

The Bell Fall for Kosova

By Xhavit Shala

As promised by Secretary of State,¹ Condoleezza Rice, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns,² paid a visit to Prishtina.³ If things go in the right direction, Burns said, then will have talks for the final status and the United States will fully back the aspiration of the people in this part of the region to decide on their future. There was no clearer and more succinct message that US officials could give to Kosova.

In the meantime, the UN Ambassador Kai Aide⁴ has indicated that that he will base his report neither on UNMIK official papers and the misinformation provided by Covic, nor on Kosova politicians' vows. The analysis of the situation on the ground would provide the basis for his report.

Thus, the bell fall! Besides the US, the international negotiating team will include the EU and perhaps other countries also. This team is expected to be headed by Europeans, since Kosova is part of Europe. Despite concerns due to the failure to approve the constitution, Europeans know that no progress in dealing with issues in the Balkans will create more problems for them. The destabilization of the Balkans, German Chancellor Schroeder said, is more expensive than its European perspective⁵. And when it comes time to pay a price, Europeans historically have demonstrated that they know very well how to make their own calculations.

They have introduced into the market what they consider the most acceptable option for them, which is "conditional independence." This option was misinterpreted by the Serbs as something more than autonomy and was misunderstood by Albanians in Kosova as

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² The article was published as an editorial in "Korrieri" newspaper on June 10, 2005 and in "Shekulli" date 11.06.2005 and in www.acnss.com

³ U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice informed the U.S. Congress that she had asked Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, to visit the Balkans in the month of June with the goal of informing the countries of the region regarding the new diplomatic initiative to resolve the final status of Kosova.

⁴ - UN Secretary General Kofi Annan reported on June 3, 2005 that he had appointed the former Norwegian ambassador to NATO, Kai Eide as UN special envoy to review the progress towards standards in Kosova. Annan decision follows Security Council meeting a week ago, which approved Secretary General's recommendation that standard implementation review should start by summer. Mr. Eide, is an expert on Balkan issues and former UN Special Envoy for Bosnia.

⁵ - This is what German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said immediately after the meeting with Macedonian PM Vlado Buckovski, on June 8, 2005 (Macedonian Government web site, A1 TV - 08/06/05; Macedonian Government web site, A1 TV, Telma TV, Vecer - 09/06/05;)

something far less than their aspirations. In order to make it clear to both parties, the Head of European Parliament Delegation for South-Eastern Europe, Mss. Doris Pack, said that with “conditional independence” Europeans understand “no change of Kosova’s borders with any neighboring country, Serbia, Albania and Macedonia, and no possibility for the creation of the so called Greater Albania.”⁶ Maybe she did well in explaining it in such clear way. This status, which Europe calls conditional independence, for Albanians, is nothing more and nothing less than real independence, because Kosovars have neither expressed any desire to change their borders with Serbia, Albania and Macedonia nor to create any Greater Albania.

The bell fall! This is a turning point for the Kosova politicians and people. Together they should commit themselves to building a society with western democratic values that provides guarantees for national minorities, their properties and places of worship and ensures their free movement and return to a Kosova that is firmly established on its European path.

The politicians in Kosova must understand that no issues between those in majority or opposition should stand in the way of resolving the national cause. Only one factor must prevail over all else, the voice of the people of Kosova. There is no time to spend resources in quarreling with each other. They should learn a little bit from Haradinaj’s sacrifice who for the sake of Kosova’s independence exchanged his Prime Minister’s office with the Hague cell.⁷ Kosova politicians must stop playing with the so-called secret services that each party has developed. Such partisan or private secret services should be removed from Kosova’s political scene. Kosova is neither Lebanon nor Palestine.

The bell fell! They fall for the Serb politicians and society. A serious commitment on their part to solving the Kosova issue, their urging of Serbs who fled to return to Kosova and put an end to the boycotting of institution in Kosova would bring Serbia and Montenegro closer to the European Union. The position assumed so far by Serbia does not help much their integration cause. The definitive solution of Kosova’s status will liberate Serbia from a huge burden. But in order to liberate it from this burden, the political class in Serbia must first get rid of its extravagant nationalism.

The Serb Orthodox Church has played an important role in urging and keeping alive Serb nationalism. Its role, in some instances, has been the determining factor. The Church deciding to concern itself only with spiritual matters would provide a great relief to the situation and would make Serbs more open to accepting a definitive resolution of the

⁶ -06/06/2005 – Part of the interview with Ms. Doris Pack, Head of European Parliament delegation to Southeast Europe, in Serb daily newspaper “Blic”

⁷ - Kosova PM Ramush Haradinaj resigned on March 8, 2005, following the ICTY indictment for war crimes. Mr. Haradinaj said he was ready to go to the Tribunal to face the charges. The Hague has not make public yet the specific accusations against him. The Tribunal is investigating Mr. Haradinaj for actions related to the time when he was the Commander of KLA forces.

status of Kosova. It is the responsibility of Serbian politicians to determine what pertains to politics and what pertains to the Church. Otherwise, colonels in black robes, or otherwise called by an advisor to former Serb PM Djindjic⁸ as “clerics with Kalashnikovs on their hands,” will make things more difficult for Kosova’s final status, and consequently, the Serbian Euro Atlantic integration.

The bell fall! It falls for the Kosovars who are eagerly waiting to have their own independent state, and for Serbs who have the chance to escape the round-shot in their legs. The countdown for Kosova has begun. Up to the end of the countdown patience is required. Kai Aide has sharpened his pencil.

⁸ - Beba Popovic, a former close advisor to the murdered Serbian PM, Zoran Djindjic, in an interview said the following to Radio B92, on May 31, 200: “Bishop Amfilohie is a senior Orthodox Church clergyman who holds the highest post amidst clerical-military officials. During the last 10 years, the Serb Orthodox Church has become a paramilitary organization that has actually controlled the military clergymen. He holds the military rank of colonel and he is he is nothing more then a clergyman with a “Kalashnikov” in his hands”.