

RAMBOUILLET INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ITS CAUSES AND IMPORTANCE IN THE LEGAL-POLITICAL PROCESSES IN KOSOVO



Political Science

Keywords: The Rambouillet International Conference, Kosovo Albanians, The international community, Kosovo delegation, Kosovo, Humanitarian intervention.

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Abstract

The Rambouillet International Conference took place in two phases from 6 to 23 February and from 15 to 18 March 1999. The Rambouillet International Conference itself was of great importance to the Albanians, as the Kosovo Albanian issue was being addressed internationally. The aim of the Albanians in Rambouillet was for the crisis in Kosovo to receive not only political but also legal solutions, in order to achieve Kosovo's independence as soon as possible. What did the Rambouillet Agreement contain? Recognized international principles and human rights, did not infringe on the sovereignty and integrity of Yugoslavia, but expressed the need for self-government in Kosovo. The use of violence in Kosovo as a means of resolution was prohibited, and the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo was demanded. It allowed refugees to return to their homes. Following the Serbian side's opposition to the Rambouillet Agreement, which provided opportunities for a peaceful solution to the conflict, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization warning of the need for a military intervention in the former Yugoslavia as the only option was already on the agenda as a human, legal and humanitarian obligation.

Introduction

This paper aims to express the important of the Rambouillet Conference regarding the problems in Kosovo. This conference further internationalized the resurrection of Kosovo and the hopes that this world can be resolved by political and legal means. Under these figures only Albanians and not Serbs force NATO intervene militarily to write the escalation of the conflict.

Methodology

This paper is based on historical chronological methods, legal logic and Albanian and foreign historical and legal sources.

Discussion

Subsection 1. Rambouillet Conference in a Brief Historical-Legal Perspective

The Rambouillet International Conference takes place in two phases from 6 to 23 February and from 15 to 18 March 1999. This conference “represented the last political attempt to stop the Serbian war and genocide against Albanians ... and to avoid the potential danger that threatens... peace and public safety” (Bajrami, 2014). The Rambouillet web conference was organized and convened by the so-called Contact Group. The parties that participated in this Conference were: “the Albanian delegation, the Serbo-Yugoslav one, and the declared party, where they would be European parts of the contact of the Group and many countries” (Bajrami, 2002).

Proposals would be presented at the Rambouillet Conference, the content of which was related to the ways and process of resolving the Albanian-Serbian conflict.

The Albanian delegation had representatives of all Kosovo Albanians, although it should be noted that the main role was played by representatives of the Kosovo Liberation Army, because the latter, after the failure of peace, had defended the freedom of Kosovo through war.

Unacceptable and contrary to human rights actions and international law that Serbia had undertaken in Kosovo affected not only the awareness of the international community, but also its action.

The international community acted in connection with the crisis in Kosovo, after the massacre of Albanians in Recak, Kosovo, a massacre that had affected innocent civilians.

This event “influenced the convening of an International Peace Conference for Kosovo, in Rambouillet, France” (Bajrami, 2002). In the Milosevic trial, the Prosecution presented its reasoning that the Recak massacre was not an incidental incident and could have been foreseen given the rampant military campaign that began in mid 1998 and continued with the presence of Serbian military and paramilitary forces.

Prior to this conference, there had been numerous failures in discussions with Serbs. The Rambouillet International Conference itself was of great importance to the Albanians, as the Kosovo Albanian issue was being addressed at the international level, and raised hopes that the crisis could be resolved, as a result of the commitment of the international community. Rambouillet was “... one of the many efforts of the International Community, to find a solution to the problem of Kosovo...,” (Uka, 2011). The aim of the Albanians in Rambouillet was for the crisis in Kosovo to receive not only political but also legal solutions, in order to achieve Kosovo’s independence as soon as possible. The conference “foresaw a negotiation process of the Albanian and Serbian sides for the political agreement, which was proposed by the international mediators” (Bajrami, 2002).

On the other hand, the Yugoslav side, while expressing its readiness for direct talks with a Kosovo delegation, had reservations about the participation of the Kosovo Liberation Army in the conference. For the Yugoslav side, the concern regarding the internationalization of the Kosovo issue should also be emphasized, because according to her, this was an internal matter of the Republic of Serbia.

The Contact Group drafted a preliminary agreement or as it is otherwise called a draft agreement, which would be the main legal document that would support the proceedings and actions of the Conference and would also be a kind of preamble to subsequent decisions and agreements that could be reached. This draft agreement was otherwise called “Provisional Draft Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo” (Bajrami, 2014). In the draft of the Rambouillet Conference, a direct engagement of the Security Council would be difficult, as it

would not be accepted by some of its members. A joint statement by Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov in January 1999 stated that “the parties in Kosovo must work harder to reach a temporary political solution that would provide substantial autonomy for Kosovo and that they would have to engage in intensive and meaningful negotiations to achieve this goal.” (Weller, 199). The Albrights aimed to stop the war, to bring peace, and the autonomy that Kosovo had in 1974, but the Serbs and Milosevic disagreed. As the work of the Rambouillet Conference continued, the war in Kosovo escalated more and more, as the Serbian operational plan ‘Patkoi’ “... had begun to be implemented” (Arifi, 2009).

