

Kyoto Peacebuilding Center (KPC)  
in Association with Academic Council on the United Nations System Tokyo Liaison Office (ACANS-  
Tokyo) and Global Peacebuilding Center of Japan (GPAJ)

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***The Diplomacy of Small States***

**Saturday, July 7, 2021**

The seminar was conducted by online zoom. Mr. Masakuni Tanimoto, Secretary General of Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan (GPAJ) opened the seminar. He then gave the floor to Ms. Sopaj who briefly introduced Ambassador Takahiro Shinyo and Ambassador Yasushi Akashi.



After greeting the participants, Ambassador Sabri Kiçmari first elaborated the types of “states” as a term used in the topic of discussion “Diplomacy of Small States” underlining the first group under the division according to geography, history, population, and culture, and the other group consisting of economic capacity, military capacity, development and technological capacity. He said that there is no precise notion of the definition of a small state, although there are different categorizations of states as such by scientists like David Vital (who categorizes the states on the basis of population), Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer (according to whom the term "small ethnic states" refers to states with a population of up to 15 million), or Michael Hendel (also determines the nuclear power, oil, and gas reserves, energy consumption, the level of dependence on the foreign economy and military power as determinants of state power). Regarding the role of small states within the global community of nations, Ambassador Kiçmari said that due to the changes in the international system during the last twenty years, small states enjoy more international prestige and visibility than before and due to the rise of international actors such as the EU or NATO they are put on a legal and diplomatic footing with larger countries. He added that the small countries have a set of assets at their disposal compared to larger countries that give them a comparative advantage in the multilateral world order, and such multilateral fora have provided a stage for small countries to exercise influence and act internationally. “Small countries should concentrate on the creation of the professional and trained forces which can be easily mobilized in case of any crisis and they should also be affordable economically. To face the regional and global challenges of safety, the Western Balkan countries have only one strategic solution is their integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures.” On the other side, he said that security issues remain a constant challenge to the small states: “The central concern of any state’s security, namely, the safeguarding of territorial integrity is as vital to small states as to larger states.”

