

## **NATO and the KLA: How the West Encouraged Terrorism**

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### **Abstract**

The 1999 NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia had the dubious distinction of being the first time NATO aligned itself with a terrorist organization fighting an insurgency against a sovereign state. Defying the UN Security Council, the United States and its allies bombed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for 78 days, providing vital air support for the Kosovo Liberation Army. The result of this open support for the KLA has helped to encourage ethnic Albanian separatists to use terrorism to start insurgencies in Serbia's Presevo Valley and neighboring Macedonia. Furthermore, separatist terror groups in the Chechnya and Turkey have been emboldened to continue their respective campaigns as a result of Western support for Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February, 2008. To discourage the Kosovo precedent from continuing, it is crucial that NATO member states do not repeat the mistakes made in Kosovo and never again support terrorist insurgencies. Self-determination and autonomy are legitimate goals but the creation of any more new states should be avoided at all costs.

**Key Words:** International terrorism, insurgency, KLA, NATO, Chechnya, Turkey

### **Introduction**

Starting in the 1990s, ethnic Albanian separatists waged a campaign of terrorism against Yugoslavian security forces and non-ethnic Albanian civilians in Kosovo. Although the United States initially recognized the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) as a terrorist organization, they ultimately switched sides and opted to support the KLA against the Yugoslavian Government. This Western support of the Kosovo Liberation Army's fight for an independent Kosovo was designed to stabilize the region but in reality it has done the complete opposite. Despite UN Resolution 1244 stating that Kosovo is within the sovereign territory of Serbia, the US and most EU member states have blatantly ignored the UN Security Council and proceeded to recognize Kosovo's independence. This recognition has set a precedent by rewarding a terrorist organization with its own state and transformed terrorists into politicians. This has encouraged similar terrorist organizations in neighboring Balkan countries, Russia, and the Middle East to continue to pursue their separatist goals. Albanian terrorist movements in Macedonia and Serbia have reignited, Kurdish terrorists in Turkey and Iraq have become emboldened, and Chechen terrorists in Russia have launched a new wave of terror attacks in major part due to the Kosovo precedent.

## Background

Tensions between Serbs and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo go back centuries and were not the result of Slobodan Milosevic, as many in the West would have us believe. Ethnic Albanian terrorism did not begin with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in the mid 90s, but instead began just after Tito's death. Carnegie asserts, "It has been consistently ignored, but the Kosovar Albanians themselves began the terrorism long before Milosevic came to power. According to Branka Magasí Albanian resistance began as early as April 1981, just after the death of Tito. Dissident Albanians encouraged violence against the Serbs, including the damaging of their factories" (Carnegie, 1999). The Milosevic-led crackdown against the terrorist organization known as the Kosovo Liberation Army was not criticized initially because even the U.S. State Department recognized it as a terrorist organization because of its attacks on Serbian police, military, and civilians (Seper, 1999). Carnegie observes that NATO spokesman Jamie Shea "regularly said that NATO would not condone the KLA's rebel actions in Kosovo" (Carnegie, 1999).

According to many sources, the Yugoslavian government used an atypical amount of restraint in dealing with the KLA, as opposed to its dealings with rebels in Croatia and Bosnia. Kuperman observes that this restraint was actually expected by the KLA. He notes the "initial Serbian counter-insurgency of 1998 reinforced the Albanian expectation that restraint would be reciprocated, because attacks were targeted relatively narrowly at villages that harbored the rebels" (Kuperman, 2008). This was something of a disappointment for the KLA who openly sought to provoke excessive attacks by security forces to enlist outside intervention. The KLA did ultimately succeed in drawing in outside help through a combination of excessive Yugoslavian force as well as the successful use of public relations firms making the situation in Kosovo look infinitely worse than it actually was.

Following the 78-day NATO bombing campaign of Serbia, NATO and Belgrade agreed to terms outlined in UN Security Council 1244. Among the terms of the peace accord and Resolution 1244, Kosovo was recognized as being the sovereign territory of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavian government agreed to remove its forces from the province of Kosovo and permit a UN-led force to run the province, with the caveat that some Yugoslavian forces would return to Kosovo at some point. This caveat is clearly stated in Resolution 1244 which "Confirms that after the withdrawal an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel will be permitted to return to Kosovo to perform the functions in accordance with annex 2" (NATO, 1999). Annex 2 of the resolution specifically states,

After withdrawal, an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serbian personnel will be permitted to return to perform the following functions: Liaison with the international civil mission and the international security presence; Marking/clearing minefields; Maintaining a presence at Serb patrimonial sites; Maintaining a presence at key border crossings (NATO, 1999).

