

The Post-conflict Reconstruction and the Implications of Kosovo-Serbia Tensions for the Regional Security

Andrei Alexandru Micu*

Key-words: Balkan, EU, geopolitics, Kosovo, nationalism, NATO, Serbia, UN, Yugoslav Wars

Abstract

The Western Balkans is an area of discontinuity in terms of European integration, the state of the affairs representing a direct effect of the civil war that led to the collapse of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The concerns about the Balkan geopolitical climate dominate the last decade of the 20th century, with the humanitarian implications that exacerbated nationalism episodes brought to the forefront, at a time when the Communist regimes were already gone, and the Euro-Atlantic integration was the goal the main post-revolutionary agenda at the East. The study case follows the security impact that the of Kosovo-Serbia binomial has, the first being the province that later became a self-governing state, at the periphery of European construction, but with the security guaranteed by NATO's permanent mission on site.

The specificity of the developments between Belgrade and Pristina is one of the issues to be considered when analyzing the European paradigm on the medium and long-term developments of the region is debated. At a time when European actors continue to develop a common identity based on secular European ideas, Kosovo is one of the exceptions that come to confirm the rule. Therefore, European integration must be doubled by redrawing intra-regional relations, with the aim of reconciling and normalizing relations.

On the other hand, the phenomenology in Yugoslavia is a complex one, practically distinguishing an overlapping of processes: the fall of communism, the collapse of federal statehood, territorial secessionism among the hereditary republics, and then a civil war between the former Yugoslavia. From a historical perspective, the Balkan space is one of the most animated spaces of the nationalist movements, movements on the basis of which we have paradoxical processes: the formation of the state entity after the First World War, and its disintegration with the end of the Cold War.

The Western Balkans is an area of discontinuity in terms of European integration, the state of the affairs representing a direct effect of the civil war that led to the collapse of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The concerns about the Balkan geopolitical

* Editor-in-Chief of Intervio.ro.

climate dominate the last decade of the 20th century, with the humanitarian implications that exacerbated nationalism episodes brought to the forefront, at a time when the Communist regimes were already gone, and the Euro-Atlantic integration was the goal the main post-revolutionary agenda at the East. The study case follows the security impact that the of Kosovo-Serbia binomial has, the first being the province that later became a self-governing state, at the periphery of European construction, but with the security guaranteed by NATO's permanent mission on site.

The specificity of the developments between Belgrade and Pristina is one of the issues to be considered when analyzing the European paradigm on the medium and long-term developments of the region is debated. At a time when European actors continue to develop a common identity based on secular European ideas, Kosovo is one of the exceptions that come to confirm the rule. Therefore, European integration must be doubled by redrawing intra-regional relations, with the aim of reconciling and normalizing relations.

On the other hand, the phenomenology in Yugoslavia is a complex one, practically distinguishing an overlapping of processes: the fall of communism, the collapse of federal statehood, territorial secessionism among the hereditary republics, and then a civil war between the former Yugoslavia. From a historical perspective, the Balkan space is one of the most animated spaces of the nationalist movements, movements on the basis of which we have paradoxical processes: the formation of the state entity after the First World War, and its disintegration with the end of the Cold War.

Historically, the province of Kosovo is presented from the most diverse perspectives, the thesis gravitating around two poles, constructed by historical, geographical, but also ideological arguments. In this context, the theories of historical legitimacy over Kosovo, and then the right to self-determination of the province – that later became a state – are subject to tensioned intra-regional relations, where historical interpretation has become an integrated component of the debate over secessionism and irredentism. The debate on the historical right over Kosovo, and especially on the rationale for the existence of Kosovo's statehood, will amplify on the background of the war, to continue in a latent form after the conflict, including nowadays.

The first theory, belonging to the pro-Serbian lode, is that illustrating the province as "Serbian Jerusalem"¹, and Kosovo is thus presented as "the cradle of Serbian Orthodox culture and spirituality"². In this way, the province (currently a self-governing state) is presented as "the old Serbia"³, underlining the indisputable character of the Southen Slavs' ancestral presence in the region and resulting in the intransigence of the Albanians in the region. According to the theory, Albanians were colonized by the Ottomans after the defeat of the Serbs in the Battle of Kosovo Polje (Blackbird Plain) in 1389⁴.

¹ Dušan T. Bataković, *Cronica de la Kosovo*, Bucharest, Bucharest Library Publishing House, 1999, p. 4.

² Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogojan, *Istorie, geopolitică și spionaj în Balcanii de Vest: originile, evoluția și activitatea structurilor secrete de informații în spațiul etno-geografic al slavilor meridionali: Iugoslavia versus România în războiul din umbră*, Baia Mare, Proema Publishing House, 2009, p. 51.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Madeleine Albright, *Doamna secretar de stat*, Bucharest, RAO Publishing House, 2008, p. 536.

The same theory of the Islamization of the province during the Ottoman period develops the process of population exchange, illustrating how Constantinople brought Muslim colonists from Anatolia since the 15th century. In parallel, the massive migration of the Serb population from Kosovo, Metohija, and Macedonia in the 17th century, especially to Vojvodina, lead to the re-integration of Kosovo by the Islamic Albanian population, with the mention of a certain degree of persistence of the Albanian Christian confession.

The second theory, that of the Illyrian origin of the Albanian people, is the central element of the pro-Albanian voices, the theory stating that the Albanians are the descendants of the Illyrian ancients. This ideological construction denies that the province is a "Serbian historical and spiritual territory"⁵. This theory of ethnic Albanian ethnogenesis is built as a response to the idea of Kosovo as a Serb *civilization cradle*, claiming that "Serbs who came in the 7th century after Christ at about seven centuries after the Christ, they would only be intruders on the native land"⁶. The *albanofille* side of the historic debate over Kosovo links the provinces' political developments to the great migratory waves, thus erecting the main argument of Albanian continuity of occupation of the province since antiquity.

The Titoism had built over the decades a coalition to block nationalism, given the charismatic leadership of Josip Broz Tito, by "redistributing the previously incompatible elements into a new unity of personal identity and organizational membership, as well as the reappropriation of certain groups social at such a unity"⁷. The Leninist parties' emphasis on hierarchy, collectivism, and self-sacrifice precisely lead to a reconciliation of the incompatible commitments and guidelines, thus dismantling any divergent nationalist energies.

