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December 10, 2007

Russia warns Kosovo could be dangerous precedent

KosovoCompromise Staff

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Sunday that Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence carried with it the danger of interethnic clashes in the province and the resurgence of violence in the entire region.

"In light of the events around Kosovo, the situation in other countries of the region, especially Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, is already becoming conspicuously more strained," Lavrov said.

He pointed out that the threat of undermining international law as foundation for the stability of interstate relations as a whole was cause for serious concern.

"Unfortunately, by repeating over and over the thesis of Kosovo's predetermined independence, the Albanians have focused on the signals coming from a number of western countries showing their readiness to support unilateral independence," the Russian foreign minister said.

Russia, as he put it, will at the UN Security Council session devoted to the troika's report highlight the predictable negative consequences of self-proclaimed independence.

The Russian minister also said that "the Kosovo case is not unique" and that a unilateral solution for Kosovo "will inevitably become a precedent and project onto other similar situations."

"One need only remember Cyprus," the minister said. "Similar conflicts, or their sources, today remain under control primarily thanks to the efficiency of the basic norms of international law, and to weaken that law with thoughtless activities regarding Kosovo would be plain irresponsible," Lavrov warned.

If the EU sees the issue as "European," then "why has so much time been lost in integrating Serbia, within its current borders, into the EU?" he wondered, underscoring that Pristina had not shown the slightest bit of readiness to acknowledge Belgrade's legitimate interests in any area.