While the Yugoslavian government abided by the conditions of the accord, the KLA did not. The KLA did not disarm as ordered by Resolution 1244; rather, its fighters descended from their mountain hide-outs and took control of nearly the entire country before the UN mission was in place. KLA terrorists seized all state institutions and took control of the province. They waged a vicious revenge campaign against a helpless Serbian population, killing, looting, and violently expelling as many non-Albanians as they could until the UN took over.

It is well-documented that horrific atrocities were committed by both sides in the conflict. While most Serbs that were involved in these atrocities had withdrawn from Kosovo as dictated by the peace accords, the members of the KLA who committed similar atrocities were left in power. The KLA was not disarmed but simply renamed the Kosovo Protection Corps. Davis asserts, "This view is echoed by the International Crisis Group (ICG), which argues that no one seriously believes that the KPC is anything but a new manifestation of the KLA, inheriting its leaders and loyalties. The KLA leaders themselves do not pretend otherwise" (Davis, 2002). Non-Serbs were expected to forget that the very leaders of the new "multi-ethnic" Kosovo were only months before responsible for kidnapping, torture, and murder of Serbs, Roma, Bosnian Muslims, as well as ethnic Albanians whom accused of being collaborators. Davis observes that two of the three major political parties, the PDK and AAK, were headed by former KLA leaders Hashim Thaci and Ramush Haradinaj (Davis, 2002).

The UN administration ran Kosovo for nearly a decade and failed miserably at protecting the non-Albanian minority in Kosovo. Churches were destroyed, Serbian and Roma homes burned and looted, and civilians continued to disappear or were murdered in cold blood. The worst case in the UNMIK administration occurred over a three day period in March, 2004 when nationwide riots by ethnic Albanians resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Serbs from Kosovo, the destruction of churches and homes. The riots involved tens of thousands of ethnic Albanians across Kosovo and were suspected by some to be carefully orchestrated. Each year that passes it seems that Kosovo is inching towards becoming an ethnically pure state. Kuperman argues, "NATO's humanitarian intervention thus helped Kosovo's extreme nationalists toward their longstanding goal of an ethnically pure Albanian province" (Kuperman, 2008). It stands to reason that given such a grand success in Kosovo, ethnic Albanian nationalists could replicate it in Serbia-proper and Macedonia. Additionally, other terrorist groups around the world have taken notice of the Kosovo precedent and begun or increased their own campaigns shortly after.

If international intervention in Kosovo gave global separatist movements encouragement to engage in terrorism, the US recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 cemented the idea. Despite the specific statement that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia as stated in Resolution 1244, the United States and many of its European allies rushed to recognize Kosovo's independence. Showing a complete disregard for international law and the United Nations, the West set a horrific precedent by showing the world that terrorism *can* work. Despite the passing of two years and the acquisition of only 68 UN member-states recognition of Kosovo, nearly the remaining 2/3 of UN member states have not recognized the declaration of independence. Some states, such as permanent Security Council members Russia and China have stated that they will not recognize Kosovo, thus barring any chance of UN membership.

### **The 1990s: Era of Humanitarian Intervention**

Some experts argue that the US policy of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s actually encouraged separatism by instilling the belief in separatist movements that they could use terrorism to initiate a conflict with a state and the United States would come to the rescue. Kuperman asserts the intervention in Bosnia paved the way for the conflict in Kosovo. Much the same, the precedent in Kosovo encouraged Albanian terrorism in southern Serbia,

Macedonia, and numerous other movements across the globe. Kuperman notes that before the terrorist attacks of 9/11, humanitarian intervention was the key policy of the United States and its allies (Kuperman, 2008). One cannot help but notice that more often than not, the recipients of this intervention were Muslims. This is evident because of the lack of intervention in various crises far worse than that of the Balkans. Sri Lanka and Rwanda are but two cases that lacked a significant Muslim presence but resulted in an infinitely worse humanitarian situation that received little to no attention from the United States

Kuperman argues that after 9/11, the focus of US foreign policy changed from humanitarian intervention to counter-terrorism. He asserts,

í potential interveners now focus less on humanitarian intervention and more on combating terrorism and nuclear proliferation, so rebels who attack states are less likely to attract sympathetic intervention and more likely to be labeled as terrorists. This may help explain why nascent rebellions by ethnic Albanians this decade in Macedonia and southern Serbia have failed to replicate the escalation of their predecessor in Kosovo (Kuperman, 2008).

