

THE KOSOVO CRISIS

AND

TURKEY

(1991-2001)

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

of

Bilkent University

by

EYLEM ALTUNYA

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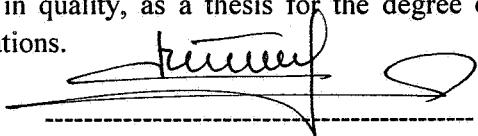
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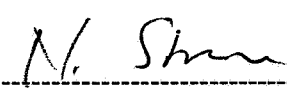
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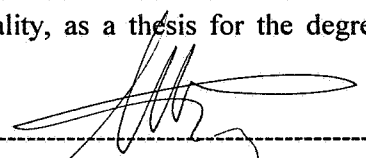
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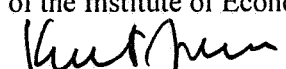
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ABSTRACT

THE KOSOVO CRISIS AND TURKEY (1991-2001)

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September 2003

With the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the post-Cold War period, the disagreement between the Serbs and the Albanians in Kosovo reached a climax and a crisis emerged in 1999. The eruption of the Kosovo crisis is closely related to the larger Albanian question in the Balkans which started with the establishment of the Albanian state in 1912. Existence of Albanians living dispersed in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece has always been problematic for the host states. Whether the Albanians really wished to gather around a single state or not was not questioned by the host states, who always tried to prevent the establishment of a larger Albanian state in the Balkans.

The Balkans is a corridor between Turkey and the European continent. Claiming to be a regional power and having historical and cultural bounds with the region, Turkey can not ignore the developments in the Balkans. Turkey is expected to play an influential role regarding the events of the Balkans.

ÖZET

KOSOVA KRİZİ VE TÜRKİYE (1991-2001)

ALTUNYA, Eylem

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Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hasan Ünal

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Yugoslavya'nın dağılmasıyla birlikte, Kosova'da yaşayan Arnavutlar ile Sırp lar arasındaki anlaşmazlık en üst düzeye ulaşmış ve 1999 yılında krize dönüşmüştür. Kosovo krizinin ortaya çıkması, 1912 yılında Arnavutluk'un kurulmasıyla başlayan Balkanlar'daki geniş Arnavut sorunuyla yakından ilgilidir. Başta Kosova, Makedonya ve Yunanistan olmak üzere, Arnavut nüfusunun Balkanlar'a yayılmış olması, sözkonusu nüfusa evsahipliği yapan ülkeler açısından sorun olmuştur. Balkanlar'da geniş bir Arnavut devletinin kurulmasını her zaman engellemeye çalışan evsahibi ülkeler, Arnavut nüfusunun tek bir devlet etrafında birleşmeyi gerçekten isteyip istemediklerini sorgulamamışlardır.

Balkanlar, Türkiye ile Avrupa kıtası arasında bir koridor oluşturmaktadır. Bölgesel bir güç olma iddiasında bulunan ve bölgeyle tarihi ve kültürel bağları olan Türkiye Balkanlar'daki gelişmeleri görmezden gelemmez. Türkiye'nin Balkanlar'daki gelişmelerde etkin olması beklenmektedir.

Bu alışmanın birinci bölümünde Kosova krizi, tarihi, etnik ve siyasi bir sorun olarak incelenmiştir. İkinci bölümde, 1991-2001 yıllarını kapsayan dönemde, Türkiye'nin Balkanlar'a yönelik genel politikası ile özelde Kosova'ya yönelik politikası ele alınmıştır. Bu alışmanın amacı, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türkiye'nin Kosova politikasının ne ölçüde etkin olduğunu incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kosova, Arnavut Sorunu, Balkanlar

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INTRODUCTION

AIM

When the Cold War ended, it was expected that cooperation among the states would intensify and the world would be a safer place in the absence of ideological confrontation. The eruption of the Yugoslav wars of dissolution signaled the emergence of a series of crises in the international arena and challenges to international security in the form of nationalism and irredentism. The Yugoslav wars lasted for almost half a decade and they had regional implications for the Balkans until today.

Kosovo used to be part of Yugoslavia. Interestingly, the initial signs of dissatisfaction with the Yugoslav system were displayed in Kosovo where the Albanian majority criticized the regime vociferously and sought to establish an independent state of their own. In both the 1968 and 1981 demonstrations in Kosovo, the Albanians maintained that they were discriminated against by the Serbian regime, the political and economic policies of the Yugoslav system led to the backwardness of Kosovo and low standard of living compared to the rest of Yugoslavia. No one imagined that the dissatisfaction of the Albanians with the Serbian regime would create a crisis in Kosovo in the second half of the 1990s; becoming an issue waiting to be solved by the international community until today. What made the issue of Kosovo so important for the Balkans and Europe?

With the disappearance of the Cold War ideological division, Europe started to move towards intensive political and economic cooperation, leading to unification within the framework of Western organizations like the European Union (EU), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The communist states in Europe got into a process of economic and political regime transformation, as well. The ex-communist states tried to establish democratic political systems and free market economies. The new era symbolized joining of Eastern and Western European countries under the framework of “Western” political and economic organizations of the Cold War period. The constituent republics of ex-Yugoslavia, which started a bloody ethnic and religious war, remained outside the process of European integration. Yugoslavia constituted an exception to the process of unification in Europe. The Yugoslav wars created new challenges to European security; like the problem of refugees and displaced people, resettlement and recovery from the ravages of wars. But the common fear was that the wars of Yugoslav dissolution might prolong and spread to other states in the Balkans and Europe.

The international community neglected the issue of Kosovo during the Yugoslav wars of dissolution since the disagreement between the Albanians and the Serbs had not turned into a war. When the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the Bosnia war, was signed in 1995, the Albanians were disappointed since no reference was made to their cause in the Agreement. This

was partly due to the fact that the United States and Europe did not want to annoy the Milosevic regime, which they perceived as the protector of the Dayton Peace Agreement and guarantor of its implementation. This worsened the relations between the Albanians and the Serbian regime. Tension turned into a crisis in 1999 with wider regional implications and new security challenges. The issue of Kosovo is closely linked to the “larger Albanian question” in the Balkans in various respects. This stems from the historic fact that the Albanians live dispersed in the territories surrounding Kosovo under the authority of different states, mainly in Macedonia, Greece and Albania. The potential of the issue to spread to its periphery makes it even more fragile in terms of security. So the issue of Kosovo has to be examined from two perspectives; one is related to the process of Yugoslav dissolution and the other is linked to the larger Albanian question in the Balkans. It could be argued that the issue of Kosovo emerged as a challenge to the security of the Balkans and Europe in the post-Cold War period.

The tension between the Albanians and the Serbs was frozen during the Cold War. The Albanians rebelled against the Serbian regime in 1968 and 1981 in order to achieve their independence, but they failed. Although the events in Kosovo were considered as an internal matter of Yugoslavia during the Cold War, the issue was internationalized with the start of Yugoslav wars of dissolution after the Cold War. The conflict between the Albanians, who make up the overwhelming majority of the population in Kosovo, and the Serbs came

to the surface after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. Tension between the Albanians and the Serbs reached a climax in 1998 and ended with NATO air attacks on Serbia in 1999, which, in turn, ended in the repression of the Albanians by the Serbian regime and prevented the spread of the crisis to the Balkans and Europe. This led to internationalization of the issue of Kosovo. Thanks to the NATO air attacks of 1999, the Serbian regime was forced to sign an agreement of peace, which eventually abolished Serbian repression of the Albanians and led to deployment of a multinational force in Kosovo. After Serbia signed the peace agreement, the international community took the upper hand in the region. The United Nations established an Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by the contributions of the European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Council of Europe. Besides, Kosovo Forces (KFOR) were deployed in the region in order to prevent the emergence of future crises between the two nations.

The peace agreement, which was signed between Serbia and NATO allies, stipulated that self-government be established in Kosovo, although Kosovo would remain part of Yugoslavia. The political status of the region remains unresolved. Interestingly, the conditions under which the peace agreement was signed have gradually changed. For instance, the two constituent republics of Yugoslavia, namely Serbia and Montenegro, signed an agreement in 2003, which established a *sui generis* relationship between themselves. The name

“Yugoslavia” was abolished and the state was renamed as the “Republic of Serbia and Montenegro”. Some analysts argue that this transformation is a further step of the unfinished Yugoslav dissolution and since “Yugoslavia” no longer exists, the peace agreement concerning the status of Kosovo can not be applied any more. According to these arguments, in the light of the current conditions, a new agreement has to be signed between the Albanians and the Serbs in order to determine the final status of Kosovo. Taking into consideration the rapid changes in the Balkans, it seems the analysts will be busy with the issue of Kosovo in the near future. Developments regarding Kosovo deserve academic interest because of their potential effects on the Balkans and Europe. Besides the final status of Kosovo is a problem waiting to be solved, but peacefully. The future political status of Kosovo has to be determined not only by the Albanians and the Serbs, but also by the international organizations involved in the matter. Particularly the United Nations, which administers United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and NATO, which commands KFOR would probably play determining roles in Kosovo.

The future of Kosovo is unknown. But why is the issue of Kosovo important for Turkey? Kosovo is located in the Balkans and Turkey has historic and cultural ties to this neighboring region that go back to the Ottoman times. With the claim of being a regional power in the post-Cold War era, Turkey cannot ignore the developments that take place in its periphery, like the Balkans and

the Middle East. Turkey aspires to be an influential power in its region and this urges Turkey to play an active and determining role in the fields of cooperation and/or problematic matters and crises. Since Kosovo emerged as one of the most important problems of the Balkans in the post-Cold War period, Turkey is expected to respond effectively to the issue since its eruption. The Turkish community living in Kosovo and the surrounding territories in the Balkans expected that Turkey would take an active stance, both during and after the crisis.

This dissertation aims to examine Turkey's policy towards the issue of Kosovo within the context of the developments in the post-Cold War period and evaluate to what extent Turkey was able to benefit from the opportunities provided by the new period. Turkey started the 1990s with quite an active line of diplomacy, but was it permanent or temporary? The study focuses on the issue of Kosovo on the one hand, dealing with the history of the region, and on the other hand focuses on the causes of the old disagreement between the Albanians and the Serbs. Then it discusses the developments in Kosovo after the Cold War. Additionally, the dissertation explores Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans in the post-Cold War period with special emphasis on the question of Kosovo. The dissertation combines two subjects: Turkish foreign policy and the issue of Kosovo.

In the first part of this study, the Kosovo crisis is analyzed as a historical, ethnic and political issue. And in the second part of the study, Turkey's policy towards the Balkans in general, and toward the the issue of Kosovo, in particular is examined between 1991-2001. This study aims to analyze to what extent Turkey's policy towards the issue of Kosovo has been influential in the post-cold War period.

Keywords: Kosovo, Albanian Question, Balkans

Both the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the issue of Kosovo have been analyzed by scholars of international relations from different perspectives, historical, cultural, economic, political and social. “The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break Up (1980-1992)” of Magas, “Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration” of Sekelj, “Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia (1962-1991)” and “Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War” of Ramet, “The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation” of Sharpe can be cited as examples of such studies. Likewise the issue of Kosovo was examined within the context of Yugoslav dissolution and the roots of the historic disagreement between the two constituent nations: the Albanians and the Serbs. Malcolm’s “Kosovo: A Short History” and Mertus’s “Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started A War” are examples in that context.

On the other hand, many scholars studied Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Some of these studies examined Turkey’s foreign policy towards the neighboring regions like the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia, like Mango’s “Turkey: The Challenge of A New Role”, Fuller and Lesser’s “Turkey’s New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China” and Çelik’s “Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy”. Some focused on Turkey’s search for full membership to the European Union: Balkır and Williams, “Turkey and Europe”, other studies dealt with the issue of human rights, terrorism and Turkey’s security and defence policy under the conditions of the

post-Cold War period. However, these studies did not examine the issue of Kosovo, as an issue of Turkish foreign policy.

This dissertation aims to answer the following questions: How did the issue of Kosovo emerge? What were the historical reasons that lay behind the disagreement between the Albanians and the Serbs in Kosovo? What is the relationship between the issue of Kosovo and the “larger Albanian question” in the Balkans? How was the issue of Kosovo internationalized? How did the international community get involved in the matter? How did the issue of Kosovo influence the developments in the Balkans and Europe, particularly after 1999 crisis? How did Turkish foreign policy react to the post-Cold War developments in the Balkans? Why is the Balkans important for Turkey? What were the determining factors of Turkish foreign policy towards the issue of Kosovo? To what extent Turkish foreign policy towards the issue of Kosovo was influential?

METHODOLOGY

The dissertation consists of seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the history of Kosovo, starting from the Congress of Berlin (1878). This part examines the movements towards Albanian independence and finally the establishment of Albania proper (1912). It explains how Kosovo was separated from Albania proper and became part of Yugoslavia in 1945.

The second chapter examines the developments in Kosovo after the death of Yugoslavia's charismatic leader Tito in 1980 (1981-1991). Following the death of Tito, the dissatisfaction of the Albanians with the Yugoslav system came to the surface. Kosovo was a part of the Serbian republic in Yugoslavia, but the Albanians who made up 90% of the population of Kosovo refused Serbian rule. They wanted to establish their independent state though they officially pursued a policy that aimed at more self-government.

The third chapter deals with the process of Yugoslav dissolution and its impact on the issue of Kosovo (1991-1995). This part focuses on the post-Cold War developments in Kosovo.

The fourth chapter analyzes Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period by giving special emphasis to the Balkans. The fifth chapter is an examination of the issue of Kosovo and Turkey's response in the post-Cold War period. Chapter six is an analysis of the developments in Kosovo after the crisis of

1999 and NATO's air attacks against Serbia. The seventh chapter is an overall evaluation of Turkey's foreign policy towards the Balkans in general, and toward the issue of Kosovo, in particular.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF KOSOVO (1878-1980)

Four years after the end of the NATO air strikes against Serbia, Kosova remains a problem to be solved both for the Kosovars themselves and for the outsiders who got involved in this old dispute. One needs to make a historical evaluation of the facts in order to understand the reasons for the controversy between the two main component ethnic groups in Kosovo, namely the Albanians and the Serbs. Apart from the ethnic, religious and cultural differences between them, the two nations put forward historical claims as the actual owners of this territory. In view of the Albanians, Kosovo is the cradle of their national independence movement or what they call “Rilindje Kombatare” (national awakening)¹. The Albanians (who make up 90 % of the population of Kosovo) maintain that they have been the inhabitants of these lands for centuries, ever since the time of their ancestors: the “Illyrians”. Whereas the Serbs (who make up approximately 8 % of the population of Kosovo) attribute a particular importance to this land, perceiving it as the heart of the Medieval Serb Kingdom, still commemorating the defeat of the Serb King by the Ottoman Sultan at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.

¹ N. Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, (Macmillan, London 1998) p.217

1.1. Albanian Independence

Shortly after its establishment, the Ottoman State took control of the lands in the Balkans and enlarged its territories towards the European continent. The Ottoman existence in the Balkans lasted until the Empire was pushed out of the peninsula during the course of the Balkan Wars (1912). Only a small portion of the Ottoman lands in Thrace were left to the Turkish Republic which was proclaimed in 1923. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans had governed the lands in the Balkans through the “millet system” which was based on the division of people into two classes: the rulers (Ottomans) and the ruled (“rayah”). The determining feature of the rayah class was religion and each religious group established an “internally autonomous community”² which was called “millet”. The religious groups maintained their traditional law and set up semi-autonomous administrative structures under the guidance of their religious leaders. It should, however, be mentioned that the Muslim community had a favored status compared to the other religious groups within the Ottoman State, since majority of the population shared the same religion with the Ottoman rulers. The Albanians benefited from this privilege and achieved high administrative and military positions within the state³. Such benefits explain why the Albanians had been late-comers in gaining independence from the Ottomans compared to other nations in the Balkans.

² S.J. Shaw, “The Ottoman View of the Balkans” in C. and B. Jelavich (eds.), *The Balkans in Transition*, (University of California Press, Berkeley 1974) p.61

³ F. Bieber, “Muslim Identity in the Balkans before the Establishment of Nation States” *Nationalities Papers*, (28) 1, (2000) pp.13-28, p.17

The Albanian-inhabited lands remained under Ottoman control for almost five hundred years just like other regions in the Balkans. The Albanians had always been a most favored community in the eyes of the Sultan compared to non-Muslim nations under his rule. Thus, the Albanians made every effort to strengthen the Ottoman rule on the territories where they constituted the majority of the population. They acted like the “guardian” of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans until the nationalist movements took over, and nation-states emerged on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Greece (1829) came out as the first independent state in the Balkans, and was later followed by Serbia (1831), Bulgaria and Romania (1878). When it became obvious that the Ottoman rule could not be maintained and the Ottoman State would withdraw from the Balkans, the Albanians were in a dilemma; whether to search for independence or stay under the control of the weak Ottoman State. The Albanians were aware that the Ottoman rule in the Balkans was collapsing. Although the Albanian national movements intensified following the end of the Berlin Congress, attempts towards emancipation were initiated with the establishment of the “Central Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian Nationality” in İstanbul, which swiftly evolved into the Prizren League. The Committee was formed under the leadership of a prominent intellectual, Abdyl Frasheri who was a member of a well-known Albanian family. Abdyl Frasheri played an active role during the Albanian national movement of independence.

Following the Russo-Ottoman War (1877-1878) , which ended with the victory of Russia, the European Powers assembled at the Congress of Berlin (1878) in order to decide on the future of the Ottoman lands in the Balkans. The Congress of Berlin gathered at a time when nationalist movements accelerated within the Ottoman State. When the Albanians saw that the Ottoman lands would be partitioned among the newly emerging nation-states in the Balkans, they demanded administrative autonomy for the Albanian-inhabited lands which would be unified under the name of “Albania”. This demand was communicated to the European Powers by a protest letter sent by the Prizren League just before the gathering of the Congress of Berlin.⁴ In its letter, the League clearly stated to the European Powers that an autonomous rule should be established by the Albanians at the four Ottoman “vilayets”⁵ where they constituted majority of the population at that time. These four vilayets were: Janina (Yanya in Turkish), Monastiri (Manastır in Turkish), Skopje (Üsküb in Turkish) and Scutary (İşkodra in Turkish).

In 1881, the League transformed itself into the “Provisional Government” of the four Albanian vilayets. The Albanian Provisional Government was directed from Kosovo. By 1880, the League started to rule Kosovo and its periphery as a de facto government⁶. The acceleration of the League’s ruling power alerted

⁴ S. Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening (1878-1912)*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 1967) p.36

⁵ An Ottoman administrative division

⁶ Malcolm, *ibid*, p.226

the Ottoman rulers, and an army was sent to the region, which totally destroyed the authority of the League. The intervention of the Ottoman army was so influential that the Albanian opposition movements in Kosovo were not able to act coherently for several decades. Only the immigrant Albanians were successful in resisting the Ottoman rule in order to establish an autonomous regime for their nation. Some degree of unification among the diverse Albanian national groupings was attained towards the end of the nineteenth century and the Albanian revolts against the taxation and recruitment systems of the Ottoman State intensified.

In 1899, the Turkish opposition movement; the “Committee of Union and Progress” was established in Macedonia. There was only a short period of cooperation between the Albanian resistance and the Committee of Union and Progress. The Turkish opposition movement against the autocratic rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, which is normally known as the “Young Turk” movement in Western historiography, disappointed the Albanians and some other nations in the Balkans. Although the Young Turks promised to the Balkan nations to give their basic rights like administrative autonomy and education in native language in return for their support to overthrow the Sultan, they followed a rather different policy after coming to power in 1908. Their main aim was to strengthen Ottomanism all over the Empire⁷. When they became the

⁷ B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans (Twentieth Century)*, (Cambridge University Press 1983) p.82

rulers, the Young Turks gave priority to the unity of the Empire, rather than granting autonomous rights to the constituent nations⁸ which might lead to their independence.

The demands of the Young Turks' collaborators in the Balkans, concerning their administrative participation and cultural rights were not accepted by the new regime. The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the emergence of the self-declared Bulgaria in 1908 disappointed the Albanians. This was the end of cooperation between the Young Turks and the Albanian national movement. There was a split between the Albanian resistance movement and the Young Turks shortly after the latter gained the upper hand in the Empire, although 25 Albanian representatives took office in the new Ottoman Assembly in 1908. Revolts broke out in Kosovo against the Young Turk regime under the leadership of a well-known Albanian figure, Hasan Prishtina⁹, who was a member of the Ottoman Assembly. The uprisings then spread to all Albanian-inhabited lands and continued between the years 1909-1911. The Albanians resisted the taxation policy of the regime and demanded that the tax revenues be used for investment in Kosovo and education in native language.

⁸ M.Ş. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford University Press, NY. 1995)

⁹ T. Zavalini, "Albanian Nationalism" in P. F. Sugar and I.J. Lederer (eds), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London 1994, 4th edition), p.70

Ironically, Albanian resistance against the Ottoman rule slowed down when the state was almost totally declining in power. The Albanians even fought on the side of the Ottoman State when the Balkan nations formed military coalitions against it, which gradually led to the eruption of the two “Balkan Wars” (1912-1913). A determining feature of the Balkan independence movements was the assertive territorial claims of the Balkan nations which made them potential enemies. Unlike the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians, the Albanians failed to establish a strong political unity among themselves so as to resist both the Ottoman rule and aggression by the neighbouring Balkan nations. Being aware of the fact that their national interests would be best protected by acting harmoniously with the Ottomans, the Albanians cooperated with their old masters *vis-a-vis* the irredentist claims of the newly emerging nation-states in the Balkans.

Towards the end of the Balkan Wars, however, the Albanians intensified their movements for gradual independence, refusing to be ruled by another Balkan state. In 1912, the rebellions, which started in Gjakova and Pec (Western Kosovo) spread to Mirdita, Tirana, Scutary, Mitrovica and Ferizaj. Albanian members of the Ottoman army joined these opposition groups as well. The supporters of the Albanian resistance movement prepared the “Twelve Points Program” and sent it to İstanbul in 1912, which was based on the “Red Book” of the previous year. The Twelve Points Program put forward the basics of establishing an autonomous administrative structure for the Albanian-

inhabited lands in the Balkans. Resisting many nations which struggled for their independence and territorial extension and being weakened since 1908, the Ottomans recognized that they could not prevent the Albanian demands for administrative freedom. Finally, the Albanian rebel leaders and the representatives of the Ottoman State sat at the negotiating table and agreed on autonomy for the Albanians.

But the defeat of the Ottomans in the Balkan Wars aborted this process as the Ottomans had to withdraw from the entire region as a result. Paradoxically, this led to the emergence of an independent Albanian state under Austro-Hungarian insistence. Finally, Albania proper was designed at the Ambassadors Conference of London in 1913. In essence, Albania proper was an international protectorate which was based on autonomous Albania, and the Ambassadors Conference appointed German Wilhelm von Wied as Prince of Albania. An International Commission was established to be responsible for its administration. This led to the start of continuous struggles between the Prince's forces that were supported by the International Commission and the prominent Albanian groups which had de facto ruled the Albanian-inhabited lands since the 1880s. The internal confusion finally ended when the German Prince left the country shortly after the outbreak of the First World War (1914). However, the Albanian state entered into a new phase of chaos stemming from an unstable political system and competition for administrative control among various political groups. These were to be compounded with external problems

like the territorial claims of the neighbouring Balkan states (for example the Greek claim on southern Albanian lands or what they called the northern “Epirus”, Serbian and Montenegrin territorial demands to extend their borders at the expense of Albania).

The new Albanian state was an artificial creation of the major European powers since it failed to embrace the majority of the Albanian population in the Balkans. Almost half of the Albanian population in the Balkans was left outside the borders of Albania proper. Some of them had to stay in Serbia (and later Macedonia) under Serbian control while some were in Greece. Initially there were some attempts to join all the Albanian-inhabited lands, however, Albania proper lacked the means to realize this aim. Independent survival was the priority of the new Albanian state. However, the existence of large numbers of Albanians living dispersed in the surrounding territories had been perceived as a potential threat to political stability and territorial unities by their host states. This led to the continual repression of the Albanian populations by host states who feared that the Albanian population in the Balkans might gather within one state under the leadership of Albania proper.

Serbia took control of Kosovo and Macedonia in 1913, shortly after the establishment of the independent Albanian state. The outbreak of World War I weakened Serbian influence in the Albanian inhabited lands, and Kosovo was invaded by Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces. Serbia was totally expelled

from Kosovo in 1915. Kosovo was separated from the other Albanian-inhabited lands in the Balkans during the First World War. The north of Kosovo was put under Austro-Hungarian control, while the south was captured by Bulgaria. The two invaders ruled Kosovo until the end of the First World War, when they were finally defeated by the Allied Powers in 1918, and Kosovo was put back under Serbian control. During World War I, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria had applied two different systems of rule in Kosovo. Austria-Hungary collaborated with the Albanians by granting them certain rights. The Albanians participated in local administrations; they were allowed to use the Albanian language in governmental offices and open schools teaching in the Albanian language. But the conditions in the south were rather difficult. Bulgaria followed a strict policy and did not cooperate with the Albanians. Instead, it forced the Albanians to work in certain projects like building railways in Macedonia.

Following the end of World War I, the Albanian patriots arranged a National Conference in Lushnje (1920) through which they expressed their trust to the outside world on the issue of independence. And when the Albanian membership to the League of Nations was accepted in the same year, the existence of the independent Albanian state whose borders¹⁰ were

¹⁰ ibid p.82

determined by the 1913 Conference of Ambassadors was internationally safeguarded.

1.2. Creation of the Yugoslav State

One needs to examine the process of creating the Yugoslav state, going back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, for a better understanding of the roots of the current territorial and political debate in Kosovo. The multicultural social structures in the Balkans owe a great deal to the Ottoman political system, which prevailed over the region for many centuries. The Ottomans created a *sui generis* millet system, which categorized all the peoples living in the Ottoman Balkans according to their religious affinity rather than their ethnic or racial backgrounds. The system was based neither on ethnicity nor nationality.

With the gradual decline of the Ottoman power in the Balkans, widespread dissatisfaction, particularly among the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire grew and when nationalism took over in Western Europe, it found fertile ground in the Balkans. Nineteenth century saw the penetration of nationalism, which, coupled with the continual decline of the Ottoman Empire, led to the emergence of nation-states to be carved out of Ottoman territories. The West, in general, and Russia, in particular, supported this new process of nation building. Finally, the Ottomans were expelled from the region during the

course of the Balkans Wars of 1912-1913. The point to be borne in mind is that this process, from the beginning of the decline to the end of the Ottoman administration in the whole region, took a long time, indeed centuries. Similarly, the emergence of the nation-states, in other words, from the beginning of dissatisfaction with the Ottoman system to the anti-Ottoman revolts that started the nation-building process, took a long time, too.

The Serbs achieved their independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. The small Balkan state enlarged territorially with the achievements of the Balkan Wars. The Yugoslav state was created by the integration of the Southern Slav population after the collapse of the multi-national Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy following the defeat in World War I. The Italian and Hungarian threat directed towards the Southern Slav population of the Dual Monarchy led to the unification of the Slav nations around the rather powerful Serb Kingdom. The outcome was the establishment of the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and the Slovenes” in 1918 to be known as Yugoslavia.

