



# BALKAN WATCH

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## A Review of Current Events

**AHTISAARI NAMED UN ENVOY FOR KOSOVO TALKS.** Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari has been appointed the UN Special Envoy to the upcoming Kosovo final status talks. Ahtisaari is an experienced diplomat and negotiator, having brokered the agreement with former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic that ended the 1999 NATO war over Kosovo. He is also director of the Helsinki-based Crisis Management Initiative, which recently chaired the Aceh peace talks. He plans to visit Pristina and Belgrade beginning November 21 to meet with the Albanians and Serbs. He expressed hope that this first trip to the region in his new role would help him to better understand the positions of the parties to the Kosovo conflict and to "collect impressions." When asked to set a timeline for the negotiations, Ahtisaari responded that it would be "inappropriate" to do so, saying that the parties will determine the speed of the talks. Nonetheless, he noted that the current status quo cannot go on forever. Back in Helsinki, Ahtisaari stated that the international talks will involve a contact group of representatives from the United States, Germany, Italy, Britain, France, and Russia. He also described the European Union as a major "stakeholder" in Kosovo and in the Balkans, in general. The EU, itself, recently appointed Austrian Balkans-expert Stefan Lehne to serve as its representative to the Kosovo talks. Lehne is currently a senior advisor to EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

**BURNS TESTIFIES ABOUT KOSOVO.** Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns recently testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the situation in Kosovo and in the Balkans. He noted that the United States must work with the international community on a final status agreement in Kosovo and on drafting a new constitution in Bosnia during 2006. Burns noted that the U.S. would not take sides in the Kosovo final status process yet, choosing not to favor a specific outcome. He listed three criteria that the contact group of international representatives expects a final status outcome to respect: promoting stability in Kosovo and southeastern Europe; full democratic rights for everyone, including minorities; and furthering the integration of the region with the "Euro-Atlantic mainstream." Burns also conveyed messages to both the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs in his testimony, stating to the Albanians that independence must be earned and the rights of minorities in Kosovo improved. He noted that when meeting with Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica in October, he told him that his government's policy of telling Kosovo Serbs to boycott elections was a "miscalculation," urging Belgrade to encourage Kosovo Serb participation in the political process in Kosovo. The United States has yet to name its envoy to the talks; however, it is expected to do so within the next couple of weeks.

Burns also noted that the United States would support whatever solution is reached over the political status of Montenegro, as long as it is attained through democratic means. Burns also noted that the Bosnian constitution attained through the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995 was not "set in stone." Members of the Bosnian government are expected to travel to Washington to commemorate the agreement with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice November 21 and 22. Former Assistant Secretary Richard Holbrooke, the Clinton administration's top adviser on the Balkans, also testified before the Senate committee, stating that an independent Kosovo is the only viable option for peace in the Balkans.

**EU WARNS MONTENEGRO.** The European Union recently cautioned officials in Montenegro about their plans to hold a referendum next spring to declare the Serbia & Montenegro state union dissolved and Montenegro a fully independent state. European Commission official Josep Lloveras stated that the EU would not accept a "one-sided process," noting that the way in which Montenegro holds the referendum and its outcome will have an impact on Montenegrin relations with Brussels. Minority Serbs in Montenegro claim that the environment is not conducive to an independence referendum. Ranko Krivokapic, a leader of the Social Democratic Party in Montenegro, stated he hoped that the EU could persuade the opposition in Montenegro to participate in the independence debate. Predrag Bulatovic, a pro-Serb leader in Montenegro, stated that his party, the Socialist People's Party, did not believe a referendum was necessary. Krivokapic commented, "Dialogue is the key word here." Montenegro does not plan to participate in the upcoming Kosovo talks.

**MACEDONIA RECOMMENDED FOR EU MEMBERSHIP; CRVENKOVSKI IN HELSINKI.** Macedonian Prime Minister Vlado Bukovski expressed his satisfaction with a recent announcement in which the EU recommended Macedonia for membership. Macedonia first applied for membership in March 2004 and has implemented a large number of political and economic reforms since then. Bukovski's deputy prime minister, Radmila Secerinska, noted that the announcement was a reward for the hard reforms that have been implemented. Secerinska was charged with the duty of leading the country's effort to join the EU. Nonetheless, Macedonia will have to continue to implement more reforms before membership. Additionally, it will need to address a conflict over its name with its southern neighbor Greece, which has threatened to block Macedonian membership, should it choose to try to accede using its contested name. EU leaders may accept the recommendation next month and formally declare Macedonia a candidate for EU membership at an EU summit. Macedonia's

president, Branko Crvenkovski, also met with Finnish President Tarja Halonen. They discussed the upcoming Kosovo talks and the EU accession process. Halonen praised Macedonia's efforts thus far.

**ASHDOWN URGES INTERNATIONAL REFORMS.** UN High Representative to Bosnia Lord Paddy Ashdown recently remarked at a roundtable discussion at the Bosnian Institute in London that direct foreign intervention in Bosnian affairs will need to stop in the near future. Ashdown acknowledged that the role of the international community in Bosnia needs to evolve to that of an adviser, not that involving "intrusive intervention." Ashdown noted that the cost of government in Bosnia has been a negative factor, causing the country's economy to stagnate. He suggested that constitutional change come soon, allowing Bosnia to more effectively pursue membership in the EU. Ashdown's mandate to Bosnia expires in a few months and the international community has not yet agreed on a successor.

**COOPERATION ACCORD FAILS.** An attempt by the governments of Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia to sign an agreement to strengthen cooperation among the three countries failed. The leaders agreed that cooperation should be improved but were stymied by the question of Bosnian constitutional reform, leading them to abandon the proposed agreement.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"I was struck by the fact that in each of these three meetings, in three different places, these students, of all the people we met, were the most courageous in putting forward the proposition that people of different faiths and nationalities should be able to live together in the Balkans of the 21st century. I didn't hear this message from the political leaders, but I heard it loud and clear from the younger people."—Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns, after meeting with officials and young people in Sarajevo, Pristina and Belgrade (11/8/05).

"Peace cannot be brokered by a person who has a need to promote himself. Job satisfaction must be found not in the praise of outside parties but in something else. These things are not ego trips."—Finnish diplomat Martti Ahtisaari, before his appointment as UN Special Envoy for Kosovo final status talks (AP, 11/1/05).

"In the end, the Serbs in Belgrade will have to choose between Brussels and Kosovo; it's as brutal as that."—Former U.S. diplomat Richard Holbrooke, noting that an independent Kosovo is the only viable option (AFP, 11/8/05).

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