One year after Tito's death, between March and April 1981, the first confrontations on ethnic grounds aroused between Belgrade and Pristina, protests by Kosovo's Albanians being stifled by federal authorities, as stipulated in the circular *Memorandum* sent to Nicolae Ceaușescu by a group of the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia:

"The latest information from international media agencies and Yugoslav authorities about student demonstrations in Kosovo province of Yugoslavia is only a tiny picture of the massacre committed in this unfortunate province. While it is difficult to accurately assess the number of victims killed or injured, we can declare that their number is much higher than the 11 dead and 57 officially recognized and that the brutality and the *non-discriminatory use of weapons* by the police and the army Yugoslavia was made on a large scale, is comparable only to what we saw during the Nazi occupation during the Second World War"⁸.

⁵ Anthony Tucker-James, *The Rise of Militant Islam An Insider's View of the Failure to Curb Global Jihad*, South Yorkshire, Pen and Sword Military, 2010, p. 93.

⁶ Dušan T. Bataković, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁷ Velko Vujačić, *Slobodan Milošević. Lider charismatic sau demagog plebiscitar?*, published in the volume "World Order after Lenin", edited by Vladimir Tismăneanu, Marc Morjé Howard, Rudra Sil, Bucharest, Curtea Veche Publishing, 2009, p. 140.

⁸ Romania's National Archives, Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party – External Relations Section, file no. 179/1980.

The Yugoslav domestic climate, during the generational exchange in Belgrade, was first of all characterized by a political vacuum after the disappearance of Marshal Tito, and then by the "reduction of the federal state to a collection of elites that acted as pseudo-representatives of the various republics and autonomous provinces"⁹, the issue of the consensus intent becoming increasingly difficult to reach, the right to veto the important federal decisions acting a reform blocker. In contrast to the policy of "brotherhood and unity" implemented during Tito's rule by "removing Croatian nationalists and recalcitrant Republican elites from Slovenia (technocrats) and Serbia (liberals)"¹⁰, the successors of the Yugoslav leadership turned to the Serbian association with the state central Yugoslavia, thus inherent in the reaffirmation of the *Greater Serbia's* hegemony.

It was the era when the Yugoslav decision-makers such as Gragoslav Marković made efforts to rebuild Kosovo's reintegration within Serbia, mentioning in this way Ivan Strambolić's strategy for the revision of the 1974 federal constitution, in order to allow Serbia to arrogate the new right of control over the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. The political process of amending the fundamental law registered a considerable slowness, in fact, the effect of increasingly tensioned relations between the republics and the autonomous regions. Serbia's institutional synergies have been aggravated by the fact that "the leaders of the new Kosovo Serb civilian movement have threatened to organize a mass exodus of the rest of the Serb population in the region"¹¹.

Under these unprecedented tensions at the level of the power relations between the Yugoslav republics, Slobodan Milošević's neo-traditionalist discourse would anticipate a redefinition of the configurations of the Balkan states by arms: "To the frustration of the Serbs, Slobodan Milošević came to power by acquiring his legitimacy through the alleged care to protect persecuted Serbs. He abused the Kosovo legend, presenting himself as a protector of the Serbs, as Lazarus had done six centuries before, on the eve of the struggle of Kosovo Polje in 1389¹², showing himself as a continuator of the struggle of Orthodoxy against aggressive Islamism"¹³.

It stands as an evidence Milošević's speech from April 24th, 1987 from Kosovo Polje, addressed to the Serbs, on the background of tensions with the Albanian cohabiting ethnicity: "All Yugoslavia is with you. There is no doubt that for Yugoslavia Kosovo is a problem, but Yugoslavia is also Kosovo. Yugoslavia does not exist without Kosovo! Yugoslavia disintegrates without Kosovo! Yugoslavia and Serbia will not allow Kosovo to quit"¹⁴. The *Milošević Revolution* began in 1988 after the solidarity marches with Serbs in Kosovo, noticing the considerable public support for the constitutional reforms meant to bring the province under the leadership of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, motivated

⁹ Velko Vujačić, *op.cit.*, pp. 105-106.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 145.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

¹² Battle between Kneaz Lazar and Sultan Murad I of June 15th/28th, 1389 disputed in the province of Kosovo and resulted in the death of both leaders; the confrontation ended with the Ottoman victory, the fall of Serbia and the encirclement of the Byzantine Empire by the Ottoman armies: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Kosovo-1389-Balkans> (accessed on April 30th, 2018).

¹³ Dušan T. Bataković, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ Velko Vujačić, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

by "extreme nationalism, frustrating aspirations for justice and social reforms, as well as nostalgia for the glorious days of Yugoslavism"¹⁵.

The popular confirmation for Milošević's speech, an exponent of the Yugoslav *apparatchik*, argued a precondition for the charismatic leader, that of being *culturally recognizable*¹⁶, although the degree of charisma was questionable, given the profound crisis the Yugoslav federal system was transiting. From a certain perspective, the political agenda of the new leader from Belgrade, a philobizantine-based position impossible to deny, Serbia was presented as the "peak of the Greek-Slavic world and the bastion of Orthodoxy"¹⁷.

There are also authors who even discuss the Greek *slavofillia*, presented as motivated by a strong religious component. Without aiming at distorting the impact that the confessional component has, it should not be forgotten that Greece also faced, just like Serbia, problems with the integration of the Albanian minority, so a precedent at the Greek state's borders had the potential for inciting some secessionist energy including even the territory of the Greek state. The tensioned situation that characterized the last moments until the actual confrontation broke out showed that "the Balkan war of the 1990s is an overwhelming reminder that the old wounds in Europe can burst into new and devastating violence"¹⁸.

The situation was sharpened even more after Russian constant entered into the equation, in this case, the *dilemma of the restoring the large Euro-Asian space*¹⁹, thereby we notice Kremlin's pan-Slavic and pan-Orthodox *mission*, as well as the answer from Belgrade: the request to be part of the Russian-Belarusian Union. Complications such as "ethnic warfare that fuels the war"²⁰ overlapped with a contradictory situation regarding developments in the era and manifestations in South-Eastern Europe: "it may seem paradoxical that globalization and economic modernization nurture political nationalism, but it only if we consider nationalism a backward ideology that should be removed from the advancement of progress"²¹. After an era when the "socialist patriotism weakened the commitment of the Albanian individual to the nation"²², the *ghost of the war*²³ became once again the trend in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with only two of the six republics remaining and losing one of the two autonomous provinces, Kosovo.

