Nationalism in the Balkans: Greater Albania and the Kosovo Issue

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Abstract: *Greater Albania is once again on the agenda. The latest incidents in Kosovo and the declarations by Albanian and Kosovo leaders seem to have reignited once again the fears that a plan is already underway. According to many the independence of Kosovo is just the first part of a series that sees the political unification of all lands inhabited by Albanians into a single state. Sometimes even irrelevant issues are interpreted as a show of irredentism, an interpretation which often translates into nationalist rhetoric and threats. However many scholars find the issue of Greater Albania not convincing. While it's true that such a desire exists, Albanians know that something of this nature is hard if not impossible to achieve. Others insist that it is nothing else an empty rhetoric used by political elites to maintain their grip on power and improve the leverage in EU membership negotiations. The real issue is not that of grater Albania but the one that deals with the future of Kosovo.*

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the issues of the last decades that have attracted the attention of international scholars is the resurgence of nationalism in the Balkan Peninsula. The post-communist conflicts that engulfed ex-Yugoslavia although caught many by surprise, were in themselves important in shifting international community debate on issues of ethnic nationalism, considered at the time of little importance by post-modernist circles (İnaç and Ünal 2013). It is this ethnic nationalism, a tool frequently employed by leaders of the peninsula to generate political support that is to blame for most of the horrors the Balkans experienced in the beginning of 1990's (Biserko 2012).

The territory where ethnic nationalism manifested itself the most, sometimes in it most brutal form, is none other than Kosovo. Its contested status within Yugoslavia would prove to be the catalyzing force that would soon attract state, regional and international actors. This small country, claimed in its entirety by two different opposing ethnic groups, was not only the starting point of Yugoslavia's disintegration but its unilateral independence is interpreted by many as the opening of the region's Pandora Box (Nazemroaya 2008). Many fear that its independence would set off domino effect of secessionist movements of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, Hungarians in Transylvania and southern Slovakia, Basques and Catalans in Spain etc.

This article tries to shed some more light on the issue of nationalism in the Balkans, which albeit following patterns of Eastern European nationalism has some characteristics of its own too. The paper will also discuss the causes that led to the reemergence of nationalism and the consequences of such polices in the Balkan region. Furthermore the paper will focus on the issue of Kosovo and will try to answer the question of whether there is an "Albanian Question"? If such a question exists, what is it? Is it a question centered on the political unification of all territories inhabited by Albanians in a single state? Or is it just an empty rhetoric used by political elites to maintain their grip on power and improve the leverage in EU membership negotiations? Finally the article will address a number of solutions to the above mentioned problem.

II. NATIONALISM AND THE BALKANS

Nationalism is a term of which definitions' in political and analytical dictionaries continues to be ambiguous and hard to summarize. Perhaps the thing that makes it so difficult to define is the different realties in which it is expressed. On the other hand Josep R. Llobera in his writings *''Recent Theories of Nationalism''* also agrees that, "The word nationalism expresses different realities: a love of country, the assertion of national identity and national dignity, but also the xenophobic obsession to obtain these things through violence and sacrificing other nations. Nationalism builds on ethnocentrism towards the in-group and xenophobia towards the out-group" (Llobera 1999). While this definition seems too offer a simplified version of the real definition, it is important in the fact that it sets the ground for understanding the reasons societies come together or fall apart. Nationalism often considered a product of post-French revolution, made inroads in the Balkans at the beginning of the 19th century (Glenny 2012). The first people to get hold of it were the Greeks, who in 1821, mainly

through European intervention, were able to establish a modern national state. The Greek nationalism principles are in essence not that different from that of other Balkan countries; all of them interested in expanding their territories sometimes at the expense of others by invoking their glorious past as an argument for irredentism (Hatzopoulos 2008). The same arguments were to be applied by Bulgarians, Serbs, Hungarians, Romanians and to some extent Albanians.

The triumph of nationalism is mostly attributed to two different factors (Marinova-Zuber 2007). The first factor asserts that disintegration of the great multinational empires – the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburgs – and the creation of a number of sovereign states, which were often hostile to each other, as the cause of nationalism raise. The second factor can be found on the principle of self-determination introduced by the USA president Woodrow Wilson in the premises of Versailles. Although it served as a main criterion in the new reorganization of Europe it soon became clear that the principle of self-determination was unpractical as it led to the creation of states whose borders did not coincide with the historical frontiers of nationality and language. This especially became apparent in the Balkans, where the new created smaller states were in fact quite multinational. The minorities of the new territorially smaller states were in many cases regarded as treacherous and untrustworthy and were thus oppressed, expelled or killed.

