

THE SEIZURE OF KOSOVO AND METOHIJA FROM SERBIA PERMANENTLY DISRUPTS GEOPOLITICAL STABILITY OF THE BALKANS

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When Serbs inhabited Balkan region they established provinces called „Sclavinia“ there and received Christianity from the Byzantine Christian Orthodox Church. Stephan Nemanja was a first ruler who succeeded to establish an independent Serbian state in the middle of 12th century. Then Kosovo and Metohija became the part of the Serbian state and soon following that it became Serbian central state and church domain. Ever since the establishment of the Serbian state in the Balkans the Serbs have struggled for their existence and survival. An analysis of historical documents regarding the expulsion of the Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija throughout last three centuries (1690-2006) leads to the conclusion that there have been 1,150,000 Serbs expelled by force from Old Serbia (it is the former name of today's Kosovo and Metohija), that about 200,000 of them were murdered and that 150,000 – 200,000 of them were „arbanized“ or converted into Islamic faith. In the Middle Ages there was not a separate name for this province in existence other than its general name Serbia. Throughout 16th and 17th centuries travel writers, and among them some Arbanasian travel writers, too, mentioned the territory of Kosovo and Metohia under the name of Serbia. Although the fact is that at the beginning of 21st century Shqiptars form a majority of population of Kosovo and Metohija, the population data rate strenght of some national community is not determined by the number of its population in one part of some state, but by its number of population in the whole state, and so on the basis of this criterium the Albanians are a national minority in Serbia. So far nowhere in the world has happened that a national minority gained right to form their own state. One national community can not determine for itself whether it is a nation or a national minority.

Key Words: Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija, geopolitics, security, violence

Jean Jacques-Rousseau, *Social Contract*:

“To renounce freedom is to renounce one's humanity, one's rights as a man and equally one's duties.”

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Kosovo-Metohian region is a historical seat, the state-forming core and central territory of medieval Serbian state and certainly these characteristics, along with the natural resources of this region, are considered to be the most significant geopolitical characteristics of every state. Territory of Kosovo and Metohija encompasses a surface of 10,887 square kilometers, which makes for 12,3 % of whole state surface of Serbia. After the violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia there came the creation of a *very wide and deep spatial aperture* in the Serbian ethnical space, with a tendency of its continuous widening and in accord with that, of a continuous piranha-like „biting“ of the Serbian ethnic space and its narrowing with an objective that Kosovo and Metohia (Kosmet) completely gains an Islamic sign mark as well as a multiple geopolitical role: *Firstly*, to support creation of the project of „Great Albania“,¹ primarily at the expense of the Serbian ethnic space; *secondly*, to strengthen so-called northern Islamic wedge which would cut into the center of the Serbian ethnic space (Kraljevo – Nis – Kragujevac), and *thirdly*, by the connection of Kosovo and Metohija and Raska region as a Muslim spatial unit, factually there would be created a territorial aperture between Serbia and Montenegro. In this way probably in the long run this would vitiate the idea of establishment and strengthening of cultural and all other relations between Serbian ethnic spaces in the Balkans - between historically determined ethnic territories of the Serbs in Serbia, Montenegro and Republika Srpska.

Besides the abovementioned problem, the forceful seizure of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia has also had other numerous geopolitical and geostrategic consequences which are directly confronted to Serbian national and state interests. First thing which could be noticed in the context of the issue of Kosovo and Metohija is that this part of Serbia is located in the very center of an envisioned „green Islamic transversal“ which goes from Tashkent over Asia Minor, Thrakia (the part of Bulgaria and Greece), Macedonia (in its Islamic visage), Kosovo and Metohija, Raska (Sandjak in Islamized terminology and geopolitics) and Bosnia and Herzegovina all the way to Cazin as the farthest Islamic point in Europe. This is a direction and vector of new Islamic inroad to Europe of which Turkey is its strategic intercessor, in its double role: *Firstly*, to intercede for American and British strategic interests in Islamic world and *secondly*, to be American counterbalance for German predominance in Central Europe and on the Balkans.

Certainly all this should be also analyzed within the context of a new American initiative for integration of Southeastern Europe in which Turkey should have a crucial role, that is, it is supposed to get deeply involved into European flows and processes as earlier as possible, despite the reluctance on behalf of the EU to it. At the same time on one side there are the efforts of Western powers, before else of America and Great Britain, to deprive Serbia of its power and make it irrelevant factor in the Balkans and on the other side these efforts are also aimed at preventing the return of Russian influence on the Balkan peninsula.

