

Forum: Historical-North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Issue: Resolving the Kosovo crisis (1998-1999)

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IMPORTANT

The Historical North Atlantic Treaty Organization procedure is significantly different to the normal debate procedure. Firstly, it mimics Security Council procedure in that debate will progress clause by clause. Secondly, delegates are required to assume the roles of countries in the past and act based on their political climate at that time. And lastly, this committee will have a hybrid crisis-debate structure.

After the submission of resolutions following lobbying and merging, the committee will start debate on the first clause of the first resolution. Once this has elapsed the chairs will introduce a crisis directive regarding the current situation of the issue. The committee will then move into a press conference-style debate, in which the delegates of the countries involved in the crisis directive make a 3-minute speech regarding their stance on the issue. (The delegates involved will be informed of their involvement before the crisis and will have a chance to make their speech).

The involved delegates then form a panel and the rest of the committee are able to ask them POIs for 10 minutes. After the time for crisis has elapsed the goal of the committee is to make amendments to the remaining clauses of the resolution based on the events of the crisis. Note that any clauses that have already been debated and voted on cannot be amended. There will be 2-3 of these crises for each resolution, depending on time constraints.

This committee will be set in 1999, right after The Račak Massacre. The goal of the committee is to write the delegate's own version of the Rambouillet Accords, which was a proposed peace agreement that ultimately failed. The committee need not and should not copy the wording or even the terms of the original agreement. The end goal is ultimately to bring peace to the region and have both Serbia and Kosovo sign the proposed treaty. Solutions should be creative, but reasonable and actionable for the situation.

Introduction:

Kosovo is a region located in Serbia, specifically the southern area, where the majority of the population is Albanian and Muslim. Up until 1989, Kosovo enjoyed autonomy alongside former Yugoslavia, when the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro after its inception in 1992), Slobodan Milosevic changed the status of the region, taking away the autonomy and bringing it under control of the Belgrade.

In 1996, there was the formation of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) by Kosovo Albanians, where they started an insurgency against Belgrade, the violent nature of the fights against the oppression, led the KLA to be labelled as a terrorist group by the US until 1998 when it was recognised as a political actor.

In 1998, there was open conflict between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs and the Yugoslavia government. This resulted in the displacement of over 400,000 people from their homes and caused the death of over 1,500 Kosovor Albanians. The increasing violence, its humanitarian effects, and the possibility that it may extend to other nations caused the international community to become extremely alarmed. Some areas of concern include the militant Kosovar Albanian forces' destabilising role and President Milosevic's negligence towards any diplomatic efforts made at a peaceful ceasefire.

Map of FR Yugoslavia



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Former_Yugoslavia_Map.png

Definition of Key Terms:

1. **Yugoslavia:** The geographic region that includes Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Kosovo. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia included all of these states. By 1992, the Yugoslav state disintegrated, as many states decided to secede from the federation.
2. **Ceasefire:** An agreement, usually between two armies of different countries/nations, in order to stop a conflict and fighting therefore allowing discussions about peace.
3. **KLA:** Kosovo Liberation Army -According to Encyclopedia Britannica- is an "ethnic Albanian Kosovar militant group active during the 1990s that sought Kosovo's independence from Serbia."
4. **Balkan Wars:** In 1912 and 1913, the Balkan conflicts erupted in the Balkan Peninsula. It was made up of two battles. The Ottoman Empire was conquered and abolished in the First Balkan War by an alliance of Balkan states. Former allies fought amongst themselves for the Ottoman spoils during the Second Balkan War.
5. **Nationalism:** The Cambridge Dictionary defined Nationalism as "a nation's wish and attempt to be politically independent".

Background Information

Historic Tensions

There were tensions between the Serbian and Albanian populations throughout the twentieth century. Starting in the first Balkan war in 1912 - 1913, where many Balkan states fought against the Ottoman empire, the key tensions between the two groups was due to territorial disputes as both the Serbians and Albanians fought to expand their territories by influencing the Balkans, which led to disputes over land. There was great power involvement from other European countries during this time where they took sides causing heightened tensions between the two states. After the war, there was a London conference to discuss the partition of the Ottoman territories and the decisions made seemed unfavourable to both Serbia and the Albanians, increasing the tensions even further as there was a sense of unjust.

Slobodan Milosevic starts to remove Kosovo's rights to autonomy (1989)

Tensions began to rise as the Serbian President Milosevic revoked Kosovo's rights to autonomy, this increased the tension between the ethnic Serbians and ethnic Albanians. The Albanians being the majority, protested this which led to increased instability politically as

well as additional grievances. This resulted in the Serbian authorities responding violently, further aggravating the situation at hand.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia (1991)

In 1991, the dissolution of Yugoslavia was a pertinent event in facilitating the Kosovo crisis. Nationalism/nationalist ideas as well as ethnic tensions erupted, causing heinous and violent crimes as well as ethnic disputes of borders and territories within the region. Croatia and Slovenia declared independence as breakaway states, after which Herzegovina and Bosnia followed, increasing the ethnic tensions and animosities. The dissolution of this state led to the base for the future conflicts including the Kosovo one.

Current Situation

The rise of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) (1996)

As a response to the discrimination and oppression towards the Kosovar Albanians, there was a formation of a militant group called the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1996. At first the KLA was an underground resistance, but then grew into an armed insurgency, focused on gaining independence for Kosovo. The militant group targeted Serbian authorities and institutions to protect the rights of the Albanians in Kosovo. But the Militant group's actions resulted in a violation of even more human rights, further complicating and increasing the violence and conflict.

