

THE GEOPOLITICAL AND SECURITY ASPECTS OF THE KOSOVO-METOHİJA KNOT

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Due to the intertwined and parallel interests of the great powers in Kosovo and Metohija, a kind of geopolitical knot has been created, as a field of aggressive geopolitical actions by non-Balkan and Balkan neighbouring political factors, which is reflected in current events, making them politically and security complex. After 2008, we have witnessed the unilaterally recognized so-called independence of Kosovo, which continued the process of internal transition and territorial fragmentation of Serbia that is clearly marked as a challenge and threat even in the current geopolitical and security context. Therefore, the paper has tried to show and explain the importance of the southern Serbian province, first of all emphasizing its geographical and geopolitical importance as a central area on the Balkan Peninsula, which makes it very important for the control of traffic, economic, communication, strategic and other corridors. The second part of the paper presents a geopolitical analysis of the current events in the south of Serbia and the consequences for the country's internal political structure and international position. In addition, the security aspects of the Kosovo-Metohija knot have been analysed, with a focus on national security and security problems caused by the violent exclusion of the Serbian territory and the self-proclamation of the so-called independence of Kosovo, in order to find sustainable solutions for the security situation in the south of Serbia.

Key words: Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia, geopolitics, security, National security, political violence

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Introduction

Serbia is a continental country that occupies the central part of the Balkan Peninsula with its territory of 88,361 km². In the administrative and territorial sense, Serbia has two autonomous provinces - Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija is an integral part of the Republic of Serbia, and therefore all state bodies are obliged to represent and protect the state interests in the southern Serbian province.¹ With the new National Security Strategy, Serbia has committed itself to protect national interests, territorial integrity and the Serbian nation as a whole, highlighting Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council.²

The Serbian Province of Kosovo and Metohija represents the macro fortress of the Balkans, the central area of the peninsula and a kind of *intermarium*, thus being very important for the control of traffic, economic, communication, strategic and other corridors. The main peninsular transversals, mostly directed by river valleys, define the central role of Kosovo and Metohija. It is the macro fortress of the Balkans as a natural entity bounded by mountain ranges resembling natural ramparts (Šar Mountains, Koritnik, Paštrik, Kopaonik) in whose centre there are two basins rich in ores (gold, silver, lead, zinc, iron, lignite) and natural resources (drinking water and arable land). The entry into the area of the macro fortress is limited and possible only through several passes (e.g. Merdare and Morina) and gorges (e.g. Kačanik and Ibar), while the interior of the fortress is passable. Apart from the fact that Kosovo and Metohija is the geopolitical heart of Serbia, it is also the spiritual heart, which in the centuries-old history of Serbs used to be "the state and religious centre, the focal point of culture and the origin of its historical traditions (...). It symbolises the foundations that during the centuries of slavery preserved and in the era of gradual liberation from domination established the modern national and state identity."³ On the other hand, viewing the efforts of the United States to create a geostrategic arc in the Balkans by expanding NATO, establishing bases (Bondsteel) and logistics stations, as well as supporting guards in the field (especially Albanians), it can be noted that the key point for creating such an arc is precisely Kosovo and Metohija.⁴

¹ Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 98/06.

² National Security Strategy of RS: 94/2019-13.

³ Dušan Bataković, *Kosovo i Metohija u srpsko-arbanaškim odnosima*, Čigoja štampa, Beograd, 2006, p. 5.

⁴ Ljubiša Despotović i Vanja Glišin, "Geopolitički identitet Republike Srbije i Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti", *Politika nacionalne bezbednosti*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2021, p. 24.