At the beginning of the 21st century the Balkans is a region with politically imperfectly defined borderlines and with redundancy of history and 'unfinished peace'. However, the production of the redundancy of history in the Balkans as the region, where the arcs of different civilizations get intersected and different religions and ethnicities get intermixed, is not a consequence of the Balkan peoples' acts only, but also of great powers which

¹ Ђорђе Борозан, *Велика Албанија – порекло, идеје пракса*, Војноисторијски институт, Београд, 1995, 237

most often not only have 'shuffled cards and arbitrated', but have also directly triggered and managed the conflicts. Such was the state of affairs not only in the 19th and 20th centuries, but unfortunately at the beginning of the 21st century as well. The Balkan peoples are no less valuable and talented from the European ones, but in recent periods geo-history acted like a sort of the storm in the Balkans, like a sort of the weather disaster which during certain war periods devastated everything which former generations of people had created in this geo-region in the past. Certainly at the beginning of the 21st century and in new historical circumstances, the Balkan peoples needed a Copernican turn – the turn from the warrior culture toward the worker culture, or in other words, toward a new culture of the work and the peace. This is a precondition for development, modernization and progress of the Balkans. And this precondition demands a change of the system of values, the world-related point of views, cultural orientations of the peoples and of course this has its own implications regarding the process of self-identification and transformation of identity of the Balkan peoples' cultural essence. It is the time for a metamorphosis of cultural forms from the warrior culture toward the working patriot culture in the spirit of a message of Djuro Danicic: "It is possible to die for one's homeland at each working place".² However it is obvious that such renaissance will not be accepted by the Albanians in the Balkans for a long time. Therefore, considering the fact that in the Balkan the Albanians are the initiators and protagonists of regional conflicts – it is impossible to interpret this aforementioned Danicic's thought as a renunciation of great significance of the warrior values and of patriotism of other peoples and citizens as well.

In the circumstances of growing cruelty of the Balkan bleakness, the working patriotism should be only an upgrade of basic values on which national and cultural identity of the Balkan peoples was built upon. According to geographic-deterministic comprehension of the notion that geography determines politics, or again according to the comprehension that in the broadest sense the geography is connected with the politics, in the Balkans there have been unavoidably present foreign powers which create the geopolitics of the Balkan. Directions of influence of these non-Balkan powers on inter-Balkan relations have shaped a Balkan geopolitical crossroad with northwest – southeast (NW–SE) and northwest-southwest (NW–SW) poles. Throughout history, from directions of the northwest Germany and Austria, from the northeast Russia and Hungary, from the southeast Turkey and from the southwest Vatican, the Republic of Venice and Italy have exerted their influence in the Balkans. From direction of the southern Mediterranean side the navy powers such as Great Britain and France, and later in the 20th century the United States of America, exerted their influence, too. Austria declared itself a 'natural' successor of Turkey in the Balkans and Russia made efforts to grasp control over the Straits (Bosporus and Dardanelles) and gain the access to 'warm' seas, while Great Britain fiercely resisted it. Therefore, the geopolitical crossroad was clearly shaped into an intricate Balkan geopolitical node. And so the process of 'Balkanization' of the Balkan had started.³

² Љубиша Митровић, *Чари непознатих обала*, Књижевна заједница, Вељко Видаковић, Ниш, 2007, 76-78

³ Derogatory term 'Balkanization' implies political-geographical fragmentation, mutual quarrels and intolerance of the Balkan peoples and states and the predominance of foreign forces and factors in the region.

A foreign component of the Balkan geopolitical node has been most often expressed in a division of interest spheres (both secret and public ones) by biased meddling into Balkan geopolitical relations and processes, causing strives among the Balkan peoples along with redrawing of political borderlines and creation of new states (e.g. the creation of Albania 1912-1913).⁴

The significance of Kosovo-metohian region from the aspect of geopolitics

The territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija encompasses the surface of 10.887 square kilometers and it consists of two regional and four sub-regional morpho-tectonic units. They are: KOSOVO, with secondary valleys Lab and Upper Morava (the Gnjilan valley) and Kacanicka gorge, which is located between the mountain Sar and Skopska Crna Gora (*Karadag*); and METOHIIJA, which consists of Upper Metohija or Metohija in the narrow sense of the word and the Prizren valley. The Upper Metohija and Prizren valley make a comprehensive tectonic depression of valleys and one regional-geographic unit. Secondary intra-regional and peripheral geo-systematic units are the following ones: *Ibar-Kopaonik mountain-valley* region in the northern margin part of the Province. This region is a southern and southeastern part of Starovlah-Raska highland. *Drenica* is a region between Kosovo and Metohija valleys. Podrim, with a limestone and flysch insular mountain Milanovac is connected with Drenica, along with Prekoruplje, a hills-valley area that is directly connected to the lowland part of Upper Metohija in the basin of the river Klina which is the left tributary river to the Beli Drim River.

