



Kosovo Conflict: USA

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1 History

The century-long bilateral relations between Serbia and the United States of America have been mixed throughout the last century. In the wake of the Ottoman Empire's dissolution, the USA developed extensive diplomatic relations with the newly independent states. Hence, the USA supported the Kingdom of Serbia during WWI against Austria-Hungary. Following the Paris Peace Conference in 1919-1920 and under the patronage of the Serbian royal Karađorđević family, Serbia soon joined the fellow South Slavic nations to form the country which is to be known as Yugoslavia. When parts of Serbia were occupied by the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a puppet state of Nazi Germany, as well as fascist Bulgaria, the United States supported the Serbian royalists Chetniks. The support, nonetheless, turned against Serbia towards the end of the war, with Belgrade being the only European major city to be bombed both by the Axis Powers and the Allies. The Chetniks ultimately lost to Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslav Partisans. Tito gained power as the eternal Communist President of Yugoslavia. US support for Serbia starts fading despite Marshall Tito's cooling relation with the USSR. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Serbs sought refuge from both World Wars in the USA. With them, a sizeable number of intellectuals, including Nikola Tesla and Mihajlo Pupin as well as several businessmen made their fortune in the US upon emigrating.

2 Involvement in the Yugoslav Wars

As soon as the Yugoslav Federation started to disintegrate, with Slovenia and Croatia first declaring independence in June 1991, the United States were swift in providing military support to the newly established states in defeating the Yugoslav Army, which stood under the command of Slobodan Milošević. US-American generals provided logistic support and consulted Croatian military personnel during Operation Storm in 1995, which set out to liberate all Croatian territory from the Yugoslav army. This support continued with the NATO Bombings of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and included training KLA troops for their offensive against the Yugoslav Army in 1998-1999. Likewise, the international community imposed large-scale economic sanctions against Serbia, causing one of the worst hyperinflations in human history.

After the failure of the Rambouillet Peace Talks in February 1999, under the command of former US President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and General Wesley Clark, the USA became the mastermind in mobilising NATO troops against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - which at that time included Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro - in support of the Kosovo Rebels. The sophisticated NATO artillery outplayed the mostly outdated Yugoslav Army weaponry and lastly bombed Milošević into submission. Kosovo has remained de jure a part of Serbia, but has been de facto subject to international KFOR control.

After the Yugoslav Wars had ended by the beginning of the new millennium, the USA has been both strongly supportive of an independent Kosovo and continued opposing Slobodan Milošević. In order to topple his regime, large-scale demonstrations under the



Fig. 1: The relative positions of Serbia (green) and the USA

motto of "Gotov Je!" (He's finished!) were financed with 30 million dollars via the USAID foundation. The protests culminated on 5 October 2000 in what is known today as the Bulldozer Revolution, which ultimately brought a regime change to Serbia and the pro-Western opposition leader Zoran Đinđić was appointed PM.

The declaration of Kosovar independence eight years later has been met in the USA with great acceptance. The former US President George W. Bush defined the move to "bring peace to a region scarred by war". As a sign of gratitude for the US military and diplomatic support, the largest statue of Bill Clinton had been erected in 2009 in Kosovo's capital Prishtina. Moreover, several public places and institutions were named after US politicians.

Nonetheless, together with the EU, the USA exerts pressure on the Kosovar parliament to extradite war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). This situation has revealed itself particularly problematic for the Kosovar President Hashim Thaçi and former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, both of which are suspected of having committed war crimes during the Kosovo War.

3 Economic Interest in Kosovo

The large reservoirs of natural resources make Kosovo an attractive hub for economic investments, first and foremost in its Energy industry. The region is home to the Trepča Mines, a large industrial complex which is regarded as the largest silver and lead-zinc mine in Europe.

On September 4 2020, two separate agreements of economic normalisation were signed between both Serbia and the USA as well as Kosovo and the USA. While all of the signatories perceive the agreements as a success, with US President Donald Trump claiming that it was a "truly historic day", reactions from the EU were mixed.

4 References

- 1 Wikipedia: Serbia-United States-relations
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia-United_States-relations

