

# POSITION OF LATIN AMERICA TOWARDS KOSOVO

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*Abstract:* The paper problematizes relation between Latin American states' position on NATO intervention in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the recognition of Kosovo's independence. It analyses the position of five major regional players: Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and Bolivia, as well as the particularity of Suriname, which recognized Kosovo and then overturned the recognition a year later. Particularly the concept of humanitarian intervention and the right of self-determination is problematized in relation to different policies of Latin American states and their bilateral relations with the United States.

*Key words:* humanitarian intervention, self-determination, recognition, Kosovo, Latin America.

## Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, a new period of international relations began. In addition to the Soviet Union, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) began to collapse. In 1991, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia declared independence and were recognized in 1992 by a large number of states. The referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 led to a three-year war, and the state was

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granted international recognition only in December 1995, by virtue of the Dayton Accords. In the spring of 1992, the two remaining former SFRY republics formed a union named the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), renamed in 2003 into Serbia and Montenegro. Two former Serbian autonomous provinces - Vojvodina and Kosovo - were also part of the FRY, however, the latter soon expressed its intention to leave the newly-formed state. To prevent this secession, Serbia increased the pressure on Kosovo, leading to an armed conflict between Serbs and Kosovars (Albanians) in the period between 1996 and 1999. Both sides, the Yugoslav Army and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), violated human rights. Mostly, the KLA attacked the Serbian police force or army, which then sharply retaliated, leading to civilian casualties. After the Serbian massacre in Račak, which was condemned by UN Security Council, NATO bombed Serbia with the aim of halting the escalation of the conflict. After the NATO intervention against FRY (March-June 1999), the Yugoslav Army withdrew from Kosovo, which fell under a UN protectorate. On 17 February 2008, the Kosovo parliament declared independence. Serbia has not recognized this proclamation of independence, unlike the United States and most EU members, including Croatia. By the end of 2017, Kosovo has been internationally recognized, depending on the source, by 110 or 114 states. Its recognition was withdrawn by Suriname and Guinea-Bissau. Kosovo's passport is recognized as a valid travel document by 8 states, which do not recognize Kosovo's independence.

The aim of this paper is to present the views of Latin American countries<sup>3</sup> regarding the NATO intervention in FRY and the recognition of Kosovo's independence. We will analyze the positions of five major states that have competed in the past for the role of the region's leader - Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Venezuela, as well as Bolivia. We will also see the case of the Caribbean state of Suriname, which recognized Kosovo as an independent state, overturning this recognition a year later.

The hypothesis of the paper is that, assuming the equivalence of the ruling president's<sup>4</sup> ideological orientation, a country's position will

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<sup>3</sup> Latin America consists of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The term Latin America and the Caribbean is also used to label the region, which includes the *Commonwealth Caribbean Countries* (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago) and Suriname.

<sup>4</sup> In Latin America, the presidential system of government is in effect, wherein the

coincide, i.e. that a country that “supported” the NATO's action would support the creation of an independent state of Kosovo, and vice versa, that a country that condemned the NATO's action would not recognize Kosovo's independence. The support in both cases is, according to the theory of Realism, connected with the promotion of national interests and manifested through good bilateral relations with the US.

The paper consists of an introduction, three chapters (the first of which was dedicated to the concept of humanitarian intervention, the second to the position of the Latin American countries regarding the NATO intervention in 1999, while the third deals with the proclamation of Kosovo's independence) and the conclusion.

### **Humanitarian intervention theory**

Among the different definitions of humanitarian intervention in IR literature, we decided to apply the one that defines it as „the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals other than its citizens, without permission of the state within whose territory the force is applied” (Yoshida, 2013). However, there are always those claiming humanitarian intervention as an interest-driven. In the article, we argue that there is a correlation between Latin American states' support for the NATO intervention in Kosovo and their policy on its recognition. Therefore, in this case, their position on humanitarian intervention is not only explained by the Liberal theory but is also heavily influenced by Realism (Ibid).

