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UK, Spain, Slovakia warn against unilateral moves in Kosovo

KosovoCompromise Staff

The UK, Spain and Slovakia warned over the weekend against unilateral moves and in favor of a compromise solution for the Kosovo status.

The chief of the British office in Pristina David Blunt said that a unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence could leave severe consequences. "That could leave serious consequences, because it is unclear who will acknowledge it (the independence). The Kosovo case could become similar to Turkish Cyprus," said Blunt, a representative of Great Britain, one of the countries that has been consistently supporting Kosovo's international independence. He also said it was unrealistic to expect everything to end on December 11, after the finalization of the ongoing talks.

Slovakia said it could not recognize Kosovo's statehood without a U.N. resolution in place, according to Foreign Minister Jan Kubis. Kubis met with Kosovo Albanian officials in New York. The Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement which said Kubis told the Pristina officials that Slovakia "could not recognize Kosovo's independence based solely on a unilateral proclamation of independence."

"Unilateral moves on the part of any side would only aggravate the situation in the region and elsewhere," Kubis warned.

Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero voiced a similar opinion, saying that any unilateral solutions for Kosovo would be dangerous for the whole region.

But, Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha weighed in on the issue by saying that any unilateral decision or declaration of Kosovo's independence made without coordination with the U.S. government "or other states which see independence as the sole solution," would be "counter-productive."

In his report on the U.N. General Assembly session and the meetings he had during his stay in New York, Berisha said his goal was "to secure support for Albania's membership in NATO and for Kosovo's independence as a final status to which its citizens are aspiring."

"The problem lies in the fact that Russia can exercise its veto rights, and Kosovo independence can then only be realized through recognition by individual states," Berisha noted.



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Meanwhile, at a meeting in Portugal, EU member states defense ministers have adopted a position that an agreement on Kosovo was the only viable solution. Portuguese Defense Minister Nuno Severiano Teixeira, who presided over the two-day meeting in Lisbon, told reporters that the ministers pointed out the EU "wholeheartedly supports status negotiations mediated by the Contact Group troika."

The EU defense chiefs called for continuation of the diplomatic pressure on Belgrade and Pristina in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution, "which has no alternative."

"In our opinion, only such a solution is just and viable," Teixeira stressed.

The EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said in Portugal that the first round of talks in New York had been "constructive".

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana says that the direct Kosovo talks in New York have been "constructive."

Solana declined to answer what the EU would do if Belgrade and Pristina fall short of reaching a compromise by December 10, when the Troika is to submit progress report to the UN secretary-general.

"The two sides are engaged in the negotiating process and no one can talk about the results at this moment," the High Representative said.