

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AS A TOOL FOR PREVENTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE CASE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

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Abstract: International conferences, especially those with closed doors, have been shown as a successful tools of conflict prevention but in many cases even in resolving them. It seems that the peoples of the world have not learned lessons about the dangers that war brings and are constantly dealing with provocations which ultimately send to war. Also the peoples of the former Yugoslavia who lived together in peace for 50 years, even though they belonged to different nationalities and religions, after the collapse of the communist system that kept them united, and with the emergence of nationalists of different nationalities began bloody wars between them in order to create their own national states. In this regard, Serbia was the one that started everything on the occasion of Kosovo and Vojvodina to continue with the Serbian uprisings initially in Slovenia, Croatia and then in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to the creation of big Serbia, a project which was promoted in a religious event, which was politically styled manifestation in Gazimestan of Pristina in marking the anniversary of the loss of Serbs from the Ottoman Empire. In this paper we will deal with the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, because closed doors were held for these two countries, which in the first case resulted in political agreement, while in the case of Kosovo was also the military intervention of NATO aimed to end the war in Kosovo.

Keywords: International conferences, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, conflicts, nationalism

INTRODUCTION

Found in different situations throughout the history of mankind and the development of numerous conflicts, that according to statistics exceed 14,000 of them, the international community was forced to invent different forms for preventing, alleviating or resolving conflicts. Different methods such as mediation, negotiation, flying diplomacy, secret diplomacy, roundtables are some of the tools that international diplomacy has used and continues to use today, with the only aim of reducing the conflicts in the world as possible.

In this paper, we will analyze one of the methods that has succeeded in resolving conflicts, whether local, regional or global, as was the case, for example, at the Paris Conference in January 1918 at the end of first World War, which was recognized for the 14 points of American Presidency Woodrow Wilson, which the conference laid strong basement that this form will be used in the future to resolve the various conflicts, continuing with the Tehran Conference of 1943 and of the Yalta in 1945 were held during the war and the end of World War II.

Since the focus of the topic is on the former Yugoslavia and the conflicts between its peoples that led to the many destructions and the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives and major economic damage, the paper we will analyze the international conferences held for conflict resolution as well as reached political agreements that they brought to the end of conflicts.

It is worth pointing out that the international community once launched its first war signals in the former Yugoslavia sent its emissaries with the aim of mediating and preventing conflicts, which ultimately proved unfortunately insufficient and if was not a more intrusive intervention American state and their diplomacy can we only imagine what would be the consequences of a continuation of the war. It is enough to mention the cases of Vukovar and Dubrovnik in Croatia, and then Reçak and Prekaz in Kosovo as well as Sarajevo and Bihac, especially the case of Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the outcome would be more than obvious.

So, seeing these inhumane acts, the international community reacted by sitting the negotiating table with the fighting parties, both in the Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Kosovo case, and at least to improve the mistakes that had been caused since the early 90's years and allowing the conflict to reach to the extent that the democratic world brought back to World War II with scenes that were entirely similar to concentration camps, women's rape- especially Muslims in Bosnia or even trains for transportation of Albanians towards Macedonia, Albania with the aim of ethnic cleansing of the territory. Found in such a situation international diplomacy organized two conferences, the first in Dayton, Ohio, in the United States for the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the second the Rambouillet conference in France for the end of the war in Kosovo.

It should be noted that in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conference gave the right results, ending with the achievement of the political agreement and its signing by the parties to the conflict, while in Kosovo the parties did not agree, the conference was closed only with the signed agreement by Albanian side of Kosovo and the rejection by the Serbian government, resulting in the outbreak of field disputes and NATO intervention with a aim to stop the ethnic cleaning of the Serbian government against Kosovo Albanians

DAYTON CONFERENCE

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the bloodiest of all the conflicts of the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation. This republic in central Yugoslavia had a mixed government that reflected the ethnic composition of the population with over 40% Muslims, over 30% Serbs, and approximately 17 Croats, and 7% other nationalities. The strategic position of this republic made it the object of Serbian and Croatian efforts to dominate parts of its territory. In fact, the leaders of Serbia and Croatia, the respective presidents Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman had secretly met in 1991 in Karagjorgjevo and had agreed to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina and leave a small Muslim enclave.

