

In Focus Transatlantic News Digest
An Electronic Newsletter of the Atlantic Council of Canada

#7, February 25, 2008

Editor: Luisa Sargsyan
Email: luisa.sargsyan@atlantic-council.ca

In this issue:

- Kosovo Declares Independence
- New Treaty To Ban Weapons in Space
- South Korea Urges North to Disclose All Nuke Programs
- Recommended Readings

Kosovo Declares Independence

On February 17, Kosovo declared independence in an extraordinary parliamentary session. All 109 deputies present at the session in Pristina voted in favor. The 12-point text says Kosovo is dedicated to "peace and stability" in the region and declares its will for a "good relationship" with its neighbors.

There is a widespread international concern for the well-being of Kosovo's minority Serbs. About 10 percent of the 2-million population, Serbs have resisted the independence move as they regard Kosovo as an integral and historically precious part of Serbia. Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, who is a former political leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, once condemned as a terrorist organization, has attempted to soothe the Serb community, assuring that they have a place in the new state. "In an independent Kosovo, no citizen of Kosovo will be discriminated against or pushed aside," Thaci said. "Kosovo is the mother of all its citizens."

About 250,000 Serbs and other minorities fled Kosovo in the wake of a campaign of intimidation by the ethnic Albanians that the international community seemed powerless to stop. Most of the remaining 120,000 Serbs live in enclaves protected by NATO troops and barbed wire. What remains unclear is whether the Serb-populated areas will attempt to secede from Kosovo and how much the authorities in the Serbian capital of Belgrade might encourage such an effort.

The issue of Kosovo's independence exposed major splits within the EU. Spanish Minister for Europe Alberto Navarro did not agree with the fact that the future of Kosovo was being decided by the world's big powers in breach of international law. "I'm really frustrated that the future of Kosovo has been decided in Washington". Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia also expressed anxiety about the signal that recognition might send to separatists. Russia's parliament passed a motion condemning the declaration of independence. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia can block Kosovo's entry into the organization as a sovereign state and it said that Kosovo's declaration should be null and void. France confirmed that it would recognize independence, as expected. U.S. President George Bush said Kosovo's people were "independent" but stopped short of formal recognition. China, a permanent member of the

UN Security Council with veto power expressed deep concern about the independence move. In remarks echoed by the envoys of Indonesia, Vietnam and South Africa, the Chinese envoy regretted that the negotiating process had been replaced by unilateral action. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged all sides to "refrain from any actions or statements that could endanger peace, incite violence or jeopardize security in Kosovo and the region."

The European Union has called on Serbia to protect foreign embassies following a day of violence in Belgrade. Serbs angered by Western support for Kosovo's secession set fire to the U.S. embassy and attacked the UK, German, Croatian, Belgian and Turkish embassies. Serbia has recalled its ambassadors from the U.S., France and Turkey who recognized Kosovo's independence. On Monday, Serb protesters in the north of Kosovo, who were rallying against Kosovo's independence, set fire on EU flags in what has become a daily challenge of the country's secession from Serbia.

For now, Kosovo will remain under the UN administration and the 16,000 NATO troops; they will hand over the control over Kosovo to a 1,800-member EU-led mission assigned to build up the Kosovo's institutions.

The EU now faces serious challenges. It is not receiving a UN mandate for its mission because Russia is opposed to independence and all that goes with it. The European mission will include a political office, a European Commission delegation and a law and order team. But the splits over recognition raise questions about its determination.

Kosovo's independence move could also trigger a new wave of secession movements, including other former Soviet territories. Officials of the Georgian breakaway republics Abkhazia and South Ossetia renewed their petitions for recognition of the independence they declared in the 1990s; Georgian authorities said they will never recognize Kosovo's independence. The government in Nagorno Karabakh, the Armenian-populated region and a formerly autonomous oblast within Azerbaijan that declared its independence in 1991 is also watching closely the developments in Kosovo.

New Treaty to Ban Weapons in Space

Amid concerns of growing anti-satellite missile rivalry, Russia and China have proposed a new treaty to ban the use of weapons in space. According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who addressed a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, "Without preventing an arms race in space, international security will be wanting". The new treaty would prohibit the deployment of weapons of any kind in space, and the use or threat of force against space objects.

Concerns over a new arms race in space have been growing since China tested an anti-satellite missile in January last year. The United States also has its own anti-satellite program ranging from laser cannon to satellite destroying missiles.

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 bans the build up or stockage of military weapons - including nuclear arms or weapons of mass destruction - in orbit and their installation on the moon, but not the shooting down of satellites. "Weapons deployment in space by one state will inevitably result in a chain reaction. And this, in turn, is fraught with a new spiral in the arms race both in space and on the earth," Lavrov said at the conference.

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev thinks that Russia and China who have technical capabilities to build space weapons have taken a very constructive and responsible position. "I think that the global community should consider their proposal very carefully," Gorbachev said. The danger of the militarization of space had reappeared for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union and since Gorbachev fought, in the 1980s, the Strategic Defense Initiative, a proposed U.S. space-based missile-defense system.