Examining statements by various KLA terrorists one can see that they studied the US response to events in Bosnia and Croatia and learned that they could provoke outside intervention. Current Kosovo Prime Minister and founder of the KLA Hashim Thachi is quoted by Kuperman openly admitting that they [the KLA] knew civilians would be killed. Thachi stated, "We knew full well that any armed action we undertook would trigger a ruthless retaliation by Serbs against our people. We knew we were endangering civilian lives, too, a great number of lives" (Kuperman, 2008). Kuperman also quotes another current Kosovo politician and former KLA commander named Jakup Krasniqi who states, "The danger that Serbs would retaliate against the civilian population was well known" (Kuperman, 2008).

## **Serbia**

Emboldened by the success of the KLA in the Serbian province of Kosovo, ethnic Albanian separatists in southern Serbia soon began their own campaign of terrorism in Serbia's Presevo region. Yugoslavian government official reported "í between 21 June 1999 and 21 November 2000, the Presevo Valley area experienced 296 terrorist attacks and incursions" (Wikipedia, 2010). This number includes five Yugoslavian police officers and six civilians killed before January, 2000 when the LAPMB formally identified itself. Soon after the attacks began, ethnic Albanians in the Presevo Valley formed the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac (LAPMB). The three municipalities have a large ethnic Albanian population and members of LAPMB "í aimed to annex the Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac region to Kosovo. Many Albanians call this area Eastern Kosovo and believe it should be liberated at all costs" (Davis, 2002). Once again the idea of a "Greater Albania" or uniting of all Albanian lands comes into focus. In the case of Presevo, many of the fighters in the LAPMB were former KLA fighters who simply moved from Kosovo into the Presevo Valley to begin a new campaign (Davis, 2002). Of the similarities between the KLA and LAPMB, Whitaker observes,

í the UCPMB has called for Albanians to be united, and its creation has alarmed commanders of the K-For peacekeepers in Kosovo, as well as political leaders in the West. It is clearly modeled on the officially disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army ó the

shoulder patches worn by the guerrillas in Dobrosin are identical, apart from the initials ó and nearly all its recruits used to be in the KLA (Whitaker, 2000).

In a report on Pan-Albanianism, the International Crisis Group notes that officially KLA disbanded after 1999. Unofficially, however, many of its members drew the conclusion that if fighting should begin in the Presevo Valley NATO would once again come to the rescue and release Presevo from Serbian control, annexing it to UN-administered Kosovo (ICG, 2004). Unfortunately for the terrorists, this was not the case. Under international supervision, Yugoslavian security forces soon eliminated the bulk of the LAPMB threat in the Presevo Valley or drove them back into the safe-haven of Kosovo. Sadly, NATO forces in Kosovo merely identified the terrorists and released them so they could continue cross-border attacks which occur to this very day. *Economicexpert.com* reports,

More than 450 UCPMB members took advantage of KFOR's *screen and release* policy, among them Shefket Musliu, the commander of the UCPMB, who turned himself over to KFOR at a checkpoint along the GSZ just after midnight May 26 (Economic Expert, 2001).

While Musliu was later sentenced by an UNMIK court to a 12-year prison term for kidnapping and other violations (UNMIK, 2004), the vast percentage of UCPMB terrorists were never arrested and simply released to commit further attacks. Had they not believed they had the support of NATO and had they not used the Kosovo precedent to draw inspiration from, countless lives may have been spared and the ethnic Albanian population in the Presevo Valley may have sought negotiation instead of terrorism.

Despite the peace accords that formally ended the hostilities in the Presevo Valley there is still an ongoing terrorist threat there today. Members of the LAPMB continue to claim responsibility for attacks on Serbian police forces and their families, car bombings, and shootings. In July 2009 news agency B-92 reported that the Presevo Valley region saw a spate of incidents, including an RPG attack on a Gendarmerie vehicle that injured two officers, and a bomb blast in front of a residential building that houses policemen and their families (B92, 2009). In February, 2010 an ethnic-Albanian member of the Serbian police force in Bujanovac was targeted by a car bomb which seriously injured him and his family (B92, 2010). The targeting of ethnic Albanians that work for government institutions has been a hallmark of the KLA who brutally killed ethnic Albanians they viewed as collaborators during the war in Kosovo.