In essence, this new state officially acquired the name “Yugoslavia” in 1929. Although the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Bosniacs belonged to the same race and ethnicity, their religion, history, as well as their social and political

organizations¹¹, under which they lived for centuries, were totally different. The Serbs, Montenegrins and Bosniacs were ruled by the Ottoman Empire for about five centuries, whereas the Croats and Slovenes made up the Slav population of Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Serbs and Montenegrins were Orthodox whereas the Croats and Slovenes were Catholic. The Albanian majority in Kosovo, on the other hand, was overwhelmingly Muslim. The rivalry¹² for political control among the constituent nations continued even after the achievement of unity within the framework of Yugoslavia. For instance, the Croats disputed with the Serbs about the structure of the state (“federal” versus “unitary” state) and they never gave up the idea of separation from the Yugoslav Kingdom soon after recovering from the wounds of wars. Such differences prevented the creation of an ethnic, religious and cultural mosaic living in peace; on the contrary, they constituted the roots of political and cultural conflicts, which challenged the very existence of the young Yugoslav state.

¹¹ J. Rotschild, “Yugoslavia” in P.F. Sugar and D.W. Treadpold (eds) *East and Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London 1992, 7th edition), p.207

¹² I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1984) pp.115-140

1.3. Kosovo under the Rule of Yugoslavia

1.3.1. The Interwar Period (1919-1939)

Kosovo had been conquered by the Serb Kingdom during the Balkan Wars and become an integral part of it in 1918. When Yugoslavia was established, Kosovo was automatically included in this Slav state. The Great Powers legally recognized Serbian conquest of Kosovo at the Paris Peace Conference, which gathered after the end of the First World War. The Albanian resistance against the Serbian *fait accompli* came immediately. In 1918 a group of Albanians gathered around Hasan Prishtina and formed the “Committee for the National Defense of Kosovo”, also known as the “Kosovo Committee”¹³. The major aim of the Committee was to struggle against integration with Serbia. The movement protested the repression of the Albanians by the Serbs, since the latter strongly denied the existence of Albanians as a separate nation and considered them as Albanian-speaking Serbs¹⁴.

Serbia suppressed the Albanian community in various realms of social life. For example, the Albanians were not allowed to use their native language, particularly in the field of education, the lands owned by the Albanians were swiftly confiscated and they were forced to leave while the Albanian-inhabited

¹³ Malcolm, *ibid* p.273

¹⁴ *ibid* p.268-69

territories were filled by people of Slav origin. The Serb oppression of the Albanians started with the conquest of Kosovo and continued until the eruption of the Second World War in 1939. Albanian resistance against the Serbs was not very effective, since the Albanians lacked the means for armed struggle. Albania proper was not able to make its voice heard on this issue either, because it was a small and economically weak state in political turmoil. Thus the Serbs got a free hand to implement their discriminatory policies regarding the Albanian population in Kosovo.

1.3.2. The Occupation of Kosovo and the Second World War: Realization of “Greater Albania”? (1939-1945)

Even after achieving independence, Albania had to deal with internal problems and resist the assertive territorial claims of its neighbors. Almost half of the Albanian population had been left outside the territories of Albania proper, as a result of the diplomatic bargains of the European Powers that were made following the end of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, respectively. A temporary solution to internal chaos was found when the state was proclaimed a “republic” under the leadership of Ahmet Zog (1925). The republic continued to exist until Ahmet Zog declared himself king of the country and announced the state

a “monarchy” in 1928¹⁵. During that time Albania developed close ties with the economically strong Italy, since it was in need of financial support to survive. One should not ignore the fact that there was a lack of Great Power interest in Albania at the beginning of the 1930s¹⁶, since they were trying to recover from the effects of World War I and the 1929 world economic crisis. Cooperation between Albania and Italy intensified and Albanian economic dependence on Italy gradually made this state a protectorate of the latter. When this became compounded with the assertive claims of the fascist leader Mussolini in the Mediterranean periphery, it led to the occupation of Albanian lands by Italy on the eve of the Second World War (1939). This was the end of Zog’s era in Albanian politics that had lasted for about a decade (1928-1939). The competition of various political groups struggling for administrative dominance resumed during World War II, and Albania plunged into turmoil again.

¹⁵ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (Hurst 2000, 1st published in 1958), p.717-727

¹⁶ J. Rotschild, *Return to Diversity* (Oxford University Press, NY and Oxford 1993, 2nd edition), p.70-74

By the year 1939, not only the Balkans but also the whole of Europe came under German and Italian fascist threat. The Munich Agreement regarding the Germans of the Sudetanland (Czechoslovakia), the German Anschluss of Austria, the Italian maneuvers targeting the Mediterranean and the various assertive claims of these two Powers signaled the outbreak of Second World War, which was to be much more destructive than the first. The Balkans became a battleground during World War II. In 1941, Hitler decided to move eastward and invaded both Yugoslavia and Greece¹⁷. In Yugoslavia, German forces exploited the old rift between the Serbs and Croats by collaborating with the fascist “Ustasa” movement of the Croats, which was seeking an independent nation-state. The consequence was the division of Yugoslavia among the Axis powers (Germany and Italy) and the establishment of the independent Croat (1941) state. The fascist Ustasa regime of the Croats swiftly initiated a program of ethnic violence against the Serbs, once it created its own state.

During World War II, Kosovo was perceived as part of Albania proper and was put under Italian control¹⁸. Since Italy took lands from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia and Albania, it was able to dominate the Adriatic Sea. Later, the Italians and the Germans agreed to join a large part of this Albanian-inhabited lands to Albania proper, still under the control of Italy. The logic behind this compromise was to prevent the

¹⁷ Stavrianos, *ibid* p.754

¹⁸ *ibid* p.771

eruption of Albanian irredentist actions *vis-à-vis* the German forces¹⁹ of occupation, since the Germans wanted to exploit the mineral resources of Kosovo (particularly lead and zinc) through the help of its ally, Italy.

An interesting and vital outcome of inclusion of Kosovo in Albania proper during World War II was that for the first (and the last) time Albanian-inhabited lands were united across the borders. From the Albanian point of view, this wartime phenomenon justified their cause that the Albanians should live as a united nation under a single flag, bringing the artificial division of the nation to an end. The unification of Albanian-inhabited lands brought two new facts to the agenda. Above all, creating a “Greater”²⁰ Albanian state had become a feasible target for the first time, since Albania achieved its independence. Second, the close contact that developed between the Albanian and the Yugoslav communists as wartime allies, who opposed the invasions of fascist Axis powers, shaped the future structure of the Albanian political regime. Through this partnership, the status of the communists in Albania was consolidated by kicking out foreign powers from Albanian soil with the support of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. This was materialized at the expense of giving Kosovo to Yugoslavia. Besides, the foundations of

¹⁹ Malcolm *ibid*, p.291

²⁰ N.J. Costa, *Albania: A European Enigma* (Boulder, NY 1995) p.85

the long authoritarian rule of Enver Hoxha in Albania were laid. However, the unification of Kosovo and Albania lasted only to the end of the war, and Kosovo was ceded to Communist Yugoslavia. Losing Kosovo dashed the wartime hopes of establishing an all-inclusive “Greater” Albanian state among the members of this nation.

1.3.3. Communist Yugoslavia: Kosovo under the Rule of Tito (1946-1980)

The Yugoslav state was built after the Partisans’ victory against both the fascist Nazi invasion of Germany and the rival Cethnik bands. Ideologically the new state acknowledged the Marxist-Leninist line of communism. The Communists prepared a new constitution and proclaimed the establishment of the “Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia” in 1946. Federal Yugoslavia was established under the leadership of Tito, who presided over until his death in 1980. The Yugoslav state was made up of six socialist republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbian Republic was further divided into two ethnically autonomous units: the Autonomous Region of Vojvodina and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo-Metohija. It should be pointed out that the six republics and two autonomous units were not

homogenous in their ethnic and religious composition. Although Slovenia and Montenegro had ethnic homogeneity; both in Croatia (Krajina) and Macedonia a large number of Serbs were present, Bosnia-Herzegovina was a multinational state, including Serbs, Croats and Muslims, whereas the province of Vojvodina hosted a large Hungarian minority and a Serbian majority. Finally the Kosovo province had a Muslim Albanian majority. The federal structure of Yugoslavia aimed to guarantee equal status to compounding republics. Interestingly, Article 1 of the 1946 constitution safeguarded the federal structure of the state by acknowledging the right to self-determination to the constituent nations. This article stated that Yugoslavia was “a community of equal peoples that “have expressed their will to live together in a federal state”²¹ on the basis of self-determination, including the right to secession.

²¹ A. Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution (1919-1953)* (Harvard University Press, Massachusetts 1991) p.167

Political ideology became an instrument of national integration. “Brotherhood and unity” the slogan of Tito evidenced this effort; “Brotherhood” emphasized the common Slav origin of the constituent nations, and “Unity” symbolized the continuity of common interests and desire of these nations to live together²². The Yugoslav Communist Party tried to establish a common national identity to stick various nations together in a single state. This identity was known as “Yugoslavhood” (jugoslavanska identiteta)²³. Yugoslavhood was a supranational identity. It did not replace the national identities of the compounding units; rather, it displayed the common will to live together in a single state. The charismatic Yugoslav leader Tito was able to keep these different nations together within the boundaries of common ideology and common will of freedom from foreign influence throughout his presidency (1946-1980). Yugoslav communist movement and its leader Tito were under the influence of Soviet communism, two regimes developed close contacts particularly during the Second World War. They were both under German threat directed towards their territorial integrity and political independence. This collaboration turned into an ideological split between the two countries in 1948. It should, however, be pointed out that the Soviet Red Army did not intervene in Yugoslavia and Albania, either during the Second World War or in the years that followed it because the British was there first. The communist

²² V.V. Godina, “The Outbreak of Nationalism on Former Yugoslav Territory: A Historical Perspective on the Problem of Supranational Identity” Nations and Nationalism 4 (3) (1998) pp 409-422, 413

²³ *ibid* p.416

movements in both Yugoslavia and Albania developed in a rather secure and independent environment from the influence and control of the Soviet Union compared to other Eastern communist regimes.

The 1948 split was the result of a disagreement over different interpretations and implementations of the Marxist-Leninist ideology by the two states. The Yugoslav-Soviet split had two main repercussions for Yugoslavia. Within the domestic realm, the “Yugoslav road to socialism”²⁴ was created in politics and economics, which evolved gradually and reflected its genuine features in various constitutions of state. In the external realm, the independent attitude of Yugoslavia *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union was applauded by Western democratic states, which gave moral and material support to the former. Although Tito’s Yugoslavia welcomed this foreign support, the state gradually created the “third way” in its external relations, which meant independence from both the communist (East) and the liberal (West) blocs. It was called the “non-aligned movement” in world history. This movement increased the popularity of the Yugoslav leader abroad, giving him more room for maneuver in the domestic sphere. Tito’s charismatic leadership helped keep Yugoslav peoples together under a single flag throughout his presidency.

²⁴ B. Magas, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break Up (1980-1992)* (Verso, 1993) p.79

Within this composition, Kosovo remained part of the Serbian republic. The Yugoslav communists took total control of this region towards the end of the Second World War, dashing any Albanian hope of creating a larger nation-state. Founding a greater state was a common notion among the Albanians when Kosovo was included in Albania proper during the Second World War. The Albanian communists were able to defeat both Italy and Germany, but they failed to keep Kosovo on their hands. The wartime alliance of Albanian and Yugoslav communists was not enough to bring about the unification of Albanian population in the Balkans. Although the rhetoric of Yugoslav communists was based on the right to self-determination of nations, the Albanians were deprived of this right. In 1944, the Kosovo branch of Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation (AVNOJ) gathered in Bujan (in Albania) where they accepted the Bujan Resolution. With this resolution, the Albanians declared the indivisibility of the Albanian population living in Kosovo and Albania proper²⁵ and the desire of the Albanian people to live in a single Albanian state. However, after the establishment of Federal Yugoslavia, the Albanians of Kosovo were granted only autonomy within the Serbian republic.

²⁵ S. Repishti, "The Evolution of Kosovo's Autonomy Within the Yugoslav Constitutional Framework" in A. Pipa and S Repishiti, *Studies on Kosovo*, East European Monographs, Boulder, NY 1984) p.207-208

The autonomous status of Kosovo within the Serbian republic was safeguarded through the Yugoslav constitutions, although this right never satisfied the Albanian majority in the region. The 1946 Yugoslav constitution established a centralized state structure in the realm of politics and economics. A rapid socialization of the means of production, collectivization of agriculture and the primacy of the Communist Party in administration were the main themes of this phase. In accordance with this constitution, Kosovo was established as a nominal “autonomous province” of the Serbian republic. The 1963 constitution changed the name of the state to the “Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” and put forward the concept of “self management” for the federation, the constituent republics and the autonomous units. This clause emphasized the free will of the people in every phase of the administration; from the smallest territorial unit to the federal system; it implied a tendency towards a more decentralized administration. This system defended the unified structure of the state, based on the sovereign right of the nations who would take responsibilities in the administrative system.

A major amendment, however, came with the 1974 constitution, which defined the autonomous units (Vojvodina and Kosovo) as the “constituent members of the federation”²⁶, although, unlike the republics, they were not granted the right to secede from the federation. The right to self-determination was denied to the

²⁶ J.A. Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started A War* (University of California Press, Berkeley, LA and London 1999) p.291

autonomous units simply because the majority of their population belonged to a nation living outside the borders of Yugoslavia. This argument was based on the classification of “nation” and “nationality”, which was common in Yugoslav communist rhetoric. According to this formulation, a “nation” comprised a group who had established a genuine state of its own that did not exist outside the borders of Yugoslavia; like the Serb, Croat, Montenegrin, Macedonian, Slovene and the Bosnian nations who established their nation-states in Yugoslavia. A “nationality”, on the other hand, was a national group who had blood ties with the members of a nation-state founded outside the Yugoslav territorial borders. In this respect, the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina and the Albanian majority of Kosovo were not labeled as “nations” in the Yugoslav sense of the word and they were not allowed to determine their own future independently through the right to self-determination. This was also safeguarded by the Yugoslav constitutions. The autonomous status of Kosovo evolved with the 1974 constitution, but not to the level of a constituent republic. Since Kosovo was allowed to use its own flag and establish its communist party organization, parliament, police force and judiciary, it achieved a de facto republican status²⁷ but it was still deprived of the right to self-determination or the right to secede.

²⁷ M.E. Salla, “Traveling the Full Circle: Serbia’s Final Solution to the Kosovo Problem” Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 18 (2) (1998) pp 229-240, p.232

Several factors impeded granting Kosovo republican status. First, the Serbs were deeply concerned about the existence of the large Albanian population scattered all over the Balkans. Apart from Albania proper, in neighboring Yugoslavia, a large group of Albanians lived in Yugoslav territories; particularly in Kosovo, Northern and Western Macedonia as well as Southern Montenegro. The Serbs feared that giving Kosovo republican status and the right to secede might end up with the unification of this province with Albania proper. Such a move would end with the establishment of a large Albanian state across the Yugoslav borders. The Serbs often remember the memories of the Second World War, when the Albanians collaborated with German forces, following the Italian withdrawal in 1943, to achieve a larger Albanian state. After the establishment of Federal Yugoslavia in 1946, the Albanians were harshly repressed²⁸, mostly as a sanction against their wartime partnership with the Axis Powers.

One should examine the attitude of Albania proper to the issue of Kosovo in order to evaluate Serbia's fears of the unification of two Albanian-inhabited territories. It should be borne in mind that the Albanians of Kosovo demanded the promotion of their status to that of a constituent republic/nation. Their demands were limited within the scope of Federal Yugoslavia. However, the republican status would mean endowment of the Albanians with the right to

²⁸ P. Moore, "The Albanian Question in the Former Yugoslavia" **RFE/RL Research Report** (1) 14 (3 April 1992) pp7-15, p.9-10

self-determination. The Serbs always presumed that the Kosovo Albanians would use this right to join Albania proper. However, the existence of close contacts between the two Albanian populations of Albania and Kosovo is questionable. In Albania, Enver Hoxha ruled the state through his own version of communism. He was supported by a small cadre of communist party members and there was no political opposition. Hoxha's interpretation of communism was so strict that he even denounced the existence of a true communist regime in the world with the exception of Albania. Later, Albania totally cut off relations with the outside world. Albania aligned itself with no other country (communist and/or democratic) and in the sphere of economics, an autarchic self-sustained system was established. Within this configuration, the Albanians living in Yugoslavia and the political status of the autonomous province of Kosovo were perceived as an internal matter of Yugoslavia.²⁹ Thus Albania pursued a neutral stance to the Kosovo issue during the era of Enver Hoxha.

The Albanians of Kosovo, on the other hand, never gave up their claims to be the seventh republic of Yugoslavia. They argued that they were ruled by the discriminatory policies of the Serbian administration, which left the region underdeveloped with their racial policies favoring the Slav population. In essence, the 1974 constitution raised the status of Kosovo to a *de facto* republic

²⁹ E. Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick* (Boulder, Westview Press 1990)

since the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo were granted equal rights with the six federal republics in the process of presidential elections. All of the eight administrative units (six republics and two autonomous provinces) had the right to participate in the presidential elections through secret voting. The presidency council had eight members with equal votes. Besides, a “system of rotation”³⁰ in presidency was set up to provide equal chance for each unit to achieve top position within the political regime that would come into practice after the death of Tito.

³⁰ Magas, *ibid* p.291

CHAPTER II

KOSOVO BETWEEN 1981-1991

2.1. Kosovo after the Death of Tito

The death of Tito in 1980 led to a sequence of crises, which prepared the ground for disintegration of Yugoslavia within one decade. The problems of the state were in fact residues of the charismatic Yugoslav leader's long rule and they were political, economic and ethnic in nature. On the political scale, one-party rule of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) turned into an oligarchy³¹ of the LCY members, since the party had the monopoly of power in administration, and no civil and/or political opposition was allowed to exist. LCY members became the only beneficiaries of the system. The Yugoslav public did not believe that the League would be able to cope with the problems of the country. The loss of faith in the political cadre's capability gradually led to the "problem of legitimization"³². The Yugoslav people believed that the self-management system failed to function effectively since there was no place for criticism and opposition in politics. It was impossible to suggest alternative ways to solve the political and economic problems in this monolithic system.

³¹ L. Sekelj, *Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration* (Columbia University Press, NY 1993) p.169

³² S.P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia (1962-1991)* (Indiana University Press 1992) p.214

Economic dissatisfactions constituted the second major problem in Yugoslavia. There were two groups who disagreed about alternative solutions to accelerate the development of the economy. The liberal group favored a more decentralized system in which the constituent republics would be authorized for management of the economy. The second group supported re-centralization of the economic system. According to this conservative group, the source of the existing financial problems was the delegation of decision-making power in the economic sphere to the republics through the 1974 constitution³³. What lied at the heart of the public discontent was the failure to develop economically up to the level attained by the contemporary Western European democracies. Although the state was endowed with huge amounts of foreign loans, economic crisis could not be prevented. The economic crises were only frozen by temporary solutions until the beginning of the 1990s.

The third vital problem of Yugoslavia was ethnic/national in character. The communist system, which was founded on the common will of the constituent nations, was no more successful to overcome ethnic disagreements. Various ethnic groups sought to establish their own nation-states, claiming that the Serbs were the predominant nation in Yugoslavia while the others came second in social rank. This stemmed from the failure to attain social integration among the constituent nations of Yugoslavia. These nations always made the

³³ Sekelj ibid p.162

categorization of “we” and “others” in every field of social life. When the national problems were compounded with different levels of economic development in which roughly the northern republics (Slovenia and Croatia) improved rapidly in comparison to the southern republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia), the process of social disintegration started. The advanced republics put the burden of economic crisis on the less developed republics and this attitude sharpened inter-ethnic conflict.³⁴

The Albanians of Kosovo, who made up the majority of the population in the province, were dissatisfied with the long rule of Tito and the communist regime, as well. In the eyes of this ethnic group, Tito’s rule had been repressive, and it was responsible for the backwardness of Kosovo, which had the lowest standard of living and highest rate of unemployment compared to the six constituent republics and the autonomous province of Vojvodina.³⁵ The negative stance of the Albanians *vis-à-vis* the Yugoslav system was displayed through riots and demonstrations even during Tito’s times. The first influential opposition movement was organized in 1968. In 1968, the Albanians demanded republican status for the province and effective Albanian participation in the administration of Kosovo. The 1968 riot was also a protest of the repressive administration of Aleksandar Rankovic, who was the Interior Minister in

³⁴ V. Goati, “The Challenge of Post-Communism” in J. Seroka and V. Pavlovic (eds) *The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation* (M. E. Sharpe, NY and England 1992) p.19

³⁵ Magas *ibid* p.10

Yugoslavia. Rankovic had been in office between the years 1946-1966 and his policies aimed to control the Albanians in Kosovo.³⁶

Although the 1974 constitution enlarged the rule of self-management for Kosovo, the demand for republican status was not totally abandoned from the political agenda of the Albanians. The year 1981 witnessed the second largest Albanian demonstration against the republic of Serbia. The resistance stemmed from a protest movement of the students in Prishtina against poor living conditions in the university campus. The protest of the university students turned into a general riot with the participation of many Albanians who belonged to different social classes, and who were critical of inadequate living conditions in the province. There was a strong belief that the Serbs were responsible for the backward social and economic conditions in Kosovo because of their discriminatory policies. The response of the Serbian administration came swiftly and in a rather harsh manner. Strict martial law was proclaimed in the province, pointing to the seriousness of the situation.

³⁶ J. Gow, *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis* (St. Martin's Press, NY 1992) pp 64-72

2.2. Autonomous Kosovo

Although the issue of Kosovo turned into a crisis in 1999 and became an “international” matter, the province had a symbolic character as being the last of the domino in the process of Yugoslav disintegration. Within the framework of Yugoslavia’s collapse, Kosovo had a peculiar position with two main features, which separated it from any other part of Yugoslavia. The initial signs of dissatisfaction with the Yugoslav communist rule and movements of unrest against the regime started in Kosovo. The 1968 movements of opposition rose to protest the Yugoslav constitution and achieve an independent status within the state and 1981 protests of the post-Tito political system came to the surface in Kosovo. Those movements were the initial signs of the collapse that Yugoslavia gradually went through.

Kosovo had also been the primordial scene for Milosevic’s nationalistic ambitions. After coming to power in 1987, Milosevic concentrated his efforts on strengthening Serbian position in Yugoslavia, which, he deemed, had been weakened during Tito’s rule. On his way towards realizing that aim, which gradually turned into the realization of “Greater Serbia”, he used Kosovo as a means to flare up the nationalistic feelings of Serbs. In so doing, Milosevic pointed to the historical importance of the territory for the Serbs. The six hundredth anniversary of the war against the Ottoman forces at the “Battle of Kosovo” had a symbolic value. During the celebrations that took place in 1989,

Milosevic was able to motivate nationalistic feelings of the Serbs, not only against the Albanians living in Kosovo, but also against other nations in Yugoslavia. After 1981, Kosovo symbolized the “decay of charismatic legitimacy,”³⁷ following the death of Tito and the rise of Serbian nationalism (irredentism) *vis-à-vis* other constituent nations in Yugoslavia.

Examining the matter from the perspective of the Albanians, one may conclude that the demand for independent status was manifested loudly after 1981. Kosovo was granted more autonomous rights by the 1974 constitution. However, the Albanians who made up the majority of the population were eager to achieve the status of a “constituent republic”. Yugoslav statesmen always refrained from granting republican status to Kosovo, although the political status of the province was upgraded to total autonomy. It was, most probably, because of the concern that republican status might lead to independence of Kosovo, once the province was given the right to secede like other constituent republics. The Serbs were aware of the fact that such an attempt of the Albanians might lead to a sequence of demands by other nations. Since Vojvodina was recognized as one of the two autonomous provinces in Yugoslavia (the other one being Kosovo), it was feared that Vojvodina might follow the Kosovo example and search for independence. All those fears of the Yugoslav ruling elite stemmed from the multi-national and multi-ethnic

³⁷ L. Sekelj, *Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration* (Social Science Monographs, Colombia University Press, NY 1993) p.207

character of Yugoslavia. Being aware of the all-inclusive features of the state and possible threats for its survival, the administrators refrained from policies that would lead to the destruction of political and economic integration.

Economic problems were evident in Yugoslavia during the 1970s. There was a clear distinction between the levels of economic development among the constituent republics and autonomous regions. Slovenia and Croatia were at the top of the list of the “developed” areas, whereas Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo could easily be labeled as “underdeveloped”. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the secondary group failed to cope with their economic and financial problems, and they continued to benefit from “central federal fund” for the underdeveloped parts of Yugoslavia. The system of central federal fund provided flow of economic aid from the more developed regions to those, which were unable to raise their economic power. Slovenia and Croatia seemed unwilling to share their gains with the others, and they proposed that the donor republics retain control over the contributions they made by directly investing in selected development projects of the recipients.³⁸ When their demands to reform the system were not fulfilled, two prosperous republics focused on “full confederalisation” of the political system. Such ideas of the “developed” regions can be evaluated as the initial signs of dissatisfaction with the existing political and economic system

³⁸ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism in a Multilateral State* (Macmillan 1997) pp.75-76

and search for alternatives to maintain the better life-conditions that they had compared to the “others”.

Kosovo was not the starting point of the process of Yugoslav dissolution, rather it was the outcome of a series of problems that had existed both in Kosovo and in Yugoslavia. The financial problems in the state can be cited as the most vital of such problems, together with differences in the level of economic development among the constituent republics. Unresolved political and economic problems contributed to the acceleration of domestic dissatisfaction that gradually contributed to the crisis of political legitimacy. Kosovo had always been one of the least prosperous regions of Yugoslavia. When low level of economic improvement was compounded with a very high birth rate, Kosovo had endemic financial problems. Economic problems exacerbated social dissatisfactions in the province. The Albanians believed that the poor conditions of the state were due to the policies followed by the Serbs that held administrative power. The economic crisis gradually led to a legitimacy crisis in Kosovo. The establishment of the “University of Prishtina” in 1970, where the language of education was Albanian and the achievement of enlarged autonomy through the 1974 constitution were beneficial. These came about as a result of Albanian demonstrations to display dissatisfaction with the regime and Tito’s policy of balancing Albanian demands with the preservation of the federal state system.

What made Kosovo peculiar was the inconsistency between the composition of the population and political representation: The Albanian majority living under Serbian control since the end of the Second World War. When the Albanians were able to achieve enlarged autonomy in 1974, this contributed to the rise of national sentiments, since the new state of affairs meant *de facto* self-rule for the Albanian majority. A further characteristic of the region was the low level of social and economic integration with the rest of Yugoslavia. There was a very little contact between Kosovo and the rest of Yugoslavia.

It was not surprising that the student protests about living conditions at the University of Prishtina turned out to be a popular movement of opposition *vis-à-vis* the Serbs in 1981. The student unrest had a snowball effect and people that belonged to various social strata supported and even joined the movement. Civil initiatives like the “Association of Philosophers and Sociologists of Kosovo”³⁹ played a determining role in mobilizing the Albanian population at the time. Mass demonstrations ended up with the slogan “Kosovo republic”. The Serbian regime declared a state of emergency in order to stop the unrest from spreading to other regions and punish those who had taken part in the uprising. It was the beginning of a period of harsh Serbian repression of the Kosovar Albanians. During that period, Albanians were fired from their jobs, imprisoned for no reason; they were discriminated against and suppressed by the Serbian regime.

