

No to Kosovo “Independence”

Canada should not have recognized the independence of Kosovo

By [James Bissett](#)

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Statement to the Montreal Rally against the recognition of Kosovo, March 30, 2008

There are many reasons why Canada should not have recognized the independence of Kosovo and it was a serious mistake to do so.

Of course, it is always difficult for Canada to refuse to follow the foreign policy dictates of its powerful neighbour to the south. As a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], Canada was even in a more difficult decision to refuse recognition but a number of NATO countries have stood by their principles and said, “no” to Kosovo. Canada would have gained self respect and admiration from a large part of the international community if it had refused recognition and not followed the American direction..

There are 192 members of the United Nations and only a handful of Western European states have followed the American lead to recognize Kosovo.. Russia, China, India, Indonesia, most of the countries of Africa, Asia,

South America have refused to do so. It is doubtful if Kosovo will ever gain admittance to the United Nations and even should that happen it will be a failed state.

Kosovo is the creature of the United States. The Americans instigated the armed rebellion against the Serbs in 1998 by training, equipping and arming the terrorist organization, the Kosovo Liberation Army [KLA]. Later they fabricated the stories of genocide and ethnic cleansing by the Serbian security forces that was used as the excuse to bomb Serbia for 78 days and nights—using cluster bombs and weapons containing depleted uranium.. We now know by UN figures that the total death toll in Kosovo during the two years of fighting before the bombing is estimated to be about 4000 killed -counting both Albanians and Serbs. So far, only 2000 bodies have been discovered there.

We also know that while there were several thousand Albanians displaced within Kosovo by the fighting -the so called ethnic cleansing of the Albanians occurred AFTER the NATO bombing...not before. So much for President Clinton’s claim that genocide was taking place in Kosovo.

The NATO bombing of Serbia was brought to an end when Serbia accepted the terms of UN Resolution 1244. This Resolution called for the disarming of the KLA, the return of all refugees, the establishment of a democratic and multi ethnic Kosovo and most importantly it reaffirmed Serbia’s sovereignty over Kosovo. During almost ten years of NATO/UN occupation none of the provisions of Resolution 1244 have been carried out. In fact almost

all of the non-Albanians have been expelled from Kosovo, 150 Christian churches and monasteries have been burned and crime, corruption and violence is endemic in the territory. All of this at a time when there have been up to 40,000 US and NATO troops there to maintain order and implement UN Resolution 1244. This is a shameful record of duplicity, double standards and cowardice on the part of the US led NATO forces.

However, the primary reason Kosovo should not have been recognized by Canada is that by doing so we have abandoned the central pillar that has governed Canadian foreign policy since the end of the Second World War — respect and adherence to the United Nations Charter and its principles. The UN Charter includes territorial integrity as one of its cardinal principles prohibiting the threat or use of force in the resolution of international disputes and it is one of the paramount elements in the Charter relating to the concept of sovereign equality. The Helsinki Final Accords of 1975 reinforced this principle by including a section on the inviolability of borders.

These are fundamental principles. They were designed as a guarantee that all nations small as well as large need not fear aggression by a more powerful state. They are meant to have universal application and cannot be set aside because of special circumstances or when they prove to be an obstacle to the policy aims of powerful nations. Their message is simple and clear—borders cannot be changed without the consent of the affected state.

Canada did not follow the USA's invasion of Iraq because it was done without the authority of the United Nations. This was the correct decision but in recognizing the independence of Kosovo we have turned our back on international law and have acted in violation of the United Nations Charter. This is the second time Canada has done so. We set the precedent when we joined the USA in bombing Serbia in 1999 without UN approval. In foreign policy as in other issues of public policy there are times when principles must be honoured otherwise we risk sliding back to the days when force was the only means of resolving disputes. In an age of nuclear proliferation this is the road to disaster.

James Bissett March 29 2008

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