

## Intelligence Report

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

21 December 1995

### Balkan Conflict Spillover Unlikely in Near Term

*The Dayton Agreement appears to have galvanized ethnic-Albanian resolve to gain international attention, but their efforts are not likely to alter the status quo in Kosovo in the near term. Although concerned by their perceived exclusion from the negotiations on a general peace settlement, Kosovar Albanians appear to view the Dayton Agreement—in particular the strong US lead and the perceived granting of autonomy based on ethnicity—as a model for settling the standoff over Kosovo. Along with Albanian President Berisha, who has also used the Dayton agreement as a peg to bring the fate of Kosovo to international attention, they have stepped up their public demands to achieve eventual independence for the province through dialogue.*

- *If Belgrade is allowed to reintegrate into the international community without conditions to improve the situation in Kosovo, activist Kosovar Albanians may become increasingly influential and could use more drastic measures to gain international attention, possibly precipitating violence in the province. Increased Serb ultranationalist involvement in the province or a permanent resettlement of Bosnian and Croatian Serb refugees could also portend violence.*

### Dayton Agreement as Rallying Point for Ethnic Albanians

Diplomatic reporting indicates that Kosovar Albanians--ninety percent of Kosovo's population and suppressed by Serb military and police force--see the Dayton accord as a model for a political settlement that would restore the province's autonomy and pave the way for eventual independence. [redacted] the Kosovar Albanians are disillusioned by their exclusion from the Dayton talks despite perceived US guarantees that Kosovo would be addressed in a general peace settlement. Consequently, they have increased their efforts in recent meetings with US officials to encourage US mediation in Kosovo.

- Following Dayton, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) presidency decided to reverse its policy against holding public demonstrations within Kosovo and approved a December rally because

passive resistance to Serbian oppression had not achieved results,

[REDACTED]

- LDK Foreign Affairs advisor Tahiri in late November told US diplomats that the Dayton talks were a time of great psychological tension for the leadership as they awaited the outcome of the agreement. Moreover, Kosovar Albanian "Prime Minister" Bukoshi has told US officials that Dayton was a watershed and that "before Dayton is like before Christ." Now the main obstacle is how to begin internationally-mediated dialogue with Belgrade. Although Kosovar Albanian leader Rugova was pleased that not all sanctions were lifted against Belgrade in the agreement, Tahiri urged that Rugova be included in follow-on talks. [REDACTED]

#### Kosovo Standoff Likely to Continue [REDACTED]

Despite the stepped-up Kosovar Albanian activities, Serbian President Milosevic's demonstrated ability to fend off criticism from Serb nationalists, the weak Kosovar Albanian position vis-a-vis Serb police and military forces, and indications that Belgrade and the Kosovar Albanian leadership are interested in pursuing dialogue are likely to forestall open confrontation.

- Milosevic has survived a series of potentially destabilizing challenges to his leadership in recent months and marginalized Serb nationalists who have in the past used the Kosovo issue to rally support. His ruling Serbian Socialist Party (SPS) recently dismissed five of its leading members who were considered to be part of a hard-line, pro-Serb nationalist faction of the party. In addition, Serbian Radical Party leader Seselj's efforts earlier this year to rally support against Milosevic for not protecting Serbs in Croatia against Croatian offensives in the Krajina drew only marginal support, according to the US Embassy.
- Activist Kosovar Albanian leaders in November assessed that despite growing frustration with the lack of progress in achieving concessions from Belgrade, the flight of Kosovar Albanian youth as a result of Milosevic's repressive policies has made it impossible for the Kosovar Albanians to rise up against the Serbs [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] These activists assess that conflict will not flare even if Bosnia stabilizes.
- Unconfirmed reports indicate that Rugova has permitted low-level contacts with Belgrade. Rugova reportedly believes that a step-by-step

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This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] Office of European Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to Chief, DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force [REDACTED]

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approach--beginning with informal talks--will best prepare the Kosovar Albanian public to at least temporarily accept a form of limited autonomy. [redacted] Bukoshi told US officials in December that Rugova could accept beginning with dialogue on normalizing life in the province and then possibly setting up separate talks on the future status of the province. [redacted]

### **Tirana's Potential to Influence the Region** [redacted]

Albanian President Berisha will play a leading role in trying to balance efforts to improve the plight of the large ethnic-Albanian minorities in Serbia and Macedonia with efforts to foster regional stability. Nonetheless, Tirana has echoed Kosovar Albanian demands for an international focus on Kosovo, telling US diplomats in early December that failure to address the Kosovo problem would lead to an uncertain future in the Balkans.