A common characteristic feature can be found on all Balkan states' nationalism in the early days of its introduction in the peninsula. Contrary to German or Italian integrative nationalism (uniting people living under different states or principalities under a single state) Balkan states adopted a separatist nationalism. Dominated for centuries by empires Balkan states craved to establish their nation states along clear-cut ethnic lines. The Balkan wars of 1912-1913 and the WWI would constitute the first but not the last biggest shows of this separatist nationalism; a nationalism that became synonymous with violence, intolerance and inhumanity.

However one of the questions that asked regards the reasons that led to the reemergence of nationalism after WWII, in a region where it was thought it had drained out. Most of the scholars assert that during communist regimes nationalism never disappeared altogether but was only suppressed by ruling elites (Mevious 2009). Although communist elites believed that nationalism would melt away with time as the proletariat would come to dominate the international, regional and state events, their belief soon proved to be wrong as the wars that engulfed the region come to be fought on the name of national pride or national survival. According to Barany collapse of communism in1989 was one of the most important events that gave rise to nationalism although not being the only reason that led to war. He mentions a number of reasons that influenced the reemergence of nationalism. Of these he mentions: a) the diminishing deterrent role of Soviet Union; b) the destabilizing effect of the mass media; c) the adoption of populist approach by politicians; d) the dire economic situation of the transition; e) a shift to extreme right and f) the frustration experienced by older generations (Barany 1994). However other scholars refuse Barany's principles on the basis that ethnic conflicts are the inevitable result of disintegration of any authoritarian rule.

Other scholars have not only tried to identify the reasons but also the consequences of nationalism – the emergence of ethnic conflict. Smith argues that conflicts emerge from proximity, unequal relations and in most cases incompatible and rival myths, legends, symbols and memories that define the culture and tradition of two different groups (Smith 1991). On the other hand Posen maintains that emergence of ethnic conflicts can be explained by focusing on international relations theory. Here security dilemma plays an important role. Posen argues that disintegration of multinational states or empires leaves emerging states in a situation where they have to take security on their hands (Posen 1993). This leaves them with a free hand to direct and undertake actions in order to guarantee their sovereignty or their survival.

The post-war period would challenge the state's ability to absorb and assimilate certain minority groups. While for many Balkan states problems stemmed from irredentist claims by neighbors or hostile with the minorities within their jurisdiction, the real challenge for Yugoslavia became the unification of different ethnically, culturally, linguistically and religiously groups in a single nation. Although Serbia would came to dominate the new state by claiming that it alone had a political elite capable of ruling, a comprehensive government apparatus, an experienced military services and a native dynasty, its domination would not go as smoothly as it was planned (Marinova-Zuber 2007). During its existence its authority would be challenged by groups within, especially and foremost by Croats and Albanians which considered their autonomy threatened by Serbia's domination. Yugoslavia was as 'artificial creation' held together by Tito's brilliant political maneuvers that failed to unite the people into a single political nation. It was this failure that led to the disastrous wars that would engulf Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990's.

III. KOSOVO: BETWEEN SERB AND ALBANIAN

Nationalism in the Balkans is thought to have begun with the Serbian upheaval of 1804. This upheaval would create a chain reaction that would engulf other orthodox millets of an already declining Ottoman Empire. However many others have tried to trace Serbian nationalism to the battle of Kosovo of 1389, even though that battle marked the end of Serbian medieval kingdom. Recent publications even argue that 'Oppressed Serbian people remember Kosovo…as a tragic break in the continuity of national history (Karpat 1997). In reality the Serbian upheaval was no more than a peasant upheaval caused by the Ottoman Empire's breakdown of central authority which allowed the Janissaries to occupy peasant land. The peasants in their fight against the Janissaries were themselves armed by Ottoman Sultan Selim III to fight against Osman Pasvanoglu, the *ayan* of Vidin (Karpat 1997).

