be allowed to temporarily in Kosovo until, they assumed, Serbian authority could be restored. Second, for Slobodan Milosevic, handing up Kosovo to the United Nations was a way to save face in the worst-case scenario, as it was simpler to sell than losing it to a foreign invader or the Kosovar Albanians.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ B Simma, "NATO, the UN and the Use of Force: Legal Aspects," *European Journal of International Law* 10, no. 1 (January 1999): p. 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/10.1.1>.

⁹⁸ Florian Bieber and Daskalovski Židas, "International Administration of Kosovo," in *Understanding the War in Kosovo* (London: Routledge, 2009).

3.6 Perspectives of the EU and the Russian Federation

3.6.1 Pro-Western Line of Russia to Confrontation

In the historical context, Russian policy toward the Balkans was significant in two ways: the first was strategic, as it was viewed as an important area for Russia's security, and the second was religious and cultural, as it was viewed as necessary for Russia's national interest to support Slavic and Orthodox Christian nations.⁹⁹

Regarding the Yugoslav conflict in 1991-93, Russia tried to build a strong relationship with the West by adopting and supporting policies like those of the US and EU. They were intellectually influenced by the West and avoided confrontation with it. This adoration for the Americans has put Russian policy toward the Balkans under US and EU influence. In the early 1990s, Russia tried to join the European security system and merge with the West. To join the democratic civilization, Russia had to align with the West in Yugoslavia. Among the reasons for this stance was that Russia's top leadership was busy with internal issues; the dissolution of the USSR and the subsequent collapse of the Russian economy not allowed Russia from playing an active part in settling Balkan disputes and was ready to hand control of the country over to Europe. Yugoslavia's demise would have been disastrous for Eastern European multiethnic republics like the USSR.¹⁰⁰

After Moscow's admission in 1992 that the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had been dismantled, with Moscow's support for the Serbs in certain circumstances,

⁹⁹ Predrag Simic, "Russia and the Conflicts in the Former Yugoslavia," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 1, no. 3 (2001): p. 95-114, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683850108454654>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

Western powers have pursued policies that exclude Russia in a region where Russia has traditionally been influential and used force without Russia's consent.

Russia, reshaping its foreign policy in the post-Cold War era, worked with the West when the Bosnian conflict initially occurred and established its posture toward the Balkans within the limits of world politics. Andrey Kozyrev, the foreign minister, put the vision of collaboration with the West and strategic partnership into effect under the concept of global integration.¹⁰¹ Moscow backed practically all open-sided Western efforts and proposals to terminate the conflict as an extension of its cooperative posture. The Kremlin knew Western policies included anti-Serb language and acts but ignored them to maintain general unity.

1994 marked a turning point in Russia's foreign policy goals and the ability of Moscow's political parties to find common ground. The Yeltsin government prioritized defending Russia's national interests and security in the same year.¹⁰² Russia's Balkan strategy also reflected this little shift in foreign policy thought. Beginning in 1994, the Kremlin started to join in the peace process with its perspectives and ideas and establish policies that did not always accord with the Western stance. Russia's push to the side approach started with the United States' participation in the continuing peace process. In the latter stages of the Bosnian War, Russia was excluded from the peace process. 1995 marked the end of RF's ability to affect the course of events. Russia's forced honeymoon with the West came to an end.¹⁰³

In contrast to the inactivity and disarray created by several challenges during the Bosnian War, the RF's policies became more autonomous and braver during the

¹⁰¹ Amitabh Singh, "Russian Policy towards the War in Former Yugoslavia," *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 64, no. 2 (2008): p. 86-108, <https://doi.org/10.1177/097492840806400204>.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.100

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.106

Kosovo Crisis.¹⁰⁴ Initially, Russia's diplomatic efforts toward a peaceful resolution of the Kosovo Question mirrored those of other important states. With the failure of the forced peace diplomacy of the Western governments to resolve the situation and the realization that the following approach would be military, the RF attempted to avert a potential military intervention. As in the case of Bosnia, the RF was excluded from the decision-making process in the continuing developments.¹⁰⁵ In the latter phase of the Kosovo conflict, in the Rambouillet Accords, the open backing of the Kosovo delegation throughout the negotiations threw a large shadow on the mediator diplomacy conducted by Western powers on behalf of the Contact Group.¹⁰⁶ The Rambouillet Agreement, which set criteria that a sovereign state could not accept, demonstrated that military intervention plans were formulated independently of the warring parties' opinions.

After NATO's involvement, the Kremlin made every effort to depict the assault as a crisis of international law and institutions. During and after the intervention, the infringement of state sovereignty rights and the breach of the ban on the use of force were Moscow's two primary reasons. The most critical factor, however, was that Moscow saw the operation as a step towards the encirclement by NATO. NATO's engagement in the Balkans, citing the Serbian threat, is fundamentally tied to the organization's new purpose. The Kremlin saw its exclusion from the Kosovo Question as a major humiliation. Chernomyrdin, who took part in the peace plan discussions, did not see much support in Russia since it was noticed that Russia did not provide sufficient assistance against the Serbs, who considered it should back them. This led

¹⁰⁴ Branislav Radeljic, "Russia's Involvement in the Kosovo Case: Defending Serbian Interests or Securing Its Influence in Europe?," *Region: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 6, no. 2 (2017): p. 273-300, <https://doi.org/10.1353/reg.2017.0017>.

¹⁰⁵ Vladimir Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator* 35 (2000).

¹⁰⁶ Marc Weller, "The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo", *International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (1999): pp. 211-251, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00069>.

to Chernomyrdin's lack of popularity in Russia.¹⁰⁷ It is also noted that even though the West excluded Russia from the peace process, it did not entirely do. It is assumed that the West, especially the US, opened space and tried to include Russia in the system, however expected them to act within the framework defined by the West.

Although the Kosovo War highlighted Western powers' bias after the Cold War's end, the most remarkable change occurred in the sphere of international law. With this crisis, the theory that international law has evolved through being violated for the first time was advanced, and later Russia used it to gain legitimacy in its interventions.

Consequently, Russia's foreign policy in the Yugoslav Crises was limited to joining the Contact Group, making proposals to resolve the almost universally rejected crises, and serving as a mediator between Belgrade and the International Community. Russia did not support the national cause to unify Serbs under a single state, nor was it able to prevent the NATO war on Yugoslavia and the loss of *de facto* sovereignty over Kosovo.

In this sense, the events in Yugoslavia and NATO's participation in the Balkans indicate the operational component of the US policy to demonstrate that Russia is no longer a superpower. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's involvement in Yugoslavia was a step in the broader process. Since 1999, the Russians have regularly asserted that NATO's aggressive military posture in the Balkans, as well as its extension and development there, is a process tied to the New World Order's security model.

In NATO-led peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, Russian and NATO troops have collaborated in Bosnia and Herzegovina and subsequently in Kosovo. Russian peacekeepers stationed in the Balkans have had the chance to learn how NATO functions and operates. In this manner, they have seen for themselves that NATO is a transparent alliance that deals with a variety of complicated challenges and is willing

¹⁰⁷ Mark Baker, "Russia: Chernomyrdin Criticized over Kosovo Peace Deal," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty (Russia: Chernomyrdin Criticized Over Kosovo Peace Deal, April 9, 2008), <https://www.rferl.org/a/1091500.html>. (accessed August 13, 2021).

to engage with and consult with partner nations to develop long-lasting solutions. The rules of Russia's involvement in KFOR were negotiated in Helsinki, Finland, in June 1999. In accordance with this agreement, Russian peacekeepers are deployed in three sectors: the Multinational Brigade East commanded by the United States, the Multinational Brigade North led by France, and the Multinational Brigade South led by Germany.¹⁰⁸ It may be said that Russia's foreign policy underwent a lengthy creation process in the 1990s, from inaction to vigorous defense of national interests. The Balkans generally resembled a polygon in which all parts wished to participate. In the post-Cold War era, the conflicts in Yugoslavia have been the most contentious issue between Russia and the West. In other words, the crises profoundly impacted Russia's ties with Western governments and necessitated a second revision of Russian foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Simultaneously, the Yugoslav wars showed the flaws in the post-Cold War world's security order. Most critically, the crises revealed the flaws in Russia's position within this order.

3.6.2 EC's Calculation

In the late 1980s, when it became apparent that the dissolution of the SFRY was a real possibility, the European Community decided to cede control of the situation to the various local players. The European Union's approach was unsuccessful in resolving the issue in the Balkans or preventing the spread of violence. This is because it was

¹⁰⁸ "NATO and Russia: Partners in Peacekeeping," accessed August 1, 2022, <https://www.nato.int/docu/presskit/010219/brocheng.pdf>.

difficult to speak on behalf of the EU's twelve member states, and the voices of Member States held higher significance.¹⁰⁹

When we examine the reasons behind the EC's lack of an active approach toward the Yugoslav issue in the early 1990s, we notice that the EC was preoccupied with itself and had big aspirations for the future, such as European Union reform and the creation of a single currency. Another factor for the inability to develop a single foreign and security strategy regarding the Yugoslav crisis was the presence of divergent national interests among the member nations. Germany, the United Kingdom, and France were split into the three most powerful countries.

On the one hand, Germany was a staunch supporter of establishing the independent nations of Slovenia and Croatia; on the other hand, the United Kingdom and France opposed the formation of separate states of Slovenia and Croatia. Among the causes was anxiety over Germany's recent reunification, which raised the prospect of the country being one of the most powerful in Europe.¹¹⁰

With so many distinct perspectives and strategies, it would be impossible for the EU to develop a unified response to the Yugoslav problem. But we may examine that despite the diverse approaches, the EU had a single policy; in the time before the vote in Slovenia, the EU's policy was shared in ignorance of the potential for a crisis in Yugoslavia, which was a choice and a common stance in the EU's foreign policy.¹¹¹

As a result of Slovenia's referendum, the EU could no longer overlook the danger posed by the breakup of Yugoslavia and instead decided to base its strategy on territorial integrity vs. self-determination, which recognized Slovenia and Croatia as a

¹⁰⁹ Branislav Radeljic, "Europe 1989-2009: Rethinking the Break-up of Yugoslavia," *European Studies* 9 (2010): p. 115-127.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.119

¹¹¹ Dejan Marolov, "The Policy of the USA and EU towards the Disintegration of Yugoslavia," *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow* 1 (April 2012).

threat to European stability. Secessionist movements in EU countries like Spain's Catalonia and Basque regions, Northern Ireland, and Italy's northern regions could be encouraged by this policy, which could lead to a chaotic situation in Europe that cannot be controlled. This policy resulted because it could create a secessionist mess that could not be controlled within Europe.

But when Slovenia and Croatia announced their independence in June 1991, YNA carried out a military operation, which was the primary factor that led to a shift in EU policy towards the concept of territorial integrity. The notion of recognizing the separatist republics was brought up for the very first time during a conference that took place in Venice in the year 1991. The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of Italy and Germany. But once again, the European Union was divided between the positions of Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. French and British positions shaped the overall European Union policy toward Yugoslavia, which just managed to send a mission into Yugoslavia with two primary goals: an immediate ceasefire and to preserve the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. At the same time, it is possible to conclude that it is some kind of success for Germany, verified by the union members recognizing Slovenia and Croatia as independent states.¹¹²

In the Kosovo crisis, the EU could not again take an active stance and could not solve the problem in its backyard.

As the frequency of assaults between the KLA and the Yugoslav People's Army increased in 1998, Milosevic and the KLA agreed to a truce via international mediation, the Holbrooke-Milosevic Accord, although events persisted. The Kosovo Verification Mission, an unarmed OSCE-led monitoring mission, was intended to monitor the ceasefire but failed. The collapse of peace discussions at Rambouillet followed. The EU supported the NATO Intervention as the EU saw it as a chance to get rid of Milosevic the dictator, and at the same time, it would not be exposed to the migration wave either.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 4

On 10 June 1999, resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council created the UN Interim Administration of Kosovo (UNMIK) to manage Kosovo as a separate portion of Serbia and a UN protectorate. A lack of cohesion marked the EU's approach to crisis management at this time since no agreement was formed.

3.7 Conclusion

When it became clear that Western Europe may become critical of the worldwide prominence held by the United States, the United States decided to activate NATO in the Balkans which showed the weakness of the EU. The errors Milosevic committed in SFR Yugoslavia allowed NATO to intervene in Bosnia and Kosovo. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States, more specifically the Clinton administration's, military response to the conflict in Kosovo has so far been the most extensive operation of its sort anywhere in the world. On the other hand, it differed from the Bush administration which pursued only diplomacy rather than sending troops, and also emphasized that Kosovo was a European problem, whereas the Bush administration had prioritized the Middle East and dismemberment of the USSR, the Clinton administration took up an active leadership to show that the US had indispensable interests in the Balkans and in particular in Kosovo.

An expansionist policy was the United States government's primary focus with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United States of America would step in to fill the power vacuum created by the dissolution of the USSR and SFR Yugoslavia. Also, the military action taken by NATO against Yugoslavia was in line with the United States' strategy, which includes working to keep the European Union under American control. It may be underlined that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the most suitable tool for the United States to play off Europe with.

After Milosevic abolished Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, the fight for Kosovo's independence got underway shortly afterward. The severe sanctions forced the Kosovo Albanians to engage in passive resistance while the region of Kosovo slipped farther behind in recovering its autonomy. The fact that the Dayton accord did not address the issue of Kosovo contributed to an atmosphere already fraught with tension. The Kosovo Liberation Army was established when the local population decided to take things into their own hands by launching attacks on Serbian objectives in Kosovo. Attacks carried out by the KLA catalyzed the deadly and cruel operations carried out by Serbian military and paramilitary forces against Kosovo Albanians in 1998 and 1999.

The escalation of violence in 1999 allowed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to launch a military operation, which resulted in the expulsion of Serbian soldiers from Kosovo. By Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council, an international civil and security presence has been established in Kosovo under the aegis of the United Nations. Since then, the province has been governed by UNMIK, the United Nations Administration for the Interim in Kosovo.

CHAPTER 4

THE KOSOVO QUESTION IN THE US FOREIGN POLICY FROM G.W.

BUSH TO OBAMA (2001-2016)

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to analyze the U.S. government's foreign policy toward Kosovo from the year 2001 up to the year 2016, comparing two different administrations. It makes an effort to investigate whether and how the independence of Kosovo became a severe priority for American foreign policy under the administration of George W. Bush. By analyzing both the Ahtisaari Plan and the *de facto* independence of Kosovo, it discusses how the United States attempted to satisfy the aspirations of the Albanians of Kosovo people for independence. On the other hand, the intention of divergent courses of the Obama administration is to be examined. This chapter outlines the significant adjustments in policy that have occurred in the United States' foreign policy regarding Kosovo. The Russian and EU positions regarding independence are examined in detail.

4.2 The policy of G.W. Bush toward the Kosovo Question (2001-2008)

4.2.1 Kosovo after the War

Under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, sovereignty in Kosovo was transferred to the UN, which established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).¹¹³ The goal of this resolution was to end the bombing, rebuild Kosovo, and provide it with a transitional administration, all while establishing and supervising the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions where minorities could be represented through a quota system in the Kosovo parliament, thereby ensuring stable conditions for a normalized political life for all Kosovo residents. Resolution 1244 was devoted to addressing the dire humanitarian crisis and guaranteeing the safe return of all refugees.

What followed after was chaos for Kosovo. In the first week following the conclusion of the war, the KLA attempted to seize local power and fill the void. Still, the UN administration dislodged the KLA. It replaced it with its employees and elected authorities.¹¹⁴ The international community's failure to enforce law and order in the early days of the operation was felt most acutely in Mitrovica, where the Trepca mine is located. It is the most significant asset in Kosovo, which serves as a central industrial hub. Before the conflict, Albanians and Serbs resided on both sides of the Ibar River in North Mitrovica. Still, it now serves as an informal boundary between Kosovo Serbs

¹¹³ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1244 (10 June 1999) UN Doc S/RES/1244

¹¹⁴ Tim Judah, "Kosovo after 1999," in *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 93-108.

in the north and Kosovo Albanians in the south.¹¹⁵ According to some observers, the city's de facto split was done to avert violent clashes between the two ethnic groups.¹¹⁶

The French KFOR was stationed on the bridge and refused to allow Albanians to pass to the Serbian side. The French soldiers' actions harmed ties with the Kosovo Albanian populace, who already felt the French were pro-Serbian.¹¹⁷ It did not make sense that the situation could not be addressed. Serbia maintained control over public institutions and services such as schools and hospitals because the country sponsored them. Mitrovica exploded again a year later, in February 2001. This time, Albanians erupted in wrath when an Albanian youngster was slain in an event in north Mitrovica. UNMIK was able to establish its authority in Northern Mitrovica shortly after 2002.

On the other hand, the establishment and training of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), the issuance of UNMIK passports, and the supervision of the formation of a legislature, a government, etc., were among UNMIK's most significant achievements. Authority was progressively transferred to Kosovo's institutions, with some exceptions. The head of UNMIK, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), had the last word. KFOR ensured the safety of Kosovo, disarming the KLA while absorbing some of its members into the so-called Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC).¹¹⁸

After 1999, the physical and mental landscape of Kosovo altered. Serbia and Serbs were physically evident in Kosovo throughout the 1990s through the Cyrillic alphabet,

¹¹⁵ “In Mitrovica, a Bridge That Separates Albanians and Serbs: Extract,” euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/14/in-mitrovica-a-bridge-that-separates-kosovo-s-albanians-and-serbs-extract>. (accessed August 20, 2021).

