

XXXIV

TECMUN

North Atlantic Treaty
Organization

Ambassador,

It is a fact that we today find ourselves living in a world of normalized loathing and danger. We are surrounded by rapists, murderers, corrupt politicians, and classists every single day. We are scared of choosing whom to love, of being indigenous, of having certain skin color, of being women, of being alive. Moreover, instead of reaching out to each other, being in a scenario in which success is unlikely, we envy those who manage to succeed. Rather than as humans, people are seen as numbers, as money, as bodies. I congratulate you, ambassador, for overcoming the imposed alienation and for realizing that the global situation is worsening. You, that have cared enough about humanity to come out of your “bubble” of privileges.

Thanks, ambassador, for choosing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Hopefully, after knowing NATO’s objectives, you will understand the significance of cooperation, not only because union means strength, but also because achieving peace individually is implausible. Let me tell you that, even though you see politicians as distant entities, they once were regular students of your age, and our generation has the next main faces of the world. Remember that we are not oblivious to the type of issues that are dealt with within this organization. I hope you feel comfortable and guided by the chair during the debate as well.

Beyond learning about international matters, practicing teamwork, and improving oratory and writing skills, I believe that the greatest goal that can be achieved in TECMUN is the development of empathy. We have nothing if we are not capable of seeing our neighbor as an equal, with the ability to think and feel, but with the right to do it in a completely different way. We have nothing if humanity does not blossom inside ourselves. More than science, politics, and laws, empathy is crucial because it is more human. However, it is completely different from love, impulses and passion, since it requires reflection and experience.

You, ambassador, not only for three days but for the time you keep a mentality of human sense, represent hope. Always aspire to inspire. From today, you inspire me.

Constanza Marquet Illescas
President of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
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Outline of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 29 North American and European nations. It implements the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed in Washington, United States, on April 4th 1949. From its founding, NATO aimed to be a system of collective defense whereby its member states agree on the mutual defense in case of an attack by any external party. Its primary purpose was to strengthen the military response in case of an invasion of western Europe by the Warsaw Pact allies during the Cold War. The organization promotes democratic values and allows members to cooperate towards topics of defense and security, as well as it plays an active role in operations regarding crisis management. Moreover, in the event that diplomatic efforts fail, NATO has the power to undertake military actions in order to enhance peace and justice.

Topic A

Repercussions of the instability of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, focusing on the recent alleged Russian violations

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States of America (hereinafter referred to as US) and the Russian Federation have had constant tensions over a variety of issues, alongside other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). One of their latest collisions is over the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (hereinafter referred to as INF), which was created in 1987 between the United States of America and the Russian Federation to regulate the usage of nuclear weapons by establishing the elimination from their stocks of intermediate-range ballistic missiles (hereinafter referred to as IRBMs) and ground-launched cruise missiles (hereinafter referred to as GLCMs). According to the US, Russia is developing a ground-based cruise missile, the Novator 9M729, with a range of at least 3,000 kilometers, which would violate the INF. The US has threatened to leave the treaty after accusing Russia from violating it for several years. Russia denies this, but states that if the US leaves, it will, equally. The departures of both countries from the INF Treaty would have as a consequence the freedom of using these weapons without further restrictions.

Background

During the Cold War (1947–1953), nuclear weapons were crucial to deter the Soviet aggression against the United States and its allies. The United States maintained its central strategic weapons at bases inside its borders and deployed shorter-range nuclear weapons in Europe, Japan, and South Korea, and on surface ships and submarines around the world.

In 1979, NATO decided to modernize the US nuclear weapons and persuade Russia to negotiate reductions in intermediate-range nuclear forces. While most of the allies agreed that NATO's security would be strengthened by eliminating the Soviet Union's ability to target all Europe with their SS-20 missiles, they also recognized that would be more likely to occur if the same happened in Western Europe. The INF Treaty, finally signed in 1987, was the first treaty to ban a category that each nation had already deployed and considered vital for their national security. The then Soviet Union had to destroy 1,846 missiles and the United States 846. The treaty ended ten years of debates, negotiations and protests for the installation of the Soviet SS-20 missiles and the North American replica, the Pershing, and the Tomahawk.