Mountain rim of Metohija in direction to Upper Polimlje, Crnogorska hills, Kolasin and the valley of the upper Ibar River with gigantic Prokletije mountains dividing Metohija from the Zeta, Montenegrin and Skadar coast. The *Sarplanina area* is situated between the Prizren basin and Poloske (*Tetovo*) valley in the upper part of the watershed of the Vardar (*Aegean watershed*) and Radika (*Adriatic watershed*) rivers. With mountains Koritnik and Pastrok, Sar-mountain area forms an orohydrographic node of a Central pulse-system (called *Catena Mundi* in Latin sources) in antic presentations of the

Up to these days the Balkans has been primarily an object and not the subject in international political, military and economic relations. (Radoslav Gaćinović, "A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia", *Thematic conference proceedings of international significance, Archibald Reiss Days*, Volume II, Academy of criminalistic, and police studies, Beograd, 2015, 11)

⁴ In terms of the spheres of interest, the majority of the agreements and attempted agreements were made between Austria and Russia, although one of the first plans regarding division of the Balkans had been made at the court of French king Louis XIV in 1686 (the plan of Jean Copain). According to this plan, France was supposed to gain Istanbul, for which Napoleon I said that it was "the key of the world". There were also famous divisions of the spheres of interest in the Balkans in October 1944 in Moscow and in February 1945 on Yalta. According to an agreement made between Stalin and Churchill in October 9th 1944 in Moscow, the percentage part of great powers in the Balkans was the following one: Romania – Russia 90%, others (Great Britain, the USA, France and others) 10%; Greece – Great Britain and the USA 90%, Russia 10%; Bulgaria – Russia 75%, the others 25%; Yugoslavia and Hungary – 50:50% (Владимир Дедијер, *Интересне сфере*, Просвета, Београд, 1980, 389)

orographic system of the Balkan Peninsula.⁵ The western part of the Sar Mountain overlooks the outlet part of the valley of the White Drin from Prizren basin above the watershed of the White and Black Drim in northern Albania. From there arises the Drim valley of the Metohija in the direction southwest-northeast (SW-NE), connecting the Skadar-Lješka coast with the Prizren basin. The Drim valley is a major natural link of historical Zeta with Metohijan-Kosovo Old Serbia or Lower Serbia Lower in Latin sources (*Servia inferior*) and also a central transverse communication road - Zeta road (*Via de Zenta*) - between the Adriatic Sea and the interior part of the Balkan Peninsula, starting from Split, Neretva, Dubrovnik and Kotor roads in the north up to *Via Egnatia* in the south, the ancient main link between the Western and Eastern Roman Empire. Some authors underline the connection of Sar Mountain area with Prizren or Metohijan-Prizren basin due to its functional relation with Prizren, the town with great influence to its mountainous background and also a former royal capital place in the period of the peak of power of medieval Serbia. By its regional position and its main natural and anthropogeographical-ethnographic characteristics Sar Mountain region is a separate regional unit with an excellent complex geographic, biogeocenologic, anthropological and ethno-cultural structure.⁶

The relief of Kosovo and Metohija is of mountainous character, with two large valleys (Kosovo and Metohija), encompassing 36.5 % of the total surface, while their hilly and mountainous part covers 63.5 % of the surface of the Province. The Kosovo valley consists of a plain along the river Sitnica, with an average altitude of about 500 meters, while the Metohija valley is a gently undulate terrain with an average altitude of about 400 meters. The climate of Kosovo and Metohija is determined by its jagged relief, its proximity to the Adriatic and Aegean Seas, the direction of positioning of its mountains and valleys and also by the network of its numerous rivers. When viewed from the geopolitical and geostrategic aspects, Kosovo and Metohija is a Serbian security macro-fortress. Subsequently, the territory of Kosovo and Metohija encompasses about 12.3 % of the whole state surface of Serbia. Furthermore, when viewed by the position that Kosovo and Metohija has had in the state territory of Serbia it is obvious that it holds a great geopolitical, geostrategic and military significance, because in Serbia violent secession of this Province has not been recognized. By its geostrategic and geopolitical position the region Kosovo and Metohija is of priceless significance for Serbia. The region of Kosovo and Metohija covers the whole line of the state borderline of Serbia with Albania and about two thirds of its borderline with Macedonia. Comparing the strategic depth of Serbia with the spatial depth of Kosovo and Metohija both in the terms of its short and long axis, it is possible to conclude that *the region of Kosovo and Metohija encompasses about 100 kilometers of the strategic depths by both of these axes*. Taking into consideration that the strategic depths of Serbia is small, in particular in case of the short axis (East – West), then the estimation of great strategic significance of Kosovo and Metohija for Serbia becomes even more supported by such evidence. The region of Kosovo and Metohija holds great significance in Serbian ethnic space. In the words of experts it is a 'soft belly' of Serbia. By the use of this metaphor in a picturesque way there is expressed the great strategic significance of Kosovo and Metohija for Serbia and

⁵ Radoslav Gaćinović, "A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia", 2015, 12.