According to Waltz (1979: 117) “in a self-help international system states' foreign policy is determined based on its national interests with the aim of increasing their power in anarchical international relations”. In this case, the interest of Latin American states in supporting or opposing the intervention was influenced by the role of the United States as the initiator of NATO action. Different strands of liberalism problematize mostly protection of human rights and the prevalence of international cooperation in the times of crisis. This position was particularly stressed by the former NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana (in: Dunoff, Ratner, Wippman 1996: 941) prior to the intervention: “Our objective is to prevent more human suffering and more repression and violence against the civilian population in Kosovo...We have a moral duty to do so”. The

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president of the state is both the head of state and the head of the government.

humanitarian concerns were also emphasized by the Canadian representative at the UN Security Council: "We cannot simply stand by while innocents are murdered and the entire population is displaced, villages are burned and looted, and a population is denied its basic rights.."(UN.org, 1999).

Not questioning the humanitarian dimension of the intervention, we focus more on the vital interests of the US to intervene, as well as its bilateral relations with Latin American states, which supported or refused to support the intervention. According to the US President Bill Clinton, one of the purposes of the intervention was "to ensure the credibility of NATO in Europe," which has been "crucial for maintaining the US hegemony in Europe" (Stegner 2008: 99). The US vital interest was also "to prevent Russia from being influential in the area".

Different responses of Latin American states to the NATO intervention reflect "the wider tension between state sovereignty and human rights". In this case, it is also a demonstration of support or lack of support for the US policy in general, as well as in the region. Therefore, the reactions varied from moderate support to open opposition to the intervention. On one side Argentina and Chile warned about the NATO's dismissal of the UN, however, Argentina did not refer to the NATO's actions as illegitimate. There is also a more moderate case of Brazil and its traditional emphasis on multilateralism. At the other end of the spectrum, Mexico fearful of autonomist threats at home strongly opposed NATO's use of military force (Serrano in: Schnabel and Thakur 2000: 223-244).

This shows Latin America as the region with "a healthy foreign policy position taken by their governments" and with "geopolitical tensions translating into ideological frontiers" (Arredondo 2014: 353). According to Petrella (in Ibid 2014: 354), during the 19th and early 20th century Latin American foreign policy was based upon following principles: sovereign equality of states, no intervention, territorial integrity, self-determination, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for international law. However, a significant difference among Latin American states in responding to the Kosovo crisis had to do "with the nature of their regimes, their democratization processes, their exposure to human rights pressures, and we may add to their bilateral relations with the US (Thakur in: Bellamy and Dunne 201: 94-114). For example, in the case of Mexico "the fact it lost half of its territory to the United States has informed its standing to non-intervention" (Ibid).

## **The position of Latin American countries regarding the NATO's intervention in FRY**

The non-intervention principle was established in the Western Hemisphere, to be later taken over by the League of Nations and the United Nations, making it one of the essential principles of international law. "In Latin America, absolute interpretations of the principle of non-intervention were a traditionally the norm until recent decades, when important changes took place in the legal context underlying this principle" (Serrano, 2000: 224). During the 1990s, the views of Latin American states regarding the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of other sovereign states became more flexible. We find the reasons in the democratization of the region, the acceptance of the role of the Organization of American States (OAS)<sup>5</sup> in pacifying and supporting democratically elected governments of certain states in the region, the processes of globalization and economic integration. Concerning the Kosovo crisis, some countries in the region have demonstrated a tendency to accept the "exception" from the generally accepted Latin-American principle of nonintervention, while other states have insisted on it. Serrano and Murillo (2001) indicate in their article "La crisis de Kosovo y America Latina: el dilema de la intervencion" that some states of the region considered the NATO intervention to be a cold and calculated manipulation of international standards, with the aim of justifying military intervention, while others considered the NATO intervention to be a justified action to protect international law. Although Latin American states demonstrated a willingness to volunteer part of their sovereignty to protect human rights in the nineties of the last century, their response to the Kosovo crisis maintained the attitudes of each country on aligning the right to sovereignty with human rights protection.