The White House rejected Russia's and China's proposal of the new treaty warning that ensuring compliance would be "impossible". "The United States opposes the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit access to or use of space," White House said. Officials in the U.S. think that the best way to prevent an arms race in space would be to "encourage discussions aimed at promoting transparency and confidence-building measures" so that countries are not in the dark about potential rivals' plans. Washington welcomes international cooperation "to preserve the benefits of peaceful activities in space for everyone" and is "committed to preserving equal access for the peaceful uses of outer space." "Proposed arms control agreements or restrictions must not impair the rights of the U.S. to conduct research, development, testing and operation or other activities in space for U.S. national interests," officials in Washington say.

The U.S. is negotiating with Warsaw and Prague a possible installation of some 10 interceptor missiles in Poland by 2012 and radar stations in Czech Republic, which is the reason for Russia's concerns about these plans. Moscow fears that the combined effects of the missile defense shield and growing U.S. anti-satellite missile projects could spark a new arms race and threaten the global balance of power.

The U.S. withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2001 and it gave the country the flexibility to develop its new project in Europe. The ABM Treaty was signed in Moscow in 1972, at the height of the Cold War. The Bush administration has been standing in the way of the Sino-Russian proposal since it was first raised in 2002 after the United States pulled out from the ABM Treaty.

Beijing and Moscow have long sought to ban weapons from outer space. China highlighted the issue last year by destroying one of its own orbiting craft in a demonstration of its anti-satellite capability.

Despite strong push from China and Russia, the proposal appears to have no chances of gaining support. However, arms control and disarmament experts think that while Russia and China likely will not succeed with their proposal, it is damaging the U.S. because many countries are in favor of discussing it and that would be a diplomatic victory for the proponents.

South Korea Urges North to Disclose All Nuke Programs

It has been one year since the nations in the six-party talks - China, Japan, Russia, the United States and both Koreas - reached an agreement under which Pyongyang would receive aid for dismantling its nuclear infrastructure. North Korea since then has halted operations at its Yongbyon nuclear complex and moved to disable three key facilities, which would prevent the plants from resuming work for at least one year. The country has completed eight of eleven measures that it has promised to take to disable its nuclear facilities.

While it has largely shuttered its plutonium production capability, North Korea must still declare its suspected uranium enrichment efforts in order to move ahead with the denuclearization agreement. A list submitted last November failed to address several sectors, including alleged uranium enrichment. The five governments negotiating with North Korea to date have delivered roughly one-fourth of the pledged aid. The supply has been hampered by technical problems and Pyongyang's limited ability to store oil promised under the deal.

A landmark aid-for-disarmament deal was reached on February 13, 2007; it offers the North a million tons of fuel oil or equivalent energy aid, diplomatic and security concessions from China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States and a formal peace treaty, if it discards all nuclear programs and material.

However, Washington says Pyongyang missed the December 31 deadline to provide a full account of its nuclear efforts. The U.S. top negotiator on North Korea Christopher Hill was in Asia ahead of a trip by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice this week and discussed the contents of the required declaration with the North Korean negotiator Kim Kye Gwan. During her trip this week, Rice will visit Seoul, Pyongyang and Tokyo and will try to get North Korea to fulfill its promise to reveal all its nuclear activities, including its nuclear inventory and its dealings with countries such as Iran and Syria.

As the Bush administration moves into its final year, Condoleezza Rice may have few, if any, opportunities left to overcome stumbling blocks that have undermined the sense of progress produced by the signing of the six-nation agreement a year ago.

According to South Korean nuclear negotiator, a roadmap for North Korea's eventual dismantling of its nuclear programs should be formulated by the end of June.

Recommended Readings

Asian arms race gathers speed

By John Feffer, Asia Times, February 14, 2008

Diplomats remain upbeat about solving the nuclear stand-off with North Korea; optimists envision a peace treaty to replace the armistice that halted, but failed to formally end, the Korean War 55 years ago. Some leaders and scholars are even urging the transformation of the six-party talks over the Korean nuclear issue, involving the United States, Japan, China, Russia and the two Koreas, into a permanent peace structure in Northeast Asia. *Read more [here](#).*

Will Musharraf Step Down?

By Simon Robinson, Time, February 25, 2008

One week after parliamentary elections buoyed hopes for change in Pakistan, the country received a deadly reminder today that there is still a long and difficult battle ahead to end the growing tide of violence. A suicide bomber in the garrison city of Rawalpindi killed at least three people, including Lt Gen Mushtaq Baig, the army's top surgeon. Rawalpindi was also the site of the Dec. 27 assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Today's attack, on a car carrying Baig, was the first since last week's election. Baig is the highest-

ranking military officer to be killed in the wave of militant attacks that has hit the country's security forces and civilians over the past few years. *Read more [here](#).*

Sources: Washington Post, BBC News, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Toronto Star, Agence France Press, Associated Press, Global Security Newswire (www.nti.org), International Herald Tribune, Financial Times, ISN Security Watch (www.isn.ethz.ch), Christian Science Monitor.

We would like to know your opinion. Please, [email us](#) with your comments and suggestions!

Disclaimer: Any views or opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the authors and the news agencies and do not necessarily represent those of the Atlantic Council of Canada. This newsletter is published for information purposes only.

The Atlantic Council of Canada is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to the idea that the transatlantic relationship between Canada and the United States, and the nations of Europe, is of critical importance to Canadians in cultural, security and economic terms. The Council's mandate is to promote a broader and deeper understanding of international peace and security issues relating to NATO.