

# Finding a Peaceful Path for Kosovo:

## A Track Two Approach

by Avnita Lakhani

In the October 26, 1998 issue of U.S. News & World Report, reporter Fouad Ajami wrote “Serbia has had enough of poetry and legend; in its return to reason and to practicality must lie its deliverance.”<sup>1</sup> Since June 28, 1987, when Serbian President Slobodon Milosevic arrived at the Field of Blackbirds, just outside the Kosovo capital of Pristina, Serbia has drenched Kosovo in a rain of blood and war based on Serbia’s legendary tales dating back to their defeat at the hands of the Turks in 1389.<sup>2</sup> Despite countless attempts by the international community to intervene in the killing fields of Kosovo, neither reason nor practicality cut through the Serbian cultural and religious claims to the predominantly Albanian stronghold. Finally, in June 1999, after significant United Nations Security Council intervention, shuttle diplomacy, and heavy NATO bombing, NATO reached an agreement with the Yugoslavia government to: 1) withdraw its Serb troops, militias, police and secret police from Kosovo; 2) allow NATO-led peacekeeping forces to enter Kosovo; and 3) allow ethnic Albanians to return to their homeland.<sup>3</sup>

Kosovo today is considered an international protectorate under an interim trusteeship administration by the United Nations.<sup>4</sup> Even under international protection, there has been violence in Kosovo, including deadly rioting in March 2004 that left 19 people dead and more than 4,000 Serbs and others without homes.<sup>5</sup> This recent outbreak of violence underscores the fact that, despite abatement of the violence in Kosovo via traditional international intervention, unrest is growing because Kosovar Albanians are “frustrated with their unresolved status, the economic situation, and the problems of dealing with the past.”<sup>6</sup> Clearly, there can be no peaceful and practical future for Kosovo without first addressing the historical, cultural, and religious claims of the Serb majority of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Albanian majority of Kosovo, and the Serb minority of Kosovo.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the overriding issue of Kosovo’s unresolved status and how faith-based diplomacy can serve as a critical, non-governmental mechanism for conflict resolution. Faith-based diplomacy can begin to

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address the historical, ethnic, and religious claims that lie at the heart of helping Albanian Kosovars and Orthodox Serbs to peacefully co-exist in the future and for determining Kosovo's final status in the Balkans.

Faith-based diplomats orient the potential solution to an international conflict towards a particular religion—the religious texts, their ideologies, their practices, and their traditions because of a potential integration between religion and politics. Practitioners of faith-based diplomacy will look to understand “the two-vectored spiritual orientation around which all of them [religious elements] resolve: 1) the proper orientation of politics to the transcendent; and 2) the active role of the divine in human affairs.”<sup>77</sup>

In particular, faith-based diplomats believe that, in some instances such as identity-based conflicts, there is an integration between religion and politics. For example, practitioners of faith-based diplomacy argue that the political order (how people and societies are to live together) is based on the religious texts of the various faiths of the world. Practitioners of faith-based diplomacy argue that by understanding such religious texts and ideologies, the horizontal relationships between members of the society, and the vertical relationships between the society and the divine,<sup>8</sup> one can gain a deeper understanding of the source of the conflict, as well as some possible solutions that will address the underlying interests. By addressing the underlying interests and root causes, proposed solutions will be more viable and withstand the pressure of backlash, disintegration, and non-commitment.

The next section provides a brief perspective of the Kosovo conflict and the historical roots of the violence between the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and the Serbs. Section II provides a faith-based analysis of the Kosovo conflict and how the conflict is rooted in unresolved cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. Section III discusses faith-based solution proposals for moving Kosovo towards a more peaceful path and a final status. Finally, the article concludes with a call to action for establishing security and stability in the Balkans by boldly addressing the unresolved status of Kosovo in relation to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

## **SECTION I: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The seeds of the Kosovo conflict were sowed long before President Slobodan Milosevic began his campaign of ethnic cleansing against the majority ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo in 1989.<sup>9</sup> In a chilling event foreshadowing the bloodbath to come, Milosevic sparked Serbian nationalism when, on June 28, 1987, he came to the Field of Blackbirds, outside of the Kosovo capital of Pristina, and denounced Kosovo's Albanian majority in front of more than one million Serbs and “promised the Serbs that nobody would beat them again.”<sup>10</sup> Milosevic reminded the Serbs of their defeat in 1389 by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire and promised that he would avenge that loss at the expense of the ethnic Albanian majority that currently occupied Kosovo.<sup>11</sup>

According to Serbian classical history, the Serbian Prince Lazar fought the Ottoman Turks at Kosovo Polje (Field of Blackbirds) on June 28, 1389, and lost.<sup>12</sup>

While Prince Lazar is celebrated as a war hero and as a “glorious sacrifice,”<sup>13</sup> the Serbian loss to the Turks became engrained in Serbian national consciousness, shaped the national identity of the Serbs, and transformed Kosovo from simply a battlefield to “the crucible of Serbian nationalism.”<sup>14</sup> As the Rev. Blastko Taraklis, a Serbian Orthodox priest stated, “We cannot give up Kosovo because it is the Serbian Jerusalem. The birthright of the Serbian Orthodox Church is in Kosovo and must remain there as part of Serbia.”<sup>15</sup>

