

Operation Independence Kosovo: NATO and the New Step Toward “Greater Albania”

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The celebrations by the Albanian people of Kosovo upon the declaration of an “independent and sovereign” state were aired on television extensively. Two flags were waved during these celebrations. One was the familiar U.S. flag. And the second one? This flag with a double-headed black eagle on a red background, which country might that belong to? Better not to be too rash and say that it is the flag of the newly “independent” state of Kosovo, for that would be misunderstanding the true nature of what has happened. In the newly “independent” state of Kosovo, the people celebrating on the streets were waving the flag of *another country*. This was the flag of Albania!

The declaration of the “independence” of Kosovo is, first and foremost, a vast step forward for one of the pet projects of the U.S. in the Balkans, the creation of a “Greater Albania.” This fact is so tangible, so concrete that when Martti Ahtisaari, the Special Envoy of the United Nations (UN), in a report he submitted in spring 2007 after two years of negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia had reached a deadlock, recommended the “independence” of Kosovo, he had to qualify this by a special formula, “supervised independence.” And against what would the “independence” of Kosovo be “supervised”? Why, the first precondition that Ahtisaari had to propose was to rule out unification with Albania! The mere imposition of this qualification demonstrates, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the real aspiration of the Albanians of Kosovo (and of the U.S.) is the creation of a “Greater Albania” through unification with the present state of Albania. Hence, the “independence” of Kosovo is sham independence.

And who is supposed to “supervise” the “independence” of Kosovo? The answer to this question gives us the second dimension of Kosovo’s “independence.” It is a well-known fact that, after the seventy four-day air strikes inflicted on the former Yugoslavia by NATO, Kosovo was delivered to the civilian rule of UNMIK (the UN Kosovo Mission) and the military control of KFOR (the Kosovo Peace Force). According to the terms of the resolution adopted by the UN after the termination of the Kosovo War, Kosovo was to remain Serbian territory, but was also to be converted into a “UN protectorate.” This was a legal formula that was permeated with contradiction, since the status of “protectorate” is an entirely colonial status and to declare a territory that is under the sovereignty of an independent state (the former Yugoslavia and today’s successor state of Serbia) a colonial belonging defies logic.

The “independence” granted today to Kosovo removes this contradiction, making it thereby a straightforward colony, one under multilateral rule. The initiative regarding the declaration of “independence” does not belong to Hashim Thaci, the leader of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army become prime minister in January this year, but Ahtisaari on behalf of the UN. It is a travesty to pretend that Thaci is a “hero.” Imperialism has offered

“independence” to the KLA on a golden platter. Today Kosovo is controlled by 17 thousand NATO troops. It is being delivered to the rule of the EU, which will be sending an additional force of 1800 to police the territory. “Independence” on the force of arms of others is sham independence!

The real historic significance of this sham independence resides in this, that the U.S. and the EU have, through the Kosovo War, forcibly wrested a part of Serbia away from the country! (It would not be futile to remind EU fanatics that, in contrast to the Iraq War of 2003 for instance, all the big EU countries were comrades in arms with the USA, and even led, the Kosovo war.) The 1999 war was fought on the declared grounds of stopping the cruel treatment and ethnic cleansing the Albanians of Kosovo were suffering at the hands of Milosevic. But the final outcome nine years later demonstrates that the real aim was to carry to its conclusion the dismemberment of Yugoslavia. “Operation independence Kosovo” is but the belated consummation of the forcible destruction of Yugoslavia in the years 1991 to 1999.

A clear understanding regarding the aims of this imperialistic policy is of paramount importance. To start with, the Balkans are the South-western tip of Eurasia, an immense region that has come up for grabs as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the other degenerated workers’ states in Europe between 1989 and 1992. It was imperative for imperialism to prevent the survival of a state (Federal Yugoslavia) that had the capacity of obstructing imperialist plans in the Balkans. The dismemberment of Yugoslavia was the most violent form that capitalist restoration took in this historical period. Secondly, for the smooth implementation of EU plans to annex central and Eastern Europe, it was necessary to carve Federal Yugoslavia into mini-states and subsequently to destroy the historically strong identity of the Balkans through the imposition of the concept of “Southeast Europe.” The so-called [“Southeast Europe Stability Pact”](#) (of which Turkey is such an ardent protagonist) is a product of this operation. Third, the Albanians were promoted as a special ally of the USA. Albania has today become the stronghold of reaction and pro-imperialist policies, as well as the Balkan centre of trafficking in drugs and prostitution. The project of “Greater Albania” is a U.S. initiative, developed as a counterweight to the preponderance of the Southern Slavs in the Balkans. Today Albania and Kosovo seem to embody the two heads of the eagle on the Albanian flag. Tomorrow, the eagle may become triple-headed, with the Albanians of Macedonia joining the band wagon. The “independence” of Kosovo should be situated in this overall picture.

The Albanians of Kosovo seem to be overwhelmingly in favour of secession from Serbia. Would it not be appropriate under these circumstances, it might be asked, for internationalists to support this “independence” on the basis of the right of nations to self-determination? The specific evolution of Kosovo history and the existence of a project to establish a “Greater Albania” complicate matters. Before it came under Ottoman domination in the wake of the notorious Kosovo War of 1399, Kosovo used to be the historic centre of Serbia. It was only towards the end of the 19th century that Albanians became the majority in this territory as a result of the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs under Ottoman colonial policy and the support extended by the Empire to Islamised Albanians as against the Serbs. Add to this the fact that Albanians already wield a state that neighbours the Serbian state. Under these circumstances the national question in Kosovo overlaps with that of the quest of one state to expand its territory (and population) at the expense of another. Beyond the plain and simple principle of the right of nations to self-determination, we see here a struggle for power between two sovereign states. But all these arguments pale beside the fact that the

status accorded to Kosovo today has nothing to do with “independence.” A new colony is born. How long the status of protectorate will last is totally unforeseeable, given the policy of imperialism in the Balkans.

That Turkey should have recognised the “independence” of Kosovo immediately, on the same day as the U.S. and the larger states of the EU, and this despite its own Kurdish question and its fears regarding the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, has certainly nothing to do with respect for the rights of oppressed nations. The ruling classes of Turkey have made it a principle to serve the policies of imperialism, and of U.S. imperialism in particular, in the region of Eurasia, as long as these do not come into direct conflict with its own interests as in the case of the Kurdish question. The Eurasia policy of Turkey, pursued since Özal established it in 1991, has taken the form of military support to all kinds of imperialist endeavours (Somali, Afghanistan, Lebanon etc.)

During the Kosovo War, Turkish bombers poured death over the Serbian people arm in arm with the air forces of imperialist powers, three military air strips were allocated to imperialist fighter jets (but were not ultimately used because the war ended earlier than predicted), and the supposedly nationalist prime minister Ecevit declared, in the early stages of the war, that Turkey was prepared for land combat. The recognition of the “independence” of Kosovo implies that Turkey continues to play the game of imperialism and is directly connected to the agreement of 5 November 2007 between Bush and Erdogan related to the bombing of Kurdish (PKK) targets in Northern Iraq. Given the oppression of the Serbs by the Turks and the role they played under the Ottoman Empire in the forcible Islamisation of Kosovo, this policy becomes all the more shameless.

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