

Keep an eye on that ‘damned silly thing’ in Kosovo

UN and NATO in defiance of International Law

By [James Bissett](#)

Global Research, October 31, 2006

Globe and Mail 31 October 2006

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [United Nations](#)

In-depth Report: [THE BALKANS](#)

Serbian voters have approved a new constitution that, among other things, reaffirms sovereignty over Kosovo which, since the bombing of Serbia in 1999, has been administrated by the United Nations with the help of NATO troops. The weekend referendum result will further complicate efforts of Western policy-makers to grant independence to Kosovo since, to do so without Serbia's consent, would violate the U N Charter on territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. Nevertheless, there have been indications that the UN special envoy, Martri Ahtisaari, will soon recommend that Kosovo be separated from Serbia and become an independent country.

This would be a mistake.

For the past seven years Kosovo has become one of the most dangerous places on Earth. It is the center of heroin, weapons and human trafficking into Western Europe. Murder and abduction of non-Albanians are a daily occurrence. Civil society is non-existent and living standards are equivalent to those of Haiti. There is evidence that Islamic extremists with Al Qaeda connections are a growing presence. In short, Kosovo has all the characteristics of a failed state.

Under the watchful eyes of the UN and NATO, more than 200,000 Serbs, Jews, Romans and other non-Albanians have been expelled from Kosovo. Those who remain are in constant danger. And some of those encouraged by the UN to return have been murdered. The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Agim Ceku, a former leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, has been accused of war crimes by the Serbs. He is the man who led Croatian forces in 1993 that overran Serbian villages protected by Canadian peacekeepers. When his fighters were driven out, the Canadians found all of the civilians and animals in the villages had been slaughtered.

One of the crimes committed by the Albanian majority in Kosovo has been the razing of over 150 Christian churches and monasteries. Many of these churches dated back to the 13th and 14th centuries. Their destruction has been a deliberate effort to remove all semblance of Christian heritage in Kosovo. Shamefully, there has been no international outrage, no serious attempt to apprehend the perpetrators and no expression of alarm or protest on the part of Christian churches in the West.

The U N resolution that ended the bombing campaign against Serbia guaranteed that Kosovo would have a functioning civil society, democratic institutions, security for all citizens and respect for the rule of law. It called for the disarming of the Kosovo Liberation Army and other armed groups. It provided for the return to Kosovo of limited numbers of

Serbian security forces to guard the Christian Holy places. And it reasserted Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo.

Sadly, it seems the UN and NATO had no intention of honouring these commitments. These are hard facts and they stand as a testimony of failure. The performance of these two international institutions has been marked by duplicity, double standards and cowardice.

Independence for Kosovo would establish a dangerous precedent. President Vladimir Putin of Russia has already warned that a decision to grant Kosovo independence could be applicable to post-soviet territory. He has particular interest in regions of the former Soviet Union that have aspirations for independence. The most volatile ones are the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; these two regions broke away from Georgia in 1992 and want independent status. Recognition of Kosovo independence would give them their precedent. And could result in bloodshed with serious implications for world security.

Bismarck, once said that the Balkans were not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier. Yet, he also predicted that, if there were to be another war in Europe, it would be because of some "damned silly thing" in the Balkans. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, sparking off the First World War, proved him right.

Ominously, there is again a strong possibility that another "damned silly thing" is taking place in the Balkans: the seeming determination of Western policy makers to grant the Serbian province of Kosovo its independence. In foreign policy, as in other human endeavours, you can't get good results if you do dumb things.

James Bissett is former Canadian Ambassador to Yugoslavia

The original source of this article is Globe and Mail
Copyright © [James Bissett](#), Globe and Mail, 2006

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [James Bissett](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca