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# KOSOVO/A<sup>1</sup> CONFLICT AND THE POST-COLD WAR ORDER: RUSSIA AND TURKEY POLICIES.

Enika Abazi\*

## 1. Introduction

Kosovo/a conflict as an event, has generated great debates related to the way the case was processed and implications it brought into international relations in general and states' Post Cold War identity issues and foreign policy in particular. At the international level the case was defined by many scholars as the event that mostly related with the symbolic and sermonic omen about the 'shape and shove' of the Post Cold War system. The symbolic of the case surged out controversies related to the Weberian concept of state autonomy<sup>2</sup> that recognize the supreme authority of the state in the domestic realm and state centrality<sup>3</sup> in international relations, assuming full respect over state sovereignty and integrity in the international system. In the case of Kosovo/a both concepts lost their sanctity. Scholars and policy makers exceedingly debated intervention, institutions and legitimacy as concepts and practice. The case, more then every other event in the Post Cold Era forewarned the configuration of new power distribution, differentiating states in weak and strong in Waltzian's terms (Waltz, 1979)<sup>4</sup>, while fuelling their internal security dilemma related to societal identity<sup>5</sup> and other insecurities.

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<sup>1</sup> Kosovo is the Serbian name for the region, and as such is used in international vocabulary. Kosova is Albanian appellation for the region. Kosovo/a would be used thorough the text as a way of being fair to all parties.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of state autonomy connotes "the ability of the state to make domestic or foreign policy as well as shape the domestic realm, free of domestic social-structural requirements or the interests of non-state actors" (Hobson, 2000: 5).

<sup>3</sup> The concept of state centrality define state "as a unit-force 'entity'" able "to mitigate the logic of inter-state competition and thereby create a cooperative or peaceful world" (Hobson, 2000:8 and 218) (whether it is imbued with high or low domestic agential power)

<sup>4</sup> In Waltz terms the strong states have maximized their power and have influential decision-making, which other-vice points out great powers; the weak states are the followers that do not have other choice but to take this role.

<sup>5</sup> Societal identity imply according to Buzan (1991: 19) "sustainability, with acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom".

With the end of the Cold War every major state/actor in world politics proved to be in the middle of a profound change. In the 10 years that followed this event, Kosovo/a marked an important development in the Post Cold War era. In Europe, it marked the end of the Cold War structures; it demonstrated 'the primacy of human rights in international politics' (Dini, Autumn 1999: 4); and it redefined 'aspects of security in relation between NATO and the EU and NATO and Russia' (Rotfeld, 2000: 182), and the EU and Turkey. Actor's place and policies gained currency and momentum sometime reflecting a blurred vision for the future.

In many respects Kosovo/a case remained a hostage of geopolitics, historical and present symbolics. At an international level it could be considered as a test of Post Cold War geo-politics proving that unfortunately nothing has changed from the realist world politics perceptions. In an anarchical world still the distribution of capabilities matter as a definer of state's behaviour.

This theoretical conceptual framework is large involving vast and debatable issues, each of them dealt specifically and extensively by other international scholars. The present paper will avoid the theoretical debate; it will only use theoretical framework for developing a case study. For the purpose of this paper the role, place and policies of Russia and Turkey towards the Kosovo/a conflict would be reviewed briefly as case studies in the light of their shifting strategic landscape, security concerns and domestic developments after the end of the Cold War era. The aim of this paper is not to detail all Russia and Turkey efforts and practices in dealing with the case of Kosovo conflict, neither would it enumerate all circumstances and effecting factors. These limitations are done with the intention of avoiding onerous details whilst preserving the cohesion and consistency of the paper.

## **2. Russia and Turkey in the Balkans. A Short Historical Record**

Historically Russia and Turkey have been important players and in a way or in an other, have both been present in making the Balkans' history and competing with each other for supremacy, control and influence in the region. With the defeat of the Serb and other Balkan forces including the Albanians, by the Ottomans at the battle of Kosovo/a in 1389, the long Ottoman control over the Balkans started. Competing with the Ottoman Empire for the domination of the Balkans, Russia has been on the side of Serbia in its struggle against the Ottomans. Although, the support of Russia has been always in favor of Serbia it remained ambiguous and not all the time consistent. The center of Russian

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influence in the Balkans have moved from Montenegro in the beginning of eighteenth century (Anderson, 1966:48) to Bulgaria and Montenegro that received better deals in the Conference of Constantinople and Treaty of San Stefano following Turkish amnesty with Russia in 1878. The Congress of Berlin in June 1878 recognized formally the independence of Serbia together with Montenegro and Rumania from the Ottoman Empire. In Anderson's (1966: 212) words 'Serbia gained merely a triangle of territory to the south-easts of her existing frontiers...and her disillusionment with the territorial settlement and Russia support of Bulgaria against her, drove her at once into a rapprochement with the Habsburg Empire'. Russia's ambiguous policy in support of Serbia could be observed in the present times as well and this paper would try to demonstrate that.