More often than not, terrorists carry out attacks in Presevo with impunity from their safe-haven of Kosovo. LAPMB and NLA members cross into Serbia or Macedonia to carry out terrorist attacks, and then retreat back to Kosovo. Because Kosovo is virtually a lawless state run by former KLA terrorists and whose police and security forces consist largely of former KLA members, terrorists with the NLA or LAPMB have no fear of apprehension and operate with impunity along the Kosovo side of the respective borders with Macedonia and Serbia. Additionally problematic is the fact that Serbian and Macedonian security forces have no ability to pursue suspects into Kosovo where large caches of arms are hidden near the border.

## **Macedonia**

By 2001 it was obvious that Kosovo served as the spark that ignited the flames of ethnic Albanian separatism and nationalism across the Balkans. After spreading from Kosovo

to Presevo, ethnic Albanian nationalists took their fight to Macedonia. Zahariadis asserts, "The crisis in Kosovo served as the catalyst for bringing an end to the idyllic portrayal of ethnic relations in FYROM" (Zahariadis, 2003). Indeed, following the war in Kosovo, Albanian separatists near the city of Tetovo launched a low-level conflict in early 2001. Just like the KLA and UCPMB, ethnic Albanians in Macedonia formed the National Liberation Army (NLA). The tactics the NLA used were copied from the KLA: kidnappings, torture, and murder were again employed against the non-Albanian population. Human Rights Watch documented multiple cases such as one in August, 2001 noting, "Ethnic Albanian rebels in Macedonia brutally tortured, sexually abused and mutilated five ethnic Macedonian road workers after abducting them from the Skopje-Tetovo highway" (HRW, 2001). Similar cases occurred in Tetovo where there were 14 cases of the abduction of Macedonian civilians in the city alone (HRW, 2001).

Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority took notice of the Kosovo Liberation Army's success in recruiting NATO assistance to further their goals. Zahariadis observes, "The eruption of armed conflict in neighboring Kosovo widened the chasm between ethnic Albanians and the governing Slav majority and served as a model of how to draw NATO to the Albanian cause" (Zahariadis, 2003). He also notes the conflict in Kosovo "brought to the fore two issues that led to open interethnic warfare. First, it served as a model of how to bring in outside powers on the side of the Albanian cause. Second, it flooded the area with refugees and arms, giving radical Albanians in FYROM the capability for armed insurrection" (Zahariadis, 2003). Refugee camps are among the most favored recruiting grounds for terrorists, whether they are in Gaza or the West Bank, Macedonia, or Albania. In the case of Macedonia, the refugees had the same ethnicity as the largest minority of their host nation which aided recruitment to the Albanian nationalists' ranks.

It is highly probable that Macedonia's internal conflict was a direct result of the war in Kosovo. Had the war in Kosovo been averted it would have lessened the chance for conflict in Macedonia. Had a peaceful settlement been found instead of the Western powers openly supporting a terrorist organization, ethnic Albanians in Macedonia would have likely not instigated a terrorist campaign of their own. Instead what occurred in Kosovo was contagious and spread to neighboring states. Zahariadis concludes,

In sum, the crisis in Kosovo provided the catalyst for an eruption of ethnic conflict in FYROM. The grievances by Albanians were remarkably similar to those they had in the days before FYROM's independence despite participating in governing coalitions for ten years or so. The only difference is that the population is far more radicalized now, partly because strategies designed to deal with external interventions focused on short-term gains at the expense of long-term consequences on interethnic relations (Zahariadis, 2003).

A more radicalized population was intoxicated with its success in Kosovo, thereby significantly decreasing the chance for negotiations.

As in the case with Kosovo, ethnic Albanians claimed government repression at the hands of the Slavs. The NLA publicly stated it sought more representation within the government and recognition of Albanian rights. It is interesting to note that of the many minorities found in Macedonia, only the ethnic Albanians claim to have problems with the Macedonian majority. In his book *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans*, John Phillips notes,

Macedonians pointed out that they never had a serious problem with other ethnic groups in the country. Nor do Albanians have a good record of treatment of non-Albanians living in their territorial bases. This is evident from the plight of the Serb minority in Kosovo. A lot of Macedonian Turks and Bosniaks in western Macedonia, dominated by ethnic Albanians, feel unfairly treated by Albanians there (Phillips, 2004).