The Kosovo-Metohija knot – the geopolitical and security aspects

Analysing the geopolitical position of Serbia and the Serbian nation, as well as parts of the territory such as Kosovo and Metohija, it can be concluded that in the historical range of several centuries, this area is characterized by the following geopolitical features: contact, bordering, knotty and fragmentation. Firstly, contact is a consequence of the intersection of two religions (Christianity and Islam) and three civilizational and cultural circles (Western, Orthodox and Islamic civilization) in the Balkans. It is precisely for this reason that the Serbian territory throughout history has been coded as a zone through which “the main axis of transgression and regression processes of civilizational collisions” extends.⁵ In our opinion, contact and bordering are the features that for centuries have drawn political and administrative boundaries in the Balkans, as well as more far-reaching discursive and civilizational boundaries, which “violate the territorial, cultural and civilizational integrity of the Serbian nation, making it vulnerable and easy prey for the territorial aspirations of aggressive neighbours, fraud, persecution, seizure of religious and cultural heritage, etc.”⁶ The example of Kosovo and Metohija clearly shows how discursive and civilizational boundaries are established, and if we do not follow and protect national interests, there will be far-reaching consequences for the Serbian nation as a whole. Secondly, knotty as a geopolitical feature has arisen due to the intertwined and parallel interests of regional and global powers, which project the territory of Serbia and Serbian countries as geopolitically important. The Germanic factor projects the direction of movement northwest–southeast, across the Balkans towards the Near and Middle East. The Islamic factor follows the direction southeast–northwest, towards Europe. Russia is trying to coordinate in the direction northeast–southwest, towards the Mediterranean and warm seas.⁷ The United States coordinates in southwest-northeast direction and tries to control other directions, especially those that extend from the circle of allied states. China appears as a new factor following east-west direction, which further complicates Serbia’s geopolitical position (China+17 Initiative).⁸ Apart from the fact that each of the countries has its interests in the wider area of the Balkans, their interests also intersect in the area of Kosovo and Metohija - diplomatically, economically and strategically. In this context, we notice that the violent occupation of the southern Serbian province is the result of the

⁵ Ljubiša Despotović, *Srpska geopolitička paradigma*, Kairos, Sr. Karlovci, 2012, p. 143.

⁶ Vanja Glišin, “Srpski narod pod imperijalnom presom – položaj u geopolitičkom čvoru”, *Napredak*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2020, pp. 60-61.

⁷ See more about Russia in: Ljubiša Despotović i Vanja Glišin, “Geopolitička pozicija Ruske Federacije na postsovjetskom prostoru”, in: Dragan Petrović (ed.), *Konfliktne zone na postsovjetskom prostoru i regionalna bezbednost*, IMPP, Beograd, 2021, p. 127.

⁸ See more in: Ljubiša Despotović i Vanja Glišin, *Savremeni međunarodni odnosi i geopolitika*, Kairos, Sr. Karlovci, 2021, pp. 313-341, 353-375.

unipolar hegemony of the United States, which, after the Cold War and the occurrence of a geopolitical vacuum in contact zones such as the Balkans, has unequivocally worked on strengthening its global position. Therefore, due to its contact, the Balkans have not been “spared from major political, military and territorial changes, which has radicalised the Balkanization process typical of it”.⁹ The mentioned process is characterized by territorial and political disagreements and conflicts, ethnic fragmentation and spatial mixing, religious and national exclusivity, etc. In addition, Serbia and the Serbian countries face the globalist concept of geopolitics of destruction, which is an “ideological and political concept (globalism, globalization, new world order) of the subordination of the world to the interests of the US and the Atlanticist geopolitical paradigm, conducted through processes of partial or complete devastation of state, national, identity, institutional, economic, cultural, educational, military, religious-confessional and territorial capacities of the nations that are marked as the target of their destructive action”¹⁰. The independence of Kosovo is an Atlanticist project, developed in the context of the geopolitics of the destruction of Serbia. In this regard, “geopolitical pretensions and territorial aspirations of global, regional and local actors in the Serbian geopolitical position predetermine fragmentation as a feature that will be used as a factor of new destabilization” of this area.¹¹ It is about the possible activation of other potential geopolitical hotspots in Serbia, such as Vojvodina, Raška and Bujanovac-Preševo, or out of it, and is related to the position of Serbs in Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.¹²

Therefore, the Kosovo-Metohija geopolitical knot in historical continuity is a place of opposing vectors of different geopolitical interests of global, regional and local factors.

The United States, as a global power, has projected this area as a zone of interest for several reasons.