Russians reserve a low regard towards Serbs due to their historic disobedience and quest for independence in their policies. Historically, 'Russia's align with Serbia, has been on the pursuit of the zones of influence rather than the Slavic solidarity' (Levitin, spring 2000: 131) and Orthodox faith unity. Serbs in return continuously have followed an ambiguous but unremitting relationship with Russia. A relationship that skilfully was used to gain supremacy in the region *visa-vie* the neighbours while maintaining an independent stance in foreign policy and domestic affairs (Anderson, 1966: 48-9, 166, 186-7). This pattern of insubordination continued also during the Cold War and was masterly used by Tito, making the two superpowers to play out each other and receive favours from both sides on favour of country's prosperity. However, at the end of the twentieth century, although not for the first time, Russia found itself 'compelled' to defend the Serbian cause pushed forward by 'geopolitics imperatives rather than ethnic considerations' (Danopoulos and Cobani, 1997: 187) or pan-Orthodoxy affiliation.

On the other hand, Turkey as the successor of the Ottoman Empire perceives 'Kosovo/a... as a debt it owe to its own history' (Ecevit, 06 April 1999) and the Balkans as an 'inseparable part of history, and<sup>6</sup> culture' (Çeviköz, 1998:181), counting for this on almost five centuries of coexistence under the roof of the Ottoman Empire. Under the Ottoman Empire the land populated by ethnic Albanians, including Kosovo/a, was divided into several Ottoman administrative units. In the period of 1881-1912, which constitutes the last period before the establishment of the first independent Albanian state, the ethnic Albanians were split into the vilayets of Kosovo, Shkodra, Monastir, Joannina, including within them other ethnic groups as Vlachs, Gypsies and Turks. In Malkom'

<sup>6</sup> The words in italic are added.

(1998: 1-30) terms, the Ottomans preferred this administrative approach of dividing ethnic groups into different and mixed administrative units as a way of reducing any risk of national state-formation within the Empire. These inherited patterns of division remain still present in the Balkans although this time not because of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the Albanians converted to Islam and as such had a quick integration into the Ottoman Empire structures and society where they were accepted without discrimination. Accordingly, there are millions of people who have Albanian ancestry and relatives in that region. In addition to these realities there is a Turkish minority living thorough the Balkans and in Kosovo/a in particular, left behind since the times of the Empire, to whose fate Turkey is sensitive and for political and social reasons would like to strengthen its impact and importance on the domestic affairs of their constituent state.

During the Balkan wars 1912-1913 the Ottoman Empire was driven almost completely from the Balkans. Serbia won the war against Bulgaria and expanded its territory to the east including all of present day Macedonia and Kosova (Skendi 1967: 36-39). Historically the seat of the medieval Serb kingdom, Kosovo/a was only "liberated" from Turkish rule by the Serb Army in 1912, where Albanians, predominantly Muslim, were the majority population (Malkom, 1998). During the Cold War period the past rivalries were frizzed in the traditional terms while reflected in the framework of the 'zones of influences'.

In the Balkans ironically history keeps unconsciously repeating and revealing almost the same picture in different colours. In 1914, the decaying Austro-Hungarian Empire tried to give a lesson to the small Serbia miscalculating its power and the consequences of such an action. Russia got on the side of Serbia, Turks sided Germany and the whole world was dragged into one of the most shattering wars, World War I. This war wrecked Europe for two generations, dissolved Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman Empires with much else. There is almost the same today but Europe coping in time with Kosovo/a conflict saved itself may be from World War III and other undesirable consequences.

### 3. Kosovo/a Conflict and Its Symbolics

In its symbolics, Kosovo/a question was different from Bosnia. The difference

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<sup>7</sup> Civil war could be defined as a 'protracted internal violence aimed at securing control of the political and legal apparatus of a state' (Evans and Newnham, 1998: 64). Civil wars could be separatist movements, which associate with ethnic nationalism aiming at the establishment of a state ethnically homogenous. This is the other extreme of civil war that transcend domestic political implications.

