



# KOSOVO

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## **Sweden warns US against “big crash”, US warns Serbia not to resist**

KosovoCompromise Staff

Sweden's foreign minister Karl Bildt warned the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice of his concerns about a possible outbreak of instability in the Balkans as the deadline approaches for the Contact Group-mediated negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina.

Bildt, a one time UN envoy to Balkans, said after his meeting with Rice that the West needs to make another serious push in order to secure a compromise deal between Serbia and the Kosovo Albanians.

"We need not a big crash but a soft landing," he told reporters after his meeting with Rice.

Meanwhile, however, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns gave an implicit warning to Serbia not to forcibly resist the independence of Kosovo.

In a testimony before a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee, after speaking with the US and EU envoys in the Contact Group Troika, Burns reaffirmed the U.S. backing for a period of supervised independence for Kosovo leading to full independence, as proposed by former UN mediator Martti Ahtisaari – a plan which had already crashed in the UN Security Council.

Burns warned Serbia and the Serb community not to oppose Kosovo's supervised independence.

"We have 17,000 NATO military personnel in Kosovo, including about 1,500 American troops. Those troops are there to maintain law and order. They will put down any attempt by any party to take the law into their own hands, or to seek a partition, or to seek instability. And I think we can trust NATO to do the job, and at the same time trust our diplomacy to be successful in convincing the people of the country to move forward, considering the fact that 95 per cent of the people who live in Kosovo now are Kosovar Albanian Muslims", Burns said.