It was Karageorgevic who managed to give the peasants revolt a religious and political coloring in 1804. Trained as an officer in the Habsburg Empire and later working as a pig merchant, he managed to create an autonomous Serbia, mainly with the support of the Russian Empire. However Karageorgevic would soon be replaced by Milos Obrenovic. His ability as diplomat managed to earn Serbia more autonomy as well as the right to establish its own church. Outside the influence of the Patriarchate the Serbian church was now able to play the 'national' role under the control of the government (Dobrijevic 2001). According to Gale Stokes, Obrenovic was not a nationalist but rather a man interested in wealth and power (Stokes 1984). Although imitating the sultans in the way he dressed and in manners (creating some sort of harem) he was able to establish some sort of constitutional rule and create an intelligentsia (Karpat 1997).

Unable to immediately implement Ilija Garashanin's expansionist polices towards Banat, Albania and Montenegro, Serbian politicians had to wait for further weakening of the Ottoman Empire. The traumatic events in Egypt and the Crimean war convinced the Serbian policy makers that the Ottoman Empire was too weak and would be unable to defend itself in *Rumelia*. Among other policies such as the creation of a national army and open support for the expansionist plans, the revival of Kosovo myth was seen as a necessity as well as a justification for the war that was to come. However the war of 1876 did not yield the desired outcome as the newly created Serbian army was badly defeated (Vovchenko 2016). Had it not been for the Russian intervention Serbia would not only have seen its dream of expansion turn into a nightmare but lose what little sovereignty it had managed to secure as well.

The Congress of Berlin of 1878 not only confirmed the Serbian independence but it also rewarded the new state with territory around Nis, partially fulfilling the Serbian imperialist appetite. This did not stop the new state from continuing to lay claim to any land ruled at any point in time by obscure Slavic rulers. The nationalist rhetoric became harder and strident and the greatness of medieval Serbia was to be discussed at the nationalist circles operating all around territories inhabited by Serbs. The fact that at various times through history these lands had been ruled by other people, such as the Magyars, Ottomans, Greeks or Venetians, was completely ignored. The dream of 'Greater Serbia' started to take form immediately after the Balkan wars where it managed to enlarge its territories at the expense of Bulgaria and Albania even though the Serbian population in these areas was significantly small in number compared to that of other ethnic groups (Karpat 1997). The Serbian nationalism would reach its zenith after WWI when Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia were incorporated in the newly created Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The new state was since its inception a battleground for domination between the Croats and the Serbs. The husband-like attitude of the Serbs towards the state was detested by the Croats who considered themselves more civilized than their counterparts. The spat between Serbians and Croats would take a dramatic turn with the start of WWII. Relying on movements, such as Ustasha and Chetniks, both preoccupied with creating ethnically and religiously ethnic states would soon prove catastrophic as both of them turned to genocide to advance their agendas.

While the Serbian state was preoccupied with its dream of domination, Albania was facing challenges of another nature. Albanians had been under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for more than five centuries and their conversion to Islam had helped them to better integrate within the empire. Its people fought in the Sultans' armies or worked in their administration as bureaucrats, clerks and sometimes even in such prestigious posts as those of *sadrazam* or *vezir*. The relation between Albanians and the Ottoman State was such that Albanians saw every threat against the Empire as a direct threat to them and would not accept any authority beside that of the Sultan. On the other hand the Empire considered Albanians as loyal people, allowing them to carry arms and administer themselves almost autonomously. Sultan Abdulhamit II is thought to have declared that 'my empire rests on the Arabs and Albanians' and even employed Albanians as part of his personal guard (Mansel 1995).

The events of 1878 were to mark the first crack between the Sublime Porte and the Albanians. The Treaty of Saint Stefano's and the Congress of Berlin a year later had managed to chunk away portions of the Empire's land inhabited by Albanians (Gawrych 2006). These lands were largely given to Serbia and Montenegro. The refusal of the Albanian request for a review of the treaty led them with no other choice but to politically organize themselves in what came to be known as the Prizren League. The league established a united national platform which stated that all territories inhabited by Albanians should be unified into a single autonomous *vilayet* under the Ottoman Empire (Gawrych 2006). The inability of the Sublime Porte to positively respond to

Albanian demands convinced them that they should take matters into their own hands. The League undertook military actions both against Serbian and Ottoman forces, mostly around the *vilayet* of Kosovo, but the internal divisions, the lack of international support and Empire's conciliatory policies diminished the league's role. Although short-lived, the Prizren League had a profound role in the revival of Albanian nationalism.