results from the fact that Kosovo/a did not represent a simple turmoil or a civil war<sup>7</sup> within the domestic arena of the state. The case is defined as an intra state conflict aiming at dividing the state in ethnic lines. The distinction between inter-state conflicts and intra-state conflicts is becoming less distinct today considering that such distinction depends from which point of view you are looking at the conflict. Consequently, wording Aron (1981:7) 'if a province, an integrated portion of the state's territory or a fraction of the population, refuses to submit to the centralized power and undertake an armed struggle, the conflict, though civil war will regard to international war, will be considered a foreign war by those who see the rebels as the expression of an existing or nascent nation'. In the Kosovo case the development of the events where according to the UNCHR data, 850 000 people were expelled from their homes and killings in mass were continuing systematically, state centric concept of authority and related practices and strategies revealed to be detrimental in the sense of sacrificing other human values for those of sovereignty and territorial inviolability of the state<sup>8</sup>. State desisted to be the protector of its citizens instead it twisted into a security threat to them (Moller, 2000). Under such symbolic the case represents the reality of separatism and the danger of granting to a national minority mechanisms for secession and independence with implications for state sovereignty and institutions.

Both Russia and Turkey are sensitive to their own territorial integrity being subject of irredentist movements that challenge their recognized sovereignty integrity or national social cohesion. The issue of human rights upon which the Kosovo case was processed fuels other sensibilities. In Bilgin (2001:19) words 'human rights is viewed by some as a "national security" issue as far as it is perceived to be used by external actors to intervene ...in domestic affairs'. Kosovo/a case symbolised Chechnia for Russia and Kurdish question for Turkey. For both countries such question represents an issue within the domain of state autonomy. In such a case the use of force is within the state's rights and both states have showed that force is on the state right to discipline the troublemaking peoples. There are fears that Kosovo/a case may become a precedent for bypassing the UN which may one day be used against states in similar circumstances or others. In the case of Russia and Turkey, quite easily following the same logic used in the Kosovo/a case the Caucasus or southeast Turkey issues, could be the following up of such precedent.

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<sup>8</sup> State in Loke's understanding is the best arrangement that offered to its subjects protection from foreign harassments and from each other. The relationship between the state and its subjects took the form of a social contract that assigned duties and responsibilities that in the external environment paramount with the 'national interest' concept. In the domestic realm state emerged as a protector of its subject's interests.

Assigning the same similarities of Kosovo/a case to Chechnia and Kurdish issue is not accurate. The understanding of the Kosovo/a case should be considered in association with its peculiarities that relate to its historical context, Yugoslav Federation realities and the processing and management of the whole conflict on the side of international community<sup>9</sup>. Consequently Russia and Turkey policies towards the Kosovo/a case that would be identified in the following section are not comprehensively justified.

#### **4. Post-Cold Order: Russia and Turkey Policies on Quest of Identity.**

##### **4.1. Russia quest for place and identity in the Post Cold Era: Dealing with Kosovo/a case.**

The end of the Cold War left Russia with erosion of power, shrunken in size and influence, stroked by financial crisis and economic difficulties. In its quests for place and identity Russia's foreign policy revealed ambiguity, confusion and inertia. Moscow's policy towards Kosovo/a failed to accomplish any of its proclaimed or hidden aims. Moscow managed neither to become a genuine partner to the West, nor to create an effective anti-Western outpost in Yugoslavia' (Levitin, Spring 2000:130). Russia found itself sandwiched between inherited Tsarist and Soviet ideas<sup>10</sup>, new concepts of national security interests and economic and military imperatives.

For Russia, the period after the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union was characterised by a period of rapprochement with the West materialised in NATO-Russia special relations and in Russia's participation in the Contact Group that dealt with peace process in Bosnia. Russian forces were part of IFOR and in SFOR serving side-by-side NATO forces. The same spirit per inertia followed in the beginning of the Kosovo/a crisis. Close consultations took place on the issue between Russia and Euro-Atlantic foreign ministries. Russia co-sponsored with the other Security Council members (China abstained) the UN Security Council resolution 1160 and 1199 that imposed embargo-on Yugoslavia and called for cease-fire and appealed on the possibility of further actions that would restore peace and stability in the region respectively. In the framework of the Contact Group, Russia dealt with the Kosovo issue before

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<sup>9</sup> For more analytical arguments see Enver Hasani (2001).

<sup>10</sup> In Tsarist Russia and later Soviet Union, expansionist policies were considered as imperatives of both state security and power maximisation.

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and during the Rambouillet negotiations<sup>11</sup>. The second round was held from 15 to 18 March and finalised with one side signature of Proposed Peace Agreement. Only the Kosovo/a representatives signed the Agreement. The Agreement had five main points: immediate cessation of violence; the withdrawal of FRY military, police and paramilitary forces from Kosovo/a; the stationing in Kosovo/a of an international military force led by NATO; the safe return of all civilians and displaced peoples; an political solution for the autonomy of Kosovo/a. . The cooperation with the Russians appeared to be rather good. In appearance a peaceful identity transition was taking place, Russia was trying to develop a genuine partnership with the West, meanwhile trying to safeguard diplomatically its superpower status.