⁶ Милован Радовановић, *Косово и Метохија – антропогеографске, историјско-географске, демографске и геополитичке основе*, Службени гласник, Београд, 2008, 9-10.

even broader – for the whole ethnic space of the Serbian people.⁷ The ethnic structure of Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija up to the period of the 1960's reflected the statehood status of the Serbian population on Kosovo and Metohija.⁸ In comparison with the Kosovo valley, Metohija has considerably more complex morphotectonic structure.⁹

The physical-geographical characteristics of Kosovo and Metohija used to have the characters of elements / parts of the 'macro-fortress' much more in the period of medieval Serbian state than nowadays at the beginning of the 21st century, but in the first place due to its specific relief there is clearly identified its geopolitical position and role in contemporary age as well. However, all aspirations of Serbia for the Balkan to become the zone of peace in the 20th century have not been accomplished yet primarily due to the interests of some great powers to keep the Balkan Peninsula as the most fragile European region in the state of constant tension, so that in given certain political circumstances the security problems of the Balkans might become activated. This was most directly proved in the case of the last decade of the 20th century by the lack of respect for international law and the *Charter of the Organization of the United Nations* on behalf of the most powerful military force in the history of humankind and also by the implementation of double standards regarding the peoples in the Balkans.¹⁰

By possible establishment of „great albania“ there will be created preconditions for new conflict in the balkans

In European science it is a well-known fact that homeland regions of Albanian people are the regions in the contemporary central Albania. The famous German Albanologist Georg Stadtmüller underlined that the homeland region of the Albanians encompasses

⁷ The testimonies of foreign authors are the best illustration of ethnic, political and religious circumstances in the region of Kosovo and Metohija. These are the works of Ami Boué, Joseph Müller, Johann Georg von Hahn, Ivan Stepanovich Jastrebov, Alexander Fyodorovich Gilferding, Victor Berar, Gaston Gravier and others. In 1838 Joseph Müller published the data on the religious and linguistic section in the structure of population in Metohija – Pec, Prizren and Djakovica. In Pec the Serbs were majority (92.09 %) in comparison with the Albanians. In Prizren the percentage of the Serbian population was 73.68 % and only in Djakovica there was vast Albanian majority (80.76 %). (*Велика Албанија – замисли и могуће последице*, Институт за геополитичке студије Београд 1998, 21- 22)

⁸ According to the census register of the population in Kosovo and Metohija in 1929, the Serbs were the majority of the population (61 %). It is obvious that the Albanians understood the demographic factor to be the strategic one and they acted in that way, so that according to the census register of the population in 1948 in Kosovo and Metohija, the percentage of their population was 68.5 %, at the census register in 1961 there was 67.1 % and in 1981 74.4 %. Due to the fact that the Albanians boycotted the census register in 1991, the estimation of the percentage of their population in this period was 81.6 %. (Јован Илић, *Косово и Метохија изазови и одговори*, Институт за геополитичке студије Београд 1997, 261)

⁹ Metohija was a the biggest valley in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, descending on the tectonic confluence of Dinara and Sar mountain ranges and surrounded by high mountains of Sar and Prokletije. The altitude of the bottom of the valley is 350-450 meters and the rim of the mountain rises over 2000 meters. Deep Metohija valley is lower, but larger than Kosovo valley. It is oval in shape and is characterized by a complex 'plastics' of wavy hilled bottom which abounds in the river flows and tectonic lines. Along its edges at the crease with the rim of high mountains the rivers deposited powerful rampart-like mountain massifs. Within the Metohija valley there are secondary Pec-Djakovica, Prizren and Mirus valleys. (Ј. Ђ. Марковић, *Регионална географија СФР Југославије*, Универзитет у Београду, Грађевинска књига, Београд, 1980, 440-441)

¹⁰ Radoslav Gaćinović, „A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia“, 2015, 14

the valley of the river Shkumba, both sides of the river Mat, Kroya and some other neighboring parts. However, in the last decade of the 20th century Albania became interesting to some Western powers from several aspects. For them it became 'the key' of the Adriatic Sea (the position on Otranto) and the fan-shaped arrangement of the Albanians outside (around) of the contemporary state of Albania provides the creation of considerably more spread 'friendly' Albania, in particular at the expense of the Serbian territories. In particular the existence and spreading of the 'Albanian ethnic wedge' in direction toward the Morava-Vardar valley as a main transport and military-strategic artery of the Balkans is unacceptable for the majority of the Balkan peoples. This wedge cuts off the 'ethnic' link of Christian Orthodox Serbs and Macedonians and also of the Serbs and Greeks. Consequently, the Albanians might preoccupy Macedonia from the west and north, or in other words from Struga to Kumanovo. The Albanians have the hugest population growth in Europe, which means that in future period their demographic capacity will gain in significance. Albania is predominantly a Muslim state and so by protecting the Albanians one might 'gain points' in other Muslim states. However, perhaps by placing the Albanians under their control the United States of America would like to prevent spreading of fundamentalist Islam to the western Balkans and its inroad into middle and Western Europe. Having placed Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria into their influence zone, the USA have created some sort of a control (strategic) belt the Adriatic Sea – Black Sea. Thus, there has been accomplished additional protection of an important Mediterranean oil road as well as some sort of a barrier to the influence of Germans and Russians and even British, French and Italians on the whole entity of the Balkans. This fact becomes even more interesting if the USA (and other western states) have opted for the concept 'weak Serbia', which from geopolitical aspect implies strengthening and inroad of Orthodox Islam toward the Middle and Western Europe.

