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## **Hoping for Independence of All Oppressed Peoples on the Occasion of Kosovo's Independence**

**By OHKURA Yunosuke**

Kosovo has declared its independence. Serbia, insisting on its dominion over Kosovo as an autonomous province, has rejected Kosovo's declaration and proceeded with economic sanctions. Russia, which has close ties with Serbia because both are Slavic people is also opposed to Kosovo's move, fearing a ripple effect of minorities in its own country taking steps towards independence. When the three Baltic States proclaimed their secession from the Soviet Union, President Boris YELSTIN stated that any kind of people had the right to be independent and that it would be natural to accept their independence if they desire it. However, when Chechnya announced independence, Russian troops were immediately sent in to suppress the movement.

China is also against Kosovo's move because it is faced with its own autonomy problems of Taiwan, Tibet, and Uighur. Even countries within the EU oppose Kosovo's independence, such as Spain which continues to oppress the Basques, and Cyprus which is troubled with the de-facto independence of Northern Cyprus. In short, each country acts in accordance with its own national interest.

The beginning of the disputes surrounding the former Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) stems from the confusion when Slovenia and Croatia tried to declare independence after the collapse of Soviet Union. Germany asserted that their independence should be accepted. But the UK and France insisted that Yugoslavia's dissolution was undesirable for the process of integration in Europe, with which the US also agreed. To tell the truth, the UK, France and the US gave a plausible excuse, for fear that Germany's influence would gain strength in Central Europe. From the beginning, if Serbia's military intervention had been prevented, the Balkan Peninsula would not have become so muddled.

Despite President Thomas Woodrow WILSON's call for "self-determination" at the end of World War I, this principle was only applied to the defeated countries of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey. However, colonies of victors remained until the end of World War II. The 30 million Kurds, extending over Turkey, Iran, Iraq

and Syria, are the ones who have been suffering from unfair treatment even still today. Taking Kosovo's independence as an opportunity, I hope that other oppressed peoples will be able to move towards their own independence.

**(This is the English translation of an article written by Dr. OHKURA Yunosuke, President of Cross Cultural Laboratory, which originally appeared on the BBS "Hyakka-Seiho" of JFIR on February 25, 2008.)**