

Kosovo in the framework of international agreements 1991-1995

PhD (C.) Lulzim Nika
University of Pristina

Assoc. Prof. Bujar Dugolli
University of Pristina

Abstract

The disintegration of Yugoslavia started in 1991. It was completed in 1999 and it was one of the most serious developments of international diplomacy. At the beginning, the International diplomacy failed to show sufficient interest in dealing seriously with the Kosovo problem. The Hague-, London-, Geneva-, Dayton Conferences empowered the Serbian nationalist feeling for the creation of Big Serbia, while not choosing ways for its realization. International diplomacy proved not to act decisively in the former Yugoslavia for peacefully solving the process, while the violence was taking lives of hundreds of innocent civilians. History teaches us that the solution of the Kosovo issue came as a result of the determination of Western diplomacy to use military force of NATO with the aim of persuading the government of Yugoslavia to accept an agreement for Kosovo.

Keywords: Kosovo, London, Dayton, Diplomacy, Albanians.

Introduction

International conferences on the crisis in Yugoslavia started by mid-1991 and continued one after another trying for a peaceful solution to its crisis. At the same time in the fighting battles the most severe crimes and massacres in Europe occurred since World War II, which were conducted by the Serb-Yugoslav military and police. The Hague Conference on Yugoslavia in 1991 sealed the separation of Yugoslavia, while Kosovo was not treated as a constitutive part of Yugoslav state, the unilateral abrogation of its status made on 23rd of March 1989 by the Serbian Assembly was known. Rugova (the President of Kosovo) was officially invited to participate in the Hague Peace Conference on Yugoslavia. This is the first contact of the Albanian representatives of Kosovo in this conference. In an interview he gave in front of reporters he said: *"We are invited to conduct a meeting with two vice presidents of the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia. This is more a meeting where we will look in what type of reports to step in the Hague Conference afterwards. We will require that our Constitutional Commission and the Commission for Human Rights to be present with direct participation"*. Kosovo Albanian representatives in this conference had as a purpose to present their view, that they are not a minority according to ethnic reality in Yugoslavia, because they were the third population of the Yugoslav federation¹. From this conference came out also the Badinter Committee, that did not count Kosovo

¹ Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, Fund, Kosovo 1991 Dossier, no. 1590, B VII – 2 –Dossier Title-for Germany's position on Kosovo, Tirana, 1991.

neither as a geographical term let alone as one of the eight subjects that constituted the Yugoslav Federation (Malnar, 2013). The Badinter Committee gave priority to territorial approach before ethnical approach; the right of self-determination was recognized only to republics but not to regions such as Kosovo (Tahiri, 2001). On the contrary, state subjectivity was recognized to four Yugoslav republics, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.

London Conference that continued its work in Geneva (1992-1995) examined Albanians just as much as it was needed for source information (Phillip, Auerswald, 2000). Five Albanian delegations (delegation from Albania, as a neighboring country of Yugoslavia, the Kosovo delegation, the delegation from Presevo Valley, delegation of Albanians from Montenegro and delegation from Albanians from Macedonia took part in this conference.² The decision that was taken on Kosovo for the formation of a special group was within the protection and respect of the human rights and freedoms. In this conference, but also in that of Geneva, the concept of handling the Kosovo issue was wrong. At this time some senators and congressmen had written a letter to the President Bush about the necessity of opening the Kosovo issue in the London Conference on Yugoslavia. In his original letter to President Bush the congressman William H. Zeff, JR, stated that "the serious situation where according to the experts is envisaged the war between Serbs and Albanians and among other things also is required the involvement of the Albanian leader of Kosovo Ibrahim Rugova in the London Conference and possibly be invited in a meeting at the White House to be informed about the situation in Kosovo".³ In the official response for the concern of the congressman Zeff, the White House responds emphasizing that "London Conference is organized to demonstrate to all actors included in the Yugoslav conflict our and our partner's commitment, that we will not allow escalation of violence in Kosovo".⁴ But at the same time, respectively on 20th of August 1992, the so-called President of the Committee for Kosovo and Metohija in the Serbian Parliament Momcillo Trajkovic had rejected the possibility of participation of Albanians from Kosovo in a meeting with the advisor of the Embassy of USA in Belgrade James Swigert, stating that "*the participation of Albanians in the international conference on Yugoslavia in London would be a precedent that would encourage separatist forces and would lead toward a conflict*". He added that "*the proposal to give Kosovo and Metohija a special status is a typical example of interference in the internal affairs of another state and the first stage towards the separation of Kosovo and Metohija*", and he stressed that the essence of all problems in Kosovo was that the Albanian side insisted on the creation of another Albanian state in the Balkans.⁵ Ibrahim Rugova had received a letter from the organizers of the conference, where among others stated: "If you plan to come to London at the time of the Conference (26-28th of August), then I am

² Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, Kosovo Fund in 1991, Dossier no.1609, B. V11/2.

³ George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Record ID – 9204556 Keywords, Yugoslavia Albania, Subject Reply to rep Zeff Situation in Kosovo, William H. Zeff, JR 1st District, New Hampshire (1992).

⁴ Memo for Arnold Kanter – state, Paul Wolfowitz – OSD, Barry McCaffery – JCS, on Presidential Messages on Kosovo, November 18 1992, National Security Council, Washington DC 20506.

⁵ Memo on Serb official opposes Kosovo participation in London talks, 20 August 1992- Bush Presidential Library.

happy to inform you that it will be possible for you and your delegation to have access to the conference center, since it will not be possible to allow your delegation access to the meeting room. Organizers will provide earphones which will broadcast directly the official development of the conference".⁶ The decisions of the London Conference did not bring any progress towards dialogue in the area of Yugoslavia, in Kosovo the situation only went towards deterioration and increasing brutality of the Serbian authority.⁷ This is demonstrated by reports of international organizations and the press of that time describing a serious condition of discrimination against the Albanian population in Kosovo.

