

## The Fourth November

By Xhavit Shala

Each day that goes<sup>1</sup>, consolidates further the hopes of Kosova Albanians to achieve an independent state by the end of the year (2006).<sup>2</sup> Quoting sources from the Contact Group and other American and European political centers, various analysts have said that independence could be achieved in November. This news is no longer a secret. Several Serb media have also carried the same news. Belgrade's newspaper "Blic," on May 15, 2006, citing again sources from Contact Group, reported that, if there was no essential progress in bringing the parties closer, Ahtisaari will be given the green light to precede with presenting his final status proposal by the end of the year. According the plan, "Kosova could become an independent state by November of this year" and "if the plan is not willingly accepted, it will be imposed on the parties."<sup>3</sup>

With November 28, 1443, that marks the liberation of Kruja from Skanderbeg and the raising of the double headed eagle, with November 28, 1912 that marks the event when Albanians led by Ismail Qemali declared their determination to create an independent state, and with November 1944 when Albanians, after some major but also controversial efforts, were liberated from Nazi occupation, the November of this year could enter into the history of our people as the fourth one, the November that brought independence to Kosova and opened the way for greater prosperity for Albanians everywhere.

In addition, recent developments give greater credence to our belief in this fourth November. The meeting in Vienna between the highest representatives of Serbia and Kosova that was held several days ago marked another important step forward in Kosova status definition process. The Contact Group and the international community do not really expect any results from these meetings. But this is a stage that needs to be concluded prior to moving on to the other stage, that of imposing the solution. The steps that will soon be introduced can be understood from the statement that the Contact Group made after the Vienna meeting, in July 24.

The Contact Group supported Ahtisaari's actions that indicated the transition to another stage, that of the preparation of a comprehensive status proposal that would lay the basis for a multiethnic and democratic Kosova where the rights of every citizen are respected. The Contact Group statement that "all efforts should be made to achieve a resolution

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<sup>2</sup> The article is published in daily newspaper "Shqip," on 2.8.2006 and on issue no. 48 of "ABC" newspaper, 05.08.2006. The article was also published in <http://www.acnss.com> and in <http://www.fbd.org.yu/DRUGI%20PISSU/sadrzaj.html>

<sup>3</sup> "Blic" quotes a source saying that Russia's position would be the major barrier that could stand in the way of implementing this plan. Moscow says that the solution applied in Kosova will be universal and shall be valid for other pro-Russian separatist regions, such as South Osethia and Abkhazia.

within this year that is acceptable to the people of Kosova and that promotes a multiethnic society,” demonstrates very clearly not only the intention to wrap up within this year the issue of Kosova, but also come up with a solution that is acceptable to the Kosova people.<sup>4</sup> Only independence is the outcome that is acceptable to the Kosova people, a position that was once again clearly reiterated in Vienna by the highest Kosovar politicians.

Serbia is also reading the developments over the Kosova status. It appears that Serbs themselves are now looking more ahead to Europe than to Kosova. “The Washington Post” in an article titled “The West grants Kosova independence” says that according to Serb polls “more than 59% of the Serb citizens would vote in favor of entering the EU ...and the majority of them think that independence is the only realistic expectation. Only 21% of Serbs think that Kosova is the most important issue for them.” But the main problems in Serbia are not the people.<sup>5</sup> According to “Washington Post” “the real problem is the leadership of Serbia still affected by the nationalist poison” which pushed the country into a series of destructive wars in the 90s.

Important Serb politicians, however, in spite of the fact that they know that nationalism goes to their disadvantage, are trying to implement the same ideology, but now without Milosevic. And Prime Minister Kostunica is the worst in this regard. With the position and actions that he has taken, he has been identified now by international community as a worthy follower of Milosevic’s nationalist policies. His attitude against the negotiations that have taken place up to now contravenes negotiations and puts Serbia’s integration to join EU and NATO in danger. Kostunica’s actions demonstrate that he wants to remain faithful to the ideals of the Serb terrorist organization “Crna Ruka,” an organization which has threatened with death any one who will dare to sign over the independence of Kosova. Only Tomislav Nikolic, the leader of the Serb Radical Party is trying to outdo Kostunica with his position and actions against Albanians. If Nikolic will try to remain true to his threat of going to war if Kosova breaks from Serbia, he will soon find himself having fellowship with his former boss in The Hague. Such voices only delay Serbia’s reformation towards an open democratic society.