As a reason for the beginning of the conflict, Serbs always mention it in March 1992, and the referendum that the Serbs boycotted, and in which more than 60% of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens voted for independence. In response, local Serbs took the first steps and in April 1992, they began their rebellion, initially proclaiming the establishment of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was also due to the military superiority (of the JNA Yugoslav National Army) that they had, and the dominance that they placed in the controlled areas somewhere over 60% of the territory, beginning purges from non-Serb citizens. Following the same chain the Croats declared the creation of their republic, which they named Herceg-Bosna and that in the areas they controlled. As in the case of Serbs assisted by Serbia, Croats were also helped by Croatia, so that the conflict would return to a tripartite territory war where civilians of all three ethnicities became victims of terrible crimes. The case of the murder of a young Serb in Sarajevo on the marriage day, was mention as the reason why the war started which in the end caused many suffering and consequences."European barbarism showed itself in the Balkans with its neighbor, inviting the neighbor in fratricidal wars that cost more than 200,000 lives and efforts to ethnic cleansing of millions of human beings, mostly Muslims of Bosnia and Kosovo³⁷⁰.

The Dayton conference was held at the US military base Wright - Patterson in Ohio, USA, and came as a result of a large work by US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke who in the capacity of President Clinton persuaded parties to come at a conference that would be closed within the military base and will last for 3 weeks. World diplomacy was set to end the bloodiest conflict after the Second World War in Europe, which among other things was characterized by the creation of infamous concentration camps for civilians, the rape of over 20,000 Muslim women, as well as many murders among their thousands of children and millions of people, or more than half of the population that were forced to leave their homes as a result of the war, which lasted from 1992 to 1995.

The international community at this conference was represented at the highest level, including the presidents and prime ministers of the world's most powerful countries, the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany and the most powerful international organizations such as the UN, NATO, EU etc. which was in fact a powerful signal that the decision-making centers were set for the war to end, because otherwise the war was not seen ending. The parties in conflict were presented by presidents Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia's Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, who will also sign the political agreement known as the "Dayton Agreement" reached in November 1995 in Dayton and the same signed in Paris on December 14 of the same year.

The main achievement of the Dayton Conference was the ban on fighting and the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into two entities - the Croat-Bosnian Federation known as the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian entity known as the Republika Srpska on the principle of territorial division 51% to 49%. As well as the Brcko district, this will be led by the international community and to be deployed after 10 years

³⁷⁰ Ash Garton Anthony, *Free World*, Random House, New York, 2004, pg. 52

Bosnia and Herzegovina - Dayton agreement lines



Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton Agreement³⁷¹ Asked the Bosnian president, Alija Izetbegovic³⁷², what he thinks about the agreement reached in Dayton, he said: "This is not fair peace but is more just than the continuation of the war. Having in consideration this situation and this world what it is, better peace was not possible to achieve"³⁷³

Even though Dayton's conference was not about Kosovo, however, interest was enormous, and inquiring about the issue, Rudolf Perina, head of the diplomatic missions in Belgrade, participant of the Peaceful Conference for Bosnia, he was direct in his statement: 'In Dayton were invited those who fought.'³⁷³

But, in the end of Dayton Summit was concluded, the US government came up with a stance on a document that was the resume of the US Department of State for the summit, in which it was announced that the external sanction wall against Serbia remained in force, in addition to conditionality's other, was the solution of the Kosovo issue, which means that this attitude of the US administration for Kosovo was clear, but the Summit did not produce anything special and unique to it³⁷⁴

According to Richard Holbrook: "The Dayton Conference had a very complex and complex agenda, so that even if the issue of Kosovo were introduced would jeopardize the negotiation process, and the peace agreement would probably never be achieved."³⁷⁵, or perhaps it was expected what was actually announced by German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel³⁷⁶, according to which "A Conference for Kosovo should be organized".