The latest scientific analysis has shown that the Albanians are not satisfied with the secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia. In the first phase they will attempt to create 'Great Kosovo', because in recent history there were publicly expressed expansionist aspirations of the Albanians living in Kosovo and Metohija towards: a) Southeast of Serbia (Medvedja, Bujanovac, Presevo) within the framework of the project "Dardania"; b) Kosovo and Metohija within the framework of the project "Independent Kosovo"; c) Montenegro (Plav, Gusinje, Bar, Sutomore, Ulcinj within the framework of the project "Malesija"; d) Western Macedonia within the framework of the project "Iliria" and e) Northern Greece within the framework of the project "Epir". If such expansionist aspirations of the Albanians got accomplished, then the so-called Great Kosovo would form a federal or confederate union with Albania. In this case the territory under control of the Albanians would cover around 55,000 square kilometers with 6.5 to 7 million Albanians.¹¹ The creation of great Albania in the Balkans would trigger further national prepotency of the Albanians and most probably an open conflict with Serbia or Greece, which would unavoidably lead to the Third Balkan War. This is primarily a warning for the European states and also for the Organization of the United Nations. In other words, without Kosovo and Metohija Albania cannot accomplish its strategic role in geopolitical games in the Balkans which was designed for it by some centers of power after the wreckage of Yugoslavia. Albania lacks all necessary resources on which there are

¹¹ Радослав Гаџиновић, "Насилје на Косову и Метохији", *Политичка ревија* No. 1/2008, 79.

based important elements and determinants of the state powers (spatial and strategic depth, demographic potentials and economic and natural resources as the basis of economic power of the state). On the basis of these facts, it is not difficult to conclude why the pressure of a part of international community over Serbia (to accept the change of the state-legal status of Kosovo and Metohija) is so strong and that these pressures and extortions will continue regardless of the fact who will reign in Serbia and in what way. In other words, the issue of human rights and the rights of national minorities as well as the need for domestic democratization in Serbia have a totally supporting role, the role of 'a smoke-screen' for the pressures which are motivated *solely by the geopolitical and geostrategic reasons*.¹²

The violent geopolitical modeling following the post-Balkan intervention of the NATO pact in the southeastern European region might have very negative consequences for the most powerful states of the Western world, because the friendly relation with terrorist organizations might eventually have a boomerang effect. It has become completely obvious that the slogans on humanitarian missions and creation of a multiethnic and tolerant and supposedly democratic society in Kosovo and Metohija are not in accordance with the reality and that it became more difficult and uncertain to find the exits from the Balkan labyrinth than it had been possible to do that in the period before the intervention. In contrast to idealism and illusions, the state of affairs in this province shows that there is a new 'history repetition' there, that Albanian violence as well as the ethnic and religious conflicts do not quiet down and that extremisms and pretensions of various players in the Balkans and outside of it constantly grow and announce the revenge of an 'unlearned lessons in history'. An arbitrary geopolitical modeling and violent cutting of 'the Gordian knot' in the fragile Balkan crisis field and redrawing of the state borderlines is a serious blow not only to the basis of international law but also it triggers spreading of instability in the region and activity of new separatist movements in the world.¹³

It is certain that the Albanian leaders in Kosovo and Metohija for a long time have not counted on domestic economic and civilization progress, but on non-economic sources of profit by criminal and illegal methods of acquisition of wealth by trafficking drugs, people and weapons or by separate sources of help, even the help from Islamic sources. This gives rise to civilization regression in the Balkans and Europe which becomes more malignant and more distant from the postulates and principles of liberal and democratic civil society and regional stability.

The violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia, which stands in contrast to constitutional, historical and international law, will significantly change integral capacity of security of the Balkans. By the act of disrespect of the Resolution of 1244 of the Security Council of the United Nations and the Kumanovo Agreement, the Charter of the United Nations and international law in general are also ignored. On the other hand, the implementation of international terror and terrorism toward one nation (the Serbs) in the Balkans has become legalized, because at the beginning of the 21st century the process of ethnic cleansing of this nation in Kosovo and Metohija has almost come to the end.¹⁴

¹² Radoslav Gaćinović, „A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia“, 2015, 15.

¹³ Милан Матић; Живојин Ђурић, *Косово и Метохија пред судом историје*, Зборник радова САНУ, Београд, 2007, 125-128.

¹⁴ The threat to the security in the region of the Balkans became more obvious at the beginning of the 21st century and the violence of the Albanians over the Serbs was intensified. Since the establishment of the Serbian state in the Balkans, the Serbs have struggled for their survival. An analysis of the historical documents regarding the expulsion of

The geopolitical position of the Balkan peoples and states has always been created by non-Balkan actors, first of all by great powers and the biggest centers of political, economic and military power. The influence of these non-Balkan factors, relations of the Balkan states and peoples toward these centers of power and mutual relations between the Balkan states and peoples themselves and domestic crisis fields in the Balkans have created the so-called Balkan geopolitical node. In the very center of this Balkan geopolitical node, or the crossroad where main directions of the influence of non-Balkan factors get intersected, there is Serbian ethnical space and their homeland – Serbia. There is almost no possibility that such adverse influences of these powerful non-Balkan factors can be completely avoided and so this fact will continue to very unfavorably influence the possibility of the accomplishment of national and state interests of the Serbian people on their whole ethnical space.¹⁵