One cannot help but wonder if this ill-treatment of non-Albanians is intended to provoke a reaction from Macedonian security forces and illicit the same international intervention as it did in Kosovo.

In August, 2001 the Ohrid Agreement formally ended hostilities in Macedonia. The ICG reports that the agreement created fundamental changes to the constitution of Macedonia, increasing the rights of Albanians to influence the legislation most important to them, such as Albanian-language education and increasing Albanian representation in government and in the police force (ICG, 2004). While this agreement satisfied those in the group that sought reform, it in no way placated the separatist element of the NLA. As recently as May, 2010 there have been heavily armed groups along the border with Kosovo smuggling heavy arms and engaging Macedonian Security forces in shootouts.

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Macedonian police killed four ethnic Albanian terrorists in a shootout near the border with Kosovo. According to reports, all four were ethnic Albanians wearing military uniforms and possessed a large cache of weapons. This incident followed another incident in the same area. Testorides cites an Associated Press report which states that in early May, the National Liberation Army, claimed responsibility for another shootout on April 29 in the border area, which it said killed a Macedonian soldier (Testorides, 2010). The report states that Macedonian security forces have recently located several weapons caches hidden underground in the border area, with police recovering hundreds of mines, grenades and shells, as well as anti-aircraft machine guns and other weapons last month (Testorides, 2010). It is not difficult to imagine that these events will not lead to more retaliation by the NLA and that the fragile Ohrid Peace Accords could be on the verge of collapse. Clearly the large quantity of weapons being stockpiled in Macedonia is significant and may well be a sign of things to come.

### **An Independent Kurdistan?**

When one examines the fact that Turkey has been a vocal supporter of independence for Kosovo's 2 million ethnic Albanians it seems shocking that they would deny the same basic rights to the estimated 12 million Kurds living inside Turkey. Given that ethnic Albanians already have a homeland of Albania yet the Kurdish people have no such homeland, Ankara's stance is even harder to understand. Even though the issue of independence for Kosovo Albanians does not resonate with Ankara regarding its Kurdish minority, it is safe to say that Kurdish terrorists have noticed the irony of this situation. Over the past several years the Kosovo precedent has reignited Kurdish separatism in Turkey and northern Iraq.

Escobar notes this irony and predicts what could happen in the near future as a result of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). He notes, "Kurds, especially those in Iraq, might be tempted to believe Kosovo is a meaty precedent pointing to the emergence of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan - their dream, and Turkey's nightmare" (Escobar, 2008).

Turkey is poised to try and ruin any chances of an independent Kurdish state in Turkey and northern Iraq while at the same time being an ardent supporter of independent Kosovo. As it stands now, the only stable part of Iraq is the Kurdish dominated north. If the Kurds continue to look toward the Kosovo precedent, it could be utter chaos there too. Escobar predicts this worst-case scenario where "Iraqi Kurds - seeing red against both Washington and Ankara - more than ever they won't stop dreaming of becoming the new Kosovo, on their own terms" (Escobar, 2008).

Bock reports the dubious reasons for humanitarian intervention in Kosovo while the far larger crisis in Turkey was blatantly ignored. He asserts, "During the period when Kosovo clashes attracted headlines last summer, Turkey was killing thousands of Kurdish rebels during an aggressive phase of an ongoing civil war/conflict that has cost the lives of 34,000 Kurds over the last six years or so" (Bock, 1999). Perhaps because Turkey is a NATO member it can not only deny self-determination for its largest minority but it can police its own internal affairs without outside interference. Yugoslavia apparently did not deserve that luxury.

Despite the fact that Turkey has been heavy-handed in its response to Kurdish separatists in no way legitimizes Kurdish terrorist groups. The largest group known as the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) is a brutally violent terrorist organization. The PKK was established in 1978 and has waged a horrific insurgency against Turkish forces throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Larrabee notes that the PKK's guerilla war has killed over 35,000 Turks and Kurds (Larrabee, 2007). After years of fighting and thousands of lives lost, Turkey emerged victorious against the PKK following the capture of its founder and ideological leader, Abdullah Ocalan in 1999. This was a rare victory by a state that was combating an insurgency. Radu observes, "As major insurgencies go, Turkey's campaign against the PKK is one of the few recent examples of clear victory by the state" (Radu, 2001).