At the end of the 20th century, democracy in Latin America became the fundamental political value and fundamental principle of regionalism. Although the OAS was supposed to promote and defend democracy during the Cold War, due to two-faced American criteria and the intervention in sovereign states' affairs, activity was delayed. The OAS was

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<sup>5</sup> The Organization of American States (OAS) was created in March 1948 through the adoption of the Bogota Charter. OAS members committed themselves to continental solidarity and to complete abstinence from intervening in the affairs of other sovereign states, all based on the principles of democracy, economic cooperation, social justice and human rights protection. Members are all Western Hemisphere States (Kos-Stanišić 2010: 55).

revived in 1990 with the joining of Canada and the signing of the 1991 Santiago Settlement Agreement, as well as by adopting Resolution 1080, which gave the organization the task of defending and promoting democracy and human rights protection in the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, today, the OAS has the task and the right to collective intervention in cases of a “collapse” of democratic institutions and the constitutional order of member states.<sup>6</sup> The 1992 Washington Protocol authorized the OAS to suspend the membership of a state in which the government was overturned in a non-democratic manner. Similar provisions have been adopted by other regional organizations such as Mercosur<sup>7</sup>, the Rio Group<sup>8</sup> and the Central American Democratic Security Treaty.<sup>9</sup>

Although the region adopted a more flexible version of the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of other sovereign states, the American tendency to employ double standards of intervention and the historical memory of US intervention, affected the countries of the region adopting a defensive stance. Thus, the states of the region accepted the necessity of defending democracy, but not by force (Serrano and Murillo 2001: 21). The vast majority of countries in the region accept “limited sovereignty”, but in their actions related to the non-intervention principle, there are significant differences, influenced once again by internal politics. Hence, in Latin America, we differentiate between three types of attitudes. First, there are states that have moved away from the principle of non-

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<sup>6</sup> OAS intervened in: Haiti in 1991, Peru in 1992 and 2000, Guatemala in 1993, Paraguay in 1996, etc.

<sup>7</sup> MERCOSUR (Esp. Mercado Comun del Sur, Port. MERCOSUL) represents the common market of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. It was founded in 1991 by signing of the Asuncion Agreement, with the aim of creating a common market and customs union and came into force in 1995. Venezuela became a member of Mercosur 2012, and its membership was permanently suspended in 2017.

<sup>8</sup> The Rio Group represents the organization of 23 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with the aim of aligning the foreign policies of the member states. It consists of Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica (representing the 15 CARICOM member states), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela (<http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/rio-group/>).

<sup>9</sup> The Central American Democratic Security Treaty was signed in 1995 by Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama. The aim is to consolidate democracy, the rule of law, and development in the region (<http://www.oas.org/csh/spanish/c&ttratadocentro america.asp>).

intervention and advocate the international protection of democracy. Among them are Argentina and Chile, countries whose democratization process has influenced their foreign policy. Second, countries in which, thanks to international mediation, a civil war had come to an end, which therefore voluntarily accept limited sovereignty. Among them, the Central American states stand out. And the third, states like Mexico, and partly Brazil, who are vigorously opposed to any type of intervention in their internal affairs. The foreign affairs policies of the great powers of South America - Argentina, Brazil and Chile - regard the consolidation and defense of democracy as their foreign policy priority. However, unlike Argentina and Chile, Brazil has accepted the principle of conditionality but insists on the strict interpretation of the principle of non-intervention. It also opposes the creation of military capacities of the OAS (Serrano and Murillo, 2001: 22-23).

Ever since the 1930s, Mexican foreign policy was based on Estrada's doctrine, advocating the principle of non-intervention in sovereign states' affairs, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the self-determination of nations (Trevino, 2011). The main determinants of Mexico's foreign policy are respect for international law and equality between states, respect for the sovereignty and independence of states, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and promotion of collective security. Insisting on the principle of non-intervention was also maintained for periods of liberalization of the political and economic system at the end of the last century. The reasons for such insistence are found in the US's geographical vicinity and the fear of any US interventions, which were not lacking in the past. In that vein, Mexico accepted the Santiago agreement, with the reservation that democratically elected governments can find themselves in "dangerous waters," but can only be established and consolidated from the inside. During the 1990s, when Mexico negotiated and entered NAFTA, there was a rebellion of the indigenous population in Chiapas, asking for greater autonomy, and Mexico feared that international actors, especially the United States, might try to exploit the situation and intervene in order to protect human rights. They, therefore, insisted on adhering to the policy of non-intervention both in others' and their own "affairs". Serrano and Murillo (2001) conclude that there is no consensus in Latin America on the principle of non-intervention, which is also corroborated by the positions of the countries of the region regarding the Kosovo crisis.