Throughout recent political history and in particular during the war in the wreckage of the second Yugoslavia, the Serbian ethnical space was continuously narrowed. In this sense, the greatest losses were from 1991 to 1995, when Croatian state was left without 500,000 Serbs as official owners of over one third of the land in the state by their expulsion from their homes and by various other ways. This was followed by the violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia, the territory of about 10,887 square kilometers. These losses were partially the consequence of the absence of any kind of support of the world power centers for the idea of reaching a fair solution of Serbian national issue. An indirect consequence of this fact was the expulsion of the Serbs from the regions which historically and traditionally were theirs and then the consequence was also the removal of the Serbs from the Adriatic Sea and the rivers Kupa, Una and Neretva, with serious dangers of further narrowing of this space in the region of Raska. The process of the violence toward the Serbs is still active, with an objective of narrowing of the Serbian ethnical space and forcing compactness of the Serbs into the watersheds of three Morava rivers (Great, Western and Southern ones), which would be a vanguard for vanishing of the Serbian people as political nation and for great turbulences in the Balkans, including a great war. This poses a great threat to the peace in the Balkans and it should be avoided at any cost.¹⁶

The seizure of Kosmet from Serbia changes geopolitical structure of the Balkans

Within the framework of the Serbian ethnical space, Kosovo and Metohija is a sacral-geographical, spiritual and historical center of all Serbian people. Their cultural-civilization identity makes all its parts connected into one unique ethnic spatial unit: the

the Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija throughout last three centuries (1690-2006) leads to the conclusion that there were 1,150,000 Serbs expelled by force from the Old Serbia (it is the former name of today's Kosovo and Metohija) and that about 200,000 of them were murdered and 150,000 – 200,000 of them converted into Islam. (Јован Н. Деретић, *Срби и Арбанаси*, Народна библиотека Србије, Београд, 2005, 52; 130).

¹⁵ Јован Илић, „Балкански геополитички чвор и српски етнички простор“, Зборник радова, *Геополитичка стварност Срба*, Институт за геополитичке студије, Београд, 1997, 429-430.

¹⁶ Radoslav Gaćinović, „A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia“, 2015, 17.

region of Raska as a historical center of the Serbian state and Pomoravlje (western and southern ones as well as Ponisavlje) as the backbone links of contemporary geostrategic and geopolitical position of Serbia as the homeland of all Serbs. Kosovo and Metohija also make the central line of connecting Serbian ethnical territories into one unique unit on its southern geostrategic wing: from the Kumanovo valley up to the east, over the region of Raska in the center and Montenegro in the west and on the Adriatic coast and its littoral part. And vice versa, by exclusion of Kosovo and Metohija from the Serbian ethnic space this connection disappears and in the depth and width of about 100 kilometers this 'soft belly' of Serbia becomes open and through it and over it there is the possibility of continuation of further dismemberment and disintegration of the Serbian ethnic space in all directions: to the west, northwest, north and east.

By the violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia in the Serbian ethnical space there comes the creation of a *very wide and deep spatial aperture*, with a tendency of its continuous widening and in accord with that, of continuous piranha-like 'biting' of the Serbian ethnic space and its narrowing. In such geopolitical scenario Kosovo and Metohija completely get Islamic sign mark and gain a multiple geopolitical role: *firstly*, to support the creation of the project of 'Great Albania',¹⁷ primarily at the expense of the Serbian ethnic space; *secondly*, to strengthen the so-called northern Islamic wedge which would cut into the center of the Serbian ethnic space (Kraljevo – Nis – Kragujevac) and *thirdly*, by the connection of Kosovo and Metohija and the region of Raska as Muslim spatial unit factually there would be created a territorial aperture between Serbia and Montenegro. In this way probably in the long run this would vitiate the idea of the establishment and strengthening of cultural and all other relations between the Serbian ethnic spaces in the Balkans, that is, between historically determined ethnic territories of the Serbs.

Kosovo and Metohija is located in the very center of envisioned 'green Islamic transversal' which goes from Tashkent over Asia Minor, Thracian territory (the part of Bulgaria and Greece), Macedonia (in its Islamic boundaries), Kosovo and Metohija, Raska (Sandzak in Islamized terminology and geopolitics) and Bosnia and Herzegovina all the way to Cazin as the farthest Islamic point in Europe. This is the direction and vector of new Islamic inroad to Europe of which Turkey is its strategic intercessor.

