



DOS PHOTOS

# KOSOVO'S FINAL STATUS:

## *A Key to Stability and Prosperity in the Balkans*

*"I want to be very clear that we see a future in which Kosovo and Serbia are both strong and free and in which both are fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic horizon and Euro-Atlantic structures..."*

– Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

Kosovo is a region of the former Yugoslavia composed of approximately 90% ethnic Albanians and 6% ethnic Serbs. Serbs want Kosovo to remain an integral part of Serbia, while Kosovo's Albanians want an independent state. Kosovo's unresolved status is the last major territorial question remaining from Yugoslavia's violent, non-consensual breakup.



measures to protect Kosovo's minorities and enhance good governance, including decentralization of local government, protection of religious and cultural heritage, and economic issues.

### FINAL STATUS PROPOSAL

In April 2007, Ahtisaari presented to the UN Security Council his final status proposal, which

included a recommendation that Kosovo become independent subject to a period of international supervision. The proposal detailed far-reaching guarantees to protect the rights and security of Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanian communities. Kosovo accepted this package; Serbia did not.

### DEVASTATING CONFLICT

In 1989, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic engineered the revocation of the autonomy Kosovo enjoyed in the former Yugoslavia. Milosevic implemented direct rule from Belgrade and an apartheid-like system of ethnic discrimination against Kosovo Albanians. As conflicts between Kosovo Albanians and Serb forces became more intense in the 1990s, Milosevic initiated a campaign of ethnic cleansing that resulted in thousands of Albanians being killed and 1.5 million driven from their homes. In 1999, NATO intervened in Kosovo to stop some of the worst ethnic violence in Europe since World War II. Milosevic withdrew his forces. The United Nations Security Council subsequently suspended Belgrade's rule over Kosovo and placed Kosovo under interim UN administration, with NATO providing security. The Security Council also envisioned a UN-facilitated political process to determine the future status of Kosovo. Under UN administration, Kosovo developed its own democratic institutions, including an elected president and prime minister, a multi-ethnic and professional police force and a judiciary. Violence and discrimination against Kosovo Serbs, however, remained problematic and inter-ethnic violence in 2004 disrupted reconciliation.

### KOSOVO STATUS PROCESS

Recognizing Kosovo's undefined status as a source of instability, in 2005, the UN Secretary-General named former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as his Special Envoy to lead the Kosovo status talks. Ahtisaari discussed with the two parties a wide range of

### TROIKA ENGAGEMENT

Following an impasse in the UN Security Council over the Ahtisaari proposal, the international community agreed to a new period of status negotiations led by a "Troika" of the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the United States. On December 10, 2007, the Troika's mandate concluded without finding a mutually acceptable solution.

### THE UNITED STATES AND KOSOVO'S STATUS

The U.S. Government is working closely with its international partners to resolve Kosovo's status. The United States believes that implementation of the Ahtisaari proposals, including supervised independence, is the best way to ensure peace, stability, and prosperity for the entire Balkans region, including Serbia. Its implementation will allow the region to move beyond the conflicts of the 1990s toward a brighter Euro-Atlantic future. The historical context of Yugoslavia's breakup; the history of ethnic cleansing and massive human rights violations that led to international intervention; and a UN Security Council decision that placed Kosovo under international administration and envisioned a political process to determine Kosovo's status make Kosovo different from other conflicts.