The Rio Group Declaration issued the day after the bombing of FRY which began on 25 March 1999, demonstrated the attempt to express

different positions by the members of the Group. The declaration expressed regret over the inability to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, the concern of the group members regarding the NATO bombing but did not condemn the action. The Rio Group called on the parties in conflict to urgently begin with negotiations and expressed the view that a peaceful solution to the conflict depends both on respect for human rights and the territorial integrity of the states involved in the conflict. They also expressed concern that NATO action was taken without the UN Security Council's consent. Serrano and Murillo (2001: 25) conclude that the region used the Declaration to make it clear that it does not consider the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia more important than the protection of human rights and considers them equally important.

The complexity of the Kosovo crisis and the NATO intervention can be demonstrated in the arguments of Argentina and Chile, and to a lesser extent Brazil. Despite expressing concern over the use of the NATO force, they did not harshly condemn the intervention. They attempted to reconcile the principles of sovereignty and respect for human rights, emphasized also by numerous declarations of the aforementioned states. Argentina not only endorsed the UN Security Council Resolution 1199 (<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1199>), which condemned the use of force by Serbian forces over Kosovo civilians, but also, alongside Brazil, rejected a resolution proposed to the Security Council by Russia, Belarus and India, which condemned the NATO's action by proclaiming a threat to international peace and security. Argentina's full support of the intervention can be explained by its legacy of democratic transition, its experience in participating in peace operations in the Balkans, and its desire to demonstrate that it belongs to liberal western states. Brazil, however, publicly expressed its unwillingness towards interventions done with double standards leading to their selective application, especially those that were taken without the blessing of the Security Council. For Brazil, it is important that the actions being undertaken are carried out under the UN umbrella, which is the reason it participates in peacekeeping operations. Chile's position was cautious, especially because of the arrest of General Pinochet. It expressed regret over the inability to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and over the NATO's intervention without the approval of the UN Security Council but did not object to the international community trying to reconcile Kosovo's desire for greater autonomy with Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. Later, in a UN session, Chile expressed the stand that the human rights protection issue has become a task of the international community, which cannot be ignored



by the government of any state. Chile has demonstrated its readiness to send its forces to Kosovo on a peacekeeping mission, as it had done in Bosnia.

Contrary to the aforementioned states of South America, Mexico has strongly condemned the NATO's intervention and its pursuit without the UN Security Council approval. However, it signed the resolution of the UN Human Rights Commission, which condemned Serbian crimes in Kosovo, but expressed disapproval because the text of the resolution did not equally emphasize the importance of the territorial integrity of states. Also, at an extraordinary session of the UN Security Council, Mexico reiterated its regret that the NATO action was taken without the blessing of the Security Council and that no peaceful solution to the conflict was found that would ensure the respect of the human rights of all minorities, as well as the territorial integrity of the states. Mexico insisted on the necessity of finding solutions within the UN, with a view to preserving the credibility of the international security system and stressed that the use of force even for humanitarian reasons carries with it more violence and does not contribute to solving the problem. Despite the emphasis on the importance of the UN, Mexico's constitution forbids the participation in peacekeeping operations, hence it does not take part in them (Serrano and Murillo, 2001).

Venezuela's newly elected President Hugo Chavez, a person whose coming to power was followed by the region's turnaround towards left-wing political options and opposition to the US actions, condemned the NATO operation against Serbia (<https://planken.org/archive/1999/01>).