By the violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia, the geopolitical architecture concept of the Balkans gets into the process of transformation of the Balkans into a continuous conflict region of small Balkan states by activating the processes of separatism and nationalism from outside (by creation of misleading stereotypes regarding certain Balkan peoples and on the basis of it their demonization as well), simultaneously opting for one of the opposing sides and in this way provoking even bigger conflicts which are prepared in advance in centuries-long politics of great powers '*divide et impera*'.¹⁸

Thus, during the last twenty years of interference of foreign factors into Yugoslav crisis in the Balkans, several new dependant states which are mainly ethnically clean

¹⁷ Ђорђе Борозан, *Велика Албанија – порекло, идеје пракса*, Војноисторијски институт, Београд, 1995, 237

¹⁸ Љубиша Митровић, „Балкан у светску савремених процеса глобализације“, *Српска политичка мисао* No. 3-4/97, Институт за политичке студије, Београд, 86

states were created, despite a declarative support of the West for multiethnic society. In particular Croatia has become ethnically clean state by expulsion of the Serbian people from their ancestral homes in its territory and following that it was accepted into the European Union and the NATO pact. Only Serbia has remained as a multiethnic state after the wreckage of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. In addition, a 'new Kosovo' was created following the intervention of the most powerful military force in the history of mankind. On the territory of it there was rapidly conducted ethnic cleansing and genocide of Serbian and other non-Albanian peoples by the use of terrorist activities. Macedonia is also divided and subject to conflicts and criminalized Albania and after having gained independence Montenegro will soon become the target of the Albanian separatist movement.¹⁹

Permanent loss of Kosovo and Metohija would have catastrophic consequences for the existence and survival of the Serbian people in this region. In addition to the destruction of the Serbian spiritual vertical axle which had created the national identity of the people, the negative consequences of such loss would be reflected on economic,²⁰ military and strategic field as well. By the violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija (Kosmet) from Serbia its state sovereignty has been threatened and this sovereignty is a primary precondition for the survival and struggle for life of all Serbian people, because without the statehood constitution of one people (nation) there is no possibility for defense of their vital values and interests. The loss of this part of the state territory most often simultaneously has as a consequence the loss of the cultural-civilization parameters (in both spiritual and material sense), Serbian sacred monasteries and monuments, demographic potentials and vital natural resources and economic basis. However, even more significant are geopolitical consequences of the secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbian sovereignty and territorial integrity (regardless of the fact whether it is obtained at a glance of by 'step by step' methods). In the case of the secession the Albanians take over the whole quality of this region from the Serbs and instead of it being Serbian 'fortress' it becomes Arbanasian (Albanian) geopolitical 'fortress' in the Balkans not only in demographic sense, but also in cultural-civilization, military-strategic, economic and even in the statehood sense of the word. Due to the violent secession of Kosovo and Metohija, the Serbian lands are faced with the total destruction and the extent of their spatial implosion and fragmentation goes beyond the limit of ethnic and spatial compactness which is sufficient for their survival on this Balkan 'bleakness point'.²¹

¹⁹ Radoslav Gaćinović, „A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia“, 2015, 18.

²⁰ Mineral resources of Kosovo and Metohija were a well-known fact even 2,000 years ago. According to the latest data, there are over 13,5 billions of tons of coal reserves in Kosovo and Metohija. In Kosovo and Metohija there is a largest deposit of lignite in Europe. The value of the reserves is estimated to 88 billions of dollars, while the reserves of the lead-zinc ore in Kosovo and Metohija is estimated to 5,5 billions of dollars. The reserves of the bauxite are estimated to 1,668,000,000 tons, the reserves of the nickel and cobalt to over 20 millions of tons, the reserves of the magnesite to over 8 millions of tons. In Kosovo and Metohija there are great reserves of the ore of chromium, cobalt, bentonite... (Проф. др Звездан Ђурић и Проф. др Горан Милошевић, "Природни и материјални ресурси Косова и Метохије као безбедносни чинилац Србије," Збраник радова Србија - Отимање Косова и Метохије, Институт за политичке студије, Београд, 2012, 100-101)

²¹ Миломир Степић, *Косово и Метохија—политичке, геопарафске и геополитичке перспективе*, Знамен, Београд, 1999, 15-21

At the beginning of the 21st century in Europe there is no state issue of greater importance than the case of two peoples having a claim over some territory. Nowadays this is the case with Kosovo and Metohija, which the Serbs consider to be the axle of their national self-awareness and inseparable part of their own state on the basis of history and constitutional-legal aspect, while the Albanians, having separated themselves by the use of force and with the help of NATO, try to verify such their “non-statelessness” in the organization of the United Nations, so that following that they could join Albania in a federal or co-federal way of organization.²²

Kosovo and Metohija is a very important region for airborne desants. It can accept airborne-desant forces of strategic level and significance which are capable of carrying out armed operations autonomously and in long term period, until they achieve a planned connection with the forces which operate on the land routes from southwest, south and east. Considering the facts that Kosovo and Metohija is not the part of defense system of the Republic of Serbia and that this airborne (desant) region is not defended by the armed forces of Serbia, endangering of the safety of Serbia might begin on the model of a so-called “reverse strategic front”, that is, by desanting the forces of strategic level in Kosmet and also in the region of Raska (the district of Sjenica – Novi Pazar).

