

# New Balkans Wars Loom on the Horizon

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The contours of the Kosovo separatists' plan to suppress the Serbian resistance in the northern part of the province with the help of the US and the EU are getting increasingly visible. The statements emanating from Pristina and the intensifying international debates over the Kosovo theme do not only show that the Albanian separatists are preparing an attack against their opponents but also give an idea of its potential scenario, the distribution of roles in it, and the extent to which Hashim Thaci and other former leaders of the terrorist Kosovo liberation army are relying on the international support in the process.

The debates at the January 22 open session of the UN Security Council on Kosovo were unprecedentedly heated. It was the first time since the summer of 2007 (when Russia managed to derail the Resolution recognizing the Kosovo independence, proposed by the West on the basis of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's plan) that the parties to the dispute over Kosovo defined their positions with such utmost clarity. There was an impression that the world's major powers were speaking different languages. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the US, and West European countries "urged flexibility" in admitting Kosovo to regional and international mechanisms and forums, whereas Russia and Serbia regarded the approach as an attempt to dilute the role of the UN in the province and to legitimize its independent status. The discussions were centered around Pristina's so-called final solution plan for North Kosovo, which Thaci inadvertently unveiled several days prior to the session. He said the plan was being drafted jointly with the international representatives and was aimed at strengthening what he called Kosovo sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thaci said 2010 would be the year of consolidation for Kosovo. The priorities in the framework of the plan include the elimination of the Serbian self-government established in Kosovska Mitrovica and nearby Serbian communities based on the May, 2008 elections held in accord with the laws of Serbia. Another blow will be dealt to Serbian police forces and custom service, which at the moment are maintaining at least partial control over the traffic across the administrative border between Kosovo and the rest of Serbia.

NATO's KFOR deployed in Kosovo will render military assistance to Albanians. There is information that on the whole the corresponding decision was made during Commander of Joint Force Command Naples, Admiral Mark Fitzgerald's January visit to Kosovo, after which he described the Serbian self-government as... a threat to the security of Kosovo. "All violations of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 pose a threat to security. Since the resolution does not approve of parallel institutions, they are cause for concern", said Fitzgerald.

Pristina's priority is the international support for the operation, which the US and the EU are supposed to ensure. The US will be blocking the attempts by Russia and China to have a

response resolution passed by the UN Security Council. At the same time Brussels will be exerting ever greater pressure on Serbia to make it deny support to the Serbs of Kosovo and seal off the border with the province so as not let Serbian volunteers reach Albania.

Chances are that the operation will be launched already next April after the International Court of Justice issues an indefinite verdict on the Kosovo independence and the establishment of the Mitrovica municipality headed by Albanians and the few Serbs ready to cooperate with them.

Serbia's pro-Western President B. Tadic spoke with great caution of the anti-Serbian plan harbored by Pristina, NATO, and the EU, essentially saying little more than that the "final solution" promised nothing good to the Kosovo population. Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to UN I. Shcherbak was much more outspoken. He said that from Russia's standpoint it is necessary to arrest decisively any attempts to float concepts harmful to Kosovo regardless of their source, as they do not only breach UN Security Council Resolution 1244 but also destabilize the province and provoke tensions.

There is information that the plan was co-authored by EU Special Representative and UN Civil Administration head Pieter Feith. The Administration was established in the spring of 2008, shortly after the declaration of the Kosovo independence and its recognition by the US and major EU countries. The Administration that no UN documents regulate comprises representatives of 14 EU and NATO countries and Switzerland, which are implementing the Ahtisaari plan, a EU brainchild the UN Security Council never approved. It is noteworthy that Kosovo separatist government foreign minister Skender Hyseni who represented Kosovo at the UN Security Council session made no comments concerning the plan for the northern part of Kosovo. Speaking to the media after the session, he claimed without elaborating that the EU mission and the Civic Administration were not promoting any final solutions for North Kosovo.

A survey of recent developments leads to the conclusion that the blueprint for suppressing the Serbian resistance in Kosovo is being drafted at a level much higher than that of the province. Given its basic parameters (a snap offensive supported by the NATO and EU pseudo-peacekeepers with international political backing plus the installation of a puppet administration), the plan for a final solution for North Kosovo is similar to the one Georgian President M. Saakashvili had in mind launching an attack against South Ossetia in August, 2008. Even the stated objectives – the restoration of the constitutional jurisdiction in Saakashvili's wording – is the same in both cases.

Even earlier, in August, 1995, a similar scenario was imposed on the Serbs of Krajina when Croatia sent regular army forces to attack them while the US and the EU backed the operation diplomatically. Actually, at that time the diplomatic support played no practical role as neither Yugoslavia nor the Russian leadership demonstrated any will to help Serbian Krajina in its tragedy. Yugoslavian leader S. Milosevic took more interest in getting rid of his competitors R. Karadzic and R. Mladic with the hands of the international community, and Moscow paid little if any attention to the whole Balkan theme.

It is hard to predict the outcome of the current developments as the Bosnian front, no less important to Serbs, Russia, and the Orthodoxy, is likely to gain a place on the map of the new Balkan war alongside the Kosovo one. Outgoing Croatian President Stipe Mesic said the Republic's army should launch an offensive against the Bosnian Serb Republic in case it holds a Kosovo-style self-determination referendum.

To be continued

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