The Balkan wars of 1912-1913 and the beginning of WWI marked the end of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. The end of the Ottoman Empire was to be the beginning of disintegration of Albanian lands, which would be divided among Balkan states. The Treaty of Versailles did not only recognize Albanian independence but it also institutionalized the division of its territories. It is these decisions that Albanians resent the most and often blame Europe for the problems they inherited.

The post war-period found Albania weak and unable to further any claim on the perceived injustices it had experienced as a result of Great Power decisions. The new Albanian state and later on the Albanian Kingdom had more pressing issues to deal with than to focus on nationalist agendas that the weak state wasn't able to pursue. In order to balance the chauvinist desires of its neighbors, Albania aligned itself with Italy. This alignment would prove economically beneficial for the small Balkan state but would come at a high price – a gradual loss of sovereignty. The sovereignty would come to a complete end in 1939, when Italy invaded Albania. The WWII years would be the last time Albanians would live in a single state as the invading powers unified Albania with Kosovo and some parts of Macedonia.

The end of WWII brought new hopes in a region tormented by ghosts of the past. Yugoslavia and Albania had not only regained their independence but had also found new ways of cooperation. The Albanian communist forces even crossed into Kosovo to help the partisans of Yugoslavia in their struggle for liberation from Nazi Germany. However the cooperation was short-lived and turned to a bitter confrontation when Yugoslavia tried to incorporate Albania as the 7th republic, a move which was forcefully rejected by Albanian communist leadership and their allies in Moscow. The issue was used from both countries as justification for their oncoming policies. Albania became more and more distrustful of Yugoslavia's actions, a situation which prompted the regime to focus on defense spending and building bunkers out of fear that the country may be attacked. The issue of Kosovo gained momentum as Albania accused Yugoslavia of antagonizing Albanians of Kosovo by limiting their freedom of expression and by denying their identity.

Yugoslavia under the leadership of Tito, on the other hand to emerged as an important player in the international arena as it established the movement of non-aligned countries together with Egypt and India. On the domestic arena Yugoslavia pursued a more liberal policy which saw it giving autonomy to Kosovo and Vojvodina and the lifting of a number of restrictions emanating from Rankoviç's era. Kosovo Albanians could use their flag, their language and elect their leaders. Yugoslavia even allowed Albanian teachers for Albania to come and work in Kosovo.

As Albania was becoming more and more paranoid, Yugoslavia was experiencing it a golden age. The adoption of a more liberal communism had allowed its economy to develop fast although there was a huge disparity between its regions. Yet the inability to find a political formula that would ensure political democracy and integration for all its subjects for the federal state would lead to its disintegration (Biserko 2012). The coming to power of Milosevic would mark the starting point of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The Serbian Radical party strongly believed in the idea that trying to save Yugoslavia was futile and instead chose to champion the Serbian national question. The goal now shifted to how to make Serbia benefit the most from its disintegration. The Albanian protest of 1981 was used as a pretext to ferment and raise the Serbian national issue. The policy makers in Serbia blamed the 1974 federal constitution and set about to revive the "Kosovo Myth". In the words of Sonja Biserko, this myth was;

'the belief that the Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and the consequent long period of slavery under the Turks must be avenged by ousting Muslims from Kosovo and restoring the territory to its rightful owner, Serbia" (Biserko 2012).

It was this myth and the blind belief that Serbia could easily manipulate the situation for its own benefit that led to the disastrous wars of 1991-1995. Although Kosovo was used as the pretext, it had to wait until 1999 for it to become the next battleground of a war which would cause the death of tens of thousands of people and the displacement of other one million. The war would become synonymous with genocide and ethnic cleansing and if it was not for the NATO intervention the conflict would became bloodier as both parts resorted to atrocities in order to instill fear to the adversary. NATO saved Kosovo but its future remains fragile as the new state remains deeply divided along ethnic lines.

IV.   GREATER ALBANIA: MYTH OR REALITY?!

The latest events have managed to once again bring the topic of 'Greater Albania' into mainstream. Statements from Albanian leaders, incidents in a neighboring country or even banderols in a football match are enough to raise alarms in the European capitals. It seems that even later denials of such statements or even

assurances that something of this nature is impossible to even think of, doesn't seem to calm those who advocate that the threat is real.