Regarding the impact of globalization, the Ambassador said that it has served to exacerbate differences and divergences: “Small states no longer attempt to work as part of a wider South-oriented trade union movement. Inter-small state competition constitutes both upward mobilities – such as Singapore, Iceland, Malta, Barbados, and Mauritius – and an alternative race to the bottom, most visible in the South Pacific as witnessed by Vanuatu, Nauru and the Solomon Islands. Fukuyama points the view that democracies fight less often against each other.” In reference to the foreign policy of Kosovo, Ambassador Kiçmari first laid out the map of Kosovo as a European country, explained the meaning of the flag of Kosovo (6 stars representing the 6 communities), and the role of Kosovo within the former Yugoslavia: “It is a process of the will of the people of former Yugoslavia that from a medium sized the country we now have 7 small countries.” Ambassador Kiçmari also provided brief information about Kosovo: the total area of 10,887 m<sup>2</sup>, population of 1.8 million, Pristina as the capital city, Albanian and Serbian being two official languages state-wide, using EURO as a currency, the Independence Day on 17 February 2008, and the recognition by Japan on 20 March 2008. About the history of Kosovo, Ambassador Kiçmari said that he agrees with Churchill who once had said that “the Balkans, Southeast Europe, produces too much history” and added that he would like for the region to produce a more peaceful history than war. He said that in 1998-1999 there was a war, where the majority of people fought for their independence, and the Serbian regime in that time decided to occupy Kosovo, and that he is happy to talk now about the current peaceful situation in Kosovo. Regarding diplomacy, Ambassador Kiçmari underlined the “Reçak massacre” as the turning point to the situation in Kosovo at the time. 45 Kosovo Albanian in the village of Reçak were massacred by Serbian military forces while the Serbian Government at that time refused to let the war crimes prosecutor visit the site. Ambassador explained that immediately after this event, the Rambouillet Conference of 1999 was organized to find a peaceful solution between Kosovo and Serbia. The agreement signed by Kosovo but not by the Serbian side didn’t agree to the terms which actually provided not a republic of a state for Kosovo but a sort of international protectorate, with the road opened to “a final solution for Kosovo on the basis of the will of the people”. Following the continuation of attacks by Serbian military forces, NATO had to intervene by airstrikes on Serbia, which led to the peace agreement in 1999 followed up by the UN Mission in Kosovo until 2008 when the independence was declared. In 2008 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo was established, and Ambassador Kiçmari was appointed the first Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to Austria. So far, 117 countries have recognized the Republic of Kosovo as a state, which is also one of the biggest issues of Kosovo’s foreign policy together with accession to the UN, NATO, EU, UNESCO, and other international and regional organizations. The other struggle is the negotiation with Serbia on the normalization of relations. In regard to the recognition of Kosovo by Japan, the ambassador stressed the statement of the Japanese Foreign Ministry “On March 18, Japan recognized the Republic of Kosovo as an independent state. As the Government of the Republic of Kosovo has made its intention clear that it will run the country pursuant to the “Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement” made by the U.N. Special Envoy, Japan expects that Kosovo’s independence will contribute to the long-lasting stability of the region.” Ambassador Kiçmari also elaborated Kosovo’s struggle to gain the membership of the United Nations is the biggest challenge of Kosovo’s foreign policy as well as the negotiation process to normalize the relations with the end result being mutual recognition. “Kosovo and Serbia began a negotiation process to normalize the relationship between the two countries in March 2011, just three years after the declaration of independence of The Republic of Kosovo and nine months after the Opinion of the International Court of Justice, which assessed that **no** act of international law (ICJ 2010) was violated on the occasion of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Kosovo. Followed by the Opinion of the International Court of Justice, UN Security Council Resolution 64/298 of September 9th, 2010, was adopted.” Ambassador Kiçmari stressed that although more than 90 % of the people are Muslim, “the Republic of Kosovo is oriented towards the West” and such orientation is a tradition from the times of the Skanderbeg in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kosovo has excellent relations with the US, underlining the sentence “the eternal friendship with the USA”, but Kosovo also has excellent relations with the European Union. Regarding the United Nations, the ambassador concluded his remarks that “ the Secretary-General fully support(ed) both the recommendation made by (his) Special Envoy in his report on Kosova’s future status and the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosova Status Settlement.”. He also referred to the Opinion of the International Court of Justice dated 22 July 2010.

## Panel Discussants



Ambassador Shinyo took the floor by stating that the presentation made from Ambassador Kicmari was very comprehensive. He expressed his contentment on the days he served to Kosovo. Back then Ambassador Shinyo was Minister of the Embassy in Germany. He participated at G8 meetings in 1999 that made a compromised including Russia. The process of peacemaking was the important step that was serving to the UN and its resolution to be adopted 1244. The year 1999 was very crucial year which ended the humanitarian tragedy. Upon Ambassador's Shinyo return he was sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Kosovo when he became Deputy Director General and was returned to Kosovo to conduct a survey about the key areas that Japan should contribute more to Kosovo. That time Japanese Government made \$100 million contribution to Kosovo, and he clearly remembers that one of the projects was the broadcasting station that was upgraded by using Sony products that was included in the reconstruction project. Ambassador Shinyo stated that small countries can make a great contribution to the international arena whether they are UN or non- UN member. Small countries have very well-trained experts/ politicians that can play an important role such as the East-Timor Jose Ramost Horta. Kosovo should nurture the talented diplomats, politicians and the possibility to the accession to the UN. Further Ambassador Shinyo stated that he is aware that there are two countries that insist on rejecting Kosovo's membership to the UN. For Kosovo is important to have closer relations with Russia and Germany, that's how historically they are known and its very important to include Russia in the process of Kosovo becoming UN member. This will take longer undoubtedly. The presence of KFOR is still needed with UNMIK and my questions is until when Kosovo needs that? In his concluding remarks Ambassador Shinyo stated were that it's a great for Western Balkan countries to become member of EU. As said by Merkel that EU needs the six Balkan countries, I do believe Kosovo should pay more attention to this aspect. You should apply the rule of law and human rights so it's the right direction for Kosovo to go on that direction. Reconciliation with Serbia is very important since both of your countries are democratic values. The main problem is how to protect Kosovar- Serbs that want to return, and this is very important.