³⁹ Malcolm, Kosovo...ibid, p.347

2.3. Abolishing Kosovo's Autonomy

Starting from the second half of the 1980s, Serbia's reaction turned to be a national campaign against the Kosovar Albanians. Not only the statesmen and politicians, but also academic circles got involved in activating national sentiments. The 1986 "Memorandum" that was prepared and declared by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAAS), had a decisive role in the process. The Memorandum was about the Serbs of Yugoslavia, namely, their position *vis-à-vis* other nations within Yugoslavia. The main argument was that the Serbs had been mistreated, and that a policy of discrimination had been pursued against them during Tito's times. The Memorandum particularly attacked the 1974 constitutional arrangements, which, it was argued, divided "Serbia" into three parts⁴⁰ and undermined its territorial integrity. It alleged that the Kosovar Albanians had waged a war against the Serbs since 1981 and it demanded that they be stopped. This attempt of SAAS was rather unusual given the history of the Academy. However, as the developments of the following years were to demonstrate, the move was part of a larger design of the Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia. As it was to be understood later by the world public, the expansion of Serbian national sentiments was a means to achieve "Greater Serbia" in the coming years. The notion of "Greater Serbia" came to the surface when it found fertile ground to flourish after 1990, on the

⁴⁰ *ibid*, p. 340

basis of both the domestic conditions of Yugoslavia and the international political environment.

Serbian campaign against the autonomous status of Kosovo ended with the abrogation of this right in 1989 through an amendment made in the constitution. This was a “radical” political change in retrospect. It symbolized the first step of Serbian irredentism. The new era had certain direct influence on the daily life of the Kosovar people and particularly the Albanians who constituted majority of the population. The 1980s started with Albanian demands for more autonomy. The end of the decade saw the abolishing of the autonomous rights of Kosovo.

Following the constitutional change of 1989, mass movements against this political decision started in Kosovo. The Albanians initiated movements of protests. Then a “state of emergency” and “special circumstances” came into being in February 1990. After that, many Albanians who got involved in the protest movements either lost their jobs or they were intimidated by the Serbian security forces. Many Serbs in Belgrade or any other part of Serbia made demonstrations in support of the new political situation created by the Serbian regime. The Serbian campaign continued with more restrictions on the life of Kosovar Albanians. Among such restrictions were the closing of the Albanian newspaper “Rilindja”, the only Albanian-language newspaper in Kosovo, and the passage of laws through abolishing the previous laws that safeguarded the independent education system in Kosovo. All these were

quite stringent measures that limited the previous autonomous status, if not, abolish it altogether.⁴¹

Three alternatives emerged for the Kosovar Albanians after the autonomy of the province was abolished in 1989. The first alternative was to support the political reform program that was initiated by the constitutional amendments of the Serbian regime. The second alternative was to achieve independence of Kosovo, while the third alternative was to join up with Albania proper. The majority of the Albanians chose to struggle for their independence through peaceful methods. Within this political environment, “Democratic League of Kosovo” (LDK), which was founded on 23 December 1989, emerged as the main political organization to materialize that aim under the leadership of a famous writer and literary critic, Ibrahim Rugova. This political movement gradually led to a system of self-rule that was to be recognized only by Kosovar Albanians and supported by Albania proper within the international context. The LDK later turned into an administrative body and established a *sui generis* parallel state structure in Kosovo to constitute a political alternative to Serbian rule, which had total control of the province through the constitutional coup.

⁴¹ A. March and R. Sil, “The Republic of Kosovo (1989-1998) and the Resolution of Ethno-Separatist Conflict: Rethinking Sovereignty in the Post-Cold War Era” at <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/sir01/index.html>

There were many reasons for the establishment of this parallel state structure. After the enforcement of constitutional changes, the Serbian regime put into action a series of repressive measures just to intimidate Albanians and provide obedience to this new state of affairs. Almost all cultural institutions and ministries, together with the Albanian language section in the University of Prishtina, all Albanian-language secondary and elementary schools were closed down. As a response, the Albanians declared the “Republic of Kosovo” on 22 September 1991⁴². They even organized multi-party elections a year later in May 1992, through which the LDK of Rugova got the majority of the votes. A new government was established by Dr. Bujar Bukoshi as prime minister. There were some major achievements of the new “state structure” made by the Albanians. The peaceful way followed by Rugova earned them international sympathy. During the 1992 London Conference gathered to find a solution to the Yugoslav process of disintegration, a “Special Group on Kosovo” also took part in the talks.

⁴² ibid

CHAPTER III

THE DISSOLUTION OF YUGOSLAVIA AND KOSOVO

(1991-1995)

3. 1. The Collapse of Yugoslavia

The *sui generis* role played by charismatic leader Tito in Yugoslav domestic politics and foreign policy is beyond any doubt. However, the era of Tito was not totally safe from problems and internal conflicts. The collapse Yugoslavia did not come about over night; it was the result of a sequence of political, economic and ethnic/national problems, which turned into a snowball effect. The major actors of the communist regime, as well as Tito, were responsible for the downfall of the state, since they ignored these issues and solved the problems on a temporary basis.

The unresolved problems opened a new scene in Yugoslav domestic politics of the 1980s. Combined with the drastic changes taking place in Eastern communist regimes and collapse of the Cold War, the dissatisfied groups within the state started to speak with a louder voice. Those groups strongly criticised the ill-functioning political (federalism) and economic (self-

management) structures⁴³, as being the major causes of ongoing problems. A further development was the rising tide of “nationalism” among the Yugoslav people. Each and every constituent national group started to favour a nationalist solution to the existing problems, while continuously blaming the rest of the population. This was gradually carried to the level of republican administrations. Among the constituent republics, Serbia was playing the leading role in giving primacy to national issues. Slobodan Milosevic’s rise to presidency of the LCY in Serbia by the year 1987 was the first major catalyst for the rising nationalism in this republic. Milosevic had manipulated nationalistic tendencies within the republic to be elected president, and later, he continued to exploit such feelings to maintain his position and materialise his aggressive policies regarding other republics. Nationalism legitimised the extremist policies of Milosevic, who turned out to be an authoritarian president in time.

The Serbian view of the causes of internal crises had been made public even before Milosevic came to power. In 1986, the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences had prepared a “Memorandum”, through which reasons and possible solutions of the Yugoslav crises⁴⁴ had been announced. This was mainly a Marxist criticism of the LCY’s policies since the 1960s. The Memorandum

⁴³A. Pavkovic, “From Yugoslavism to Serbism: The Serb National Idea 1986-1996” Nations and Nationalism, 4 (4) (1998), pp 511-528, p.515

⁴⁴ *ibid* p.513

included an additional part entitled: “The Status of Serbia and the Serb Nation”, which argued that the Serb population in Yugoslavia had been subject to continuing political, economic and cultural discrimination *vis-à-vis* other nations since the establishment of the communist regime. This was very similar to the allegations that were put forward by other constituent nations in Yugoslavia, who often claimed that the Serbs had been the most favoured nation since the establishment of the Yugoslav Kingdom (1918).

Milosevic successfully manipulated the growing nationalistic feelings among the Serbs. In 1989, he displayed a show of strength at Kosovo Polje, on the anniversary of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo. At the celebrations, Milosevic addressed the Serbian crowd in an effective and provocative manner. During the speech, he stressed that the territory of Kosovo witnessed a great heroism of Serbs in 1389; thus the land belonged to the ancestors of this nation and it should stay like that forever. This long speech was important for two reasons; it demonstrated Milosevic’s understanding of politics and gave the first clues of the nature of his future political rule. Besides, he advised the Serbs in Kosovo not to leave their fatherland for any reason. Kosovo region had become the focus of attention for Milosevic and he successfully manipulated the growing tensions between the Serbs and Albanians in order to legitimise his own status in Serbia. Milosevic maintained his presidential position in Serbia through the exploitation of nationalism. Under the leadership of Milosevic, Serbia proposed strong “federalism” as a solution to the political crisis. The main theme was

that decentralization of political power by the 1974 constitution, which strengthened the republican administrations and granted autonomy to the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina by raising them to the level of constituent republics, weakened the Yugoslav central administration and led to the current political deadlock.

The other republics did not share the Serbian view. Particularly Slovenia and Croatia supported an even looser federal system; or rather a “confederal” system through which the republics would be bound only by common foreign policy. The rich northern republic of Slovenia supported a relaxed system of rule in the belief that the federal system was exploited by the poorer republics. Slovenia even proposed an “asymmetric federation”⁴⁵ through which it would enjoy special administrative rights compared to other republics who had minor contributions to the Yugoslav economy. Thus, Slovenia planned to share its wealth with other republics only at the expense of a determining role in politics.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the “recentralization” versus “decentralization” debate dominated Yugoslav politics. The disagreements among the republics were reflected at the LCY Congresses, as well. The 1990 Yugoslav Communist Congress in Belgrade witnessed a Slovene-Serbian political confrontation.

⁴⁵ S.P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War* (Westview Press 1996) p.25

While the Slovenes insisted on a party reform to overcome the political chaos, the Serbs opposed this view. In the end, the Slovene delegation, under the leadership of Milan Kucan, walked out of the Congress and the Croat delegation followed suit. This was the collapse of the LCY. Yugoslavia had to deal with major domestic problems in the 1990s.⁴⁶ These problems included: the federal question (“centralization” versus “decentralization”), the economy (“privatisation and market economy” versus “self-management”), political pluralization (“pluralistic system” with opposition and alternatives versus “single party system”) and finally breakdown of the sense of community within the state as a result of rising nationalism.

What lied behind Milosevic’s policy was the Serb aspiration to achieve dominance in Yugoslav domestic politics. This aim signalled total divergence from “unification of Yugo-Slavs”, an idea of the 1920s and “brotherhood and unity” notion of the communist regime. Thus, “Serbian supremacy” policy was developed as an alternative to “Yugoslav unitarism”⁴⁷ under the influence of internal (political and economic crises) and external (end of the Cold War, period of transition in Eastern European states) factors. Dissatisfaction with the communist regime became more apparent in the 1990s and national conflicts, which had been frozen by the regime under the conditions of the Cold War

⁴⁶ *ibid* p.33-34

⁴⁷ I. Banac, “Post-Communism as Post-Yugoslavism: The Yugoslav Non-Revolutions of 1989-1990” in I. Banac (ed), *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1992) p.169

dominated the political agenda of Yugoslavia. It was clear that the South Slavs: the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, who were supposed to constitute a single community of Yugoslavia, were no longer able to live peacefully under a single flag.

Statements of Milosevic regarding unification of all the Serbs within the borders of Yugoslavia and abandonment of the autonomous status of both Kosovo and Vojvodina in 1989 were strongly criticised by Slovenia and Croatia. They responded to Serbia's arbitrary practices by holding multi-party elections in April and May 1990 respectively. In both republics the victors of these elections were not reformist communists; rather the parties, which committed themselves to a "confederal"⁴⁸ solution to the Yugoslav political crisis achieved considerable success. In Slovenia, a coalition of Christian Democrats, Slovene Democrats and Social Democrats were the participants in the new government, although Milan Kucan, who had been a former communist leader, was elected president. In Croatia, the winner was the nationalist Croat National Union (HDZ) headed by Franjo Tudjman, a former general of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA).

⁴⁸ *ibid* p.180

Slovenia and Croatia went one step further and prepared an alternative federal constitution to replace the existing problematic one. The proposed constitution envisaged a “minimalist” confederal system, since the basic aim of the two republics was to strengthen the administrative structures of the constituent republics, while reducing the role of the federal centre. According to this minimalist confederal structure, the centre would have jurisdiction on matters like commerce, customs and agriculture whereas the constituent republics would have their own security system and armed forces.⁴⁹ Slovenia and Croatia acted in harmony in order to resolve the crisis in Yugoslavia, which was about the future political structure of the state. Milosevic totally rejected the Slovene-Croat proposal.

The tension between Serbia and the rich republics of Slovenia and Croatia resulted in a total split on 25 June 1991 when the latter two declared the establishment of their own independent states. This was a shocking move for Serbia. In response, Milosevic said that all the Serbs living outside the boundaries of Serbia had the right to self-determination⁵⁰. Milosevic’s attitude, compounded with his earlier statements, had been provocative and pointed to the redrawing the boundaries of “Serbia”. By 1991, the Serbs living in the Krajina region of Croatia (where they constituted the majority) had already seceded from the republic by declaring Krajina the “Serbian Autonomous

⁴⁹ *ibid* p.181

⁵⁰ Rogel *ibid* p.21

Region”. In addition, Milosevic sent the JNA forces both to Slovenia and Croatia, with the allegation to preserve Yugoslav territorial integrity. The Slovene national forces defeated the JNA within 10 days. In Croatia, the JNA succeeded in grasping one third of this state’s territories, which remained under Serbian control until 1995.

Serbia was supported only by Montenegro. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, which were comparatively poorer, followed the line of Slovenia and Croatia and favoured the idea of a “looser” confederation. However, when they realised that keeping Yugoslavia intact was not possible, both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia proclaimed their independence in 1991. The following year, Serbia and Montenegro got together to form the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in the absence of four of the former constituent republics. By the year 1992, Yugoslavia had totally collapsed.

3.2. The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, a sequence of intra-state (civil) wars and inter-state wars (among the newly independent states) took place. The confrontations had attracted external interest and they had been internationalised through the participation of foreign states and international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union and NATO in the conflicts. Among them, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which erupted in

1992, had been the longest and most destructive of all confrontations in ex-Yugoslavia. Both the collapse of Yugoslavia and Milosevic's encouragement of the Serbs to achieve "Greater Serbia" led to the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ethnic composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina was unique. The Muslims, who were recognised as one of the constituent nations of Yugoslavia by the 1974 constitution, made up 44% of the population, and the Serbs made up 33% of the population, whereas the Croats constituted 17%. Shortly after the international recognition of the Bosnian state in 1992, Serbs living within the borders of this new entity declared their independent state entitled the "Serb Republic of Bosnia", imitating their co-nationals in Krajina region of Croatia. This was the implementation of Milosevic's project to establish Greater Serbia with the inclusion of all the Serbs living in former Yugoslav territories. The Croats, who received full support from the Tudjman regime, had, meanwhile, proclaimed their own independent state, "Herzeg-Bosna", on the Bosnian territories where they constituted the majority, further destabilising Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbian and Croatian claims of independence started the "Bosnia War".

The Bosnian state failed to react to the separatists effectively because it had no military power to speak of. In addition, the United Nations “arms embargo” introduced⁵¹ in 1991 against Yugoslavia was still in force. Although Yugoslavia collapsed, the United Nations embargo was not lifted. The United Nations arms embargo had prolonged the Bosnia war for two reasons. First, the Serbs got the upper hand militarily *vis-à-vis* other nations since the JNA was under full Serbian command. The FRY’s (Serbia and Montenegro) claims of succession of ex-Yugoslavia enabled the Serbs to use the artillery and ammunition of the JNA, irrespective of the United Nations embargo. Besides, the Serbs were generous enough to support their co-nationals who made claims of independence claims against the newly independent host states, which used to be part of rump Yugoslavia. The Bosnians did not have the necessary material to defend themselves against either the Serbs and Croats. When this inferiority was combined with the arms embargo, Bosnians were left almost defenceless. A further impediment for Bosnians was Western unwillingness to intervene in the matter militarily since the Bosnia war was defined as a “civil war”, thus an internal matter of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover, the United Nations peacekeeping forces “UNPROFOR” (United Nations Protection Force), which was sent in 1992 did not military intervene in the matter for fear that the lives of the United Nations personnel⁵² would be in danger.

⁵¹ N. Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (Macmillan, London 1996) pp.242-243

⁵² *ibid* p. 247

Throughout the Bosnia war, the Serbs displayed increased violence against the Muslims. A programme of “ethnic cleansing” was put into practice in Serb-controlled regions of Bosnia. The world media broadcasted news about the Serbian detention camps, through which ethnic cleansing was materialised by rape, murder and torture. Serbian violence resulted in a major wave of exodus from the Bosnian cities under Serbian control and/or siege, leading to the problems of refugees and displaced people. The presence of United Nations forces did not prevent Serbian actions. On the contrary, their existence gave a free hand to the Serbs in their actions when they realised that UNPROFOR constituted an impediment or just a verbal justification on the part of Western governments for European military intervention. The United Nations plan of establishing safe territories under its control did not work either. Even the “safe heavens”⁵³ which were spared for Muslim civilians, including six Bosnian cities (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Goradze, Bihac and Srebrenica) could not be protected from Serbian attacks.

The peace plans that were prepared by international organizations like the United Nations and the European Union failed to end the Bosnia war. The atrocities continued until the Croatian forces were finally persuaded by Croatia proper to fight on the side of the Bosnians against the Serbs. By the year 1994,

⁵³ M.F. Goldman, *Revolution and Change in Eastern Europe* (M. E. Sharpe, NY and London 1997) p.353

the two parties formed the “Muslim-Croat Federation”⁵⁴ and unified their military and manpower *vis-à-vis* the Bosnian Serbs. In 1995, Croatia made a sudden attack against the Krajina Serbs by successfully destroying their forces and re-establishing authority in entire Croatia. The unification of Muslim-Croat forces, the defeat of Krajina Serbs by Croatia and the small-scale NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs prepared the ground for peace in Bosnia war. The war finally ended with the acceptance of the Dayton Peace Agreement by all parties in November 1995.

The Dayton Peace led to the establishment of a confederal state in Bosnia, which was made up of the “Muslim-Croat Federation” and “Republica Srpska” (Serb Republic) owning 51% and 49% of the territories respectively. The peace agreement allowed the federal entities to develop “parallel special relationships”⁵⁵ with their neighbours. The Muslim-Croat Federation could establish close contact with Croatia whereas the Serb Republic could do the same with Serbia. This clause of the agreement was criticised to a large extent, since it enabled continuous divergence among the new constituent federal republics, whose establishment had already depended on ethnic and religious differences. However, the Bosnian confederation continued to survive to this date, although internal problems exist and the two federal entities could not integrate socially and economically.

⁵⁴ *ibid* p.380

⁵⁵ Malcolm, Bosnia... *ibid* p.267

3.3. Response of the International Community to the Yugoslav

Dissolution

The Yugoslav dissolution took place in the post-Cold War environment, when the Western European states were busy with reforming and redefining the roles of Western organizations that were established under conditions of the Cold War. Initially, the European Union states failed to put forward a coherent policy towards Yugoslavia, which would satisfy all the members. Instead, the European Union states declared that they favoured the continuation of the status quo, ignoring the existence of independent states, which emerged from communist Yugoslavia. Germany supported the new states, whereas the British and the French were hesitant to react positively and swiftly. In the end, Germany legally recognized Slovenia and Croatia simultaneously by forcing other European Union members to accept this fait accompli. The European Union members acted likewise and recognized the new republics (1992). The United States, on the other hand, was busy with domestic issues and the campaigns for the 1992 presidential elections. The Bush administration was careful about not making foreign policy commitments on the eve of elections. The United States military intervention, which was made in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had been binding for the Bush administration; thus Bush did not wish to make similar connections in any other part of the world.

Yugoslavia had lost its strategic value for the West, compared to the Cold War period. The Yugoslav alternative to the communist camp and the non-aligned foreign policy line was not supported by the Western states any more in the absence of ideological confrontation between the two blocs. Still, the European Union and the United Nations worked for a possible peace throughout the Bosnia war. The Vance-Owen plan of 1992, Owen-Stoltenberg plan of 1993 can be enumerated as examples. The election of Clinton as president in the United States accelerated the endeavours for peace since he was concerned with the matter more than the Bush administration who used to evaluate Bosnia conflict as “a matter of the Europeans”⁵⁶. However, the response of Western Europe was ineffective and led to the escalation of the conflict⁵⁷. European states insisted on diplomatic initiatives and economic sanctions, which were agreed upon under the auspices of the United Nations. When the peace proposals were rejected by the aggressors in Bosnia, NATO air strikes were put into effect by the enforcement of the United States. Only after the realization of the NATO air strikes, the peace proposal put forward by the Contact Group⁵⁸ (the United States, Great Britain, Russia, France, Germany and Italy) was enforced upon the Bosnian Serbs. Most scholars and historians argued that Western military intervention had been a late response to Serbian atrocities; the

⁵⁶S.L. Burg, “Why Yugoslavia Fell Apart” *Current History*, (92) 577 (1993) p.361

⁵⁷W.R. Duncan, “Yugoslavia’s Break-Up” in W.R. Duncan and Jr. G.P. Holman (eds) *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict: The Former SU and Yugoslavia* (Westview Press, Boulder 1994) p. 36

⁵⁸ The Contact Group consisted of: the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. It was originally established by the 1992 London Conference on Yugoslavia.

Western unwillingness to get involved militarily had encouraged Serbian aggression and prolonged the Bosnia war.

3.4. The Events in Kosovo

The lifting of autonomy by the Milosevic regime in 1989 had been a turning point in the recent history of Kosovo. The following years witnessed confrontations between the Albanians, who struggled to regain the autonomy and achieve independence and the Serbian regime, which made every effort to maintain a dominant status *vis-à-vis* the Albanian majority. Kosovo continued to be a source of conflict between the two nations in the post-Cold War period. However, the attitude of the Milosevic regime deteriorated after 1989 and the repression of Albanians continued. Milosevic benefited from the ongoing tension in Kosovo to strengthen his own political career and to maintain control over the Albanians in Kosovo.

The Albanians reacted swiftly to the lifting of autonomy. In 1990, the Kosovo Parliament, which was banned by the Serbian authorities, prepared a new constitution that declared the province of Kosovo a “separate republic”.⁵⁹ The following year, they held a referendum among the Albanian population through which the Albanians declared their willingness for a separate state of Kosovo.

⁵⁹ B. Lombardi, “Kosovo: Introduction to Yet Another Balkan Problem” European Security 5 (2) (1996), pp 256-278, p.263

The Kosovo independent state was proclaimed in 1991, and the parliamentary and presidential elections were held in 1992. The victor of the first “independent” elections in Kosovo was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) under the leadership of the prominent Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, who used to be the president of Kosovo Writers’ Union. Starting from the year 1992, the Albanians formed their “parallel state structure” in Kosovo. That political entity was based on the establishment of parallel state institutions to those already existing under Serbian rule. Education and health-care centres, together with the judiciary, which functioned underground, could be enumerated as examples of those parallel structures. The shadow state was financed by the Albanians living outside the borders of Kosovo.

Following the establishment of underground state institutions by the Albanians, repression of the Serbian administration intensified. When the Albanian moves toward more freedom was compounded with the eruption of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Belgrade administration made every effort to stick to the remaining parts of ex-Yugoslavia together under its control. Annual reports of various international human rights organizations displayed the fact that the Serbian administration had become very repressive against the Albanians particularly after the year 1992, out of fear that the Albanian majority in Kosovo would separate itself from the FRY by proclaiming independent statehood. The records of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are very telling in this sense. Those organizations mainly focused on the violations

of civil and political rights in Kosovo. Such violations involved arbitrary detention, torture and ill treatment of the Albanians; dismissal from jobs on the basis of ethnicity, banning the meetings of underground parallel state structure and the restrictions upon the Albanian-language press⁶⁰. A further implementation of the Milosevic regime was to settle large number of Serbian refugees, who fled from the Bosnian War in Kosovo. The aim of the Serbian regime was to increase the number of Serbs in the province, which was overwhelmingly populated by Albanians. This Serbian policy of settlement was meaningful, since the Serbs constituted only 9% of the population in Kosovo, and this attempt was directed towards Kosovo Albanians who had the highest birth rate compared to other ethnic groups within the boundaries of ex-Yugoslavia.

Although Serbian repression against Albanians and human rights violations intensified particularly after the declaration of independence in Kosovo, the “parallel state” established by this ethnic group continued to function underground. Total independence from Serbia remained to be the basic aim of the Albanians. Albanian shadow state functioned to achieve two major targets. The aim of this underground system was to evolve towards a fully sovereign Albanian state. The health, education and social security systems were handled by the Albanians, and they were already functioning parallel to the existing

⁶⁰ *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993 (Events of 1992)*, p.264 and *Amnesty International Report 1994 (January-December 1993)*, p.319-321

Serbian state structure. The other aim was to gain international recognition for Albanian struggle against the authoritarian rule of the Serbs and for the proposed independent state of Kosovo.

Non-violent measures had been used by the Albanians on the way towards realizing their political objectives. Rugova's point was that only peaceful methods and refraining from the use of arms could contribute to the achievement of legal international recognition for the Albanian cause. However, not all the Albanians in Kosovo agreed with the pacifist stance, or what some called the "Gandhian" way of Rugova. Some believed that only an actual fight against the Serbs would advance the Albanian cause. Gradually this group gained strength, through full support of some hard-liner Albanians. The hard-liners got the upper hand, particularly after the exclusion of the Kosovo issue from the agenda of the Dayton Peace negotiations. When the Bosnia war ended with approval of the Dayton Peace Agreement by all the warring parties in 1995, the Albanians understood that the future status of Kosovo would not be formulated together with Bosnia-Herzegovina. The expectations of the Albanians had not been fulfilled by Dayton, since the Albanians were not invited to the peace talks and the future status of Kosovo was not included in the peace accords.

There were several factors, which led to the exclusion of Kosovo from the agenda of Dayton peace negotiations. The Contact Group, who prepared the merits of the peace and the Milosevic regime shared a common cause: application and continuation of peace among the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Contact Group was aware that they needed Serbia's cooperation for the realization of the agreement. In addition, the United States and the European states chose neither to support nor to acknowledge an independent state in Kosovo in the belief that a separate entity in this region would further complicate the situation on the eve of an armistice in Bosnia. The Europeans believed that an independent state in Kosovo would constitute an example for future movements of secession. In addition, such an attitude might end the positive stance of Milosevic to Dayton, since the Serbian regime had always evaluated the crisis in Kosovo as an "internal matter". Legal international recognition of independent Kosovo might annoy the Serbian regime and the war in Bosnia might restart.

The Western policy makers had two main considerations.⁶¹ First, the Kosovo case might be considered as an example of "self-determination", leading to proposed national movements of separation in the Balkans. The immature peace in Bosnia might be influenced negatively, and this might lead to the resumption of fights among the multiple religious groups living on these

⁶¹ R. Caplan, "International Diplomacy and the Crisis in Kosovo" International Affairs 74 (4) (1998), pp 745-761, p.755

territories. Second, recognition of Kosovo's independence might further destabilise the Balkans by carrying the Albanian question to the political agenda of the peninsula. An independent Kosovo might create questions about the future status of this state and the reactions of the Albanians living outside the borders of this new political formation. The major concern of foreign observers was that the Albanian population living outside Kosovo would follow the example of Kosovo Albanians and secede from their host countries. This theory held water especially for the Albanians in Macedonia, who make up nearly one third of that state's population. A further notion was that all the Albanians in the surrounding territories of Kosovo, including Albania proper, might unite to achieve "Greater Albania" at the centre of the Balkans. All those fears of the Western policy-makers and political analysts led to a political preference of ignoring the situation in Kosovo, concentrating on the peace in Bosnia instead.