The attitude of international organizations was unique at the Dayton Conference, but the actions of the international factor were delayed because the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina had left many killed and according to many experts this form of conflict resolution is not a good form because the action did not deal with the prevention, but with the consequences that in the Bosnian case were enormous, so taking the lesson of what the international community did happen seemed to decide in the future not to allow the repetition of these terrible scenes, especially those from Srebrenica and to act at the start of eventual conflicts. The Kosovo case was knocking on the door because Serbian state violence was forcing Kosovo Albanians to start armed rebellion against Serbian regime as a sign of dissatisfaction with the established situation that was actually apartheid in the heart of Europe.

CONFERENCE OF RAMBOUILLET

"We condemn the brutality caused to Kosovo Albanians. We consider this to be a very serious sign. We do not want to have another case of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans."³⁷⁷ Said President Clinton, after the terrible views that came from the fighting in Kosovo, in which the target of the attacks was Albanian civilians, women, elders and children. And it was exactly what Western diplomacy and especially the United States had warned since the end of the Dayton conference.

With the start of the first combat operations in Kosovo and the massacre in Prekaz in the Jashari family, the international community reacted by sending the specially established contact group ministers to the former

³⁷¹ <http://www.camo.ch/kartadayton1.htm>

³⁷² Alija Izetbegović, 1925. – 2003, first president of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992-1196

³⁷³ Blerim Shala: Vitet e Kosovës 1998 – 1999, Prishtinë, 2001, pg. 22

³⁷⁴ Ramë Buja: konferenca e Rambujesë, Prishtinë, 2006, pg.43

³⁷⁵ Greg Capmbell: The Road to Kosovo, A Balkan Diary, Colorado, London, 2000, pg. 153

³⁷⁶ German Foreign Minister from 1992-1998

³⁷⁷ Nikë Gjeshi, Kosova 1999 – as republikë e proklamuar as autonomi imponuar, Tiranë, 2002, pg. 139

Yugoslavia. The actions of the police, military and paramilitary forces on the civilian population, and especially the case in the village of Reçak, were the turning point in the entire armed conflict in Kosovo. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright woke up with the radio news that in a village in Kosovo, called Reçak, the shogunts were massacred. When international observers confirmed that the Serbian forces were responsible for this, in the western capitals was opened the way for the decisive step not to contradict the airstrikes by the Europeans³⁷⁸.

The international community after assessing the group of OSCE verifiers that we are dealing with crimes against humanity, returned to the Balkans by distinguished US diplomat Richard Holbrooke in order to stop the fighting that was taking the lives of civilian people and causing untold economic damage. What was achieved was the holding of the international conference under the patronage of the international community represented by the US, the EU and Russia. The conference was held in the Rambouillet castle near Paris and lasted 2 weeks, while it is characteristic that the parties have never met each other but through international emissaries, which is a novelty because a shuttle diplomacy took place inside the castle.

Another distinction was the representation of delegations because the Albanian side was represented by the political, military and civil society, while on the other side the Serb side was represented by Serbian government officials of Belgrade and representatives of national minorities in Kosovo who were in the service of Serbian politics. Related to this issue, Serbian academician Dobrica Cosic says Serbia at such high level conferences has sent wisest heads, and now we have come to the situation that the Patriarchate of Peja, Deçan and Gračanica will protect the Roma and Egyptians. The biggest underestimation of the Serbs has not been experienced over time just like in Rambouillet.³⁷⁹

After two weeks of talks and efforts and delivery of several versions of the conflict resolution plan for Kosovo, and at the request of the parties for additional consultations both in Serbia and Kosovo, it was decided to return the parties after two weeks in Paris and to declare whether they support the plan offered or not. It should be said that this added activity confirmed that the problem of Kosovo is a big problem and if it is not resolved it threatens to turn into a regional conflict and beyond. Kosovo was a major problem for the security and stability of the Balkan, within the unresolved Albanian issue, so without the full involvement of the West, this problem could not be solved.³⁸⁰

The international community during the conference provided a document which it provided to the parties for consideration in the coming days. The draft contained ten points.