Start of the war (1998)

In 1998 the KLA intensified their armed power and fight for independence, which resulted in several altercations with serbian armed forces and authorities. These disagreements quickly escalated into violent crimes and many human rights abuses committed from both sides. During this time, the rise of Albanian nationalism further pushed the conflict as they had a newfound greater desire for autonomy, recognition of their cultural identity such as their language and education and what started as peaceful protests, resulted in conflict with the Serbian forces.

The Račak Massacre

The Račak Massacre occurred on January 15th 1999 in Račak, Kosovo. This event was pivotal in escalating the crisis and causing further impacts on the international community.

In the winter of 1999, FR Yugoslavian and Serbian forces started an operation within the Račak village, where the majority of the population was ethnic Albanian. They began conducting house to house searches and any person who attempted to flee or run was shot down by the authorities. The operation was a response to Kosovo Liberation Army's presence in that area and the claim was that they were targeting the members of the KLA, however the result was a massacre against innocent civilians.

A group of around 25 men were said to be hiding in a building, but were later found by the Serbian police and beaten, they were later taken to a hill where they were shot and killed. Overall, the Serbian authorities killed 45 innocent Kosovo Albanian civilians.

This caught the attention of many international communities and saw this a call for action, it strengthened the case for the need for intervention in Kosovo, and caused massive outrage throughout the media and human rights organisations.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Serbia

Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, Serbia emerged as an independent landlocked country in the Balkan region of Europe. Its population is primarily Orthodox Christian Serbian, leading to tensions between the minority Albanian Muslim groups in the region. Serbia does not recognise claims that Kosovo is part of Greater Albania, and with Pristina (the capital city of Kosovo), being a large economic hub, it is unwilling to let it go. Additionally, the region is home to a large number of Serbian Orthodox Monasteries, and it is viewed as symbolically significant to Serbian identity, religion and culture. Due to these reasons, Serbia is unwilling to recognise Kosovo as a sovereign nation, and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević rescinded Kosovo's autonomy in 1989.

Serbia's allies

Serbia's most notable allies include Russia and China. Serbia-Russia relations have been strong since the 19th century, and both China and Russia have expressed support for Serbia's resistance to Kosovo's independence. Both countries have stated that Kosovo's declaration of independence may have negative

consequences on the stability of Eastern Europe as a whole. In particular, Russian volunteers and mercenaries have been said to have defended against the KLA.

Albania

Albania has recognised Kosovo's independence since 1991, and was one of the only member nations to do so. Albania's tumultuous history with Serbia, dating back to the Balkan wars in the early 1910s, can still be felt today. Albania has a similar claim on Kosovo as Serbia, with rich parts of Albanian history and culture emerging from Kosovo. The concept of Greater Albania underscores all discussions regarding Albanian-Kosovo relations. This political idea includes the recognition of certain territories across the Balkan region of Europe as belonging to Albania, Kosovo being one of them. Due to the majority of the population of Kosovo being Albanian and the cultural significance of Kosovo to Albania, Albania supports the recognition of the independence of Kosovo and has provided both financial and military aid to the region in the past.

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)

After long being denied recognition as an independent state, a rebel group known as the Kosovo Liberation Army was founded in Kosovo in 1993. The group took to violent measures in order to push for independence, conducting attacks on Serbian police forces throughout the early 1990s. Their attacks grew increasingly more violent as the years continued, moving from targeting Serbian policemen to targeting ethnic Serbians living in Kosovo and forcing them out of their homes.

Serbia's response

Serbia similarly defended Serbian minorities in Kosovo with violence. There have been attempts to drive Albanian Kosovos out of Kosovo in order to maintain control, along with reported killings and rape of Albanian Kosovos by the Serbian military.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was a military organisation formed in 1949. All countries that signed it committed to provide large amounts of military aid if other NATO countries required it. Historically, the formation of NATO posed a serious threat to the USSR, as any attack on any NATO countries, many of which are European countries, would be met with the military of many other countries, including the USA. This made Soviet

expansion, which was rapid in the 1940s, difficult and limited the control the USSR had over Europe.

NATO's stance on the Serbia-Kosovo conflict

Many NATO members recognise Kosovo's claims to independence. Specifically, the USA, had previously said that military intervention would be enacted against Serbia if violence in Kosovo escalated. NATO is not hesitant in providing military support to Kosovo if required and will continue to be involved in discussions of the ceasefire. Neither Serbia nor Kosovo are part of NATO. More information on this can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Possible Solutions

This section is slightly different due to the special procedure of the H-NATO committee. The goal of this committee is to reach a diplomatic resolution following the events detailed in this report. Delegates are to assume the stances of their countries *at the time of February 1998*, as the Kosovo War commences in real-time. The progression of this committee does not need to be historically accurate- the goal is not to do exactly what countries did before, but to be creative and develop alternative solutions. **However**, these solutions do need to be realistic and things that could have feasibly been done by the countries involved. The topics that the chairs suggest for debate are:

- The reaction from the international community
- Discussions of ceasefires, with or without direct NATO intervention
- The possibility of offering military support to either side of the conflict from external parties
- Creating and signing new treaties regarding the territorial disputes that are the root of the problem

Bibliography

Useful Links

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There is no need to use MLA format, please link the websites you have used with hyperlinks as bullet points.

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