During the last years, both signatory States have accused each other of violating the INF Treaty. Russia in 2017 claimed that anti-missile systems in ground installations of the US Aegis missile defense system in Romania could easily be replaced by mid-range cruise missiles, which would be a direct violation to the treaty. In addition, Russia was concerned

about the presence of American combat drones, which operating range is 1,100 kilometers. The characteristics of these vehicles make them very similar to cruise missiles. Russia has complained, also, that the limits imposed by the treaty are already obsolete and that it bans missiles that could be useful to new threats in their geographical environment.

The United States, for its part, has determined for several years that the Russian Federation has violated its obligations under the INF Treaty in different tests since 2008. The Obama Administration raised its concerns about Russian obedience to the INF Treaty in a number of meetings since 2013, in which Russia continued to deny such violations. In 2016, the United States called a meeting of the Special Verification Commission (SVC), which was established by the INF Treaty to address compliance concerns. During this meeting, both sides raised their concerns, but failed to make any progress in resolving them. The United States has also begun to consider military responses, such as new land-based INF-range systems and sea-launched cruise missiles, seeking to incentivize Russia to reach a resolution and in case it deploys new missiles and the treaty collapses. The US State Department, in the 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 editions of the report *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments*, stated that Russia “is in violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty not to possess, produce, or flight-test a ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) with a range capability of 500 km to 5,500 km, or to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.”

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

After five years of often belligerent negotiation, the Soviet Union and the United States accepted the elimination of all land-based shorter-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (which could carry nuclear warheads), except sea-launched weapons. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed in Washington, D.C., on December 8, 1987, by the US President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. It was ratified by the American Senate and the Supreme Soviet one year later. This dual-track treaty called for the progressive dismantling, over a term of three years, of the American and Soviet nuclear or conventional ballistic and cruise missiles. The INF Treaty defined intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) as those with a range from 1,000 to 5,500 km and shorter-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) as those with a range from 500 to 1,000 km.

The treaty also allowed on-site inspections both in the United States and in the Russian Federation of missile assembly facilities, storage centers, deployment zones, and repair, test,

and elimination facilities, to confirm the elimination of INF missiles and the absence of new production. These inspections continued after the eliminations were complete and until May 2001. The INF Treaty also established the Special Verification Commission (SVC) in order to promote the implementation of the treaty. Both parties agreed that, if either party requested it, they would meet in the SVC to resolve questions related to compliance.

Recent alleged Russian violations to the INF Treaty

Over the years, the US has continuously claimed on the Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments reports that Russia has violated the INF Treaty, however it had not given many details until latest years. In the report made in April 2018, with facts found in 2017, the American government stated that Russia is not following the restrictions since it has in its power the system called 9M729, whose range exceeds from the accorded one in the treaty. Additionally, the document mentioned that the US had information about the companies involved in the development of the missile, the history, the coordinates of the tests, the Russian attempts of disguising the project, etc., without giving the exact data.

The Novator 9M729 (which also has the NATO designation SSC-8) has a range capability of 500 km to 5,500 km, when the INF Treaty bans GLCMs with that exact range. The Russian Federation began developing the SSC-8 around 2000 and started flight-testing it in 2008. Then, in September 2015, it was tested again, although it did not exceed the INF prohibited limit of 500 km. Moreover, according to the statement of the Director of National Intelligence:

Russia initially flight tested the 9M729 – a ground based missile – to distances well over 500 km from a fixed launcher. Russia then tested the same missile at ranges below 500 km from a mobile launcher. By putting the two types of tests together, Russia was able to develop a missile that flies to the intermediate ranges prohibited by the INF Treaty and launches from a ground-mobile platform (Coats, D., 2018).