The Kosovo crisis started with the Yugoslav President's decision to abolish Kosovo's autonomy on March 28th, 1989, following the Serbian nationalist agenda the leader of the Yugoslav Federative Socialist Republic promoted after taking over the leadership. The minimization the province's status meant a return to the political order

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 145.

¹⁷ Viorel Roman, *Tranziția. De la Revoluția din România, 1989, la războiul din Iugoslavia, 1999*, Bucharest, Europa Nova Publishing House, 2000, p. 24.

¹⁸ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Decizii dificile*, Bucharest, RAO Publishing House, 2015, p. 245.

¹⁹ Viorel Roman, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

²⁰ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

²¹ Fareed Zakaria, *Lumea post americană*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2009, p. 49.

²² Fahri Balliu, *Berisha și Albania democratică*, Bucharest, Leda Publishing House, 2011, p. 61.

²³ Slavenka Drakulic, *Balkan Express. Fața nevăzută a războiului*, Bucharest, Athena Publishing House, 1997, p. 24.

preceding the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 when Josip Broz Tito conferred provided the province with autonomy. Albanians' to the campaign of systematic suppression of constitutional rights consisted of the *phantom institutions'* stage²⁴, in fact, the first form of rejection of the federal authority, the people from Kosovo creating in this way an informal institutional system.

At the end of the Cold War, the claims of the Albanian population would go towards the *status quo ante*²⁵, the pacifist resistance movement being led by Ibrahim Rugova. The results perceived as modest would widen the gap between Belgrade and Pristina, with a major impact on the demands of the Albanian population in Kosovo, which had completed its agenda by requesting an *update (e.n. of the status) of Kosovo*²⁶, the transformation of the region into the republic and the recognition of the Albanians as a constituent nationality of the Yugoslav federation. As a result of this objective, Kosovo's General Assembly adopted on July 2nd, 1990 a *Constitutional Declaration*²⁷ granting Kosovo a status of equality with the constituent Yugoslav republics. The inherent impact was the organization of a clandestine referendum on September 1st, 1991, when 87% of the electors declared in favor of independence.

Despite the democratic legitimacy of regional political leadership, the ethnic cleansing led to the weakening of Rugova's position, the *de facto* leadership of the resistance movement being taken over by the *Kosovo Liberation Army (Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës – UÇK)*²⁸, whose mission was to obtain the independence using the military means. The loss of the informal power by the leader of the *Democratic League of Kosovo (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës – LDK)* was caused by the failure in building a "negotiating team consisting of a large coalition of ethnic Albanian parties"²⁹ and was also a result of the inability to obtain substantial concessions from the Yugoslav President. The most consistent external support for Kosovo's secessionism came from the Albanian Democratic Party led by Sali Berisha, who reintroduced the idea of *Greater Albania* as early as in 1992 and, particularly, the idea of a union with Kosovo, the Berisha Administration recognizing the Republic of Kosovo in a statement that reconfirmed the decision of the Albanian Parliament from 1991.

In this context, the Kosovo crisis had exponentially grown in intensity, especially alimmented by the developments from the immediate neighborhood: ethnic tensions and territorial claims "frozen by bipolarity and block policy"³⁰ had been revitalizing after an

²⁴ Sabrina Ramet, *Balkan Babel: the Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the death of Tito to the fall of Milošević*, Colorado, Westview Press, 2002, p. 308.

²⁵ Madeleine Albright, *op.cit.*, p. 537.

²⁶ Stefan Wolff, *The Kosovo Conflict*, IKV Pax Christi, 1998, p. 2: <http://www.stefanwolff.com/files/kosovo.pdf> (accessed on April 30th, 2018).

²⁷ Armend R. Beka, *The KLA and the Kosovo War*, f.l., Berghof Conflict Research, 2010, p. 13: http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Papers/Transitions_Series/transitions8_kosovo.pdf (accessed on April 30th, 2018).

²⁸ The Guerrilla Movement was founded in March 1993, with the mission of preparing the Kosovo population for armed resistance, also disseminating political information. Armend R. Bekaj, *The KLA, and the Kosovo War. From Intrastate Conflict to Independent Country*, Berlin, Berghof Conflict Research, 2010, p. 17.

²⁹ Stefan Wolff, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

³⁰ Mihail Dobre, *Romania la sfârșitul Războiului Rece*, Bucharest, Enciclopedica Publishing House, 2011, p. 222.

era in when the fear of Soviet domination suppressed interethnic disputes, based on a common discipline of resisting interest in the scenario of external intervention. The Yugoslav wars, starting with Bosnia and Herzegovina, happened in the paradigm of the *doctrine of humanitarian intervention* but preceded by diplomatic steps to avoid the opening of any new front.

As a result of the ongoing conflicts, leaders from seven Balkan countries gathered in November 1997 at a high-level meeting to discuss the point-by-point problem of migratory flows and to adopt a common position on recognizing the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia within the existing frontiers at that time. On this occasion, there was a discussion between the Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano and the Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević on the Kosovo issue. Although the talks did not end with a consensus on Kosovo's constitutional stance, the talks indicated that the new Tirana executive chose to abide by the existing borders rather than supporting the *irredentist claims of Kosovo*³¹.

As early as 1998, the United Nations began to take action for preventing a potential conflict in southern Serbia, thus deploying the U.N. Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia. The decision to organize the mission on the border of the future theater of war was determined by a geostrategic calculation, namely the nature of potential contamination by expanding the confrontation between Slavs and Albanians in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The UN decision came to confirm the pseudo-axiom of the era describing *the 1990s as an interwar period*³², and the *Balkanization*³³ as a phenomenon of political fragmentation was thus confirmed.

UN's activism on peacekeeping also demonstrated the assumption made by the former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on "subsequently defrosting the Security Council"³⁴ with direct reference to the NATO's *New Strategic Concept*, the actions of the Western European Union, the European Union or the OSCE in this direction. The tendency to refuse strategic logic and search for even the smallest common denominator in terms of commitment is distinguished in this respect.

From the desire to retain military force as the *last arbiter*, the solution of the Kosovo crisis was initially imagined from the perspective of coercive diplomacy, the exertion of influence being augmented by international legal pressures. The economic sanctions against Milošević's regime were the first steps to dismantle the Serbian offensive in Kosovo, noting that the impact was the encouragement of black market in conjunction with destabilizing regional context, having known the trade relations between Serbia and countries like Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or Romania.

