



KOSOVO

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Serbia only Wants 'Legal Advice'

Spiegel

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,582373,00.html>

In a SPIEGEL interview, Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic discusses his country's application for the United Nations to review the legality of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. A decision is expected this week on whether the International Court in The Hague will consider the issue.

SPIEGEL: On Wednesday, the United Nations is set to decide on Serbia's application to have the independence of Kosovo examined by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. What do you want to achieve by that?

Jeremic: It deals with the question of whether Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February is compatible with international law. The court is to give its advisory opinion on it. Yet it can only take that step if a majority of the General Assembly calls on the court to do so.

SPIEGEL: You have lobbied over 100 foreign ministers for their support.

Jeremic: No one is being asked to vote for our political position, but rather only for the right of a UN member to receive an advisory opinion by the court. So far, that wish has been expressed 21 times, and it has never been rejected.

SPIEGEL: By 2009 at the latest, Serbia wants to be bestowed with the official status of being a European Union accession candidate. At the same time, however, Belgrade wants to drag European countries before the International Court. How do you reconcile that?

Jeremic: We are proceeding very cautiously. However, if the territorial integrity of a country is threatened, it must be allowed to defend its position peacefully and legally. So I am very interested in how the EU states will vote. Germany, also, has voted "yes" in all 21 cases so far.

SPIEGEL: So far, 47 states have recognized the independence of Kosovo, among them 21 members of the EU. Do you seriously believe they will change their opinion?

Jeremic: We do not want a confrontation, but only legal advice. That has, above all, great moral and political weight. We want to get back to the negotiating table. If we are affirmed, then we will be open for talks. In the meantime, however, no further countries should recognize Kosovo or admit it into international institutions.



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SPIEGEL: Serbian President Boris Tadic has mentioned a partitioning of Kosovo as an option. Is that a threat?

Jeremic: No, a partition of Kosovo is not on our agenda. That was never our proposal and never will be.