

## Taiwan, China and the Status of Kosova

By Xhavit Shala

From October 22 to 27 of 2005,<sup>1</sup> the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Serbia & Montenegro<sup>2</sup>, Vuk Drashkovic, was in China upon official invitation from the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Li Zhao Xing. Drashkovic was received in meetings by the Deputy Chairman of the State, Zing Qing Hong. At the end of the meeting, it was said that both parties found understanding and shared their support for basic interests, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>3</sup> It appears clear to all that China will never consent to the legal separation of Taiwan just as Serbia seems intend to do with Kosova. In the meantime, both Taiwan and Kosova are separated from them.

The visit drew the attention of the media both because of the fact that China is a permanent member of the Security Council and because it has openly stated its pro-Serb position on Kosova. "Kosova is as important for Serbia as Taiwan is for China. There are no two Frances, two Italys, two Chinas or two Serbia and that's why there can not be two Albanias," Drashkovic said during his visit to China.

The comparison made by Drashkovic between Taiwan and Kosova indicates that either he is not well informed of the history of Taiwan or he is deliberately twisting it. If we were for a moment accept as true the argument made by Drashkovic on the importance of Taiwan for China and the need for it to be returned to China, Kosova for the same reasons should be returned to Albania and not to Serbia. Only such an analogy would be the correct one. With his statements in Beijing, Drashkovic is indirectly provoking the Albanians to consider demanding a unification of Kosova with Albania.

In 1894 Japan declared war on China and a year from that date forced the Chinese Dynasty of Chin to sign a discriminating treaty and agree to the occupation of Taiwan. This state of affaires continued all the way to 1949. It was on this year that the nationalist Chinese leader, Chan Kai Sheik, and other opponents of the communist regime that had taken power in Beijing, moved to Taiwan and declared it the Republic of China. And this Republic was able to occupy the seat of China in the UN until 1971. The population of

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<sup>2</sup> The article with some small alternations was first published in the daily "Korrieri" 9.11.2005.  
<http://www.acnss.com/html/studime/kina.htm>

<sup>3</sup> The correspondent of the Chinese Radio said that during the meeting with Serb Montenegro Minister of Foreign Affairs Vuk Drashkovic, dhe Chinese deputy head of State Zeng Qinghong confirmed that China was ready to boost mutual political trust between the two countries. Both countries have shown understanding and support in issues related to broad interests such as sovereignty and territorial integrity.(Wang Lei, RADIO-CHINA October 26, 2005)

Taiwan is overwhelmingly Chinese. Since October of 1945, the Chinese Communist government had declared that Taiwan was officially returned to China even though this declaration remained true in paper alone. Since that date, the 25th of October is annually celebrated as the "Day of the Restitution of Taiwan." Taiwan and China were once one state and they share the language and culture. It is for this reason that China to this day considers Taiwan as an inherent part of its territory.

At about the time period that Taiwan was divided by force from China, Kosova was an Albanian territory inhabited mainly by Albanians who shared the same language and culture with the rest of the Albanian inhabited areas. Albanians across the Balkans from Kosova to Chameria had begun their efforts to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire. After Albania's declaration of independence in 1912, Kosova even though occupied by Serbia, was considered part of the newly created independent state of Albania. Thereafter Kosova remained under the Serb rule and in 1918 it was by force made part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. At the end of the WWII, in spite of the efforts for separation, Kosova was still made part of the Yugoslav state. Decades later it was to gain an autonomous status. Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Kosova declared its independence in July 2, 1990 but it remained an occupied territory under the Serb rule. On June 10, 1999, Kosova was liberated by the intervention of NATO forces in cooperation with the KLA. From this day forward, Kosova is a territory under the administration of the UN per resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council. Kosova was an Albanian territory, part of the Albanian state that was forcefully separated from its motherland by Serbia. It has an Albanian culture, language and population that is now liberated and free of Serb genocide. Kosova and Serbia are two different people, with a completely different language and culture. Serbia took control of Kosova by force and it was stripped of its control by the international community. Serbia can never make the Chinese claim over Taiwan on Kosova.

Drashkovic is inciting Albanians in Kosova to seek closer association with Albania not only when he makes the analogy with Taiwan but also when he says that there are no two Frances, no two Italys, two Chinas, two Serbia, and therefore there can not be two Albania."<sup>4</sup> Kosova r politicians faced with growing pressures at home and increasing harassment from Serb and Greek nationalist policies may be forced to reconsider their position. Unless the international community takes a strong stand in support of the independence of Kosova, Kosovars may be forced to seek a unification of Kosova with Albania.