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By 1459, the Turks ruled all of Serbia, including Kosovo.<sup>16</sup> The Serbs began to migrate north towards Bosnia and, after a failed uprising in 1689, the migration escalated, changing the population balance of Kosovo.<sup>17</sup> Ethnic Albanians, descendants of the ancient Illyrian tribes<sup>18</sup> that inhabited the Balkans before the Slavs, started settling in Kosovo during the Turkish rule and their numbers grew steadily.<sup>19</sup> As more Muslim Albanians moved into Kosovo’s fertile lands from the mountains of northern Albania, Serb emigration continued until Kosovo became 90 percent ethnic Albanian. In 1817, the Serbs won autonomy under the rule of Prince Milos Obrenovic and became a fully independent state again, but Kosovo remained under the control of the Ottoman Turks.<sup>20</sup> During the Balkan War of 1912–1913, the Serbs and other independent Balkan states banded together to drive the Turks out of the Balkans, and Europe itself.<sup>21</sup> The Turks then ceded Ottoman territory to Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria.<sup>22</sup> After defeat during World War I, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was abolished and Serbian King Alexander established a royal dictatorship and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>23</sup> Within the newly created kingdom, hostilities escalated between Serbs and non-Serbs until 1934, when Croatian terrorists assassinated King Alexander.<sup>24</sup>

In 1941, during World War II, Yugoslavia formed an alliance with Hitler, who would ultimately betray the country and invade Yugoslavia, followed by Italian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian forces.<sup>25</sup> Marshall Tito organized a partisan resistance against Germany, took control of Yugoslavia, and established a communist Yugoslavia consisting of six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia.<sup>26</sup> Kosovo remained part of Serbia.

Marshall Tito, through an iron hand and a vision of a united Yugoslavia, sought to appease Serbs and non-Serbs alike, including the Kosovar Albanian majority. In fact, Tito, in an attempt to recruit Albanian soldiers during the war, promised the Kosovar Albanians that they would reunite with Albania after the war.<sup>27</sup> After they realized this promise would not be kept, ethnic Albanians began a series of uprisings, resulting in a lockdown of the province that lasted until the 1960s. In 1974, under a revised Yugoslav constitution, Kosovo was given full autonomy.<sup>28</sup> The ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo established Albanian language schools, observed

Islamic holy days, and were allowed to have representatives on the “old collective federal presidency.”<sup>29</sup>

When Marshall Tito died in 1980, so did the vision of a united Yugoslavia.<sup>30</sup> In the wake of turmoil and the break-off of Slovenia and Croatia from the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia,<sup>31</sup> Slobodan Milosevic<sup>32</sup> gained control of the Serbian Communist Party in 1987 by manipulating the grievances between Serbs and ethnic Albanians and demonizing the Albanian Kosovars.<sup>33</sup> In 1989, Milosevic took away Kosovo’s autonomy, declared the Albanian language unofficial, and changed the school’s curricula into one strictly focused on promoting Serbian nationalism.<sup>34</sup> By 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established with two republics: Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>35</sup> The ethnic Albanian Kosovars responded to Milosevic’s actions by holding peaceful resistance against Serbian rule, declaring their independence, and running a parallel state complete with separate health, taxation, and education systems.<sup>36</sup>

Under the leadership of author Ibrahim Rugova, the ethnic Albanian majority attempted to regain their independence in a non-violent manner.<sup>37</sup> However, some Albanians became weary of Rugova’s pacifism and, in 1996, took up arms as a radical group known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA has since claimed responsibility for several attacks on Serbian policemen and have not been backed by the clandestine ethnic Albanian leaders headed by Rugova.<sup>38</sup> The KLA’s actions led to a police crackdown in Kosovo and the subsequent deaths of thousands of Albanian Kosovars. In February 1998, eighty people were killed when Milosevic sent Serbian troops to take back KLA-controlled areas in Kosovo.<sup>39</sup> Between February 1998 and spring of 1999, Milosevic continued the “ethnic cleansing” of Kosovo, resulting in the death or expulsion of over one million Albanian Kosovars.<sup>40</sup>

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Despite numerous international attempts to intervene and end the conflict in Kosovo, including the Rambouillet Accord<sup>41</sup> and the Belgrade agreement brokered by American diplomat Richard Holbrooke in 1999, both sides in the conflict failed to adhere to the peace agreements, and violence continued.<sup>42</sup> Finally, in March 1999, NATO began a 78-day airstrike campaign in an attempt to force President Milosevic to stop the military offensive against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.<sup>43</sup> On June 10, 1999, Milosevic accepted a UN-backed agreement to cease all hostilities.<sup>44</sup> The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1244, which outlined measures for withdrawing Yugoslavian military forces, allowed UN peacekeepers to enter, and established a UN trusteeship administration for both civil and military affairs in

Kosovo.<sup>45</sup> The goal of Resolution 1244 was to eventually allow for “substantial autonomy” for Kosovo.<sup>46</sup> However, this has proven to be a difficult task. Today, Kosovo is still under UN trusteeship administration with an “indefinite protectorate status,”<sup>47</sup> under the “standards before status” policy<sup>48</sup> established by the United Nations.