¹¹⁶ Jelle Janssens, *State-Building in Kosovo: A Plural Policing Perspective* (Antwerpen, Belgium: Maklu, 2015), p.112-114.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.113

¹¹⁸ Tim Judah, “Kosovo after 1999,” in *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

flags, papers, police, administration, radio, television, and so forth. It faded quickly in Albanian majority regions, and Albanian ones replaced them; the Yugoslav dinar was replaced by the German mark, and subsequently by the Euro. Many Serbs fled because they were terrified of living in an Albanian-dominated region.¹¹⁹

By the beginning of the year 2000, UNMIK had become more solidly established and had begun releasing legislative acts in the form of UNMIK Regulations. A transitional administrative council comprised of Thaci, Rugova, and other political party leaders served as the indigenous hub for UNMIK's shared government power. In contrast, by the late 2000s, UNMIK had chosen to organize elections in Kosovo. In May 2001, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) drew out a Constitutional Framework for Kosovo's Provisional Self-Government. The Framework provided a legislature with 120 seats, from which a president and a prime minister would be chosen. Twenty of the available seats were set aside for members of ethnic minorities, and 10 of them were designated for Serbs.¹²⁰ However, the ethnic Albanian majority could make laws, and the Serb minority could not veto such laws.

During this interim phase, UNMIK continued to exercise its power as the overseer of law enforcement, the judiciary, rights protection, monetary policy, customs, state-run companies, and international relations. In addition, UNMIK had the authority to nullify any legislation in direct opposition to Resolution 1244. In Kosovo, there were three significant parties. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) with Rugova, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) with Thaci, and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) with Ramush Haradinaj. During the first local elections, Rugova's LDK obtained an overwhelming majority of votes. The municipal elections for local legislatures in 2000 were followed by elections for the national assembly in 2001 and 2002. The constitutional framework of UNMIK envisioned a power-sharing model in which an elected parliament would nominate a president and form a cabinet led by a

¹¹⁹ Ibid.,p.98

¹²⁰ “Constitutional History of Kosovo,” Constitution Net, January 29, 2021, <https://constitutionnet.org/country/europe-kosovo>. (accessed August 21, 2021).

prime minister. UNMIK permitted the three major parties to divide the political spoils. Kosovo had its government for the first time, albeit temporarily subject to UNMIK inspection.¹²¹

Meanwhile, events in Serbia were evolving. In 1999, the United Nations established a political trusteeship over Kosovo, undermining Milosevic's grip on power in Serbia. His prosecution for war crimes by the ICTY was an extra distraction for his position, even though it strengthened his popularity among extremist Serb groups in Kosovo. Milosevic, hoping to capitalize on this diversion, said that elections would be placed on September 24, 2000, believing that this would give him a second term in government. Even foreign observers who wanted to monitor the elections were barred, and candidates were not permitted to appear on state-controlled television and radio. Opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica won the election.¹²²

Milosevic's removal from office via peaceful elections and protests opened up a better transition. President Vojislav Kostunica and Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic were lauded as the leaders of this new period. While Kostunica represented the nationalist wing in Serbia, Djindjic was renowned for his pro-European stance and ability to forge workable agreements with the West. In the medium-term, however, Djindjic was assassinated by extreme Serb nationalists on 12 March 2003 for collaborating with ICTY.¹²³

¹²¹ Henry H. Perritt, "Living Under a Colonial Regime," in *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 67

¹²³ Srdjan Cvijic, "How the Virus of Criminal Authoritarianism Killed Zoran Djindjic," *Balkan Insight*, March 18, 2021, <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/11/how-the-virus-of-criminal-authoritarianism-killed-zoran-djindjic/>. (accessed August 22, 2021).

4.2.2 G.W.Bush's Foreign Policy before and after 9/11

George W. Bush ran for the presidency on the promise of a "modest" foreign policy that would avoid his predecessor's error of overcommitting military forces throughout the globe.¹²⁴ During his first seven months as president, he mainly concentrated on internal concerns. In September 2001, everything changed dramatically. Despite the Bush administration's original desire for a neo-unilateralist, isolationist foreign policy, it took the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to establish a new course for US foreign policy, which pushed the US to pursue more multilateral foreign policy. Here, it may be stated that Madam Albright's policy of assertive multilateralist posture was to be reproduced by George. W. Bush administration.

During the 2000 presidential campaign, G. W. Bush made it plain that under his administration, the United States would revert to a more unilateralist foreign policy defined by acts congruent with the president's perceptions of what was in the national interest.¹²⁵ Before 9/11, the G. W. Bush administration concentrated its foreign policy emphasis on China and Russia, evaluating if a Middle East peace solution was possible, constructing a ballistic missile defense system, and pondering how to deal with rogue regimes such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea.

And he made it plain that the United States should not be engaged in nation-building. In conclusion, candidate G.W. Bush highlighted a significant change in the direction

¹²⁴ "October 11, 2000 Debate Transcript," CPD: October 11, 2000 Debate Transcript, <https://www.debates.org/voter-education/debate-transcripts/october-11-2000-debate-transcript/>. (accessed August 24, 2021).

¹²⁵ Joyce P. Kaufman, "The Post-Cold War Period," in *Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (S.l.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

of U.S. foreign policy, particularly in comparison to that of his predecessor, Bill Clinton, and even his father, George H. W. Bush.¹²⁶

Bush entered the presidency without any foreign policy expertise or his view of America's position in the world. As a result, he was heavily reliant on his foreign policy advisers, and the team he assembled provided significant insight into the course of his foreign policy.¹²⁷

The earliest approach to the foreign policy of G.W. Bush was classical realism. Upon assuming office in 2001, he supported and opposed specific measures. First, he sought to establish uniquely American internationalism. The first objective of the Bush administration would be to repair America's international ties. Europe and Asia would be the main priority due to the presence of long-standing friends and possible adversaries. Additionally, the new government aimed to limit America's foreign policy to those measures that were strategically vital.

September 11, 2001, altered the course of American foreign policy. Terrorism was no longer merely a problem; it was the priority. Bush regarded September 11 as the emergence of an existential danger comparable to that faced by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.¹²⁸ 9/11 refers to a series of four coordinated suicide terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, which changed the course of American Foreign Policy. As a result, the administration concluded that al-Qaeda militants commanded by Osama bin Laden, supported and enabled by the Taliban

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.191.

¹²⁷ James M. McCormick, *American Foreign Policy & Process* (Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth, 2014), p.203.

¹²⁸ James M. Lindsay, "George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the Future of US Global Leadership," *International Affairs* 87, no. 4 (2011): p. 765-779, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2011.01003.x>.

government of Afghanistan, were responsible for the loss of almost 3,000 lives.¹²⁹ Inevitably, Bush came up with a policy recommendation: a "war on terrorism." The significance of both nouns in such a formulation was clear. Rather than depending on law enforcement and passive measures like additional guards, firearms, and gates to keep the enemy out, the United States would take the attack.

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty was used for the first time in NATO's history as one of the most urgent consequences of September 11.¹³⁰ The North Atlantic Council issued a press statement on September 12, 2001, reiterating that Article 5 stipulates that in the case of assaults falling within its jurisdiction, each ally would help the attacked party by taking such action as it sees appropriate.¹³¹ Consequently, the NATO Allies of the United States stand ready to give any help that may be necessary due to these direct attacks that perceived as an attack to all.

The decision to strike Afghanistan as part of a bigger "global war on terror" would not finish until every terrorist organization that had previously attacked Americans,

¹²⁹ Leonard Cutler, "Bush vs. Obama Detainee Policy Post-9/11: An Assessment," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 4 (2010): p. 63-87.

¹³⁰ Article 5 of North Atlantic Treaty; "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, and consequently, they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in the exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

¹³¹ Nato, "Collective Defence - Article 5," NATO, April 21, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm. (accessed May 26, 2021).

including the 9/11 attacks, or that would do so in the future, was eliminated.¹³² U.S. officials offered Afghanistan's Taliban administration the chance to hand over al-Qaeda members due to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but in vain. U.S. policymakers immediately shifted their focus to regime change in Afghanistan when the Taliban rejected it.¹³³ The first choice to invade Afghanistan, one of the recognized strongholds of al-Qaeda, was seen as justifiable and was generally well received domestically and internationally. The war in Afghanistan did not proceed according to plan, despite the high objectives of removing the Taliban, fighting al-Qaeda, launching a NATO operation, and reconstructing the nation. In reality, from 2001, when the conflict with Afghanistan began, and January 2009, when the Obama administration took office, the United States paid less attention to Afghanistan than it did to the key foreign policy concern of the Bush administration: the war with Iraq.

In his address on September 12, 2002, President Bush said that Iraq was in breach of multiple international rules and that the international community had a moral obligation to react strongly to the threat posed by the country's defiance of international law.¹³⁴ The UNSC Resolution 1441¹³⁵ of the UN Security Council approved the resumption of weapons inspections and threatened "severe repercussions" for noncompliance. Resolution 1441 gave Iraq "one last chance to comply with its disarmament responsibilities." Saddam Hussein agreed to the resolution on November 13; however, in early 2003, President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair

¹³² Peter H. Irons, *War Powers: How the Imperial Presidency Hijacked the Constitution* (New York: Owl Books, 2006), p.218.

¹³³ James Dobbins et al., "Post-9/11 Nation-Building: Afghanistan and Iraq," in *After the War: Nation-Building from FDR to George W. Bush* (United States, 2008).

¹³⁴ Voa, "Bush Challenges UN on Iraq - 2002-09-12," VOA (Bush Challenges UN on Iraq - 2002-09-12, October 29, 2009), <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2002-09-12-6-bush-67438852/384592.html>. (accessed August 28, 2021).

¹³⁵ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1441 (8 November 2002) UN Doc S/RES/1441

asserted that Iraq was still obstructing UN inspections and had proscribed nuclear weapons. On March 17, after obtaining no other UN resolutions and judging further by Security Council diplomatic attempts fruitless, Bush announced an end to diplomacy and issued an ultimatum to Saddam, giving the Iraqi president 48 hours to surrender. This buildup to war was opposed by the leaders of France, Germany, Russia, and other nations.¹³⁶ When Saddam refused to leave Iraq, the United States and its allies began an attack on March 20, 2003.

By then it was obvious that the US Foreign Policy priorities were not in the Balkans. As noted before, Bush's Foreign Policy before 9/11 made it plain that the United States should not be engaged in "nation-building" and declared his plan to withdraw U.S. forces from the Balkans, the burden for maintaining peace in Bosnia and Kosovo would be transferred to Europe.¹³⁷ In addition, Republican vice presidential nominee Dick Cheney urged for a re-examination of the United States' participation in peacekeeping operations across the globe, saying it was time to reconsider returning American foot forces from Kosovo and Bosnia.¹³⁸ Without debating the merits of the Clinton administration's initial decision to send troops into Bosnia and Kosovo, Mr. Cheney argued that it was time to consider withdrawing the remaining American ground troops from the Balkans, perhaps with a small presence remaining to gather intelligence and assist the remaining international force with logistics. However, as the

¹³⁶ Philip H. Gordon, "The Crisis in the Alliance," Brookings (Brookings, July 28, 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-crisis-in-the-alliance/>. (accessed September 1, 2021).

¹³⁷ Michael R. Gordon, "Bush Would Stop U.S. Peacekeeping in Balkan Fights," The New York Times (The New York Times, October 21, 2000), <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/21/us/the-2000-campaign-the-military-bush-would-stop-us-peacekeeping-in-balkan-fights.html>. (accessed September 1, 2021).

¹³⁸ "Cheney Urges Rethinking Use of U.S. Ground Forces in Bosnia and Kosovo," The New York Times (The New York Times, September 1, 2000), <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/politics/camp/090100wh-cheney.html>. (accessed September 2, 2021).

crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo has passed, he has highlighted that it is time to allow European partners and allies a role.¹³⁹

Also, after 9/11, the main priority was the war on terrorism, especially the Iraq invasion. In light of all these factors, it may be assumed that the Kosovo question did not occupy a large room in the agenda of the G.W. Bush administration unless it was brought into the US agenda.

4.2.3 The Ahtisaari Plan

On March 17, 2004, ethnic Albanian mobs in Kosovo erupted in violence, a day after ethnic Albanian news agencies in Kosovo published exaggerated and ultimately false accusations that three young children had perished after being pursued into a river by Serbs.¹⁴⁰ The Kosovo police counted thirty-three big riots with an estimated 51 thousand participants over the following two days, as the mass violence swept over the whole country with lightning speed.¹⁴¹

The March 2004 violence was not the first-time non-Albanians were attacked in Kosovo. During the 1999 NATO-Yugoslavia battle over Kosovo, Serb and Yugoslav troops carried out a systematic campaign of mass murder, rape, forced expulsions, and other war crimes against Kosovar Albanians. As soon as ethnic Albanians returned to

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Petrit Çollaku, “Deadly 2004 Unrest 'Damaged Kosovo's Image',” Balkan Insight, May 22, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2015/03/18/march-events-have-faded-kosovo-s-image/>. (accessed September 4, 2021).

¹⁴¹ “Failure to Protect,” Human Rights Watch, April 29, 2015, https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/07/25/failure-protect/anti-minority-violence-kosovo-march-2004#_ftnref2. (accessed September 6, 2021).

Kosovo after NATO's intervention, Kosovo's Serb, Roma, and other minorities were subjected to violence, resulting in a massive exodus of non-Albanians from Kosovo.¹⁴²

The riots of March 2004 revealed the instability of the situation in Kosovo, increasing the possibility of more widespread ethnic bloodshed. In the spring of 2005, an international agreement was reached to address final status concerns due to the riots, which prompted an attempt to speed Kosovo's movement toward meeting international criteria. Violence once again attracted the world community's attention to the area.¹⁴³

Without the March 2004 riots, severe discussions regarding the final status would not have been feasible. The Albanians in Kosovo used their trouble-making capacity to gain independence by attracting attention from foreign powers, which resulted in success. Some nations, such as the United States, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the International Crisis Group (ICG), demanded immediate action on Kosovo's ultimate status.¹⁴⁴ Divisions occurred in the United States. Some members of Congress and administration officials questioned whether the US was interested in Kosovo enough to devote political capital or military resources to it. Several of President George W. Bush's aides questioned whether the government should honor the Clinton administration's promise to the Balkans at the start of his presidency.¹⁴⁵

The impasse in the number was aggravating the situation between the demands of the country's inhabitants and the desire to maintain the balance vis-à-vis international

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Daniel Serwer and Yll Bajraktari, "Kosovo: Ethnic Nationalism at Its Territorial Worst," *US Institute of Peace*, 2006.

¹⁴⁴ "A Kosovo Roadmap (I): Addressing Final Status," Crisis Group, November 17, 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/balkans/kosovo/kosovo-roadmap-i-addressing-final-status>. (accessed October 2, 2021).

¹⁴⁵ Henry H. Perritt, "7. Responding to the Wake-Up Call," in *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

politics, as Serbia requested the preservation of its sovereignty. In a statement before the Security Council in 2002, the SRSG, Michael Steiner, drew attention to the delays caused by the resolution's passage through many stages and assessed that the time had come for its appraisal and direction, along with a final political strategy. He recommended establishing standards before achieving the ultimate status.¹⁴⁶ Later, the SRSG at the time Hari Holkeri, and the international community formulated a different plan. In actuality, the special representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Harri Holkeri, delivered to the Kosovar authorities, at the end of 2003, a paper titled "Standards for Kosovo"¹⁴⁷ that was identical to the prior document (from Steiner's time) but with a new title.¹⁴⁸ Since the impasse after 2002, when the resolution and administration of UNMIK remained without a precise orientation and a clear answer regarding the final status of the country, the international community has responded to all requests for the resolution of the status with "pre-status standards" as a consolidated legal and political document.

The Contact Group and the Secretary-General had settled on a two-step procedure by the beginning of 2005 for the final status of Kosovo. First, a high-level UN envoy would examine whether Kosovo is prepared for discussions on the ultimate status. Then, if this finding were positive, a second envoy would be chosen to lead the process of determining the ultimate status.

¹⁴⁶ "Highlights of the Introductory Remarks at a Press Conference by Michael Steiner, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo," OHCHR, June 27, 2002, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2009/10/highlights-introductory-remarks-press-conference-michael-steiner-special>. (accessed October 12, 2021).

¹⁴⁷ United Nations Mission in Kosovo. *Standards for Kosovo*. UNMIK, 2003, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Kos%20Standards.pdf>. (accessed October 20, 2021).

¹⁴⁸ "SRSG and PM Launch the 'Standards for Kosovo' - Serbia," ReliefWeb, December 10, 2003, <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/srsg-and-pm-launch-standards-kosovo>. (accessed October 26, 2021).

Kai Eide, the Norwegian ambassador to NATO, was assigned to the first assignment in June 2005.¹⁴⁹ He often visited Kosovo, participated in in-depth conversations with local Kosovar Albanian and Kosovar Serb political figures, had talks with the government of Serbia, and repeatedly met with the Contact Group and other state officials. Eide judged that it was time to begin the process of deciding the ultimate status. When Kai Eide was evaluating whether Kosovo was ready for final status discussions, selecting a special envoy for final status was underway. Several famous foreign diplomats had direct experience with Kosovo or Bosnia and were therefore plausible contenders. But Martti Ahtisaari was named Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Kosovo Future Status Process in October 2005 as he had previous experience in Kosovo and was a part of the Military Technical Agreement in June 1999.

Ahtisaari's primary responsibility as the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy was to draft a Proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement, which he would subsequently present to the UN Security Council through the Secretary-General. In preparation for this plan, Ahtisaari and his staff undertook a series of direct negotiations between representatives of Belgrade and Pristina, as well as sessions in which specialists on the different problems visited Belgrade and Pristina individually to speak with each side about those concerns. In these discussions, Pristina maintained that independence was vital; however, Belgrade repeated that complete independence remained undesirable and promised autonomy to Kosovar Albanians.