"Albanians received with bitter disappointment the role assigned to them in London."⁸ In December 1992, in a "Christmas warn, President Bush informed Milosevic that the Serbian aggression in Kosovo will lead to a unilateral military response of United States". This administration warning was repeated by President Clinton on several occasions during 1998.⁹

Kosovo participated in the conference with what became known as "echo-chamber", but without any substantial commitment to its cause. This was intended to later be transferred as minority problem in the Geneva Conference. This ignorance was felt even more in the Dayton Peace Conference in 1995. Not reviewing the Albanian issue even in this conference was a disregard, but also a depreciation of the Albanian factor in the Balkans, despite the fact that Kosovo was declared in favor of maintaining the territorial integrity of neighboring countries by giving up territorial claims such as in relation to Macedonia as well as excluding the pan Albanian agenda and by seeking independence rather than unification with Albania.¹⁰

Milosevic was allowed to sign the Dayton Agreement on behalf of Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina setting out personally its further fate in that conference. Meanwhile, he threatened with not participating in the Dayton Peace Conference if there would be talked about Kosovo as well.¹¹

On the other hand, Milosevic on behalf of the curtailed Yugoslavia in Dayton enunciated the expansion of Serbia, an idea since the "Black Hand" movement or "Union of Death", established in 1882 by the Serbian kingdom to create the Great Serbia which sought access to the Adriatic Sea. Milosevic filed the request that the territories inhabited mainly by Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina be reunited. Serbia claimed that any Serb population should have the right of disuniting from the entities newly independent, an argument which was rejected by the Badinter Committee which was established to advise International Conference on Yugoslavia

⁶ MarcWeller, *Contested Citizenship, "Koha"*, Prishtinë 2009, p.103.

⁷ Jane Holl Files – Electronic Files Electronic Messages – Kosovo [1] [0A/ID CFO1566] Kosovo[2][0A/ID CFO1566] Kosovo [3] [0A/ID CFO1566] Kosovo [4] [0A /ID CFO1566] Electronic Messages - Kosovo [0A/ ID CF 01746] London Conference [1], [2], [3]. Jane Holl Files –Subject Files Balkans [0A/ ID CFO1747].

⁸ Wolfgang Petritsch, Robert Pihler, *The long road to war*, works cited, p. 78

⁹ National Security Council Washington DC, November 18, 1992,Memorandum for Arnold Kanter – state, Paul Wolfowitz – OSD, Barry McCaffery – JCS,From, David C. GompertSubject, Presidential Messages on Kosovo

¹⁰MarcWeller, *ContestedCitizenship, "Koha"*, Pristina, 2009, p. 61.

¹¹Christopher R. Hill, *OutpostLife on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*, Simon&Schuster, 122.

for accession issues of citizenship and heritage.¹²

Now Kosovo Albanians were casting eyes around with astonishment and pain while seeing independent states created. Here is where the loss of patience began, as it was obvious the denial of the rights of Albanians writes Albright (2003) in her book.

This was trauma for Albanians since it was confirmed that Rugova's policy for passive resistance had failed. And not only that but also his ideas that they would be "rewarded" by western countries for "their good behavior" was totally wrong (Judah, 2002).

The conclusion of the Dayton Agreement without mentioning Kosovo testified openly the failure of passive resistance. Instead of rewarding Rugova's responsible action policy, Kosovo was completely ignored. Thus in 1996 in the question made to Rudolf Perina, the chief of diplomatic mission of the USA in Belgrade and participant at the Conference of Dayton, that why Kosovo was not invited to the conference he answered: "In Dayton were invited those who have fought". With this it became more than clear that international diplomacy intervenes only in those cases when the conflict escalates.

It was not a real, expected and fair development that the Dayton Agreement did not include Kosovo. A Serbian minority of Kosovo cannot rule 90% of Albanians there (Milo, 2009). Exclusion of Kosovo from Dayton Agreement only opened the way for the next war, will say Joschka Fischer in his book (Fischer, 2008). Whereas Wolfgang Petritsch in his book deems that estimations of international community in Dayton for not including Kosovo in this conference were fatal and endanger the fragile balance of powers.

Not including Kosovo in diplomatic solutions to the negotiating table in international conferences was a model and wrong alternative of Euro-Western diplomacy. The more time passed the more the Serbian regime developed apartheid policy in Kosovo; moreover, the solution of the Kosovo issue through war was becoming an inevitable reality for the people of Kosovo. Meanwhile, the Serbian regime was gaining courage and strengthening with the silence, opportunism and indifference of Euro-Western diplomacy.

Conclusions

The separation of Yugoslavia was the most dramatic event in Europe after the Second World War with which European and international diplomacy was faced. As a result of Serbian nationalism and Serbian claims for the centralization of the Yugoslav Federation bloody wars in Yugoslavia were caused. At the same time Slovenia and Croatia were seeking full independence from the Yugoslav Federation. These two different concepts between the Serbs for a centralized Federation and Croats and Slovenes for independence became the cause of the separation of Yugoslavia, which was followed with the bloodiest wars Europe knew since World War II. In all international conferences which were held in Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995, for Kosovo, no right decisions were taken to solve the problems peacefully. Arrangements between the people of the Yugoslav Federation succeeded only when diplomatic

¹² Marc Weller, Shtetësia e Kontestuar, "Koha", Pristina, 2009, p. 58.

intervention was combined with the use of military forces as in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo.

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