The key issue is how to transform Kosovo and its ethnic Albanian majority and Serbian minority into a stable society where ethnic, religious, and cultural differences are a point of celebration instead of a point of disintegration. Faith-based diplomacy can play an integral role in bringing the parties to a better understanding of the religious and ethnic roots of conflict and ways to release such tensions. The focus of the next section is an analysis of the underlying conflicts that must be addressed by those working to find a peaceful path for Kosovo.

## SECTION II: CONFLICT ANALYSIS

As a result of a tumultuous history, the Kosovo conflict is one that has various interdependent and complex levels. Some of the key issues include: the relationship between the ethnically diverse population of Kosovo, the historical wounds suffered by the Serbs and the ethnic Albanian majority, and the search for a national identity that is entangled with ethnic and religious affiliations. In addition, there are the expectations of the international community that has tried and failed to bring peace to Kosovo via traditional diplomatic intervention. Each of these areas is discussed in detail below as a means of fully understanding how faith-based diplomacy might be the untapped solution to defining the future and final status of Kosovo.

### *Ethnic or Religious Conflict and National Identity*

The Serbs originated from the Southern Slavs who have long inhabited the Balkans from the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>49</sup> The ethnic Albanians originated from the ancient Illyrian tribes who began to inhabit Kosovo under the Ottoman Turkish rule of the Balkans.<sup>50</sup> Because they are from different ethnic backgrounds, the Serbs and Albanians have different attitudes and behaviors, not only towards the preservation of their own cultural identity, but also regarding the importance of Kosovo. Furthermore, their ethnic differences include their “language, myths and shared memories of common origin and ancestry, state traditions, and religious affiliations.”<sup>51</sup> Because of these differences, it was relatively easy for both sides to see the other side as an enemy and create an “us vs. them” conflict in order to achieve their political aims. Both the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians had visions of a “Greater Serbia” or a “Greater Albania” that further fueled the conflict.<sup>52</sup> By demonizing each other through highlighting their differences, the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians fought to gain control and used the differences to fuel human aggression as well as force their political and historical ideology on the other. In so doing, the battle between the Serbs and the Albanians became a battle of control over the past.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the ethnic polarity, many argue that the Kosovo conflict is deeply

rooted in religious differences. According to one estimate, of the 1.9 million residents of Kosovo at the time of the conflict, there were 1.7 Muslims, 60,000 Roman Catholics, 150 Serbian Orthodox, and approximately 150,000 Roma (gypsy) and Ashkali.<sup>54</sup> Serbs are almost entirely followers of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which originated in Kosovo before the Turkish invasion.<sup>55</sup> The non-Serbs, or the majority of ethnic Albanians, are followers of Islam and Roman Catholicism.<sup>56</sup> An understanding of the religious make-up of Kosovo is critical to resolving the underlying conflict. As of late 1998, of the 1.89 million inhabitants of Kosovo, 81 percent were Muslim (90 percent of the ethnic Albanians), 10 percent were Serbian Orthodox (10 percent of the Serbs), and 9 percent were Roman Catholics (an Albanian minority).<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, religious identity is now fused with national identity such that the future of Kosovo cannot be separated between political goals and religious identity.<sup>58</sup> In fact, the Serbian Orthodox Church provided strong support to Milosevic, “becoming a haven for the nationalist-oriented intelligentsia, offering them legal cover and moral legitimacy.”<sup>59</sup>

### *Historical Wounds*

The historical wounds suffered by the Albanians and the Serbs play a critical role in the Kosovo Conflict, and many of these wounds are still being played out in the current conflict in Kosovo and neighboring nations. For example, Yugoslavia was initially established by a Serbian King with a vision of uniting all Serbs within a single state, creating a “Greater Serbia.” On the other hand, ethnic Albanians moved from the harsh northern mountains of Albania into Kosovo during the Turkish rule with hopes of creating a “Greater Albania.” Each of these visions has been shattered by violence, beginning as early as 1389, when the Ottoman Turks invaded the Balkans.

During the First World War, Serbs and Albanians both “suffered mutual and lasting national traumas” in the form of “ruthless Serbian occupation of Albanian areas since the Berlin Congress of 1878, followed by Serbian colonization of Kosovo and racist attempts at Serbianization and the expulsion of Albanians to Turkey.”<sup>60</sup> In addition, during the Second World War, the Serbian massacre of Albanians led the Turks, along with third-party occupiers in collaboration with Armenians, to expell the Serbs from Kosovo.<sup>61</sup>

During the period of the Second Yugoslavia (coinciding with World War II), it is reported that those who found themselves to be victims of brutal oppression or genocide “typically claimed that their own depredations had been maximized, while those of the enemy had been minimized.”<sup>62</sup> Each side adhered to their sense of being “more sinned against than sinning.”<sup>63</sup> Because of this perception, the key to addressing the issue of historical trauma is not so much what actually happened, but what people “knew” or believed to have happened to them or their families. Intertwined with the historical traumas are the visions of what might have been, what could be, and what God has promised for both the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians.<sup>64</sup> Such historical wounds combined with religious divinations carry a heavy burden that cannot simply be diminished or addressed by traditional

diplomatic intervention.