Although the report bemoaned the inability of Belgrade and Pristina to reach an agreement on Kosovo's future status and noted that no additional discussions would bridge the divide, it said that the international community must face two facts. The original assumption was that any effort to reintegrate Kosovo into Serbia would fail. Second, the continuation of international administration was unsustainable. For one thing, the tolerance of Kosovar Albanians with being denied full self-government could not persist.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.89

While emphasizing that independence was the only realistic alternative, the plan recognized Kosovo's inadequate ability to protect minorities, build viable democratic institutions, expand the economy, and accomplish interethnic reconciliation, "sovereignty supervised by the international community is the best option".¹⁵⁰

In March 2007, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari presented his plan for Kosovo to the Secretary-General in two documents. The first document was titled "Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's Future Status" it was four pages long.¹⁵¹ The second document was titled "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement," and it was 63 pages long.¹⁵² The report covers the proposal that Kosovo's status should be independent but overseen by the international community and the reasoning for coming to this decision.¹⁵³

According to the plan, Kosovo's independence would be supervised by three international bodies.¹⁵⁴ An International Steering Group (ISG) would nominate an International Civilian Representative (ICR). This ICR would also serve as the EU's Special Representative (EUSR). Although the ICR would be the final authority for

¹⁵⁰ "MEPs Strongly Back Martti Ahtisaari's Proposal on Kosovo, Call for It to Be Put under 'Supervised Sovereignty." (accessed, November 12, 2021).

¹⁵¹ "Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's Future Status (S/2007/168) - Serbia," ReliefWeb, March 26, 2007, <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/report-special-envoy-secretary-general-kosovos-future-status-s2007168>. (accessed November 20, 2021).

¹⁵² "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (S/2007/168/Add.1) - Serbia," ReliefWeb, March 26, 2007, <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/comprehensive-proposal-kosovo-status-settlement-s2007168add1>. (accessed November 25, 2021).

¹⁵³ "The Ahtisaari Plan," *The Road to Independence for Kosovo*, 2009, pp. 163-170, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511635410.014>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.167

interpreting the civilian aspects of the plan, they would not have executive or legislative powers except veto power over legislation adopted by the Kosovo Assembly and the ability to annul decisions by public authorities that violated plan provisions. A second organization, the European Security and Defense Policy Mission (ESDP) (later renamed "EULEX"), under the direction of the EUSR, would aid Kosovo in the development of its institutions of the rule of law. It would have limited presidential power to investigate sensitive offenses and the ability to prosecute and determine guilt or innocence. In the meantime, KFOR would continue to serve as the International Military Presence (IMP) until an unspecified period.

Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council was passed on June 10, 1999, and on 12th of the same month, the first components of the NATO-led Kosovo Force, known as KFOR, landed Kosovo. The last of the Serbian soldiers had left their positions by the 20th of June. Initially, about 50,000 men and women from NATO member nations, Partner countries, and non-NATO countries worked together under a single command and control structure to form KFOR. By the beginning of 2002, the size of KFOR had been cut down to around 39,000 soldiers. Due to the better overall security situation, NATO was able to decrease the number of KFOR troops to 26,000 by June of 2003, then to 17,500 by the end of 2003, and they are now down to around 3,761.¹⁵⁵ In the meanwhile the U.S administration constructed an American base in Ferizaj in Kosovo, named after an American soldier, Camp Bondsteel to serve as the headquarter of the KFOR, which provided a leverage for the U.S to enrich its presence in the region.

It has been evident that Serbia would continue to oppose Kosovo's independence. Seeing possibilities to further its geopolitical agenda, Russia moved to separate itself from the other Contact Group members. As Russian resistance to the Ahtisaari Plan grew, so did the likelihood of a Russian veto in the Security Council.

¹⁵⁵ "History," jfcnaples.nato.int, accessed August 5, 2022, <https://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor/about-us/history>. (accessed August 6, 2022).

4.2.4 The US Perception of Kosovo's Independence

Martti Ahtisaari presented a draft status settlement plan to the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina in February of 2007. This proposal was the foundation for a draft United Nations Security Council Resolution that suggested supervised independence for the province. Russia, one of five permanent members of the Security Council, declared that it would not support any resolution that was not acceptable to Serbia. Most observers believed that independence would be the most probable conclusion at the outset of the discussions. However, some felt that a speedy settlement would not be the most desirable option. The negotiations were unsuccessful and ended in late 2007, with both parties holding quite different positions.

The United States and the European Union (together with Russia called Troika) collaborated during July and August 2007 to schedule new rounds of discussion with Russia, with the goals of maintaining Russia's participation in the process and securing Russia's support and cooperation within the Security Council. On December 4, 2007, when the final draft of the Troika report was being prepared, there was still no consensus on a solution; nonetheless, the United States was resolved to see Kosovo through independence.¹⁵⁶

At the beginning of 2008, several news outlets began reporting that the Albanians of Kosovo were intent on announcing their nation's independence. The government of Kosovo took the initiative, no doubt encouraged by signals that it would have the backing of the United States and key EU states.¹⁵⁷ On February 17, 2008, at a

¹⁵⁶ Henry H. Perritt, "The Troika Takes Over," in *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁵⁷ Colin Warbrick, "I. Kosovo: The Declaration of Independence," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2008): p. 675-690, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s002058930800047x>.

conference held in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, members of the Kosovo Assembly and the President of Kosovo formally declared the country's independence.¹⁵⁸

It was given the go-ahead by all 109 members of the quorum, who voted in favor of it, out of total 120 members of parliament.¹⁵⁹ Eleven representatives of the Serbian national minority chose to abstain from participating in the proceedings. The quorum was met with the participation of all nine additional representatives of ethnic minority groups.¹⁶⁰ By the declaration's wording, Kosovo's independence will only be exercised in accordance with the principles indicated in the Ahtisaari plan. It prohibits Kosovo from joining any other country, stipulates that Kosovo will be subject to international supervision, provides for only a limited military capability, provides for the protection of minority ethnic communities, and stipulates that Kosovo will be subject to international supervision. The proclamation that was signed that day was initially written in Albanian.¹⁶¹

After the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia deemed the act illegal because it was not in coordination with the UN Charter and UN Security Council Resolution 1244, on February 18, 2008, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia declared Kosovo's declaration of independence as null and void for the suggestion of the

¹⁵⁸ “Kjo Është Deklarata E Pavarësisë Së Kosovës e Shpallur Para Nëntë Vjetësh ,” Klan Kosova, February 17, 2017, <https://klankosova.tv/kjo-eshte-deklarata-e-pavaresise-se-kosoves-e-shpallur-para-nente-vjetesh-foto/>. (accessed November 30, 2021).

¹⁵⁹ V Grabanica et al., “17 Shkurt 2008, Dita Kur Kosova Shpalli Pavarësinë,” RTV21, February 17, 2022, <https://rtv21.tv/17-shkurt-2008-dita-kur-kosova-shpalli-pavaresine/>. (accessed November 30, 2021).

¹⁶⁰ Bahrirexha, “Fakte Për Pavarësinë e Kosovës,” Albinfo, February 16, 2022, <https://www.albinfo.ch/fakte-per-pavaresine-e-kosoves/>. (accessed November 30, 2021).

¹⁶¹ Kult Plus and KultPlus, “Deklarata e Pavaresise SE Kosoves,” KultPlus, accessed July 12, 2022, <https://www.kultplus.com/tag/deklarata-e-pavaresise-se-kosoves/>. (accessed November 30, 2021).

Government of the Republic of Serbia.¹⁶² Russia also took a firm position in its opposition to Kosovo's independence.

Serbia, Russia, China, and other governments that are Serbia's allies might play a role inside the United Nations in preventing the recognition of Kosovo and the publication of the proclamation that it is legally and globally illegal. Regarding the subsequent conflict, both in terms of diplomacy and the law, Serbia successfully persuaded several governments within the European Union to consider the recommendation of the Kosovo case by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) through the General Assembly of the United Nations.¹⁶³

The resolution to send Kosovo's independence declaration to the International Court of Justice was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 8, 2008, with 77 nations voting in favor, 6 countries voting against, 74 countries abstaining, and 30 countries did not vote.¹⁶⁴ The General Assembly sought advice from the Court on the following issue on October 8, 2008 (Resolution 63/3) “Is the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo in accordance with international law ?”¹⁶⁵

The Court initially considered whether it had the authority to issue the General Assembly's desired advisory opinion. After determining it had jurisdiction to deliver

¹⁶² Jure Vidmar, “International Legal Responses to Kosovo's Declaration of Independence,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 42 (May 3, 2009).

¹⁶³ Besnik Murati, “The Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's Declaration of Independence,” *Acta Universitatis Danubius* 13 (2017).

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.74

¹⁶⁵ “Latest Developments: Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo: International Court of Justice,” Latest developments | Accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo | International Court of Justice, accessed July 12, 2022, <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/141>. (accessed March 12, 2022).

the desired advisory opinion, the Court considered whether it should refuse to do so as a matter of discretion. According to its precedent, there were "no compelling grounds" to deny the request.¹⁶⁶

The Court decided that the reference to the "Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo" in the General Assembly's question did not prohibit it from assessing whether the proclamation of independence was issued by that organization or another. It also found that it was not obliged to assess whether international law gave Kosovo a positive right to declare independence; instead, it had to examine whether a norm of international law prevented such a declaration.¹⁶⁷

The Court initially determined whether the proclamation of independence was legal. It highlighted that state experience in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries "indicates that international law does not prevent independence declarations." The Court decided that "the scope of territorial integrity is limited to interstate interactions." It further held that Security Council resolutions condemning prior declarations of independence could not be used to ban all declarations since they were made in the context of illegal use of force or a breach of a *jus cogens* standard. The Court found that Kosovo's independence did not violate international law.¹⁶⁸

The Court next evaluated whether the independence declaration complied with Security Council resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999. It determined that the resolution's goal was to create "a transitory, extraordinary legal regime that temporarily superseded Serbian law." It then evaluated the declaration's writers. The Court concluded that the declaration's authors were not the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government but rather "persons who collaborated as representatives of the people of Kosovo outside

¹⁶⁶ Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2010, p. 403

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

the scope of the interim government." The Court ruled that the independence declaration did not contradict resolution 1244 for two reasons. First, it underlined that the two instruments "work on distinct levels": resolution 1244 was quiet on Kosovo's eventual status, while the declaration of independence tried to decide it. Second, resolution 1244 established minimal duties on non-state actors, none of which prohibited a declaration of independence. Lastly, since the declaration of independence did not come from the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo, the Court ruled that its authors were not bound by the Constitutional Framework created under resolution 1244. Therefore, the declaration did not breach it. Therefore, the Court ruled that the independence proclamation did not violate international law. The General Assembly accepted the Court's advisory opinion in answer to its request (resolution 64/298) on 9 September 2010.¹⁶⁹

On July 22, 2010, the court issued its advisory opinion. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) held that the declaration of independence by Kosovo did not breach general international law since general international law does not ban such statements.¹⁷⁰

Since 2005, the U.S. has pushed for a settlement on Kosovo's status, whether it should be independent or part of Serbia. On February 18, 2008, one day after Kosovo declared its independence, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice formally announced that the United States recognized Kosovo as a sovereign and independent state.¹⁷¹ With limited success, the US has lobbied other nations to recognize Kosovo.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Elena Cirkovic, "An Analysis of the ICJ Advisory Opinion on Kosovo's Unilateral Declaration of Independence," *German Law Journal* 11, no. 7-8 (January 2010): p. 895-912, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s2071832200018915>.

¹⁷¹ "U.S. Recognizes Kosovo as Independent State," U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State), <https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/02/100973.htm>. (accessed March 27, 2022).

The Bush administration has committed to supporting Kosovo's independence and the Ahtisaari plan's execution by participating in EU-led and NATO deployments in Kosovo and providing financial aid to the region.¹⁷² It should be noted that even before the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, when he started to experience the bad consequences of his interest-driven foreign policy, he toured Europe and the Balkans in June 2007. Bush's travels were intended to garner support for the "Missile Defense Shield" system and to create a forum for input on NATO's actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is worth noting that Bush selected Poland from Eastern Europe¹⁷³ and Albania and Bulgaria from the Balkans for these trips.¹⁷⁴ All three nations dispatched soldiers to Iraq to aid US forces. Bulgaria's NATO sites are also strategically important for the security of Southeast Europe and the Black Sea. Bush said that the United States supported Kosovo independence by requesting that the UN envoy Martti Ahtisaari's Kosovo plan be implemented in the nations he visited.¹⁷⁵ After the acknowledgement

¹⁷² "President Bush Discusses Kosovo," National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration), <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/02/20080219-7.html>. (accessed April 2, 2022).

¹⁷³ "Bush to Visit Poland in June: Report," Reuters (Thomson Reuters, April 21, 2007), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-bush-idUSL2147953020070421>. (accessed April 2, 2022).

¹⁷⁴ "Bush Has Got Friends in Albania, Bulgaria," CBS News (CBS Interactive, June 10, 2007), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bush-has-got-friends-in-albania-bulgaria/>. (accessed April 3, 2022).

¹⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, "Bush Kicks off Europe Tour," News | Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, June 4, 2007), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2007/6/4/bush-kicks-off-europe-tour>. (accessed April 3, 2022).

of Kosovo's independence from Serbia, Bush stressed that it is a chance for Kosovo to move beyond the disputes of the past and towards peace and stability in the region.¹⁷⁶

4.3 Barack Obama's policy towards Kosovo Question (2009-2016)

Barack Hussein Obama was elected as the first African American president in 2008. He inherited instability in the Middle East due to his predecessor's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the accompanying economic collapse.

Obama suggested that, unlike his predecessor George W. Bush, he would focus on developing and rebuilding the relationships and alliances that formed the foundation of U.S. foreign policy in the past and would enable the United States to restore its position as a global leader if elected president.¹⁷⁷

Obama also made it clear that, if elected president, his priorities would be ending the war in Iraq, refocusing on the fight in Afghanistan, and restoring the United States' standing and reputation worldwide. Even though foreign policy is not a significant concern for the American electorate, especially during an economic crisis, Obama's proposed package of economic reforms¹⁷⁸, combined with foreign policy priorities, swayed the public; Obama was elected with a significant Democratic majority in the

¹⁷⁶ Deborah Charles, "Bush Recognises Kosovo Independence," Reuters (Thomson Reuters, February 19, 2008), <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-serbia-kosovo-bush-idUKLAW00005120080219>. (accessed April 14, 2022).

¹⁷⁷ Joyce P. Kaufman, "Chapter 7 Obama and Trump: 2009–2021," in *Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (S.l.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

¹⁷⁸ Kimberly Amadeo, "Did Obama's Stimulus Plan Work?," The Balance, <https://www.thebalance.com/what-was-obama-s-stimulus-package-3305625>. (accessed April 20, 2022).

House and Senate. In summary, President Obama inherited a lot of domestic and foreign issues when he took office, and once elected, Obama focused his attention on Afghanistan, as he pledged throughout the campaign.

In terms of foreign policy, he had already developed an activist vision of his role in history; he intended to improve America's image abroad, particularly in the Muslim world; end its involvement in two wars; extend an olive branch to Iran; reset relations with Russia as a step toward reducing nuclear tension and not to provoke Russia on NATO's enlargement toward Ukraine and Georgia; develop significant cooperation with China on regional, global, and international issues; and make peace in the Middle East.¹⁷⁹

After Barack Obama was inaugurated as president, he immediately shifted his focus to Afghanistan. Because of the conflict in Iraq, Afghan civilians have been harmed, and Afghanistan has not received the resources it needed to meet its needs. This was Obama's overarching purpose.¹⁸⁰ He announced that more United States would send troops to Afghanistan to train and equip Afghan military forces.¹⁸¹

In contrast to Afghanistan, the path for the United States to withdraw from Iraq was, in some respects, charted out by the administration of former President George W. Bush. Before leaving office in November 2008, President Bush agreed to "a three-year timetable for the departure of all U.S. forces," despite having stated throughout the

¹⁷⁹ Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

¹⁸⁰ Amina Khan, "Obama and Afghanistan," *Strategic Sources* 29 (2009): p. 1-26.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.4

campaign that such a timeline would be completely irresponsible.¹⁸² This was Bush's last act in office. This Status of Forces Agreement, known as SOFA, served as the foundation upon which the new government of Barack Obama was built. Even if combat soldiers were pulled out of Iraq, this did not mean an end to the struggle there. Despite President Obama's desire to negotiate a way to maintain a small U.S. military presence in the country to ensure regional stability, talks between the United States and Iraq broke down. By the SOFA, U.S. combat forces withdrew beginning in December 2011. Obama could not do something that the Bush administration could not do identify and kill Osama bin Laden, which he revealed on May 2, 2011, despite the fact that he was dealing with these two battles simultaneously.¹⁸³

As soon as he took office, Barack Obama had a firm grasp on the fact that one of the most significant effects of the policies enacted by the Bush administration was the deterioration of relations with the Islamic world and that he was in a position unlike any other to work toward mending those ties.

In his speech delivered from Cairo, President Barack Obama discussed the connection between the United States of America and the Islamic world. This talk sets the groundwork for a significant shift in western perceptions about Muslims. When the whole Islamic world, including moderate governments like Egypt, is furious at deadly

¹⁸² “President Bush and Iraq Prime Minister Maliki Sign the Strategic Framework Agreement and Security Agreement,” National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration), accessed June 20, 2022, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/12/20081214-2.html>. (accessed May 3, 2022).

¹⁸³ “Witness the Historic Speech by U.S. Pres. Barack Obama Announcing the Killing of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. Forces, May 2011,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), <https://www.britannica.com/video/149700/Pres-forces-Barack-Obama-Osama-bin-Laden-May-2011>. (accessed May 6, 2022).

US operations in Muslim-majority countries, President Obama's address, in which he calls for "a fresh beginning," comes at an opportune moment.¹⁸⁴

After the wave of uprisings and turbulence that swept across the Middle East after Obama's first term in office, it became even more crucial to ensure stability was maintained in that area. The popular uprising against autocratic leaders quickly spread to other countries in the region thanks to technology and the ease with which information could be transmitted. One of these countries was Libya, where fighting continued throughout the summer and ended in October 2011 when Gaddafi was captured and then killed.¹⁸⁵

A scenario already fragile in the Middle East became much more unpredictable due to the civil war in Syria. The outbreak of violence in Syria in 2011 did not result in the overthrow of dictator Bashar al-Assad but led to a civil war that encompassed the entire country. This contrasts the uprisings in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt that collectively formed what has come to be known as "The Arab Spring." The Obama administration faced a conundrum over how best to react to this. The lives of thousands of people were spared due to President Obama's decision to approve air attacks against ISIS, which were carried out with the support of the United Kingdom and several other nations.¹⁸⁶ Despite this, Obama made it quite clear that he would not send American foot soldiers to battle in Syria.