Ambassador Tadanori Inomata affirmed that the diplomatic challenges of small states faced in modern times were not only to survive and secure national independence but also to maintain the integrity of its governance system based on national values and norms reflecting the way of life and culture germane to each society. Nowadays, economic and military survival is not the only issue to be managed within and among nations. As the concept of security expands to be inclusive of human security, the role of non-state actors, as well as that of small states, grows important. There are also a host of global challenges to be overcome multilaterally such as climate crisis, digital divide, lethal autonomous weapons, and pandemics. Even large countries such as the United States and China could not solve them alone. Ambassador Inomata spoke against small countries' relying on the dominant powers of the region for their security and pointed out the crucial importance of rule of law and inclusive rulemaking of multilateral norms and principles in the age of globalization as a basis for peace and security of every country and its people. He referred to the case of Costa Rica, a non-armed state since 1949, which contributed, along with countries in the third world towards fostering sustainable development consensus, environmental governance, and disarmament as well as human rights at the global level. Costa Rica promoted the conclusion of the Paris Agreement and the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons. It is a member of the International Criminal Court, without a Bilateral Immunity Agreement of protection for the United States military as foreseen under ICC Rome Statute Article 98. On the regional and bilateral ground, it succeeded at establishing the Oscar Arias Sánchez' 1987 accord for lasting peace in Central America as well as peacefully settling disputes with Nicaragua through the OAS' collective security system; it resolved those over Rio San Juan navigation and territorial demarcation through the ICJ for nearly 20 years. He concluded remarks by comprising that Costa Rica's democratic check and balance of power do not allow the government to succumb to the dominant power diplomacy of big States. Recently, Costa Rica's General Comptroller Office judged contrary to national law, a joint venture agreement with China providing for the latter's purchase of monopoly sales and distribution rights of Costa Rican state oil refinery agency (RECOPE).



Mr. Saturo Kurosawa made his comment by taking a closer look at the UN resolution in 1947, where it states that Jerusalem is not the capital of Israel. Having Kosovo's embassy in Jerusalem is a violation of UN resolutions. As a result, in April, Palestine demanded that the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) not recognizing Kosovo's independence. Mr. Kurosawa stated that he doesn't oppose the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. However, under such circumstances, the decision to open the embassy in Jerusalem is incomprehensible. The question addressed: Why did Kosovo ally itself with Israel, even against the entire Arab world? Association of Serb Municipalities (ZSO). In 2013, an agreement was reached to establish an Association of Serb municipalities in the Serb-populated areas of northern Kosovo, but the Kosovo government has not yet established it. Mr. Kurosawa concluded his remarks with a concern that if the Association is created, Kosovo could become a second BH consisting of two entities, and this will further increase the division between Serbs and Albanians.



Professor. Popovski expressed gratitude to HE Mr. Sabri Kicmari, for the excellent presentation. His views on the majority of the states are 'small' in the UN, in fact Kosovo, when it will enter the UN, will not be among the smallest, for example Nauru has only 70.000 population. A good friend who used to be the Ambassador of Iceland in Delhi once told me, when I referred to Bulgaria as a 'small country', that we should not talk about 'small countries'. When he was still with the Ministry at one meeting he referred to

'Iceland as a small state' and later he was corrected by his Foreign Minister not to use this term. Indeed, we can think of Iceland as 'small in population' with less than 400.000 people, but if we look where Iceland stands in economic data, indexes of peacefulness, happiness, transparency, prosperity, compliance with international law, climate action etc.