The missile is likely to be derived from the Russian Navy's 3M-54 Kalibr missile (known by NATO as SS-N-27 Sizzler), but it has also been reported to be based on the Iskander-K. The Iskander-M is a short-range ballistic missile of the Russian Army system. It normally carries cruise missiles with a maximum range of 400 km. Although, it has the capability to launch R-500 intermediate-range cruise missiles (SSC-8). Once cruise missiles are loaded, the system is referred to as Iskander-K.

The 9M729 has been used on several battalions. For example, in 2016, the Russian Federation positioned two 9M729 missile battalions, one at Kapustin Yar missile test range, in southwest Russia, and the second one was moved from there in December to an operational base whose location is unknown, with the only information, given by an anonymous senior official, that it is somewhere in Russia.

These missiles, it is claimed by the US, can reach targets at a distance of 2,000 to 5,500 kilometers, range clearly prohibited by the INF Treaty. Plus, according to the same reports, the missile can be equipped with conventional and atomic warheads. Nonetheless, in the Zapad 2017 military maneuvers, it was reported by Russia that the missile reached a maximum of 480 kilometers. Russia has clearly denied all of the accusations, resorting to the claim that the missile has never been tested at distances like these nor was designed to reach targets within this range, which is why it does not violate the treaty. This statement has been confirmed by the Russian Foreign Ministry on several occasions and since Washington has not yet presented conclusive evidence, the tensions remain. Meanwhile, Russia alleged that the United States has itself violated the INF Treaty by deploying a component of a missile defense system, the Mark 41 Vertical Launch System (VLS), fact the US denies as well.

The uncertain future of the INF Treaty

The United States response to the recent alleged Russian violations to the INF Treaty has been to start researching the mobile ranged missile. The US has threatened to leave the treaty, while Russia states that if the it leaves, it will too, since the treaty is bilateral and does not impose limitations to other nations with nuclear weapons. NATO stated that the departure of Russia from the INF Treaty is inconvenient and would represent a threat to the relative existent peace between these two nations since the end of the Cold War. However, the United States sent in the first days of December 2018 an ultimatum of 60 days urging Russia to comply with the treaty by destroying or adjusting their nuclear forces which violate the INF Treaty. President Putin has reacted to the ultimatum denying any violation once more.

The Russian Federation has submitted a draft resolution on December 14th to the United Nations General Assembly in support of the preservation and enforcement of the INF Treaty, which calls on both of the parties to comply with their obligations under the agreement and to solve related issues .

The US challenge to Russia in the Sea of Japan

The Peter the Great Gulf is a gulf on the southern coast of Russia and the largest one of the Sea of Japan. Under international maritime law, nations' territorial rights extend only 12 miles from shore. Peter the Great Bay stretches farther than that from parts of the Russian coast, anyway, Moscow claims as its own the entire bay, which has been home to its Pacific fleet.

On December 5, 2018, a US Navy destroyer sailed into waters claimed by Russia in the Sea of Japan as a direct challenge to Russia. The guided-missile destroyer USS McCampbell “sailed to challenge Russia’s excessive maritime claims and uphold the rights, freedoms and lawful uses of the sea enjoyed by the United States and other nations” (McMarr, 2018). The move is part of what the Navy calls Freedom of Navigation Operation (FON), a principle of customary international law that challenges nations that claim sovereignty over waters beyond the 12 nautical miles allowed by international maritime law.

The McCampbell’s operation comes at a time of heightened tensions between Moscow and Washington due to their disagreements towards a variety of issues, including the US complaints over recent Russian operations near Ukraine and the US accusations that Russia has violated the terms of the INF Treaty.

Possible consequences of the dissolution of the INF Treaty

The exit of the United States from the INF Treaty is expected for February 2019, date from which it would take 6 months to make that decision effective. The end of the treaty will surely have a negative impact on international security and provoke an arms race, threatening Euro-Atlantic overall security architecture, since this continent would be the scenario of the possible conflict. The departures of Russia and the United States from the INF Treaty would have as a main consequence the freedom of utilizing nuclear weapons without further restrictions. This increases the possibilities of new armed confrontations considering there are growing tensions with other nuclear-armed countries, like China, North Korea, and Iran.