¹⁸⁴ "President Obama Speaks to the Muslim World from Cairo, Egypt," National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/foreign-policy/presidents-speech-cairo-a-new-beginning>. (accessed May 10, 2022).

¹⁸⁵ "Death of a Dictator," Human Rights Watch, November 3, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/10/16/death-dictator/bloody-vengeance-sirte>. (accessed May 13, 2022).

¹⁸⁶ "UK's Cameron Supports Obama on Intervention," Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/uks-cameron-supports-obama-on-intervention/221792>. (accessed May 16, 2022).

The reset policy began during President Obama's first term in office. The objective of the reset was to bring the leaders of both countries back to the negotiation table so that they could address a variety of topics, including nuclear arsenals and trade treaties, among other topics. During the first stage of the reset, the primary emphasis was placed on fostering a connection between the newly elected presidents of the United States and Russia, Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev. Medvedev would show the Russian people and the Kremlin that he was competent in furthering Russia's global interests.¹⁸⁷ President Obama wished to repair what was the most crucial relationship for the United States.

Ukraine and Georgia caused divisions among NATO allies. The United States and its European partners were split about reacting to Georgia's and Ukraine's requests to join NATO. The United States advocated for a new formula that would place Ukraine and Georgia on a gradual route to NATO membership. Washington pushed Ukraine and Georgia to be granted the MAP (Membership Action Plan). Still, Germany, Italy, and Spain rejected it because it would exacerbate tensions with Russia. They perceive Georgia as the more significant culprit in the conflict with Russia, view Georgia's president Mikheil Saakashvili as unreliable, feel that Ukraine's internal instability makes it ineligible for NATO membership, and are eager to prevent additional conflict with Moscow.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Steven Pifer, "US-Russia Relations in the Obama Era: From Reset to Refreeze?", *OSCE Yearbook 2014*, 2015, p. 111-124, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845260945-111>.

¹⁸⁸ "NATO Allies Divided over Ukraine and Georgia," *The Guardian* (December 2, 2008), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/02/ukraine-georgia>. (accessed May 18, 2022).

President Obama was forced to go in a new direction due to the failure of the policies that were executed during the Bush administration,¹⁸⁹ the repercussions of those policies, and the economic challenges that they caused in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Two of Obama's earliest campaign pledges were to improve ties with Russia and to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.¹⁹⁰ It has been stated that the reset method is essential for removing mistrust between two nations. According to him, the Obama administration aimed to construct permanent collaboration mechanisms with Russia, not temporary ones. The argument that the reset has been unsuccessful and that ties with Russia have not been reset is the most common and broad critique of the reset. The basis for most accusations of failure is one of two assertions.¹⁹¹ “The first argument is that the reset did not accomplish anything significant regarding policy. This argument can be phrased in various ways, including that it did not accomplish the goals set for it, that developments were detrimental to the national interests of the United States, or that they did not represent any kind of departure from the previous US–Russia relations. The second argument is that the general improvement in bilateral ties will not be durable and has already started to go backward, regardless of whatever small policy achievements may have been made. This latter argument was notably apparent during the time leading to and soon after the legislative and presidential

¹⁸⁹ Ruth Deyermond, “Assessing the Reset: Successes and Failures in the Obama Administration's Russia Policy, 2009–2012,” *European Security* 22, no. 4 (2013): p. 500-523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2013.777704>.

¹⁹⁰ Danielle Nierenberg stated on January 9 et al., “Politifact - Barack Obama's Top 25 Campaign Promises: How'd He Do?,” <https://www.politifact.com/article/2017/jan/05/tracking-obamas-top-25-campaign-promises/>. (accessed May 20, 2022).

¹⁹¹ Ruth Deyermond, “Assessing the Reset: Successes and Failures in the Obama Administration's Russia Policy, 2009–2012,” *European Security* 22, no. 4 (2013): pp. 500-523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2013.777704>.

elections in Russia in November 2011 and March 2012. In other words, the reset was unsuccessful, and it is necessary to do another reset on itself.”¹⁹²

Positioning Kosovo in the middle of all these crises and the challenges that the Obama administration has is extremely difficult. We might conclude that the United States' engagement in Kosovo and the Balkans was prioritized less than its emphasis on the Middle East, Asia, China, and other regions. Obama administration also contemplated that the European Union should take more responsibility for the Kosovo issue as it was in its backyard.

One of the most prevalent complaints that have been thrown against President Barack Obama is that he does not have a consistent foreign policy ideology. Instead, he chooses to respond to each unique issue individually. U.S. involvement in Kosovo and the surrounding Balkan region was given a lower priority by President Obama, who instead chose to place his attention on new and ongoing security objectives in the Middle East (such as the War on Terror and ISIS, Iran's nuclear program, and the dictatorship in Libya), economic objectives in Asia (such as reducing barriers to trans-pacific trade and commerce), and global environmental initiatives (e.g., the Paris Agreement). Like George W. Bush's junior and senior, Barack Obama was a firm believer that it was Europe's responsibility to find peaceful solutions to conflicts that arose in its immediate neighborhood. This included any unresolved tensions that existed between Serbia and Kosovo.

To suggest that President Obama gave the Balkans a lower priority is not the same as saying he disregarded the region entirely. Instead, Obama relied on diplomacy to advance Kosovo's interests and to compete with Russian influence in the area. According to the Obama administration, the European Union was primarily responsible for the situation in the Balkans, and the responsibility of the United States was to provide support and encouragement to the efforts of the EU whenever necessary. In this sense, Obama primarily depended on the substantial diplomatic and

¹⁹² Ruth Deyermond, “Assessing the Reset: Successes and Failures in the Obama Administration's Russia Policy, 2009–2012,” *European Security* 22, no. 4 (2013): p. 500-523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2013.777704>

international policy expertise of cabinet officials such as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Vice President Joe Biden. More precisely, Obama relied on the experience of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. For example, she announced while attending a press conference on October 31, 2012 in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, with Catherine Ashton, the leader of EU foreign policy. According to what Clinton said, "the borders of an independent, sovereign Kosovo are obvious and defined."¹⁹³ Supporting the independence of Kosovo. We can deduce that the people of Kosovo have a favourable opinion of Hillary Clinton based on the passages that she included in her autobiography called *A Memoir Hillary Rodham Clinton*. She notes that

When I arrived in Pristina, Kosovo's capital, enthusiastic crowds waving American flags lined the road from the airport, cheering as our motorcade passed, often with children sitting on adults' shoulders so they could see. By the time we reached the plaza in town, which features a monumental statue of Bill, the crowds were so dense our motorcade had to stop. I was glad it did; I wanted to say hello. So I jumped out and started shaking hands and hugging and being hugged. Across the plaza was an adorable little clothing boutique with a familiar name: Hillary. I couldn't resist a quick visit. The shopkeeper said they named the store after me "so that Bill wouldn't be lonely in the square."¹⁹⁴

The Obama administration has pledged its support to the budding Balkan state in its efforts to get further international funding and recognition. And Secretary of State Clinton said that the United States is pushing countries all around the globe to join the list of governments that have recognized Kosovo's independence as a sovereign country.¹⁹⁵ Kosovo, on the other hand, sought the US administration's support for

¹⁹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Clinton Says Kosovo's Independence 'Not up for Discussion'," Refworld, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/509b8b0323.html>. (accessed May 28, 2022).

¹⁹⁴ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices: A Memoir* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2014), p.246.

¹⁹⁵ Voa, "Clinton Vows Obama Administration Support for Kosovo," VOA (Clinton Vows Obama Administration Support for Kosovo, November 2, 2009), <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2009-02-26-voa54-68811267/412817.html>.

Kosovo's NATO membership and EU integration and expected to join international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF as soon as possible.

In addition, Obama brought a fresh perspective to the discussions between Kosovo and Serbia by shifting the emphasis away from racial tension and contested independence and toward matters of international commerce, foreign direct investment, and the normalization of relations between the two countries' armed forces. Obama's attitude to the area differed from his predecessor's. Obama administration officials regularly travelled to the area, especially in the first term, to deal with "unfinished business." Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had previous experience in the area in the 1990s, allowing them to play a more active diplomatic role. Under Obama, the private sector took the lead in trading with the area while financial help dwindled. As other significant nations increased their presence and influence in the area, the Obama administration started formulating a regional strategy.¹⁹⁶ In Obama's second term, top U.S. diplomats and interagency delegations emphasized economic growth via trade and investment, energy independence, and democratic consolidation. This larger strategic initiative was, in fact, a response to Russia's expanding influence in the Balkans. This was also considered to play against the growing influence of Turkey and China.¹⁹⁷ The US regional strategy kept the administration's European policy, which emphasized limiting Russia's harmful influence after Crimea in 2014. Even though it had celebrated objectives, President Obama's approach to Kosovo and the Balkans was not successful in producing tangible

¹⁹⁶ Gorana Grgic|Lecturer at the Department of Government and International Relations and the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, Gorana Grgic, and |Lecturer at the Department of Government and International Relations and the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, "The Prospects of Relative Neglect – U.S. Foreign Policy in the Western Balkans under President Trump," European Leadership Network, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/the-prospects-of-relative-neglect-u-s-foreign-policy-in-the-western-balkans-under-president-trump/>. (accessed May 29, 2022).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

outcomes, which meant that Kosovo and Serbia were no closer to mutual recognition or solving their problems.

4.4 The Russian Position

NATO's 1999 military intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia increased Russian fears about NATO's eastward expansion and new strategic concept as a danger to national security. Russia's motto was "universal principles," which said that the matter of Kosovo's independence could only be addressed by a UN framework based on international law and the rule of mutual agreement, while NATO members maintained that the Kosovo situation was "sui generis."¹⁹⁸

Russia's experience in Kosovo has increased Russia's distrust of NATO and the United States and, to a lesser degree, the European Union as a whole. Russia's brutal conduct in the Russo–Georgian War of Summer 2008¹⁹⁹ and its subsequent unilateral recognition of the secessions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia directly resulted from the distrust developed over Kosovo.

Putin emphasized that the unilateral independence of Kosovo was a Russian red line that would create a precedent for the "frozen wars" in the post-Soviet zone in

¹⁹⁸ James Hughes, "Russia and the Secession of Kosovo: Power, Norms and the Failure of Multilateralism," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 5 (June 2013): pp. 992-1016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2013.792448>.

¹⁹⁹ "Behind the Scenes of the Russia-Georgia Conflict," Home – Parliament of Australia
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/0809/RussiaGeorgiaConflict. (accessed June 1, 2022).

Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁰⁰ On the other hand, he excluded Russia's separatist difficulties, namely those of Chechnya, from this dilemma.

Russia's stance on Kosovo has always been supportive of Serbia, but beginning in January 2008, on the eve of Kosovo's declaration of independence, Russia became strategically closer to Serbia. During a combined visit to Moscow by the leaders of Serbia, President Boris Tadic, and Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, a substantial interstate energy cooperation deal was inked.²⁰¹

In both 2008 and 2014, Moscow built its legitimization narratives on the same components and prioritized the same aspects: the international legitimacy of its actions, whether based on UN norms or by contrast with the West's earlier acts (the Kosovo precedent); and the humanitarian dimension.

Moscow has cited the instance of Kosovo, where the Western community acted according to the same principles and accused the West of using double standards by criticizing Russia's conduct in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Crimea. However, while condemning the latter for a selective approach, Moscow has avoided mentioning its conduct during the Chechen battles.

The similarity between Moscow's justifications for the war in Georgia and the annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula implies the presence of a legitimization plan. After 'testing' a series of justifications for the breach of Georgia's sovereignty

²⁰⁰ “Russia Will Not Recognize Kosovo's Independence: Envoy,” Anadolu Ajansi, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/russia-will-not-recognize-kosovos-independence-envoy/2576505>. (accessed June 1, 2022).

²⁰¹ “Serbia, Russia Initial Deal on Oil Monopoly's Sale,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, December 22, 2008), <https://www.reuters.com/article/energy-serbia-russia-idUKLM10432220081222>. (accessed June 2, 2022).

and territorial integrity in 2008, Russia looks to use the same justifications for violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014.²⁰²

4.5 The EU's Position

Because UNSCR 1244 did not guide how a future status settlement may emerge, the matter was seen as too delicate to be publicly discussed in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. After some time during which UNMIK issued no formal declaration about the status problem, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Michael Steiner determined in 2002 that the moment had come to make a policy change. During his address to the United Nations Security Council in April of 2002, he proposed the strategy that has become popularly known as the “standards before status” approach.²⁰³ He defined a set of eight “benchmarks” and achieved these standards as a precondition for beginning talks on Kosovo’s future status. This line of condition responded to the growing Kosovar Albanian demand for independence.

The standards were presented as nebulous aims when released, and there was neither a definition nor a set of criteria to evaluate progress. On the other hand, it was approved by the United Nations and, later, by all of the other major international parties engaged in the process, including the European Union. Harri Holkeri, who succeeded Steiner as SRSG, was the one who was tasked with the responsibility of clearly formulating

²⁰² Vasile Rotaru, “‘Mimicking’ the West? Russia's Legitimization Discourse from Georgia War to the Annexation of Crimea,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 52, no. 4 (2019): pp. 311-321, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2019.10.001>.

²⁰³ “Kosovo: Address to the Security Council by SRSG Michael Steiner - Serbia,” ReliefWeb, February 6, 2003, <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/kosovo-address-security-council-srsg-michael-steiner>. (accessed June 4, 2022).

the benchmarks. He was successful in this endeavor, and in December 2003, he published a document titled "Standards for Kosovo" that included specific requirements for each standard.²⁰⁴

"Standards before Status" stipulated several essential requirements to be met before a procedure for determining Kosovo's final status could be started. These requirements included the establishment of solid democratic institutions and the implementation of the rule of law. These were laid out in the following manner: "(1) the existence of democratic institutions that are efficient, representative, and operating properly; (2) the enforcement of the rule of law; (3) freedom of movement; (4) the sustainable returns of refugees and displaced persons, and respect for the rights of communities; (5) the creation of a sound basis for a market economy; (6) the fair enforcement of property rights; (7) the normalization of dialogue with Belgrade; and (8) the transformation of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) by its mandate."²⁰⁵

By the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) of the European Union, the Ahtisaari Plan served as the inspiration for the establishment of EULEX. EULEX was supposed to be led by a person whom the Council of the European Union selected. It was supposed to function under the control of the EU Special Official in Kosovo, a civilian representative from an international organization. However, this plan was scrapped.²⁰⁶ The European Union took up the duties formerly performed by UNMIK

²⁰⁴ Michael Alfons, "Of Standards and Status: The Role of the European Union in Kosovo: From UNSCR 1244 to the Future Status Talks," *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 54, no. 3 (January 2006): p. 339-379, <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2006-540303>. See also, "The EU's Western Balkan Strategy: Forms and Essence", in *Republika Turciji: Polityka Zagraniczna I Wewnetrzna*, ed. Karol Bieniek (Krakow, 2016), pp. 53-69.

²⁰⁵ James Ker-Lindsay and Spyros Economides, "Standards before Status before Accession: Kosovo's EU Perspective," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): p. 77-92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2012.656939>.

²⁰⁶ Erika de Wet, "The Governance of Kosovo: Security Council Resolution 1244 and the Establishment and Functioning of EULEX," *American Journal of International Law* 103, no. 1 (2009): p. 83-96, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20456723>.

when it established EULEX. EULEX was responsible for ensuring that Kosovo was placed under the supervision of the EU to meet the Ahtisaari Plan's requirements and avoid the possibility of Kosovo being taken over by political elites from the surrounding area.

The European Union (EU) offers technical assistance to normalize ties between Belgrade and Pristina via EULEX. The EU also operates in Kosovo's organizational system and oversees the judicial system there. EULEX collaborates with the institutions of Kosovo and is committed to ensuring that human and gender rights are included.²⁰⁷ EULEX and the European Special Representative in Kosovo are the two organizations that represent the European Union in Kosovo.

Kosovo has been incorporated into the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). The SAP is the political framework the EU uses to define the interactions between the EU and the Western Balkans.²⁰⁸ The SAP has been a pre-accession condition that allows a country to be able to apply for EU candidanship. Its purpose is to further the goals of regional cooperation and stabilization, the transformation to a market economy, however, without promising an EU membership. The goals of SAP are to direct the growth and promotion of peace, freedom, stability, security, and justice, as well as to promote economic growth. On April 1, 2016, the Stabilization and Association Agreement (the SAA) negotiated between the EU and Kosovo went into effect. Regardless of Kosovo's legal position, the SAA is the first step to be able to apply for candidanship for EU. The objective is to provide the political and economic

²⁰⁷ Ppio, "Leaving No One Behind," EULEX European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, <https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?page=2%2C11%2C597>. (accessed June 7, 2022).

²⁰⁸ "Stabilisation and Association Process," European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/glossary/stabilisation-and-association-process_en. (accessed June 10, 2022).

groundwork required to begin applying for the candidatureship that does not give a guarantee to a thriving eventual EU membership.²⁰⁹

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the years 2001-2016 as its time frame for analysis. The tools used by both George W. Bush and Barack Obama are examined. Following September 11, 2001, the United States modified its approach to foreign policy, and Kosovo fell lower on the priority list. However, the US tended to make the EU should shoulder more responsible in Kosovo. The United Nations (UN) decided on the ultimate status with the support of the United States of America. The strategy developed by Ahtisaari emerged as the winner, but neither Russia nor Serbia was willing to adopt it. The EU, UN, and Russia tried to mediate a solution, but neither side could agree since the Kosovo Albanians' top priority is full independence.

The declaration of Kosovo's independence came with the support of the United States and the European Union as a last resort. It was a time when the United States and the European Union had similar priorities. The unilateral proclamation of independence was met with disapproval by Serbia, Russia, and some members of the EU who face similar separatist issues in their own countries. But while the Bush administration pledged to support the independence of Kosovo and the execution of the Ahtisaari plan by participating in EU-led and NATO deployments in Kosovo as well as providing financial aid to the region, on the other hand, the Obama administration did not change its policy toward Kosovo very much. It may be noted that the supervised independence was worked out by Ahtisaari during the Bush administration and continued under the

²⁰⁹ Mustafa Türkeş and Göksu Gökgöz, "The EU's Strategy Towards the Western Balkans: Exclusion or Integration?" *East European Politics and Societies*, (EEPS) 20/4, 2006, p.(659-690).