*Problems Caused by Traditional Diplomatic Intervention*

A final, yet major issue involves the traps created by traditional “Track One” diplomatic intervention in a genuine effort to end the bloodbath in Kosovo. International diplomacy is at the heart of preventing, and resolving, international conflicts such as the one in Kosovo. However, traditional diplomacy has its roots in law, policy, and international politics. Traditional diplomacy must also adhere strictly to respect for the national sovereignty of nations under international law and the rules and regulations established by international organizations, especially the United Nations. Because of these inherent “traps,” the benefits of traditional international intervention are reduced by the time, expense, and limited considerations imposed by a regulated political body. These problems are at the heart of the Kosovo conflict even today.

First, the conflict between the Serbs and ethnic Albanians occurred and continues to occur today within a sovereign state. It is well established in international law that the international community must respect the boundaries of a sovereign nation. Regardless of how many people may despise “[Milosevic] and his treatment of the Albanian minority [in Serbia, not as a majority in Kosovo], reaction would, legally speaking, have amounted to an outright invasion of a sovereign state;”<sup>65</sup> both Serbs and ethnic Albanians would reject such a foreign intervention. In fact, in an April 1998 referendum, 95 percent of Serbs voted against international intervention in Kosovo,<sup>66</sup> and Milosevic, consistently and defiantly, refused to sign international peace accords to stop the military offensive in Kosovo. The ethnic Albanian majority and, in many cases, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) refused to sign the peace accords because it did not give them full independence. Both sides resisted international intervention for various reasons and rejected the peace accords brokered by the international community on the grounds that these agreements did not help either side achieve their mutually exclusive political goals.

Second, the current trusteeship administration of the Kosovo province has raised questions about the legality and effectiveness of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 in establishing a United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).<sup>67</sup> Many scholars and international leaders question whether the UN had authority to even establish such an administration under the UN Charter’s purpose and principles. Furthermore, critics argue that by intervening in Kosovo, the Security Council “effectively creates new international law doctrine through the establishment of an omnipotent trusteeship administration in the present case” that is not rooted in explicit articles under the UN Charter for UNMIK’s authority to occupy Kosovo.<sup>68</sup> To be sure, intervention was necessary because of the rate of mass killings by the Serbian offensive in Kosovo; however, such divided views on the actions taken by the UN Security Council foster division among the Balkan nations and the international community. It further polarizes the safety and security of the Kosovars as a legitimate sovereign nation within the international community. This is

specifically evident in the “standards versus status” policy established by the United Nations as a pre-condition to discussions on Kosovo’s future status as well as the current, six-year UN occupation of Kosovo amidst continuing violence and growing frustration by the ethnic Albanian majority.

A final issue regarding the nature of traditional diplomatic intervention has to do with the international community’s expectations of Kosovo as compared with the expectations of the Serbs and the Albanian Kosovars. UN Resolution 1244 was passed with the intent of granting Kosovo “substantial autonomy” by forcing the Serb government to withdraw all military and paramilitary forces from Kosovo, allowing UN peacekeepers to enter and provide humanitarian relief, and place the UN, assisted by NATO, as civil and military administrator until the UN could oversee the transfer of authority to a more stable political structure for Kosovo.<sup>69</sup> This goal is consistent with that adopted by the six-nation “Contact Group,” consisting of the U.S. and European nations, and the recommendation made by the International Crisis Group in its January 2005 report.<sup>70</sup> While this goal is seemingly consistent at the international level, it is internally at odds within international institutions in terms of tactical execution and policy. It is also inconsistent with the pre-war demands of the Serb majority in Yugoslavia, the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo, and the KLA rebel group. A primary reason for this is that international expectations are rooted in temporal international law and policy while the expectations of Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo are from the ageless standpoint of ethnic, religious, and historical differences.

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The Serbs have always had a vision of a united Yugoslavia and a “Greater Serbia,” dating back to the ruling days of King Alexander and Tito, to the more extremist policies of Milosevic. Because Kosovo holds a special place in the Serbian national consciousness, it is doubtful that Serbia will give it up entirely without a fight. It is also widely recognized that such a partition of Kosovo is undesirable and would not lend to stability in the Balkans.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, ethnic Albanians have fought for a “Greater Albania” with hopes of one day reuniting with their homeland. Albania has also made clear that they would be united in their support of the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo should war break out. Ethnic Albanians wanted to retain the autonomy they have had since 1974, and they peacefully protested for the Serbian government to capitulate and eventually grant independence for Kosovo. At the same time, the KLA fought for complete independence with methods other than non-violent protest. Indeed, KLA began the violence against Serb police in an effort to demonstrate their methods in the fight for Kosovo’s independence.

As a result of these conflicting expectations at the state, regional, and



international levels, the goal of substantial autonomy or even full independence for Kosovo is slowly fading.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, Kosovars live on in a state of limbo, and the lack of a defined future status, much less a final status, means that Kosovo is not unlike the Kashmir in the war between India and Pakistan. Though both religious and non-faith-based attempts have been made to bring about some peace in the area,<sup>73</sup> Kosovo is in dire need of practical, effective proposals for moving the country forward both historically and psychologically. The next section discusses some proposals for helping the ethnic Albanian majority and minority Serb population of Kosovo move towards peaceful settlement of their religious, ethnic, and historical wounds so that they may peacefully co-exist in an otherwise volatile region.