Convinced that a close relationship with Miliošević was essential to Russian policy in the Balkans, special relationship took place between Russian military-intelligence establishment and Belgrade regime. The exchange of visits between Moscow and Belgrade high officials became more frequent, including the visit of Miliošević to Moscow and his meeting with Jeltsin in June 1998 (Reuters, 21 June 1998). For the West this was the continuation of the job division settled at Dayton where Russia dealt with Serbs and the West with the rest. Stretching to its long-established historical Russian politics, Moscow tried to oppose Western policies towards Miliošević regime, smarting in the role of former superpower and ethnically bound to its Slav kinship. At first, it tried to boost its influence through a Pan-Slavic union supporting Seselj's<sup>12</sup> call on other 'brotherly' countries, including Armenia, Greece, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Romania and Bulgaria, to join in a new alliance to 'counterbalance the forces of NATO and the European Union.' It may sound a little bit funny, but reportedly nobody laughed at it in Moscow (Reuters News Service, 06 November 1998). The Russian Duma authorised its Committee on Legislation, Judicial and Legal Reform and its Committee on International Affairs to draw up a draft decision calling on President Boris Yeltsin to sign a treaty establishing the Russia-Belarus-Yugoslavia union. The president supported the idea of such a union but he never signed the decree, revealing once more incessant contradictions between Duma and Kremlin that partially explain Russia's puzzled foreign policy towards Kosovo/a crisis. At the end the issue was shelved.

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<sup>11</sup> First round of Rambouillet negotiations was held from 6-23 February 1999

<sup>12</sup> Vojuslav Seselj was deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav government and leader of the Serbian Radical Party during Miliošević time.

Being aware that their bid for influence in the Balkans remained fragile, Russia came up with a strategy that would compound NATO's difficulties by trying to line up a new arms contract with Cyprus. The Russians supplied S-300 anti-aircraft missiles to Cyprus and promised to supply the SA-15 short-range mobile air defence system as well. This decision fomented tensions between Greeks and Turks and suddenly Russians became an essential player in the Greek-Turkish dispute, a first step that aimed to checkmate NATO in the area but also shake the alliance by the Cyprus arms deal. Exploiting the differences between NATO members Greece and Turkey, Russia aimed the preservation of the *status quo* in Yugoslavia and thereby preventing NATO from doing what it wishes without Moscow's approval. In the case of Kosovo/a, the tactic worked at least during 1998 (Jane's Information Group Limited, 19 October 1998). Under the American and the EU pressure upon the bellicosity between Greeks and Turks as the Kosovo/a crisis worsened, the Greeks called off the plan to put Russian missiles on Cyprus. Once more, Russia miscalculated its position and abilities to yell a result in its favour and its favourite Miliošević. At the same time a bitter lesson was learned; Russia did not have a real veto on Western actions.

NATO's air campaign in Kosovo/a, made Russia find itself pressured on its western military flank through ongoing NATO advancement towards the East. The air strikes have come just days after Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic became officially NATO's member. Russia perceived them as an offensive action just after the recruitment of Russia's former allies. This situation was considered as a serious threat to Russia's own security since historically power and security were enhanced by expansionist policies that seized up nearby lands. Consequently, 'Moscow's fears of being encircled and isolated were fuelled to the level of near-hysteria' (Kremp, 22 December 1999). Boris Jel'tsin, Russian president of that time denounced the act as a 'naked aggression' and warned that Russia reserved the right to take 'adequate measures, including military ones, to defend ...the overall security of Europe' (Niall, 26 March 1999). Yevgeny Primakov's<sup>13</sup> Washington visit was dramatically cancelled when he was halfway across the Atlantic. All cooperation with NATO was suspended and Russia's military and diplomatic representatives were recalled from NATO headquarters (ITAR-TASS-World Service, 23 March 1999) and Duma decided to abandon the ratification of the Star III arms reduction treaty (Daily Telegraph, 03 April 1999). On 9 April 1999, Jel'tsin warned that NATO

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<sup>13</sup> Yevgeny Primakov was Russia Prime Minister of that time

actions were triggering Russia towards a military response that at minimum will involve Europe and may be the world as well (Reuters World Service, 9 April 1999).