Regarding the US, another threat is the appearance of the Tomahawks (a long-range cruise supersonic missile) with ground positioning, which were eliminated in the framework of compliance of the INF Treaty. These projectiles will be able to be launched until they get in Russian airspace, meaning they will only be detected two minutes before they reach their target in said territory. The United States could also use shorter-range missiles in case of an armed conflict in the East, located strategically in NATO Member States. Yet, with reference to Russia, it would probably use intermediate-range ballistic missiles, like it did in the Cold War, in order to keep the influence inside Europe.

Another growing threat is China. In recent years both the United States and Russia have become more wary of China's military capabilities, due to the fact that its missile inventory is mostly composed of systems in the INF Treaty-prohibited range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers. On the grounds that China has expressed no interest in joining the INF Treaty or any similar one, the dissolution of this treaty can mean both, an opportunity to be protected from this country and the risk of having the needed nuclear armament to have an outbreak of a clash between the US or Russia and China.

It is really probable that the first action to counter after the possible dismantling of the INF Treaty is that US and other NATO Member States negotiate some agreements on ballistic missile defense (BMD) installations. Secondly, Washington has not answered to all the offers of Moscow to start negotiating a replacement treaty of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) of 1991, which expired in 2020, or extending the old one. The framework for negotiations of the START III began in 1997, but the treaty was never signed. This kind of treaty would be at the same time more viable but would have less impact on keeping security, since it consists on self-limiting the number of nuclear missiles. Anyhow, having benefited from the decline of the Russian military strength since the end of the Cold War, the United States of America is not really interested in the replacement treaty. Anyway, the extension of START could be a regulator, with a minor impact compared to the INF Treaty, of the tension between Russia and the US.

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Glossary

B

Ballistic Missile: A usually rocket-powered missile that is launched in a high arc under guidance for its ascent but that is unpowered and unguided once it begins its descent.

Battalion: A considerable body of troops organized to act together.

Belligerent: That was engaged in a war or conflict, accordingly to international law.

Bilateral: Affecting reciprocally two nations or parties.

C

Compliance: Conformity in fulfilling official requirements.

D

Deploy: Move troops or military equipment into position for action.

Disguise: To obscure the existence or true state or character of something.

Dual-track: Mutual.

E

Enhance: To improve the quality, amount, or strength of something.

F

Framework: A system of rules, ideas, or beliefs that is used to plan or decide something.

G

Gulf: A very large area of sea surrounded on three sides by a coast.

I

Incentivize: Encourage someone to do something.

Intermediate: Being or occurring at the middle place, stage, or degree or between extremes.

M

Maneuver: A procedure or method of working usually involving expert physical movement.

N

Nautical mile: A unit of distance used at sea that is equal to 1,852 metres.

Navy destroyer: A small fast military ship.

L

Launcher: A device that sends something such as a rocket or a missile into the air with force.

S

Signatory: A party that signed an agreement, specifically a state that signed a treaty.

Sovereignty: The power of a country to control its own government.

U

Ultimatum: One whose rejection will end negotiations and cause a resort to force or other direct action.

Tópico B

North Atlantic Treaty Organization's involvement in the Kosovo-Serbia conflict, focusing on preventing the outbreak of a conflict between Kosovo Serbians and Kosovo Albanians

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Introduction

After a peaceful protest against the abolition of Kosovo's autonomy by the then president of Serbia Slobodan Milosevic in 1989, a conflict of interest present all the way since the Middle Ages sparked hatred between the Albanian population of Kosovo, and Serbs. Nationalist feelings grew strong between the two parties, and the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) emerged as response to this conflict. The UCK attacks, labeled as terrorist by some countries, brought the conflict to international attention, and in 1999 NATO began intervening. Due to the refugee crisis caused by inhumane actions by both Yugoslav police and the UCK, as well as the failure of various attempts of diplomacy, NATO initiated an 11 week airstrike program, which resulted in a peace accord with Yugoslavia and in the deployment of NATO's peacekeeping troops in the region. While the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) are keen to grant Kosovo sovereignty, Russia insists that no decision can be taken without Serbian consent. Nowadays, the tension has not ceased, and the interests can result in the outbreak of a conflict within Kosovo's borders.