### **SECTION III: PROPOSED FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY SOLUTIONS**

Mainstream diplomacy regarding the resolution of international conflicts is mainly centered on Track One diplomacy. This means that the main proponents and participants engaged in conflict resolution are state actors—official governments and government-sponsored organizations. Therefore, Track One diplomacy is essentially a “process whereby communications from one government go directly to the decision-making apparatus of another.”<sup>74</sup>

In contrast, Track Two diplomacy, or citizen diplomacy as it is sometimes called, is the unofficial interaction between unofficial parties to the conflict resolution process. As defined by Joseph Montville, the pioneer of the term Track Two diplomacy, it is the “unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversarial groups or nations with the goals of developing strategies, influencing public opinions and organizing human and material resources in ways that might help resolve the conflict.”<sup>75</sup> This process may involve a variety of non-governmental entities, such as conflict resolution specialists, private citizens, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or businesses.

Faith-based diplomacy is a form of Track Two diplomacy because it involves non-state actors working within an unofficial capacity to help groups or nations resolve the conflict. More specifically, faith-based diplomacy involves “incorporating religious concerns into the practice of international politics...by making religion part of the solution to some of the intractable, identity-based conflicts”<sup>76</sup> that are part of some of today’s politically volatile landscapes.

There are at least four principal ways in which faith-based diplomacy can assist in bringing about a peaceful path for all those who live in war-torn Kosovo. First, the ethnic and religious conflict that stands at the core of the national identity of both the Serbs and Albanians can be addressed with good-faith dialogue and education. While the religious institutions of Kosovo have initiated dialogue, faith-based diplomats can bring a broader, more objective perspective to the conflict through their lack of direct involvement on either side. By not having a self-interested purpose in seeking a resolution, the faith-based diplomat can more easily work with civil society in an attempt to build bridges between the Serb minority, Albanian

majority, and the KLA. Education is also a critical first step in helping Kosovars realize that they share not only ethnic similarities, but religious similarities as well. A faith-based diplomat who is familiar with the biblical Abrahamic family, its history, and the ways in which the Christian and Muslim traditions are connected, can help both ethnic Albanians and Orthodox Serbs begin to heal the root cause of their conflict.

One way of doing this is to engage not only civil society, but also the youth in particular. While civil society may be able to influence leaders, it is the youth who will eventually carry the burden of Kosovo's ethnic and religious history. Therefore, it is necessary to teach a history that is integrated and takes into account the goodness of both Serbs and Albanians. In this way, the future of Kosovo will bring, not a Greater Serbia or a Greater Albania, but a Greater Kosovo that is ethnically diverse, culturally sensitive, and religiously tolerant. At the moment, the key issue is the inability of either side to create a vision apart from the one inherited by ancient myths and a victim mentality. For example, the ethnic Albanians today consider the original history, flag, and culture of Albania as their source of identity, even though they are aware they do not have full independence. By working with children of Kosovo, a faith-based diplomat can help transcend history and myth, bringing about a new reality based on tolerance and a respect for all religious traditions and cultural practices.

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**Faith-based diplomats can offer a unique perspective in helping to resolve the layers of conflict in Kosovo, where reality collides with myth and religion intersects with reason.**

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Second, both Serbs and ethnic Albanians must recognize that Kosovo has special significance both as a mineral-rich land and as a historical landmark. Kosovo is perceived as a sacred place. A faith-based diplomat can work with key religious and political leaders to find ways to honor the Field of Blackbirds, instead of holding it hostage as a reminder of past defeats, future plots of revenge, and the current cause of historical wounds. Serbs and ethnic Albanians could mark the Field of Blackbirds as a sacred site by constructing a museum on the grounds to commemorate the Serbian and Albanian history in the fight for a united Yugoslavia. In addition, the Field of Blackbirds could be designated as a historical landmark and opened for guided tours. The Serbs, in particular, should be reminded that as much as the Field of Blackbirds was a site of early defeat by the Turks, it is also the sight of survival and victory for their culture and religious ideals. On the other hand, Albanians need to fully understand and appreciate Serbian history, as it relates to Kosovo, in a manner that respects the once-held vision of the Serbian kings of a united Yugoslavia. The Field of Blackbirds might also be converted into a national cemetery or national park, similar to Valley Forge national park in Pennsylvania, where both Serbs and Albanians could commemorate their intertwined history and celebrate

their survival.

Third, healing the wounds of history is critical to the future survival of those who live in Kosovo and surrounding provinces. As it stands today, despite the “forced peace” implemented by the UN and NATO forces, an institutional collective memory remains within the Serb and ethnic Albanian communities that is linked with an identity-based view of what their relationship should entail. Unfortunately, this collective memory is fueled with emotional, spiritual, and moral pain and suffering that is keeping individuals, institutions, and the entire nation from developing to its full potential. For example, the parties have been so consumed with demonizing each other for past injustice, genocide, crimes against humanity, and war that they have failed to appreciate the strategic location of Kosovo as a potential example of a regional peace center. They have also been blinded to the fact that Kosovo is a mineral-rich province that could provide significant economic advantages if the Serbs and Albanians could find a way to work together.