According to Morales (2003: 228-240) Bolivian foreign policy in the 20th century was "highly dependent and externally penetrated", especially by the United States. The desire to meet the wishes of the US led to "bilateralizing the foreign policy agenda", meaning the US actions were largely supported, as was the case with the NATO intervention in 1999.

### **The position of Latin American and Caribbean countries regarding Kosovo's declaration of independence**

The Assembly of Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in February 2008 by the second declaration of independence, with the first one being proclaimed in September 1990. Serbia disputed the legality of the declaration and sought an advisory opinion from the International

Court of Justice, which ruled that the declaration does not represent a violation of the international law. The ruling held that "the authors were acting in their capacity as representatives of the people of Kosovo outside the framework of the interim administration and therefore are not bound by the Constitutional Framework or by UNSCR 1244"<sup>10</sup> (Wikipedia.org, 2008). In international law a new state may result from part of the territory of an existing state, and its creation will be lawful if it has a consent of the partner host state. If this does not occur, the new entity has to find some "special legal entitlement to be independent". Some of the options recognized by the international law are: external self-determination based on a historical situation (the case of colonial territories), when a people is a subject of "alien domination", or when an existing state disappears and the situation of an extreme violation of internal self-determination involving gross human rights violation occurs (Chatamhouse.org, 2008).

Kosovo's independence could be assessed under the international law of secession, which "provides a framework under which certain secessions are favored or disfavored." "The legal concept of self-determination is comprised two distinct subsidiary parts": internal self-determination (presenting the protection of minority rights within a state) and secession or „external self-determination" (Borgen, 2008).

However, it is difficult to "identify a legal basis for the declaration of independence rooted in the right of external self-determination on behalf of the people of Kosovo". This is proven by the fact that "the term self-determination" has not played a significant role in official statements of recognition by states". Most states which recognized Kosovo, including those from Latin America, held the position that status quo was untenable (Chatamhouse.org, 2008).

Until now 110 members of the United Nations recognized Kosovo. Latin American states belong to the group of silent states, in contrast to groups of recognizing and opposing states. Recognizing states mostly expressed concerns for the peace and security in the Balkan region, as well as "the unsustainable nature of the *status quo*" (Almqvist, 2009: 8), the argument about failed negotiations between Pristina and Serbia, the fact that Kosovo constitutes a *sui generis* case and that there is "no settled international law governing the case" (Ibid, 9). The objecting states asserted that Kosovo decision "amounts to a manifest abridgment of

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<sup>10</sup>United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 was adopted in June 1999 establishing the United Nations Interim Administration Mission i Kosovo (UNMIK).

international law" (Ibid, 10) while there are several different grounds for objecting, mostly political one in terms that Kosovo presents "a dangerous precedent" that can "result with problems in their own or neighboring countries" (Ibid, 11). The silent or passive group of states which encompasses several Latin American countries pursue silence which can be explained, according to Almqvist (2009: 11), in several different ways. Firstly, some of them do not have any stakes in the outcome, some have to prioritize more urgent problems at home, while some are concerned about the "legality of Kosovo decision" (Ibid, 12).

Latin American states mostly extend the recognition to states outside the hemisphere based on "geopolitical sense of national interests "trying to extend ties to areas of previously little interest (Venezuela and Nicaragua recognized breakaway South Ossetia and Abkhazia) (Coha.org, 2010). The reason behind the recognition could be found in their "attempt to court Moscow as a possible source of weapons sales and client for their commodity exports (Ibid). This reflects some of the basic premises of realism according to which states are driven by their own self-interest in the international arena. Namely, Latin American countries have developed a strong economic relationship with the Caucasus states.

Furthermore, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay have recognized Palestine as an independent state which shows "Latin America countries to ease out of Washington's sphere of influence and the fact that Latin America has a growing commercial and political link with the Muslim world" (Ibid). For example, Brazil and Venezuela tend to build a relationship with Libya and Iran, with growing partnership between Argentina and Algeria as well as between Bolivia and Iran.