Firstly, the triumph in the Cold War and the assumption of a leading role in the newly emerging unipolar system has enabled the US to position itself undisturbed in key zones on the Eurasian continent, especially in the Rimland zone (*Rimland, Nicholas Spykman*), and in this way further suppress Russia, which was in the phase of complete withdrawal towards the heart of the continent. By occupying the Balkans, Washington has gained control over a great part of Rimland, enabled a springboard to the Near and Middle East and assumed primacy in the zones of the former Soviet domination. With the accession of Montenegro to NATO in 2017, and then North Macedonia in 2020, the Serbian position has become much more difficult and isolated. In addition, constant pressure is exerted on Serbia in the most sensitive points, which

⁹ Ljubiša Despotović i Vanja Glišin, “Geopolitički identitet Republike Srbije i Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti”, gen. quote, p. 25.

¹⁰ Ljubiša Despotović, *Geopolitika destrukcije*, Kairos, Sr. Karlovci, 2015, p. 65.

¹¹ Ljubiša Despotović, *Geopolitika Svetosavlja: srpsko nacionalno pitanje u istorijskom rasponu od krštene do prirodne Srbije*, Kairos, Sremski Karlovci, 2019, p. 90.

¹² See more: Vanja Glišin, *Balkanska geopolitička paradigma*, Kairos, Sr. Karlovci, 2019, p. 127.

exhausts the Serbian capacities, and thus narrows the manoeuvrability of the great powers in this area. This has confirmed the US dominance in relation to the main opponent - Russia, and created one in a series of excuses for the existence of NATO.

Secondly, in the global projection of the establishment of the new world order, Serbia as a semi-peripheral area is not a fully globalised zone, so it should be brought under the influence of the West by imposing the US internationalism, with the intention of concealing real economic, political, military and ideological interests.¹³ Globalization as a process leads to “the establishment of a post-sovereign era in which states will be subordinated to the global centre of power”.¹⁴ States that oppose the establishment of the new world order and the centre of global power are declared failed or weak states, that is, rebel states¹⁵ and are exposed to a long-term and open policy inspired by the concept of geopolitics of destruction.¹⁶ The independence of Kosovo is a postmodern geopolitical experiment of Atlanticism and an indicator that under the guise of the rhetoric about the European integration, the global village, democratisation and modernisation of developing countries, the real interests of the global centre of power are actually being implemented and accomplished. The real danger is the reduction of our country to the level of a “disorganised country”, which is the ultimate outcome of the “civilizational, identity and geopolitical conversion” that is carried out by the national elite in the mentioned models with the wholehearted support of the West.¹⁷

Thirdly, the geostrategic, geoeconomic and traffic potential of the Kosovo and Metohija's part of Serbia has been pointed out, which is very important for the control of the wider Balkan area. Therefore, the US has not stopped interfering in the internal political processes in the country, trying to put the mentioned potential under its control. Even before the beginning of the aggression against FR Yugoslavia, Madeleine Albright made it clear that the US would interfere in the internal politics of Serbia, and that NATO would manage the situation in Kosovo as it did in Bosnia.¹⁸ After the expulsion of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija and the confiscation of their property, and then with the end of the 1999 war, Albanians, with the wholehearted support of the US, got the opportunity to terrorise the Serbian population that remained living in the Province, as evidenced by the pogrom on March 17, 2004, the declaration of the independence of Kosovo in 2008 and the decades-long destruction of the Serbian cultural and religious

¹³ Tomas Molnar, *Amerikanologija*, SKC, Beograd, 1996.

¹⁴ Vanja Glišin, “Implikacije atlantističkih geopolitičkih doktrina na bliskoistočnu krizu - slučaj Irana”, *Kultura polisa*, Vol. 17, No. 42, 2020, p. 160.

¹⁵ Ljubiša Despotović i Aleksandar Gajić, “Perspektive moderne države u postvestfalskom poretku”, *Kultura polisa*, Vol. 14, No. 32, 2017, pp. 293-307.

¹⁶ Ljubiša Despotović, *Geopolitika destrukcije*, gen. quote, p. 65.

¹⁷ Ljubiša Despotović, *Geopolitika Svetosavlja*, gen. quote, p. 421.