The term of 'Greater Albania' is often associated with the desire of Albanian people to see all the lands inhabited by them united into a single state. Despite the fact that Albanians reject the term and prefer 'Ethnic Albania' more, this hasn't stopped neighboring countries from questioning the real intentions behind the term they consider as irredentist. The term usage can be traced back to Prizren League, although the name started to be used extensively after the wars in Kosovo and Macedonia. In the last years many have tried to find a link between the term and the political agenda; an agenda they think tends to unite all Albanians into a single state by using both the force of arms and the support of the Western countries, particularly the USA (Birn 2017). The unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence is seen as the first step of this irredentist plan and fear that its independence would set off domino effect of secessionist movements of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, Hungarians in Transylvania and southern Slovakia, Basques and Catalans in Spain etc.

The question of 'Greater Albania' took a new high with the interview that Kosovo's and Albania's Prime Ministers held in the Montenegrin city of Ulcinj where they both stated that 'as long as the European Union continues to close its door to Kosovo the possibility of a union will not be ruled out (Bytyci and Robinson 2015). The ensuing joint meetings between the two governments were considered a step too much and were openly criticized by the Serbian media and politicians. The Serbian cabinet minister Aleksandar Vulin, in an interview given to the Serbian news agency Tanjug, would interpret these developments as the next steps of an ongoing process to create 'Greater Albania' (Sputnik 2017). He even reiterated that this cannot be achieved except through a Balkan War and the Albanians have to be punished before they try (Tanjug 2017).

The question of Greater Albania does not only revolve around Kosovo. Macedonia, a country with a significant Albanian minority, is considered by radical circles as the next target of the Albanian irredentist policy. The Ohrid agreement, the Kumanovo incident and the Albanian platform signed by the Albanian parties before the general elections of the last year are all seen as part of a greater game intended to divide Macedonia; a division that would see almost half of the country joining Albania. The situation becomes explosive especially during electoral campaigns where each party tries to capitalize on nationalist vote. The argument adopted mostly by nationalists is that Albanians high birth rates will subsequently change the ethnic composition in their favor and will thus accelerate the division. What is worse is the fact that the rhetoric is also often employed by the leaders of political parties.

Other neighboring countries have also expressed concern over the issue of 'Greater Albania'. While Montenegro has shown a more diplomatic response to the issue, Greece has openly expressed its dissatisfaction with the term. The demolition of 19 Greek minority homes in the holiday resort of Himare as part of a new urban plan caught the attention of the Greek media and was strongly condemned by Athens. Greece went further by promising to review its unconditional support for Albania in its route to European Union and the Greek defense minister in a visit to a military outpost near the Albanian border lashed out that 'Greece will never accept such provocations' (Ekathimerini 2017). Sometimes even issues of no importance such as that of the Tirana's square makeover would come to be considered as an '*action that cultivates and conceals irredentism*' (Ekathimerini 2016). In a statement issued in relation to the square stones the Greek foreign ministry claimed that 'this is tangible proof of the central support for irredentist tendencies against the countries bordering Albania, given that the names of regions of various Balkan states are literally etched in stone' (Ekathimerini 2017).

But how real is the threat of 'Greater Albania? "? Does such a question even exist? If such a question exists, what is it? Is it a question centered on the political unification of all territories inhabited by Albanians in a single state? Or is it just an empty rhetoric used by political elites to maintain their grip on power and improve the leverage in EU membership negotiations?

Many do not find the issue of 'Greater Albania' convincing or even possible. Perhaps the main theme of the today's Albanian question is the issue of Kosovo, which many Albanians love to see independent and sovereign. But beyond that the views diverge. While some claim that Albania and Kosovo shouldn't unite, others support another variant; that of a 'Greater Kosovo'. This includes the unification of only lands inhabited by Albanians in the former territory of Yugoslavia. Although the end of communism made the circulation of ideas and contact between Albanian communities much easier, there is still a long way to go for a greater national cohesion to emerge. Many Albanians are aware of the diversity of interests of their communities and many have shaped their political interests according to the *status quo* (Batt 2008). The Albanian elites are well aware of the realism of today's world while the Albanian public opinion shows less and less appetite for issues related to 'Greater Albania' preferring to focus on issues of poverty, economic development, corruption and crime (Vickers 2008). According to Miranda Vickers, Albanians of Albania are very much committed to the European dream and the idea of pan-Albanianism is slowly being channeled into a more post-modern notion of a 'new Albanian space', in which all Albanians will be able to move freely and maintain cultural, economic and family ties without having the need to change the political borders (Vickers 2008).

