

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1308

March 21, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As co-chairmen of the Congressional Serbian Caucus, we are writing to express our concern about the current negotiations over the future status of Kosovo led by the UN's Special Envoy for Kosovo, Mr. Marti Ahtisaari. As you know, Mr. Ahtisaari issued a preliminary proposal for Kosovo's status in January 2007 followed by a modified proposal submitted this month to Serbian and the provisional government in the Serbian province of Kosovo and subsequently forwarded the United Nations Security Council. Due to possible contravention of existing international laws and U.N. Resolution 1244, which had recognized Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia, we urge caution as you continue to consider this important matter.

While we support continued negotiations between the Albanian leaders in Kosovo and Serbia, we are troubled by the structure of the Ahtisaari plan and the pace of negotiations. First and foremost, before any solution is reached, Kosovo's provisional leadership must achieve measurable standards of improvement on human rights certifiable by the international community. Unfortunately, the current process has been hastily conducted and it appears a blind eye has been turned to the continued violence and religious persecution directed at the ethnic Serbian population within Kosovo.

Furthermore, we do not believe the provisional government in Kosovo is nearly mature enough to provide necessary protection and services to its residents. The provisional government in Kosovo must demonstrate more tangibly its commitment to protecting basic human rights such as freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom from fear and persecution, and must establish a process which will ensure the safe return to Kosovo of ethnic Serbs who have fled the violence. Thus far this provisional government—led by the United Nations—has not provided these protections and until the local authorities can demonstrate their ability to provide proper protection, we strongly recommend that the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) remain in Kosovo.

Finally, considering Kosovo's long and intricate history, we do not believe one year of "intensive" diplomacy is sufficient enough to gather the insight necessary to weigh the potential impact the proposed independence will have on security and diplomatic relations in the Balkans. This past January, Serbia held successful parliamentary elections where the pro-Western, pro-reform coalition led by President Boris Tadic

received an increase of support in the Serbian parliament. This coalition remains committed to reaching a settlement with the provisional government in Kosovo that is mutually agreeable to both sides. However, any imposed decision regarding the future status of Kosovo will surely halt and possibly derail the progress Serbia has made.

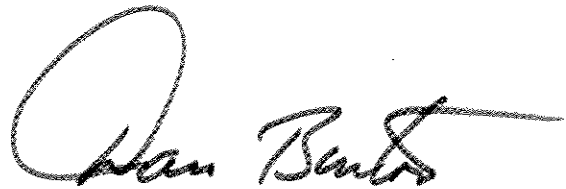
Mr. President, we know that there are many pressing issues before you and we agree that a future solution for Kosovo must be reached. However, we strongly believe that any decision regarding future status be made with the support of both the Serbian and Albanian people of Serbia. Democracy and stability are essential to the future of the Balkans and we must strive to ensure that is the outcome.

We therefore respectfully request that you oppose any imposed solution that does not have the support of both the Serbian government and the provisional government of Kosovo. We fear that if a solution is imposed it is very likely that the pro-Western, pro-reform forces that have made significant strides to this point will lose control of Serbia, which would be catastrophic to future growth and security of the Balkans and the entire European continent.

Sincerely,



Melissa L. Bean
Member of Congress



Dan Burton
Member of Congress