¹⁸ Aleksis Trud, *Geopolitika Srbije*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2007, p. 145; Serž Alimi i dr, *Kako se fabrikuje javno mnjenje: mediji i “pravedni ratovi”*, FMK, Beograd, 2020, pp. 26-27.

heritage. There are many examples of pressure and violence against Serbs in 2021 alone, starting with cases where victims were individuals, and ending with those when, due to the adopted measures, victims were all Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. The examples of terrorising the Serbian nation from September and October 2021 speak louder than words.¹⁹

Fourthly, the stereotypical presentation of Serbs as “little Russians” in the Balkans and the development of such a media discourse on a global scale can actually lead to the idea that the US, through Serbia, by seizing Kosovo and Metohija, is symbolically dealing with Russia, which since 2007 has used the right of veto in the UN SC in order to prevent many processes contrary to the Serbian interests (mainly the Ahtisaari Plan). For years, Russia has had a firm position when it comes to the status of KiM, which Serbia should follow in order to preserve national interests. During the last incident in the northern part of Mitrovica, while the British supported the Kosovo Police, Russia demanded that the “Mission in Kosovo fulfills its mandate in accordance with the UN SC Resolution 1244 and to restrain the rampant radical Kosovar Albanians”.²⁰ The Chinese diplomat Geng Shuang made a similar statement at the UN SC session, saying that Resolution 1244 is the legal basis for finding a solution.²¹ According to SC Resolution 1244, NATO has full responsibility for preserving peace and security in the Province, which we should call for and demand.

Fifthly, it is clear why the US has assigned guards to the field - Albanians. Namely, Washington supports their territorial aspirations, while, on the other hand, it uses them as a means to accomplish the set goals. Through them, the US destabilises the political situation in the region, punishes local political elites for possible disobedience (e.g. Nikola Gruevski) and “threatens further territorial fragmentation in favour of Great Albanian pretensions”.²² Anna Filimonova also points to the “Albanization of the Balkans” when she says that the Albanization “will enable the NATO pact to continue to increase its military presence without obstacles (to deploy military bases and all kinds of weapons), to control the transit of energy sources and to further destroy Slavic space in the Balkans”.²³ Viewed more broadly, by occupying and violently seizing Kosovo and Metohija from the territorial integrity of Serbia and annexing it to Albania (along with the territory of western Macedonia), the US would ensure the necessary strategic position for controlling strongholds on the Adriatic coast, achieve strategic depth and penetration into the heart of the Balkans and thus took control of the important, previously mentioned, corridors.²⁴

¹⁹ Novi standard, “Haos na KiM: ROSU na severu”, *Novi standard*, 20.9.2021.

²⁰ Sputnik, “Obuzdajte razularene radikalne kosovske Albance”, *Sputnik*, 14.10.2021.

²¹ RTS, “UN o opasnim jednostranim akcijama Prištine”, *RTS*, 15.10.2021.

²² Ljubiša Despotović, *Geopolitika Svetosavlja*, gen. quote, p. 102.

²³ Ana Igorovna Filimonova, “Albanizacija Balkana”, in: *Geopolitika postmodernog sveta*, Geopolitika, Beograd, 2011, p. 39.

²⁴ Milimir Stepić, *Kosovo i Metohija: Postmoderni geopolitički eksperiment*, gen. quote, p. 16.

Sixthly, by occupying the macro fortress of Kosovo and Metohija, the United States would provide a stable springboard for further territorial transgression in several directions: towards the Caucasus, the Black Sea basin, the Middle East and North Africa. The direct infiltration of the US and NATO is carried out from two directions with the aim of creating an integral Balkan geopolitical and geostrategic arc, consisting of bases, training grounds, strongholds and other installations, easily accessible from the Adriatic and Aegean basin and the Pannonian Plain.²⁵ Therefore, the position of the territory of Kosovo and Metohija in the Balkan "Heartland" is significant for the Atlanticist structures in their intention to "include the entire Balkans in the sphere of their indisputable control".²⁶

