

---

# After Kosovo : Dilemma Of Colonialism

By Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal, [abdulruff\\_jnu@yahoo.com](mailto:abdulruff_jnu@yahoo.com)  
Kashmir Watch - 17/3/2008

---

On 17 February 2008 in South-eastern Europe, the Serbian Southern province of Kosovo declared independence from Republic of Serbia and proclaimed itself new Republic of Kosovo. New Republic of Kosovo was later recognized by few sovereign states, mainly the USA. Kosovo now has to become a member of the EU, the UN, OSCE, IOC, IMF, and many other vital world bodies. Kosovo will remain a sovereign nation and a part of UN very soon. This should show to the world that seeking legitimate independence or "secessionism" or separatism", to use the expression in vogue from colonial and imperialist powers, is a noble cause and has to be respected by the world. And Republic of Kosovo is certainly not a mistake, a reality a fact and necessity. Kosovo will never be a part of Serbia again.

Nine years ago, the international community, led by NATO, acted to end brutal attacks by Serbs on the Kosovo Albanian population. This timely international intervention ended the violence, leading to a United Nations Security Council decision to suspend Belgrade's governance and place Kosovo under interim UN administration. Since that time Kosovo has built its own democratic institutions separate from Belgrade's control. Kosovo population got back its right to offer prayers. Many nations across the globe have already recognized Kosovo. And Kosovo will reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and International Law, as well as in the United Nations.

Last year, UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari developed a plan to build a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo and recommended Kosovo be independent, subject to a period of international supervision. In light of the conflicts of the 1990s, independence was the only viable option to promote stability in the region. The United States supports the Ahtisaari Plan and will work with its international partners to help implement it and help Kosovo join the UN and other international bodies of political and economic importance.

A couple of countries have criticised the Kosovo independence, fearing backlash on their terrains. It is quite likely that the colonial powers determined to retain the colonies at any cost might resort to further aggressive as well as tactical measures to pressurize the colonized to remain calm and obedient.

## KOSOVO - A SPECIAL CASE

True, the 2008 declaration of independence by Kosovo, has added another feather in the cap of nations demanding freedom nations that face serious problem of freedom fighting people/nations. The United States has formally recognized Kosovo as a sovereign and independent state. We congratulate the people of Kosovo on this historic occasion. These are clear indications that the United States will not aid, abet or support any armed group, movement or non-state player to forcibly breakaway to declare independent territory in any recognized nation.

President Bush has responded affirmatively to a request from Kosovo to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. The establishment of these relations will reaffirm the special ties of friendship that have linked together the people of the USA and Kosovo. USA welcomed the commitments Kosovo made in its declaration

of independence to implement the Ahtisaari Plan, to embrace multi-ethnicity as a fundamental principle of good governance, and to welcome a period of international supervision. "The United States takes this opportunity to reaffirm our friendship with Serbia, an ally during two world wars. We invite Serbia's leaders to work together with the United States and our partners to accomplish shared goals, such as the protection of the rights, security, culture and livelihood of the Serb community in Kosovo", a US spokesperson said.

However, by sensing disquiet across the world, the USA has said Kosovo is an exclusive issue and no parallels could be drawn on the basis of Kosovo example. World wide, there are several types of freedom fighting groups and depending on the nature of their demand and struggle USA would support or oppose their claim.

Ideally, each nation/people demanding independence could be granted if that serves the legitimate interests of the new nation concerned, if created. USA strongly believes that Kosovo makes a special and unique case and that the situation that existed Kosovo to gain independence does not exist anywhere in the world today. While supporting the independence of Kosovo, USA categorically stated that the Congress recognized the situation led to the freedom of Kosovo was unique to its territory and that it cannot be substituted in other situations anywhere in the world. "The unusual combination of factors found in the Kosovo situation (including the context of Yugoslavia's breakup, the history of ethnic cleansing and crimes against civilians in Kosovo, and the extended period of UN administration) are not found elsewhere and therefore make Kosovo a special case. Kosovo cannot be seen as a precedent for any other situation in the world today.

#### RUSSIAN WORRY

The country that vehemently opposes the Kosovo freedom and threatens with severe punitive action is Russia. Many argue that if this policy of the US and its allies is accepted as part of the new global political order, the Chechens, Dagestanis and Ingusetians should also have solid international support to breakaway from Russia.