This victory appears to be short-lived, however, as there has been a recent uptick in violence by 2004. Larrabee observes that the PKK again "took up arms again in June 2004. Since January 2006, it has launched repeated attacks on Turkish territory from sanctuaries in northern Iraq, killing several hundred Turkish security forces" (Larrabee, 2007). One cannot help but notice the upsurge in PKK terrorism followed both the US-led interference in Kosovo as well as the US-led invasion of Iraq. The Kurds were key players in the Iraq strategy strong US allies. In addition, the Kurds have already witnessed the US and NATO support ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo so it stands to reason they felt safe enough to again initiate their campaign of terrorism against Turkey. Bruno goes so far as to suggest that the US has *encouraged* the PKK, noting,

"some observers blame the United States for emboldening the separatists. "The de facto autonomy enjoyed by Iraqi Kurds [following the fall of Saddam Hussein] has encouraged the PKK," notes the *Economist*. "The Turks have held back from retaliation, largely because they hoped that America would deal with the PKK itself" (Bruno, 2007).

Bruno notes that thus far, the United States has not dealt with the PKK. Clearly, it seems that the US must walk a fine-line between its Kurdish allies in Iraq and its Turkish allies in the Middle East. This situation has become much more complicated as a result of the United States support of the KLA and its refusal to take action against the PKK in Iraq.



### **Chechnya and the Former Soviet Union**

After a period of relative stability there has been a new rash of terrorist attacks by Chechen terrorists following Kosovo's UDI. Most recently there were the Moscow Metro bombings in April, 2010 which killed 39 and injured over 70 (Al Jazeera, 2010). After viewing the Western support their fellow Muslims in Kosovo, Chechen separatists have been encouraged to continue violent attacks in hopes of an independent Chechnya. The very day of Kosovo's UDI, Reuters reported "Chechen rebels fighting to secede from Russia hailed Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, comparing Pristina's fight against Serbia to their own struggle against Moscow" (Reuters, 2008). The article quotes the Chechen terrorists in a statement via the *Chechenpress* website where they state that they "welcome the declaration of state independence by Kosovo and do not question the right of the people of Kosovo to distance themselves from the state that terrorized it" (Reuters, 2008).

Going back to 1999 one can see a clear parallel between events in Kosovo and those in Chechnya. The first war between Russian security forces and Chechen terrorists was fought from 1994-1996. Following the end of formal hostilities the situation remained chaotic with scores of kidnappings and assassinations but without large-scale terrorist activities or warfare. All that changed after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, however. March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1999 signaled the start of NATO operations against Yugoslavia and the first time NATO had defied the UN Security Council and openly supported a terrorist organization. The significance of the occasion was not lost on Chechen terrorists who renewed the war with Russia approximately one month after NATO successfully stole a part of Yugoslavia and handed it to ethnic Albanian terrorists. Grau and Kipp observe, "The NATO intervention in Kosovo, which bolstered the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army, disheartened the Russians and emboldened the Chechens. In August 1999, the Chechen military led formations into Dagestan to ignite an Islamic insurgency" (Grau, Kipp, 2000). Arguably, the Chechen terrorists believed that the United States and its allies would step in on their behalf after witnessing how they went to war with Yugoslavia and opted to side with Muslim terrorists and separatists who had ties to international terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.

Following the US recognition of Kosovo's UDI, Russian President Vladimir Putin predicted future problems would arise from other separatist regions not just in Chechnya, but also in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Despite claims that Kosovo is a "special case" and does not set a precedent, Putin argued that there is nothing special about Kosovo. In the UK's *Guardian*, Putin asserted, "We have Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Trans-Dniester, and they say Kosovo is a special case?" he said, referring to three breakaway, pro-Russian regions in the ex-Soviet republics of Georgia and Moldova" (Guardian, 2008). Furthermore, Putin stated that this precedent changes international relations from here out, asserting Kosovo is a "terrible precedent, which will de facto blow apart the whole system of international relations" (Bhat, 2009). Although there has not been the introduction of terrorism in Georgia and Moldova, there has been violence, most notably with the 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia regarding South Ossetia.

