

**Ambassador Frank G. Wisner**  
**Special Representative to the Kosovo Status Talks**

**Interview with VOA Albanian Service**  
**U.S. State Department,**  
**Washington, DC**

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**Question:** Ambassador Wisner, Secretary Rice met today in Moscow with President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov. Was there any progress reported on the Kosovo issue?

**Ambassador Wisner:** I have only a partial account of what the Secretary and the President and the Foreign Minister said, but I understand they had a very full and very frank discussion, that the Russian side voiced its concerns which are well known, and on our side we made it clear that this is a time we believe must move Kosovo forward. The work of the Security Council should go forward. We and the Russians should look very carefully at the work in front of us. We should try to find common ground. And we should try to find a basis on which to see a resolution through that will settle final status for Kosovo.

**Question:** You said this is a time to settle relations, decide on the final status of Kosovo.

**Ambassador Wisner:** Yes.

**Question:** Is your government still on with the deadline of the end of this month to pass a resolution --

**Ambassador Wisner:** The United States Government has always been on line to support the Ahtisaari Plan, to see this codified in a Security Council resolution, have that resolution passed as soon as possible. I'd like to have it passed before the end of the month. I'd like to have it passed as soon as it can pass. I don't think it's right, however, to pick an exact date. There isn't an exact date. We are all treating the matter with the utmost urgency.

**Question:** I understand, but is there any possibility that the resolution might be delayed?

**Ambassador Wisner:** I wouldn't look at it that way. Our objective is to secure passage of the resolution without delay, to move it as rapidly as there can be consensus in the Security Council.

**Question:** The International Crisis Group issued its report the other day and one of the recommendations there, an interesting one, has to do with a moratorium for two years before Kosovo can apply for a full membership at the UN. Is this something that is being considered seriously?

**Ambassador Wisner:** No, it is not. At the moment we're not talking about the issue of membership, we're trying to get the resolution through the Security Council. The outlines of that are now well known. A draft resolution has been circulated. It's based on the Ahtisaari proposal. UN membership is an entirely separate effort that follows a discussion inside the Security Council, a separate one that has to go on to the General Assembly. It's a different issue.

**Question:** But do you foresee a scenario where things might change, the resolution and this recommendation might be part of the final one?

**Ambassador Wisner:** I think that's highly speculative and isn't on the table at the moment.

**Question:** There is one question that apparently no one has been willing to take on or been willing to answer, but I'll try it with you. What would happen if Russia were to veto this resolution?

**Ambassador Wisner:** I just am not prepared to assume that's what's going to happen. I believe there are ample reasons that Russia will not veto, that Russia will recognize the interest that the Europeans and the Americans have in bringing a matter that requires justice and final status to be achieved.

We've been working with the Russians now for better than a year. I'd like to think we're going to end up on a positive note.

**Question:** Another question. Everybody now is focused on the resolution, especially on Russia's possibility of a veto, but I want to ask about Mitrovica. There is a de facto division of Kosovo north of the Ibar River. Do you think Mitrovica can be integrated, or can the Serbian population say that since Mitrovica is de facto divided, let's make it de jure, too? The same argument that the U.S. is making for Kosovo now: to make de jure what exists de facto.

**Ambassador Wisner:** Mitrovica is not out of Kosovo. Kosovo is Kosovo. We all know its well-recognized limits and Mitrovica and the land north of the Ibar is part of Kosovo. It has always been part of the Kosovo package. That's exactly what the Contact Group agreed to in the beginning. It's the principle, the maintenance and the unity of the Kosovar territory.

**Question:** One last question, can you get us to the process of the status of Kosovo? The resolution goes for a vote. Let's speculate it's going to get passed. Then what happens? Kosovo is --

**Ambassador Wisner:** Let's get that resolution, then you and I will talk about the next step.

**Question:** Okay. Ambassador, thank you very much.

**Ambassador Wisner:** Great.

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