Multitudes of warning and empty threats were thrown out, aiming at the revival of the ghosts of the Cold War while a Russian counter military operation was feared, especially after an uncommented news which claimed that President Boris Jeltsin has ordered the targeting of Russian strategic missiles at NATO nations (Turkish Daily News, 10 April 2001). In an effort that would make intentions speak out and meanwhile recovering Serbs morale, Russia announced its plans to move from its military base in the Black Sea nine warships to Adriatic Sea in a reconnaissance and monitoring mission (Reuters News Service, 14 April 1999). Russia tried to create an environment comparable with those of 1949 Berlin blockade or the 1961 Cuban missile crisis. However much suggested that the motivations behind the Russian reactions were also related with domestic politics, the consequent need to identify an external enemy as a way to express both the disagreement about NATO enlargement policies and the applicability of the Article 5 of the Washington treaty on out-of aria operations without UN Security Council approval (Antonenko, Winter 1999/2000: 124).

At the end Russia seemed intimidated by the prospect of damaging its 'good relations' with the West and consequently risking possible financial aid by the IMF. Despite the genuine sense of popular outrage, however, while condemning NATO's air strikes as a 'blow against common sense', Yevgeny Primakov, Russian Prime Minister, declared that Russia would not retreat from reforms nor turn its back on the West. 'There will be no isolationism', he said (Financial Times, 26 March 1999). Russia had more at stake than Serbia did in maintaining good relations with the West.

Having lost the bit on the Balkans at least on the use of force, Russia prompted as an indispensable asset in peace-making efforts. Victor Chernomyrdin, Jeltsin's special envoy, a 'sensible politician' competent in Kosovo/a affairs was sent to Belgrade to lower the tensions in the region (ITAR-TASS, 20 April 1999). With the intermediation of the Russian envoy a military-technical agreement was finalised, leading to the withdrawal of the Yugoslav forces from Kosovo/a and the establishment in Kosovo/a of the peace implementation mission, KFOR. Obviously, Russian emissaries told Milosevic that the deal he was offered was the best he could get. Russia would back him no further. Chernomyrdin, whom the US had deliberately briefed about its ground invasion plans, said this publicly (Guardian, 04 September 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Yevgeny Primakov was Russia Prime Minister of that time

Bringing Russia as a partner into the peace-making coalition was a credit payed to Russia, first to put more pressure on Milosevic and second to bring Russia into the peace deal. Russia still remains a nuclear power with 1.2 million men under arms and four naval fleets that can not be ignored for long. Conscious of this reality Russia still acts the part of superpower and still somehow expects to be treated as such. In the case of Kosovo/a, Russia smarted with a combination of rhetorical and improbable threats, offers of help or opposition to any move of the West until the last deal striving to rebuild Russian influence in the world. The outcome of these actions revealed that 'Russia's influence and prestige-among former Yugoslav republics and neighbouring countries, and even in Belgrade-has fallen to the lowest point ever (Levitin, Spring 2000, p.130). In Pushkov (2000:5) terms Russia had no other options but to develop in conditions of the dilemma defined by two Russia imperatives: consistent upholding of the country's national interests and integration into the world economy, which could be translated as the dilemma between maintaining and improving the relations with the West in favour of recognising the priority of the US and other Western countries interests over its own, or sacrifice its improved relations with the West to asserting itself as the main military-political force of the continent. Neither option apparently was affordable by Russia.

Knocked down in the defences Russia burst out its new military doctrine<sup>14</sup>. The final version as approved by President Vladimir Putin on 21 April 2000 was published in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 22 April 2000. An unofficial translation in English was released by BBC Monitoring on 22 April 2000. The new military doctrine attempts 'to counteract the strengthening of Russia as an influential centre of the multipolar world' and mitigate the threats to its military security. The new doctrine allows Russia to use armed forces, not for the protection of its own territory or peace-making operation abroad but for protection of some-other foreign-policy interests. The doctrinal provisions are supposed to have a deterrent effect. This includes Russia's right to use nuclear weapons in the event of a large-scale aggression. Russia may resort to them for lack of other means to ensure its national security. The internal threats are described thoroughly and the lessons of Chechnia enlightened by the Kosovo/a cases are obviously taken into account. Russia considers the internal threats as of great importance for Russia's security, considering that under some circumstances they can easily turn into external threats, and the Istanbul summit of the OSCE approach towards Russian policy in Chechnia taught this lesson. (Kunadze, June 2000).