But, however, Russia has indicated that the Kosovo principle can be applied to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh of Georgia and Armenia, as Moscow supports them. These regions are already trying to merge with Russia. They might as well declare unilateral independence.

Russia which opposes Kosovo's independence because of its own trouble spots in several parts of Russia, particularly in Chechnya, hopes if European members of NATO suspend their membership and decide that the US should withdraw her military forces from Europe, the US will be very vulnerable. However, if the US in that moment looks for an ally in the UK, the UK as the US biggest ally will turn back on her and closely bond with the EU. That is not going to happen in the foreseeable future, no matter who would be in charge the White House and European capitals.

#### VOICES OF CONCERN

Russian concerns have been echoed by China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

China criticised Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia while Taiwan welcomed it. China is worried about similar action by Taiwan, which has recognised Kosovo. China is also concerned about its western Xinziang area, where Uyghur Muslim rebels are fighting a 'liberation war' for over three decades. The Tibet issue too has the potential of

troubling Beijing again. But not all of these countries are colonizers.

Sri Lanka has voiced concern out of fear that the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) might follow the Kosovo example and might even be recognized by some world capitals. Indonesia has already lost East Timor and is worried about the Aceh province, where rebels want to secede from the mainland regime. Thailand is involved in fighting the Muslim minorities in the three southern provinces, saying that the so-called International Islamic Jihad is patronizing the Thai Muslims. Sri Lankan Muslims say they can derive no inspiration whatever from Kosovo's independence. They can profit in no way from the break-up of the island which under severe threat from climate change.

Now India, though abetting separatism among Indian origins in Lanka for a separate nation that would exist along with India, says by supporting Kosovo US has probably seeded another poison-tree that might lead to the Third World War. Creation of new nations based on religion and redrawing national boundaries of several states had started after the First World War. After the Second World War, the Big Powers assumed this task as a matter of international policing privilege.

Some argue if the US and its allies now go for three separate nations in Iraq - Sunni, Shia' and Kurdish? Would the UK agree to create a separate Northern Ireland and give full political rights to the Catholic Irish community? USA is clear about its policy: it all depends on the merits of the nations seeking independence. Scotland, a constituent of UK and the homeland of UK premier Brown, has been clamoring for independence for quite some time now.

#### TROUBLE SPOTS

In every zone where conflicts have been on for self-determination, there have been a lot of blood-letting and destructions and the state sponsored terrorist forces evade human rights without hindrances and ignoring the warnings from the international community and organizations.

Major zones of turmoil are: Middle East where Palestinians fight for their own homeland under Israeli occupation; Kashmiri patriots struggle for getting back their country under Indian occupation and genocides; Sri Lanka where Tamils are waging a long war for a separate nation; Russia, where the Chechen patriots wage a long re-independence war with Russian terrorist forces; China, where Tibetans struggle for a nation of their own, but the Buddhist spiritual leader Dalai Lama, as a tactical step has asked China for autonomy and more religious freedoms (the present attack by Chinese forces on Tibetans indicates that Beijing does not think of granting freedom for Tibetans), to mention the most important ones.

The decisions like that of India to support their people in their demand for separate nations have only complicated the lives of non-ethnic people in every country and many countries like USA have become more restrict with their immigration policy.

#### CATEGORIES

There could be several categories of freedom fighting nations/peoples around the world. The first category of nations/peoples that seek independence are the offspring, i.e., those that have lived together for a long period of time, may be centuries, contributed to the growth and development of the country, but felt marginalized by the major community of the country, denied their legitimate share in resources,

freedom in all respects, leading to serious differences and resultant tensions with the main land. Pakistan and Bangladesh, for example, emerged on this basis. Kosovo was a part of Serbia, the successor state of Yugoslavia that has already Balkanized into several independent states, but Kosovo was denied independence by Serbia for a long time.

