



# SERBIA

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SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING  
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## STATEMENT

by

H.E. MR. BORIS TADIĆ,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

New York, 16 January 2008

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you on behalf of the Republic of Serbia for the opportunity to present to the Security Council of the United Nations once again the position of my country on the need that the solution of the future status of Kosovo and Metohija be a result of compromise and that all participants in the process must approach this problem carefully and with a high level of responsibility.

In the past two years the Republic of Serbia took part in the negotiations on the future status of its southern Province in a constructive way. We put forward a number of proposals that favoured a largest possible autonomy as the best solution for Kosovo and Metohija.

Substantial autonomy has figured in various models as a functioning, sustainable and successful solution. It has been proved that such solutions are in accordance with international law and that they are the only way to arrive at a compromise in conflicts similar to the Kosovo conflict.

This is why the Belgrade negotiating team measured its proposal of substantial autonomy against the manner in which China has resolved the question of Hong Kong and Macao, and Finland the status of the Aaland Islands. The subsequent analysis corroborated the arguments maintaining that the solution of the future status of Kosovo and Metohija can be found in the way that resembles these examples.

I consider that it is in the general interest that we examine all the possibilities and lessons. We can find something new in each example that would help us open the door to the solution on which we all will agree.

The history of Europe in the past 50 years is rife with unique examples that demonstrate how sovereignty can be harmonized with self-government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fact is that the Serbian negotiating team invested enormous efforts in reaching a compromise. Unfortunately, the negotiations conducted under the auspices of the international mediation Troika failed to yield results.

It is also a fact that the Pristina side refused to talk about the future status of Kosovo which had been defined as the basic topic of negotiations beforehand and tried unsuccessfully to impose negotiations on relations between independent States instead, which obviously was a prevarication of a clearly set goal of the negotiations.

The only argument that the other side put forward was that Slobodan Milošević and his regime are the guilty party for the situation in Kosovo and alleged that, because of the mistakes of the former regime, Kosovo deserves independence.

Let me, therefore, remind you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that Serbia and its people experienced very trying times during the last ten years of the twentieth century because of the tragic mistakes of the past regime. Sanctions, conflicts, killings, poverty, fear and uncertainty were the everyday way of life of the citizens of Serbia for more than a decade. The consequences of a bad and irresponsible policy culminated in the unjust punishment of Serbia in the spring of 1999 during the three months of bombing. Indeed, the citizens were punished, while the regime went scot-free. Until the people of Serbia threw it out in October 2000 defending its democratic election will.

Already for the eighth year running Serbia has been a democratic and peaceful country which has negotiated hard, offering solutions and compromises. There exists no justifiable reason, no legal argument, why Serbia and its people should be unjustly punished again because of a flawed policy of a bad regime almost a decade later.

If the community of European nations was created on the project of lasting peace and the solution of all problems by agreement 50 years ago, it is necessary that this great civilizational value, this principle, take root also in the Balkans today. We must make every effort to solve the misunderstandings and conflicts in our part of Europe peacefully and by agreement only, not by making unilateral moves.

A unilateral recognition of Kosovo's independence would, no doubt, be a precedent.

Nobody has the right to destabilize Serbia and the Balkans by hasty and unilateral decisions which would have unforeseeable consequences for other regions fraught with problems of ethnic separatism as well. We made our position clear on a number of occasions that the solution must be in accordance with international law, a result of compromise, acceptable to both sides and that it has to bring about long-term peace and prosperity to all citizens of my country and to the region.

The visions and methods that the history of Europe since 1945 has taught us, make it possible for us to aspire to a future in which we solve problems patiently and by agreement, so that we achieve a general good.

We must bear in mind that the common goal of all peoples of our region is to find solutions that will prepare us for the future in the European Union.

We therefore consider that additional efforts are needed to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution, so as to ensure, in accordance with UNSC resolution 1244, a substantial functioning self-government as would guarantee all rights to the Kosovo Albanians. And such a solution is possible and attainable.

You can count on the full readiness of Serbia to take part in the negotiations continuation in a constructive and responsible way. And they could be staged in Belgrade, Pristina or at any

other place in the world and in any other form that this body of the United Nations may assess as appropriate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to point out here in the Security Council once again that the Charter of the United Nations guarantees the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of internationally recognized States, which Serbia is.