Albanian separatist-terrorist movement in Kosovo and Metohija has received the support for their forceful separation from Serbia from many powerful states in the world, although there have never been elements of Albanian statehood in the region of Kosovo and Metohija. It was not Serbia who determined the borderlines with her neighbors. The international community did it on the basis of ethnic structure of population and Turkish “defters.”²³ These borderlines were determined on the London Conference in 1913, and by the revision these borderlines were finally confirmed on the Conference in Florence on July 26, 1926.

The Serbs have constitutional and historical right on Kosovo and Metohija and this right is always older than ethnic right. International law, too, is on the side of Serbia, because the Charter of the Organization of the United Nations forbids forceful seizure of the parts of sovereign states. Population data rate strenght of some national community is not determined by its number in one part of some state, but by its number of population in the whole state, and so on the basis of this criterium the Albanians are a national minority in Serbia. So far nowhere in the world has happened that a national minority gained right to form their own state. One national community can not determine for itself whether it is a nation or a national minority.²⁴

In addition to these facts of legal nature, it is necessary to underline that Kosovo and Metohia is the center of Serbian spirituality and culture. Throughout 19 and 20th centuries academic research determined that in this region there have been 162 objects

²² Радослав Гаџиновић, *Отимање Косова и Метохије*, Новинско издавачки центар *Војска*, Београд, 2004, 58

²³ “Defter” (or “tefter”) means a notebook or book in modern Turkish language, but in time of the Turkish Ottoman Empire it was one of official documents of the Ottoman administration and accountancy - a cadastral tax list with recorded data on the villages, households and ethnic groups on the territory of the Ottoman Empire.

²⁴ Radoslav Gaćinović, “A Geopolitical Aspect of a Violent Secession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia”, 2015, 18

which are declared to be cultural heritage of high importance, while 500 objects are protected as cultural monuments and more than 1,400 objects are registered as cultural heritage of the Serbian people.²⁵

In addition to this, it is very important to remind of a fact that for decades the Shqiptars used to receive money from the citizens of Serbia and other republics in former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia which they expended for the purpose of financing the economy revival of Kosovo and Metohija. By this money the Shqiptars used to buy houses and property of the Serbs who were forced to move out by pressure from Kosovo and Metohija. As a reminder, for a period of ten years each employee in the Republic of Serbia had to set aside 1% of her/his personal income for purpose of development of Kosovo and Metohija, which in accord to the exchange rate of that period amounted to one million dollars per day or about 3,650,000,000 dollars in a ten year.²⁶

For decades Serbia has invested great financial resources for development of scientific activity and education system in Kosovo and Metohija. At the beginning of 1990 Kosovo and Metohija had 22 scientific organizations and institutions with more than 1,200 employees and among them there were 213 Ph.D. and Master's degree holders, mainly the Shqiptars, while before the Second World War nobody of the Shqiptars had academic titles. Only in 1988 there were published 113 scientific papers in Kosmet and greatest number of them was in Albanian language. Radio Television Pristina used to broadcast 80% of their program in Albanian language and at the beginning of 1990 there were 120,000 TV receivers in Kosmet, and that year only to mention a publishing house Rilindja published 289 titles in Albanian language. At that period there were 16,500 teachers for education in Albanian language in Kosmet, and that is greater number than the number of pupils of this nationality in 1941, and also there were 4,000 high school teacher, also the greater number of the number of high school students of the Shqiptar nationality in 1948.²⁷ Despite all these indicators, the Albanians have created obstructions to their own state in which they have lived by mass demonstrations, armed violence and ultraright terrorism. Regardless of the fact that still nowadays there is no society which has achieved maximum of safety or absolute freedom, the manhood must strive to reach this ideal. However, at the beginning of the 21st century in Kosovo and Metohija there is no even minimum of safety, there is only the state of unsafety and non-statelessness which any given day might cause dangerous turbulances in the Balkans.

²⁵ In Kosovo and Metohija as a treasury-house of all Serbian states and a region which is richest with Christian antiquities, the highlight of church art architecture was achieved during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Testimonies for this are the temples of indescribable beauty which are Serbian prayers made in stone: The Patriarchate of Pec, built from 1230 to 1330, Bogorodica Ljeviška Church (1219-1305), Gracanica Church (1313-1321), Visoki Decani (1327-1335), and the impressive remains of the city of Saint Archangels and medieval cities Banjska, Zvecan, Novo Brdo, Prilepac, Ubosac, Ajnovac and tens of churches as heritage endowments of Serbian aristocrats in 13th and 14th centuries. At the end of 2003 in Kosmet there were 1994 Serbian toponyms, of which there were 1,181 churches and ruined church sites, 113 monasteries, 48 hermitages, 8 Memorial Chapels, 534 Serbian cemeteries, 96 fortresses and 14 castles of Serbian nobility. (*Меморандум о Косову и Метохији Светог архијерејског сабора Српске православне цркве*, Издавач, Свете архијерејски синод Српске православне цркве, Београд, 2003, 21)

²⁶ Милан Вучинић, *Зашто Косово не може да буде република*, НИП Пословна политика, Београд, 1990, 138; 139.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 231

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