



KOSOVO

COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

July 23, 2008

The Future of Kosovo

Ari Rusila, http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/The_Future_of_Kosovo

The years to come in the Balkan region cannot be as bleak as those of the recent past. Despite uncertainties regarding developments in Kosovo, the following scenarios offer likely alternatives and demonstrate the region has a future.

The comments I have had here as well in some discussion forums about today's Balkan events and politics have been quite negative. The core problem from my point of view is Kosovo, because it influences the whole of the Balkan region. In one forum, I was asked the question whether I believe the Balkan region has any future. Yes I do.

The Western Balkans have a future and at least following scenarios can be considered:

- **“Laissez faire”** / frozen conflict - model: The West does not revise its politics, the East keeps its positions. The EU will “supervise” Kosovo some 20 years backed up by NATO, the northern part of the country will be integrated to Serbia - and the same will take place in Bosnia. Maybe the most realistic and easiest (no-one-needs-to-do-anything) scenario.
- **Deal** scenario: US revises its foreign policy after the elections and reverts its recognition of Kosovo. Real talks begin and end in bitter compromise (e.g. partitioning Kosovo, application of the Hong Kong model ...), Serbia and Kosovo concentrate on economical/social questions instead of quarreling over borders. If both Serbs and Albanians can make a deal among themselves, it is a first step toward ethnic tolerance and maybe, after generations, toward a multiethnic society. A pragmatic - but maybe realistic - result, of which the implementation demands hard work from all sides and stakeholders.
- **Crisis** scenario: The West tries to impose an “independent” Kosovo over the whole territory, forcing puppet authority to the northern part of the province. Serbia sees its territory occupied, and a Gaza type of conflict develops. Regarding this scenario, the only winner would be organized crime and I really cannot think that such a stupid policy would bring about anything else or even draw the attention of Great Powers which have other real problems to deal with.
- **Diversity** model: All Balkan countries have their own paths to development - some countries are going to join the EU quickly (Croatia), some are going to do so later (Macedonia, Albania), some are maybe looking for alliances elsewhere (Serbia). Kosovo will be an international protectorate for the next



KOSOVO

COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

decade; Bosnia will totter between breakup, federation/confederation, state, protectorate depending on inner politics and outside influences.

So I indeed think that western Balkan states will have a good future (most of my potential scenarios had positive aspects - especially if one compares them to the past decades. My forecast is that in the Balkans, conflicts will be of a smaller scale than before; tolerance and the economy are growing and people are starting think more about the future than about the past.

Ari Rusila is a development project management expert from Finland with a special interest in the Balkan region.