<sup>14</sup> A draft of the New Military Doctrine was published first by *Krasnaya Zvezda* on 9 October 1999, pp. 3-4

Domestic politics in Russia have been sliding gently down a historical slope that leads from democracy via oligarchy back to despotism, where Russian nationalism is the grease determining the speed of the descent and Kosovo/a case accelerated that speed (Ferguson, 26 March 1999). With Yeltsin resignation from presidency on 31 December 1999 and handover to Prime Minister Putin until the presidential elections in March 2000, Kosovo/a was used as an argument on the support of the nationalistic policies. Volunteers that were recruited for Yugoslavia in many cases were used as paramilitary, to create confusions during the pre-electoral campaign or for propaganda effects. NATO's military action gave to the Russian military and political leadership the pretext to use nationalism as a force for political mobilisation. The nationalistic vote was there to be won or lost and Putin won it. Russia is appealing on nationalism, looking at it as a saving boat that will help Russia to gain its internal cohesion and reconstitute its great power status and identity.

#### 4.2 Turkey quest for place and identity in the Post Cold Era and the Kosovo/a case

In the Balkans Turkey's Post Cold War foreign policy remained in an 'observer status' rather than assuming leadership. This attitude could be mainly attributed to the patterns of Turkish' Post Cold War security culture that in Karaosmanoğlu's (2000) terms could be characterized as "defensive realpolitic" aiming at the preservation of balance of power and *status quo*. Although in the early '90s under Turgut Özal, Turkey started a "Balkan offensive", reviving the Ottoman heritage in the ex-territories of the Ottoman Empire, these policies were discontinued because of the war in Bosnia and Kosovo/a.

Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans suffers the consequences of a twisted legacy, where the past effects the present as much as the future. The Ottoman past ties Turkey to the Balkans, while the challenges of the future keep it in the role of the follower unable to embark on independent actions. In Ismail Cem's (September-November 1997:7-6) words 'Turkey is now facing the task of rethinking its own universal purpose. It has to draw on the past, dream about the future and determine what original contribution it can bring to the grand walk of humanity. The goal of today's generation should be to carry Turkey to the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the characteristics of a "Global State"'.

Turkey's policy towards Kosovo/a moved through concession and passive stances in general, favouring the preservation of the *status quo* to offering

an active support for NATO military operations. Laying behind the incontestable principles of the UN charter and the OSCE documents, Turkey was firm about the preservation of the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and sympathised with the calls for refrain from the use of force and interference into the internal affairs (Turkish Daily News, 1 May 1998). Negotiations and dialogue without preconditions between the Belgrade regime and the Kosovo/a leadership under the United States mediating role were considered the way out of the Kosovo/a crisis. (Ergil, 29 March 1998). The Turkish approach was very closed to that of the Belgrade government (Tanascovic, 01 April 1999) excluding Turkish request for the US as mediator. Accordingly Turkey remained ambiguous about the outcomes, the effectiveness and the legitimacy of NATO operations in Yugoslavia. Many leading Turkish scholars formulated their concerns about NATO's actions. In Seyfi Tashan's, words (1.April.1999) the head of Dış Politika Enstitüsü (Institute of Foreign Policy) in Ankara, NATO's operation 'aggravated the massacres of Kosovars by Serbs'. Reluctant on air strikes efficiency, Hasan Koni (1.April.1999) professor at Ankara University and ASAM (Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies Research) referring to the case of Iran would word out that 'it has become obvious that air strikes cannot produce immediate results'. Huseyin Bağcı (1.April.1999) professor at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, would be concerned about the fact that 'NATO's intervention was not approved by the U.N. Security Council', and as such the attitude of Russia and the sending of its warships to the Mediterranean could find a justification on that. The position of the Government was not that distant from such approaches as well (Radikal, 08 July 1998). Obviously Turkey was sketching parallels between the Kosovo/a case and the Kurdish question in South-eastern Turkey, fearing a polarisation process in ethnic lines.

Other insecurities that were related to the case of Kosovo/a were present for Turkey as well. In Ecevit (27 March 1999), terms 'Serbian-Orthodox union, the foreign policy based on the Serb-Orthodox axis' was considered as a driving force towards a polarisation that 'might be far more dangerous than that of the ideological polarisation' for Turkey. Turkey's frustration grew up after the outcome of the NATO's operations and the future of Kosovo/a. The future prospects of Kosovo/a were perceived as the start of a dangerous process. (Utku, 20 June 1999). The crisis in Kosovo/a opened the Albanian question in the Balkans that is not only related with the establishment of an Albanian state of all Albanians leaving in the Balkans but with the re-drowning of the geopolitics of the Balkans. The Balkan wars 1912-1913 ended up by splitting the Albanian

inhabited lands into two parts: one half of the population in the new created Albanian state and the other half remained split among the neighbours. Being split into different states since the creation of the Albanian state in 1912, Albanian factor has never constituted an important voice into the Balkan policies. Demographically ethnic Albanians constitute a potential, which easily could, in a case of unification, change the geopolitical configuration of the region (Abazi, 2001). On the other hand Albanians are mostly of Muslim faith<sup>15</sup>. Religious belonging is used for political mobilisation in the region and beyond.