In an effort to control the past, each side is actually desecrating the memory of their ancestors and destroying the future for their children. Each side has adopted a victim-offender dynamic that results in an interdependent bondage based on historical pain and guilt. A faith-based diplomat can help the parties deal with historical wounds by using a process that would allow them to face the truth about their history, rewrite the master narrative of history, grieve for those who are lost, repent for crimes committed, and make amends with each other. Kosovo could establish community truth commissions whose purpose would be to simply allow Serbs and ethnic Albanians the opportunity to “walk through history,” focusing on reconciliation and restoration. These commissions would not include the purpose of punishing anyone, as is traditionally seen in other truth commissions, such as the one established in Rwanda.

Implementing truth commissions may be especially important for the children, the ones most tragically affected by the mass killings in Kosovo. For children, the form of the truth commission could be less formal, and more playful and indirectly engaging. These children need to be heard and they need to voice their feelings about what they saw, how they felt, and what they need, so that their collective memory of those incidents might be washed from their minds. If this is not done now, they will suffer the burden of memory that will leave them in a perpetual state of internal conflict, causing wounded worldviews, psychological suffering, victim mentalities, and demonization of other ethnic groups. By helping the children and young adults, the faith-based diplomat creates a portal through which the youth may heal the wounds of all those around them. This may seem counter-intuitive, as the traditional approach is to work exclusively with adults; however, children have a more innate understanding of what is spiritually true: that we are one people. Children can see beyond the superficial and ideological roadblocks of adults to the purity of one’s actions and intentions, thereby having a better perspective through which to re-write history. Because certain aspects of conflict resolution are innate to children, a faith-based diplomat who focuses on healing the wounds of history for children may well

find greater success in influencing adults in the political and religious communities.

Finally, the issue of Kosovo's status as a province must be addressed in order to provide Kosovo with a chance to thrive. There needs to be an honest, truthful dialogue with and between individuals and communities about their vision for Kosovo. It is no longer plausible to allow the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo to believe they will obtain full independence, or to allow Serbs to believe that they can control Kosovo in the manner in which they are accustomed. The dialogue about the honest future of Kosovo should start with individuals and communities. This dialogue must be based on the current reality, rather than historical myth and legend. To date, it seems that ethnic Albanian Kosovars have been drinking from the cup of promised independence, as long as they meet certain standards. These standards and conditions are a mirage. Kosovo could never meet such conditions unless its status within Yugoslavia and the international community is resolved. Without knowing whether Kosovo is autonomous, independent, or no longer a separate province, it cannot obtain foreign investments, monetary credit, support and respect from neighboring states, or political recognition to participate in international decisions. In many ways, Kosovars stand as hostages of the UN and NATO in a battle rooted in history, much like the example of Kashmir in the disputes between India and Pakistan. It is a battleground, not a legitimate province. Once Kosovo is given an official status, whether permanent or temporary, Kosovars can begin to rebuild with help from the international community. They can begin to re-write history, commemorate and celebrate sacred places, and form a national identity that takes ethnic and religious differences into account. This policy may work better if re-conceptualized as "status before standards," in recognition of the fact that only when an individual knows who they are and how others see them, can they begin to appreciate their goodness and change their unacceptable conduct.

As the international community continues to work with Kosovo and the current political leaders of Serbia and Montenegro over the future of former Yugoslavia, it is important that traditional diplomatic channels be open to the non-traditional diplomatic methods of resolving conflict. Faith-based diplomats can offer a unique perspective in helping to resolve the layers of conflict in Kosovo, where reality collides with myth and religion intersects with reason. As aptly stated by Fouad Ajami, "In the legend of the Serbs their history is one of martyrology and self-sacrifice where the 'kingdom of heaven' was always preferable to the 'earthly kingdom'—hence, the nihilism at the heart of that history."<sup>77</sup> Faith-based diplomats can begin to help the Serbs, the ethnic Albanians, and neighboring nations affected by the Kosovo conflict build bridges between heaven and the earthly kingdom so that all may live in relative peace and tolerance.

## CONCLUSION

Kosovo will not simply go away because of a UN Security Council resolution, NATO forces, or pressure from the international community. The memories of the mass killings will also not disappear because Milosevic or other officials are indicted

by the International Court of Justice. The wounds of the Kosovo conflict are deep, historical, and psychological at many levels. The healing of Kosovo can begin with the intentional, active intervention of faith-based diplomats, working in partnership with existing, traditional diplomatic intervention. This will ensure the integrity of future solutions under international mediation, while also endeavoring to heal the national consciousness of all Kosovars.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Fouad Ajami, "The Killing Fields of Kosovo," *U.S. News & World Report*, October 26, 1998, 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "Religious Aspects of the Yugoslavia – Kosovo Conflict." Available at:

[http://www.religioustolerance.org/war\\_koso.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/war_koso.htm) (Accessed April 24, 2005). See also Epanimontas E.

Triantafilou, "Matter of Law, Question of Policy: Kosovo's Current and Future Status under International Law," *Chicago Journal of International Law*, no. 5 (2004), 355, 358.

