

## 5. The Disintegration Process in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

### I Introduction

The disintegration process in the FRY is a continuing process since Kosovo Albanians have started to fight for independence. It is difficult to set a starting point because the origins of the ethnic rivalry and demands for independence are a continuous issue. The FRY was established on 27. April 1992 and on its birthday the disintegration process had already started. It started in Kosovo and later spread to Montenegro. The main reason was *Milošević* nationalistic, unitaristic and aggressive, non-democratic policy toward Kosovo Albanians. The main occasion was the abolition of the autonomous status of Kosovo in 1989 even before the FRY had been established.

### II Kosovo

Kosovo became a Serbian colony where ethnic Albanians who represent 90 percent of the Kosovo population were ruled by Serbs. Albanians created parallel state institutions and tried to establish local authorities on a short term and a sovereign national state on a long-term. Their peaceful resistance and political fight for their rights and independence under the leadership of *Ibrahim Rugova* caused only more Serbian repression. Such violent political and security environment stimulated the appearance of KLA in 1998 and change in Kosovo Albanians policy - from political fight to armed confrontation with Serbian police and military forces. Serbian response can be described more like ethnic cleansing supported by military and police forces than an adequate response to KLA activities.

The situation in Kosovo and in the FRY as a whole suggests that the disintegration process will continue. It is just a question how, when and to which extent the process will continue and what implications it will have on the security and stability of the Southeast European region.

### III Montenegro

The situation in Montenegro is very much different from the situation in Kosovo. Montenegrins don't have ethnic or territorial disputes with Serbs but rather political and economic ones. The new Montenegro government under the leadership of Mr. Milo Đukanović and the Montenegrin people are feeling trapped in *Milošević's* unitaristic policy in which they can not see any future for the prosperity of the nation. So the reasons for planning independence are different from those of Kosovo Albanians. These facts can fill US U with optimism that the separation of Montenegro from the FRY can still be stopped and the disintegration process limited on Kosovo. The preconditions for such limited disintegration process are democratic changes in Serbia and the removal of *Milošević* regime. These changes could shape a political atmosphere of dialogue between Serbia and Montenegro to create federation or confederation of two sovereign nations on a completely new democratic basis.

## IV Rambouillet and Dayton

However, the past conflict and the political situation in Kosovo give us no reason for optimism. All political parties in the Kosovo are in favour of an independent Kosovo and the majority of the population supports them. The political leaders don't have any space for political manoeuvring. The return of Serbian police and military forces even just for guarding the borders (according to Chapter 2, Article VI of the so-called *Rambouillet Accords* dating from February 23, 1999) seems to be impossible. It would lead to new conflicts between Serbs and Albanians. Serbian presence in the region would cause a new crisis in Kosovo and a destabilisation of the region. The fact is that Serbs and Kosovo Albanians couldn't reach an agreement of how to live together in a common state for a century. It is most likely that they will not be able to reach an agreement in the future, especially after the last war. Because all these facts we can assess that Kosovo as an integral part of the FRY is more a wish of the international community and Serbian obsession than reality. It is also impossible to make any serious comparison to the situation in BiH. Moreover, the solutions (the *Dayton Peace Accords*) used in BiH can not be used for Kosovo. The *Rambouillet Accords* which were based on the constitutional rights of Kosovo (autonomy) referring to the 1974 constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is out of date and is not a proper solution of a future status of Kosovo. Kosovo as an autonomous republic in the FRY would be a republic just on paper, which will function as an independent state. Such a situation would make Kosovo a time bomb triggering a new crisis in the region. I am convinced that these accords would no longer be acceptable for Kosovo Albanians. They are simply not enough. They do not give enough guarantees for a certain secession in the future.

In the end the international community will have to face this fact and the new reality even if it may have some negative impacts on the region and will change the geopolitical map of Southeast Europe. The most important task of the international community is to give assistance to both sides to reach some kind of solution for peaceful disintegration. Such a plan should be a step by step process that will guarantee that nobody is a winner or loser. That means that the Serbian minority will have all rights according to international standards and that the FRY will have free access to their historical important sites. Also a fair agreement regarding natural resources and transportation routes must be achieved. Security guarantees are also very important, not just for Serbia and Kosovo, but for the entire region.

## V Answers

If we take in consideration the prediction that FRY will disintegrate to a certain extent, we must find answers what are the implications of this future reality to the security of the region.

First: There should be no doubt that the Kosovo Albanians will re-establish close ties with neighbouring Albania with very little or even no border control. This could cause a threat of importation of organised crime of all kinds from neighbouring Albania and through Kosovo into western and central European countries. Open borders would also mean a threat of illegal or uncontrolled migration. Such threats would have a negative impact on the fragile democracy in the Kosovo, economic and security situation and could cause major instability in the country.

Second: Such a situation will have possible negative impacts on neighbouring Macedonia. It is a question how the Albanian minority in Macedonia will react. It is well known that the Macedonian Albanians also cherish a hope to integrate parts of territories where they are the majority with territories where other Albanians are living today. The least possible demands will be close ties with Kosovo what means loose border control and threat of illegal migrations from Albania and Kosovo. Such migration waves could easily change the demographic

picture in Macedonia and cause further ethnic tensions between Macedonians and the Albanian minority. In such a Situation Macedonia could be easily destabilised and become a new potential security risk for the region. The Kosovo crisis could easily move to Macedonia.

## VI Future Perspectives

The shapers of political long-term solutions of Kosovo Question must take all these negative impacts into consideration. They must find proper solutions to minimise the risks. Long-term solutions are still far in the future.

However, there is no doubt that a further disintegration of the FRY without presence of international peacekeeping forces in Kosovo and without NATO military deterrence against Serbian military forces will lead to the use of force. The consequences would be horrible not just for the people in FRY but for the whole region. The current situation must be used for finding peaceful and democratic solutions for the Kosovo question and for the future stability of the FRY and the whole region. This is the main and the only sense for international military presence in the region and all other humanitarian and other post conflict assistance.

Vladimir ŠAPONJA  
Centre for Strategic Studies, Ljubljana