Soviet Union was another example in this type of nations. Michael Gorbachev, the last Soviet President, voluntarily granted independence in 1987 to all 15 constituent republics that formed the then Soviet Union, accepting utter failure in making the Soviet state into a functional communist multi-nation. Successful October revolution in 1917 led to the unification of several neighboring nations into Soviet Russia that culminated into the establishment of USSR by the end of the World War II by 1945 and set the background for the so-called Cold War afterwards. However, while granting independence to 15 republics, nations like Chechnya, annexed by Imperial Russian in the past, were not granted re-independence mainly because it was then a part of Russian Republic and the Nobel Laureate from Russia Gorbachev expected, perhaps still expects, that Russia, the successor state of USSR to grant freedom to the needy nations. He expressed his views in an article published in The Bangladesh Today recently that Russia was also under foreign occupation for nearly 300 years which clearly shows the nations Russia annexed and kept under its control could be given freedom.

The first Russian president Boris Yeltsin let the Chechens and other freedom seekers with hopes to be free soon, but later, incapacitated, he let the military decide the matter which led to wars with Chechnya, killing thousands of innocent people. President Putin once said if Chechens want independence "this is not the way to ask for independence", was meaning that they must give up violence and counter-terrorism for freedom from the Kremlin.

This type of freedom seekers are a logical development of human relations in every country and this trend would continue for ever, creating more and more nations as the globalization progresses further.

The second category includes nations, annexed by colonial powers and kept under their custody, and the strong powers refuse to grant re-independence. India and many other third world nations that got freedom from UK belong to this category. Kashmir is striving for independence on this basis. These peoples have lost their sovereignty to their neighbours who annexed the land and keep on expanding or terrorising the inhabitants. India has over decade since 1947 when it annexed Kashmir tactfully, killed over 90,000 Kashmiri patriots.

Chechnya is another best example.

There is yet another, third, category of nations that settled down and depend on the host countries for sustenance. There are peoples/nations that once went to another county to earn their livelihood and gradually settled down there over a long period, demanding more powers and rights and have finally claimed separate nations. There are many blocks of Indians living abroad for decades now and demanding separate states for themselves by dividing the host countries. Indians in Sri Lanka fit well here. Here India, economically better-off now, should, instead of fuelling more explosive situations, try to make alternative settlement arrangements in India itself.

#### INDIAN DOUBLE-STANDARDS

Even after the collapse of many colonialist and imperialist powers

world wide last century, India that became free in 1947 began entertaining colonial empire ambitions by annexing Kashmir. It dreams of acquiring the areas from Afghanistan and Myanmar. Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim are now considered safe and by using Indian living in Sri Lanka, New Delhi aims to split Sri Lanka and add one part into its future territory. On the one hand, New Delhi doesn't take a final decision to let Kashmiris have their sovereign back, on the other, it also encourages a separate country by splitting Sri Lanka.

India, as one of the contemporary imperialist nations having alien nations, like Kashmir, under its custody, has developed cold feet a Kosovo declaration mainly because the Western powers spearhead the Kosovo cause and Kosovo is predominantly of Albanian Muslims. That also signals follow-up action in India as well. In the habit of linking Islam and Muslim with so-called fundamentalism, terrorism and cross-border terrorism, India aims at US support and guidance. India always thought it has USA in its pocket along with the nuclear deal thanks to its grand auspicious of "terrorism" plank. It is under this illusion that New Delhi let its intelligence agencies work under the dictates of USA, ostensibly to coordinate efforts to track the so-called "terrorists". Indian hopes for coming closer to USA and the West on the pretext of combating terrorism, have been proved short-lived.

Indian hegemonic strategists want to keep Kashmir under its military boots. Kosovo has written new international laws for all the simmering separatist movements. The government of India has so far remained silent about the Kosovo developments basically out of fear that any opposing statement would erode its 'secular' image, annoy its targeted vote banks and displease its supposed friends in the comity of Muslim nations. The very threat tone in its statement that Kosovo would lead to World War II betrays the its democratic and Non-Aligned credentials the real format of its foreign policy of using war threats.

Many Indians ho make fortunes by churning out anti-Islamic and anti-Pakistani and anti-Kashmiri stuff regularly that Indian media wholeheartedly promote and uphold, ask India to stridently oppose unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, while under UN administration. India is worried that Kosovo is free now and want to openly support Russia and China in the UN and ask Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to explain to the world body as to how the US and allies could bury the UN mandate and agree to the creation of another nation on ethno-religious considerations.

India, a close ally of USSR developed bad breathing because not only the Kashmiris were already demanding re-independence, some states within India also glamour for independence. But India does not want to grant re-independence to Kashmiris to self-determination and independent rule. Hence Kosovo created a jerk in New Delhi.