Kosovo is recognized by two of Washington's major allies, Colombia and Peru as well as Panama, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Belize and Honduras. This shows that the partnership with the US is one of the dominant reasons for this kind of foreign policy move. Ironically Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, Latin American countries that oppose Kosovo's declaration of independence, "have raised their voices the loudest when it comes to supporting an independent state of Palestine"(Luxner, 2010).

### **States recognizing the independence of Kosovo**

Newly appointed Foreign Minister of Kosovo, Skender Hyseni, met with several representatives of the countries of the region at the UN Office in Vienna. There were representatives of Costa Rica and Peru who first recognized Kosovo, as well as Panama, Paraguay and Ecuador, states that

the minister was to visit shortly thereafter (<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-pushes-for-latin-america-recognition/1615/18>).

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA)<sup>11</sup> states that the recognition of the independence of countries outside the Western Hemisphere by Latin American countries was influenced by two factors - the national geopolitical interests of those states and the processes of globalization that connect Latin America with the remote regions of the world. They consider that the Latin American states that have recognized Kosovo's independence have not done so for economic reasons, not because of the abstract concept of goodwill and friendship (Coha.org, 2010).

Of course, one of the reasons is the alliance with the United States, which was demonstrated by the fact that Peru (22 February 2008) and Colombia (4 August 2008), who negotiated the signing of free trade agreements with the United States and received significant US aid in the fight against drugs, acknowledged the independence of Kosovo in 2008.<sup>12</sup>

Costa Rica was the first country in the region to recognize Kosovo's independence (18 February 2008), although at first in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, it “expressed doubts, saying such a move would weaken the UN”. Afterwards, the Government of Costa Rica “declares itself in favor of the independence of the Republic of Kosovo” (<http://www.ticotimes.net/2008/02/22/costa-rica-high-fives-kosovo-on-independence>). Kosovo's lobbying came to fruition in the case of Panama, which recognized its independence the following year, and Panama has the only Kosovo embassy in the region. The independence of Kosovo has been recognized by the small states of the Circum-Caribbean region where the presidents in power were inclined towards the United States. The Dominican Republic admitted Kosovo in 2009, Honduras in 2010, Haiti in 2012, and El Salvador in 2013.<sup>13</sup> Following a military coup in 2009, the government of the Honduras President Zelaya was replaced by the right-wing government of Porfirio Lobo, hence a possible explanation for the recognition is its desire to approach the United States and

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<sup>11</sup> COHA is a left-wing CSO with headquarters in Washington DC.

<sup>12</sup> <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/>

<sup>13</sup> CAFTA-DR is a trade agreement between the United States and the Central American States

- Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/cafta-dr-dominican-republic-central-america-fta>

demonstrate the elimination of the foreign policy influence of Hugo Chavez and Venezuela.

*a) Positions of states not recognizing the independence of Kosovo*

None of the major and significant states of the region have recognized the independence of Kosovo - Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico or Venezuela. We will explain the reasons for the denial.

Brazil stresses that in the case of a unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence, a solution should be found peacefully and under the auspices of the UN and its Security Council Resolution 1244, which holds that Kosovo is a part of Serbia, and emphasizes that the principle of self-determination is not above the international law. We have asked Brazil's Ambassador Paulo Roberto Campos Tarrisse da Fontoura, accredited in the Republic of Croatia, to explain the position of his state, which he did: "Brazil does not recognize the independence of Kosovo and believes that any solution to the issue should be based on UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) and dialogue between the parties".

Argentina did not recognize the independence of Kosovo by arguing with respect for the principles of territorial integrity of states, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other sovereign states, and the obligation of peaceful settlement of disputes. The principle of self-determination and Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence without an agreement with Serbia opens a dangerous precedent. Argentine daily newspaper Clarin argues that the government has made a decision not to recognize Kosovo in fear that it could endanger negotiations with the United Kingdom and the resolution of the dispute over the Falkland Islands ([https://www.clarin.com/ediciones-antteriores/malvinas-gobierno-decidio-reconocer-kosovo\\_0\\_r14ZlZC0pFx.html](https://www.clarin.com/ediciones-antteriores/malvinas-gobierno-decidio-reconocer-kosovo_0_r14ZlZC0pFx.html)). Argentina insists on compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244<sup>14</sup> calling on the parties to the conflict in Kosovo to jointly resolve the dispute.