The position assumed by Drashkovic, Kostunica and other segments of Serbs nationalist circles are nothing new for the Albanians. It appears that they will continue to keep their people hypnotized by the myth of Serb sagas on Kosova being a cradle of Serbia. They

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<sup>4</sup> During the visit in China, Minister Drashkovic among other things said, "There are no two Frances, two Italy's, two Chinas or two Serbia and that's why there can not be two Albania. The demand by the Albanian majority in Kosova to declare independence is a request to seek the creation of another Albanian state. The status "more than autonomy, less than independence" is the maximal compromise and European offer that Serbia can make. Danas, 26.10.2006

do not want to hear what their President Boris Tadic says when he tells his compatriots that "they should be prepared for the worst as it regards Kosova because the status may be imposed on us from outside."<sup>5</sup>

While the Serb position is obvious, the anti-Albanian position assumed by China is hard to explain and justify. They have been consistent on their position on the side of Serbia when NATO intervened in Kosova in 1999, and subsequently when it abstained on the decision of the Security Council to launch the talks for the determination of the final status of Kosova. Serb statements indicate that China may also use its veto to block the final status of Kosova, if it does not coincide with the Serb interests.

China fears that support for the independence of Kosova would set an international precedent for recognizing Taiwan as an independent state. The media has made a custom of calling Kosova as the Taiwan of the Balkans recently. The issue of Kosova, however, has nothing in common with Taiwan. In the case of an analogy of Taiwan with Kosova, just as China is the mother country for the Chinese people of Taiwan, so is Albania as the mother country for the Kosovars. The Chinese aberration consists in the fact that they apparently consider Serbia as the mother country of the Kosovars.

Whereas the Chinese people of Taiwan do not want unification with their mother country but seek an internationally recognized independence, the Albanians of Kosova have always desired unification with their mother country. It is only because of the international circumstances that are making them sacrifice their desire to join Albania. They shall not, however, accept any other status for Kosova other than full independence that is internationally recognized. By supporting the independence of Kosova, the Chinese would actually be protecting their own interests in Taiwan and strengthen their cooperation with Albania. By following this policy they would still be able to preserve their good relations with Serbia as the Serbs already know that Kosova is lost. China should be reassured that there is no harm that could befall them from the international recognition of the independence of Kosova.

The support that Albania gave China when it was in the difficult circumstances of trying to get into the United Nations should also make China reconsider its position on Kosova. On the midnight of October 25, 1971, a resolution tabled by Albania at the United Nations that made China a member of the UN and expelled Taiwan, was passed with 73 votes in favor against 35 that went for the pro Taiwan resolution tabled by the United States.<sup>6</sup> From that day, China took the seat of Taiwan in the United Nations. With the changes in the American foreign policy toward China under the term in office of President Nixon, China established diplomatic relations with the US and a series of other

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<sup>5</sup> The Serb President Boris Tadic among other things said that the talks over Kosova would be difficult due to the legacy that Milosevic left us with." [www.lajmet.com](http://www.lajmet.com) - 26 10 2005.

<sup>6</sup> In an article published in the ABC of March 9, 2006, Ass. prof. dr. Hamit Kaba presents in an elaborate manner the diplomatic action undertaken by Albania with the goal of bringing China in the UN.

countries, becoming an important factor in world politics. The admission into the UN and the contribution given by Albania in this regard are events that can not be forgotten.<sup>7</sup>

China should reconsider its position in relation with the Albanians not only so as to "pay off" its old debt but also because of the economic and geopolitical interest that could be developed. The Albanian ports are becoming some of the most important in the Adriatic. These ports and the east-West corridor could make Albania an important economic partner in the region for China and a good base for the transit of Chinese goods to the West.

If China will not move away from its pro-Serb position, it will have itself to blame for encouraging a pro-Taiwanese position in certain segments of Albanian politics, a tendency that has been kept under control because of the still lingering belief in China's policy. An adverse development in this respect could make it likely that such groups may attempt to undertake moves to recognize Taiwan.

"Will China compensate you for this? Henri Kissinger had asked the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nesti Nase, at the time of the UN Resolution. And then continued, "It is a pity that Albania has not understood where her interests lie and has chosen the wrong ally." Let's hope that Kissinger will not be proven right again. In the coming months however, the Albanian diplomacy must find the ways and manners to exert a positive influence on extracting a Chinese vote that is favorable to the independence of Kosova.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Albanian Communist Leader, Enver Hoxha, speaks of China's entry into the UN in his political diary titled "Notes on China" page 582. "The just policy of the Republic of Albania gave an important contribution for the admission of the Peoples Republic of China into the UN," he said.

<sup>8</sup>The distinguished professor Ismet Elezi wrote on the day of the publication of this article: "I have followed with great interest and deep respect your articles on Kosova. I salute you and convey to you my best wishes that you may continue to provide your valuable contribution for our national cause and the full independence of Kosova. Even though we have not been personally acquainted, we share together the same sentiments and opinions. Respectfully Prof. Dr. Ismet Elezi (retired)"