The Kosovo Albanians changed strategy in resisting the Serbs. Starting from 1995, hard-liners gained the upper hand in Kosovo. Insisting on the use of force *vis-à-vis* the Serbs, a small group of extremist Albanians established the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The founders of the KLA argued that repressive policies of the Serbs against the Albanian population did not diminish, since there existed no mechanism of opposition to stop them. This theorem of the KLA founders and their supporters was to be compounded with actual attacks against Serbian targets and KLA insurgencies, gradually

intensified both in quantity and quality. Thus, KLA rejected both the non-violent approach of Rugova's LDK and the attitude of the Western powers who, from the Albanian point of view, rewarded Serbian aggression⁶² through the Dayton Peace Agreement.

⁶² G. Xhudo, "Ethnic Violence Escalates in Kosovo" Jane's Intelligence Review, March 1997

CHAPTER IV

TURKEY AND THE BALKANS

4.1. Historical Background of the Relations

The founding elite focused on maintaining independence and territorial integrity following the establishment of the Turkish Republic under the leadership of Atatürk in 1923. The Balkans was vital in foreign policy formulations of the young Turkish Republic. The historic and cultural ties with the Balkans had been a catalyst for close relations with the states in this region. Shortly after signing the Lousanne Treaty (24 July 1923), Turkey concluded bilateral agreements with the Balkan states. Friendship agreements were signed with Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on 15 December 1923, 18 October 1925 and 28 October 1925 respectively⁶³. Turkey had also signed “*pacte d’entente cordiale*” with Greece on 30 October 1930, which symbolized the intensified bilateral relations between the two states.

Turkey initiated the gathering of a series of Balkan conferences with the attendance of the regional states between 1930-1933, which brought about the foundation of the Balkan Entente on 9 February 1934. Turkey, Greece,

⁶³ İ. Soysal, *Türk Dış Politikası İncelemeleri için Kılavuz (1919-1993)* (OBİV Yayınları, İstanbul 1993) pp.41-44

Romania and Yugoslavia⁶⁴ were the members of the Balkan Entente, whereas Bulgaria and Albania did not join. The entente aimed to maintain the *status quo* in the post-World War I period and it included provisions of collective security and collaboration among the members in case of a security threat. The Balkan Entente was designed to resist threats that might come from the revisionist states not satisfied with the peace agreements that ended World War I. Bulgaria was the revisionist state of the Balkans. However, the actual security challenge of World War II made the entente useless at the beginning of the 1940s and the Balkans became a battleground.

After the end of World War II, ideological divisions shaped the relations of the states in the Balkans. During the Cold War period, Turkey and Greece were members of NATO; Bulgaria and Romania took part in the communist camp while Albania and Yugoslavia followed their independent ways. In the context of the American containment policy of the Soviet Union, Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation on 28 February 1953, which constituted the basis of the Balkan Pact of the Cold War period⁶⁵. In 1954, the pact was transformed into an alliance. Like the Balkan Entente of the 1930s, the Balkan Pact was designed to maintain cooperation in the field of defence among its members. Political and territorial disagreements that erupted

⁶⁴ İ. Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Anlaşmaları (Cilt I, 1920-1945)* (TTKB, Ankara 1983) pp.447-453

⁶⁵ O. Sander, *Balkan Gelişmeleri ve Türkiye (1945-1965)* (Sevinç Matbaası, Ankara 1969)

between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus and the non-aligned movement of the Yugoslav leader Tito made the Balkan Pact ineffective in time.

Under Atatürk's leadership, Turkey paid utmost attention to develop peaceful relations, particularly with the neighboring states but friendly relations between Turkey and Greece lasted only for a decade. During the Cold War period, Turkey's relations with its Balkan neighbor, Greece, was problematic. Turkey's relations with its second neighbor in the Balkans, Bulgaria, worsened in the 1980s. Violations of the rights of the Turkish community in Bulgaria led to a political crisis between Turkey and Bulgaria. The issue was resolved after the regime change in Bulgaria and the participation of the Party of Rights and Freedoms of the Turkish population in the coalition government, which was established after the free general elections of 1991.

The geographical situation of Turkey is *sui generis*, since the country is located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Geography has been advantageous for the state in the sense of easy access to various regions and the economic gains that might accrue from transportation links (highways and sea-routes). However, the long border with the Soviet Union in the north-east had been a security challenge for Turkey, particularly towards the end of the Second World War⁶⁶. Turkey sought to become a member of NATO shortly after the establishment of

⁶⁶ S.Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War: An "Active" Neutrality* (Cambridge University Press 1989) p.180

this organization, perceiving an actual security threat coming from the Soviet Union. The strategic location of Turkey, sharing long sea and land borders with the Soviet Union and owning the Straits contributed to its accession to NATO as a “frontier” state. Turkey’s membership to Western international organizations came about as a result of convergence of Turkish and Western foreign policy priorities, on the one hand, and the strategic and geographical location of Turkey, on the other⁶⁷.

During the Cold War years it was often stated that Turkey constituted a “bridge” between the opposite cultures of the East and the West thanks to its location at the converging point of the two continents and the Ottoman heritage. In addition, the common border with the Soviet Union made Turkey a “flank country” of NATO, by further increasing its strategic importance in Western security concerns.

Whether Turkey actually plays the role of a bridge between the two continents and two different cultures is an open-ended question. But the evaluation of Turkey’s role depends on two determinants. First, Turkey’s “capabilities” in terms of domestic and foreign policy, economic power and security should be examined, since those factors constitute the real power and influence of a state *vis-a-vis* the others.

⁶⁷ K. Karpat, *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition (1950-1974)* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1975)

The bridge role has to be supported by the state's actual power. Second, the "perception of other states" should be accounted for. The activities of Turkey as a "bridge" should be accepted and appreciated by other states. Recognition of Turkey as a "bridge" by other states would help legitimize its foreign policy undertakings. Taking into consideration Turkey's problematic relations with its neighbours as a residue of the Ottoman imperial past and the continuous exclusion of Turkey from the European Union enlargement process, it is hard to argue that it plays the role of a bridge between East and West. Thus, it would be safe to say that Turkey acts as a "barrier"⁶⁸ or a "frontier"⁶⁹ in the region. Taking into consideration the claim of acting as a bridge between Asia and Europe, one should raise the point that geographical location is not enough to determine the role of a certain state within the international realm.

⁶⁸ I.O. Lesser, *Bridge or Barrier: Turkey and the West After the Cold War* (RAND 1992)

⁶⁹ S. Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?: Turkey's Post-Cold War Geopolitical Posture" **The International Spectator**, (34) (1 January-March 1999) pp.63-78

The Balkans has an historic and strategic importance for Turkish foreign policy. Since the region remained under Ottoman rule for more than five hundred years, Turkish cultural influence on these territories is self-evident. The Balkans is home to several groups of Turkish communities while large numbers of people in Turkey have Balkan origins. Turkey signed emigration agreements with Yugoslavia in 1938 and 1953⁷⁰, large groups of people came and settled in Turkey as the beneficiaries of those bilateral agreements. This created a further link with the region. Turkey's political structure and geographical location led to its membership of NATO during the Cold War period, and its foreign policy actions were shaped under the conditions of bipolarity. Stemming from ideological divisions, relations between the Balkan states who belonged to opposite camps were limited. Although problematic relations with Greece who was also a member of NATO continued, Turkey's foreign policy towards the Balkans developed in accordance with the requirements of the Cold War. Except the Turkish-Bulgarian political crisis of the 1980s that emerged from the mistreatment of the Turkish community in Bulgaria, Turkey's relations with the Balkan states were far from being problematic, although limited contacts existed with Albania and Romania.

⁷⁰ Ş. Kut, "Turks of Kosovo: What to Expect?" in <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/percept/V-3/skut-4.htm>

4.2. The Post-Cold War Period

4.2.1. General Framework of Turkish Foreign Policy

The end of the Cold War signalled the end of ideological East-West divide and brought about both “opportunities” and “challenges”⁷¹ to Turkish foreign policy at the beginning of the 1990s. Besides, Turkey -with its economic and political potential to play an active and determining role in its periphery-was perceived as an effective regional power by most analysts⁷² of international relations. Geographically, the Balkans acts as a “corridor” between Turkey and the European continent⁷³. Turkey is not in a position to ignore Balkan developments in her foreign policy calculations; besides, the rapid domestic and external changes in the region urges Turkey to take a more active stance.

The Gulf War of 1991 was a watershed in post-Cold War Turkish foreign policy. In the past, Turkey had stayed away from “inter-Arab conflicts”⁷⁴ but it got involved in the 1991 Gulf War by fully complying with the United Nations resolutions⁷⁵. One should not neglect the role played by President Özal⁷⁶, who

⁷¹ E. Rouleau, “The Challenges to Turkey” *Foreign Affairs*, (72)5 (1995) pp.110-126, p.113

⁷² R.S. Chase, E.B. Hill and P. Kennedy, “Pivotal States and US Strategy” *Foreign Affairs*, (75)1 (1996) pp.33-51

⁷³ B. Oran, “Türkiye’nin Balkan ve Kafkas Politikası” *SBF Dergisi*, (50)12 (Ocak-Haziran 1995) pp.271-294

⁷⁴ A. Mango, *Turkey: The Challenge of A New Role* (Preager 1994) p.112

⁷⁵ A. Nachmani, *Turkey and the Middle East* (BESA Center for Strategic Studies 1999) p.8-9

⁷⁶ S. Sayari “ Turkey: The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis” *Middle East Journal* (46) 1, pp.9-21 , p.10

had been very active during the crisis and took the initiative to make Turkey “part” of the conflict irrespective of the criticisms raised by the military and foreign policy establishment. The existence of a sizeable Kurdish population living very close to Turkish-Iraqi border was a major source of concern for Turkey. The Turkish establishment feared that the Gulf War might end up with total control of the PKK in Northern Iraq. PKK benefited largely from the existing security vacuum in Northern Iraq and found shelter on the territories very near to the Turkish border. Under the circumstances, Turkey continued to fight the PKK, and it achieved a considerable success towards the end of the 1990s.

Turkey’s search for full membership to the European Union has been one of the most vital themes of its foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Since the establishment of the Republic Turkey has turned its face towards Western Europe. Turkey aimed to incorporate itself into appropriate Western- type of political, economic institutions and way of living since this part of Europe symbolized the advanced standard of living for the Turkish founding elite. This purpose of Turkish foreign policy which goes back to the early years of the Republic, found fertile ground to flourish during the Cold War period. Turkey’s membership to Western organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1948), the Council of Europe (1949) and NATO (1952) had been realized under the specific conditions of ideological confrontation and bipolarity. Turkish application to the European Community for membership, shortly after the Greek initiative to join this organization in

1959, seems to be the logical extension of Turkish foreign policy, which was directed towards being part of the West. Turkey signed the “Ankara Agreement of Association” with the European Community in 1963, which constituted the legal base for eventual Turkish membership. Turkey made its application to European Community simultaneously with a similar Greek attempt. This was not a simple coincidence; rather it was evidence and outcome of the “Greek factor”⁷⁷ that influenced Turkey’s relationship with the West. Turkey’s full membership to the “European Union”⁷⁸ has not been materialized until today. Turkey signed the agreement of Customs Union with the European Union in 1995 and legally bound itself by accepting the economic obligations of the organization. The Customs Union Agreement has been a “unilateral” liability for Turkey since the Union did not declare a certain timetable for Turkey’s admission to the European Union on the basis of this agreement. Right after the European Union Luxembourg Summit of 1997, at which the Union did not mention Turkey as a “candidate state” for membership, Turkey even cut off communication channels with the Union. However, the European Union declared Turkey as one of the candidates at the Helsinki Summit of 1999; albeit refraining once more from setting a timetable for eventual admission.

⁷⁷ A. Eralp “Turkey and the EC in the Changing Post-War International System” in C. Balkır and A.M. Williams, *Turkey and Europe* (Pinter 1993) p.25

⁷⁸ The EC took the name EU with the signature of the Maastricht Agreement in 1992

Leaving aside the domestic problems, which Turkey has to overcome, full membership to the European Union seems even more difficult within the post-Cold War political context. After the collapse of the communist regimes in East Europe, the European Union gave priority to integration of those states with the Union by accelerating the process of “enlargement”. In addition, the Union developed the notion of “Common Foreign and Security Policy” (CFSP) and “European Security and Defence Identity” (ESDI), which were materialized through enhancing the role of the Western European Union as the security arm of the European Union within close relationship with NATO. Despite being a member of NATO, Turkey has only achieved an “observer” status at the Western European Union in 1992.

Continuous exclusion of Turkey from the structures of the European Union⁷⁹ and the Western European Union is something to be reckoned with for Turkey’s foreign and security policies in two respects. First, the European Union designs to make the Western European Union the “European pillar” of NATO through common and/or integrated military operations would necessitate the involvement of Turkey, being a member of the NATO Council⁸⁰, in the decision-making process for the realization of joint action. However the European Union insistence on not granting Turkey the status of “full member” and the policy of excluding non-European Union member states

⁷⁹ W. Park “Turkey’s EU Candidacy: From Luxembourg to Helsinki-to Ankara” Mediterranean Politics, (5)3 (Autumn 2000) pp.31-53, p.51

⁸⁰ M. Müftüler-Bac “Turkey’s Role in the EU’s Security and Foreign Policies” Security Dialogue, (31) 4 (December 2000) pp.489-502, p. 493

from the decision-making mechanism concerning future joint actions between the Western European Union and NATO endangers Turkey's active participation in NATO decision-making bodies. Second, the rejection of Turkey displays a new understanding in the West which involves a redefinition of "European identity" simultaneously with the transformation and reshaping of Western organizations by including new members, most of which were ex-communist states of the Eastern camp. In fact the European Union attitude of keeping Turkey rather "outside" the framework of Western organizations almost breaks the links between Turkey and Europe since security⁸¹ has always been the building bloc of Turkey's relationship with the West.

Since 1991, a new factor has been added to the Turkish-European Union relations: the membership application of the Greek Cypriots to the European Union on behalf of the whole island. This was a rather interesting attempt, particularly when the existence of two separate administrative bodies on the island is taken into consideration. In the northern part of the island, there exists the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus"; in the south there is the "Cyprus Republic" which in essence represents only the Greeks who live in that part of the island. However, the European Union considered the Greek application for full membership as if it was a single state, which represented the whole population of the island: the Turks and the Greeks. The Union's positive stance

⁸¹ G. Aybet and M. Müftüler-Bac "Transformations in Security and Identity after the Cold War" International Journal, (Autumn 2000) pp.567-582, p.569

on the issue of Greek Cypriot application was an attempt to carry one of the problematic issues between Turkey and Greece to the European Union platform. While the Union decided to start negotiations with the Greek Cypriots, it insisted on prolonging consultations with Turkey for admission.

Cyprus is just one of the problematic issues between Turkey and Greece. Two states disagree over a series of political and legal problems. The sources of continuous political confrontation between Turkey and Greece can be enumerated as follows⁸²: the Aegean-related problems (militarization of the Aegean Islands of non-military status, delimitation of the continental shelf, extension of territorial waters to 12 miles by Greece, issues of airspace command and control); violations of human rights of the Turkish minority living in Greece (particularly in Western Thrace) and the Cyprus conflict. It should be noted that the problematic bilateral relations erupted shortly after two states achieved independence by fighting against each other and continued until the contemporary times. Any examination of two states' attitudes toward each other demonstrates that competition has been the rule, and that cooperation has been the exception⁸³ in bilateral relations. Interestingly enough, rivalry over the above-mentioned issues continued during the Cold War period although the two states remained allies within the framework of NATO.

⁸² Ş.S. Gürel "Turkey and Greece: A Difficult Aegean Relationship" in C. Balkır and A.M. Williams *ibid*, pp.167-180

⁸³ *ibid*, p.163

During the second half of the 1990s, the “Greek factor” played an influential role in Turkey’s foreign policy priorities. Apart from the efforts to make Cyprus a member of the EU, the Greek side developed new projects to deploy Russian made S-300 missiles to the island. This attempt was severely rejected by Turkey. The Greek side claimed that the missiles were purchased as a means of defence. However, the actual range of the missiles created security concerns on the part of Turkey since they were capable of endangering the southern territories of Turkey. In essence the Greek move aimed to question the existence of Turkish military deployment on the island⁸⁴. However, Turkey’s rejection was so strict that the missile crisis ended up with the deployment of S-300 missiles on the island of Crete in 1999, instead of Cyprus.

The “Greek factor” has also been influential in Turkey’s relations with the European Union, as well, because Greece joined the club in 1981 while Turkey was left outside. Since its admission to the Union, Greece insistently obscured Turkish access to the EU. The Greek attitude towards Turkey’s membership to the Union became a means of its foreign policy towards Turkey. Greece continuously rejected Turkey’s admission to the Union and vetoed the granting of legal financial assistance to Turkey on the basis of the agreements concluded with the Union. The negative stance of Greece continued until Öcalan, the leader of the terrorist organization PKK, was arrested in Kenya. Shortly after

⁸⁴ F. Sönmezoğlu, *Türkiye Yunanistan İlişkileri ve Büyük Güçler: Kıbrıs, Ege ve Diğer Sorunlar* (Der Yayınları, İstanbul 2000) p.302

his arrest, he admitted receiving aid from Greece in a variety of ways for activities of PKK against Turkey in general and for his escape from Syria to Kenya during his testimony. The Öcalan affair was vital because it led to a change in the attitude of Greece towards Turkey. Since 1999, Greece has been following a low-profile line against Turkey within the European Union despite the existence of bilateral problems.

4.2.2 Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans in the Post-Cold War Period

During the Cold War years, Turkish foreign policy was preoccupied with protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty under the Soviet communist threat just across its borders⁸⁵. Although Turkey had problems with its neighbours in the Balkans and the Middle East, such disagreements were only secondary in rank. The collapse of the communist regimes in the Balkans opened a new scene in Turkish external relations. In Bulgaria, for instance, discriminatory policies applied by the old regime against the Turkish minority ended with the collapse of the communist party rule under the leadership of Jivkov in 1989. The new Bulgarian regime sought to develop stronger ties with Turkey in various fields. Bulgaria tried to repair its relations with Turkey for

⁸⁵ Y. Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, (Westport, Connec, Praeger, 1999)

three basic reasons⁸⁶. First, it needed Turkish support to be a member of NATO⁸⁷. Since Turkey was already a member of this organization, owning the second largest army within it after the United States, Turkey's influence might be of important use for Bulgaria. Lastly, the existence of a large Turkish minority, which constitutes almost 10% of the Bulgarian population, makes Turkey a focus of attention for Bulgaria in its foreign policy calculations. The change of attitude in Bulgarian foreign policy towards Turkey led to a rapprochement in relations and the two states signed a number of bilateral military and economic cooperation agreements. This signaled the beginning of a new era in relationships between the two states.

Among ex-communist states of the Balkans, Albania, had been the latest to start the period of transformation. The first multi-party elections took place in 1991, long after the death of Enver Hoxha (1985)⁸⁸. The 1991 multi-party elections came rather late compared to the rest of the communist camp, and it ended up with overwhelming victory of the Social Democratic Party (of former Labor Party members) *vis-a-vis* the Democratic Party (DP) of Sali Berisha. Only a year after, when the DP came to power

⁸⁶ B. Demirtaş-Coşkun "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Bulgaristan'ın Dış Politikası (1989-2000) in Ö.E. Lütem and B. Demirtaş-Coşkun (eds), *Balkan Diplomasisi* (Ankara, Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001) p.235

⁸⁷ O.W Jr. Clytt, "Bulgaria's Turn toward Europe" *European Security*, (2)1 (Spring 1993) pp.90-114

⁸⁸ N.A. Stavrou, "Albania: The Domino That Refuses to Fall" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (1)2 (Spring 1990) pp.25-41, M. Muco and L. Minxhozi, "The Political and Economic Transformation of Albania" *The International Spectator*, (27)4 (October-December 1992) pp. 95-103 and *Special Issue of War Report on Albania*, (May 1996)

by defeating the Social Democrats⁸⁹, the swift process of opening up to the outside world started in foreign policy and trade⁹⁰. Thus Albania started to search for ways to join international organizations, like NATO, the European Union, International Monetary Fund, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Council of Europe. This was a fundamental change for a state like Albania that lived in isolation from the outside world in external relations and followed a policy of autarky in economics by depending only on its own financial and material resources. During this period, Turkey's relations with Albania developed enormously, particularly in the first half of the 1990s⁹¹. In June 1992⁹², the two states concluded a protocol covering the fields of transport, tourism, communication, agriculture, banking and the process of exchanging information in areas of trade, taxation and customs. This was followed by the signature of a "defence cooperation pact" on 29 July 1992⁹³, which included cooperation in military education and scientific cooperation. They enhanced bilateral economic ties through the framework of Black Sea Economic Cooperation. This stemmed both from the change in foreign policy orientation of Albania and the new phase of international relations. Official visits of high-ranking members of the military and statesmen took place as well.

⁸⁹ F. Tarifa "Albania's Post-Communist Transition: Can Democracy Thrive?" **Balkan Forum**, (1)5 (December 1993) pp.123-133, A. Angjeli, "Problems of Albanian Democracy" **Mediterranean Quarterly**, (6)4 (Fall 1995) pp.35-47

⁹⁰ E. Biberaj, "Albania's Road to Democracy" **Current History** (November 1993)

⁹¹ L. Zanga, "Albania and Turkey Forge Closer Ties" **RFE/RL Research Report**, (12 March 1993)

⁹² FBIS-WEU, 30 July 1992

⁹³ FBIS-WEU, 31 July 1992

Apart from improving bilateral contacts in multiple fields, Albania demanded Turkish support for the Kosovo problem in the international arena. The change that was observed in domestic politics had direct influence on the foreign policy orientation and external contacts of Albania. Following the establishment of the new regime, Kosovo became an issue of Albanian foreign policy⁹⁴. Albania was concerned about the fate of Albanians living in Kosovo under Serbian rule. This change in the attitude of the Albanian state regarding the issue of Kosovo can be interpreted as total divergence compared to the policies of the communist regime, during which Albania turned a blind eye to that region and perceived the problem as an internal matter of Yugoslavia. It was a natural extension of the “isolationist” foreign policy line pursued by the communist regime. Thus the Albanians living in Albania proper and in Yugoslavia developed different ways of life under different political regimes and they lived in total isolation from each other during the Cold War period.

Naturally, Albania was the first and the only state to acknowledge the self-proclaimed state of Kosovar Albanians, which came into being in 1990. For instance, during an official visit to Ankara in January 1993, Albanian Defense Minister Zhulali underlined the importance of the

⁹⁴ L. Zanga, “Albania and Kosovo” RFE/RL Research Report (2 October 1992)

defense pacts signed between Turkey and his country, and asked for Turkish support and help in case the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina spread to Kosovo, a place which had a strategic position in the Balkans⁹⁵. In response, Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel said that cooperation would continue between the two states in the field of defense, and he pointed out that “Albania would not be left alone in case of danger”⁹⁶. The issue once more came to the agenda of bilateral contacts in October 1993⁹⁷ upon a visit of Albanian Prime Minister, Aleksander Meksi to Ankara. Turkish Foreign Minister, Hikmet Çetin, and Albanian Prime Minister Meksi put special emphasis on Serbian aggression in the Balkans and its possible impacts. Cetin pointed to the potential of the Kosovo problem to spread, and he stated that it was not only the Balkans that would be affected by the conflict, but the whole world. However, in his statements Cetin refrained from going into the details of the problem and means to solve it.

⁹⁵ FBIS-WEU, 21 January 1993

⁹⁶ *ibid*

⁹⁷ BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), 11 October 1993

Turkish-Greek relations did not display a tremendous change during the same time-span. On the contrary, bilateral disagreements continued, particularly over Cyprus and issues related with the Aegean Sea. Apart from the problematic relations with Turkey, Greek foreign policy was rather aggressive towards the countries in its periphery, particularly during the first half of the 1990s. To cite a few examples, Greece totally rejected the international recognition of “Macedonia”, which was established with the disintegration of the Yugoslav state. Greek- Macedonian relations were not normalized until the beginning of 1996. In addition, disagreements with the Albanian state concerning the southern region of Albania (or what the Greeks call “Nothern Epirus”) and the treatment of the Greek minority in Albania intensified. Greek foreign policy towards the Balkans was rather aggressive until the second half of 1990s. After the signature of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Greece entered into a new phase of external relations and it gradually developed ties to its neighborhood.

In the post-Cold War era, the Balkans became an arena where Turkey and Greece raced for prepondarence. With that aim in mind, Turkey took initiatives in various fields like politics, economics and military, shortly after the emergence of new democracies. Greece followed a similar path, particularly after 1995. The two states made great efforts in order to maintain the strategic balance between them⁹⁸. In essence, what both states understood from the

⁹⁸ İ. Turan and D. Barlas “Turkish-Greek Balance: A Key to Peace and Cooperation in the Balkans” East European Quarterly (32)4 (January 1999) pp.469-488, p.48

notion of preserving the balance was to achieve even a small amount of advantage for its foreign policy at the expense of the other. Turkey followed an active foreign policy regarding the Balkans at the beginning of the 1990s.

The process of Yugoslav dissolution was the first test for Turkish foreign policy of the new period. Emergence of five new states after the disintegration of Yugoslavia brought to the fore a series of unprecedented problems in the Balkans. Whether the six states, which were once the constituent republics of Yugoslavia would legally be recognized by the international community despite Serbian opposition, was the first crisis. The crisis was overcome with recognition of those states by the European Union shortly after achieving independence. Initially, Turkish position was to support the maintenance of Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. Once the break-up of Yugoslavia appeared inevitable, Turkey acted harmoniously with the European Union and recognized the independence of new Balkan states on 6 February 1992, simultaneously and indiscriminately⁹⁹. Later, a series of ethno-religious and national crises occurred on ex-Yugoslavia stemming from territorial disagreements. Those events made ex-Yugoslavia and the Balkans a point of attention for the West, the United States and Russia, mainly because the security and stability of Europe was endangered with the possibility that the crises might prolong and spread by embracing other states in the continent.

⁹⁹ Ş. Kut , “Yugoslavya Bunalımı ve Türkiye’nin Bosna-Hersek ve Makedonya Politikası (1990-1993)” in F. Sönmezoğlu (edt), *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi* (İstanbul Der Yayınları, 1994) p.165

The Bosnia War was the watershed of Yugoslav dissolution. Throughout the war, Turkey made every effort at various international fora like the United Nations, Cooperation on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later “Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe”/OSCE), NATO and Organization of Islamic Conference ¹⁰⁰ in order to end Serbian violence and ethnic cleansing against Bosniacs and Croats. Turkey’s main concern was to stop massacres and maintain independence and territorial integrity of the new republics by way of coercion, threat and/or actual use of force. From the Turkish point of view, Serbian violence could only be deterred by way of an international armed force (like NATO), strong enough to destroy Serbian targets. That thesis was formulated by the “Turkish Action Plan”¹⁰¹ which included deterrence measures *vis-a-vis* the Serbs. However, the Turkish Action Plan of summer 1992 was not supported by the West and the US, since they were unwilling to intervene in the Yugoslav conflict for a variety of reasons. Turkey did not have the necessary means to materialize its plan alone, thus, the plan became void. But Turkish Grand National Assembly made a decision on 8 December 1992 that allowed Turkish troops to join the UNPROFOR and the government was permitted to send soldiers abroad in case of an international military operation in Bosnia. But Turkey’s active line of policy regarding Bosnia was not risk free.