Document with non-negotiable principles³⁸¹

1. Necessity to stop violence and respect for the cease-fire
2. Peaceful dialogue solution
3. Transitional agreement is a mechanism for final settlement after a three-year transitional period
4. Unilateral change of transitional status
5. Territorial integrity of the FRY and neighboring countries
6. Protection of the rights of the members of all national communities (preservation of identity, language and education, special stamping of institutions and religious objects
7. Free and fair elections in Kosovo (local and general) under the supervision of the OSCE
8. No party shall prosecute any of the acts related to the Kosovo conflict (except for war crimes and other serious violations of international law)
9. Amnesty and release of political prisoners
10. International participation and full cooperation of all parties in the implementation of this agreement

After consulting in the respective countries, without underestimation the international diplomacy's activities, international peace-making activity which provided rewards for those who accepted it the offered plan and punished the parties which refuse, that implied NATO's intervention. At the Paris meeting, the Albanian side signed the provided document. It was the opinion and conviction of all the international participants at that conference, that the Albanian delegation after the very long debates, despite the shaking, in the end, almost unanimously had chosen peace.³⁸²

While the Serbian side, in spite of the great insistence of the international community, refused to sign it, paving the way for NATO intervention. The refusal by the Serbian delegation to sign the agreement on one side and its

³⁷⁸ Xhejms Rubin, Një luftë shumë personale, 2000, pg. 9

³⁷⁹ Dobrica Cosic, Kosovo 2004 pg.104

³⁸⁰ Blerim Shala, Vitet e Kosovës: 1998 – 1999, Prishtinë, 2001, pg. 21 – 22

³⁸¹ Rambouillet agreement, non-negotiable principles, basic elements of contact group

³⁸² Madeleine Albright, Zonja Sekretare (Autobiografia), Tiranë, 2004, pg. 471 – 472

signature by the Kosovo Albanian side closed the door to a possible compromise and opened a new chapter on the future of the people of Kosovo, that of international support to the Kosovo issue which resulted with NATO intervention. The act, which strengthened the already recognized practice of the international community, to provide the choice between carrots and rods by the parties involved in the conflict. Belgrade's refusal brings B-52 over Serbia's territory.³⁸³ This statement came to be correct with the development of later events. And by not abandoning the principle that he had set out since in Rambouillet that for those who sign would have a reward in this case was Kosovo, as well as for those who refuse to follow the sentence, which in this case was Serbia, Secretary of General of the NATO Pact, Javier Solana, on March 24, 1999, ordered an air strike against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia. Arguing this action Mr. Holbrook declared that: "We gave Belgrade three good cases to politically resolve the Kosovo issue." These were the meetings of Rugova - Milosevic, the ceasefire and the arrival of OSCE verifiers in Kosovo and the Rambouillet Agreement. All these cases were rejected by Belgrade, so "we offered NATO airplanes, which they cannot refuse."³⁸⁴

CONCLUSIONS

- Historically, international conferences have been shown to be effective in preventing or resolving conflicts, whether local, regional or global.
- Former Yugoslavia in the 90's of the last century became an arena in which, apart from the horrors of war, they were used and applied many international diplomacy methods for such situations
- Shuttle diplomacy, mediation are the forms that western diplomats applied in order to send the parties to international conferences
- Isolation of conflicting parties either in the military base in Dayton or in the Rambouillet fortress proved to be very effective because the parties were on the one hand under pressure from the international community but on the other hand were far from public opinion, which means away from possible external influences.
- Until the Dayton Conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with full success by signing a political agreement between the parties, the same did not achieved at the Rambouillet Conference for Kosovo and the international community, respectively NATO was forced to use force for humanitarian and prohibiting the ethnic cleansing that is happening to Kosovo Albanians and enabling the return back of over one million forced Albanians from their homes
- We also conclude that in the case of Bosnia and Hercegovina , the international community responded with delay and allowed to happen the same scene with those of World War II committed by the Nazis as concentration camps, mass killings of civilians like in Srebrenica or even deportation by trains Kosovo Albanians
- Though they reacted late, however, a recent reaction that stopped the war by simultaneously stopping further killing and civilian suffering and the return of refugees to their homes.

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³⁸³ Pierre J. Andrew, Coalitions – Building and maintenance – Institute for the study of diplomacy, USA 2002, pg. 29

³⁸⁴ Blerim Shala, Vitet e Kosovës 1998 – 1999, Prishtinë, 2001, pg. 15