- Berisha reportedly told US diplomats that the Dayton agreement and a perceived moderation in Belgrade's policies have improved the chances for pursuing a Kosovo settlement. He told the diplomats that the US should take the lead in helping resolve the Kosovo standoff following the deployment of NATO troops in Bosnia.
- Berisha--most likely recognizing the weak negotiating position of the ethnic Albanians--continues to insist that Rugova drop demands for independence and has told US diplomats that he believes that beginning negotiations will help Rugova fend off pressure from more activist Kosovar Albanian leaders.
- A political challenge from Albania's Socialists--former communists--in parliamentary elections next spring may lead Berisha to pursue a harder line on regional ethnic-Albanian issues. He also may use the nationalist card to garner support from small rightist parties. [redacted]

### **Potential Flashpoints** [redacted]

Five years after losing autonomy with no tangible results from Rugova's moderate policies, elements of the Kosovar Albanian leadership who advocate a more activist approach toward Belgrade are gaining influence, according to various reporting. The US Embassy in Belgrade reports that its moderate contacts within the Kosovar Albanian leadership believe that the activists, led by Bukoshi, are a threat to peace in Kosovo and are frustrated that Bukoshi has not been sidelined.

- [redacted] controversy within the LDK over how to raise the international profile of Kosovo has divided the party's

leadership between those supporting Rugova's policies and those supporting more activist leaders.

- [redacted] activist pressure has forced Rugova to compromise and allow a rally to be held in Kosovo this month, which, if it occurs, is certain to raise tensions with the Serb authorities and could even lead to limited confrontations. [redacted]

Belgrade's aggressive pursuit of various tactics to resolve its Kosovo problem-- including granting limited autonomy, redistricting and resettling of Serb refugees to "dilute" the ethnic Albanian concentration, and trying to undermine Kosovar Albanian unity--is likely to add fuel to ethnic Albanian activism.

- A conflict in Sector East could precipitate significant numbers of refugees whom Belgrade might subsequently try to resettle in Kosovo, although past resettlement campaigns have not been successful. Serbs are not inclined to settle in the ninety-percent ethnic Albanian province and have jumped trains, hidden from authorities, and fled the province to avoid permanent resettlement.
- Kosovo press reports that Milosevic has agreed to initiate dialogue with former communist Kosovar Albanians, a move that has been criticized by the main ethnic Albanian parties, and prompted them to appeal to the US for assistance in mediating dialogue, according to Embassy reporting. [redacted]

Serb nationalists will continue to pose a threat to stability in Kosovo. Dissatisfaction with a Bosnian or Sector East peace deal or the failure of the Yugoslav Army to respond to a Croatian military offensive in Sector East could provide the nationalist Serbs issues to rally behind. Serb nationalism and anti-Milosevic feeling is strong among Kosovo's minority Serb population, according to Embassy Belgrade. An increased nationalist presence in the province-- [redacted] Serb ultranationalist leader Arkan may attempt to relocate his training base from Eastern Slavonia to Kosovo--would heighten tensions. [redacted]

#### International Leverage in Kosovo [redacted]

Provisions that mandate a return of OSCE monitors to Kosovo before the "outer wall" of sanctions is lifted against Belgrade will improve international access to the region and boost the standing of Rugova and other moderates in the LDK. They are not likely, however, to precipitate an easing of Serbian repression in Kosovo unless Belgrade permits the monitors wider powers than afforded under the previous OSCE mission.

- OSCE monitors operating in Kosovo before the summer 1993 expulsion reported that widespread human rights violations continued despite their presence, according to US Embassy reporting.
- Milosevic has told US diplomats that he will allow a USIS center to open in Kosovo. The opening of such an office would serve to reaffirm the US commitment to Kosovo and provide ammunition for Kosovar Albanian moderates to use against critics claiming there are no tangible results from their moderate policies. The opening itself would probably not, however, alter the status of Serb repression or satisfy Kosovar demands for independent international recognition.

#### Macedonia Weathering Instability

An escalation of internal tensions within Macedonia that could precipitate a broader conflict does not appear imminent. Macedonia's caretaker government has to date avoided any serious political instability following the 3 October assassination attempt against President Gligorov and is continuing Gligorov's moderate regional and domestic policies.

- The Macedonian Government, with parliamentary speaker Andov acting as President, has pushed forward on implementing the accord signed with Greece in September, leading to the lifting of the Greek economic blockade. The expected increase in economic activity--both from the lifting of this embargo and the relaxation of sanctions on Serbia--is likely to head off further labor unrest and contribute to political stability.
- The government effectively managed another potentially disruptive issue with its moderate response to the beginning of the fall term at the Albanian-language university in Tetovo. Skopje appears willing to let the university continue to operate as long as it maintains a low profile.

Macedonian Foreign Minister Stevo Crvenkovski does not believe Gligorov will be able to fully resume his presidential duties and he may opt for a temporary return to help ease what could be a contentious leadership transition. Any successor to Gligorov is unlikely to garner the combination of public support and government control that Gligorov has used to balance ethnic-Albanian demands and nationalist criticism during recent periods of instability and economic hardship. Macedonia is likely to continue to look to the US--and the US participation in the UN Preventive Deployment--as a guarantor of its stability.

- Ethnic Albanians have maintained a low profile since the assassination attempt, but are likely to more actively pursue concessions from the government once Macedonian politics return to normal. The rector of the Albanian language university, for example, has already begun to step up his public rhetoric about winning government recognition for the university.