¹⁰⁰ S. Çalış, “Turkey’s Balkan Policy in the Early 1990s” Turkish Studies, (2)1 (Spring 2001) pp.135-146

¹⁰¹ *ibid* p.167

Greece resisted Turkey's activities in the Balkans. It refused to recognize "Macedonia" by alleging that both the name of the Republic and the symbols used on the country's flag constitute security challenges to Greece. Greek attitude lasted until the beginning of 1996. In essence, the Greek response to Macedonia was a residue of an old historic problem regarding the province of Ottoman Macedonia. Greece did not establish diplomatic contact with this state and forced the United Nations to acknowledge the state under the name "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM) by arguing that there already existed a piece of land in Greece called Macedonia. Athens maintained that recognition of that state with the name "The Republic of Macedonia" would be a challenge to Greek territorial integrity. Finally, the United Nations recognized the new state as the FYROM. But Turkey used the name "The Republic of Macedonia" since its foundation.

During the process of Yugoslav dissolution, Greece claimed that Turkey's activities were movements of "Islamic encirclement" which aimed to weaken the Christian existence in the Balkans, by using historic and cultural ties with the Muslims. The argument of Greece was that Turkey developed closer ties with Albania and Macedonia, and that it supported the Bosniac cause against the Serbs during the ethno-religious war, since the majority of those states' populations were Muslim. Greece strongly believed that the relatively more active Turkish stance in the Balkans in the first half of the 1990s, stemmed from Turkey's desire to establish a kind of Islamic brotherhood in the region in

order to weaken the Greek position. Despite the Greek belief that “religion” was and/or is the main theme of Turkey’s post-Cold War active role in the Balkans¹⁰², this argument does not reflect the reality. For instance, in addition to Bosnia and the others whose populations are overwhelmingly Muslims, Turkey improved its contacts with others like Bulgaria and Romania as well, by signing bilateral and multilateral agreements covering a wide range of issues like economics, military and security cooperation. Thus, “religion” is not the driving force behind Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans. The famous notion of the early 1990s that there exists two religious axes¹⁰³: the “Orthodox camp” (Serbia and Greece) and the “Islamic camp” (Turkey, Albania and Bosnia) in the Balkans is a baseless argument. Turkey’s major concern during the Bosnia War was to stop ethnic violence. Turkey has special historic and cultural ties with the Balkans but religion is not a determining factor of contemporary Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey got involved in the Balkans by signing a series of bilateral military agreements with the “old” and the “new” Balkan states in the post-Cold War era. Those agreements were signed either by the Office of the Chief of the General Staff (with the authorization of the Council of Ministers) or by the Ministry of Defence. Agreements that were signed by the Chief of the General

¹⁰² N. A. Stavrou, “The Dismantling of the Balkan Security System: Consequences for Greece, Europe and NATO” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (6)1 (Winter 1995) pp.27-48, p.46

¹⁰³ M. Glenny, “Heading Off War in Southern Balkans” *Foreign Affairs*, (74)3 (May/June 1995) pp.98-108, p.103

Staff established the framework for military education, technical and scientific cooperation and annual application plans for implementation of the agreements. Agreements that were signed by the Minister of Defence, on the other hand, stipulated cooperation in a variety of fields, such as defence industry, defence research and technical cooperation of various kinds. Military cooperation between Turkey and the Balkan states was realized within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace as well, through which military personnel from the Balkans were trained by the Turkish military staff.

In the second half of the 1990s, Turkey got involved in regional military issues. For instance, Turkey participated in international forces which were deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, shortly after the success of NATO against the Serbs and signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement which ended Bosnia War in 1995. Between 1995-1997 Turkey joined both Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) and Peace Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina under NATO command authorized by the United Nations Security Council. Likewise, Turkey supported the international air strike by NATO against Serbia in 1999 because of the latter's discriminatory and violent policies against the Albanians in Kosovo. When the Serbian suppression of the Albanians turned into armed violence, the international community responded to it by organizing military operations conducted by NATO. Turkish troops arrived in Kosovo shortly after the conclusion of "Operation Allied Force" together with the soldiers of other participating states. Turkey allowed the entry of large groups of people who

escaped from violence during the Yugoslav disintegration process, Kosovo conflict and various other crises in the Balkans that occurred during the post-Cold War era.

Turkey's role within the European security structure goes hand in hand with its activities in the Balkans. Turkey's membership to NATO continues to be the determining feature of its security policies. The Western security system is vital for Turkey for two reasons. First, NATO is the most important collective security organization in the world. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has played an active and determining role in the European crises. Although the organization was established as a Cold War institution, NATO's military capabilities were tested after the bipolar structure came to an end. In addition, the search for a new and capable "European" security architecture within the framework of the European Union could only be materialized in close cooperation with NATO. Thus NATO continues to be the back-bone of the European security system with its material possessions and experience. Second, Turkey needs to collaborate with other states in order to be influential in regional and/or other developments since it is not politically and economically strong enough to carry the burden of huge military operations alone. Thus, Turkey's membership to NATO and its participation in military operations held by this organization is the building-bloc of its foreign policy actions, particularly in the Balkans.

CHAPTER V
TURKEY AND KOSOVO : A CHRONOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF
THE ISSUE OF KOSOVO AND TURKEY’S RESPONSE
IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

The present chapter aims to examine the developments in Kosovo and evaluate Turkish foreign policy towards the Kosovo question in the post-Cold War period. In so doing, the domestic conditions of Kosovo, Turkish foreign policy priorities and regional factors will be taken into consideration from the perspective of the “Larger Albanian Question” in the Balkans. This part of the study consists of a description of the events in Kosovo shortly after Milosevic came to power in Serbia and an evaluation of Turkish foreign policy in response to those developments regarding Kosovo.

5.1. The “Larger Albanian Question” in the Balkans

Emergence of independent Albania (1912) signaled the emergence of the ‘larger Albanian Question’ in the Balkans. The fact that large Albanian communities existed within the borders of non-Albanian nation-states was always a bone of contention, not necessarily between Albania proper and other states, but mostly within the host states. From the point of view of the host state, there was always the danger, regardless of whether it was real or not, that Albania and/or the Albanians outside Albania would try to come together under

one single state, Greater Albania. Every time, the Albanian population within the borders of Yugoslavia or Greece would ask for certain political and cultural rights, this would reactivate the fears about the creation of a Greater Albania at the back of the minds of the host states. Though the Albanians, who never lived under one single political umbrella throughout history, hardly expressed an unequivocal desire to set up a Greater Albania, host countries always saw their existence within their territories as a potential threat to their survival. This complicated matters in the Balkans.

Albania, on the other hand, struggled for its own survival, let alone take steps to bring all Albanians under one state as an independent state because it was surrounded from the very start by very hostile neighbors. Thus, the notion of a larger Albanian state, Greater Albania, always seemed unattainable. Moreover, the territorial separation created different ways of life and political culture among the members of this ethnic group, preventing the means of acting harmoniously. While the indigenous communist regime of Enver Hoxha was in power in Albania proper, Tito was leading the communist federation of Yugoslavia where a large Albanian population resided in Kosovo and Macedonia, and the Albanians of Greece were under the control of a Western type of government.

The end of the Cold War gave rise to a new wave of nationalism. In certain parts of the former communist world this nationalism took on an ethnic and irredentist character. In line with this, minority problems of various kinds, which had been frozen during the long years of communist regimes, came to the fore. Yugoslav wars of dissolution had both these characteristics. For instance, the major cause of the war in Yugoslavia was the will of the Milosevic regime, which became the main vehicle for the implementation of rising nationalism in Serbia in the 1980s and 1990s. Milosevic came to power, vowing to build Greater Serbia which would incorporate all the lands where there were Serbs, regardless of whether they were in a majority or minority in all those areas. That was why Milosevic and his proxies started wars, respectively in Croatia and then in Bosnia in 1991 and 1992.

From the point of view of the Milosevic regime, the existence of Albanians in Kosovo and even in Macedonia was something of an impediment in the realization of Greater Serbia. And in the eyes of the Albanians in Kosovo, the Milosevic regime and its declared aim to create a Greater Serbia was a direct threat to their very survival. Therefore, the drawbacks that the Milosevic regime had to suffer in its adventure was always applauded by the Albanians in Kosovo who resorted to setting up their own parallel administration. This was part of their non-violent struggle against the Serbian regime. Today the Kosovo question has been going through a new phase: Following NATO's concentrated air attacks in 1999 against Serbia because of its violent policies in Kosovo, a

large NATO force was deployed in the region responsible for the internal and external security of Kosovo. In addition, an interim United Nations administration has been set up to run the country. In broader terms, Kosovo has practically been taken out of the control of Serbia, and it is allowed to set up its own administration.

The Albanian question in Macedonia has gone through various phases, too, since the break-up of Tito's Yugoslavia. However, it has never acquired a dimension similar to that of Kosovo, since the Albanians in Macedonia have always enjoyed significant minority rights like a number of other minorities living in Macedonia such as the Turks, Serbs, Vlachs, Torbesh and so on. That is not to say, however, that there have been no problems between the Albanians and the Macedonian authorities¹⁰⁴. The Albanians, whose number is estimated to be at around one third of the whole population, appear to demand that Macedonia be restructured in the form of a federation between two constituent nations, the Macedonians and the Albanians, and that the smaller communities like the Turks, Serbs and other non-Macedonians enjoy minority rights. Macedonian authorities seem to think that this would be the first step in the direction of splitting the country into two and the creation of Greater Albania. The fact that the Albanians constitute absolute majority in Western Macedonia to the West of the capital, Skopje, through to the borders of Albania makes the

¹⁰⁴ R. Austin, "Albanian-Macedonian Relations: Confrontation or Cooperation?" **RFE/RL Research Report** (22 October 1993)

Macedonians extremely suspicious of the idea. Serbia takes a similar view. The fear is that, should Kosovo become independent, the Albanians would join in, and that this merger would bring in Albania, too, creating Greater Albania.

At first sight, the fear appears to be quite understandable; however, closer examination of the situation on the ground both in Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania seems to challenge this over-simplification. Fundamental differences in education, social structure, economic life and living standards between Albania proper, on the one hand, and Kosovo and Macedonia, on the other, make the whole suggestion quite implausible. But the fear is there, whether real or not, which seems to be shaping the policies pursued by Serbia and Macedonia. Be that as it may, the larger Albanian question in the Balkans has not been addressed, and it will continue to be a source of tension in the region in the 2000s. The question itself and Turkey's policies towards it deserves serious academic interest¹⁰⁵. Though certain aspects of the larger Albanian question have been handled from various angles, Turkey's policies have not been studied in detail. In this chapter, the larger Albanian question in the Balkans and Turkey's policies on this issue from the end of the Cold War to the present time will be examined.

¹⁰⁵ H. Ünal H, "Balkanlar'da Geniş Arnavut Meselesi ve Türkiye" Avrasya Dosyası, (4)1-2 (Autumn 1998) pp.131-141

5.2. The Issue of Kosovo : From Yugoslav Dissolution to Dayton Peace Agreement (1990-1995)

The process of Yugoslav dissolution made the Balkans a security priority for the United States and Western powers. The Albanian question in the Balkans constituted an important security concern for Western powers because of its explosive potential. During the presidency of George Bush, the United States gave the signal that it would intervene in Kosovo in case of Serbian aggression against the Albanians. It was made clear by the “Christmas warning” of Bush¹⁰⁶ against the Serbs in December 1992. In essence, both Bush and Clinton administrations strictly warned and even threatened Serbia, in case the Albanians were made the victims of violence in Kosovo. Besides, the Albanians in Kosovo had to be safe from provocations or support against the Milosevic regime. The attitude of Albania proper would be effective on the future actions of the Kosovar Albanians. Being aware of Albania’s special role regarding the issue of Kosovo, the United States and the Europeans supported the DP rule of Berisha in Albania proper both politically and economically. Strengthening democracy and stable governments in Albania became the building blocks of Western policy in the Balkans in order to prevent further regional crises. In return, Albania refrained from flaring up the Kosovo issue at the international fora and followed a prudent line of policy. Although the DP

¹⁰⁶ W. Zimmerman, “The Demons of Kosovo” The National Interest, (Summer 1998) pp.3-11, p. 10

rule was interested in developments regarding Kosovo, it did not claim total support for independence of the province. However, when the Serbian oppression of the Albanians intensified, and the international community became involved in the matter, Albanians' support of their brethren in Kosovo was displayed. At that stage, it became clear that the Kosovo problem was an extension of the Milosevic regime's nationalist-expansionist policies¹⁰⁷. Although the Yugoslav wars of dissolution came to a close by the signing of Dayton Peace Agreement in late 1995, this time the Kosovo problem arose.

5.3. Post-Dayton Developments in Kosovo and the Emergence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)

Until the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, the Western states and the United States were mainly preoccupied with the Serbia's "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. Since the problematic relations between the Kosovar Albanians and the Milosevic regime did not lead to an armed conflict until the second half of the 1990s, the United States and Europe turned a blind eye to the province that remained under official Serbian rule. It seemed that the Kosovo issue was neglected, given the ongoing war in Bosnia. Thus, the international community focused on the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement for permanent peace and stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina and presumed that Milosevic would

¹⁰⁷ S. Markotich, "A Potent Weapon in Milosevic's Arsenal" Transitions (28 April 1995)

be the guarantor of Serbian compliance to its provisions.¹⁰⁸ International support to the Milosevic regime and the lack of strong domestic opposition accelerated Serbian aggression in Kosovo in the years to come.¹⁰⁹

At this point, the international community created a link between the lifting of trade and arms embargo against the FRY and the establishment of market economy and democratic system of rule that would respect human rights. This was called the “outer wall of sanctions”.¹¹⁰ The outer wall of sanctions made special reference to the issue of Kosovo. Until the Yugoslav authorities found a lasting and peaceful solution to the Kosovo issue, they were to remain in effect.¹¹¹ In broader terms, implementation of the “outer wall of sanctions” meant that re-integration of the FRY to international political and economic organizations would be closely bound to Belgrade’s attitude towards the Albanians in Kosovo. By this way, what the Serbian leadership stubbornly defined as an “internal matter” became the heart-core of that state’s relationship with the outside world. Since the FRY was in need of grants to recover from the ruins of wars, the Milosevic regime had to make utmost efforts to establish diplomatic contacts with other states in order to be accepted as an equal member of the international community.

¹⁰⁸ O. Kesic, “Serbian Roulette” **Current History** (March 1998)

¹⁰⁹ F. Schmidt, “Teaching the Wrong Lesson in Kosovo” **Transition** (12 July 1996)

¹¹⁰ E. Hasani, “The Outer Wall of Sanctions and the Kosovo Issue” **Perceptions**, (3)3 (September-November 1998)

¹¹¹ J. Mertus, “A Wall of Silence Divides Serbian and Albanian Opinion on Kosovo” **Transition** (22 March 1996)

The maintenance of the principle of “outer wall of sanctions” displayed the continuous interest of the international community in the province. The United States Information Agency (USIA)¹¹² opened a permanent office in Kosovo to play the role of negotiator between the Serbian regime and the Kosovar Albanians. The United States administration was determined to observe quite closely the developments in Kosovo. Shortly after this American initiative, Ibrahim Rugova¹¹³ called for the opening of “liasion offices” by international organizations like the European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Islamic Conference Organization in Kosovo. During his visit to the Kosovo Mission Office in Geneva, Rugova stated that his invitation was valid for the friendly neighboring countries and particularly for Turkey who had historic ties with the Balkans. However, Turkey did not open an office following the United States example. Nor did it establish a liasion office in line with the request of Rugova. Turkey seemed unwilling to take an active role regarding the issue of Kosovo.

In September 1996, an “Agreement of Education” was signed by Milosevic and the LDK leader Rugova through the mediation of the Italian religious charity, Sant’Edigo. Although the Serbian leadership interpreted this agreement as allowing Kosovar Albanians to be integrated into the Serbian system of education, the Albanians perceived it as an approval of their own system of

¹¹² *ibid*

¹¹³ *Zaman*, 17 July 1996

education, which functioned independent of Serbian political control. The Albanians deemed the “mediated” agreement as a means of emancipation and total independence. Since the Education Agreement failed to produce the desired effect¹¹⁴, a new agreement on education was reached on 24 April 1998¹¹⁵ by both sides, again with efforts of Sant’Edigo. The second agreement failed to prevent the armed confrontation of 1998.

Continued tension between the Albanians and the Serbs in Kosovo turned into armed confrontation in 1996. During 1996, there were attacks on Serbian security forces in Kosovo. The attacks were undertaken by the KLA. At the time, the Belgrade regime accused the LDK and its leader Ibrahim Rugova for establishing and supporting “terrorist” KLA. The LDK leadership, on the other hand, rejected the existence of such an armed gathering and claimed that armed attacks were the activities of Serbian provocateurs.¹¹⁶ Rugova argued that the Serbian intelligence service was responsible for the terrorist actions which were undertaken to downgrade LDK’s credibility in the eyes of the international community.

¹¹⁴ C. Chiclet, “Renewed Conflict in Kosovo” *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 1997) (<http://www.en.monde-diplomatique.fr>)

¹¹⁵ A. Salihu, “An Education Profit” **Transitions** (May 1998)

¹¹⁶ S. Markotich, “Backtracking toward Dictatorship in Serbia and Montenegro” **Transition** (7 February 1997)

KLA intensified its activities against Serbian targets in 1997 to make its voice heard in the international arena. It was beyond doubt that there existed an organization called KLA¹¹⁷, separate from Rugova's LDK. Discussions about the membership composition of this organization and whether such an armed grouping really existed or not were no longer valid. The KLA emerged as an alternative to Rugova's LDK to achieve an independent state of Kosovo. It was perceived by most Kosovar Albanians as the "armed" branch of the independence movement. The Albanians believed that it was the right time to use arms in order to end Serbian oppression and draw international attention to the matter. It should, however, be pointed out that the rise of the KLA led to a serious divergence of opinion between the LDK leader Rugova who insisted on the use of passive methods and the KLA leaders who opposed the passive attitude. While the LDK leader Rugova insisted on calling for international mediation and/or intervention and searched for ways to become a United Nations protectorate until a permanent solution was found to the Kosovo question¹¹⁸; armed attacks of the KLA continued against Serbian targets.

5.4. The 1997 Crisis in Albania and Its Effects on the "Albanian Question"

In a regional context, the crisis in Albania was one of the most crucial developments of the Balkans in 1997. Albania plunged into turmoil when the "pyramid investment schemes" collapsed because of the weak economic

¹¹⁷ C. Hedges, "Kosovo's Next Masters?" *Foreign Affairs*, (78)3, pp.24-42

¹¹⁸ *Turkish Daily News*, 25 September 1997

infrastructure and problems of transition in political and economic terms. Since the majority of the population lost money through the pyramid system, they accused the ruling Democratic Party (DP) of collaborating with heads of those schemes.¹¹⁹ Chaos erupted all over the country. Large groups of Albanians started to leave the country to escape from domestic turmoil. This resembled the 1991 Albanian political crisis which occurred when the old communist regime was on the edge of collapse and huge numbers of Albanians sought to become refugees particularly in Greece and Italy in order to earn their livings. The neighboring states were worried about similar problems in case the 1997 crisis was prolonged. The DP called for external help to end the chaos under the circumstances. The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1101 on 28 March 1997, which put forward the parameters of a temporary and limited “Multinational Protection Force” (MNF) that would be responsible for the distribution of humanitarian aid across the country. According to resolution 1101, the MNF would stay on Albanian soil for three months and the cost of the international operation would be shared by the voluntary states. The MNF gathered swiftly with the participation of Italy, Spain, France, Romania, Greece and Turkey. When they arrived in Albania, “Operation Alba”¹²⁰ started.

¹¹⁹ G. Xhudo, “What Brought Anarchy to Albania ?” Jane’s Intelligence Review (June 1997)

¹²⁰ E. Greco, “New Trends in Peace-Keeping: The Experience of Operation Alba” Security Dialogue (29)2 (1998) pp.201-212) and G. Kostakos and D. Bourantis, “Innovations in Peace-Keeping :The Case of Albania Security Dialogue (29)1 (1998) pp.49-58

Although the crisis in Albania was domestic in character, it was carefully observed by the regional states and the West. The main concern was the possible spread of the turmoil, with extended implications for the periphery. Truly speaking, the international community focused on the future effects of the crisis on the Kosovar Albanians. It was widely believed that the 1997 Albanian crisis would give rise to concerns about the “Albanian question” in the Balkans. Existence of Albanians outside the borders of Albania proper, mainly in Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece seemed to confirm the concerns of the Balkan countries.

The political and social turmoil of 1997 in Albania and the continuous dissatisfaction of the Kosovar Albanians with the Serbian regime raised questions in minds concerning the future of the region. It was a widespread notion that the Albanians in Kosovo might benefit from the crisis in Albania and start a war against the Milosevic regime. However, both the “comparatively” swift response of the international community to the 1997 Albanian crisis and the calm attitude of the Kosovar Albanians prevented the spillover effect of that turmoil. A further component that prevented the spread of the Albanian trouble to Kosovo was that Kosovo had been a long-standing issue of the Balkans. Albania started to deal with the issue of Kosovo only after the DP rule of Berisha, which came to power with the collapse of the communist regime in 1991 and began to support the arguments of the Kosovar Albanians. During the authoritarian rule of Enver Hoxha, Albania had always

treated the Kosovo issue as an internal matter of Yugoslavia, and the Kosovar Albanian resistance movement against Serbia had never been supported officially. Therefore the Kosovo problem had no direct link with the developments in Albania proper in the past. Besides, the main concern of both the KLA and the LDK was limited to the independence of Kosovo. Their policies did not focus on the establishment of a larger Albanian state with the inclusion of all the Albanians in the region.

5.5. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Milosevic Regime

The year 1998 symbolized the beginning of a new era in Kosovo. The armed rebellion of the KLA was harshly responded to by the Belgrade regime and the issue turned into an armed confrontation between KLA and Milosevic's security forces. Violent measures applied by the Serbian security and military units against the Albanians brought the Kosovo issue to the agenda of the international community. Interestingly, the instruments used by the Milosevic regime, irrespective of all warnings made by the United States, the "Contact Group" and/or international organizations like the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, European Union and NATO, in order to find an overall solution to the problem within the FRY ended with the internationalization of the matter. In 1998, armed clashes between Serbian security forces and the KLA bands intensified. It was reported that Serbia used both police and paramilitary units from its Ministry of Interior

(MUP) in order to combat the insurgency¹²¹, as well as the Yugoslav Army (VJ) units¹²², which had played an active role during the Yugoslav wars of dissolution in the past. This was the beginning of the Albanian “intifada” in Kosovo.¹²³

During February and March, KLA fought to establish authority in the Drenica region. That triggered off months-long oppression and strong reaction by the Serbian regime in order to restore control in the said region. The Serbian answer to the activities of KLA had two main outcomes in the Balkans. First, it created a huge problem of refugees and internally displaced people. Almost one-fifth of the Kosovar Albanians escaped from Serbian violence, since the security forces attacked civilian targets as well, whom they perceived as collaborators of the KLA. Large numbers of Albanians moved to Albania and Macedonia to save their lives. Mass exodus of Albanians brought about changes in the configuration of neighboring host states’ populations and burden on their economies. The fear was that population movements would bring the “question of security” to the agenda of the Balkans, given the proportion of the Albanians in Macedonia. Clearly, the international community was alerted that the larger Albanian question in the Balkans might arise and create instability in the future. Second, international community focused on Serbian brutality in Kosovo more than ever and a period of external enforcement was initiated in order to bring both sides (Kosovar Albanians and the Belgrade regime) to the

¹²¹ *International Herald Tribune*, 3 March 1998

¹²² Z. Kusovac, “Another Balkans Bloodbath ? ” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* (March 1998)

¹²³ *The Guardian*, 3 March 1998, *International Herald Tribune*, 3 March 1998

negotiating table for a durable peace. It was realized that the Albanian move for independence and violent measures of the Milosevic regime to eliminate those demands could no longer be neglected for the sake of Dayton.

In order to reinforce a peaceful solution to the issue of Kosovo, Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem paid an official visit to FRY on 8 March 1998.¹²⁴ Turkey offered the implementation of a three-staged plan to ease tensions. The Turkish plan included an initial step of cease-fire in the region, which would be followed by the implementation of the "Education Agreement" and finally restitution of rights that were removed by the FRY in 1989.¹²⁵ Shortly after that, foreign ministers of five Balkan countries, Turkey, Romania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Greece met in Bulgaria on 10 March and expressed their concern about the deteriorating situation in Kosovo.¹²⁶ In their joint press statement three basic points were put forward: respect for existing borders of the FRY, granting extensive autonomy to Kosovo and an immediate end to violence in the region by both sides. Although the five foreign ministers declared their willingness to contribute to a peaceful settlement of the issue, it was only a lip service, since those countries expected the involvement of more influential powers for a solution of the problem.

¹²⁴ *Turkish Daily News*, 8 March 1998

¹²⁵ *Turkish Daily News*, 10 March 1998

¹²⁶ <http://news6.thdo/bbc/co.uk/hi/english/world/monitoring/newsid-64000/64351.stm>, 10 March 1998

As clashes continued in Kosovo, outside powers got involved politically and diplomatically in the conflict in order to persuade the warring parties to sit down at the negotiating table. Initial attempts came from members of the Contact Group. On both the 9th and 25th of March 1998, the Contact Group called on the warring parties to negotiate, and it proposed a comprehensive arms embargo on the FRY for the latter's excessive use of force against the Albanians in Kosovo. Later, international organizations like the United Nations, European Union, OSCE and NATO got involved similarly. With resolution 1160, the United Nations Security Council supported the implementation of the bilateral "Agreement on Measures to Implement the 1996 Education Agreement", signed on 23 March 1998 by Serbian authorities and the representatives of Kosovar Albanians¹²⁷. With the same resolution, the United Nations Security Council repeated the earlier call of the Contact Group for an end to armed confrontations and commencement of negotiations to achieve "a substantial degree of autonomy and a meaningful self-administration" in Kosovo. Later, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1199, which basically pointed to the worsening "humanitarian situation" in Kosovo.

¹²⁷ UNSCR 1160, 31 March 1998

These were important moves since the wording of the United Nations Security Council resolutions prepared the legal ground for a NATO-led operation against Serbia in 1999. With resolution 1199, the United Nations Security Council focused particularly on the “excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the Serbian security forces and the Yugoslav Army”¹²⁸ against Albanians, which resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties. Resolution 1199 emphasized that the Serbian measures led to the flow of 50.000 Albanian refugees to neighboring countries (Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey) and approximately 230.000 internally displaced persons who left their homes in order to survive. It described the situation in Kosovo as a “humanitarian catastrophe” drawing attention to the increase in violation of human rights and international humanitarian law. The resolution finally called for the announcement of a ceasefire and initiation of a “meaningful dialogue” among the warring parties. In both resolutions 1160 and 1199, the United Nations Security Council affirmed to act under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which covered particularly “actions with respect to threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression”.