At the same time, the *Contact Group* created to manage the Bosnian crisis had its mandate extended over Kosovo. By widening the scope of this action force for the Balkans, some structural adjustment was made by the inclusion of Italy, in addition to its

³¹ Stefan Wolff, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

³² Colin S. Gray, *Războiul, pacea și relațiile internaționale. O introducere în istoria strategică*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2010, p. 257.

³³ Antoaneta Olteanu, *Homo Balkanicus: trăsături ale mentalității balcanice*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 2004, p. 106.

³⁴ Colin S. Gray, *op.cit.*, p. 264.

original members (France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America). The first initiative to realize the diplomatic moves to resolve the crisis was revealed from the *Holbrooke – Milošević Agreements* (1998), the US envoy Richard Holbrooke implementing the tactics of good offices for the reconciliation between the federal leadership and the Albanian separatists.

As a result of international community's involvement, the Serbian Parliament approved a number of conclusions on the Kosovo conflict on September 28th, 1998, which highlighted the need for a rapid resolution of the crisis. The conciliatory position of the Serbian legislature was followed by *UN Security Council Resolution 1199* (1998), which called for both the restoration of the provisions of the Yugoslavian fundamental law of 1974 and the commitment of the parties to the conflict to end the crisis peacefully³⁵.

At the same time, massacres such as that from Račak (January 1999) led to the deployment of an OSCE observation mission composed of 2,000 observers³⁶. However, the mission of observers was hampered by the *Milošević's intransigence*³⁷, whose position of refusing the international mediation was motivated by the argument that the relations between Belgrade and Pristina were a matter of internal competence, invoking the idea of sovereignty. The response to the federal President's vehement opposition against the international mediation proposals came from Kofi Annan, who stated that "state sovereignty should not be used as an excuse for humanitarian abuses"³⁸. The evolutions in the early 1999 have demonstrated the strictly declarative stance of the Belgrade Parliament, which led to a debate between the *surgical blow*³⁹ and the negotiated solution.

Given the experiences during the Slovenian, Croatian, and Bosnian stages of Yugoslav wars, the settlement of the Kosovo conflict preferred to be achieved by diplomacy, with the Rambouillet negotiations debuting on February 6th, 1999. The negotiation scheme, developed around the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright exposed the internal fragmentations of the Albanian side, with the prospects being quasi-dichotomous: on the one hand, *LDK*, led by Ibrahim Rugova, and on the other hand, *UÇK*, led by Hashim Thaçi. Ibrahim Rugova's erratic position was, however, confirmed by the fact that the leader of the Albanian delegation was the commander of the guerrilla group and not the elected president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo.

The agenda of the negotiations from the French resort included the following *non-negotiable basic elements*⁴⁰: political agreement, *UÇK* disarmament, keeping Kosovo

³⁵ *RESOLUTION 1199 (1998) Adopted by the Security Council at its 3930th meeting, on 23 September 1998, S/RES/1199 (1998)*: [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1199\(1998\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1199(1998)) (accessed on April 30th, 2018).

³⁶ Madeleine Albright, *op.cit.*, p. 560.

³⁷ Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War. Bosnia, Kosovo and the Future of Combat*, Public Affairs, New York, 2001, p. 162.

³⁸ Fareed Zakaria, *op.cit.*, p. 215.

³⁹ John Nagal, Octavian Manea, *The Uncomfortable Wars of the 1990s*, published in the volume „War, Strategy and History”, edited by Daniel Marston, Tamara Leahy, ANU Press, 2016: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1dgn5sf.15> (accessed on April 30th, 2018).

⁴⁰ Anthony Wanis-St.John, *The Rambouillet Negotiations: A Precursor for Failure?*, f.l., f.e., 2014, p. 40: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263198869_The_Rambouillet_Negotiations_A_Precursor_for_Failure (accessed on May 1st, 2018).

within Yugoslavia, a NATO peacekeeping force doubled by the guarantee of respect for the rights of the Serb minority in the region. The reaction of the Serbian side led by President Milan Milutinović was that of accepting the autonomy restoration and the democratization, but with the vehement rejection of the foreign troops' clause, the main implication of this disagreement is the *equivalent of Chechnya in the Balkans*⁴¹. As for the Albanian side, Rugova exposed a report of equality between security and independence, saying the referendum is the last solution otherwise "we will see ourselves locked forever inside Serbia"⁴². The negotiations in the proximity of the French capital were the latest diplomatic vector to avoid an escalation to the armed conflict, the *carrot-and-stick* approach being imagined, as reported by the SACEUR Clark: Threatening the Serbian delegation with military intervention in case it refuses the proposed agreement"⁴³.

The conduct of the Rambouillet talks was also hampered by the Albanian position, an evidence of a non-pudent and atomizing perception, which blew up the negotiation process, Clark believing that they had cognitive blockages both in knowing their own position and the expanded context. The cantoning of both camps in a revanchist logic led to the conclusion of the negotiations on February 23rd, 1999 without the approval of a compromise peace, the imminence of the air military campaign being a matter of weeks because, on March 24th, 1999 NATO air force bombed Yugoslavia.

The interim between Rambouillet and NATO bombing was represented by the *talks in Paris* during which the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Drnovcek held secret negotiations with UCK's leadership. The meeting in Paris took place in the context of Hashim Thaçi leaving the Rambouillet negotiations to consult with his admirer Adem Demaçi on the basis of his instructions not to sign the text of the *Rambouillet Agreements* without prior consultation.

As the imminence of opening up of a new war theater was an increase was irrefutable, series of strategies to localize and subsidize the Kosovo crisis were drawn up, also taking into account the involvement of Romania. A first scenario was the adherence to the US strategy of supporting the Yugoslav pro-democracy forces, but with specific adaptations based on recent developments. In this way, there was a meeting that took place in Banat between Constantin Degeratu, the head of the Army's Major State and his counterpart from Yugoslavia, Momčilo Perišić, based on a strategy of "concentration of political and force institutions against the Milosevic regime"⁴⁴. The desideratum was that of avoiding NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia, but it ended with the arrest of Perišić, later placed under house arrest. Following this informal attempt to avoid the war, the presidents from Bucharest and Sofia addressed a joint letter to their counterpart from Belgrade, but the *démarche* remained unanswered by Milošević.