## Conclusions

As was warned prior to Kosovo's independence, the creation of new states would open Pandora's Box and only serve to destabilize both the Balkans and the greater Middle East and Europe. It is physically impossible for every minority group in the world to secede from their given country and to create a new state. Only when separatist groups realize that they will not be placated will these demands halt. As a result of intervention in Kosovo, the United States and its allies unwittingly supported a host of future separatist-terror groups. Diana Johnstone notes, "Without the prospect of decisive outside intervention on their behalf, the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo might have tried to make use of the existing legal framework" (Johnstone, 1998). This existing legal framework could have entailed the restoration of autonomy instead of independence. By recognizing the ethnic Albanians' right to self-determination the internationally recognized borders of Serbia there would be no precedent for future separatist groups, be they in Georgia, Spain, Ireland or Iraq.

Ironically, the "humanitarian" intervention caused more casualties than it prevented. Were it not for NATO, the KLA would have been eliminated with a minimal loss of life. Instead, as a result of the NATO bombing the conflict dramatically escalated and over 10,000 people lost their lives instead of the few hundred that perished in anti-terrorism operations prior to the bombing. Kuperman argues this very point, noting

Had the United States not truncated the Serbian counter-insurgency by threatening intervention, Belgrade might have snuffed out the rebellion at the cost of a few hundred lives, mostly rebels and their supporters. Instead, the war mushroomed, leading to 10,000 deaths and the ethnic cleansing of nearly a million Albanians and Serbs—a perverse consequence indeed for a policy of "humanitarian" intervention (Kuperman, 2007).

Because of the vast number of existing separatist conflicts in existence around the world it is paramount that we do not replicate the mistakes made in Kosovo again in Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey or Russia. Currently, NATO and the European Union are busy fighting a war in Afghanistan against terrorists and extremists whose ideological brethren they supported in Bosnia and Kosovo. There must not be any future contradictions in the fight against global terrorism; we simply cannot support it in some instances and abhor it others. Because of these past inconsistencies the credibility of the United States and NATO is at stake before the UN. It is imperative the United States and its allies are unwavering in the commitment to fight all forms of terrorism if it is to create and maintain global support in its counterterrorism efforts. This consistency will help expand the coalition to fight terrorism and enlist the support of more nations instead of alienating those at the receiving-end of misguided policy. By making a firm stand that the United States and its allies will not support the creation of any new countries and will not support separatist groups in any state, the West can discourage or limit separatist insurgencies and the terrorism that comes with them. Self-determination, autonomy, and dialogue are all far more realistic and rational options rather than supporting the creation of new states through terrorism.

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Subsequently, NATO treated KLA as its ground force in launching military aggression against Serbia (FRY), country which in no way was threatening any other country or organization. The separatist and terrorist genie that the leading countries of NATO and the EU have unleashed from the battle in Kosovo and Metohija back in 1998/99 for the purpose of furthering the geopolitical goals of the USA, Germany and the UK keeps spreading over Europe, while the EU and NATO believe they would be able to push it back into the bottle. At present the West, primarily Germany, insist that Serbia "unfreezes" Kosovo "independence process". How? Terrorism has many forms and many faces, but the most terrible of them is cold cruelty. We are asked to believe that terrorists consist of dirty lunatics, running around with bombs, machine guns and explosive belts. That's how we are told to imagine them. Many of them are bearded; almost all are "foreign looking", non-white, non-Western. In summary they are wife beaters, child rapists and Greek and Roman statue destroyers. Actually, during the Cold War, there were some white looking "terrorists" the left-wingers belonging to several revolutionary cells, in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. But NATO, which supported the terrorist KLA, launched an aggression on Yugoslavia (by then dismantled by the West to the point of including only Serbia and Montenegro) from March 1999 to June 1999 under the hypocritical pretext that the Yugoslav authorities were allegedly committing ethnic cleansing against Kosovo Albanians. According to NATO claims, around 100,000 soldiers and policemen (supported by Russian and other volunteers), 100 SAM sites, 1,500 artillery pieces, 240 aircraft, and over 2,000 armored vehicles and tanks were operated by the Yugoslav Army, pitted against around 25,000 Albanian KLA terrorists, supported by around 1,100 NATO aircraft and over 30 warships and submarines.