Obama administration. This may be an indication of continuity. This is because the Obama administration was in the same position as Bush. We can conclude that the United States' attention to the Middle East, Asia, China, and other areas was prioritized more than its participation in Kosovo and the Balkans. This would lead us to believe that these regions were prioritized less. The European Union was responsible for events on its doorstep or in its immediate vicinity.

CHAPTER 5

THE KOSOVO QUESTION IN THE US FOREIGN POLICY FROM TRUMP TO BIDEN (2017-2022)

5.1 Introduction

Trump and Biden's foreign policy agenda is discussed in detail in this chapter. Donald Trump's "America First" and Biden's "America is back" statements were discussed in detail. The expectation of the Western Balkans on Biden's Western Balkans policy, particularly Kosovo, is to be examined. This chapter focuses on whether or not there is a fundamental change or a modest variation in the two administrations' approaches toward Kosovo. This chapter also examines the Economic Normalization Agreement, within which the Abraham Accord was inserted by the Trump administration, signed between Kosovo and Serbia in Washington, DC during the Trump administration, and points out if there is any change in the Biden administration on this topic.

5.2 The policy of Donald Trump toward the Kosovo Question

Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th president of the United States on January 20, 2017 and served until January 20, 2021. Donald Trump had no prior experience in administration, the security or military, or public policy before he was elected. Instead, he relied, in his capacity as a business person, on his awareness of how to strike a bargain. His campaign was centered on the idea of "Making America Great Again," in which he said that the United States had been constantly exploited by its trading partners and friends, in addition to its enemies. The President's contradictory pronouncements and continuous tweets have instilled a special form of chronic ambiguity into the machinery of American foreign policy, substantially changing the relationship between the United States and its adversaries and friends.²¹⁰ Instead of healing existing rifts with friends and allies, Donald Trump's administration has contributed to exacerbate the issues that exist in their bilateral relationships. Foreign entities must reevaluate the strength of their alliance with the United States, regardless of its significance, as a result of the shifting global landscape. Contrary to the president's statements, the "America First" agenda and the emphasis on economic nationalism and homeland security are being transformed into "America Alone" by an inwardly focused America.²¹¹ From an isolationist or aggressive unilateralist viewpoint, the United States' position as the world's foremost superpower seems to be

²¹⁰ Nazish Mahmood and Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Trump and the US Foreign Policy Crisis," *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 4 (October 2019): p. 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.53532/ss.038.04.00129>.

²¹¹ Heather Long, "America First Is Not America Alone': Trump Aims to Reset Global Opinion about Him in Davos," *The Washington Post* (November 24, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/01/24/america-first-is-not-america-alone-trump-aims-to-reset-global-opinion-about-him-in-davos/>. (accessed June, 13, 2022).

declining. The Kosovo question occupies little space in U.S. foreign policy, among other matters. Nonetheless, Trump used it.

5.2.1 Unilateralist and Isolationist America

Trump has constructed a vision for his administration of "America First," which signals a return to a more unilateralist or even isolationist approach.²¹² Throughout Donald Trump's bids for the presidency in 2016 and during his administration (2017–2021), Trump used this word as a catchphrase to underscore the United States' disengagement from international accords and organizations. Trump has shown his support for American unilateralism abroad by adopting actions to undercut transnational organizations like the European Union, and he has often attacked these organizations for their economic policies.²¹³ Critics have referred to President Trump's "America First" strategy as "America Alone," seeing it as a substantial contributor to what is seen as a rise in the United States' worldwide isolation during the late 2010s.²¹⁴

²¹² Joyce P. Kaufman, "Obama and Trump 2009-2021," in *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), p.235.

²¹³ "EU Foreign Policy Chief Tells Trump Not to Interfere in Europe's Politics," *The Guardian* (February 10, 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/10/eu-donald-trump-federica-mogherini-washington>. (accessed June 17, 2022).

²¹⁴ Susan B. Glasser, "Under Trump, 'America First' Really Is Turning out to Be America Alone," *The New Yorker*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-trumps-washington/under-trump-america-first-really-is-turning-out-to-be-america-alone>. (accessed June 20, 2022).

By the pledges that Trump made during his presidential campaign, his government has methodically disengaged from various international organizations, treaties, agreements, and forums during his presidency.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was the major target of former President Obama's geopolitical pivot toward Asia. Following his inauguration as president, Donald Trump withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), claiming his administration's desire to negotiate future trade accords bilaterally with each country.²¹⁵

Later, Trump revealed his opposition to the Paris Climate Agreement. Trump said that the pact disadvantages the United States.²¹⁶ He went on criticizing NATO. Trump believes that NATO is outmoded because it inhibits the United States from operating according to its interests. He exhibits no hesitancy while urging that other parties to the pact should pay the same amount as his country.²¹⁷ In actuality, he threatened to withdraw from the contract if the terms were not modified. Trump believed it was time for these very wealthy nations to either pay the United States for its formidable military protection or defend themselves.²¹⁸ The other significant pact from which the United States withdrew was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, most

²¹⁵ Joyce P. Kaufman, "Obama and Trump 2009-2021," in *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), p.236.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.236

²¹⁷ Wassim Daghrir, *The Trump Administration's Foreign Policy: A Trumpian World of Uncertainty or a Decline of Pax-Americana?* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2020), p.40.

²¹⁸ "Could Trump Pull Us out of NATO and What Would Happen If He Did? | Luke Harding," *The Guardian* (July 12, 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/12/trump-nato-threat-withdraw-what-would-happen>. (accessed June 22, 2022).

generally known as the Iran nuclear plan, which was intended to halt Iran's nuclear development.²¹⁹

Additionally, President Trump has referred to China and Russia as adversaries of the United States. The threats about trade were the next step after the harsh language against China. By April 2018, trade tensions between the United States and China had already reached a perilous level. In March 2018, the United States imposed tariffs on several Chinese imports, starting with taxes on steel and aluminum.²²⁰ Since then, the United States has levied a range of other levies. China responded to each round individually.

On the other hand, the Trump administration's approach toward the Middle East had contradictory consequences. The United States restored its ties with Israel by signing the Abraham Accords, which had significantly deteriorated during the previous administration of Barack Obama. On August 13, 2020, a joint declaration known as the Abraham Accords was made by representatives of Israel, the United States of America, and the United Arab Emirates. It also refers to the deal signed between Israel, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates to normalize ties among the three countries. On September 15, 2020, the original Abraham Accords were signed by the foreign ministers of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Israel (Benjamin Netanyahu, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, respectively). According to the Abraham Accords, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain agreed to open embassies in Israel and cooperate with the Jewish state in various areas, including tourism, commerce, and security.

On the other side, despite Trump's commitment to remove American forces out of Afghanistan, those soldiers remained in Afghanistan, and the future of an emerging

²¹⁹ Mohammed Cherkaoui, May 10, 2018, https://studies.aljazeera.net/sites/default/files/articles/reports/documents/d6a4c71882da438e9de76152c7e3a8dc_100.pdf. (accessed June 24, 2022).

²²⁰ Erica York, "Tracking the Economic Impact of Tariffs," Tax Foundation, <https://taxfoundation.org/tariffs-trump-trade-war/>. (accessed June 25, 2022).

deal with the Taliban had been contemplated under the Trump administration. Syria is still mired in a civil conflict. The Trump administration kept changing its discourse on whether to stay in the North of Syria or withdraw its forces. However, Trump clarified that he “loved oil” in Rakka in Northeast Syria. The Trump-Israeli relationship had its effects on Kosovo, which need to be addressed in detail in the next section.

5.2.2 Kosovo and Serbia Economic Normalization Agreement

At first glance, President Trump's approach to foreign policy toward Kosovo and the Balkans seemed to run counter to his “America First” credo. However, a deeper examination shows that this was a last-ditch effort to achieve a political triumph and enhance his surviving reelection aspirations. The tensions between Kosovo and Serbia remained high throughout the entirety of Trump's presidency, and there were undoubtedly some traditional elements working within the State Department of the Trump administration that held the view that the Balkans were a strategically important region of competition between the United States and other world powers. In 2019, the Trump administration resumed its involvement in the area by appointing Richard Grenell, the previous United States ambassador to Germany, to the position of United States special presidential envoy for Serbia and Kosovo. The United States and the European Union did not coordinate their communication or negotiating stances for the first time, resulting in the creation of a separate dialogue Washington drove.²²¹

²²¹ “The Serbia-Kosovo Normalization Process: A Temporary U.S. Decoupling,” The Serbia-Kosovo Normalization Process: A Temporary U.S. Decoupling | Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 15, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/serbia-kosovo-normalization-process-temporary-us-decoupling>. (accessed June 27, 2022).

Despite not being at war, the Trump administration wants Kosovo and Serbia to sign a "peace agreement."²²² Albin Kurti prime minister of Kosovo, was opposed to such a pointless diplomatic maneuver. With the assistance of Kosovo's old political and economic elite, Special US Envoy for Serbia and Kosovo Richard Grenell exerted enormous pressure on LVV's (Movement for Self-Determination) junior coalition partner, the right-wing Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), causing it to withdraw support for the government. The connection between the United States and Kosovo's former political elite is an intriguing reality. It might be inferred from this that the United States could potentially intervene in Kosovo's politics if it so wished, as it is done in this example.

Following the downfall of the coalition government of Albin Kurti in June, LDK's Abdullah Hoti formed a new coalition government. Three months later, he and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic were at the White House, signing what Trump repeatedly referred to as a "peace deal" but was a letter of intent on a few economic issues and more relations with Israel. It was decided that Serbia's embassy in Israel would be relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by July 1, 2021, and that diplomatic ties would be established between Kosovo and Israel, with a Kosovar embassy also being established in the Israeli capital city of Jerusalem²²³, and the designation of Hezbollah

²²² Joe Walsh, "Trump Takes Credit for Ending Kosovo War, Which Ended in 1999," *Forbes* (Forbes Magazine, October 28, 2020), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joewalsh/2020/10/28/trump-takes-credit-for-ending-kosovo-war-which-ended-in-1999/?sh=6a554a58275e>. (accessed June 29, 2022).

²²³ "Serbia Agrees to Move Its Embassy to Jerusalem; Kosovo Agrees to Recognize Israel," *thinc.*, accessed July 20, 2022, <https://www.thinc.info/serbia-agrees-to-move-its-embassy-to-jerusalem-kosovo-agrees-to-recognize-israel/>.

as a "terrorist organization."²²⁴ even though the agreement is not officially acknowledged as being a part of the Abraham Accords series, it was serving for it.²²⁵

The one-year agreements called for the normalization of military and commercial relations between the countries, as well as several other provisions, including Serbia's cessation of its campaign against the international recognition of Kosovo's independence, Kosovo's cessation of its application for membership in international organizations, and several other provisions. Other things, like opening embassies in Jerusalem,²²⁶ calling Hezbollah a terrorist group, or taking untrustworthy vendors off 5G networks, had no direct relations between Kosovo and Serbia. On the other hand, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the U.S will continue to engage in the region, especially after the Economic Normalization Agreement was signed as Kosovo should be continue to be connected to the West.²²⁷

The deal may provide the impression that United States foreign policy is adopting an active approach to Kosovo and that this effort has been successful; nonetheless, the agreement is problematic in several different areas and is unlikely to bring any fundamental change. The most important aspect of the agreement is that it is primarily

²²⁴ Agon Hamza, "Kosovo Is Slowly Recovering from Trump's Coup," Donald Trump | Al Jazeera (February 12, 2021), <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/2/12/kosovo-is-slowly-recovering-from-trumps-coup>. (accessed June 30, 2022).

²²⁵ Mike Wagenheim, "The Abraham Accords-Lite," The Media Line, October 28, 2021, <https://themedialine.org/top-stories/the-abraham-accords-lite/>. (accessed June 31, 2022).

²²⁶ "Serbia, Kosovo Agree to Economic Normalization, US Says," Serbia, Kosovo agree to economic normalization, US says, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/finance/serbia-kosovo-agree-to-economic-normalization-us-says/30422>. (accessed July 1, 2022).

²²⁷ "Pompeo Pledges Us Engagement on the Balkans," AP NEWS (Associated Press, October 2, 2020), <https://apnews.com/article/adriatic-sea-italy-mike-pompeo-kosovo-media-c5f199b98cafe3daa8de5e83cc01855c>. (accessed July 3, 2022).

economic and does not address the primary problem at the root of the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia. This problem is represented by Serbia's ongoing denial of Kosovo's independence and the ongoing tension between Albanians and Serbs who live in Kosovo. In addition, the agreement's duration is only one year, making it very challenging to do anything essential or long-lasting in such a short amount of time. The fact that Trump, who provides many EU administrations with a source of amusement, was able to secure a broad deal between Kosovo and Serbia puts pressure on his European counterparts to demonstrate that they can also secure substantial accomplishments on this front.

5.3 The policy of Biden toward the Kosovo Question

When President Joseph Biden took office in January 2021, he began his tenure with the proclamation, "America is back," which signaled the return of the United States to multilateralism and close cooperation with its allies across a wide range of issues.²²⁸ This approach appeared to be in contrast to the "America First" approach that Trump had taken during his time in office.

Not only did Joe Biden come into the presidency having won significant wins in both the popular vote and the electoral college, but he also had a career packed with knowledge in domestic and international policy matters.²²⁹ His career in public service includes 36 years as a member of the United States Senate. During this time, he held

²²⁸ "Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World," The White House (The United States Government, February 5, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>. (accessed July 3, 2022).

²²⁹ Joyce Kaufman, "Biden and Beyond," in *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

the positions of ranking member and then chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, as well as two stints as Vice President under the administration of President Barack Obama.

During the campaign and after becoming president, Vice President Biden emphasized the need to restore the United States' standing as a principled, responsible leader and a model democracy to the rest of the world. On the other hand, Trump had a far more conventional view of the United States' place in the world and dismissed international leadership as being too expensive and time-consuming.²³⁰ Biden committed to making diplomacy the preeminent instrument of U.S. foreign policy, ahead of the threat or use of force, as the fundamental strategy for reestablishing America's global standing. Biden said that the diplomatic instrument would be founded on America's most treasured democratic ideals, such as defending freedom, supporting opportunity, preserving universal rights, honoring the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity.²³¹

Biden discussed some of the issues that his administration would face, as well as a short description of how he intends to handle some of those dangers, notably by collaborating with other nations and leading where needed. The following are some of the issues and dangers that the United States is now experiencing and will encounter in the future.

One area in which there was some degree of consensus between the administrations of Donald Trump and Joe Biden was the perceived need to take action to meet the various

²³⁰ Stanley R. Sloan, *De-Trumping U.S. Foreign Policy: Can Biden Bring America Back?* (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2022), p.15.

²³¹ “Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World,” The White House (The United States Government, February 5, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>. (accessed July 5, 2022).

threats presented by China, which is growing as a global powerhouse.²³² These concerns were based on China's rising economic power and the use of that strength to execute the Belt and Road program, through which China expanded not just its financial and commercial linkages internationally but also its geo-strategic influence around the globe.²³³ Even in interactions with major U.S. allies, China attempted to fill leadership voids caused by Trump's renunciation of U.S. global leadership. When the Obama administration was in power, Biden was an advocate for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and he was critical of the Trump administration's handling of the sanctions against China and the United States' involvement in the TPP when he first took office.²³⁴ The result of using Biden's approach toward China was to collaborate when it was practicable and to confront wherever it was essential.

Iran presented Biden with additional difficulties, which he had to overcome. Biden has said that it is essential to address the danger posed by an Iranian nuclear buildup by resuming the deal with that nation but subject to certain conditions, such as Iran's willingness to engage in additional discussions.²³⁵

²³² Philip Mousavizadeh July 8, Philip Mousavizadeh, and Philip Mousavizadeh, "The Biden Administration's China Policy: An Inventory of Actions to Address the Challenge," Just Security, July 8, 2022, <https://www.justsecurity.org/82252/the-biden-administrations-china-policy-an-inventory-of-actions-to-address-the-challenge/>. (accessed July 10, 2022).

²³³ "How China's Belt and Road Initiative Is Faring," GIS Reports, April 8, 2022, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/belt-road-initiative/>. (accessed July 11, 2022).

²³⁴ Adam Behsudi and Doug Palmer, "Biden Says He Would Renegotiate TPP," POLITICO, August 1, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-trade/2019/08/01/biden-says-he-would-renegotiate-tpp-464000>. (accessed July 12, 2022).

²³⁵ Steven Erlanger, "Biden Wants to Rejoin Iran Nuclear Deal, but It Won't Be Easy," The New York Times (The New York Times, November 17, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/17/world/middleeast/iran-biden-trump-nuclear-sanctions.html>. (accessed July 14, 2022).

Russia is, of course, a policy area in which Biden had a significant deal of expertise during his time as a senator and vice president of the United States. He couched his strategy toward Russia within the context of his dedication to diplomacy, stating that he would engage Russia diplomatically when doing so would best serve the interests of the United States and defend the security of the United States. However, he also vowed to challenge Russia when it was essential, including providing answers to cyber threats and assaults, intervention in electoral processes, and aggressive regional behavior, such as Russia's ongoing aggression on Ukraine.²³⁶

Climate change is another policy subject that has both international and domestic implications. The Trump administration's principal approach to this issue has been to deny the problem's existence and withdraw from the international agreement. The withdrawal of the United States from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, reached under the Obama administration, was the most emblematic step of Trump's diplomatic policy. Diplomacy and international collaboration were critical in this case, according to Biden. He promised to rejoin the Paris accord and to rebuild the United States as a leader in carbon reduction and sustainable energy development.²³⁷ The Biden approach to climate change was a key emblem of his desire to reestablish American global leadership.