On March 2nd, 1999 the Kosovar delegation accepted to signing the *Agreements*, but the answer of the Serbian side was delayed until March 23rd, 1999, when the Parliament from Belgrade announced that it rejected the documentation, despite the actions of the *Contact Group* and Ambassador Richard Holbrooke for persuading the

⁴¹ Madeleine Albright, *op.cit.*, p. 564.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 565.

⁴³ Wesley Clark, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

⁴⁴ Laura Ganea, *Prețul demnității: o istorie altfel*, Bucharest, RAO Publishing House, 2017, p. 541.

Serb party to accept the negotiated solution. On the same day Javier Madariga Solana, NATO Secretary-General, made provision for the commencement of the air operations over the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which would last until June 10th, 1999, with the mention of military operations developed without a resolution of the UN's Security Council. From a legal point of view, the war ended after the *Military Technical Agreement*⁴⁵, also known as the *Kumanovo Agreement*⁴⁶, was signed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

The diplomatic steps to settle the conflict in Kosovo have been patented according to the quality of the case-by-case study of the conflict in southern Serbia as the final stage of the Yugoslav secessionist wars. The confrontation between Slavs and Albanians is presented from the perspective of a war following the principles of the *doctrine of humanitarian intervention* under development with NATO's *New Strategic Concept*, with coercive diplomacy being initially preferred to the detriment of classical intervention. The UN's activism promoted by Ghali corroborated with Kosovo's *anti-strategic*⁴⁷ experience, augmented by the concept of a new war specific to the 1990s: the intrastate war, with at least one of the belligerents lacking the state authority.

The diplomacy of the last decade of the 20th century was facing a *new interwar decade*, unregulated in terms of how to deal with a predominantly intra-state confrontation, but with a pronounced transnational ascendant. The diplomatic instrument was in the process of redefinition following the Kosovo crisis in the wake of the Balkan instability and combats between factions, plus the paradigm defined by Wesley Clark as *talk-fight, talk-fight*. The policies and programs breveted for the post-conflict reconstruction, reconciliation, and the widespread international development process were weakened by the security vulnerabilities, mentioning in this way the with *the minority at risk*⁴⁸.

The amplitude of the Kosovo crisis, but especially the long-term implications of ethnic cleansing, by manipulating beliefs and inciting nationalities against each other, raised the issues of province's status, thus the post-war rehabilitation could only be achieved by maximizing the security safeguards of the former combat camps. The bilateral concessions were a *sine qua non* condition for the post-conflict pacification and reconstruction, but the condescension of both sides was caused by the fear that a more moderate position in relation to the former opponent could become a security syncope. For Belgrade, the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was not a matter of negotiation, while for Pristina the self-determination was a road without return.

The conflict in Kosovo, like the previous one from Bosnia and Herzegovina, was a *manifestation of the great crises of history*⁴⁹, an integral part of the *great historical upheavals*⁵⁰, having the "internationalization of the moral trauma of non-recognition"⁵¹ as

⁴⁵ RESOLUTION 1244 (1999) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4011th meeting, on 10 June 1999, S/RES/1244 (1999): <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1999/sc99.htm> (accessed on May 1st, 2018).

⁴⁶ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogojan, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

⁴⁷ Collin S. Gray, *op.cit.*, p. 265.

⁴⁸ Șerban Filip Cioculescu, *Războaiele civile: trenduri contemporane. Despre măsurarea dezastrului umanitar în epoca globalizării*, published in the volume "Fața întunecată a globalizării", edited by Șerban Filip Cioculescu, Șerban Manea, Silviu Petre, Bucharest, RAO Publishing House, 2016, p. 37.

⁴⁹ Emir Kusturica, *Unde sunt eu în toată povestea asta?*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2012, p. 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

the main dissatisfaction with the Kosovo secessionist movement. At the same time, there is a question of mutual knowledge, at the level of interests and claims, being vehiculated some suspicions that "Kosovo Serbs and Albanians do not know who they want"⁵². The Kosovo issue was also a stake in the European crisis management mechanism, especially since its settlement was a matter for the transatlantic partner, although Jaques Poos said: "This is Europe's time. If a problem can be solved by Europeans, this is the Yugoslav problem. This is a European country and it does not depend on Americans"⁵³, so the developments showed a relationship that is basically inclined to Washington's authority in the region.

The *Myth of Europe* had even been invoked by Milošević on June 28th, 1989, when he explained how "the Serbs defend in Kosovo not only themselves but the whole of Europe"⁵⁴. The speech of the President from Belgrade was meant to contradict the accusations against his anti-Europeanism, recalling the era in which Belgrade was presented as *the keys to Central Europe*, the last bastion of resistance to the Ottoman offensive. It is demanded to add the "intellectual revival of liberalism"⁵⁵ in Serbia, doubled by nationalism, but the very rise of liberal-based criticism nature has determined the association between the maintenance of the Serbian state integrity and the idea of the *Great House of Europe* proclaimed by Mikhail Gorbachev.

The thesis stating that the preservation of Kosovo in Serbia, hence implicit Yugoslavia, was a quagmire for the *new world order*⁵⁶ announced by George H.W. Bush came to impress a state of a lull in Yugoslav society, deeply affected by divergent national perspectives. It was the stake of a head of a state whose territory had just been drastically reduced, adding the doubtful stability of the new federation made up of two republics and two autonomous republics, with one of the provinces *en route* to an international guardianship regime. This unipolar re-establishment of the post-Cold War world demonstrated, especially in the case of the Yugoslav wars, a position of US, characterized by the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright cataloging as an *indispensable nation*⁵⁷. On NATO's involvement in the Balkans, the critics of the Alliance stated that it represented "NATO expansion after the Cold War austerity"⁵⁸.

Given the tensioned situation and especially the transformations within the bilateral and multilateral relations that the Kosovo war has produced, in this case, the divergences between UN members regarding the legitimacy of NATO bombing, the completion of military operations in southern Yugoslavia represented the real challenge of unipolar order. The fall of Communism was not *the end of the history* as claimed by Francis Fukuyama, but the building of a new international society, *the rise of the rest* that Fareed Zakaria evoked, but above all a turbulent dynamic that would characterize *the*

⁵¹ Antoaneta Olteanu, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

⁵² Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia. Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 221.