The Chilean Foreign Ministry emphasized in its media statement that it is closely monitoring the developments. They called on the parties in conflict to peacefully resolve the dispute and to respect the international law and principles of the UN Charter ([http://www.minrel.gov.cl/prontus\\_minrel/site/artic/20080714/pags/20080714160249.php](http://www.minrel.gov.cl/prontus_minrel/site/artic/20080714/pags/20080714160249.php)).

In the case of Mexico, political elites and scientists agree that its

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<sup>14</sup> [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1244\(1999\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1244(1999))

foreign policy is guided by the principles laid down in its 1988 constitution. These are non-intervention, self-determination, peaceful resolution of disputes, international cooperation, juridical equality of states, proscription of the use of the threat of the use of force and the struggle for international peace and security (Covarrubias, 2011: 212-230). That is why Mexico's position was expected because it called the parties in conflict to a peaceful resolution of the dispute, which would respect the rights of minorities and contribute to the peace and stability in the Balkans. Mexico repeatedly stated that it has no intention of recognizing Kosovo's independence.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, then leading leftist and leader of the pink tide of Latin America and a major opponent of the US politics, claimed that Venezuela would not recognize Kosovo from the very moment it declared independence, and that the states that did so should revoke it as that recognition creates a dangerous precedent. He stressed that the states that recognized Kosovo had done so under the pressure exerted by the United States (<https://lta.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idLTAN2122467220080221>).

The fear that events in the distant Balkans could open Pandora's box and that the Latin American secessionists could invoke the "Kosovo case" and, with the support of the US, achieved secession, proved justified in the case of Bolivia. Due to opposition to the US politics, the affiliation to the leftist pink tide, as well as the internal political situation regarding the attempts to secede by four provinces of Medio Luna, Bolivia, headed by President Evo Morales, did not recognize Kosovo's independence. Unsatisfied with Morales' rule that went in the direction of socialism, friendship and alliance with Chavez, the four wealthy Eastern provinces of Medio Luna have declared autonomy in the spring 2008 referendum. The referendum was declared null and void by Morales, after which the movement faded.

Most Latin American countries share the views of their former parent state of Spain, which does not wish to recognize the independence of Kosovo. The Spanish government believes that Kosovo has violated the UN Resolution 1244 and is in violation of the international law, and that Kosovo's recognition goes in favor of all separatist movements in their aspirations for independence. Of course, Spain anticipated the consequences of an eventual recognition of Kosovo and the creation of a precedent that could be invoked by its own autonomous regions of Catalonia, Galicia and Basque (<https://elpais.com/>

internacional/2013/04/25/actualidad/ 1366904782\_018605.html).

After gaining independence from Spain and Portugal, there have only been a few unsuccessful attempts of secession on the territory of Latin America. Separatism is not common in Latin America, therefore, with regard to recent events, most Latin Americans believe that Catalonia is an integral part of Spain and do not support their wish for separation (The Economist 25 November 2017, p. 43, Why no Catalonias? Explaining the absence of separatism in Latin America).

*b) The case of Suriname - recognition (8 July 2016) and revocation (27 October 2017) of Kosovo's recognition*

Surinam is a country in South America, a former Dutch colony that gained independence in 1975, with a former dictator and leftist Desire Delano "Desi" Bouterse in power since 2010. Suriname was the only country in the world, along with Guinea-Bissau, to recognize the independence of Kosovo (8 July 2016) only to recall the recognition the very next year. Although there was no official statement made by the Surinam government, the daily newspaper Star News published a letter by former Foreign Minister Niermal Badsiring who wrote, "Suriname has decided to recognize the Republic of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state. I look forward to engaging in further diplomatic relations between Suriname and Kosovo." The recognition followed years of strong pro- Kosovo lobbying in organizations Surinam is a member of - the UN, the Non- Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (<http://wp.caribbeannewsnow.com/2017/10/29/commentary-suriname-flip-flops-kosovo-western-sahara-recognition/>). The revocation took place on 27 October 2017 via an official note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Suriname to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, which states that "after careful consideration" the Government of Suriname has decided to revoke the recognition of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state (see annex). The media claimed that it was done to ingratiate Surinam to President Putin ahead of the first visit by Foreign Minister of Surinam Pollack-Beigh to Russia. According to media coverage, the revocation might be a response to Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov's suggestion that Surinam could be one of the important Russian allies in the struggle against the rising US interference in the internal affairs of other states. The Russian media state that no bilateral agreements were signed during the visit, but that Russian investments in Suriname and a foreign policy coordination of the two countries were