Rambouillet brought neither independence nor autonomy for Kosovo, as it was not signed by the Serbian side, but only by the Albanian side. “The Serbian delegation did not sign the agreement... and as a result, on March 24, 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization launched military operations against the remaining Yugoslavia” (Academy, 1999). The signing of the agreement by the Albanian side showed that Kosovo for the first time was establishing a strategic partnership with the West.

Subsection 2. Content and importance of the Rambouillet conference for Kosovo

What was contained in the Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo (Rambouillet), not signed by the Serbs? He knew international principles and human rights. It did not infringe on the sovereignty and integrity of Yugoslavia, but expressed the need for self-government in Kosovo, respecting the rights of national communities, but without having additional rights for them. The use of violence in Kosovo as a means of resolution was prohibited, and a ceasefire was required, as well as the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo. It allowed fugitives to return to their homes, even giving them ownership documents. Kosovo could not change its borders. It included the conduct of elections, humanitarian aid, the development of the economy, the establishment of the Ombudsman (ombudsman, to monitor the observance of human rights), the prohibition of hostilities and provocations between the parties, and the establishment of a multinational force in Kosovo. “The Rambouillet Conference aimed at reaching a legal and political agreement for the political solution of the crisis in Kosovo, defining a transitional solution that provided for the placement of Kosovo under North Atlantic Treaty Organization protection, to enable a temporary self-government for Kosovo in the three-year period and opened the possibility of developing a political process for determining the final status of Kosovo” (Bajrami, 2002).

Although the Rambouillet Agreement was signed only by the Albanian side, it still had some positive effects on the issue of Kosovo Albanians: because it enabled the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to intervene in Kosovo, it enabled the international community to stop the genocide where its freedoms were no longer violated. Human rights, further brought about the internationalization of the Kosovo Albanian issue, and showed that any peaceful means were used to give Serbs a choice, but also to show the world that the crisis in Kosovo could be resolved by peaceful means. This agreement showed that the Kosovo Albanians were ready for talks and

peace, not for war, while the Serbs on the other hand, by not signing the agreement, showed that they were not ready for peace. Albanians showed that they were for security not only in Kosovo, but also beyond. They proved that they were willing to act in accordance with politics, diplomacy, and international law.

This agreement provided for the right of referendum and self-determination for Kosovo Albanians. He had set a deadline for the final settlement of Kosovo, which would be after 3 years, which was an achievement not only political but also legal, both for Kosovo and the international community. Through the reference made to the “will of the people” in the Rambouillet Agreement, it can be said that the option of secession was envisaged.

The Rambouillet Agreement, even though it was signed by the Albanian side, did not mean that it met all their requirements. It still “asserted... Serbian control over Kosovo, although it restored its provincial autonomy that had been stripped of it by Milosevic” (Stoessinger, 2009).

After Rambouillet failed to sign the agreement, the political option of resolving the conflict would also fail. I think that despite the technical failure of the negotiations in the political aspect, Kosovo would emerge victorious from these negotiations. Rambouillet would be a weighty cornerstone in the process of independence and state building of Kosovo. “It seems that the great powers have already been convinced of the necessity of severing unnatural ties with Serbia and the former Yugoslavia, of initiating the process of its independence and of integrating into the community of free nations and political societies” (Krisafi, 2008).

In accordance with the prior agreement of the representatives of the Contact Group and the North Atlantic Alliance, the powers for the settlement were transferred to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Headquarters in Brussels. The United Nations had failed to approve the deployment of its troops to Kosovo to contain the conflict, as it was hampered by the veto of several permanent members of the Security Council.

Following the Serbian side's opposition to the Rambouillet Agreement, which provided opportunities for a peaceful solution to the conflict, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization warning of the need for a military intervention in the former Yugoslavia as the only option was already on the agenda as a human, legal and humanitarian obligation. “Kosovo was a critical test for NATO and other institutions Albright would declare in the House of Representatives... The people of Kosovo deserve to live in democracy and peace, for Albanians to have their rights and origins respected” (Tepshi, 1999).

But in addition to the lack of cooperation from Serbia, another major problem was the inaction of the international community and the United Nations. For this and other reasons the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had to act. The Kosovo crisis of 1998-1999 has already confirmed the inadequacy of European foreign and security policy that emerged in previous years. “Even in this case, they could do nothing but ‘give entrepreneurship’ to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United States.” *Humanitarian' intervention* (Gentilini, 2015).

Conclusion

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