A further initiative to end the conflict in Kosovo came from the United States Ambassador to Macedonia, Christopher Hill. What was later labeled as the “Hill Process” attempted to stop the violence immediately through both sides’ acceptance and compliance of an agreement, which did not involve provisions regarding the future political status of Kosovo. Despite the fact that the Hill Process handled the

¹²⁸ UNSCR 1199, 23 September 1998

issue of Kosovo as an open-ended question, both the Kosovar Albanians and the Belgrade regime refused to lay down arms, and confrontations continued. Only after the relatively successful implementation of the experienced US diplomat Richard Holbrooke's "shuttle diplomacy", a series of agreements was concluded between Serbia and major international organizations. On 15 October 1998, an agreement was concluded between the FRY and NATO on the establishment of an "air verification mission" over Kosovo. In essence, this agreement was complementary to the one finalized by the FRY and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on 16 October 1998, concerning the foundation of the verification mission in Kosovo: Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Those agreements constituted the basis of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1203¹²⁹, which emphasized the importance of materializing the said agreements by the FRY and the necessity of ending armed fighting for a durable peace. Resolution 1203 brought two major issues to the fore. First, it demanded swift action and negotiation from the FRY authorities and Kosovo Albanian leadership for the "improvement of humanitarian situation and the conclusion of humanitarian catastrophe" in Kosovo. Second, it pointed to the right of all refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes by attributing the responsibility to the FRY to provide for safe conditions for their return.

¹²⁹ UNSCR 1203, 24 October 1998

The United Nations and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe were not the only international organizations that involved themselves in the Kosovo matter. NATO watched the developments in the region very closely and acted as the “armed branch” of international attempts to end the crisis through its air operations. Shortly after the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1199, NATO started to work on a possible military operation in Kosovo, in case the parties failed to reach an agreement concerning the status of the province and continual violence. On 1 October 1998, NATO Council ratified the requirement for a military action (ACTREQ) if the parties could not find a solution through negotiations.

5.6. Turkey’s Response to the Atrocities in Kosovo

Meanwhile, Turkey made official declarations, which only supported initiations of the international community, whether in the form of United Nations Security Council resolutions and/or statements of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or NATO on the situation in Kosovo. For instance, Turkey expressed approval for the signing of the “New Education Agreement” by the Serbian regime and the Kosovar Albanian authorities in 1998. Another example was a joint communiqué of President Demirel and the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov that was issued on 2 October 1998, upon the visit of the former to Macedonia. The joint communiqué expressed support for the United Nations Security Council resolutions and underlined the necessity of a

solution to the Kosovo issue by protecting the territorial integrity of the FRY and the rights of all minorities living in the said province, including the small Turkish one¹³⁰. Two presidents pointed to the annoying situation of refugees and displaced people who fled their homes and made their way into neighboring countries. Turkey and Macedonia expressed their readiness to provide humanitarian aid and shelter for the victims.

On 13 October, through an official statement of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Ankara pointed out that NATO was preparing for a possible operation in Kosovo unless the parties to the conflict reached an agreement to stop confrontation. It was announced that Turkey would support and participate in such a military operation to be undertaken by NATO¹³¹. It drew attention to the fact that the Turkish Grand National Assembly had already approved the law on 8 October 1998, which gave permission to the government to participate in a “joint force” that might be established by NATO in case of a military involvement in Kosovo. This low-profile attitude Turkey took up during the conflict was perhaps because Kosovo was not perceived as a primary issue in Ankara. Probably the government was rather busy with the search for membership to the EU and the Greek plans to deploy Russian-made S-300 missiles in Cyprus at the time.

¹³⁰ *Dışışleri Güncesi* (October 1998) p.47

¹³¹ *Dışışleri Güncesi* (October 1998) p.73

When Serbian authorities and the Kosovar Albanians remained unwilling to find a solution to the crisis in Kosovo, the confrontations resumed by December 1998. It became evident that the Kosovo issue had been deadlocked. Under such circumstances, Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a press release at the end of December and expressed Turkey's anxiety concerning the resumption of hostilities in Kosovo and called on both parties to the conflict "to cease fighting immediately". Turkey pointed out that a lasting peace should be achieved in the province by bringing every one concerned together and giving all the people living in Kosovo their rights, which they had acquired with the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution. In the official statements about the 1974 Constitution, Turkey gave priority to the rights of the "minorities", in particular, the "Turks" living in Kosovo. Turkish foreign policy regarding Kosovo focused on the rights of the Turkish minority in Kosovo. Rights of other communities played a secondary role in Ankara's foreign policy considerations. This was interesting, since the international community paid utmost attention to the position of Kosovar Albanians and made every effort to end the violence in the region by activating international organizations of which Turkey was a member.

Turkish policy regarding Kosovo was based on the assumption that the conflict would be solved, particularly by the initiations (or rather by coercive diplomacy) of the international community before turning into an actual armed confrontation. This presumption of the Turkish government was flawed.

Neither the struggle in Kosovo ended nor did the Serbian side take the warnings of the international community seriously, particularly those coming from NATO. Serbia's miscalculations led to the internationalization and prolongation of the crisis in Kosovo with devastating results for the FRY. During the armed clashes of 1998 in Kosovo, Turkey was not an active player of a peaceful solution, although it was within the small group of states who could act as a mediator by using its historic relationship with the region and its membership in international organizations. Apart from giving support to international efforts to end the conflict, Turkey did not take the initiative as a mediator to bring both sides to the negotiating table. Turkish policy makers chose to stay neutral and waited to support the actions of others that took initiative for a durable solution in Kosovo.

5.7.1. The Crisis in Kosovo and the Rambouillet Process

By the beginning of 1999, Serbian violence vis-à-vis the Kosovar Albanians had reached its peak. Following the Rajack massacre, the Contact Group met on 29 January and summoned both the Serbian regime and the Kosovar Albanians to attend the Rambouillet (France) talks in order to find a peaceful solution to the problem. This call for direct negotiations symbolized the end of unsatisfactory indirect talks of the warring parties. The Contact Group further demanded that the negotiations should end in 21 days starting from the date of the call. However, both the first (6-23 February) and the second (15-18 March)

rounds of the Rambouillet talks came to a deadlock, since the Serbian delegation refused to sign an agreement. In the following days both the United Nations Security Council¹³² and North Atlantic Council made declarations supporting the requirements for a peaceful solution put forward by the Contact Group. Through its statement of 30 January 1999, the North Atlantic Council emphasized that “NATO is ready to take whatever measures are necessary in the light of both parties’ compliance with international commitments and requirements”¹³³. The swift verbal involvement of these organizations demonstrated both the emphasis given to the Kosovo issue and the possibility of coercive diplomacy in case the parties failed to reach a peaceful solution.

Despite the Serbian opposition, the United States administration insisted on the participation of the KLA members in the Rambouillet talks. The Kosovar delegation was composed of the members of Rugova’s LDK, one third, members of the United Democratic Movement (LBD) which consisted of the splitters from Rugova’s LDK and another third, KLA members¹³⁴. Two prominent Albanian journalists, Veton Surrori and Blerim Shala were added to the Kosovar delegation that was headed by the young KLA leader, Hashim Thaci. The Serbian delegation, on the other hand, was made up of

¹³² Statement by the president of the UNSC, 29 January 1999, <http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/sprst995.htm>

¹³³ “Statement by the NAC on Kosovo”, 30 January 1999, <http://nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-012e.htm>

¹³⁴ M. Weller, “Enforced Negotiations: The Threat and the Use of Force to Obtain an International Settlement for Kosovo” **International Peacekeeping** (January-April 1999) pp.4-27, p.13

representatives only from the Republic of Serbia and was led by Prof. Dr. Ratko Markovic. Milosevic did not take part in the team.

The two delegations came to Rambouillet with totally different considerations in their minds. The Serbian delegation, which did not include any member of the ruling elite, acted very determinedly on two major issues¹³⁵. Maintaining territorial integrity and sovereignty of the FRY was a top priority for the Serbian regime, which still perceived Kosovo as an internal matter. Besides, Serbia was adamant in expressing its opposition to foreign troops to be located on the territories of Kosovo or any other part of FRY. This reflected the fact that the Serbian regime insistently refrained from internationalizing the problem. From the perspective of the Milosevic regime, Rambouillet talks consisted of two parts¹³⁶: the “political” component was about Kosovo’s autonomy and the “military” component was related to the deployment of NATO forces on the FRY soil. But Serbia insisted that entry of foreign troops in any part of the FRY was unacceptable since the matter touched upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. The Albanians, on the other hand, favored foreign intervention in the conflict and supported international attempts to find a solution to the disagreement, since they saw the contributions of “outsiders” as the only means to that end. What lied behind this Albanian

¹³⁵ A. J. Bellamy, “Lessons Unlearned: Why Coercive Diplomacy Failed at Rambouillet?” **International Peacekeeping**, (7)2 (Summer 2000) pp.95-114, pp.102-103

¹³⁶ B.R. Posen, “The War for Kosovo: Serbia’s Political-Military Strategy” **International Security**, (24) 4 (Spring 2000) pp.39-84, p.47

policy was the feeling of distrust to the Serbs, who abolished their autonomous status in 1989. The Albanians pointed out that the autonomous status established the legal roots of independence from Serbia and the FRY since Kosovo had the right to separate before 1989, just like any other constituent Yugoslav republic. They maintained that since the abrogation of their autonomy, they had to live under the Milosevic regime irrespective of their will. They went even further and argued that they had never been a part of Serbia. For the Albanians, Yugoslavia was an artificial creation of the Great Powers and the Albanians never felt part of this multilateral political configuration.

The “Rambouillet Agreement”¹³⁷ came out at the end of the talks in France under the influence of the Contact Group. The Agreement consisted of; the basic principles of equal rights and freedoms for all citizens and/or national communities in Kosovo, maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FRY, and the establishment of a democratic self-government in Kosovo through legislative, executive, judicial and other institutions. Confidence-building measures were to be drawn up and implemented. These measures involved: the end of the use of force through an agreed ceasefire, withdrawal of forces from the region, safe return, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, of all people who had to leave the region because of

¹³⁷ Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo on <http://www.state.gov/www.regions/eur/ksvo-rambouillet-text.html>

violence and armed confrontation and access for international assistance in order to reconstruct the province and to provide humanitarian assistance. Thus, the Rambouillet Agreement was a detailed piece of work¹³⁸, which put forward the basic tenets of “self-government” in Kosovo; the Constitution, the Assembly, Presidency, conduct and supervision of elections, judiciary, status of national communities, police and civil security, international border security, economic issues, and finally, implementation of the Agreement.

On 14 February, it became evident that the parties would not be able to reach an agreement. Thus the Contact Group announced the prolongation of the talks, but on 19 of March, negotiations terminated. The sides did not agree on major points. But the Contact Group had its own priorities. The main considerations of the Contact Group were maintenance of territorial integrity of the FYR, demilitarization of the KLA and the end of armed confrontation. Besides, the Contact Group was strict on abolishing the conditions of an armed confrontation or “ethnic cleansing” in the aftermath of Dayton. The determined policy of the Contact Group was two pronged. First, they wanted to prove that the international community was safeguarding the implementation of Dayton Peace Agreement, which brought about political and social tranquility to the Balkans following the end of ethno-religious wars in

¹³⁸ A. Bellamy, “Reconsidering Rambouillet” Contemporary Security Policy, (22)1 (April 2001) pp.31-56

former Yugoslavia. Second, acceleration of tension in Kosovo to prevent the rise of the larger Albanian question. It was feared that such a chain effect would turn the Balkans into a battlefield.

5.7.2. NATO's Intervention : "Operation Allied Force"

The Kosovo crisis erupted at a time when the 50th Anniversary of NATO's establishment was on the agenda. Just as it was observed in the previous Balkan crises, NATO took an active stance and enforced both sides of the conflict to achieve a solution without any resort to arms. However, the Kosovo crisis was different from the previous Balkan conflicts. The Milosevic regime was warned by the United States that force might be used in case gross violations of human rights took place in Kosovo (the famous "Christmas warning" of President Bush on 29 December 1992 and the continuation of this policy by the Clinton administration). Thus, giving a free hand to the Milosevic regime in Kosovo would create a "credibility crisis" on the part of the United States and its Western allies. In addition, NATO had a strategic investment¹³⁹ in Bosnia in the process of implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement, which finalized the war in Bosnia. NATO forces in Bosnia (IFOR, then SFOR) were perceived as the protector of peace in the new

¹³⁹ T. K. Vogel, "Preponderant Power: NATO and the New Balkans" International Journal, (Winter 1999-2000) pp.15-34, p.22

state. The resumption of armed confrontations in the Balkans might endanger peace in Bosnia, proving at the same time the ineffectiveness of NATO in maintaining regional stability. Within the framework of the political and military conditions of early 1999, the intervention of multinational NATO forces in Kosovo seemed inevitable. Moreover, the Milosevic regime did not give a positive answer to the last minute warning of the famous American diplomat, Holbrooke, who paid an official visit to Belgrade in order to persuade the Serbian leader to accept the terms of the Rambouillet negotiations¹⁴⁰.

On 20 March 1999, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) left Kosovo. Three days later, Javier Solana, Secretary General of NATO announced the start of “Operation Allied Force” in Kosovo. In his press statement of 23 March, Solana explained the objective of the operation as¹⁴¹ “to prevent more human suffering, repression and violence against the civilian population in Kosovo” and “to prevent instability spreading in the region”. In a further statement of the organization, it was emphasized that the military action was directed towards halting the violent attacks committed by the Yugoslav Army (VJ) and the Ministry of Interior (MUP) with the aim of obstructing future attacks against the population

¹⁴⁰ *Zaman*, 10 March 1999

¹⁴¹ Press Statement by Dr. Javier Solana Secretary General of NATO,
<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-040e.htm>

of Kosovo¹⁴². NATO's military operation against Serbia was continuing during the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the organization at the Washington Summit of April. At the Summit, high-level representatives of the member states and NATO officials insistently mentioned the necessity of backing diplomacy with credible military force in order to end crisis¹⁴³ and NATO's firm stance in contributing to humanitarian issues. NATO members were psychologically under pressure for military success, to prove actual power and/or credibility of the organization.

NATO was the sole defense organization with the necessary military equipment to function effectively in case of armed conflict¹⁴⁴. European initiatives to create a common defense and foreign policy and act together in accordance with those perceived objectives, since the beginning of the 1990s, did not bear fruit and effective mechanisms to act swiftly in case of crisis. For instance, the European Union countries' initiatives to revive the Western European Union as the defense arm of the Union and the "Combined Joint Task Force" (CJTF) concept designed to enable the EU states to use military equipment of NATO in case of political and military crises, by providing rapid and influential first instance intervention to end possible conflicts had not been realized yet. The

¹⁴² Press Release on "Political and Military Objectives of NATO Action with Regard to the Crisis in Kosovo", <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-043e.htm>

¹⁴³ H. Solana, "A Defining Moment for NATO: The Washington Summit Decisions and the Kosovo Crisis" **NATO Review** (Summer 1999) pp.3-8, p.6

¹⁴⁴ for a detailed analysis of NATO's intervention in Kosovo from the perspective of the "New Strategic Concept", see G. Aybet, *NATO's Developing Role in Collective Security*, SAM Papers No:4/99 (Ankara, June 1999)

Europeans did not have the necessary military equipment to act effectively, without United States participation¹⁴⁵. This was a rather ironic scene, since the Europeans deserved to create a truly Euro-centric organization in order to minimize United States command and control in matters of defense, but they failed to establish such an organization in the absence of direct and/or indirect United States involvement. Furthermore, NATO had already been involved in the conflicts of the Balkans since the Yugoslav wars of dissolution. UNPROFOR, IFOR and SFOR were examples in that sense. In the end NATO had to undertake military operations in Kosovo. However, the air operation was only part of the process that would lead to the establishment of peace in Kosovo. It was to require continuous post-war efforts by international organizations to maintain peace.

¹⁴⁵ E. Pond , “Kosovo: Catalyst for Europe” The Washington Quarterly, (22)4, pp.77-92

All members of the Contact Group supported NATO's military intervention in Kosovo except Russia. Russia was initially involved within the Contact Group since its initiation in 1992 and participated in efforts to end the Bosnian and Kosovo crises, but it rejected NATO's military involvement in Kosovo. Russia opposed the operation led by NATO on various accounts. First, Russia lacked a concentrated policy¹⁴⁶ regarding Kosovo, although the crisis had not erupted unexpectedly. This might stem from the fact that Russia had its own political and economic problems since the collapse of the communist rule. Thus the period of transition forced her to focus on domestic stability and concentrate its efforts to solve internal matters in the first place. Second, Russia was concerned that NATO involvement in Kosovo might lead to a comparison between Kosovo and Chechnya¹⁴⁷. Last but not least, Russia did not want to give a free hand to NATO in world affairs. The Russian statesmen were hesitant that NATO's out of area operations might become habitual in time¹⁴⁸. Briefly, Russia did not want to let its old rivals be active in world affairs, in general, and in its sphere of influence (Caucasus) in particular, outside Russian control¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁶ O. Levitin, "Inside Moscow's Kosovo Muddle" Survival, (42)1 (Spring 2000) pp.130-140, p. 133

¹⁴⁷ V. Baranovsky, "The Kosovo Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy" The International Spectator, (35)2 (April-June 2000) pp.113-130, p.115

¹⁴⁸ O. Antonenko, "Russia, NATO and European Security After Kosovo" Survival, (41)4, (Winter 1999-2000) pp.124-144, p.133

¹⁴⁹ A.P. Tsygankov, "The Final Triumph of the Pax Americana?: Western Intervention in Yugoslavia and Russia's Debate on The Post-Cold War Order" Communist and Post-Communist Studies, (34)2, pp.133-156

5.8. The Phase of Implementing United Nations Resolution 1244:

Establishment of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and Deployment of Kosovo Force (KFOR)

On 9 June 1999 NATO and the FRY signed a peace agreement¹⁵⁰ which ended NATO's Operation Allied Force. Only a day after the signing of an agreement between NATO and the FRY, the United Nations Security Council issued resolution 1244, which signaled the beginning of a new state of affairs in Kosovo. The resolution stipulated¹⁵¹, the withdrawal of all military, police, paramilitary forces from Kosovo and demilitarization of the KLA; safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons to Kosovo under the supervision of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, as well as the deployment of effective international civil and security (with substantial NATO participation) presence under the auspices of the United Nations, and finally the establishment of an interim administration which would provide a substantial self-government for Kosovo in accordance with the Rambouillet talks and principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FRY.

¹⁵⁰ The peace agreement which was signed between NATO and the FRY was called the "Military-Technical Agreement"

¹⁵¹ UNSCR 1244, 10 June 1999

Resolution 1244 authorized the formation of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), to be headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary General as the most senior civilian official in Kosovo¹⁵². It should, however, be noted that UNMIK was designed to collaborate with major international organizations during the process of implementing resolution 1244. The basic responsibilities of the Interim Administration were defined under four pillars, which consisted of humanitarian assistance and the return of refugees (led by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees), civil administration (under the auspices of the United Nations), democratization, human rights, rule of law and institution-building (guided by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and reconstruction and development (managed by the European Union). In addition, issues of security and policing were to be undertaken by NATO. The special security force, called “Kosovo Stabilization Force” (KFOR) would be established in accordance with the agreement signed by NATO and the FRY and it would be deployed simultaneously with the departure of Serbian forces (20 June 1999) from Kosovo. The main duties of KFOR would be demilitarization of the KLA, border controls and border-security as well as aiding the return of refugees and the displaced persons. Thus the process of peace implementation would be realized with the involvement of major international organizations, which had both the necessary means and

¹⁵² <http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/pages/unmik12.html>

experience. The international community proposed that the Interim Administration would be temporary and it would remain there until the establishment of a self-governing democratic system in Kosovo was to be set up.

5.9. Turkey's Attitude towards NATO Strikes Against Serbia and Turkey's Participation in the Peace Implementation Process

On the first day of the NATO air attacks against Serbian targets, Turkish Foreign Ministry said that:

“Being a country which attributes importance to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Balkans and having historic, human and cultural ties with the region, Turkey has made great efforts to the resolution of the conflict through peaceful settlement. However, it has been observed that the Serbian regime has not shown willingness to work towards fulfilling the expectations of the international community and the whole Kosovo population. On the other hand, the acceleration of violence in Kosovo and the increase in the number of displaced people and the migrants as a result of this has turned the conflict into a humanitarian drama. Turkey regrets the stage that the Kosovo issue has reached and is worried about possible future developments. The attitude of the FRY has made the phased military options for NATO inevitable. Being a NATO member, Turkey gives full support to North Atlantic Council's (NAC) phased military measures. Although the issue has reached such a critical stage, we wish the Belgrade regime had acted with common sense and gave a positive response to the expectations of the international community.”¹⁵³

¹⁵³ *Dışışleri Güncesi* (25 March 1999) p.198

During NATO attacks against Serbian targets, Turkey seemed to intensify its efforts in the Balkans in order to end the military operation. For instance, President Demirel paid a visit to Macedonia and the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem, joined a meeting of the EU foreign ministers and representatives of international charity organizations that was designed to provide humanitarian aid to Kosovo¹⁵⁴. Ankara appointed an ambassador to Belgrade, Ahmet Acet, as the special representative on Kosovo in charge of the refugee crisis. The Turkish ambassador was given the special task of communicating President Demirel's message to the presidents of Macedonia and Albania concerning the supply of aid to Albanian refugees in those countries. In addition, he was to prepare a report concerning the latest developments in Kosovo¹⁵⁵. However, such efforts came too late and too little, given the ongoing military operation of NATO. Turkey's low-profile attitude was limited to observing and reporting the events in Kosovo. Ankara provided humanitarian aid to Albanian refugees, together with Germany, Britain and the US and offered sanctuary to Albanian refugees¹⁵⁶ who escaped from armed clashes in Kosovo.

As the bombing came to a conclusion in the first half of June 1999, the Turkish contingent, which included a mechanized infantry and armor

¹⁵⁴ "Ankara DiplomatiK Atakta", *Zaman*, 8 April 1999

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*

¹⁵⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/English/world/Europe/newsid-311000/311416.stm>, 4 April 1999

consisting of 988 soldiers¹⁵⁷ arrived in Kosovo in early July. Turkish troops were deployed in the south of Prizren, mainly in Dragas and Mamusha¹⁵⁸ where the Kosovar Turkish community predominantly resided. A unit of 163 soldiers were also sent to Albania in order to provide security and participate in the safe transfer of humanitarian aid to Albanian refugees, who escaped from Serbian violence and found shelter there during the fighting between Serbia and the Allied forces. Meanwhile, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cem, visited Kosovo on 17-18 July, and he opened the “Turkish Coordination Offices” in Prishtina and Prizren. Those offices were designed to coordinate the distribution of Turkish humanitarian assistance and participate in the reconstruction process in Kosovo. During his visit, Cem met the Head of UNMIK and the Commander of KFOR. The three talked about the latest developments in the region. Cem particularly emphasized the involvement of Kosovar Turks in the new administrative structure, and he emphasized the preservation of all rights given by the previous administrations. Such rights covered printing, broadcasting, education in Turkish as well as keeping Turkish as one of the official languages in areas heavily populated by the Turks.

¹⁵⁷ <http://mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ah/01.htm> , 28 November 1999

¹⁵⁸ *Zaman*, 8 and 29 July 1999 and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/English/world/Europe/nesid-385000/385737.stm>, 4 July 1999

At the Turkish Coordination Offices, Cem also met with Kosovar Albanian leaders, Tachi, Bukoshi and Surrori, who acted as negotiators during the Rambouillet talks. In his talks with the Albanian side, Cem mentioned the importance of collaboration with international organizations in order to achieve a lasting peace in Kosovo¹⁵⁹. An overall evaluation of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Cem's visit to Kosovo shows the consistent stance of Turkey in acting harmoniously with its allies and with the international community. Turkey particularly dwelled upon the importance of returning the acquired rights to all inhabitants of the region, including the Turkish community. No emphasis was made to independence of Kosovo at the end of the interim administration in the official Turkish declarations.

5.10. Creation of the "Stability Pact" for South Eastern Europe

Although an agreement was reached between NATO and Serbia, which ended NATO's air operations against Serbia, there was a long way towards finding a political solution to the conflict in Kosovo and the prevention of further confrontations between the Serbs and Albanians. On 10 June 1999, the European Union members, together with the participation of Turkey, the United States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary,

¹⁵⁹ <http://mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ah/02.htm> , 28 November 1999

Romania, Russia and Macedonia met in Cologne and announced the formation of the “Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe”¹⁶⁰.

The basic principles of the Stability Pact were: contribution to “lasting peace, prosperity and stability for South Eastern Europe”. Besides, the Pact was designed to function around three working tables, which consisted of “democratization and human rights”, “economic reconstruction, development and cooperation” and “security issues”. It was established to function as a forum to develop cooperation and dialogue in a regional context with the participation of international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Council of Europe. In addition, it was perceived that this forum would help find solutions to problematic issues that might arise among regional states before such problems turn into armed confrontations. To what extent the Stability Pact would be effective in achieving the perceived regional aims of the participatory countries will be observed in the future. Given the last ten years’ developments in the volatile peninsula, it is very hard to prejudge its success. But there is no doubt that the crisis in Kosovo was the stimulus for the West, who wanted to prevent conflicts in the Balkans before they turned into armed confrontations.

¹⁶⁰ [http:// europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/stapact/10 June 99.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/stapact/10_June_99.htm), 29 April 2001

Within this framework, members of the Stability Pact elaborated the priorities for a durable solution to the issue of Kosovo¹⁶¹: establishment of a democratic self-government in Kosovo and a democratic administration in Serbia, economic reconstruction in the said region on the basis of free market economy, foundation of a truly functioning justice and security system and above all, maintenance of an administration that respects fundamental rights of individuals who belong to different national communities. For one thing, the West prejudged that in case a conflict arose in any part of the Balkans, its spread to the whole region might be eliminated through preventive measures within the framework of the Stability Pact mechanism.

¹⁶¹ P. Roumeliotis, *Promoting Stability in the Balkans* (Athens, Livani Publishing 2001) pp.25-29

CHAPTER VI

KOSOVO AFTER THE 1999 CRISIS

6.1. Kosovo in the Aftermath of NATO's Intervention

The issue of Kosovo entered a new phase with the end of NATO's military intervention. The international community undertook the responsibility of establishing an Interim Administration in Kosovo in line with the principles of the Rambouillet negotiations and the United Nations resolution 1244. This rather uneasy task depended on persuading both parties to fully abide by the agreed principles. However, the vagueness of the political agreement particularly with respect to the future status of Kosovo created a handicap for the international administration (UNMIK), simply because the final status of Kosovo was not designated. Instead, two points were raised: territorial integrity of the FRY and a self-governed system in Kosovo, which would respect fundamental human rights. These were rather unattainable goals, particularly for the Albanians who openly displayed their unwillingness to live in a non-independent state of Kosovo. Thus, any outcome, which would not lead to independence at the end of the interim period would be rejected by the Albanians. However, the FRY accepted the terms of a political deal that maintained the country's territorial integrity. Both the divergent attitudes and perceptions of the Albanians and the Serbs; and the rather vague character of

the political agreement for Kosovo will probably make this matter a top priority for the Balkans in the coming years.