Turkey, as a regional power, views the area of Kosovo and Metohija as an important link of the "green transversal"²⁷ that would connect Istanbul and Sarajevo. In this regard, two important links in the chain that stretches from the Bosphorus to central Bosnia are the Muslims in the Raška region and in the north of Montenegro. The road that connects Kosovo and Metohija with Bosnia and Herzegovina has been laid across the mentioned area.²⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu has emphasized two important short-term and long-term goals of the Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans: "strengthening Bosnia and Albania and forming an international legal foundation that will protect national minorities in this area".²⁹ Therefore, the accomplishment of neo-Ottoman goals depends on the success of the project of strengthening BiH and Albania. Furthermore, Davutoğlu emphasizes the importance of the territory of KiM, which "forms the central area between the majority Bosniak axis Bosnia-Sandžak and the majority Albanian axis Macedonia-Albania".³⁰ If "the territory of KiM is lost, the Bosniak and Albanian axis will be separated, which is a great strike for Turkey".³¹ The Turkish President Recep Erdoğan has repeatedly emphasized the Turkish goals in the Balkans. On an occasion, during his visit to Kosovo and Metohija, Erdoğan said: "Kosovo is Turkey",³² in order to announce in July 2021 that Turkey will advocate for new recognition of the independence of the so-called Kosovo.³³ In this regard, it is necessary for our country to be careful, since the statements of representatives of powerful countries, such as Turkey, are not unfounded.

For a long time, Germany has projected the Balkan area as an important strategic corridor of penetration to southeast (*Drang nach Sudosten*). It fulfills its interests through economic, political and diplomatic aspects, directly or through the

²⁵ Ibid, p. 107.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 68.

²⁷ See: Milovan Subotić, *Ekstremizam pod okriljem religije*, Medija centar "Odbrana", Beograd, 2015, pp. 196-197.

²⁸ Dušan Proroković, *Geopolitika Srbije*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2018, p. 606.

²⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Strategijska dubina*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, pp. 134-135.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 294.

³¹ Ljubiša Despotović i Vanja Glišin, *Savremeni međunarodni odnosi i geopolitika*, gen. quote, p. 338.

³² Miroљub Jevtić, "Kosovo je Turska, Turska je Kosovo", *Politika*, 2013.

³³ Politika, "Erdoğan: Radimo na novim priznanjima Kosova", *Politika*, 19.7.2021.

European Union. According to Alexis Trud, "Serbia is a capital element of this German expansion; it has become a pawn in the grand European strategic game."³⁴ In addition, "the Autrans door is an important exit to the Mediterranean" for Germany, and therefore "Kosovo and Metohija, with the Albanian demographic majority, fits into the overall geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic calculation"³⁵. Furthermore, "the support to the separatist movement of the Albanian national minority relativizes the sovereignty and weakens Serbia, a traditional obstacle to the German land penetration to southeast - the Danube, Pomoravlje and Povardarje, towards the straits, the Middle East and oil sources".³⁶ The German current rhetoric is also clear when it comes to the status of the southern Serbian province, as well as the EU and US pressure.³⁷

Albania, that is, the majority of Albanian politicians, do not hide their intentions regarding the establishment of Greater Albania.³⁸ The Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama has been talking about it for years, often hiding his offensiveness and aggressiveness with the rhetoric about intra-Balkan cooperation. In October 2021, Rama said that the goal of his political career is the unification of Albania and Kosovo, emphasizing that "Kosovo is an independent state".³⁹ With the support of the US, this project is realistic for Albanians and geopolitically useful for Washington for several reasons. Firstly, Albanians are reliable allies on the ground and through them it can destabilize and/or control events in the region. Secondly, the Greater Albania project would be an obstacle to the Russian influence extending along the northeast-southwest axis. Thirdly, this would control the Vardar-Morava vector and the Chinese effort to exert its influence along that axis. Fourthly, the US would put the Autrans door under its control. Fifthly, the Serbian factor would be contained and in the future further suppressed.

For Serbia, the southern Serbian province represents a geographical, geopolitical, geostrategic, economic and above all spiritual centre. As the macro fortress, it defends national and state survival, while as a spiritual vertical it preserves the essential survival of the Serbian nation as a whole. All of this points to the necessity of preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia, and also of Kosovo and Metohija. Any division⁴⁰ of territory and compromises, which are often discussed in

³⁴ Aleksis Trud, *Geopolitika Srbije*, gen. quote, p. 142.

³⁵ Milomir Stepčić, *Kosovo i Metohija: Postmoderni geopolitički eksperiment*, gen. quote, p. 18.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 18.