When seen through the lens of the Western Balkans, the United States of America is still one of the most prominent foreign powers that significantly impact the affairs of the area. The United States has a particular position in Kosovo and is always ready to support and assist whenever required. Kosovo, for example, has agreed to accommodate Afghans at Camp Bondsteel who participated with US-led international forces while their immigration status to the US is assessed. US Vice President Kamala

²³⁶ Stanley R. Sloan, *De-Trumping U.S. Foreign Policy: Can Biden Bring America Back?* (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2022), p.16.

²³⁷ Nathan Rott, "Biden Moves to Have U.S. Rejoin Climate Accord," NPR (January 20, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/inauguration-day-live-updates/2021/01/20/958923821/biden-moves-to-have-u-s-rejoin-climate-accord>. (accessed July 14, 2022).

Harris noted that the US is appreciative to Kosovo for its close collaboration, willingness, and kindness.²³⁸ Harris also emphasized the United States' support for the government's efforts to enhance the rule of law and the United States' expectations for success in the European Union-led Kosovo-Serbia dialogue process.²³⁹ Many people anticipated a "revolutionary transformation" in the direction of the US foreign policy of Biden in contrast to Donald Trump's foreign policy. Taking into account the fact that many individuals have criticized Trump's approach to the region as being too indulgent towards some players, such as Serbia, as being uncoordinated with the EU, as being inadequately focused on issues such as democracy and human rights, etc.

The involvement of Joe Biden in the affairs of the Balkans, which dates back to his first trip to Yugoslavia in 1979²⁴⁰, as well as his harsh criticism of Serbian policy in the 1990s²⁴¹, may lead us to believe that Trump's approach to Serbia, which some actors they considered it to be too soft, would go through a significant transformation under Biden's leadership. This was not the case.

There is a high degree of consistency between the Western Balkans policy of the administration of Joseph Biden and that of previous Republican governments. Putting an emphasis, first and foremost, on economic integration; taking a less one-sided

²³⁸ RFE/RL's Balkan Service, "U.S. Vice President Thanks Kosovo for Hosting Afghans," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty (U.S. Vice President Thanks Kosovo For Hosting Afghans, September 4, 2021), <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-kosovo-harris-evacuations/31443261.html>. (accessed, July 15, 2022).

²³⁹ RFE/RL's Balkan Service, "U.S. Vice President Thanks Kosovo for Hosting Afghans," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty (U.S. Vice President Thanks Kosovo For Hosting Afghans, September 4, 2021), <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-kosovo-harris-evacuations/31443261.html>. (accessed, July 15, 2022).

²⁴⁰ Faruk Ajeti, "Biden and the Balkans," Institute of New Europe, August 24, 2021, <https://ine.org.pl/en/biden-and-the-balkans/>. (accessed July 15, 2022).

²⁴¹ Jeremy Scahill, "Empire Politician - 1993-1995: Bosnia," The Intercept, April 27, 2021, <https://theintercept.com/empire-politician/biden-bosnia-serbia-yugoslavia-civil-war/>. (accessed July 15, 2022).

approach to the Kosovo issue and the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina; engaging in pragmatic cooperation with all of the Western Balkan leaders, irrespective of how well their democracies are functioning. All of these things, including supporting further enlargement of NATO and working to oppose the increasing power of Russia and China, are crucial components of continuity between the two administrations. On the other hand, the fact that the new government in the United States has not made any public reference to the Washington agreement has raised questions about whether or not President Joe Biden would uphold the pledges made on September 4 between Kosovo and Serbia. For some, this is not a coincidence but demonstrates how far removed the new administration is from the agreement, as they claim that only certain aspects can be moved forward.²⁴²

There are several critical distinctions between the current government and the one that came before it, the most notable of which are: more open support for European Union integration in the Western Balkans; an approach that is more active toward Bosnia and Herzegovina; and an additional (narrative) emphasis on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. However, these inconsistencies seem less significant when contrasted with the fundamental components of the policy continuum discussed before. They are centered on rhetoric for the most part.

On the other hand, recent developments in Kosovo show how active U.S. foreign policy is in Kosovo and how decisions made by the U.S. can affect internal politics. Since the declaration of independence in 2008, Kosovo has developed a number of diplomatic actions, including reciprocity with Serbia.

The first measure of reciprocity towards Serbia was applied by Kosovo in July 2011. Former Minister of Trade and Industry Mimoza Kusari-Lila took this action since Serbia had banned goods from Kosovo for three years after Kosovo's independence in 2008, as a result of the transition from UNMIK to Republic of Kosovo stamps. Since

²⁴² “Biden Not Mentioning the Washington Agreement Is Being Considered a Distance from It,” KosovaPress, February 28, 2021, <https://kosovapress.com/en/%E2%80%8Bbiden-not-mentioning-the-washington-agreement-is-being-considered-a-distance-from-it/>. (accessed July 16, 2022).

December 2008, Serbia has prohibited the importation of anything using this mark, since it does not recognize Kosovo's independence. In all of the borders this was enforced.²⁴³ In the majority-Serb northern region of Kosovo, particularly the border towns of Jarinj and Brnjak, tensions were elevated. In 2008, as retaliation for Kosovo's independence, local Serbs damaged these sites. The first measure of reciprocity lasted fewer than forty days after Kosovo and Serbia reached a mutual seal recognition agreement in Brussels December 2, 2011.²⁴⁴

Five years later, in March 2016, Kosovo enacted reciprocity procedures in transporting oil and gas with Serbia. This step was made after the Serbian authorities refused to recognize European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) certifications provided by the Kosovo authorities for drivers and vehicles transporting hazardous chemicals.²⁴⁵ The Kosovo authorities argued that Serbia was in breach of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). This agreement intends to enhance commercial interactions between Western Balkan nations. Kosovo became an official member of CEFTA in 2007. In 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, chaired by Arsim Bajrami, enforced reciprocity procedures with Serbia regarding textbooks in Serbian. At the time, Serbian authorities had sent back a truck carrying around 100,000 school textbooks from

²⁴³ Ren Ato, "Reciprociteti Ndër Vite, 6 Masat Që Kosova I Vendosi Serbisë Që Nga Viti 2011," Euronews Albania, August 2, 2022, <https://euronews.al/rajoni/kosove/2022/08/02/reciprociteti-nder-vite-6-masat-qe-kosova-i-vendosi-serbise-qe-nga-viti-2011/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁴⁴ "Reciprocity on Vehicle License Plates between Kosovo and Serbia," The Dialogue, April 21, 2021, <https://dialogue-info.com/reciprocity-is-achieved-for-vehicle-license-plates-between-kosovo-and-serbia/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁴⁵ "Naftëtarët e Kosovës Mbështesin Masën e Reciprocitetit Ndaj Serbisë," Balkanweb.com – News24 – Kryesore, <https://www.balkanweb.com/naftetar-et-kosoves-mbeshtesin-masen-e-reciprocitetit-ndaj-serbise/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

Kosovo, preventing them from being delivered to communities with an Albanian majority in the Presheva Valley.²⁴⁶

Four years later, in 2020 the Kosovo government, headed by Prime Minister Albin Kurti, enforced reciprocity measures for Serbian products.²⁴⁷ On March 31, 2020, Kosovo's acting Prime Minister, Albin Kurti, ruled that the designations of phytosanitary and veterinary certificates, as well as other associated papers, shall be utilized in conformity with the Kosovo Constitution and regulations. This decision sparked outrage in Serbia, the United States, and the European Union. After 51 days in office, the Kurti cabinet was deposed by the Democratic League of Kosovo via a resolution of no confidence March 2020. The new Kosovo Government, headed by Avdullah Hoti, was founded on June 3, 2020. Hoti overturned the reciprocity judgment in his first days on the job, claiming that the hurdles to the negotiation process for normalizing ties between Kosovo and Serbia had been eliminated. Early parliamentary elections were conducted in Kosovo on February 14, 2021, and the Assembly was formed on March 22. On the same day, the new Government of Kosovo, headed by Albin Kurti of the Vetvendosje Movement, was elected. Prime Minister Kurti has said that one of the first things his administration would do is to reintroduce the rule of reciprocity with Serbia.

The Kosovo government, headed by Albin Kurti, wanted to enforce reciprocal provisions for Serbian license plates on September 20, 2021. In opposition to this decision, local Serbs blocked the two border crossings between Kosovo and Serbia at

²⁴⁶ Ibid

²⁴⁷ Nadie Ahmeti, "Reciprociteti i Kosovës Ndaj Serbisë," Radio Evropa e Lirë (Reciprociteti i Kosovës ndaj Serbisë, August 1, 2022), <https://www.evropaelire.org/a/masat-e-reciprocitetit-kosove-serbi/31969067.html>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

Jarinje and Brnjak for two weeks.²⁴⁸ As a response to this, special forces of the Kosovo Police were stationed nearby. Thus, tension increased. In an effort to aggravate the situation, Pristina and Belgrade signed an agreement in Brussels on September 30, 2021, to place labels on vehicles crossing each other's border. According to this arrangement, the special police units and barriers have been withdrawn from the border crossings. On October 4, 2021, however, Kosovo and Serbia began affixing stickers to the license plates of cars traversing each other's territory.²⁴⁹

The Government of Kosovo has decided to enforce the decision as of August 1, 2022. The exact decision was that residents whose automobiles have Serbian license plates with the initials of Kosovo towns must re-register their vehicles with RKS (Republic of Kosovo) license plates. Similarly, all citizens of Serbia entering the regions of Kosovo will be issued a temporary entry-exit document that will replace their Serbian identity cards.²⁵⁰ Albin Kurti, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, said that Serbian unlawful structures obstructed roads and that they started fire before the provision of admission and exit documents from Kosovo commenced.²⁵¹ KFOR issued a statement which says that: "The overall security situation in the northern municipalities of Kosovo is tense.

²⁴⁸ Eduart Halili, "Kosovo Determined to Implement Reciprocity on License Plates," ALBANIA DAILY NEWS, September 22, 2021, <https://albaniandailynews.com/news/kosovo-determined-to-implement-reciprocity-on-license-plates>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁴⁹ "Serbia, Kosovo Reach Deal after License Plate Dispute Enters 2nd Week," Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/serbia-kosovo-reach-deal-after-license-plate-dispute-enters-2nd-week/2379803>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁵⁰ "Reciprociteti NDAJ Serbisë Për Targat Dhe Pasaportat, Kurti Mbledh Sot Këshillin E Sigurisë," Telegrafi, July 31, 2022, <https://telegrafi.com/reciprociteti-ndaj-serbise-per-targat-dhe-pasaportat-kurti-mbledh-sot-keshillin-e-sigurise/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁵¹ "Situata Në Veri, Kurti: Vuçiq Dhe Petković Janë Përgjegjësit Kryesorë Për Trazirat," Telegrafi, July 31, 2022, <https://telegrafi.com/reagon-kurti-ende-pa-filluar-reciprociteti-strukturat-ilegale-serbe-ne-veri-filluan-bllokim-rrugeshe-dhe-te-shten-armesh/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

The NATO-led KFOR mission is closely monitoring and is prepared to intervene if stability is threatened, in accordance with its mandate, which emerges from UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999."²⁵² Indeed NATO reinstated the attributed responsibility of the KFOR that has to keep a close eye on the current situation and prevent any instability in Kosovo as required by its mission.²⁵³

On the other hand Richard Grenell, who served as the previous American special envoy for dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, has expressed his thoughts on the most recent events that have taken place in the northern part of Kosovo. He says through Twitter that "Albanians are aware that Prime Minister Albin Kurti is the source of the crisis, and as a result, it continues to be a catastrophe for Secretary Anthony Blinken". As a consequence of this, he advocated in writing for the reinstatement of the previous president, Hashim Thaci.²⁵⁴ It must be noted that President Vjollca Osmani and Prime Minister Albin Kurti met with the US Secretary of State Blinken in Washington D.C on July 26, 2022. They highlighted the significance of the EU-facilitated Dialogue for normalizing ties between Kosovo and Serbia, with a focus on mutual recognition and progress toward Euro-Atlantic

²⁵² "NATO's Force in Kosovo Says It Is Prepared to Intervene If Stability Is Jeopardized," Anadolu Ajansı, accessed August 2, 2022, [https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/natos-force-in-kosovo-says-it-is-prepared-to-intervene-if-stability-is-jeopardized/2650228#:~:text=NATO's%20Kosovo%20Force%20\(KFOR\)%20said,municipalities%20of%20Kosovo%20is%20tense](https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/natos-force-in-kosovo-says-it-is-prepared-to-intervene-if-stability-is-jeopardized/2650228#:~:text=NATO's%20Kosovo%20Force%20(KFOR)%20said,municipalities%20of%20Kosovo%20is%20tense). (accessed August 2, 2022).

²⁵³ "KFOR: Jemi Të Përgatitur Të Ndërhyjmë Nëse Rrezikohet Stabilitet Në Veri Të Kosovës," Telegrafi, July 31, 2022, <https://telegrafi.com/kfor-jemi-te-pergatitur-te-nderhyjme-nese-rrezikohet-stabilitet-ne-veri-te-kosoves/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁵⁴ Tweets of Grenell, tweet <https://twitter.com/richardgrenell/status/1553840930590842880?s=21&t=rC2HDWosYZxpENyfnLLIzQ> See also "Live: Pas Kërkesës Së Shba-Së, Qeveria Shtyn Zbatimin Për Reciprocitetin Ndaj Serbisë," Klan Kosova, August 2, 2022, <https://klankosova.tv/live-pas-kerkeses-se-shba-se-qeveria-shtyn-zbatimin-per-reciprocitetin-ndaj-serbise/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

integration.²⁵⁵ On the other hand, they took part in the ceremony that was held in the American Congress for the signing of the agreement with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) for the Kosovo Compact Program. This program will be extremely important for the transition to a green economy, energy security, and the transformation of the socioeconomic system.²⁵⁶

Regarding the implementation of reciprocity toward Serbia and the unrest in the north of Kosovo, especially border crossings between Kosovo and Serbia at Jarinje and Brnjak U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Jeffrey Hovenier met with President Vjosa Osmani and Prime Minister Albin Kurti on July 31, 2022. Following the meeting, Jeffrey Hovenier addressed the media. He stated that: "One of the reasons I met with President Osmani and Prime Minister Kurti was to tell them that they should postpone the implementation of the reciprocity decision for 30 days because there are disagreements and misinformation regarding this decision."²⁵⁷ The Government of Kosovo accepted the United States "request", postponing the implementation of the reciprocity rules for 30 days.

²⁵⁵ U.S. Embassy pristina, "Secretary Blinken's Meeting with Kosovan President Osmani and Prime Minister Kurti," U.S. Embassy in Kosovo, July 28, 2022, <https://xk.usembassy.gov/secretary-blinkens-meeting-with-kosovan-president-osmani-and-prime-minister-kurti/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁵⁶ "Osmani and Kurti Travel to the USA to Participate in the Signing Ceremony of the Agreement with the MCC," KosovaPress, July 25, 2022, <https://kosovapress.com/en/osmani-and-kurti-travel-to-the-usa-to-participate-in-the-signing-ceremony-of-the-agreement-with-the-mcc/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

²⁵⁷ "Live: Pas Kërkesës Së Shba-Së, Qeveria Shtyn Zbatimin Për Reciprocitetin Ndaj Serbisë," Klan Kosova, August 2, 2022, <https://klankosova.tv/live-pas-kerkeses-se-shba-se-qeveria-shtyn-zbatimin-per-reciprocitetin-ndaj-serbise/>. (accessed August 5, 2022).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter examines the foreign policies of Presidents Trump and Biden toward the Western Balkans, with a particular emphasis on Kosovo, over the years 2017 through 2022. During the tenure of the Trump administration, the president indicated a return to a more unilateralist and isolationist stance when he adopted the "America First" ideology. It appeared to satisfy his "America First" ethos to insist that Serbia and Kosovo sign the Economic Normalization Agreement (ENA). However, this was a last-ditch attempt to secure a victory in the domestic political arena. However, it was using the agreement as a part of the Abraham Accords, where it was decided that Serbia's embassy in Israel would be relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by July 1, 2021, and that diplomatic ties would be established between Kosovo and Israel, with a Kosovar embassy also being established in the Israeli capital city of Jerusalem. Both of these decisions were made in conjunction with the Abraham Accords.

On the other side, the hopes of Kosovo and the Western Balkans that the newly elected Biden policy would be revolutionary toward the area were dashed when it was shown that this would not be the case. Because there was a considerable degree of similarity between the policies that the administrations of Biden and Trump had for the Western Balkans. Even a lack of comment was a positive sign of support for the Economic Normalization Agreement.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The United States attaches great importance to the pro-Western stance of Balkan states in general. During the Kosovo conflict against Serbia, while Milosevic was in charge, the United States displayed hostility to any political system in the region supported by the Russian Federation and, to a limited extent, China. The 1999 bombing of Serbia was a critical event in building a global order because it conveyed a strong message to Russia and China.

This study, which investigates the Balkan policy of the United States after the Cold War, demonstrates that global interests are always prioritized regardless of who wins the presidential election in the United States. Although these pursuits evolve, they grow in conjunction. As a result of Russia's diminished influence in the Balkans after the conclusion of the Cold War, the United States is presently the only global power capable of taking effective action in the Balkans. As the Cold War ended, ethnic and religious turmoil in Yugoslavia paved the way for American intervention in the Balkans. The United States intended to democratize the political, financial, and military axes of the newly constituted zone of interest in the Balkans, an area to which it was previously foreign.

For the U.S. policymakers, the priorities in the early 1990s were the Middle East problems, more specifically the Iraq issue and the dissolution of the USSR. Given these facts, the Balkans and more specifically the Kosovo Question were secondary in the eyes of the U.S. policy makers. Thus, G. H. W. Bush preferred to contain the problems in the Balkans and postponed addressing the Kosovo Question. The Clinton administration on the other hand put more emphasis on the dissolution of the SFR

Yugoslavia within which the Kosovo Question became a burning issue, yet it waited until 1999 to address the Kosovo Question which at the same time served in the interest of the US's NATO primacy policy.