On 15 December 1999, both Ibrahim Rugova and Hashim Thaci made an agreement with UNMIK in order to disband their underground governments¹⁶². This deal constituted the first step towards normalizing life in Kosovo after the end of NATO's Operation Allied Force and in the process of setting up the features of the Interim Administration. It should be kept in mind that demilitarization of the KLA was an essential part of the agreement between NATO and the FRY, which aimed to establish a truly functioning system of justice and security in Kosovo. Moreover, UNMIK decided to use the KLA for matters of internal security and transform its forces into "Kosovo Protection Corps" (TMK). Disarmament and transformation of the KLA was successful. During that process, the Interim Administration faced a further impediment; emergence of the "Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac" (UCPMB) in three provinces which were located at the southern part of Serbia, known as the "Presevo Valley". In fact, certain groups from the KLA, which refused to take part in TMK, joined the UCPMB and continued to fight for the rights of the Albanians in Serbia. UCPMB intensified its activities particularly at the "Ground Security Zone"¹⁶³ between Serbia and Kosovo, which was established after the conclusion of the peace agreement. This was also part of

¹⁶² **Balkan Report**, (4)10, 4 February 2000

¹⁶³ "Presevo Valley Tension", *BBC News*, 2 February 2001

the Albanian revenge actions, which came to the agenda after Operation Allied Force. Interestingly, UCPMB activities decreased after Milosevic was removed. The period of political transition in Serbia created a convenient environment for the UCPMB to materialize its declared aim of equal rights for the Albanians. The main thesis of the UCPMB was that the rights of the Albanians who resided in southern Serbian territories were also violated so these people should be granted their basic rights and join the future independent state of Kosovo.

6.2. The Latest Developments Regarding Kosovo: Elections in Serbia and Kosovo

In the year 2000 two vital elections directly related to Kosovo's future were held in Serbia and Kosovo. On 24 September 2000, presidential elections took place in Serbia, which brought an end to Milosevic's rule, thanks to the opposition parties that gathered under the "Democratic Opposition of Serbia" (DOS) led by Vojislav Kostunica. Milosevic announced the election results void once it became clear that he would be ousted from the presidency. On 5 October, an opposition movement was activated by the Serbs that protested Milosevic's reactionary attitudes to the election results and called for respect to the majority votes. With the Serbian mass movement, Vojislav Kostunica and his allies from DOS got the chance to finally set up a new government and replace the old regime.

The election of Kostunica symbolized the beginning of a new era in domestic and foreign policy orientations of the FRY. But a series of problems awaited the new presidency¹⁶⁴. The new administration had to set up the rule of law and improve the economy and get rid of the authoritarian system by establishing a new one that would be appreciated both internally and externally¹⁶⁵. In order to achieve democratic standards in politics and have a functioning economy, the “elected” had to cooperate with the international community, particularly with the West. For one thing, the FRY was in need of material aid in order to rebuild the country after almost a decade of wars. This, in turn, forced the rulers of the FRY to collaborate with the outside world on issues like the trial of Milosevic by the International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia (ICTY). The ICTY had issued an indictment on Milosevic because of his violent policies vis-à-vis the Albanian population in Kosovo, especially in the second half of the 1990s. Handing over Milosevic to the Court in The Hague would be a serious step taken by the new government of the FRY. It would facilitate the integration of the FRY with the external world¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁴ E.D. Gordy, “Building A Normal Boring Country: Kostunica’s Yugoslavia” **Current History** (March 2001) pp.109-113

¹⁶⁵ L.J. Cohen, “Post-Milosevic Serbia” **Current History** (March 2001) and J. Mertus, “Serbia: Remaining Europe’s Outlaw Nation” **Journal of International Affairs**, (54)2 (Spring 2001) pp.489-505

¹⁶⁶ A further belief was that Milosevic and his supporters acted as a team since 1989 and figures like the Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic, had also committed crimes of war and they should, therefore, be trailed altogether. It seemed that the FRY statesman were compelled to abide the principles set forth by the outsiders in order to be accepted as a member of the international community. Taking into consideration the fact that no state can be isolated from other states in today’s world of interwoven state-to-state relations and trans-boundary communication channels, the Serbian state did not have much choice.

In Kosovo, local elections, organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe¹⁶⁷, were held on 28 October 2000. During the local elections of 2000, three parties contested. The first was the LDK of Rugova. Following the disarmament of the KLA, political legacy split among different political parties¹⁶⁸, like the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) of Hachim Thaci and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) led by a KLA commander, Ramush Haradinaj. Results of the elections displayed considerable support of Kosovar Albanians to Ibrahim Rugova, while the Serbs and some other minority groups, like the Turks, boycotted it. The outcome of the elections enforced the assumption that the Albanians in Kosovo desired stability in the region instead of chaos and armed confrontation.

Shortly after the results of the Kosovo municipal elections were made public, Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a press release through which, concern about the withdrawal of Turks, together with other ethnic groups from the election process was put forward. In the official statement, it was mentioned that since the Turkish language had been deprived of equal status with Albanian and Serbian languages in the registration forms prepared for elections, Kosovar Turks had “rightfully

¹⁶⁷“OSCE Annual Report on OSCE Activities/2000”,
www.osce.org/docs/english/misc/anrep000e-activ.htm#Anchor-1.-41834

¹⁶⁸ *Elections in Kosovo: Moving Towards Democracy?*, International Crisis Group report No:97, 7 July 2000, Pristina, Washington, Brussels, p.21

reacted”¹⁶⁹. In its statement, the Ministry put the burden on UNMIK as the main institution responsible for coordination of the elections. Further, it was demanded that the UN Special Representative of Secretary General for Kosovo should take the initiative to appoint members of the legitimate political party of Kosovar Turks: Turkish Democratic Union (TDU) to the Municipal Assemblies¹⁷⁰. Finally, Turkey’s hope of a final solution to the Kosovo issue “through negotiations” was pointed out without any reference to the proper method to realize that objective. Apart from mentioning the status and fundamental rights of the Turkish population, the statement included some general remarks regarding Kosovo and the need to find a peaceful solution to the conflict between the Serbs and Albanians. What deserves attention regarding Turkish attitude is that policy was based on the protection of the rights of Turks living in Kosovo, rather than an overall approach to the solution of this conflict from Turkey’s perspective.

To the surprise of many people, the winner of the October 2000 local elections was the moderate LDK of Rugova. This clearly implied that there was a great desire for peace among the people living in Kosovo in the aftermath of the 1999 ethnic confrontation. Another major development was the establishment of “Kosovo Protection Corps” (TMK) within the framework of the peace

¹⁶⁹ “Local elections in Kosovo” on <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupb/ba/baa20/november>

¹⁷⁰ *ibid*

agreement, which finalized the bombing campaign by NATO against the Serbs in 1999. In essence, the TMK was planned by the United Nations as a civilian power, which would take on tasks like disaster response, search and rescue¹⁷¹ and would be the successor of the KLA. However, the Albanians made a different evaluation since they regarded the new structure as a trained national force, which would function in case the integrity of Kosovo was threatened¹⁷². Although the winner of the October 2000 local election in Kosovo was Rugova, an overall evaluation of the facts in this problematic environment puts forward the fact that the LDK was not the only influential political organization¹⁷³. The political arm of the KLA represented by Hashim Thaci and the Albanians who still perceive military power as a necessity for this province, all have a say on their own future.

6.3. The New Constitutional Framework for Kosovo

In May 2001, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Kosovo promulgated the “The New Constitutional Framework” which put forward the principles of self-government in Kosovo, before the general elections took place in November 2001. The principles of the “New Constitutional

¹⁷¹ L. Cohen, “Kosovo: Nobody’s Country” Current History (March 2000)

¹⁷² *ibid*

¹⁷³ R. Lani, “Rugova and the UÇK: Chronicle of A Shifting Peace” The International Spectator, 34 (4) (October-December 1999) pp.29-40, p.39

Framework” can be enumerated as follows¹⁷⁴: The Assembly will consist of 120 members. The President will be elected by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly for a term of three years. The ‘Presidency’, elected by the Assembly, will consist of seven members determined by the rate of votes. However, the Serbs and non-Albanian or non-Serb communities will have “one” reserved seat each in the Presidency appointed by the representatives of these ethnic groups. The “Government” will be presided by the Prime Minister with nine Ministers who will be proposed by the President and approved by the Assembly¹⁷⁵. Although the New Constitutional Framework set the parameters of self-government in Kosovo, the functions of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Kosovo will continue with respect to administration and cohesion between various international organizations. This was due to the legal recognition of the resolution 1244 that acknowledged Kosovo as part of the FRY.

On 17 November 2001, general elections were held. The LDK was the forerunner of the elections winning 47 seats of the 120 members Assembly, while the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) led by Hashim Thaci won 26

¹⁷⁴ D.H. Demekas, J. Herderschee and D.F. Jacobs, *Kosovo: Institutions and Policies for Reconstruction and Growth* (Washington DC, IMF Publication Service 2002) p.4

¹⁷⁵ S. Vinogradov, “Kosovo: A Milestone on the Road to Democracy” UN Chronicle, No:2 (2001) p.72

seats and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) got 8 seats¹⁷⁶. The Serb “Return” (Povratak) coalition became the third popular party winning 22 seats in the elections. Within this configuration, the Kosovo Assembly failed to elect a President following the end of the general elections. It was on 4 March 2002 when the Assembly finally succeeded to elect Ibrahim Rugova as the President and Bajram Rexhepi of the PDK as Prime Minister through a compromise of the three Albanian parties: LDK, PDK and AAK¹⁷⁷.

6.4. The Spread of the “Albanian Question” to` Macedonia

A small group of armed Albanians killed three Macedonian policemen in Tanusevci¹⁷⁸, located in the north of Macedonia, just across the border with Kosovo on 4 March 2001. This was the beginning of a series of nationalist events in Macedonia, to unfold an organized armed rebellious Albanian group called “National Liberation Army” (NLA). Although the first attacks of the NLA were not taken seriously, the continuous actions of the group attracted foreign attention. The chaos later spread to Tetevo and Kumanovo¹⁷⁹. The NLA and its supporters had concrete demands from Macedonia. Like the other ethnic Albanian groups in Kosovo and Presevo Valley, they demanded equal rights for

¹⁷⁶ T. Ripley, “Instability Reigns in the Southern Balkans” Jane’s Intelligence Review (March 2002) p.39

¹⁷⁷ V. Kozin, “Kosovo at the Crossroads” International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy and International Relations, (48)3 (2002) pp.198-209, p.208

¹⁷⁸ “The Tanusevci Story” Balkan Report, (5)18 (9 March 2001)

¹⁷⁹ “Macedonia Conflict”, *BBC News*, 9 May 2001

every individual in Macedonia. Their claims particularly rested on an equal constitutional status for both the Macedonians and Albanians, acceptance of Albanian as official language of the state and equal job opportunities in state institutions.

The roots of problematic relations between the Albanians and the Macedonian administration goes back to 1989, when an amendment was made to the Macedonian Constitution. By this amendment the republic was defined as the “national state of the Macedonian nation” by abolishing the previous designation of the statehood as the “state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities” ¹⁸⁰. Shortly after the dissolution of ex-Yugoslavia, Macedonia declared its independence on 17 September 1991. Since Macedonia achieved its sovereignty in a peaceful manner, the status of minorities in that ex-Yugoslav republic was not considered to be problematic by the international community that had later deployed the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in order to prevent the spread of Yugoslav wars of dissolution to the south.

¹⁸⁰ R.W. Mickey and A.S. Albion, “Success in the Balkans?: A Case Study of Ethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia” in I.M. Cuthbertson and J. Leibowitz (eds) *Minorities: The New Europe's Old Issue* (Westview Press 1993) p.57

Macedonian state has a *sui generis* ethnic composition, which consisted of Slav Macedonians (60 %), Albanians (23 %), Turks (4%), Rhomas (3%), Serbs (2%) and Vlachs (0.4 %). The ethnic configuration of the country is like a small picture of the Balkans, where the population is made up of multiple ethnic and religious groups. Being the second largest ethnic group in Macedonia, the Albanians had certain demands from the rulers since the first multi-party elections, which brought Kiro Gligorov to the presidency in 1990. The Albanians mainly focused on access to language and educational rights, free media in their native language and equal opportunities in various state occupations¹⁸¹. All these demands pointed to the achievement of equal status in both the state apparatus and Macedonian social life, since they felt that they were discriminated against. In 1995, the Albanian attempt to set up a private Albanian-language university in Tetovo was harshly repressed by the Macedonian police. In essence, the Albanians desired to play a more active role particularly after seceding from Yugoslavia and they wanted an “autonomous status”¹⁸² for the northern and western parts of Macedonia, where a large group of Albanians lived. However, the Albanian demands were neglected by the Macedonian regime.

¹⁸¹ A. Ackerman, “The FYROM: A Relatively Successful Case of Conflict Prevention” Security Dialogue, (27)4 (1996) pp.409-424, p.411

¹⁸² S.J. Kaufman, “Preventive Peacekeeping, Ethnic Violence and Macedonia” Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, (19)3 (1996) pp 229-246, p.235

The influx¹⁸³ of huge number of Albanians into Macedonia, following the Kosovo crisis in 1999, led to discomfort on the part of Macedonia. The fear was that increase in number of the Albanians who resided in Macedonia might change the balance in favor of the Albanians and stimulate long awaited uprising by that major ethnic group. A further cause for the 2001 uprising was the escape of former KLA and UCPMB paramilitaries to Macedonia. These extremist groups aimed to materialize their national objectives by simultaneous crises in states where large group of ethnic Albanians lived. This tendency repeated itself particularly after the Kosovo crisis of 1999.

When the conflicts intensified in Macedonia, a “government of national unity”¹⁸⁴ was established on 13 May 2001 to end the uprising and prepare the state for the early general elections of 2002. The new government was headed by Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski from the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO). Democratic Party for the Macedonian National Unity (DPMNE) and Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH) and the Party of Democratic Prosperity (PPD) made up two Albanian parties of the coalition government. However the coalition failed to implement the necessary measures to

¹⁸³ D. Perry, “Macedonia’s Quest for Security and Stability” **Current History** (March 2000)

¹⁸⁴ “The New Macedonian Government in Facts and Figures” **Balkan Report**, (5)36 (18 May 2001)

satisfy the Albanian insurgents and to stop atrocities which resumed in the northern part of the state.

Later the “Ohrid Agreement” was signed between the Albanians and the Macedonians on 13 August 2001¹⁸⁵. Furthermore, NATO implemented “Operation Essential Harvest”, which continued between 22 August-23 September 2001. Upon this operation, 3500 NATO troops were sent to Macedonia for providing logistical support to disarm ethnic Albanian groups and destroy their weapons. Following the termination of this, NATO started its “Operation Amber Fox” with 700 troops with a specific mandate to provide protection for international monitors who would observe the adoption of the Ohrid Agreement. On 15 September 2002, general elections were held in Macedonia. The most vital outcome was the overwhelming victory of the Albanian party of “Democratic Union for Integration” led by the prominent figure Ali Ahmeti¹⁸⁶. Since this party had a great success at the elections, its participation in the new government became possible.

¹⁸⁵ J.L.C. Eldridge, “Playing at Peace: Western Politics, Diplomacy and the Stabilization of Macedonia” **European Security**, (11)3 (Autumn 2002) pp.46-90, p.65

¹⁸⁶ “Stakes High in Macedonia Election” **Jane’s Intelligence Review** (August 2002)

6.5. Further Disintegration of the FRY? : The Issue of Montenegro and Its Impact on Kosovo

The divergence of opinion and uneven balance in administrative matters, between two remnant republics of former Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro, came to the surface in 1997 when the Montenegrin government adopted the “Proposal for the New Commonwealth of States of Serbia and Montenegro” on 5 August¹⁸⁷. This was a vital step on the way towards independence and setting Montenegro free from fait accomplis of the Milosevic regime in domestic politics and foreign policy. Besides, the Montenegrin proposal was the outcome of a consensus reached by three political parties of the ruling coalition. From the point of view of the Montenegrin regime and particularly president Milo Djukanovic, the proposal symbolized the formal end of the FRY since it aimed to restructure the political and economic relationship between the remnant republics. Montenegro made efforts to rearrange the formal link between the two since 1997 through its demands for democratization and economic liberalization. Moreover, Podgorica had its own political and economic links with the West despite Serbian opposition. After declaring their “Proposal”, Montenegrin statesmen designated a specific time span to the Serbian regime for the acceptance of their political future. Montenegro warned Serbia by threat of a referendum for independence in case their proposal was rejected.

¹⁸⁷ Z. Kusovac, “Milosevic Prepares to Play out Montenegro” Jane’s Intelligence Review (September 1999)

Disagreement between the two republics came to the surface again, particularly during the Kosovo crisis of 1998. The Montenegrin regime criticized Milosevic's violent attitude towards the Albanians. In a newspaper report, Montenegrin Prime Minister Filip Vujanovic made a call for the Serbian regime for "responsible" behavior¹⁸⁸. In his statement, Prime Minister Vujanovic reminded the Contact Group's threats of sanctions and pointed to the necessity of swift and efficient action by Serbia in order to prevent the crisis getting out of hand. Montenegro intensified demands for an independent statehood after 1999. NATO's Operation Allied Force against the Serbian targets (particularly the infrastructure and communication channels) and international disapproval of Milosevic regime created a convenient environment for the Montenegrin demand for independence. For one thing, the West seemed to be a voluntary supporter of any political and economic initiative which would weaken the Serbian state and help overthrow Milosevic from the presidency.

During the year 2000, the issue of Montenegro was neglected particularly because Kosovo's future status attracted most foreign attention, although the Montenegrin rulers did not give up their demands for independence. Moreover, Milosevic was ousted from the presidency and replaced by Kostunica. Once Milosevic was ousted from his post, the West was no longer interested in and

¹⁸⁸ <http://news6.thdo.bbc.uk/hi/English/special-report/1998/kosovo2/newsid/64403st>, 10 March 1998

supportive of movements, which would destabilize the Balkans and change the existing borders. Thus the victory of pro-separatists at the end of 22 April 2001 general elections did not pave the way for Montenegrin independence given the lack of external sympathy for such a change. In fact, the election results displayed an almost evenly division of electoral votes: those who favored independence and those who demanded reinforcement of close ties with the Kostunica regime. Still, Milo Djukonovic and his supporters insisted on equal footing between the two republics on administrative facilities. The new Serbian regime of Kostunica was applauded by the international community since it handed over Milosevic to the ICTY at The Hague shortly after his arrest on 1 April 2001¹⁸⁹. Serbia and Montenegro signed an agreement that brought a special status to their administration on 15 March 2002. Only one year later, in 2003, two constituent republics of the FRY signed an agreement, which changed the name of the state to the “Republic of Serbia and Montenegro”. This last step brought a special status to the relationships of the two republics. Although it was stated that the agreement, which was signed by an initiative of the European Union, did not mean the independence of any of the republics, the future status of the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro is unknown. The unresolved issue of Kosovo’s final political status and Montenegrin demands for eventual independence are directly related to each other. In case Montenegro achieves independence, this will display the official end of the

¹⁸⁹ On 15 November 2000, FRY’s membership to the OSCE was accepted at the OSCE Vienna Summit, see **Balkan Report**, (4)88 (15 December 2000)

state since one of two constituent republics will no longer exist. This in turn, may open the way for the Albanian demands for independence, because the legal base of the 1999 agreements and accords, which depended on the integrity of the FRY will no longer be valid in the absence of Montenegro. Similarly, independence of Kosovo may accelerate Montenegrin actions for the common end.

CHAPTER VII

EVALUATION OF TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS KOSOVO AND THE BALKANS IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

7.1. The Developments in Domestic Politics and Turkey's Foreign Policy

During the second half of the 1990s, Turkey was very much preoccupied with domestic political and economic problems. In 1994, one of the major economic crises of the Republican period emerged with tremendous consequences. Economic instability led to the allegations of political corruption and social dissatisfaction among the people. This was followed by a political fragmentation. A number of new political parties were born. Some of these parties emerged from political splits and did not have major ideological differences compared to the existing ones. The outcome was short lived and unstable coalition governments that were formed by the political parties, which often had totally divergent priorities. The coalition governments failed to act coherently on major economic and political issues. Foreign policy got its share from this chaos as well.

Turkish people sought a government, which would save the state from the economic chaos and stay away from any kind of corruption. Pro-Islamist RP (Welfare Party) or pro-nationalist MHP (Nationalist Action Party), which were

not able to form governments or even enter the Parliament before the 1990s started to play active roles in Turkish politics. This led to the rise of religious movements and the Islamist political party of Necmettin Erbakan, the RP. After the general elections of 1996, RP formed a coalition government with Ciller's DYP where Erbakan was the Prime Minister. Regarding foreign policy, there was a division of labor between DYP and RP. While Ciller dealt with the European Union affairs, Erbakan took care of relations with the Islamic countries¹⁹⁰.

The RP-DYP coalition government was perceived as a threat to the secular structure of the state by the public and the policies of the government were not appreciated by the Turkish establishment¹⁹¹. Following a social event that was organized by one of the municipalities in Ankara where demonstrations against the secular system took place and the guest Iranian diplomats criticized the secular structure of the state, the Turkish military was alerted. 28 February 1997 was a turning point of the tension between the RP-DYP coalition government and the military. The Chief of the Turkish General Staff prepared eighteen points plan in order to abolish anti-secular movements in the country and presented it to the government during a session of the National Security

¹⁹⁰ P. Robbins, "Turkish Foreign Policy under Erbakan" Survival, no: 39 (Summer 1997) pp.82-100

¹⁹¹ M. Cooper, "The Legacy of Ataturk: Turkish Political Structures and Policy Making" International Affairs, (78)1 (2002) pp.115-128, p.119

Council¹⁹². The plan was a total challenge to the policies of the Erbakan government. 28 February symbolized the end of the Erbakan government, which lasted less than one year. Although Turkey was ruled by coalition governments during the 1990s, the RP-DYP coalition was the most problematic one for Turkish politics, since it was perceived as a challenge to secularism.

During the 1990s, economic instability had been the major problem for Turkish governments. Allegations of corruption were put forward against almost all the political parties that ruled the country due to the economic situation of the country and unresolved financial crises. People lost faith in politicians. Besides, the coalition governments, which were made up of political parties with different political perspectives, weakened the efficiency of the executive power and slowed down the decision-making mechanism. The inefficiency of the coalition governments was observed in the field of foreign policy as well. Turkey made an active start to the post-Cold War period, but then lost pace due to a series of problems stemming from domestic conditions. The governments had to deal with the problem of economic decline, issues related to the social system like education, health and social security. In order to deal with the domestic issues successfully, the governments had to agree on a certain strategy. However, the constituent parties of the coalition governments often failed to reach a compromise between themselves.

¹⁹² H. Kramer, *Avrupa ve Amerika Karsisinda Degisen Turkiye*, (ceviri: Ali Çimen) (İstanbul, Timas Yayinlari 2001) p.117

7.2 Turkey and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia

An examination of Turkish foreign policy shortly after the end of the Cold War brings one to the conclusion that there was a change in its implementation towards a more active diplomacy. What lied behind this change and what remained unchanged in objectives and actions of Turkish foreign policy during the new era? To answer these questions, conditions of the post-Cold War international environment have to be explored. The end of the Cold War symbolized the collapse of ideological confrontations while opening the scene for new areas of conflict and new challenges to security. The international community suddenly came across the eruption of ethno-religious and nationalistic wars. There was a need to develop means and mechanisms to respond to those crises. In most cases the crises ended with the replacement of multi-ethnic and multi-national states with smaller nation-states, as seen in ex-Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

In adapting to the new international political environment, Turkey chose to act in harmony with Western allies within NATO. After the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, Turkey supported the military operation against the latter. Turkey's stance during the Gulf War of 1991 was the first of a series of international crisis, where Turkey acted in accordance with the international community in a conflict, to which it was not a

During the wars of Yugoslav dissolution and particularly during the Bosnia war, Turkey made utmost effort to end the confrontations in the shortest period of time with minimum casualties. Turkey adopted an active line of diplomacy within the international organizations and participated in order to achieve this aim. Particularly during the 1991-1993 period, it played an active role to motivate foreign military intervention to end the armed confrontations in Bosnia. Turkey intensified its efforts to make the United States get involved in efforts to stop the war. The initiatives of president Özal on behalf of foreign military intervention in Bosnia, who negotiated with United States Presidents Bush and Clinton, could be considered as part of Turkey's efforts to provide foreign military involvement in Bosnia. Turkey believed that foreign armed intervention into the conflict was unavoidable given the military dominance of Serbia *vis-à-vis* the Bosniacs. Turkey put forward a concrete plan (Three Stage Plan) to end the war in Bosnia, which included military measures. Turkey strongly argued that foreign military involvement in Bosnia was obligatory to reach a ceasefire. In this respect Turkey proposed to provide troops for a possible multilateral air operation in Bosnia. However, Turkey lacked the economic and military means to realize the objectives set in the plan alone.

Although Turkey's active stance gained sympathy in the Balkans, Greece resisted Turkey's policies by claiming that Turkey tried to create an Islamic axis in the Balkans against Christian states, particularly against Greece. In light of the disputes with Turkey, Greek reaction to the Turkish activities was not

surprising. Besides, Greece followed a hostile attitude in the Balkans until 1995 and this set the scene for an active and influential Turkish diplomacy. For instance, Greek support given to the Serbian regime during the process of Yugoslav dissolution and the Kosovo crisis of 1999 was not appreciated. Besides, Greece refused to recognize Macedonia with its official name and started a dispute within the United Nations for an official recognition of the name “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (FYROM) instead of “The Republic of Macedonia”. Turkey, however, recognized “the Republic of Macedonia” with its constitutional name after Bulgaria and became the first state to open an embassy in Skopje.

7.3. Turkey and the Albanian Crisis of 1997

In 1997, Albania plunged into turmoil since the “pyramid investment schemes” collapsed because of weak economic infrastructure and problems of transition in political and economic terms. When the chaos in Albania reached its climax, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tansu Çiller, announced that “Turkey was ready to offer help of all kinds”¹⁹⁴, including to take part in any international force gathered to normalize life in that country. Shortly after, a Turkish delegation composed of military and civilian officials started a series of official visits, which included Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria in order to find a

¹⁹⁴ BBC (SWB), 22 March 1997

solution to the crisis in Albania¹⁹⁵. And when the United Nations allowed voluntary participation, Turkey took part in that multilateral initiation (MNF) and Turkish troops arrived in Albania on 21 April 1997. Turkish military deployment was responsible for the safe distribution of humanitarian aid in Tirana and the northern part of Albania¹⁹⁶.

Intensified relations between Turkey and Albania gradually ran out of steam with simultaneous change in foreign policy actions of Turkey and Greece, particularly after the establishment of a new government in Albania following the 29 June 1997 parliamentary elections held under the monitoring of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe¹⁹⁷. As a result of the general elections, a new government was formed by the Socialist Party, headed by former communist leader Fatos Nano, the Social Democrats and the Democratic Alliance¹⁹⁸. The Greek government acted swiftly to cultivate good relations with the new socialist government, leaving aside allegations related to what it called Northern Epirus, Southern Albania, and the treatment of Greek Orthodox minority in Albania. In essence, the Greek attitude was an extension of the change in foreign policy actions regarding the Balkans since the beginning of 1996.