Background

Medieval Kosovo was the seat of the Holy Places of the Serb Orthodox, but in 1389 the Serb prince Lazar lost the battle Field of the Blackbirds, or Battle of Kosovo, against the Turkish Sultan Murat I. This event brought the collapse of Serbia and the encirclement of the Byzantine Empire by the Turkish, spreading the Ottoman influence. Islam began to gain a greater presence due to the arrival of Albanians, which soon outnumbered the Serbs. Since then, Kosovo became a land to be reconquered by the Serbs to avenge the defeat of Lazar.

In 1912, in the First Balkan War, the Balkan League (Montenegro, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria) triumphed over Turkey. In this way, Serbia reconquered Kosovo and part of Albania, in addition to which the new State of Albania was born. International diplomacy forced Serbia to withdraw from Albania, but in return it kept Kosovo. Yugoslavia, first known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, was founded in 1918 as a South Slavic state. However, many of Yugoslavia's citizens, including Albanians, were not Slavic by language and did not feel as belonging. Then, in the Second World War, Mussolini created a Greater Albania that grouped the Albanian and Kosovar territories.

After the war, Tito, the communist leader of the anti-fascist Yugoslav resistance, came to power in Yugoslavia, and Kosovo ended up being part of Serbia. He gradually gave the region more recognition and self-rule. Tito aimed as well to empower the republics in the

country seeking for the biggest national groups, especially the Serbs, to control the country as they had done before, given the fact that from 1918 to World War II the Serb royal family dominated Yugoslavia. He did not want to foment separatism either, thus he encouraged the national identity of smaller groups such as Macedonians and Kosovo-Albanians.

In Yugoslavia's 1946 Constitution, Kosovo was considered an autonomous region within Serbia. Towards the end of the 1960s, Albanian nationalism was strong and they were already the 90% of the Kosovar population. Then, with the 1974 Constitution, Kosovo became a federal entity, almost as powerful as the country's six republics (today's Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia), which made the Serbians feel their power had been diminished. In 1981, Albanian riots repressed violently took place, just after Tito's death. Rather than the secession from Yugoslavia, most Albanians aimed an improved lifestyle and legal changes that would upgrade the region's status to that of a full republic.

In 1989 the Serbian President Milosevic, suppressed the autonomy of Kosovo, stipulated in the 1974 Constitution, provoking numerous revolts. On June 2, 1990, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence. In 1992, Ibrahim Rugova, supporter of the peaceful exit of Yugoslavia, won the elections, illegal for Belgrade (Serbia's capital). Despite attempts of negotiation, some Kosovo Albanians sectors created the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK in the Albanian acronym), which advocated armed struggle to achieve independence.

Kosovo War and NATO intervention in Yugoslavia

The Albanians claimed to had been systematically stripped by the Serbians from their jobs and homes, and denied from access to education in their language. In turn, the Serbians claimed to be mistreated by the Albanian majority. In 1998, the clashes between the UCK, labeled by their opponents as extremists, and the Serbian forces, marked the beginning of the Kosovo War. President Milosevic began to use extreme force against the Albanians to the extent that he was blamed of genocide, accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In 1999, NATO decided to introduce an interposition force in Kosovo. A peace conference was also held in the castle of Rambouillet, outside Paris. In the final report, the parties committed themselves to creating a charter of autonomy for Kosovo that would include a ceasefire. In the end, Serbia refused to sign the agreement.

The Serbian assembly, in the face of the imminent NATO bombings, accepted the principle of Kosovo's autonomy. This was not enough to stop NATO's military intervention, which began on March 24, seeking to force the country's authorities to accept the conditions of

the negotiations. The bombing lasted 78 days and left around 500 deaths, according to Human Rights Watch. However, the repression did not subside and a humanitarian catastrophe took place, as more than 800,000 people left and grouped in refugee camps.