⁵³ Fareed Zakaria, *op.cit.*, p. 195.

⁵⁴ Velko Vujačić, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 147.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

⁵⁷ Fareed Zakaria, *op.cit.*, p. 197.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

*post-Cold War studies*⁵⁹. The Kosovo problem has made an overwhelming complication to an international system in the middle of a transition, which had transcended a *new interwar decade* with the disappearance of one of the bipolar actors, thus inherently having Washington in the position of the only actor possessing of the capabilities for managing international security and peace.

The status of Kosovo was likely to strain the fragile relations between *United Europe* and the Western Balkans, as witnesses of Croatian journalist Slavenka Drakulić during the Yugoslav wars: "You are not European, not even East European. You are just Balkan, primitive, savage and dangerous. Kill yourself if you like it. We do not understand what is happening there, and we have no clear political interest in the area"⁶⁰. The statement of Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General in the era, came to demonstrate Drakulić's vision, while providing justification for NATO's intervention in Kosovo⁶¹: "state sovereignty should not be used as an excuse for humanitarian abuses"⁶². However, a legitimacy conferred exclusively on power, namely by what Hubert Védrine characterized as *hyperpower*⁶³, could not lead to contestation, despite "intellectual and moral justifications"⁶⁴.

Milosevic's assumptions about the convergence of the interests between the West and Yugoslavia in the Balkans was demonstrated by the first peace plans, the Western vision being similar to those elaborate during the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the great European empires: obstructing political fragmentation or limiting as far as possible the magnitude of the process. In this respect, case studies such as Trentino (South Tyrol), Catalonia, the Basque Country or Tatarstan have been considered as "capable of providing solutions to Kosovo's problems"⁶⁵. In fact, the international community's vision for Yugoslavia's post-conflict reconstruction was to preserve Kosovo within national borders, and therefore the thesis of the subsidiary settlement was evident, expressing at the same time the guarantees for Yugoslavia's territorial integrity, together with those for Kosovo's autonomy.

The crisis management from in Kosovo became more and more difficult as *the Russian factor*⁶⁶ manifested a flagrant opposition to NATO's involvement in South-Eastern Europe, even if the Soviet Union's successor state was going through a period of internal transition and instability. Although the new regime from Moscow, assumed to be

⁵⁹ George Cristian Maior, *Incertitudine. Gândire strategică și Relații Internaționale în secolul XXI*, Bucharest, Rao International Publishing, 2009, p. 35.

⁶⁰ Slavenka Drakulić, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

⁶¹ NATO's intervention in Kosovo was not mandated by the Security Council, but the texts of the resolutions issued on Kosovo provided a *carte blanche* to the Alliance, noting that if the parties did not implement the organization's requests, other means could be resumed; the deduction indicates that if the peaceful mechanisms for resolving the crisis did not yield the expected results, the use of force remained the only option, as done against Yugoslavia in 1999.

⁶² Fareed Zakaria, *op.cit.*, p. 215.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 196.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 215.

⁶⁵ Sabrina Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 215.

⁶⁶ Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *Bătălia pentru NATO. Raport personal*, Bucharest, Rao Publishing House, 2nd edition, 2014, p. 13.

democratic, was going through a process of redefining its relations with the West, from the perspective of dialogue and sectoral cooperation, the traditional strategic interests remained a constant, ultimately the Kremlin's preeminence in the area Eastern Europe. The Commonwealth of Independent States, the soft-power component that provided the answer to the "dilemma of restoring the large Euro-Asian space"⁶⁷.

The antagonisms that both the Western and Eastern attempts to export their own model in the former Communist camp brought the great powers of the time to the logic of the Cold War, testifying in this respect to the analyzes of the era of the Washington leadership agenda: "Although the Clinton Administration would prefer to focus on internal revitalization, would make a big mistake if they ignored the dangers and opportunities that Central and Eastern Europe offers"⁶⁸. In addition to the American vision from 1993, the Western policy since 1999 has been that of *participatory reconciliation*⁶⁹, but the viability of this strategy has been questioned by the reality of the scene: "Central and Eastern Europe are covered by the Weimer Mini-Republic, each able to apply a tremendous degree of violence to others. Paradoxically, although they were heavily armed, these states were still unable to defend themselves against external aggressors"⁷⁰.

The analogies between dysfunctionalities of the inter-war period and those that belong to the post-Yugoslav order were not at odds, as the Clinton Administration's solution to the Kosovo issue was inspired by the ethnic-bound border projects after 1918. In fact, a solution a mirror of the prehistory in Upper Silesia, the White House proposal for post-conflict reconstruction of the Western Balkans included a mechanism allowing Kosovars to make a decision on their "future homeland"⁷¹. It is also should be taken into account the democratization mission that motivated the international involvement in Yugoslavia, with ideologies describing the fever of democratization. Critics of the civilizing mission of the democratic states expressed ideas according to "the term is used on the international scene as a devalued exchange currency"⁷², a *façade* for the interference within the domestic affairs of another state, while legitimizing the use of force in the name of democracy. A good example of this is Romanian poet Adrian Paunescu, who presented NATO's intervention against Belgrade in the most metaphorical terms possible, martyred the Serb side by presenting allied bombings as the "crucifixion of Yugoslavia"⁷³.

The international community's plans to establish Kosovo's autonomy were also subject to pressures coming from the Kosovar leaders, for whom the desire for self-control had rather the valences of a movement of independence, especially after the

⁶⁷ Viorel Roman, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

⁶⁸ *Apud* Zalmany Khalizad, *Extending the Western Alliance to East Central Europe: A New Strategy for NATO*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *op.cit.*, p. 248.

⁷⁰ Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *op.cit.*, p. 49.

⁷¹ National Archives and Records Administration, William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, Kettering Foundation, *Advise the President: William J. Clinton. What Should the United States Do About the Kosovo Crisis?*, f.l., 1999, p. 4: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sitesusa/wp-content/uploads/sites/402/2016/11/clinton-kosovo.pdf> (accessed on May 1st, 2018).

⁷² Sergiu Gherghina, Vasile Boari, *Abordări multidimensionale ale unei vechi problematice*, published in the volume "Regăsirea identității naționale", edited by Sergiu Gherghina and Vasile Boari, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2010, p. 16.

