

Will Bangladesh accord recognition to Kosovo?

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It is reported Bangladesh has not yet firmed up its stance on the question of recognising Kosovo's independence, despite persistent diplomatic presentation by US Ambassador James Moriarty, who met Foreign Adviser Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury on 1st July for the second time to pursue the issue of recognition of the new Balkan state.

Ambassador Moriarty told reporters that the main purpose of his meeting was to urge the Foreign Adviser to consider the issue of recognition of Kosovo.

In response, Adviser for Foreign Affairs Dr. Iftekhhar A. Chowdhury told the reporters, "In such cases, perceived national interest is always the key."

The Foreign Ministry had already issued a statement on Kosovo, mentioning that the Bangladeshis were overwhelmingly in support of the people of Kosovo for a variety of reasons, he added.

The Adviser hoped that a decision in this regard could be taken soon in consultation with other Islamic countries. However, he admitted the fact that the OIC-member states are split up on the issue of Kosovo's independence, and the last Islamic Conference of the Foreign Ministers held in Uganda failed to reach a consensus on the subject.

Kosovo's recognition: Split between US and Russia:

Kosovo's recognition seems to be the new "power game" between the US and its allies and Russia and China. The UN Security Council could not take the decision because of the split among the veto-carrying permanent members of the Security Council.

Kosovo (with about 2 million people with overwhelming majority of Albanian Muslims) received [recognition](#) as a [sovereign state](#), notably from the [United States](#) and some major [European](#) countries, such as Britain, Germany, France and Italy, while [Russia](#), [China](#), [Spain](#), [Romania](#), Cyprus, Greece and Serbia did not recognise Kosovo.

The official position of these countries is that Kosovo is a Serbian province under ad interim [UN](#) control, formally known as [Autonomous Province of Kosovo](#).

The countries that oppose recognition of Kosovo consider that its recognition as an independent state in the Balkans will boost the ethnic demands for greater autonomy or independence. They argue that recognizing the unilateral declaration of independence would legitimize the doctrine of imposing solution to ethnic conflicts.

They further argue that by the actions of some European Union member-states, every would-be ethnic or religious separatist across Europe and around the world has been provided with a tool kit on how to achieve recognition.

Factors behind recognition:

In 1950, the UN Secretariat summed up on the issue of recognition as follows:

“ The recognition of a new state or a new government of an existing state is a unilateral act...while states may regard it as desirable to follow certain legal principles in according or withholding recognition, the practice of states shows that the act of recognition is still regarded as essentially a political decision, which each state decides in accordance with its own free appreciation of the situation.”

The question is: how does a state assesses its own appreciation of the situation?

It varies depending on situations and circumstances. But one cardinal rule appears to be the attitude of the neighbouring countries of the new state to be recognized and that of the neighbours of the state that will accord recognition. This rule is to avoid third or distant countries complicate the political situation in the region by giving recognition to a new state. Waiting game is the name of the diplomacy in this matter as the situation develops.

The practice of Bangladesh during the 37 years seems to be that Bangladesh has been to insist upon certain conditions precedent to the grant of recognition of a state, namely (a) whether Bangladesh's neighbours recognized the new state, (b) whether neighbouring state of the new state have recognized it, (c) whether peace and order prevails in the country and (d) whether the administration has been accepted by people within the new state.

It means (a) whether Kosovo has been recognized by its neighbours, (b) whether the neighbours of Bangladesh have accorded recognition to Kosovo and (c) whether all people in Kosovo including Serbs recognize the government of Kosovo. It appears that none of the four factors of recognition seems to have met as of today.

Furthermore, on Kosovo issue, there is no uniform stand by the member states of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), or by the members of Non-Aligned Movement, or by the members of the UN Security Council of the UN.

The issue of recognition has become a bone of contention between Russia/ China and European Union/US. It is a game of power between US/EU and Russia and China. At an EU-Russia summit on 26-27 June, there has been no meeting of minds on this issue. Bangladesh does not wish to be caught in a proxy war between the two opposing powers by according recognition to Kosovo prematurely.

Against the above background, Bangladesh's position is understandable. The Adviser for Foreign Affairs has rightly pointed out "perceived national interest -- and the benefits" would guide to firm up a decision in matter of recognition of Kosovo. He hoped that the issue of recognition of Kosovo would be mooted at D-8 Summit at Kuala Lumpur in the second week of July and an appropriate decision would be made.

