

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT
BY
H.E. MR. VUK DRAŠKOVIĆ, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SERBIA AND
MONTENEGRO**

New York, 22 September 2005

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

Seven days ago, at this rostrum, I warned that the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, a province in Serbia administered by the United Nations since 10 June 1999, poses a serious threat to the stability of the Balkans.

Serbia and Montenegro supports the conclusion of the international Contact Group that there will be no return to the situation before 10 June 1999.

I would like to recall that before 1999, the regime in Serbia insisted on limited autonomy of Kosovo while the Albanian political leaders insisted on independence. These two extreme positions led to an armed conflict, and later to NATO air strikes against Serbia and Montenegro which ended after the adoption of UN SC resolution 1244 (1999). The protectorate was established in Kosovo but it did not bring into question the territorial integrity of Serbia and Montenegro.

The Contact Group's conclusion that there will be no return to the situation before 1999 has to apply equally to both sides – Serbian and Albanian. Consequently, there can be neither limited autonomy nor independence of Kosovo.

By proposing a status larger than autonomy and less than independence for Kosovo, a democratic Government in Belgrade demonstrated maximum commitment to a compromise solution. Unfortunately, seeking only independence, the Kosovo Albanians did not budge an inch from their positions of 1999.

Mr. President,

Unfortunately, I have to note that the international community should be partly blamed for more than a tragic position of the Serbian and other non-Albanian minorities in Kosovo as well as for political extremism of Albanian majority, coupled with many crimes.

The standards set for Kosovo are not even close to being fulfilled. Are we therefore going to abandon the "standards before status" policy?

Since 10 June 1999 until today, approximately 200,000 Serbs, Montenegrins, but also Turks, Croats, Roma, Jews and other non-Albanians were expelled from Kosovo. Close to 80 per cent of the territory is now inhabited only by Albanians. Several hundred Serbs were killed including many children. Around 40,000 thousand Serbian homes were demolished or set on fire as well as 150 centuries' old churches and monasteries. The remaining Serbs and other non-Albanians live in the so-called enclaves, without guarantees for their very lives and freedom of movement. No one in present-day Europe is so tragically unprotected.

Despite this, we hope that the UN military and police forces will remain in Kosovo. Without their presence, the tragedy of Serbs and other minorities would be complete. US, Italian, French as well as troops from other countries should be credited that Serbian Christian monasteries that have already been

proclaimed or nominated for international world heritage, have not been blown up or set on fire. We would like to thank the UN and ask them to stay in Kosovo as long as it is necessary.

For months now, Albanian extremists are issuing open threats of pogrom against the remaining Serbs, Montenegrins and other non-Albanians, unless their ultimatum on the proclamation of Kosovo as an independent State, is met. Recent killings of young Serbs announced this scenario.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

Ultimatums and threats of crimes and terrorism must not be accepted anywhere in the world, including in Kosovo. I hope that this will finally and decisively be made clear to the Albanian majority in the province.

Serbia and Montenegro demands a European level of rights protection of national communities in Kosovo, the protection of churches and monasteries as well as European status of the existing State borders with the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Albania. No more and no less than guaranteed under the Charter of the United Nations or UN SC resolution 1244 (1999). Our rights do not threaten any right of the Albanian majority, and an independent State of Kosovo is not a guaranteed right but an extreme demand.

We are truly and fully committed to a compromise, and a compromise does not imply that one side should get everything while the other side should lose everything. We are for reconciliation and a common European future in which Serbs, Montenegrins and Albanians will be best neighbors and friends to each other.

Stable and European Kosovo means a stable Western Balkans region - and *vice versa*. The choice is obvious.

Thank you.