⁷³ Laura Ganea, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

experiences of a frontless war. The failure of *Yugoslavism*, along with the "rejection of the tyranny of the majority"⁷⁴, led to the vehement opposition to any form of authority, even formal, of Belgrade over Kosovo. Unlike a conflict in the classicist warfare paradigm, the conflict in Kosovo was manifested by the annulment of marginal and civil margins as a result of ethnic cleansing policies, which made unthinkable any peacemaking project involving the return of the province under the Yugoslav authorities.

The *strategic violence*⁷⁵ applied by the regime from Belgrade, which was responded in the most retaliated manner possible, has induced an exponential degree of radicalization in former combatants' discourse: for the Serbian side, the "anti-strategic experience in Kosovo"⁷⁶ raised some insurmountable obstacles between Belgrade and the Alliance, the Kosovars' struggles – that began when the *Iron Curtain* started to crumble – could have another end than the independence. Pristina's position is the same with that expressed by the advisors of the US President in 1993: "the association between the US and the independence movements, following the precedent after bombing Yugoslavia"⁷⁷. The constructivism that characterizes the post-Cold War order demonstrated how diplomacy and strategic thinking intersect, but especially how the philosophy of the "universal interdependence of mankind"⁷⁸ exposed by Marx and Engels had some elements of symbiosis with the doctrine of humanitarian intervention exposed by Kofi Annan, that "a global age requires global involvement"⁷⁹.

The Kosovo case, one of the incipient manifestations of the *military globalism*, is an edible example of the forces projection, which led to the change of Yugoslavia's borders without any official change in the sovereignty over the province. The intervention motivated by the safeguarding of human rights was followed by the establishment of *liberal institutionalism*⁸⁰ in Kosovo. Keohane offers a simplistic definition of the international guardianship, explaining that "international regimes may have a functional role in facilitating cooperation between rational egoists"⁸¹. We distinguish, on this occasion, the neorealist perspectives such as that "security is a value with a positive null amount"⁸², assuming that the states seek for maximizing the security rather than gaining power, although one of the conditionalities of this system of projecting the strategic reality was not fulfilled: the collaborative game.

The *non-cooperative game*⁸³ played by Belgrade and Pristina, mixed with the Serbian neotraditionalism, exposed how "the primacy of security in front of all other

⁷⁴ Radu Sebastian Ungureanu, *Identități și comunități politice*, published in the volume "Relațiile internaționale contemporane: teme centrale în politica mondială", edited by Daniel Biró, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2013, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Colin S. Gray, *op.cit.*, p. 265.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ National Archives and Records Administration, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, *Putere și interdependență*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2009, p. 289.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰ Edward Harrison, *Sistemul internațional după Războiul Rece. Strategii, instituții și reflexivitate*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2010, p. 61.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 61-62.

⁸² Randall R. Schweller, *Noile cercetări realiste asupra alianțelor: rafinarea și nu respingerea poziției lui Waltz referitoare la balansare*, published in the volume "Realismul și balanța de putere: o nouă dezbatere", edited by John A. Vasquez, Colin Elman, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2012, p. 96.

⁸³ Bruce Bueno de Mersquita, *Logica și evidențele neorealismului: când este o teorie falsificată?*, published in the volume "Realismul și balanța de putere: o nouă dezbatere", edited by John A. Vasquez, Colin Elman, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2012, p. 192.

possible goals"⁸⁴ has amended what the analysts call the "revisionist jackal"⁸⁵. Specific for the post-conflict reconstruction of Yugoslavia, but especially for antagonistic interests and incompatible goals, remains Charles Tilly's statement, which depicts the states as "protective gangsters"⁸⁶. The prioritization of the security, at the level of national interests, has led to an oscillation of the dialogue between the state doctrines of Clausewitz and Machiavelli, as well as completed by the ideas subsequently exposed by Palmerston, Bismarck or Kissinger.

The post-conflict reconstruction of South-Eastern Europe represented both a mission for NATO in the framework of a "robust confidence-building exercise in the core of the Western world"⁸⁷ and for Europe, based on Robert Cooper's optics, that "there is a safe area in Europe and one of dangers and chaos outside of it"⁸⁸. In fact, the reconstruction of Kosovo was likely to avoid transforming the province into a *terra nullius* enclave in the center of Europe, thus neutralizing a threat to the post-modern safety zone. In the context of the growing international interdependence, the West metamorphosed into "unified rival authority"⁸⁹ is in a position to deal with "the revived history in the Balkans"⁹⁰. The divergent energies within the Serbian and Kosovo corporative actors⁹¹ have also been manifested ideologically, mentioning the existence of an "anthropomorphic language as a reference to the state personality"⁹².

The UN's internal debate on the correctness of NATO's intervention in Kosovo continued is one of the main obstacles to reconstruction, noticing the internal divisions between the permanent members of the Security Council: the United States, the United Kingdom, and France had a pronounced philosophical position, while Russia and China unconditionally supported the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, and later of Serbia. Relevant to the post-Kosovo internal disruptions of the UN remains the speech of Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the 54th UN General Assembly session: "if consciousness of humanity cannot find a better tribunal within the UN, then there is a danger that it may seek for peace and justice elsewhere"⁹³.

For both camps as well as for the powers guaranteeing the new Balkan order, the UN takeover of Kosovo – doubled by NATO's military mission to maintain order – was a compromise solution until a sub-strategy was drawn up. The risk of instability, however, remained constant despite the "pigeon of peace"⁹⁴ omnipresent in the reports and analyzes

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 192.

⁸⁵ Randall R. Schweller, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

⁸⁶ Alexander Wendt, *Teoria socială a politicii internaționale*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2011, p. 213

⁸⁷ George Cristian Maior, *Noul aliat. Regândirea politicii externe și de apărare a României*, Bucharest, RAO Publishing House, 2012, p. 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 38

⁸⁹ Alexander Wendt, *op.cit.*, p. 217.

⁹⁰ *Apud* Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *The Race for NATO. Reinventing the Alliance: Peacekeeping and Other Prospects and Problems of Change*, Knokke-Heist, 23rd-26th September 1993.

⁹¹ A "corporate actor" is a state marked by divergent energies, like Serbia and Kosovo, with both actors facing internal contradictions on issues like strategic thinking or foreign policy.

⁹² Alexander Wendt, *op.cit.*, p. 204.

⁹³ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect. Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, Ottawa, International Development Research Centre, 2001, p. 2: <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf> (accessed on May 1st, 2018).