¹⁹⁵ BBC (SWB), 25 March 1997

¹⁹⁶ BBC (SWB), 21 April 1997

¹⁹⁷ *Turkish Daily News*, 30 June 1997

¹⁹⁸ *Turkish Daily News*, 9 July 1997

The change in Greek foreign policy started with the improvement of relations with Macedonia in 1996. Greece gradually left aside the rather harsh foreign policy line in its periphery. For instance, in late November 1997, Greece hosted a Balkan Conference¹⁹⁹ through which the participants (Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria, the FRY, Romania, Macedonia and Greece) discussed the flash points in the Balkans and possible solutions to the problems. During the Conference, the Greek side concentrated its efforts on regional cooperation particularly on the issues of investment, joint infrastructure and technology²⁰⁰, and the major outcome of the Conference was the consensus reached on improvement of economic ties for further cooperation in the Balkans.

A further example of Turkish-Greek rivalry for influence in Albania came to the fore with a Turkish initiative to rebuild Albania's most important military base, Pashalimani that had been destroyed during the late Albanian crisis and reconstruction of the naval academy at Vlore²⁰¹. However, the Albanian government signed a simultaneous agreement with Greece for the latter's lift from the seabed the Albanian military equipment in the harbors of Vlore and Sarande, which endangered human lives in the coasts. As part of a new foreign policy line, Greece was not willing to set the scene for Turkish initiatives in Albania²⁰². The Greek willingness to cooperate with

¹⁹⁹ BBC (SWB), 3 November 1997

²⁰⁰ BBC (SWB), 5 November 1997

²⁰¹ BBC (SWB), 27 January 1998

²⁰² H. Ünal, "Arnavutluk İyice Yunanistan'a Kayıyor", *Zaman*, 9 January 1998

Albania was welcomed by Albanian authorities, who were in need of urgent and big amounts of aid to recover from the crisis. During a visit to Ankara in February 1998, President Rexhep Meidani stated that his country was open to collaboration with the neighboring countries in every field. Pointing out the impact of signing four military cooperation agreements with Greece lately, he stated that friendly relations with Greece and Turkey would be the key to be integrated in different European structures²⁰³. Albanian authorities often pointed out that economic ties with Greece was perceived as the “key” to integration with Europe²⁰⁴. Turkish-Greek rivalry for influence particularly in Albania could be evaluated as part of two states’ common will and projection to be influential in the region. Given the continuous rivalry for influence in the Balkans, this meant a “winner takes all” game for Turkey and Greece. To change the strategic balance in favor of one side would pave the way for taking the upper hand in future regional developments and materializing one’s objectives in line with national interests at the expense of the other.

²⁰³ BBC (SWB), 14 February 1998

²⁰⁴ As the Albanian President Rexhep Meidani claimed during a state visit in Ankara, *BBC (SWB)* 14 February 1998

7.4. Turkey and the Issue of Kosovo

In 1995, Turkey signed the Customs Union Agreement with the EU. Turkey perceived the Agreement as a step towards the realization of European Union membership. The evaluation of the situation by the European Union was quite different since it did not consider the Customs Union Agreement as a guarantee for Turkey's European Union membership²⁰⁵. However, the ruling coalition government of DYP (True Path Party) and CHP (Republican People's Party) that signed the Customs Union Agreement on behalf of Turkey, introduced it to the Turkish people as the watershed in the country's relations with the European Union. Turkey's first female Prime Minister Tansu Çiller aspired to be the head of the government who succeeded to achieve Turkey's membership in the European Union. The foreign policy of the ruling coalition governments headed by Tansu Çiller (1993-1996)²⁰⁶ focused on Turkey- European Union relations and all the other issues of external relations became secondary in priority. Accession to the European Union has been a foreign policy priority of the Turkish governments since the 1950s. The Turkish people have expected to be a part of the Union for a very long time. After signing the Customs Union agreement, Prime Minister Çiller tried to benefit from the advantages of the occasion for her political career as well.

²⁰⁵ B. Yeşilada, "Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership" Middle East Journal, (56)1 (Winter 2002) pp.94-111, p.95

²⁰⁶ First Çiller Government (25 June 1993-15 October 1995), Second Çiller Government (15 October 1995-5 November 1995), Third Çiller Government (5 November 1995-12 March 1996).

When membership to the European Union became the number one issue, Turkey's foreign policy towards the Balkans or any other region like the Middle East or Central Asia was neglected. In the second half of the 1990s, Turkey's involvement in the Balkans slowed down. Turkey seemed to withdraw from the Balkans while the Greek attitude towards the region totally changed. After realizing that a hostile attitude distanced it from the Balkans, Greece started a process of reformulating its foreign policy on the basis of cooperation. Greece mended its relations with Macedonia and sought to establish close relations with Albania. Greece realized that its pro-Serbian stance during the process of Yugoslav dissolution and the 1999 Kosovo crisis was not welcome by the regional states and particularly by the ex-Yugoslav republics.

Turkey ended up with a low-profile attitude in foreign policy. The 1999 Kosovo crisis came out when Turkey lost interest in the Balkans. During the period of 1995-1998, Turkey had a positive attitude towards the Milosevic regime. After the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Milosevic was considered as the guarantor of the peace in Yugoslavia. Turkey accepted this Western perception and supported the Milosevic regime, despite the fact that this line of policy distanced it from Albania. Both Albania proper and the Kosovar Albanians considered Turkey as a natural ally in the Balkans. Despite the expectations of the Albanians, Turkey supported the Milosevic regime after

the realization of the Dayton Peace Agreement. This meant the avoidance of the accelerating tension between the Albanians and Serbs.

Examination of Turkish foreign policy towards the issue of Kosovo between 1991-2001 puts forward the fact that Turkey failed to develop a foreign policy line which reflected its own perception of the developments that helped realize its national interests, long before the conflict turned into a crisis. Taking into consideration historic ties with the region, expectations of Kosovar Turks and Albanians and Turkish claim of being a “regional power”, Turkey should have been more active and followed a more determined line on this issue. However Turkish policy towards Kosovo could not be separated from the overall framework of Turkey’s foreign policy. This was coupled by the domestic weaknesses of the country (like economic underdevelopment and lack of monetary resources, dissolution of politics, rivalry and disagreement among the different branches of the executive) which becomes an obstacle for efficient action in the international arena.

After the conflict in Kosovo turned into a crisis in 1999, Turkey acted harmoniously with NATO allies and demanded that the Milosevic regime should end repression in Kosovo. Turkey repeated the statements made by international organizations and supported their initiatives to solve the conflict. Turkey’s official statements regarding the Kosovo crisis pointed out to maintaining common stance with the international community. These claims

have become justifications for the low profile attitude that Turkey followed during the Kosovo crisis. Turkey refrained from taking unilateral actions, like playing the role of a reliable mediator between the Albanians and the Serbs.

Turkey's Kosovo policy focused mainly on the protection of the rights of the Turkish community in Kosovo. Interestingly Turkey started to highlight the rights of the Turkish community when the United States and the West made efforts to protect the Albanians. After clashes between the Albanians and the Serbs reached a climax in 1998, the international community naturally concentrated on the violation of the rights of the Albanians. Since Turkey emphasized particularly the rights of the Turkish community in official statements, this policy did not coincide with the expectations of the Albanians who were in need of international support against Serbian repression. Turkey preferred to make official declarations that gave support to the initiatives of the United States and the West. After the crisis of 1999 and NATO's Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, Turkey took part in KFOR and got militarily involved in the region.

CONCLUSION

Various factors appear to have shaped Turkish foreign policy towards the issue of Kosovo. The Kosovo problem arose as one of the most important security challenges in the Balkans (and Europe) in the post-Cold War period. The emergence of the 1999 Kosovo crisis can not be separated from the eruption of the “larger Albanian question” in the Balkans in the 1990s. The issue of Kosovo is related to the “larger Albanian question” that constitutes a sui generis example with its potential to spread to the Balkans. The division of the large group of Albanians into different states is an old problem in the Balkans. The end of the Ottoman influence on these territories did not lead to the creation of a nation-state that included all the Albanians. Instead, the Albanian population was separated and put under the rule of various states in the region by the London Conference of Ambassadors in 1912. The Balkans Wars, World War I and II did not change the situation and the Albanians remained concentrated particularly in Albania, Yugoslavia and Greece. The artificial division of the Albanian population was the starting point of a prolonged “Albanian question” in the Balkans. Those people were either put under strict control by the host states or they were not able to live in accordance with their national identity, stemming from the host states’ perception of these people as potential sources of instability.

Kosovo is located in the Balkans. Turkey has historic and cultural links with the Balkans, which go back to the Ottoman times. Besides, the Balkans is a corridor between Turkey and Europe. In addition, in the early 1990's, Turkey had ambitions to be a "regional power" in the Balkans. This ambition naturally pushed Turkey to obtain an influential position in the events of the region. It was expected that Turkey would play an active and determining role in one of the most important problems of the Balkans in the post-Cold War period. The expectations of the Turkish nationals and the Albanians who live both in Albania proper and in Kosovo also compelled Turkey to take a more active stance.

The dissertation aims to show that Turkey did not follow an active policy towards the issue of Kosovo. Turkey ignored the developments in Kosovo until the Serbian oppression against the Albanians turned into a crisis in 1999. One reason was that the Kosovo crisis emerged at a time when Turkey lost interest in the region. After the signing of the Customs Union Agreement with the European Union in 1995, membership to the Union became the foreign policy priority of Turkey. Ankara made efforts to fulfill the requirements of membership and started a process of domestic reform particularly for realization of the Copenhagen political criteria, which were put forward by the European Union. Although Turkey applied active diplomacy towards the Balkans in the first half of the 1990s, this was followed by a low-profile policy in the second half of the decade. After the signing of the Dayton Peace

Agreement, Turkey thought that the crises in the Balkans ended and believed that Milosevic should be supported since he was perceived as the guarantor of Dayton Peace Agreement.

Why was the issue vital for Turkish foreign policy and why should Turkey have been more active? The cultural and historic residue of the Ottoman past is an indispensable part of the Balkans. With its long-term rule, which lasted about five hundred years, Turkey has a special and advantageous starting point to play an influential role in the region. It is very common to talk about Turkish imprint on architecture, language, social and cultural traditions of the Balkans. The end of the Cold War provided states with an international environment that leads to more contact and cooperation since the ideological obstacles were abolished. Turkey felt relieved with the disintegration of the neighboring Soviet Union, the leader of the communist camp. The initial fears that Turkey might lose its strategic importance in the eyes of the Western allies, given the disappearance of the communist threat, did not come true. On the contrary, not only Turkish politicians, but also most analysts of international relations argued that Turkey had political, economic and social potential to act as a regional power.

Being located at the crossroads of three continents, Turkey is expected to have a say in the events of the surrounding regions: the Balkans, the Middle East, Caucasus and the Black Sea region, taking into consideration its claims of

being a regional power. In order to play such a role the state should have the necessary qualifications and political will. A state can be considered a regional power to the extent that it makes others believe that it has the capability to influence the events of a particular region. Two factors play a determining role in labeling a state as regional power. The first factor is the capabilities of that state. These include political, economic strength and stability. The second factor is the perception of other states. That means the regional power should have influence to make other states act or refrain from acting in the way it demands. This is only possible when the others have the belief that the regional power has the means to make them act in accordance with its own policies. Other states should be aware that in case of non-obedience they would be penalized by the stronger.

With the end of the Cold War, the concept of super power, which was attributed to the Soviet Union and the United States, leaders of two ideological camps, ceased to exist. Today regional powers have extended room for maneuver. When the Cold War came to an end, Turkey rose as a strong regional power. This was the common view of international analysts and the claim of the Turkish ruling elite. The geographical location of the country and the strong historic ties with the surrounding states created a conducive environment for Turkey to be more active in external political and economic contacts. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a group of Turkish speaking states emerged in Central Asia and the Caucasus, together with new

democracies and market economies in Eastern Europe as potential areas of cooperation.

In the Balkans, Turkey signed economic cooperation agreements with Bulgaria and Romania, resulting in considerable amounts of economic profit for Turkish businessmen. Turkey and Bulgaria found a peaceful solution to the problem that stemmed from Bulgarian policy of ethnic discrimination, which had influenced the Turkish minority living in that state. Turkey also signed defense cooperation agreements with Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia. However, Turkey's improving relations with the Balkan states annoyed Greece. Greece started the 1990s with worsening relations with the neighboring countries. During the wars of Yugoslav dissolution, Greece supported the Serbian side. This created a negative image of Greece taking into consideration the policy of ethnic discrimination and ethnic cleansing followed by the Serbs during the wars. When Yugoslavia collapsed, Greece refused to recognize Macedonia with its constitutional name by putting forward historical and cultural reasons. Whereas Turkey was the second state, following Bulgaria, to recognize "The Republic of Macedonia" with its constitutional name and the first state to open an embassy in Skopje. Rivalry and unresolved problems between Turkey and Greece continued after the end of the Cold War. Greece even argued that Turkish active stance in the Balkans stemmed from the "Islamic encirclement" policy against Greece. Greek claims concerning Turkey did not reflect the truth since Turkey's foreign policy towards the Balkans has never been built on a

religious basis. Turkey's active involvement stemmed from the conducive international political environment and this policy lost strength and slowed down as result of domestic problems that the state faced. Among these problems, the PKK issue and fight against terrorist activities of this organization, enduring economic problems like high rate of inflation, unemployment, low amount of investment, and unstable coalition governments that ruled the country since 1991 all had direct and negative influences on Turkish foreign policy.

Particularly in the second half of the 1990s, Turkish involvement in the Balkans remained low profile. Turkey's approach to the issue of Kosovo is very telling in that sense. Although the problems pertaining to Kosovo were not new, tension between the Albanians and the Serbs intensified with the Yugoslav wars of dissolution and turned into an armed conflict in the second half of the decade. Turkey did not develop a clear and long-term policy about Kosovo before the issue turned into an international crisis. Even after the 1999 Kosovo crisis erupted, Turkey followed the policy line determined by the Western states under the leadership of the United States. Turkey was contented with joining the statements made by the West and supporting the initiatives of the Contact Group, the European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO. It was prestigious to support international attempts to solve the problem but Turkey followed a low profile approach throughout the crisis although it contributed to the international security force

(KFOR) in Kosovo by sending troops after the intervention of NATO. The expectation for the future would be an intensified and more active Turkish involvement in similar crisis.

Although the prolonged issue of Kosovo, which reached its climax and turned into a “crisis” in 1999 had manifold implications for the Balkans, its direct and first instance influence was observed in the FRY²⁰⁷. Ironically, Kosovo had been the first target of Serbian nationalism and irredentism, which was activated by Milosevic shortly after he came to power. Starting from the second half of the 1980s, Milosevic manipulated the issue of Kosovo in order to legitimize his rule and justify extreme nationalistic policies. Initially Milosevic sought strengthening Serbian influence within Yugoslavia. When it became clear that other constituent republics (particularly Slovenia and Croatia) would not automatically accept the overwhelming Serbian influence in Yugoslav domestic politics, Milosevic resorted to armed measures to enforce Serbian dominance and motivated the Serbs in Yugoslavia against the rule of the host republics. Milosevic aimed to find supporters to his extreme nationalistic aims and create political instability in the rival republics in order to create “Greater Serbia”. Without any doubt, Milosevic fired nationalistic/ethnic tensions and started the Yugoslav wars of dissolution. The struggle against the “common enemy”, be it Croatians, Slovenes and/or Bosniacs strengthened the leadership

²⁰⁷ The name of the state has been changed to the “Republic of Serbia and Montenegro” in 2003 by an agreement signed by the two constituent republics of the ex-FRY.

of Milosevic. Thus, nobody dared to or even thought of changing the ruling government in Serbia. Instead, the Serbs took joint action to create “Greater Serbia” at the expense of other Yugoslav republics.

The rise of nationalist sentiments and dissolution of multi-national states became the characteristics of the post-Cold War period. During the wars of Yugoslav dissolution, analysts expected that armed confrontations might spread to regional states since they might re-start historic territorial disagreements and questions of sovereignty, which were ignored during the Cold War. It was expected that nationalist wars might spread to near abroad because of territorial proximity and the social reality that no state in the Balkans is an homogenous entity in terms of national, ethnic and/or religious features of their populations.

The Bosnia war was the first post-Cold War crisis in the Balkans with a potential to expand territorially. One basic feature of the Bosnia war was that it was both a national and a religious confrontation in terms of the warring parties. Gradually it turned into a struggle between “Christian” Serbs and “Muslim” Bosnians. Thus the prolonged conflict led to fears that the neighboring regional states might get involved in the conflict by giving support to the warring parties. The “religious war” scenario was based on the assumption that Greece would take part on the Serbian side while Turkey, Macedonia and Albania would fight on the Bosnian side. Such a scenario did

not become true. But when the 1999 Kosovo crisis erupted, similar concerns came to the agenda. The fear was that the conflict between the Serbs and the Albanians might expand to the Balkans. It was also claimed that the potential of the Kosovo crisis to spread was more than the previous crises since almost half of the Albanian population in the Balkans resided in territories that encircled Kosovo.

The issue of Kosovo had a peculiar position in Yugoslav dissolution. It remained as a prolonged and waiting issue since the beginning of the 1980s. Nationalistic tensions between the Serbs and the Albanians in Kosovo accelerated simultaneously with the eruption of ethno-nationalism all over the world, at the beginning of the 1990s. Milosevic desired to achieve “Greater Serbia”, whereas the Albanians resisted Serbian oppression. This created hatred and tension between the two nation. Kosovo is “symbolic” for the Albanians since they claim that the region has been the cradle of their national awakening. The Albanian movements of opposition against the Yugoslav communist rule also emerged in Kosovo. The dissatisfaction of the Albanian population paved the way for achievement of “autonomy” in 1974. However, shortly after the death of Tito, Kosovar Albanians raised their voices for equal status like other constitutional republics, which would open the way for eventual independence. Thus the Milosevic regime had also attributed a symbolic importance to Kosovo in the achievement of “Greater Serbia”.

The 1999 crisis and NATO's intervention was a turning point for the issue of Kosovo. Internationalization of the issue had direct influence on domestic politics of the FRY. After the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, Milosevic was accepted as a "partner" by the United States and the West. Milosevic cooperated with the Western states, which sought a peaceful settlement to the process of Yugoslav dissolution. Milosevic was an inseparable actor of the post-Dayton peace implementation process. After the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the process of re-integrating the FRY to international politics started. With the end of civil war, an environment suitable for the rule of Milosevic appeared since the wars of dissolution ended by a peace agreement.

The Milosevic regime abused the process of normalizing domestic and foreign policy in the FRY. This became evident particularly in Kosovo. Tension between the Albanians and Serbs intensified in the second half of the 1990s since the Albanians were dissatisfied when they were left outside the framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement and repression of the Albanians by the Milosevic regime continued. During the Dayton Peace talks, the international community turned a blind eye to the issue of Kosovo in order not to annoy Milosevic and persuade him to accept the provisions of a peaceful agreement to the conflict in former Yugoslavia. The policy of appeasement gave a free hand to the Milosevic regime since the claims that Kosovo is an

“internal matter” of the FRY was tacitly accepted. This led to the acceleration of the conflict with broader implications for Serbia and the FRY.

The international community feared that worsening of the situation in Kosovo might create a security threat by flaring up the “larger Albanian question” in the Balkans. Foreign intervention in Kosovo was no surprise for the analysts of international politics, although it was a surprise for the Milosevic regime. Under conditions of rising nationalism, the West was concerned about the potential of the Kosovo issue to spread through the Balkans, paving the way for inevitable and prolonged chaos. Taking into consideration the Bosnian example, there was much fear that the Kosovo issue might turn into war between the regional states, which were perceived as “potential sides” of the conflict. Thus the fear of “regional” confrontation led to foreign intervention.

The defeat of the FRY as a result of NATO intervention had two major consequences for the ruling government. The Milosevic administration lost legitimacy and political credibility in the eyes of both the domestic public and the international community. Continuous repression of non-Serb nationals and the authoritarian system of rule were no longer tolerated by the international community after the 1999 Kosovo crisis. Besides, Milosevic was perceived as an obstacle to the establishment of a democratic state that respects fundamental rights and freedoms of all the people in the FRY. The 24 September 2000 elections displayed an overwhelming loss of domestic support for the

Milosevic administration. Although Milosevic insisted to stay in power, public resistance and collaboration of the major opposition parties led to the establishment of a new government and Milosevic was ousted from the presidency.

Albanians who are living dispersed in various Balkan states constitute the majority in certain parts of the host states and those territories are located very close to each other. This has been perceived as a security challenge to the region because of the fear that Albanians might gather and establish the larger Albanian state in the future. Although the realization of the larger Albanian state seems unattainable for the time being, fear remains on the part of the states, which host huge Albanian populations. What makes the 1999 Kosovo crisis vital was that, the movement of the Albanians towards Albania and Macedonia as a result of the armed confrontations changed the configuration of the population in these states. The developments that took place in Macedonia at the beginning of 2001 made clear that the Albanian question remains to be a security challenge to the Balkans and Europe. The unrest created by the NLA and the operations undertaken by NATO (Operation Essential Harvest and Operation Amber Fox) to end the fighting between the rebellious Albanians and the Macedonian security forces are very telling in that sense.

The signature of the Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and the FRY in June 1999 ended NATO air strikes against Serbian targets. But that agreement did not clarify the future administrative status of Kosovo. On the one hand, the agreement guaranteed territorial integrity and sovereignty of the FRY and accepted that Kosovo would remain as part of that state. On the other hand, the international agreements safeguarded eventual self-rule for Kosovo. This rather complicated picture became even more complex with the involvement of various international organizations in the matter, each of them holding different duties for the reconstruction of social, economic and political life in Kosovo. Those international organizations work under the auspices of UNMIK, which was established in 1999 by the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. The international community was directly involved in the matter by holding responsibilities in various fields of life in Kosovo.

Kosovo remained part of the FRY after NATO's intervention and elections took place in the province following the establishment of UNMIK. In both the 28 October 2000 municipal elections and the 17 November 2001 general elections, the LDK of Rugova got majority of the votes. Those elections were vital in two respects. First, an overwhelming number of the Kosovar people showed loyalty to the LDK leader Rugova and his modest policies on the way towards independence. Second, the elections were evaluated as building blocks for establishing a democratic self-rule in Kosovo. From the perspective of the Kosovar Albanians, the 1999 crisis and the following developments in the

region opened the way for inevitable self-government and eventual independence of Kosovo. Despite the interpretations of the Albanians that the existing situation in Kosovo would lead to independence, the international community does not support a radical solution to the problem. The international documents about the province favored the maintenance of territorial integrity of the FRY and sovereign rights of that state in Kosovo. This was made clear particularly after Milosevic was ousted from the presidency on 5 October 2000. The victory of the anti-Milosevic parties was realized when all the opposition forces gathered in order to topple down Milosevic since he was perceived as the source of problems in the FRY because of his (and his party's) extreme nationalistic policies. Serbian opposition parties received international support. Vojislav Kostunica replaced Milosevic and became the new president. When the opposition parties, under the leadership of Kostunica came to power in Serbia, the international community evaluated this as the first step of establishing a democratic rule in the FRY since Milosevic was no longer in power.

Ambiguity concerning the political status of Kosovo continues since the end of the 1999 crisis. Initial steps for the development of self-rule started shortly after the end of NATO attacks. The "Kosovo Transitional Council" (KTC) was established in July 1999 to function as a supreme local consultative body²⁰⁸, a

²⁰⁸ A. Yannis, "Kosovo Under International Administration" Survival, (43)2 (Summer 2001) pp.31-48, p.39

forum of reconciliation among the Albanian leaders and between the Albanians and the international community. In September 1999, the process of demilitarizing the KLA started and the organization transformed into the “Kosovo Protection Corps” (KPC). The KPC was designed as an internal security force to provide a civilian and uniform emergency response service. This would help control and constrain the destabilizing tendencies within the KLA. The third step was the establishment of the “Joint Interim Administrative Structure” (JIAS). Within that structure, the Albanians had the chance to work for building up a civilian administration together with international forces. This would provide legitimacy for international rule among the Albanian population while maintaining democratic participation in the new administrative structure²⁰⁹. Holding the municipal (2000) and general (2001) elections have further contributed to the establishment of a democratic system of rule with the participation of each national group living in Kosovo.

International observers create different scenarios for the future of Kosovo. Among these, three scenarios attract attention for the foreseeable future. In the first one, Kosovo remains as an “international protectorate” under the control of the United Nations. For many, this would be the natural outcome for the future, given the vagueness of future political status and the existence of an “interim” administration that ruled the province since the second half of 1999.

²⁰⁹ *ibid*

The simple formula depends on the transformation of the interim administration (UNMIK) to a permanent one, by improving the existing political and economic system. But this formula is contrary to the claims of the international community, which were based on the maintenance of FRY's sovereign rights over the province. Besides, establishment of a permanent international protectorate would mean referring back to the old methods of international politics at a time when the tendency is towards strengthening sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

The second scenario represents the other extreme: "Independent Kosovo". This option totally neglects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FRY and naturally it would find supporters among the Albanians²¹⁰, who struggled for that aim since the beginning of the 1980s. According to that scenario, the international administration would gradually turn into a separate political and economic entity where the Albanians would hold the power. Here the basic claim is that there already exists a political environment conducive for the transformation of the existing interim administration into an independent political structure under the control of the Albanians who make up the majority of the population. The motive is that since the 1999 crisis, Kosovo entered into an irreversible phase of independence as a result of long repression of the

²¹⁰ D.N. Nelson, "Kosovo Futures, Western Dilemmas" The International Spectator, 2(2002), pp.11-18

Albanian population by the Serbian regime and the humanitarian intervention of the international community that came afterwards.

The supporters of independence claim that Kosovo has entered a new phase and it is not possible to refer back to the old federal system. It is argued that reestablishment of the previous system would lead to the resumption of old hatreds between the two nations and confrontations would resume. Some even argue that such an independent state would join with Albania and some parts of Macedonia where majority of the Albanians reside, in order to establish "Greater Albania" by gathering the historically divided Albanian populations in the Balkans. The Albanian question in the Balkans, mistreatment of that population by the host states in the region and the potential of that national problem to blow up is a reality. However, the claim that the Albanians' search for the establishment of "Greater Albania" at the expense of surrounding states is an exaggeration of facts²¹¹. But it should be underlined that Kosovar Albanians are trying to achieve independence.

The third scenario is the reestablishment of a special type of political and economic relationship between the FRY and Kosovo. In that scenario, Kosovo is granted omnipotent powers in the domestic realms of justice, health and education under a rather free system of rule, which would be administered in

²¹¹ T. Judah, "Greater Albania?" Survival, (43)2 (Summer 2001) pp.7-18

accordance with the demands of the population. However this entity would be bound with principles determined by the FRY in the fields of foreign policy and defense. This formula is built on the perception of Kosovo as the “third” constituent republic of the FRY, together with Serbia and Montenegro. This option might be supported by the Serbs since it respects the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of the FRY, by keeping Kosovo within its borders and administrative control. Such an option could be evaluated as giving back Kosovo its autonomous rights, which were withdrawn by the Milosevic regime in 1989. The major difference would be enlargement of scope of the autonomous rights and acceptance of Kosovo as having equal rights with Serbia and Montenegro.

Given the vagueness of Kosovo’s status, three scenarios came to the agenda as probable developments for the future. Naturally and rightly those options reflect total divergence from the old and the existing situation in the region. Most vital of all, those perceptions put forward the fact that Kosovo would be taken from the control of Serbia incrementally.

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