³⁷ Dojče vele, "Krajnje je vreme za dogovor Kosova i Srbije", *Dojče vele*, 17.9.2021.

³⁸ About the "Natural Albania" project, see: Marina Filipović i Vladimir M. Cvetković, "Projekat 'Prirodne Albanije' kao pretnja teritorijalnom integritetu Republike Srbije", *Vojno delo*, Vol. LXXI, No. 4, 2019, pp. 114-125.

³⁹ Nova S, "Rama: Albanija da se ujedini sa Kosovom", *Nova S*, 9.10.2021; Sputnik, "Rama: Kosovo je nezavisna i suverena država", *Sputnik*, 13.11.2021.

⁴⁰ Dušan Proroković wrote about the division of Kosovo and Metohija between reality and delusion in: "Podela Kosova i Metohije: realnost ili zabluda?", *Vojno delo*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 2, 2022, pp. 55-74.

public, would violate the naturally predetermined geopolitical and geostrategic potential of the macro fortress and would make Serbia vulnerable, especially the districts of Raška, Rasina, Toplica, Jablanica and Pčinja [Figure 1].



Figure 1 – Map of the Republic of Serbia with and without Kosovo and Metohija
(edited by the authors)

In addition to the loss of territory, Serbia would lose its natural and mineral resources by giving up Kosovo and Metohija. It would leave the Serbian population to the will of the Albanian extremists, and the future of cultural and religious heritage would be accompanied by destruction, confiscation of land and counterfeiting. The Serbian spiritual vertical, based on the Kosovo covenant, would be permanently destroyed, the Serbian international reputation would be damaged, and secessionism could spread to other areas, as well. The so-called Republic of Kosovo would become an Islamist state, an “exporter” of terrorism and a springboard for jihad warriors. By gaining independence, it would soon become a member of NATO, which would greatly tighten the circle around Serbia. In addition, the concession and reconciliation of Serbia with the so-called independence would humiliate Russia and China, which protect the integrity of Serbia in the UN SC, etc.⁴¹ And, finally, we should point out the view of Nicholas Spykman, one of the most prominent Anglo-Saxon geopoliticians: “The main goal of the foreign policy of all states is the preservation of territorial integrity and political independence”.⁴²

⁴¹ Milomir Stepić, “Kosovo i Metohija: geopolitički aspekti brzog rešenja i zamrznutog konflikta”, *Nacionalni interes*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2020, pp. 10-15.

⁴² Nicholas Spykman, *American's Strategy in World Politics*, Harcourt, Brace and Co, New York, 1942, p. 17.

Conclusion

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and Resolution 1244 of the UN SC, the Republic of Serbia, its state and political leadership are obliged to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. It should be known that Resolution 1244 is the only act ever passed that prohibits unilateral secession. Having that in mind, Kosovo and Metohija is a part of Serbia until Serbia itself renounces its territory. Moreover, according to the new National Security Strategy, we, as a state, not only declaratively, but also essentially, have committed ourselves to preserve Kosovo and Metohija as a part of Serbia, as well as to help our compatriots in neighbouring countries. Such an obligation implies serious strengthening of all national capacities (military, security, economic, cultural, media, etc.), in order to adequately respond to this, above all, nationally important strategic commitment. It is obvious that there are many security, political and geopolitical challenges, so in that segment our solution is to strengthen relations with international factors that support us in preserving sovereignty and territorial integrity, primarily with Russia and China. In this sense, Serbia has to insist on observance of international law, as well as the aforementioned Resolution of the SC, and this means that it should persistently request the return of its security forces to Kosovo and Metohija within the mandate and number provided for by Resolution 1244. Of course, the chances are slim that it would happen immediately, but Serbia has to insist on this provision and continuously demand its observance. It is particularly important to comply with the responsibilities of KFOR in controlling and restraining the interim institutions of Prishtina. Although it is clear that this is a biased approach during the use of valid documents, when we talk about KFOR and EULEX, we have to firmly stick to international documents, especially those that are in our favour. The policy of constant insistence on their observance by the so-called international community will once be fruitful, and until that happens, we have to constantly inform international subjects and the public when, where and in which part international documents and resolutions are violated and not implemented. It would be a much more effective method than constantly “begging, apologising or whining” over your fate, that is, apologising and defensively justifying how the Albanian party continuously violates or does not implement what has been agreed upon and signed. In the future, pressure should primarily be exerted on international institutions that are in charge of controlling and implementing international documents related to Kosovo and Metohija. It is the international community that has to force the Albanian party to comply with its obligations, and if it does not do so - clearly and continuously insist on it.