Finally, Serbia recognized that Russia would not intervene in their support. Therefore, Milosevic accepted the conditions of the mediation team of Finland-Russia and allowed the presence of NATO troops in Kosovo led by the United Nations (UN). When NATO also agreed there would be no independence referendum for three years, the Yugoslav government withdrew forces and the bombing was suspended in June. The deployment of NATO's mission Kosovo Force (KFOR) began. The Albanian refugees in Albania and Macedonia returned to Kosovo, while Kosovo Serbians fled. The conflict ended on June 10, 1999.

Independence of Kosovo in 2008

After the Kosovo War, on June 10, 1999, the Security Council adopted the 1244 Resolution, which created the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The main objective of this international presence in Kosovo was:

To provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people [...] can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which will provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo (Security Council, 1999).

In July, 1999, the first meeting of the Kosovo Transitional Council took place, a start towards the future of self-governance. In September, a step was taken by reaching an agreement on modifying the UCK and demobilisation. In 2001, fighting between Kosovo Albanians and Macedonia militants began. Afterward, in 2002, Ibrahim Rugova became the elected president of Kosovo, chosen seeking to achieve a coalition government. After international pressure, Serbians and Kosovars met in Vienna in 2003, for the first time since the war, but it ended in failure. Moreover, Russia stated that the UN could not impose a resolution to Serbia and a negotiable plan was needed.

In 2005, the Kosovo Assembly got a unanimous resolution confirming the will of the people for a sovereign state. As attacks towards the Serbian minority in Kosovo increased, Serbia released a new constitution in October, 2006, in which it declared sovereignty over Kosovo, increasing tensions. In 2007, Martti Ahtisaari, former Finnish President to whom

mediation had been entrusted, recommended to the Security Council independence under international supervision as the only viable option for Kosovo, idea later rejected by Serbia.

Finally, Kosovo declared its independence unilaterally on February 17, 2008, after their Assembly voted for it. Right after, many countries recognized Kosovo as a sovereign State, such as the US and most of the members of the EU. Anyhow, nowadays it is not recognised especially by Serbia, Russia, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia and Romania, the last ones fearing to increase separatist movements within their respective borders. Nonetheless, Kosovo is still not a Member State of the UN.

Kosovar organized crime

Kosovo declared its independence despite the poverty, ethnic tensions, weak state structures and a big dependence to the international missions, remittances and aid. Kosovo is rife with corruption and a high level of organized crime that cannot be solved yet. Organized crime groups in Kosovo work in the smuggling of petrol, cigarettes, Afghan heroin and Albanian marijuana across the frontiers of the country, as well as in money laundering and extortion. There are occasional armed conflicts, specially in the north part of Kosovo, where Serbians remain and where the mafia groups have much influence in absence of the State.

Criminal groups inhibit even more the legal business through extortion or loan sharking. This brings devastating consequences: investments are not attractive anymore, discouragement of the big diasporas to invest in their country, and emigration of the entrepreneurs and educated youth caused by the lack of perspective.

Tension due to Kosovar tariffs to Serbia and Bosnia

Trade between Serbia and Kosovo has been increasing in recent years and has been one of the few areas in which standardization has prospered. In 2017, Serbian sold to its former province a total of 440 million euros. The tension between Kosovo and Serbia grew after Kosovo decided to raise Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina's tariffs from a 10% to a 100%, as well as rejecting any type of good that does not refer to Kosovo as its constitutional name. This sudden raise in tariffs was taken after the International Criminal Police Organization (hereinafter referred to as Interpol) rejected Kosovo from joining it because of an attributed Serbian campaign. Bosnia and Herzegovina also voted against its entrance.

The EU has called on Pristina (Kosovo's capital) to revoke the tax, which violates the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), but Kosovo's Prime Minister Ramush

Haradinaj has asserted that tariffs will not be lifted until Serbia recognizes independence of Kosovo. Belgrade immediately protested against the measure, which it described as political. This country also warned about how this constitutes a strong pressure on the Serbian minority in Kosovo, which depends to a large extent on the arrival of Serbian products. Tariffs, if maintained, can have a significant impact not only for Serbia and Bosnia, but also for Kosovo, where a significant rise in consumer prices for certain products is expected.