We will see Iceland in the top 10 of the worlds on many of these parameters. In relation to Costa Rica Professor. Popovski added another example, the 'small state' Singapore made a lot of contributions to the UN, contributed to the multilateral diplomacy over many years! For example, Singapore played a significant role for the successful negotiations and adoption of the Rome Statute for International Criminal Court in 1998, as a chair of the negotiations. We still call it 'The Singapore Compromise' the idea to switch the veto and apply it only for Art. 16 deferrals of cases for one year, which in fact gave the chance for the ICC Prosecutor to use *propriu motu* power to initiate a case without Security Council referral or state-party request. Kosovo is very connected with memories from my personal life, in 1998-1999 I wrote my PhD which reflected on the responsibility of states to protect populations and the concept 'R2P' in 2001 was coined by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and soon after in 2005 was internationally recognized norm with the UN General Assembly adopting the resolution. Therefore, Kosovo means a lot for many scholars and diplomats. And let me also add another comparison with another 'small state' - Timor Leste in 1999 also became independent and later was admitted as a new member of the UN. It faced a lot of challenges, but heroically survived and prospered and is today another excellent success story. Therefore, having Kosovo, in addition to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as another Muslim state in Europe, I regard as a very positive fact. I am against those nationalists who see in this some 'danger' of some 'islamization' of Europe, on the opposite, this adds more voices, more diversity and can only be welcomed. Let's have more Muslim members of the European family, and these members playing a constructive role – exactly on issues such as migration or combatting international crimes – with certainly signal how wrong are the nationalists, and how positive role these small countries can play. His conclusion was very pragmatic in relation to Kosovo's membership to the UN. It may take some, but there is no alternative to this. Last but not least he recalled the period when he was a Bulgarian diplomat, posted in London in the early 1990s, lobbying with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and presenting the Bulgarian candidacy to the EU. He has the confidence by the British colleagues, that although it is a long process, at the end of the day Bulgaria will end up in the EU (adding regretfully that by that time Britain might no longer be a member of the EU).

## Open Discussion



Professor. Hirono was involved in Kosovo during 98-99 as a part of Japanese team on helping Kosovo's reconstruction mainly economic aspect. Professor. Hirono started his comments by stating that small states have a great role with their assets but at the same time they need international community. It's important

for small states to examine their role. We have countless small states around the world which tells us that being a small country it's an opportunity to unify themselves with other small states by exposing various issues. During his stay in Kosovo, Prof. Hirono witnessed that Kosovo's history being a small muslim province of Serbia taught us that religion played a major factor and addressed his question to ambassador Kiçmari about the religion back then and what he thinks about law of the religion in small states?



Professor. Dahlia Simangan addressed a question to Ambassador Kiçmari. What is the strategy of Kosovo's Foreign Policy in terms of meditating this issue of other states revoking recognition?



Mr. Keiichi Tanabe addressed a question about China's involvement in the decrease of the number of countries which recognize Kosovo as an independent state.

As of September 2020, 97 countries out of 193 UN member states recognize Kosovo. Until that time, 15 countries (Suriname, Burundi, Papua New Guinea, Lesotho, Comoros, Dominica, Grenada, Solomon Islands, Madagascar, Palau, Togo, Central African Republic, Ghana, Nauru, Sierra Leone) withdrew their recognition of Kosovo as independent country. It does not seem that

neither Serbia nor Russia has strong influence in these countries. It is considered that China influenced these countries to revoke the recognition of Kosovo.

Considering the 193 member states of the UN, keeping the number of 97 and above is crucial to show that majority of the member states of the UN recognize Kosovo. In this point, it is inferred that China has the strategy to show that the number of countries which recognize Kosovo as an independent country is less than 97 at the General Assembly of the UN, and for this purpose China has been involved in this matter. Based on this, Mr. Tanabe addressed a question to Ambassador Kiçmari regarding his observation of China's involvement in decreasing the number of countries which recognize Kosovo.



Mr. Saleem addressed a question to Ambassador Kiçmari. Is there anything that Kosovo is pursuing on a national level?



In his concluding remarks, Dr. Hasegawa highlighted two points that he found it very pertinent: the membership of the UN and he expressed the concern of how frustrated Kosovan people might be due to



the long process of joining the organization. History tells us that other countries has gone through same struggle and if we talk about Japan, we had the veto by Soviet Union 2-3 times. Further Dr. Hasegawa affirmed that it's very important for Kosovo to quest the acceptance by not only Serbia but Russia and China. You should not underestimate the importance of these three countries. The US can help you a lot, and in Timor-Leste the leaders they confessed to me that it was a historical legacy their independence. The second point mentioned by Dr. Hasegawa was in relation to Timor-Leste's gracious to Indonesia. Timorese people aren't insisting for any apology from Indonesia. His important message to Ambassador Kiçmari was that maybe this can be a good example for Kosovo. And a lot of us can know how difficult the situation with North Korea and Japan is. It requires from both sides to overcome the past wounds. It's time to move out of what happened in the past!