One should also take into account the trend of withdrawing recognition of the so-called Kosovo independence and make diplomatic moves accordingly. Any hasty dealing with the Kosovo issue, concessions and compromises, would be solely to the detriment of Serbia. The current position characterized as a “frozen conflict” represents a more favourable starting point for the Serbian actions in the future because international events (e.g. in Ukraine) indicate changes in the international order of power that is rapidly moving in the direction of establishing multipolarism, which are more favourable circumstances for our country. These are changes that cannot be stopped without a

major world conflict and that is exactly why we should insist on the so-called buying time and waiting for more favourable circumstances for negotiations or a final solution when we would insist on the complete territorial and state integration of Kosovo and Metohija.

Just as it could be seen that the occupation of Kosovo and Metohija is a reflection of the unipolar hegemony of the US, in recent years the issue of the southern Serbian province has shown a slightly different picture in the international order, especially in the UN SC, where Russia and China oppose the Atlanticist intention to tear away the Kosovo-Metohija's part of the territorial integrity of Serbia, and the trend is to withdraw the recognition of the so-called independence of Kosovo. There is no doubt that this room for manoeuvre will be geopolitically sensitive in the following period, and it is necessary to take into account all geopolitical facts and to analyse both national political events and events in the international and regional environment. However, one thing is certain, due to everything stated and argued, time is working for us, no matter how contradictory it may seem at first glance, because we will be in a more favourable position for negotiations or even an imposed or forced military solution to the Kosovo-Metohija problem.

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Summary

Due to the intertwined and parallel interests of the great powers in Kosovo and Metohija, a kind of geopolitical knot has been created, as a field of aggressive geopolitical actions by non-Balkan and Balkan neighbouring political factors, which is

reflected in current events, making them politically and security complex. After 2008, we have witnessed the unilaterally recognized so-called independence of Kosovo, which continued the process of internal transition and territorial fragmentation of Serbia that is clearly marked as a challenge and threat even in the current geopolitical and security context. Therefore, the authors have tried to show and explain the importance of the southern Serbian province, first of all emphasizing its geographical and geopolitical importance as a central area on the Balkan Peninsula, which makes it very important for the control of traffic, economic, communication, strategic and other corridors. Then, the second part of the paper presents a geopolitical analysis of the current events in the south of Serbia and the consequences for the country's internal political structure and international position. In addition, the security aspects of the Kosovo-Metohija knot have been analysed, with a focus on national security and security problems caused by the violent exclusion of the Serbian territory and the self-proclamation of the so-called independence of Kosovo, in order to find sustainable solutions for the security situation in the south of Serbia.

The conclusion is that in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and Resolution 1244 of the UN SC, the Republic of Serbia, its state and political leadership are obliged to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. It should be known that Resolution 1244 is the only act ever passed that prohibits unilateral secession. Having that in mind, Kosovo and Metohija is a part of Serbia until Serbia itself renounces its territory. Moreover, according to the new National Security Strategy, we, as a state, not only declaratively, but also essentially, have committed ourselves to preserve Kosovo and Metohija as a part of Serbia, as well as to help our compatriots in neighbouring countries. Such an obligation implies serious strengthening of all national capacities (military, security, economic, cultural, media, etc.), in order to adequately respond to this, above all, nationally important strategic commitment. It is obvious that there are many security, political and geopolitical challenges, so in that segment our solution is to strengthen relations with international factors that support us in preserving sovereignty and territorial integrity, primarily with Russia and China. In this sense, Serbia has to insist on observance of international law, as well as the aforementioned Resolution of the SC, and this means that it should persistently request the return of its security forces to Kosovo and Metohija within the mandate and number provided for by Resolution 1244.

Key words: Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia, geopolitics, security, National security, political violence

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