Kosovo's controversial decision to form an army

Despite the establishment of the KFOR in 1999, and although security in the region improved, there was still a problem of organized crime, as well as perceived threats to Kosovo by the Serbian government. Due to this, the Pristina parliament has passed a bill that encouraged transforming the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), a civilian control force with a notably low armament, into a formal national army. According to the government's bill, this army could have a force of 5,000 men.

This army has been sought after ever since the declaration of Kosovar independence, nevertheless, the heavy Serbian presence in the parliament never allowed it. Now, the transformation initiative has been highly supported. The establishment of an army has been a highly controversial decision. While the EU and NATO have only requested the proper constitutional changes, the Serbian government has taken this as a direct threat to their land and citizens, according to Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin. This controversy has made communication between both parties nearly impossible. Both Russia and Serbia consider that the creation of an army in Kosovo is a risky step for the stability of the Balkans and Europe.

The only obstacle to making these plans a reality is that an Army must be formed in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of each State. In this case, the laws of Kosovo stipulate that it is not possible to form their own Armed Forces without the approval of the deputies of the Parliament, in which the minorities of the country, including the Serbian, are present. Nonetheless, on December 14, 2018, the Parliament approved the creation of the Army, increasing the instability with Serbia and the Kosovo Serbians.

The threat of a second Kosovo War

One of the possible solutions to the considered recently was the exchange of territories, Kosovo would deliver to Serbia the northern part populated by the Serbians, while Serbia would deliver to Kosovo two small inhabited areas that are adjacent to the self-proclaimed State. Belgrade

and Pristina moved into the negotiations phase but the initiative was strongly criticized by the Serbians and Kosovo Albanians, stalling this process.

A confrontation between the Kosovo Serbians and the Kosovo Albanians is more likely to occur rather than a conflict with Serbia. For its part, Serbia seeks to keep a close relationship with both the EU and the Russian Federation, therefore refuses to get involved in another direct confrontation. In case of an open conflict between the two ethnic groups in Kosovo, it is logical to assume that NATO would take the side of the Kosovo-Albanians. Meanwhile, the United States is primarily interested in the Albanian majority in the region because Washington has its support, which is very important for the existence of its military base deployed in the Kosovar territory.

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Glossary

A

Abolition: The act of ending an activity or custom officially.

B

Balkans: Usually characterized as comprising Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

C

Ceasefire: A temporary suspension of fighting.

Charter: A formal statement of the rights of a country's people, or of an organization or a particular social group, that is agreed by or demanded from a ruler or government.

D

Demobilisation: To release someone from one of the armed forces, especially at the end of a war.

Despite: Contemptuous treatment or behavior.

Diaspora: A group of people who spread from one original country to others.

Diminished: To reduce or be reduced in size or importance.

E

Encirclement: To reduce or be reduced in size or importance.

Entrepreneur: Someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity.

I

Inhibit: To slow down a process or the growth of something.

Interposition: The action of interference or intervention.

L

Loan shark: A person who charges very large amounts of money for lending something to someone.

M

Mafia: A close group of people who are involved in similar activities and who help and protect each other, sometimes to the disadvantage of others.

O

Outnumber: To be greater in number than someone or something.

R

Referendum: A vote in which all the people in a country or an area are asked to give their opinion about or decide an important political or social question.

S

Separatism: The belief held by people of a particular race, religion, or other group within a country that they should be independent and have their own government.

Slavic: Adjective which is given to people from Slavic region.

Smuggling: Move goods illegally into or out of a country.

Sovereignty: The power of a country to control its own government.

Sparked: To make something happen.

Standardization: To bring into conformity with a standard.

T

Tariff: A charge or list of charges either for services or on goods entering a country.

U

Unanimous: A group of people all agree about one particular matter or vote the same way.

Unilaterally: Used to indicate that something is done by only one person, group or country involved in a situation without the agreement of others.

W

Withdraw: To take or move out or back, or to remove.