<sup>4</sup> Triantafilou, "Matter of Law," *supra* note 3, p. 357-358.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Wood, "Still Deeply Divided, Nervous Kosovo Goes to Polls This Weekend," *New York Times*, October 23, 2004 (discussing how the residents of Kosovo voted in an October 2004 election for the 120-seat Parliament).

<sup>6</sup> "Kosovo: Toward Final Status," *International Crisis Group, Europe Report*, no. 161. Available at:

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&cid=3226> (Accessed April 27, 2005).

See also Wood, "Still Deeply Divided," *supra* note 5 (quoting Sorren Jessen-Petersen, new head of the UN mission in Kosovo as stating that the March 2004 riots were "...very much a protest against this sense of muddling along...[a] sense of urgency was no longer there [by the international community].")

<sup>7</sup> Brian Cox and Dan Philpott, "Faith-Based Diplomacy: An Ancient Idea Newly Emergent," *Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs* (2003). Available at: <http://www.icrd.org/docs/cox&philpott.html> (Accessed May 13, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> "Balkans Special Report – Kosovo Background: 1980s to 1998." Available at:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/balkans/timekosovo4.htm> (Accessed April 24,

2005) (indicating that in March 1989, the Serbian National Assembly first ratified constitutional changes that returned key Kosovo governmental bodies back to Serbian control. Rioting ensued, which led to the death of over 20 people. Milosevic was named president of Serbia in May 1989 and, in July 1990, Serbia dissolved the Kosovo government altogether).

<sup>10</sup> Brian Duffy, Kevin Whitelaw, Warren P. Strobel, Thomas Omestad, and Richard J. Newman, "The Art of the Deal," *U.S. News & World Report, Classroom Program: The Balkans – Teacher's Guide 7*. Available at:

[www.usnewsclassroom.com](http://www.usnewsclassroom.com) (Accessed April 24, 2005). See also Dr. Zlatko Isakovic, "Diplomacy and the Conflict in Kosovo: Notes on Threats and Fears." Available at: <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/~zlatko.htm>

(Accessed April 24, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Isakovic, "Notes on Threats and Fears," *supra* note 12.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Judah, "History, Bloody History," *BBC News: Kosovo Crisis*. Available at:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special\\_report/1998/kosovo2/110492.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo2/110492.stm) (Accessed April 25, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Judah, "History Bloody History," *supra* note 19.

<sup>14</sup> "Religious Aspects," *supra* note 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Judah, "History Bloody History," *supra* note 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> "Kosovo: Key facts and background," *BBC News: Kosovo Crisis*. Available at:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special\\_report/1998/kosovo2/61354](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo2/61354) (Accessed April 25, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Judah, "History Bloody History," *supra* note 19. See also, Duffy, et al., "The Art of the Deal," *supra* note 12, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Duffy, et al., "The Art of the Deal," *supra* note 12, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Judah, "History Bloody History," supra note 19.

<sup>28</sup> "Key Facts," supra note 24.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. See also Judah, "History Bloody History," supra note 19 (Kosovo was given almost the same rights as the other six republics. It was during this period that Albanian Kosovars started to demand full independent status as the other republics. Serbs, now a minority in Kosovo, began to complain of harassment).

<sup>30</sup> Duffy, et al., "The Art of the Deal," supra note 12, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, supra note 12, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, supra note 12, p. 7 ("Not only was he [Milosevic] born in the province he has now managed to "cleans" of its ethnic Albanian majority, but it is the key to his claim of leadership of the Serbs.").

<sup>33</sup> Isakovic, "Notes on Threats and Fears," supra note 12 (discussing how Milosevic's nationalist campaign was aimed at demonizing "them" [Albanians] by "vilifying their rivals and "their" side, which is inferior to or at least less perfect than "our side" is." By doing so, Milosevic proclaimed the ethnic Albanians as near inhuman, thus making it easier to foster human aggression against them without having a sense of conscious guilt for one's actions. It was almost as if Milosevic saw the ethnic Albanians as the "Turks" all over again and made the rest of the Serbs believe this as well).

<sup>34</sup> "Key Facts," supra note 24.

<sup>35</sup> Duffy, et al., "The Art of the Deal," supra note 12, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> Judah, "History Bloody History," supra note 19; "Key Facts," supra note 24.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> "Key Facts," supra note 24.

<sup>39</sup> Elissa Haney, "Kosovo Factsheet," *Infoplease.com*. Available at: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/kosovo1.html> (Accessed April 27, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Duffy, et al., "The Art of the Deal," supra note 12, p. 13 ("Kosovo has been an extraordinarily ugly little conflict. Thousands died. Thousands more were injured. More than 1.5 million refugees were driven from their homes, and most may have none to return to.")

<sup>41</sup> "Religious Aspects," supra note 3 (discussing the Rambouillet accord, brokered by a six-country "contact group" consisting of the U.S. and European countries, as being unsuccessful because of two main reasons: 1) Serbs objected to Kosovo autonomy and allowing NATO troops to enter the province to maintain peace; and 2) Albanian Kosovars objected because the accord did not give them full independence. While the KLA signed under pressure, the Serbian government refused to sign the accords and the violence continued).