discussed. The decision provoked enthusiasm in Serbia (<http://wp.caribbeannewsnow.com/2017/11/02/suriname-revokes-kosovo-recognition-heels-russia-visit/>), while Kosovo claimed that recognition cannot be withdrawn. According to Balkan Insight, the Kosovo government has made the statement that “in the international law there is no concept of withdrawing a recognition” (<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-claims-suriname-cannot-revoke-independence-recognition-10-31-2017>). Therefore, the website of Kosovo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs still lists Suriname as one of the 114 states that have recognized its statehood (<http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=2,224>).

### **Conclusion**

In Latin America, which consists of 20 states, Kosovo's independence was recognized by only seven, mostly for pragmatic reasons, using the recognition as a demonstration of their adherence to the US policy. The most significant countries in the region (Brazil, Chile and Mexico) whose positions on the matter were portrayed in this paper have not done so, due in part to their strict adherence to international law and the respect for the principles of territorial integrity and non-intervention in sovereign states. The second group of states consists of Venezuela, which was because of its ideology, i.e. the left-wing government of Hugo Chavez and its opposition to the international actions of the United States, guided by foreign policy in accordance with the motto - all America's friends are my enemies. The third group includes Argentina and Bolivia whose non-recognition of Kosovo is a combination of ideology - President Evo Morales is a radical leftist and opponent of the US politics - and pragmatic reasons - the desire of part of the country's territory to secede. Argentina has been emphasizing the importance of adhering to international law and used the existence of an international dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvina/Falkland Islands as the reason for not recognizing Kosovo's independence.

The thesis of the paper, assuming the equivalence of the ideological orientation of the ruling president, that countries that supported the NATO's US-led bombardment of FRY would equally endorse the recognition of Kosovo advocated by the United States, and that countries who did not support the NATO intervention would not recognize Kosovo's independence, has not been proven.

If we analyze Table 1 we can conclude that:

- in the case of Venezuela, there has been no change in the ideological



orientation of the ruling president and that intervention and independence are NOT accepted

- that in the case of Mexico there has been a change in the ideological orientation of the president in power, but that intervention and independence are NOT accepted;
- that in the case of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Chile there was a change in the ideological orientation of the ruling president and that they accepted the intervention (YES) but NOT the independence.

Kosovo continues to lobby among Latin American countries that have not yet recognized it (<http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=2,217,1888>), but there is currently no significant chance such lobbying would be fruitful.

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*Table 1. A comparison of positions of Latin American countries regarding NATO's intervention against Serbia in 1999 and recognition of Kosovo in 2008*

Country	Acceptance of NATO's operation against FRY in 1999	Government left/center/right	Recognition of Kosovo independence in 2008	Government left/center/right	Special conditions
Argentina	YES - Unconditionally	Carlos Menem Right	NO	Nestor Kircher Left	Dispute over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands with GB
Bolivia	YES	Hugo Banzer Right	NO	Evo Morales Radical left	
Brazil	YES - Conditionally	Fernando Henrique Cardoso Center	NO Recognizes passport	Lula da Silva, Left	
Chile	YES - Conditionally	Eduardo Frei Center?	NO	Michelle Bachelet Left	
Mexico	NO	Ernesto Zedillo, Left	NO	Felipe Calderon, Right	
Venezuela	NO - Condemning	Hugo Chavez, Left	NO	Hugo Chavez Radical left	Declaration of Independence of the Medio Luna Province