Kostunica’s policy against Albanians has always found allies even in some foreign media. Such is “The Sunday Times” journalist Adrian A. Gill. Inspired by the “Serbian kitchen” this British journalist one day ahead of the Vienna meeting decided not to write on his article on the food, but rather focus on denigrating the Albanians.<sup>6</sup> Kostunica is

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<sup>4</sup> The Contact Group said after the first meeting in Vienna that everything and all efforts shall be made to reach a settlement during 2006, which is acceptable for Kosova people and which will promote a multiethnic society with a future for all its citizens. (“VOA” 24 July 2006) (KosovaLive, 25 July 2006)

<sup>5</sup> Washington Post. “The West gives independence to Kosova.” The article says that the primary victims of Serb nationalist policy will not be the Kosova Albanians but the Serb people. “Whatever the outcome, the Albanians will never submit to Serbia. The Serbs may feel isolated and dependant on an autocratic and imperialist Russia. It remains to be hoped that unless the Serb leaders do not get any better, the people of Serbia will eventually choose better leaders.

making allies even in Albania where it seems elements of the Albanian mafia are willingly assisting him. These elements are trying to instigate instability within Albania by manipulating certain segments of Albanian politics with the desire of creating another 1997 experience in Albania. This would be a stab on the back for Kosova.<sup>7</sup>

The Serb PM is trying to export the Serb internal crises into Kosova and by financings and creating Serb parallel structures in Kosova, he is keeping the Serb community there hostage to his policy. He is achieving the partition of Kosova through a fait accompli approach. The Contact Group showed clearly that Kostunica attempts won't be tolerated. On July 24, with a statement they responded, "There will be no partition of Kosova or no attempt to dictate such partition will be allowed." NATO decided to deploy additional troops to northern Kosova and the Contact Group called on Kosova Serbs to demonstrate restraint and cooperate with UNMIK, KFOR and the Kosova Police Service.<sup>8</sup>

Kostunica has continued to make efforts to mislead the international factor. His cynicism reaches its climax when he tries to cover his inability or lack of will to capture Mlladiç and Karadzic with an allegedly joint action plan with Europe. Thus on July 17, he introduced an action plan to boost cooperation with the UN War Crimes Tribunal. "We will see, they have said it several times. I have been there on several occasions and every time they say they will capture Mlladiç in a week or two ... I am still waiting," the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard Bot said in the wake of Kostunica's announcement.<sup>9</sup> The US War Crimes Envoy, Ambassador Clint Williamson, in the meantime told Belgrade on July 26 that "it was now the time to establish a full cooperation with The Hague."<sup>10</sup>

Out of all the Serb main politicians, only President Boris Tadic is trying to assume a realistic approach. It appears that he understand that Serbia cannot go against the current, even though prior to the talks in Vienna he said, "Serbia won't give up its territories." According to Tadic, Serbia will fight with all of its diplomatic means to keep Kosova from becoming independent, but its position in negotiations is weak due to nationalist past of the country and the Milosevic legacy. President Tadic's statement (made prior to leaving for Vienna), that "it would be very dangerous for me as President to say that Kosova will never be independent, just because we don't want that to happen. The situation is harsher than ever before,"<sup>11</sup> can be seen as an attempt to make Serb ready to reconcile themselves with the new reality.

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<sup>7</sup> "Talks on Kosova take place in New York, protest against the Government take place in Tirana" Opinion piece printed in [www.lajmet.com](http://www.lajmet.com) on 17. 07. 2006

<sup>8</sup> "VOA"-24 July 2006-

<sup>9</sup> Igor Jovanovich- Belgrade: Kostunica introduces "The Action Plan" for cooperating with ICTY. Southeast European Times 18/07/06.

<sup>10</sup> Ambassador Williamson said that Mlladiç is accused for conducting the assassination of thousands of unarmed civilians and called on Serbia to close what he called "the black chapter" and walk towards the future that her citizens deserve. "VOA" 26.7.2006

<sup>11</sup> Beta/Balkanweb-9 July 2006

However, neither Kostunica, nor Tadic, Putin, "Crna Ruka," Adrian A. Gill, the Albanian mafia or any other anti-Albanian forces, can stop Kosova from becoming independent. With their plans and anti-Albanian attempts, they may succeed only in delaying the independence of Kosova from this November to the next but that is the only thing they can do. Kosova calls for an urgent resolution and the matter is now on the top list of the agenda of World leaders.

It is duty of Kosovars, who while waiting for their forth November, to create the conditions that would allow all of Kosova's entities to enjoy the equal rights in a multiethnic society. It is the responsibility of our political class to live up to this historical moment and show maturity and farsightedness. The citizens and institutions of Kosova must also prevent and neutralize any attempt to destabilize Kosova and make sure that they continue to enjoy the support of the international community.

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