⁹⁴ Bruce Bueno de Mersquita, *op.cit.*, p. 209.

of the committees and missions dedicated to the Kosovo issue, whose work has also been the subject of international investigations and criticisms. The post-conflict relations between Serbia and Kosovo relied heavily on the characteristics of the late Yugoslav order: "the increased inability of Belgrade to manage economic issues in the 1980s or the de-legitimation of the regime led to the search alternative ways of solving problems"⁹⁵.

The years after the 1999 conflict demonstrated how the development of the parallel regional structures, combined with exclusive *exclusivist nationalism*⁹⁶, determining the violent break-up of Yugoslav unity but also to the blockade of dialogue between former combatants for almost two decades. The reconstruction of trust proved to be the most sensitive point of the international missions in this area, especially as the *mutual vulnerabilities*⁹⁷ supposed to be assumed by an international regime. The Serbian and Kosovar actors, both homeostatic coagulators of elements⁹⁸, within a recent conflict, marked by the interplay between *Balkanization* and defense diplomacy, have been in the post-war era under *the pressures of socialization*⁹⁹.

The presidential election of September 24th, 2000 reflected the demands for change within the Yugoslav society with the election of Vojislav Koštunica, the leader of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia. The same political party won two months later the parliamentary elections of December 23rd, 2000, becoming prime minister Zoran Đinđić. The new leadership from Belgrade mainly focused on normalizing the relations with Western Europe and international organizations, agreeing to hand over Slobodan Milosevic to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague. There are also reports stating that the decision to extradite the former President to the Kingdom of the Netherlands was an "action denied by the almost totalitarian Serb people"¹⁰⁰.

Milošević's arrest took place on April 1st, 2001, the former President being transferred to the ICTY for trial on charges of war crimes or crimes against humanity committed during the Kosovo war. Milošević's judgment created, in some ways, more problems than it actually solved. First of all, the idea of international justice has been harshly criticized on the assumption that the impartiality of the process was to be strictly formal, with conflicts of interest generating subjectivism. It is precisely these "controversies over the ability of the international community to operate with such a concept"¹⁰¹ that arose just before the onset of the trial, placing the idea of international justice in a shadowy cone, all the more so since the idea of judging a head of state means the usurpation of certain prerogatives of the domestic legal system.

The controversies surrounding the politicization of Milošević's process overlapped with an intrinsic Serbian desire for internal management of the transition: "There is a strong need for every people to internally deal with this situation of interest. After all, the people want to see their own legal system pronouncing on organic issues of

⁹⁵ Radu Sebastian Ungureanu, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

⁹⁷ George Cristian Maior, *The New Ally...*, p. 37.

⁹⁸ Radu Sebastian Ungureanu, *op.cit.*, p. 210.

⁹⁹ Edward Harrison, *op.cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁰ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogojan, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

¹⁰¹ George Cristian Maior, *Incertitudine...*, p.235.

their destiny"¹⁰². The Serb resentments and suspicions were fueled by the death of Slobodan Milošević on unelicted conditions, subject to specific uncertain causalities such as the medical history of the former President, the quality of the emergency response, and especially the impact of the prolongation of the trial on Milošević's medical condition.

The critics even determined a bunch of factors that allegedly affected the health of the former Yugoslav leader, in this case around the general delays in the proceedings, which brought to light the hypothesis of the unacceptable mix of justice and politics. These critical voices about Milošević's trial were coached by Boris Tadić, who said that the entire responsibility for the death of the former Yugoslav President belongs to the ICTY. Even if Belgrade's reaction to Milošević's death during the process of essentially had a vehement dimension, the relationship with the West was not deteriorated, given "the need for identity change that would lead to Serbia breaking the chords of history and its entry into the European rhythm"¹⁰³.

The challenges of the Yugoslav transition were converted into considerable inter-institutional tensions, erupting with the rivalry between the President and Prime Minister, the socio-economic reforms vital for national recovery being the most productive elements of dissension. The struggle for power on the Yugoslav political scene intensified with the ever more visible dichotomy of vision between the Government and the Presidential Administration: Đinđić represented the pro-Western current of Yugoslav society, while Koštunica was an exponent of Milošević's neo-traditionalism. This dual dimension of the executive structures from Belgrade lowered the pace of the dialogues related to the regional construction mechanisms, imposing a considerable lengthening of the whole process, of course having a direct effect in accentuating crises rather than solving them.

The turning point at the level of Yugoslav internal consistency was the international conference to change the borders of the Balkans, organized at the suggestion of Zoran Đinđić. The project finally aroused strong nationalist sentiments, especially considering a territorial change that meant a change to the post-Dayton regional order: Republika Srpska joining Yugoslavia in exchange for an independent Kosovo. The reaction to this unthinkable strategy for the artisans of Serbia's territorial integrity came from the ultranationalists who assassinated Đinđić on March 12th, 2003.

These systemic crises were the inherent consequences of Yugoslavia's explosive disintegration, but especially of radical speeches designed to capture popular legitimacy during these episodes of the revival of the Crusades. The inherent implication was that of the persistence of the proximity of the Western Balkans to the problematic neighborhoods, with societies marked since the onset of the millennium of divergent energies but especially by country projects not only incompatible but also contradictory: within the same state - as can be seen in Yugoslavia - there are both admirers of the *Atlantic civilization*¹⁰⁴ evoked by William Ptaff, as well as nontraditionalists for whom Mihail Sadoveanu's assertion that "the light comes from the East" remains a medium and long-term perspective of unwavering.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 237.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

The major long-term implication for the Kosovo – Serbia binomial was the strengthening of the separate road hypothesis, making it clearer on the occasion of each crisis or tension that the two actors could no longer be included in the same state entity. The revanchism at the level of external discourse was accompanied by the issue of internal consumption, insufficient to legitimize a coherent agenda, especially since the domestic stability of both parties was severely disturbed by internal secessionist movements.

The parallel structures and the insurgency that characterized the radical type of asymmetric threats in the region would impart a climate of instability at interstate and intrastate level, especially since their resolution was attempted by what critics call a "hot peace that abnormally warms the Balkan area, and the status of Kosovo is still a source of conflict both within the EU and within the UN, especially between the US and the Federation"¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁵ Traian Valentin Pocea, Aurel I. Rogojan, *op.cit.*, p. 169.