<sup>42</sup> Elissa Haney, "NATO in Kosovo: 1998-1999," *Infoplease.com*. Available at: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/kosovo-timeline1.html> (Accessed April 27, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Triantafilou, "Matter of Law," supra note 3, pp. 357-358.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, supra note 3, p. 365 (discussing four proposals that have been discussed regarding the future status of Kosovo: 1) indefinite protectorate status; 2) partition of Kosovo; 3) full independence for the entire province; and 4) conditional independence with loose confederation with Serbia).

<sup>48</sup> Triantafilou, "Matter of Law," supra note 3, pp. 366-367 (discussing the conditions Kosovars must meet in order to transfer sovereignty to the ethnic Albanians, including the "abatement of irredentism and latent nationalism, establishment and proper implementation of a justice system, adequate disarmament of paramilitary forces...and...Kosovars commitment to regional cooperation, regional governance, and enduring regional institutions"). See also "Final Status," supra note 6 at 2-3 ("standards before status" is the term used for the "Standards for Kosovo" document which states that before Kosovo's future status as an independent province will be considered, certain conditions must be met to ensure that Kosovo will adhere to a policy of protecting human rights, especially those of the now Serbian minority in Kosovo). This "standards before status" policy has been severely criticized from within the United Nations, even by the Special Representative to the Secretary General (Kofi Anan), Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen who argued that resolving the final status of Kosovo was key to stabilizing the Baltic region and stating "I think there's a limit to how long you can keep a place in limbo.")

<sup>49</sup> Isakovic, "Notes on Threats and Fears," supra note 12.

<sup>50</sup> "Religious Aspects," supra note 3.

<sup>51</sup> Isakovic, "Notes on Threats and Fears," supra note 12.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. (quoting George Orwell, author of *1984*, in the Ingsoc party slogan "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.") This conflict is over whom ultimately controls the past, as this will determine who ultimately survives.

<sup>54</sup> "Religious Aspects," supra note 3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. (also discussing the minority of ethnic Albanians who follow the Albanian Orthodox Church but would not have significant conflict with the Serbian Orthodox, presumably because of common origins).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. (discussing the religious and ethnic make-up of the Balkans, including the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

<sup>58</sup> David A. Steele, "Christianity in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo," *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 130-33 (discussing the impact of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia as "becoming a haven for the nationalist-oriented intelligentsia, offering them legal cover and moral legitimacy.") For example, note that when Milosevic made his speech at the Field of Blackbirds in Kosovo in 1989 on the 600th anniversary of the Serbian defeat by the Ottoman Turks, he was surrounded and supported by the Serbian Orthodox Church. While the Church later withdrew its support of Milosevic, they did, in fact, offer legitimacy to Milosevic's campaign in an effort to provide a sense of togetherness for the victimized Serbian people.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Isakovic, "Notes on Threats and Fears," supra note 12 (discussing the historical traumas suffered by the Serbs and Albanians during the First Yugoslavia and Second Yugoslavia, corresponding closely with WW I and WW II).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> F. Brian Cox, "Faith Based Diplomacy and International Peacekeeping," *International Center for Religion and Diplomacy* (2000) (discussing the foundations of the Abrahamic faiths and the differing histories and expectations of those who are part of the three main Abrahamic families: Jews, Christians, and Muslims).

<sup>65</sup> Isakovic, "Notes on Threats and Fears," supra note 12 (discussing the nature of diplomatic intervention in the Kosovo crisis and differing opinions on the impact and perception of such actions).

<sup>66</sup> "Timeline: Countdown to Conflict," *BBC News: Kosovo Conflict*. Available at:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special\\_report/1998/kosovo2/99748.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo2/99748.stm) (Accessed April 28, 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Triantafylou, "Matter of Law," supra note 3, pp. 358-360 (discussing the legality of the UNMIK under international law).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. (stating that UN Resolution 1244 resulted "in the formation of a civil branch, UNMIK, and of a NATO military branch, the Kosovo Force ["KFOR"]).

<sup>70</sup> "Final Status," supra note 6.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> "Religious Aspects," supra note 3 (stating that "NATO's vision of a multi-cultural Kosovo appears impossible to implement.") See also, Triantafylou, "Matter of Law," supra note 3, p. 358 ("The existence of a Serbian minority in Kosovo combined with the enduring Serb belief that Kosovo is a shrine of Serbian history means that any concession to the Kosovars will come at a large political cost.")

<sup>73</sup> Steele, "Christianity," supra note 64, pp. 144-157 (discussing the role played by churches in the Kosovo conflict and serving as agents of reconciliation). The discussion and proposals that follow in Section IV are based on the analysis in the previous section, as well as ideas developed through a broad-based understanding of faith-based diplomacy. The focus is on discussion proposals that are complementary to those already discussed in the book.

<sup>74</sup> Said, A.S., Lerche, Jr., *Concepts of International Politics in Global Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 69.

<sup>75</sup> V. Volkan, D. Julius, and J. Montville, ed., *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work, Vol. II* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991), 262.

<sup>76</sup> Dr Douglas M. Johnston, "Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik," (presented at the Norwegian Chaplains Corp 50th <http://www.icrd.org/docs/norway.html>)