Bill Clinton's approach to the Balkans paved the way for the United States to build a permanent presence in the region to which our focus moved. The Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo crises' actions of the United States delivered symbolic messages to the European Union and Russia. The United States uses NATO in the region as a political weapon. NATO and the European Union are emphasized in U.S. strategy as entities restricting Russia's action choices in the Balkans.

Under Clinton, the NATO expansion goal was limited to Eastern Europe, but under George W. Bush, it extended to Western Europe. During the George W. Bush administration, attention switched to the Balkans. As part of the alliance's expansion into the Balkans, Bulgaria and Romania joined NATO in 2004, Albania and Croatia in 2009, Montenegro in 2017 and Macedonia in 2020.

Despite the United States' desire to retreat from the Balkans under the George.W. Bush administration, new defense strategies for Russia have been formed in the region due to the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to NATO and the European Union. The goal was to restrict Russia's agility in the Black Sea. It is also evident that the United States wishes to take an active role in energy distribution and security concerns around the Black Sea.

Under the Obama administration, dialogue and diplomacy moved to the forefront in the Balkans. In this regard, the Balkan politics of the Obama period mirror the politics of the Clinton era. Even though there are several differences in the region's dynamics, the similarities in the methodologies are notable. During the Clinton administration, Russia's influence in the region dropped, but it increased during the Obama administration. Under the Obama administration, competition with Russia in the Balkans grew more functional via political parties.

During the Obama administration, the view that Serbia is the crucial country for regional peace gained popularity. Under the Obama administration, vice President Joe

Biden's travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kosovo served this aim. In contrast to the European Union and Russia, the fundamental purpose of these missions is to emphasize that the United States sought stability in the Balkans. In the 1990s, Russia made efforts on the political, social, and economic fronts to regain the respect it had lost in the Balkans. Under the Obama administration, Putin's Eurasianist attacks intensified, but NATO's expansion strategy and the "Missile Defense Shield" project diverted attention away from them.

The Trump administration's foreign policy for Kosovo best illustrates the United States' overall foreign policy. Even though it should not be seen as such. Forcing Serbia and Kosovo to sign the economic normalization deal prepared the ground for Kosovo's actual position on the U.S. agenda. Despite not being at war, the Abraham Accords was the only rationale for signing the peace agreement. It is an excellent example since the U.S. policy is to play the Kosovo card when required to compel Kosovo to act by U.S. objectives. On the other hand, Biden's continuity in foreign policy muddles the position of Kosovo on the U.S. agenda since the Economic Normalization Agreement might be used at any moment to serve U.S. goals.

It may be said that the thesis benefitted from the insights given by the realist point of view, taking into consideration both national interests and security conundrums, as well as the ultimate goal of the United States, which is to achieve and maintain its hegemony. This might be explained by the aspirations of the United States to establish military bases in Kosovo. Another element that drives the US is its desire to exert its influence on the regions located inside Europe. And ultimately, when necessary, using its military base as an offensive asset against Russia and China.

Lastly, this thesis argues that there is more continuity than change among these administrations' policies toward the Kosovo Question though in each of them some changes have been noticed. The distinction was the Clinton administration policy that committed itself more than others in Kosovo.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Kala, Merve

Nationality: [REDACTED]

Date and Place of Birth: [REDACTED]

Marital Status: [REDACTED]

email: [REDACTED]

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU International Relations	2022
BS	Hacettepe University International Relations	2019

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place
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2018

2018

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Native Albanian, Advanced English, Elementary German, Elementary Polish

HOBBIES

Swimming, , travelling, watching movies

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Balkanlar; tarihsel olarak, uluslararası ve bölgesel faktörlerin birleşiminden kaynaklanan çeşitli savaş ve çatışmaların alanı olmuştur. Yugoslavya'nın dağılması sırasında meydana gelen olaylar, Balkanların yakın tarihindeki bu tür sorunların açık bir göstergesidir.

Bu araştırma, ABD'nin yürüttüğü dış politika ve Kosova'daki çatışmanın ilk günlerinden 2022'ye kadar ABD'nin ve uluslararası örgütlerin politikalarına odaklanmaktadır.

ABD, genel olarak Balkan devletlerinin Batı yanlısı duruşuna büyük önem vermektedir. Sırbistan'a karşı Kosova ihtilafı sırasında Miloseviç görevdeyken ABD, bölgedeki Rusya Federasyonu ve sınırlı ölçüde Çin tarafından desteklenen politikalara karşıtlık sergiledi. 1999'da Yugoslavya'nın bombalanması, Rusya ve Çin'e güçlü bir mesaj ilettiği için küresel bir düzenin inşasında kritik bir olay olarak değerlendirildi.

Soğuk Savaş sonrası ABD'nin Kosova politikasını araştıran bu çalışma, ABD'de başkanlık seçimini kimin kazandığına bakmaksızın küresel düzlemde ABD'nin çıkarlarının her zaman öncelikli olduğunu göstermektedir. Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden sonra Rusya'nın Balkanlardaki etkisi azalmıştır. Bunun sonucunda ABD Balkanlarda etkin eylemde bulunabilecek tek küresel güç olarak ortaya çıktı. Soğuk Savaş sona erdiğinde Yugoslavya'daki etnik ve dini kimlikleri öne çıkaran siyasi kargaşa, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Balkanlara müdahalesinin yolunu açtı. ABD, Balkanlarda yeni oluşturulan çıkar bölgesinin siyasi, mali ve askeri eksenlerini demokratikleştireceğini ileri sürdü. Bölgede demokratikleşmenin gerçekleştiğini söylemek zor olsa da, ABD bu söylemi yinelemeye devam etti.

Bu tezin amacı, 1989'dan 2022'ye kadar olan yıllar boyunca ABD hükümetlerinin Kosova Sorunu karşısındaki konumlarının değişimi ya da devamlılığı sorusu

üzerinden inceleme yapmaktır. Konular deęişmekte midir, yoksa devamlılık gösteren bir tutum mu vardır? İster diplomasi uygulamak, ister silahlı mücadeleye girişmek olsun bu seçimlerin ardındaki adımlar ve gerekçeler araştırılmaktadır. Öte yandan Clinton yönetimi döneminde gerçekleştirilen NATO'daki askeri müdahale ve aktifleştirme bu tercihe özel bir önem vermektedir. Kosova'nın tek taraflı bağımsızlık ilanının G. W. Bush yönetimi tarafından hızlı bir şekilde kabul edilmesinin ve ardından Obama yönetimi tarafından bu beyanın desteklenmesinin ve tanıtılmasının sebepleri araştırılır. Son olarak bu tez, Trump'ın ve Biden'ın yönetimlerinin Kosova Sorununa yönelik dış politikasında ne ölçüde bir süreklilik veya deęişim olduğunu göstermeye çalışmaktadır. ABD'nin Kosova Sorununa yönelik izledięi politika analiz edilirken, Kosova Sorununun ABD'nin önemseydięi dięer öncelikli dış politika sorunları arasında nereye denk düştüğü tezin her bölümünde dikkate alınmıştır.

Kosova, Balkan Savaşları sırasında 1913'te Sırbistan'a bırakılmadan önce 1389'dan 1912'ye kadar Osmanlılar tarafından yönetildi. 1913'ten önce, Kosova çeşitli yöneticiler tarafından yönetiliyordu; ancak Kosova'nın ezici bir çoğunluğu olan Arnavutların yanı sıra Sırlar, Karadağlılar, Romanlar, Hırvatlar, Türkler, Makedonlar ve dięer etnik toplulukların yaşadığı bilinmektedir. Arnavutların büyük çoğunluğu Müslümandır ve Arnavutça konuşur. Arnavutların özerklik arzusu on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonlarında arttı, ancak talepleri gerçekleştirilemedi. Sosyalist Yugoslavya kurulduğunda Kosova özerklik kazandı. Ancak Kosova'nın özerk statüsü zamanla deęişti.

1945'ten 1974'e kadar olan Sosyalist Federal Yugoslavya dönemi boyunca Kosova'nın özerk statüsü tanındı. Bununla birlikte 1974 Anayasası, Kosova'nın özerk statüsünü güçlendirerek ve onu Federasyonun önemli bir unsuru olarak tanımlarken Sırbistan Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti içinde özerk bir birim olarak kaldı. Tito; Kosova'ya federal düzeyde oy haklarını, kurucu bir birim gibi kullanma yetkisi vererek Arnavutları memnun etti, fakat bu yetkiyi Cumhuriyet statüsüne yükseltmeyerek Sırları hoşnut kıldı. Daha sonra Sırp milliyetçileri tarafından üstlenilen 1974 Anayasasında Kosova'nın haklarının kaldırılması gibi olaylar, Arnavut toplumunun tanınmayan tam

cumhuriyet statüsü için çalışmasının yolunu açtı. Ardından Kosova Meclisi 1992’de bağımsızlığını ilan etti ancak yalnızca Arnavutluk tarafından tanındı. Kosova Arnavutlarının bundan sonraki mücadeleleri uluslararası politikadan bağımsız değildi.

Bu tezin amaçlarından biri de, Yugoslavya Federal Cumhuriyeti Dönemi boyunca Kosova'ya yönelik uluslararası politikanın başat aktörü ABD’nin izlediği dış politikayı değerlendirmektir. Kosova Sorununun G. H. W. Bush ve Bill Clinton'ın başkanlıkları sırasında Amerikan dış politikası için nasıl önemli bir endişe haline geldiğini araştırır. NATO operasyonunun nasıl gerçekleştiğini ve Kosova'daki Birleşmiş Milletler Misyonu'nun (UNMIK) oluşumunu araştırır. Ek olarak, ABD dış politikasında Kosova Sorununa yönelik önemli dönüm noktalarına ve değişimlere odaklanırken Avrupa Birliği (AB) ile Rusya'nın katılımının altını çiziyor.

ABD'nin dünya çapındaki öneminin Batı Avrupa tarafından eleştirebileceği netleştiğinde ABD, AB'nin zayıflığını gözler önüne seren Balkanlarda NATO'yu harekete geçirmeye karar verdi. Miloseviç'in Federal Yugoslavya Cumhuriyeti'nde yaptığı hatalar NATO'nun Bosna ve Kosova'ya müdahale etmesine izin verdi. Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden bu yana Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin, özellikle Clinton yönetiminin Kosova'daki çatışmaya askeri tepkisi önem arz eder. Şimdiye kadar dünyada kendi türündeki en kapsamlı operasyon olmuştur. Öte yandan, asker göndermek yerine sadece diplomasi peşinde koşan ve Kosova'nın bir Avrupa sorunu olduğunu vurgulayan Bush yönetimi Ortadoğu'yu ve SSCB'nin parçalanmasını ön planda tutarken; Clinton yönetimi konuyu ele aldı ve gündeminde öncelendi. ABD'nin Balkanlarda ve özellikle Kosova'da vazgeçilmez çıkarları olduğunu göstermek için aktif bir liderlik sergiledi. G.H.W.Bush ve Clinton'ın iki yönetimini karşılaştırırken bir değişikliğin bariz olduğu sonucuna varılır. Bir yandan G.H.W.Bush konuyu ertelemeyi tercih ederken Clinton yönetimi bunu ABD gündeminin önceliği haline getirdi.

Genişlemeci bir politika, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri hükümetinin Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü (NATO) ile birincil odak noktasıydı. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, SSCB ve SFR Yugoslavya'nın dağılmasının yarattığı güç boşluğunu doldurmak için devreye girecekti. Ayrıca NATO'nun Yugoslavya'ya karşı aldığı askeri hareket,

Avrupa Birliđi'ni Amerikan kontrolü altında tutmak için alıřmayı da ieren ABD'nin stratejisiyle uyumluydu. Kuzey Atlantik Antlařması Örgütü'nün, Amerika Birleřik Devletleri'nin Avrupa ile yarıřı için en uygun ara olduđunun altı izilebilir.

Milosevi'in 1989'da Kosova'nın özerkliđini kaldırmasının ardından kısa bir süre sonra Kosova'nın bađımsızlıđı için mücadele bařladı. řiddetli yaptırımlar, Kosovalı Arnavutları pasif direniře gemeye zorlarken Kosova bölgesi özerkliđini geri kazanmada daha da geride kaldı. Dayton Anlařmasının Kosova meselesini ele almaması, zaten gergin olan bu atmosfere katkıda bulundu. Kosova Kurtuluř Ordusu (KKO), yerel halkın desteđiyle Kosova'daki Sırp hedeflerine saldırılar düzenleyerek iřleri kendi ellerine almaya karar verdiđinde kuruldu ve uluslararası düzlemde bazı devletlerden dolaylı da olsa destek aldı. KKO tarafından gerekleřtirilen saldırılar, Sırp askeri ve paramiliter gülerinin 1998 ve 1999 yıllarında Kosovalı Arnavutlara karřı gerekleřtirdiđi ölümcül ve acımasız operasyonları hızlandırdı.

1999'da řiddetin artması, Kuzey Atlantik Antlařması Örgütü'nün bir askeri operasyon bařlatmasına izin verdi ve bu da Sırp askerlerinin Kosova'dan sınır dıřı edilmesiyle sonuçlandı. Birleřmiř Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin 1244 sayılı Kararı ile Birleřmiř Milletler himayesinde Kosova'da uluslararası bir sivil ve güvenlik varlıđı kurulmuřtur. O zamandan beri Kosova, Birleřmiř Milletler Kosova Geici İdaresi olan UNMIK tarafından yönetiliyor.

G.H.W. Bush yönetiminin önceliđinin Balkanlar deđil, Ortadođu ve SSCB'nin dađılması olduđunu aıka görebiliyoruz. Öte yandan Yugoslavya'nın öküřünün denk geldiđi G. H . W . Bush yönetimi oldu. Bush'un öncelikleri arasında Kosova sorunu son sıralaradaydı. Bu nedenle Yugoslavya'nın egemenliđini ve toprak bütünlüđünü korumayı öngördü ve ABD birliklerinin konuşlandırılması konusunda hiçbir önerisi bulunmuyordu. Hatta o dönemin dıřiřleri bakanı James Baker, ABD'nin “bu kavgada köpeđi olmadıđını” belirterek bunu aıka belirtti. Ancak gerek řu ki, NATO ve Avrupa'nın istikrarı risk altındaydı. Bush yönetimi, Yugoslavya'nın dađılmasının Avrupa'nın sorunu olduđuna ve Avrupa'nın arka bahesinde olup bitenlerle ilgilenmesi gerektiđine karar verdi.

Öte yandan Clinton yönetimi dış politika seçimleriyle Kosova Sorununda önemli rol oynadı. Stratejik eyleme olan bağlılığını gösteren en önemli dış politika başarısını Kosova'da elde etti. Clinton yönetimi sırasında Yugoslavya'daki sorunları çözmek için bazı konferanslar düzenlendi. Bosna-Hersek'teki savaşı sona erdiren Dayton Anlaşması oldu, öte yandan Kosova Sorununa atıfta bulunmadan silahlı mücadelenin ve KKO'nun kurulmasının önünü açtı. 1995 yılına kadar Kosova'daki Arnavutlar; Arnavut milliyetçi davalarının sadık bir destekçisi ve Kosova'nın bağımsızlığının savunucusu olan İbrahim Rugova liderliğindeydi. İbrahim Rugova; Kosova'nın bağımsızlığının silahsız, yumuşak sivil itaatsizlikle barışçıl bir şekilde gerçekleştirileceğini ummuş ve ilan etmişti. Dayton Anlaşmasından sonra Kosova Sorununa atıfta bulunmadığı için her zaman erişilmesi zor olan özgürlük ve bağımsızlık hedefine ulaşmak için başka yolların izlenmesi gerektiği görüşünü savunan KKO öne çıkmaya başladı.

Öte yandan Sırbistan ve Kosova arasındaki saldırganlıkların durdurulamaması üzerine son çare olarak 6 Şubat-22 Mart 1999'da Rambouillet Zirvesi yapıldı. Ek B maddesi önemli bir unsurdur. Ek B maddesi NATO'nun tüm FRY kara, hava sahası ve karasularına seyahat ve erişim sağlanmasına izin veriyordu, bu hiçbir ülkenin kabul edemeyeceği bir koşuldur. Rambouillet anlaşmasının Ek B maddesinin son dakikada eklendiği dikkate alındığında ABD'nin bir uzlaşmaya varmak istemediği ve dolayısıyla Paris Rambouillet'te gerçekleşen Arnavut ve Sırp delegasyonları arasındaki müzakerenin çökmesine neden olduğu varsayılabilir.

ABD Dışişleri Bakanı Madeline Albright, Kosovalı Arnavut heyetini ikna ettikten sonra heyet, 24 Mart'ta NATO müdahalesinin önünü açan anlaşmayı imzalamaya karar verdi. NATO'nun BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin izni olmadan hareket ettiğini ancak BM'nin ne yasal olarak kınadığını ne de yasal olarak yetkilendirdiğini belirtmek gerekir. 10 Haziran'da Rusya'nın temsilcisi Chernomyrdin ve AB'nin temsilcisi Ahtisaari'nin yardımıyla ateşkes anlaşmasına varıldı ve UNSCR 1244 yürürlüğe girdi ve görev BM'ye verildi.

ABD'nin dış politikayı şekillendiren başkanları için 1990'ların başındaki öncelikler; Ortadoğu sorunları, özel olarak Irak sorunu ve SSCB'nin dağılmasıydı. Bu gerçekler

göz önüne alındığında Balkanlar ve özel olarak Kosova Sorunu, ABD'li politikacıların gözünde ikincildi. Bu nedenle G. H. W. Bush Balkanlardaki sorunları sınırlamayı tercih etmiş ve Kosova Sorununun ele alınmasını ertelemiştir. Clinton yönetimi ise Kosova Sorununun yakıcı bir konu haline geldiği SFR Yugoslavya'nın çözülmesine daha fazla vurgu yapmış, ancak aynı zamanda NATO'nun ABD çıkarına hizmet eden Kosova Sorununu ele almak için 1999'a kadar bekledi.