Numbers and religion belonging decided the alignments in the region and beyond, Greece, Serbia and Russia aligning together in 'defence' of pan-Orthodoxy. Turkey being aware of such configuration would like to emerge in the Balkans as a counter-balancing factor. First it is in Turkey's geo-strategic interests to avoid an overwhelming Pan-orthodox axe in the Balkans, based on Greek-Serb orthodox kinship that would cut Turkey out from Europe and will bring Russia in. Moreover, there is a belief in the Turkish circles that in the Balkans 'Turkey is at least as important a Eurasian power as Russia is. The aim is to prevent Russia from becoming even stronger in the region. This is what the Serbians are trying to accomplish in Kosovo/a' (Turkish Daily News, 1 September 1998). On quest for clues in the region Defence Minister Hikmet Sami Turk at the same time announced that Turkey's policy in the region would secure 'autonomy for the ethnic Turkish minority in Kosovo/a within the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia' (Turkish Daily News, 25 March 1999). Turkish minority in Kosovo/a and Yugoslavia is at the minimal margins of significance. Nevertheless, this policy has double effects. First Turkey keeps its presence in the region, second, the *status quo* and the existing balance of power in the region is preserved. This policy is not any different from today Turkish political security culture of *status quo* preservation.

Affected by the concerns about the domestic cohesion, economic imperatives and its Post Cold War identity, Turkey's foreign policy remains often subordinated or held hostage of domestic policies. More than the case itself Turkey is preoccupied about the pressure that is exercised on Turkey over the issue of minority rights and the parallels that are drawn between the case of Kosovo/a and Kurdish issue. Ocalan's capture and trial and the crisis in Kosovo/a took place during the electoral campaign for the election of Turkish parliament.

<sup>15</sup> Milosevic used religious belonging as propaganda to gain support against the Albanians. Kosovars were considered as Islamist terrorists and their aim was the creation of a Great Albaina a bastion of Islamic fundamentalist in Europe. In history Albanians has never been guided by religion. The only unifying factor of the Albanians as declared in the League of Prisen (1878) is the Albanianship (Feja e Shqiptarit eshte Shqiptaria The Albanian faith is the Albanianship) (Skendi, 1967). Furthermore, Kosovars did not receive any help from the Islamic world that this time led by Saddam Huseyn who was on the side of Milosevic.

Turkey finds it difficult to persuade other nations that the 15 or so million Turkish Kurds officially have the same rights as any Turkish citizen. There is the belief among the Western countries that in reality Kurds are still treated as second class citizens and there are many allegations of human rights violations (Contemporary Review 1 April 2000). Accordingly the EU has placed Turkey last among the countries in the accession process, mainly due to an unacceptable human rights record, together with the problem of Cyprus.

Turkey sees with distrust its membership delay in the EU though it is a part of Europe via its membership in NATO. Under such considerations in quest to accentuate Turkey's Western vocation, Turkey felt obliged to share NATO's aspirations and participated willingly and actively to the American-led war in Kosovo/a. On the other hand strengthening Western belonging is an important feature not only of Turkey's quest for identity but part of its security policy and culture (Karaosmanoğlu, 2000) as well. Accordingly, Turkey joined NATO's naval forces in the Adriatic Sea with a frigate and the Turkish bases were offered to NATO for facilitating the military operations, while declaring that military action should remain the last option for Kosovo/a (Turkish Daily News, 23 January 1999). When NATO took the decision to intervene Turkey expressed its readiness to participate in the air strike and if necessary in land operation as well (Turkish Daily News, 25 March 1999). There were some practical reasons after such a zeal. The Russian strategy behind Cyprus missile crises was considered as an effort that aimed to squeeze Turkey as hard as possible while improving relations with Greece. In such a case Turkey needed NATO as an strategic counterbalancing partner. On the other hand, Turkey's apparent exclusion from the ongoing diplomatic efforts on the problem, raised not only the question of the role of Turkey in Kosovo/a but also the frustration of Turkey about its place and role in the European and regional security architectures especially after the last developments on the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) issues.

With the end of the Cold War, Turkey an important Euro-Transatlantic geo-strategic partner felt marginalised with the disappearance of the Russian threat in the south-eastern flank of NATO. Turkey seems to be left out of political and security processes in Europe and Kosovo/a. Turkey did have no influence in the Rambouillet negotiations or the Paris talks. Russia or Finland were mediating between NATO and Belgrade while Turkey was put aside. Not much is left for Turkey to do. Turkey is neither member of the UN Security Council or of the Contact Group and the G8- important forums with a decision-making authority. The frustration of Turkey over these issues that

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are particularly related with its identity definition is growing high (Utku, 20 June 1999). Facing these Post Cold War insecurities Turkey intensified its pressures for membership in the European security architecture.