If a legitimate democracy were to be deprived of an integral part of its territory contrary to its will it would amount to the violation of the Charter of the United Nations, bring into question the credibility of the world Organization and undermine the bases of international law that prop the world as a whole.

I believe that all members of the Security Council know that UNSC resolution 1244 guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia; I therefore call on you to prevent the encouragement and the adoption of a unilateral act on the independence of Kosovo. I call on you to prevent violations of UNSC resolution 1244 and the Charter of the United Nations.

For its part, Serbia respects the Charter of the United Nations and UNSC resolution 1244, the Helsinki Final Act and all relevant international documents. This is telling evidence of our full commitment to a constructive and responsible participation in a continued quest for a stable and mutually acceptable solution.

Serbia will never recognize Kosovo's independence and will preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty by all democratic means, legal arguments and diplomacy.

I therefore confirm once again, Ladies and Gentlemen, that Serbia will not resort to violence and war.

Let me point out that the State institutions of the Republic of Serbia continue to maintain good cooperation with KFOR and remind you that diplomatic efforts and the cooperation that I have mentioned saved many lives on 17 March 2004 when militant and extremist members of the Albanian community in Kosovo burned 35 churches and monasteries, 800 houses and expelled 5,000 Serbs and other non-Albanians from their homes in only three days.

Even though we insisted during the entire course of negotiations that the other negotiating party renounce violence and the threat of force, it, in contrast to the Serbian side, failed to do so.

If any violence were to break out in Kosovo and if KFOR could not react and protect the Serbs in an appropriate way, we are ready, and I underline with the agreement of competent international institutions and exactly in respect for international law, to help and provide protection to the threatened population.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me say a few words about the Report of United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative Joachim Rucker on the situation and implementation of standards in Kosovo.

This Report does not reflect the real situation in a true way. I shall point only to the most painful issues, such as the security of the Serbian population and the return of internally displaced persons.

The basic human right to freedom of movement is being denied to members of ethnically discriminated communities in Kosovo and Metohija.

The fact is that one of the basic human rights, denied in United Nations member-States only to prisoners, is being denied to Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija only for reasons of their ethnicity.

The process of return is a domain in which the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and UNMIK have achieved no results and it is the main indicator of the failure to build a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija.

According to the UNHCR data, eight years after the arrival of the UNMIK to Kosovo and Metohija 207 000 persons continue to be internally displaced in Serbia. In Kosovo and Metohija itself, about 22 000 persons have been expelled from their own to some other place of abode in the Province.

The right to return is based on the international principles of the protection of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and on humanitarian standards included in the document called *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*.

May I, with your permission, sum up the facts that bring into question the proclaimed multi-ethnic nature of the current situation in the Province:

250 000 of expellees, 207 000 of them internally displaced in Serbia. All these people have been waiting to return to their homes;

Continuity in the violation of human rights and restricted freedom of movement for members of Serbian and other ethnically discriminated communities; and

Constant intimidation of Serbs, including attacks on their property and cultural and religious heritage.

Here are some other hard facts: until January 2007, more than 7 000 ethnically motivated attacks have taken place, 581 Serbs and 104 members of other ethnically discriminated communities have been killed since the arrival of UNMIK and KFOR in 1999. 841 Serbs have been

abducted and 960 persons have been seriously wounded. Almost 18 000 houses have been destroyed, the same number of them have been looted, while 27 000 apartments and houses have been usurped. These are some of the facts in a sea of data that speak volumes of the real situation in Kosovo.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The solution of the future status of Kosovo and Metohija must be taken in the Security Council of the United Nations, just as this organ must agree to any change of the composition of the civilian and military presences in the Province.

The people of Serbia are firmly committed to maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their country and a simultaneous continuation of European integration in order to achieve a better life and economic prosperity.

I therefore call on the Security Council to heed the position of Serbia and to decide to continue negotiations on the future status of Kosovo and Metohija. We are ready to continue the negotiations immediately. Serbia is willing and ready to participate as a partner of the Security Council in a quest for a compromise and sustainable solution which will ensure long-term peace and stability in the Balkans and a better life to all its inhabitants.