Bill Clinton'ın Balkanlar'a yaklaşımı, ABD'nin odaklandığımız bölgede kalıcı bir varlık inşa etmesinin yolunu açtı. ABD'nin Bosna-Hersek ve Kosova krizlerine yaklaşımı, Avrupa Birliği ve Rusya'ya sembolik mesajlar verdi. ABD bölgede NATO'yu siyasi bir silah olarak kullanmıştır. NATO ve Avrupa Birliği, ABD stratejisinde Rusya'nın Balkanlardaki eylem tercihlerini kısıtlayan varlıklar olarak vurgulanmaktadır.

Clinton döneminde NATO'nun genişleme hedefi Doğu Avrupa ile sınırlıydı, ancak George W. Bush döneminde Batı Avrupa'ya kadar uzandı. George W. Bush yönetimi sırasında dikkatler Balkanlara çevrildi. İttifakın Balkanlardaki genişlemesinin bir parçası olarak Bulgaristan ve Romanya 2004'te, 2009'da Arnavutluk ve Hırvatistan, 2017'de Karadağ ve 2020'de Makedonya NATO'ya katıldı.

Bu tezin bir diğer amacı ise, 2001 yılından 2016 yılına kadar ABD hükümetinin Kosova'ya yönelik dış politikasını iki farklı yönetimi karşılaştırarak analiz etmektir. George W. Bush yönetiminde Kosova'nın bağımsızlığının Amerikan dış politikası için ciddi bir öncelik haline gelip gelmediğini ve nasıl olduğunu araştırmak üzerine yoğunlaşır. Hem Ahtisaari Planı'nı hem de Kosova'nın fiili bağımsızlığını analiz ederek ABD'nin Kosovalı Arnavutların bağımsızlık isteklerini nasıl karşılamaya çalıştığını tartışıyor. Öte yandan, Obama yönetiminin farklı yollardan hareket etme niyeti de incelenir. ABD'nin Kosova ile ilgili dış politikasındaki önemli girişimleri özetlemektedir. Rusya ve AB'nin bağımsızlık konusundaki tutumları ayrıntılı olarak incelenir.

Bu bölüm, analiz için zaman çerçevesi olarak 2001-2016 yıllarına odaklanmaktadır. Hem George W. Bush'un hem de Barack Obama'nın kullandığı araçlar incelenir. 11

Eylül 2001'den sonra ABD dış politika yaklaşımını değiştirdi ve Kosova öncelik listesinde arka plana atıldı. Ancak ABD, AB'nin Kosova'da daha fazla sorumluluk üstlenmesine yol açma eğilimindeydi. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin desteğiyle BM çerçevesinde Kosova'nın nihai statüsünün belirlenmesine karar verildi. Ahtisaari tarafından geliştirilen strateji, kazanan olarak ortaya çıktı ancak ne Rusya ne de Sırbistan bunu benimsemeye istekliydiler. AB, BM ve Rusya bir çözüme arabuluculuk etmeye çalıştılar ancak Kosovalı Arnavutların en büyük önceliği tam bağımsızlık olduğu için iki taraf da anlaşamadı.

Kosova'nın bağımsızlık ilanı, son çare olarak ABD ve Avrupa Birliği'nin desteğiyle geldi. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avrupa Birliği'nin benzer önceliklere sahip olduğu bir dönemdi. Tek taraflı bağımsızlık ilanı; Sırbistan, Rusya ve kendi ülkelerinde benzer ayrılıkçı sorunlarla karşı karşıya olan bazı AB üyeleri tarafından onaylanmadı. Ancak G.W. Bush yönetimi, AB liderliğindeki Kosova'da NATO konuşlandırmalarına katılarak ve bölgeye mali yardım sağlayarak Kosova'nın bağımsızlığını ve Ahtisaari planının uygulanmasını destekleme sözü verdi. Öte yandan Obama yönetimi bunu yapmadı. Kosova'ya yönelik politikasını çok değiştirdi. Denetimli bağımsızlığın Ahtisaari tarafından Bush yönetimi sırasında geliştirildiği ve Obama yönetimi altında devam ettiği not edilebilir. Bu sürekliliğin bir göstergesi olabilir. Bunun nedeni, Obama yönetiminin Bush ile aynı konumda olmasıydı. ABD'nin Kosova ve Balkanlar'a katılımından daha çok Ortadoğu, Asya, Çin ve diğer bölgelere olan ilgisine öncelik verdiği sonucuna varabiliriz. Bu tutum, bu bölgelere daha az öncelik verildiğinin çıkarımının yapılmasına neden olur. Avrupa Birliği; sınır içinde, sınırında veya yakın çevresinde meydana gelen olaylardan sorumluydu.

Mart 2004'teki ayaklanmalar, Kosova'daki durumun istikrarsızlığını ortaya çıkararak daha yaygın etnik kan dökülmesi olasılığını artırdı. Mart 2004 ayaklanmaları olmasaydı, nihai statüye ilişkin ciddi tartışmalar mümkün olmazdı. Marti Ahtisaari, Ekim 2005'te Birleşmiş Milletler Kosova'nın Gelecekteki Statüsü Süreci için Özel Elçisi seçildi. Ahtisaari, uluslararası toplum tarafından denetlenen egemenliği önerdi ancak müzakereler başarısız oldu ve 2007'nin sonlarında Ahtisaari görüşmeleri sona erdi.

17 Şubat 2008'de Kosova, ABD'nin desteğiyle Sırbistan'dan tek taraflı bağımsızlığını ilan etti ve bu da BMGK 1244 ve uluslararası hukuk uyarınca bağımsızlık ilanının yasallığı konusundaki tartışmaların önünü açtı. Kosova'nın bağımsızlığı yalnızca Ahtisaari planında belirtilen ilkelere uygun olarak uygulanacaktı. Kosova davasına ilişkin tavsiye kararının Birleşmiş Milletler Genel Kurulu aracılığıyla Uluslararası Adalet Divanı (UAD) tarafından değerlendirilmesine karar verildi. Mahkeme, uluslararası hukukun bağımsızlık ilanlarına engel olmadığına karar verdi.

Öte yandan, Barack Obama'nın Kosova'ya yönelik politikası; Bush yönetiminin diplomasiye dayalı politikasının devamı olarak görülmüş, ABD gündeminde ikincil bir önceliğe sahipti ve AB'nin daha fazla sorumluluk alması gerektiğine dayanıyordu.

ABD'nin G.W. Bush yönetimi, Bulgaristan ve Romanya'nın NATO ve Avrupa Birliği'ne katılımı nedeniyle bölgede Rusya için yeni savunma stratejileri oluşturdu. Amaç, Rusya'nın Karadeniz'deki çevikliğini kısıtlamaktı. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Karadeniz çevresindeki enerji dağıtım ve güvenlik endişelerinde aktif rol almak istediği de açıktır.

Obama yönetimi altında Balkanlar'da diyalog ve diplomasi ön plana çıktı. Bu bağlamda, Obama döneminin Balkan siyaseti, Clinton döneminin siyasetini yansıtmaktadır. Bölge dinamiklerinde bazı farklılıklar olsa da metodolojilerdeki benzerlikler dikkat çekmektedir. Clinton yönetimi sırasında Rusya'nın bölgedeki etkisi azaldı, ancak Obama yönetimi döneminde arttı. Obama yönetimi altında Balkanlar'da Rusya ile rekabet siyasi partiler aracılığıyla daha işlevsel hale geldi.

Obama yönetimi döneminde, Sırbistan'ın bölgesel barış için çok önemli bir ülke olduğu görüşü popülerlik kazandı. Obama yönetimi altında Başkan Yardımcısı Joe Biden'in Bosna-Hersek, Sırbistan ve Kosova'ya yaptığı seyahatler bu amaca hizmet etti. Avrupa Birliği ve Rusya'nın aksine bu misyonların temel amacı, ABD'nin Balkanlar'da istikrar peşinde olduğunu vurgulamaktı. 1990'larda Rusya, Balkanlar'da kaybettiği saygınlığı yeniden kazanmak için siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik cephelerde çaba sarf etti. Obama yönetimi sürecinde Putin'in Avrasyacı saldırıları yoğunlaştı,

ancak NATO'nun genişleme stratejisi ve "Füze Savunma Kalkanı" projesi dikkatleri onlardan uzaklaştırdı.

Öte yandan bu tezde tartışılan diğer konu ise Trump ve Biden'ın dış politika gündemidir. Donald Trump'ın "Önce Amerika!" ve Joe Biden'ın "Amerika geri döndü!" açıklamaları detaylı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. Biden'ın; Batı Balkanlar politikasından, özellikle Kosova'dan beklentisi incelenmelidir. Bu bölüm, iki yönetimin Kosova'ya yönelik yaklaşımlarında temel bir değişiklik veya küçük bir farklılık olup olmadığına odaklanmaktadır. Bu bölümde ayrıca Trump yönetimi tarafından Washington DC'de Kosova ile Sırbistan arasında imzalanan ve Trump yönetimi tarafından içine İbrahim Antlaşmasının yerleştirildiği Ekonomik Normalleşme Anlaşması incelenmekte ve Biden yönetiminde bu konuda bir değişiklik olup olmadığına işaret edilmektedir.

Başkan Trump ve Biden'ın 2017 ile 2022 yılları arasında Kosova'ya özel bir vurgu yaparak Batı Balkanlara yönelik dış politikalarını incelemektedir. Trump yönetiminin görev süresi boyunca, başkanın daha tek taraflı ve izolasyonist bir duruşa dönüldüğünü belirtti. "Önce Amerika!" ideolojisini benimsediğinin altını çizmektedir. Sırbistan ve Kosova'nın Ekonomik Normalleşme Anlaşması'nı (ENA) imzalamasında ısrar etmek, onun "Önce Amerika!" anlayışını destekler görünüyordu. Ancak bu, iç siyasi arenada bir zafer elde etmek için son bir çabaydı. Ancak anlaşmayı, Sırbistan'ın İsrail'deki büyükelçiliğinin 1 Temmuz 2021'e kadar Tel Aviv'den Kudüs'e taşınmasına ve Kosova ile İsrail arasında diplomatik ilişkilerin kurulmasına karar verilen İbrahim Antlaşması'nın bir parçası olarak kullanıyordu. Bu kararların her ikisi de İbrahim Antlaşmaları ile bağlantılı olarak alındı.

Öte yandan Kosova ve Batı Balkanlar'ın yeni seçilen Biden politikasının bölgeye yönelik devrim niteliğinde olacağına dair umutları, bunun böyle olmayacağını gösterilmesiyle birlikte suya düştü. Çünkü Biden ve Trump yönetimlerinin Batı Balkanlar'a yönelik politikaları arasında hatırı sayılır derecede benzerlik vardı. Biden'ın yorumsuzluğu bile Ekonomik Normalleşme Anlaşması'na olumlu bir destek işaretliydi.

Trump yönetiminin Kosova'ya yönelik dış politikasının, ABD'nin genel dış politikasını en iyi şekilde gösterildiği düşünülür. Ancak öyle görülmemelidir. Sırbistan ve Kosova'yı ekonomik normalleşme antlaşmasını imzalamaya zorlamak, Kosova'nın ABD gündemindeki asıl konumuna işaret ediyordu. Savaşta olmamasına rağmen, barış anlaşmasını imzalamanın tek gerekçesi İbrahim Antlaşmalarıdır. Bu politika, ABD için zamanı geldiğinde kendi çıkarları uğruna Kosova kartını oynamak için mükemmel bir örnek teşkil eder.

Batı Balkanlar'ın merceğinden bakıldığında, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri hala bölgenin meselelerini önemli ölçüde etkileyen en önde gelen dış güçlerden biridir. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Kosova'da özel bir konuma sahiptir ve gerektiğinde her zaman destek ve yardıma hazırdır. Örneğin Kosova, ABD'ye göç durumları değerlendirilirken ABD liderliğindeki uluslararası güçlere katılan Afganları ABD'nin 1999 NATO müdahalesinin ardından inşa ettiği Camp Bondsteel Amerikan askeri üssüne yerleştirmeyi kabul etti. ABD Başkan Yardımcısı Kamala Harris, ABD'nin yakın işbirliği, istekliliği ve nezaketi nedeniyle Kosova'ya minnettar olduğunu kaydetti. Harris ayrıca, ABD'nin hükümetin hukukun üstünlüğünü artırma çabalarına verdiği desteği ve ABD'nin Avrupa Birliği liderliğindeki Kosova-Sırbistan diyalog sürecindeki başarı beklentilerini de vurguladı. Pek çok kişi Donald Trump'ın dış politikasının aksine ABD'nin Biden dış politikası doğrultusunda "devrimci bir dönüşüm" bekliyordu. Pek çok kişinin, Trump'ın bölgeye yönelik yaklaşımını Sırbistan gibi bazı oyunculara karşı fazla hoşgörülü olmakla, AB ile koordinasyonsuz olmakla, demokrasi ve insan hakları gibi konulara yetersiz odaklanmakla eleştirdiği gerçeğini göz önünde bulundurur.

Joe Biden'ın 1979'da Yugoslavya'ya yaptığı ilk seyahate kadar uzanan Balkanlar'ın işlerine karışması ve 1990'larda Sırp politikasına yönelik sert eleştirileri, Trump'ın Sırbistan'a yaklaşımının bazılarının pek de hoşuna gitmeyeceğine inanmamıza neden olabilir. Yumuşak buldukları aktörler, Biden'ın liderliğinde önemli bir dönüşüm geçireceklerdi. Ancak bu böyle değildi.

Joseph Biden yönetiminin Batı Balkanlar politikası ile önceki Cumhuriyetçi Parti hükümetlerinin politikaları arasında yüksek derecede devamlılık ve tutarlılık vardır.

Her şeyden önce ekonomik entegrasyona önem vererek Kosova Sorununa ve Belgrad ile Priştine arasındaki diyaloga daha az tek taraflı bir yaklaşım benimsemek; demokrasileri ne kadar iyi ya da kötü işlerse işlesin, tüm Batı Balkan liderleriyle pragmatik işbirliğine girmek örnek gösterilebilir. NATO'nun daha da genişlemesini desteklemek ve Rusya ile Çin'in artan gücüne karşı çıkmak da dahil olmak üzere tüm bunlar, iki yönetim arasındaki devamlılığın önemli bileşenleridir. Öte yandan ABD'deki yeni hükümetin Washington Anlaşmasına herhangi bir atıfta bulunmamış olması, Başkan Joe Biden'ın Kosova ile Sırbistan arasında 4 Eylül'de verilen sözleri tutup tutmayacağı konusunda soru işaretleri yarattı. Bazıları için bu bir tesadüf değildi, yeni yönetimin anlaşmadan ne kadar uzak olduğunu gösteriyor. Çünkü sadece belirli yönlerin ilerletilebileceğini iddia ediyorlar.

ABD, genel olarak Balkan devletlerinin Batı yanlısı duruşuna büyük önem vermektedir. Sırbistan'a karşı Kosova ihtilafı sırasında Miloseviç görevdeyken ABD, bölgedeki Rusya Federasyonu ve sınırlı ölçüde Çin tarafından desteklenen herhangi bir siyasi sisteme düşmanlık sergiledi. 1999'da Sırbistan'ın bombalanması, Rusya ve Çin'e güçlü bir mesaj iletildiği için küresel bir düzenin inşasında kritik bir olaydı.

Mevcut hükümet ile ondan önce gelen hükümet arasında birkaç kritik ayrım var ve bunların en dikkat çekenleri: Batı Balkanlar'da Avrupa Birliği entegrasyonuna daha açık destek; Bosna-Hersek'e yönelik daha aktif bir yaklaşım; ve demokrasi, insan hakları ve hukukun üstünlüğüne ek bir vurgudur. Bununla birlikte, bu tutarsızlıklar, daha önce tartışılan politika sürekliliğinin temel bileşenleri ile karşılaştırıldığında daha az önemli görünmektedir. Çoğunlukla retoriğe odaklanırlar.

Son olarak, bu tez G. H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, G. W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump ve Joe Biden yönetimlerinin politikalarını karşılaştırarak ABD'nin Kosova Sorununa yönelik dış politikasını irdelemektedir. Her yönetimin dış politikasının sürekliliğinin veya değişiminin olup olmadığı ortaya konmaktadır. Görüldüğü gibi, ABD yönetimlerinin diğer çeşitli endişeleri, onları Balkanlardaki isteksiz dış aktörler haline getirdi. Tez, bu yönetimlerin Kosova Sorununa yönelik politikalarında değişiklikten çok süreklilik olduğunu, ancak her bir dönemde bazı değişikliklerin fark edildiğini iddia ediyor. Asıl farklılık, Clinton yönetiminin diğer yönetimlerle kıyasla

Kosova'ya daha çok adanmış olan politikalarıdır. Kosova Sorunu, ABD yönetimleri için uzun süredir jeostratejik bir mesele olmuştur. Bu tez, Kosova'nın mevcut gelişimsel zayıflığının ve Kosova Cumhuriyeti'nin uluslararası ilişkileriyle ilgili sorunlarının, ABD'nin Kosova'nın bağımlılığını yeniden üretmesine destek olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu durum ise Kosova Sorununda ABD'nin gösterdiği duruş ile 1999'dan beri sürmektedir. ABD'nin Kosova'nın mümkün olan her durumda kendisine bağımlı olmasından faydalanmaya devam edeceği kuvvetle muhtemel gözükmektedir.

Bu tez, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin hem ulusal çıkarları ve güvenlik ikilemi hem de nihai hedefi olan hegemonyasını elde etmek ve sürdürmek olduğunu dikkate alırken realist bakış açısından yararlanır. Bu bakış, ABD'nin Kosova'da askeri üsler kurma isteğiyle açıklanabilir. ABD'yi harekete geçiren bir diğer unsur, Avrupa'nın içinde yer alan bölgeler üzerinde etkisini gösterme arzusudur. Ve nihayetinde amacı, gerektiğinde askeri üssünü Rusya ve Çin'e karşı saldırgan bir varlık olarak kullanmaktır. ABD'nin Kosova politikasına damgasını vuran özellik Kosova'nın ABD'ye bağımlılığının yeniden üretilmesidir. Bu ilişki döngüsü bütün dönemlerde devamlılık sunmaktadır.

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