Other scholars have argued that the question of 'Greater Albania' is nothing else but a tool to rally the voters. According to Frederik Wesslau, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank, Albanian and other Balkan leaders bring the issue of Greater Albania to serve their political objectives which aims to maximize the nationalists voter turnout (Janjevic 2017). His views are also shared by the Kosovo-born Associate Dean of School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia International University, Erdoan Shipoli who argues that 'Albanians know that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to even choose the leader of the Great Albania, let alone making it function and further adding that the support for such an initiative is minimal' (Janjevic 2017).

According to Jenny Nordman, the nationalist rhetoric in respect to the question of Greater Albania is nothing else but an effort to improve the countries' leverage in EU membership negotiations (Nordman 2016). Politicians have often warned that if the Western Balkan's integration process is slowed down there is a possibility of revival of nationalist sentiments, radicalization and consequently ethnic conflict. Although the link between EU integration and the diminishing of nationalist rhetoric is somewhat ambiguous, the leaders of Western Balkans continue to see the EU as a beacon of hope. The stall in negotiations they argue can be met by 'patience fatigue' of the Balkan countries; a fatigue which will inevitably give rise to nationalist politicians which will try to appeal to their electorates through populist and nationalist agendas.

While the question of 'Greater Albania' continues to hunt certain individuals' mind the facts on the ground tell another different story. The first visit by an Albanian prime-mister in Serbia after 68 years and the visit of the Serbian prime-minster in Tirana helped ease the tensions and created new possibilities for cooperation. The following Summit of Trieste where Balkan leaders express their commitment in creating a common market is interpreted by many as another attempt by the Western Balkan countries to further distance themselves away from nationalist policies (Hopkins 2017).

In Macedonia, the coming to power of social democrats has brought the country back on track with the new government trying to ease ethnic tensions. The election of a former UCK guerrilla commander Talat Xhaferri as the speaker of the parliament is seen by many as an attempt to move away from the turbulent past (RFE/RL 2017). As for relations with Greece, the meeting of Albanian and Greek foreign ministers in Crete seems to bring hope. Both countries pledged to work together in resolving both historical and latest issues such as that of the maritime border, the law of war between two countries and the right of the Greek minority in Albania (Kokkinidis 2017). Future looks promising but fragile and much hangs much on the ever-changing regional and international politics, economic development and wise policies of the Balkan countries itself.

V.   CONCLUSION

Peace in the Balkans is fragile and any failure at both regional and international level may lead to thee reactivation of conflicts that have haunted the region for years. While Balkan may not be anymore the powder keg of Europe it is for sure still a source for instability on its doorstep. The future of Kosovo, the name dispute between Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, the contradictions within Bosnia, maritime issues in the Aegean between Turkey and Greece, the integration of Albanian minorities in Macedonia and Serbia are issues that need to be solved before can be used by specific circles or to create new tensions.

Despite the fact that the question of Albania is not that convincing that of Kosovo remains very much real. Although other issues have their importance, the issue of Kosovo seems to be the one that can cause the greatest destabilization. The real question is not its independence but the sovereignty of the new state. Will it ever be sovereign and what over what territory? Both Pristine and Belgrade have been engaged in a dialogue sponsored by the European Union which unfortunately has recently stalled. Kosovo has still much to do in order to better integrate the Serbians living within its territory and on the other hand Serbia should renounce form depicting the moderate voices within Kosovo Serbs who would like to be part of Kosovo institutions as traitors. This will ultimately soften the radical elements within the Albanian society which would like to see an ethnically pure Kosovo since they believe that integrating the Serbs controlled by Belgrade would welcome in the Trojan horse which will impede the country's future development. Luckily, despite differences both parties remained committed to the dialogue. Belgrade strongly supports the creation of Serbian entities within Kosovo that would welcome Serbs from all over Kosovo. Kosovo sees these policies as attempts to create another Bosnia and thus rejects them. It should be clear that what Serbs gains in the process will set a destabilizing standard for Albanians in Serbia and Macedonia. It remains to be seen but buy experience has shown that with modest resources and international political will a moderate degree of integration is achievable. With the European integration and the entry in the Schengen area as common goals, the real question will not be the how to keep Serbs and Albanians apart but how they can live together.

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