

- Kosovo: Conditional Independence For 3 Years

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Prishtinë, Kosovë, 30 October, 2003 - Kosov@News - In the report that was submitted to the members of the Contact Group by the special UN envoy for Kosovo, Mr. Marti Ahtisaari, conditional independence has been recommended as a solution. According to the Kosovo Daily "Express", the UN envoy stepped short of proposing full independence for the UN run province.

According to unnamed sources, the diplomat recommended forming the "newest state in the Balkans, with limited sovereignty, a continued international presence and competencies in important fields".

"It is clear that the competencies given to Kosovo mean only one thing -- independence with limited sovereignty," said the daily, known for its good contacts with Western diplomats. "This will authorize Kosovo to sign international treaties and agreements, including membership in some international organizations" the paper continues.

The source of this information also claimed that Ahtisaari did not accept the request of Kosovo Albanians for full independence. However, according to the report, Kosovo will have the right to request recognition as a full independent country in after a period of two to three years.

The fact that this report does not permit the creation of a Kosovo Foreign Ministry, UN Seat for Kosovo and a Kosovo Army will most likely cause frustrations among the Kosovo Albanians. These duties will be handled by a European Union Mission and KFOR soldiers for the next few years. There are speculations that this may lead to defiance and "Declaration of Full Independence" by Kosovo's Parliament.

The report came after 52.3 percent of the Serbian electorate backed a new constitution in a weekend referendum, which stresses that Kosovo is part of Serbia.

Kosovo's ethnic Albanians were barred from voting, as their inclusion would have changed the outcome of the poll.