For the EU the end of the 1990s and 'the events in Kosovo/a, the new geopolitics situation stemming from the end of the Cold War, the need to build a political union commensurate with the Union's increasing weight in international affairs have made possible to get this perspective of a strong autonomous Europe, capable of asserting its interests while respecting its alliances, on the road again' (Fontaine, 2000: 31). Following up a series of previous meetings and decisions of the EU on common security and defence policies at Cologne in June 1999, the EU decided to take over the crisis management role of the WEU while a subsequent meeting at Helsinki called for the establishment by 2003 of a 60 000 strong force drawn from the EU states that could be deployed for a year within 60 days and a military planning staff and political body to direct it. The European Rapid Reaction Force announced in Brussels on November 20, 2000 followed directly from the Cologne and Helsinki decisions. The EU decision to enhance its military independent actions while having "separable but not separate" capabilities with NATO presents challenges to Turkey's security policies and identity in the Post Cold War Era since it used to be an indispensable and inseparable participant in the Euro-Atlantic affairs.

Refuging under the Kemailist legacies that historically were designed to strengthen the country's internal cohesion, Turkey withholds from becoming a dominant power in the Balkans. Its perspective on the Balkans does not go beyond a close cooperation between Balkan countries and the preservation of the regional balances (Cem, September-November 1997:7). This is considered a realistic policy while reflecting the interests of present-day Turkey (Turkish Daily News, 27 January 1999). In Koni (1.April.1999) understanding Turkey's strategic vision towards the region remains defined in economic terms since 'conducting of military functions in the region is not possible due to the well-known attitudes of Greece and other Christian nations in the region towards Turkey'. The economic imperatives explain partially the stand by position of Turkey in the case of Kosovo/a that in many cases was considered as favourable to Milosevic. The main commercial partner of Turkey is the EU with almost 50 percent of export in this direction, not ignoring the imports. The Balkans is the shortest roadway, while Serbia corridor is the most feasible.

Nevertheless, the political opinion showed mixed feelings about what was happening in the Balkans, going sometime beyond the economic and political imperatives. In the Grand Unity Party (BBP) Chairman Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu terms, 'the basic aim of the aggressors in the Balkans... is to force a reckoning with Turkey', Yazıcıoğlu pointed out that the Serbian domination of Kosovo/a was nothing short of occupation, since one country had occupied another country's land. In Yazıcıoğlu terms 'international organisations have to side with Kosovo/a in order to eliminate this unjust occupation'. Turkey wasn't yet aware of this reality and once more it lost the opportunity to increase its influence in the Balkans. 'Turkey must understand this, and the Turkish Republic must make peace with history' (Turkish Daily News, 1 September 1998)- he said. An attitude that revealed the perplexity of Turkish politics faced with the quest for a role and identity in International politics after the end of the Cold War.

### Conclusions

Kosovo/a crisis revealed Russian domestic weaknesses and sensed the lost of its superpower status. Russia's nuclear arsenal have lost its political leverage after the Cold War Era. Economic collapse and social developments in the 90s impeded Russia to take the role of a world policy shaper. Turkey moved forward living the dilemma of pacifying domestic imperatives with international needs. In a counterbalancing act Turkey smarted again as a valuable ally of NATO, not necessary of the EU, especially for the US policies in the Turkey's near abroad were both countries policies converge.

Russia and Turkey, while coming from different points of interest revealed a low common denominator in their policies towards Kosovo/a crisis. Both countries aimed the preservation of the *status quo* in the region, which implicitly or explicitly favoured Milosevic for a while. While Russian policies towards the Kosovo/a crisis kept Milosevic for a long time defiant towards International Community pressure to stop its 'final solution' policies, Turkey tried to keep a modifiable position that ended with its stance against Milosevic while favouring the preservation of Yugoslavia territoriality and integrity.

It must be emphasised that Milosevic was able to play intelligibly the card of separatism and irredentism to bring these two important countries with

influence in the region in his favour. What Milosevic miscalculated was the overstress he gave to these factors in shaping both Russia and Turkey foreign policies. The aftermath crisis brought Turkey and Russia on the side of NATO. In the case of Turkey's both the geo-strategic and economic needs and the quest for regional balance favoured its inclination towards Western affiliation. For Russia economic and social imperatives and the growing disparities on nuclear and conventional forces with NATO pushed back Russia from its pro-Milosevic policies (Arbatov, 1999, 198).

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