Countries like India exist as nations as all ethno-religious and linguistic sub-nationalities, but not have mutually agreed to make it a nation-state, rising above narrow considerations. Every state within India has a right to cede. Kashmir was an independent country until 1947. Wanting to keep Kashmir in its Union, India says that Pakistan continues to incite and abate sections of "misdirected Kashmiri" and mainland Muslims for seceding from India. The Kashmir Media Service (February 20, 2008), a pro-independence website, quoted the pro-liberation leaders like Syed Ali Geelani and Shabbir Ahmad Shah of the All Party Hurriyat Conference and chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Muhammad Yasin Malik as saying that the sacrifices of the Kashmiris would not be allowed to go waste. They

cited Kosovo as a ray of hope and urged the international community to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

#### AN OBSERVATION

UN, founded by replacing the then less effective League of Nations soon after the devastating World War II, is supposed to play a proactive role in such crucial issues like world wide, but it has over years become a forum for nations to finalize trades, especially in weapons and technology and busy with determining the commissions package in the deals, has totally failed to do any thing positive and let the explosive freedom struggles explode by themselves resulting in constant genocides and destructions. UN and other related forums have refused to mediate honestly for peaceful settlements, by involving the stake-holders in every conflict. Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Taiwan, Tibet and Sri Lankan Tamils, among others have been fighting for independent nations and the regions remain explosive all the time.

Under these mischievous circumstances, decision of Kosovo patriots to declare independence voluntarily is indeed remarkable. More broadly, every nation that seeks freedom could be allowed to be free, if they are capable of independent existence. But those who seek independence and freedom should also ask themselves if they really require independence and for what.

Gaining and enjoying freedom and independence from the oppressive rulers is accepted as the rightful action by oppressed people.

However, the colonial and imperialist powers would continue to resist only to eventually lose in stopping the freedom loving peoples from gaining independence. That has been the message from human history, including India. India is now cash rich and can support the Indians living abroad, especially in Sri Lanka, in many positive ways, instead of fuelling crises.

Kosovo may be a tiny territory but in the great game of oil politics it holds great importance. US knows that Kosovo does not have oil but its location is strategic as the trans-Balkan pipeline - known as AMBO pipeline, reportedly being built at a cost of 1.1 billion dollar by US builder and operator company, the US-registered Albanian Macedonian Bulgarian Oil Corporation will pass through it in due course. The pipeline would pump Caspian oil from the Bulgarian port of Burgas via Macedonia to the Albanian port of Vlora, for transport to European countries and the United States.

Muslims everywhere, have a dual identity, in one of which he is a member of Universal Islam, the charismatic community of Muslims all over the world, an identity which transcends ethnic and national identities. Practice of Islam in real faith and spirit demands the Muslims in Kosovo to regain and imbibe the Islamic values.

Independence could offer the Kosovo enough strength to practice their religion freely. There can be no doubt that the Kosovo Muslims could not so practice their religion as members of a Serbian state that kills Muslims in Kosovo, but now they can practice their religion without let or hindrance. However, only when they are recognized by the UN and other world bodies Kosovo can pursue their legitimate economic and security interests in a sustained manner. One hopes, with the support of the USA that has already recognized Kosovo as an independent country and asked them to open their embassy in Washington, they will emerge stronger as a nation belonging to UN and EU and other world bodies.

Kosovo is lucky to have the USA and Europe on its side and it will achieve its legitimate objectives and goals with their help. Looking from the economic side, the United States would shoulder additional expenses over Kosovo. But Kosovo is for many years in deficit, and there is not much that the US can take from Kosovo which Europe does not want. Europe also would support Kosovo to emerge stronger in the years to come. UN cannot sit idle but has to guide and support similar freedom seeking nations to achieve their legitimate goals with lesser difficulties. Meanwhile there should be a global debate on the scenario of freedom movement to decide about the relevance of each freedom fighting nation. Colonialism has undergone changes over decades but still its vestiges are visible in many corners of globe.

It is time every country gives up its colonial ambitions and hang-overs.

Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal Research Scholar, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi can be contacted at

[http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1205767690&archive=&start\\_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news](http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showexclusives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1205767690&archive=&start_from=&ucat=15&var1news=value1news)

---