Giving

After taking stock of its geo-political impact, Bangladesh should quickly give diplomatic recognition to Kosovo



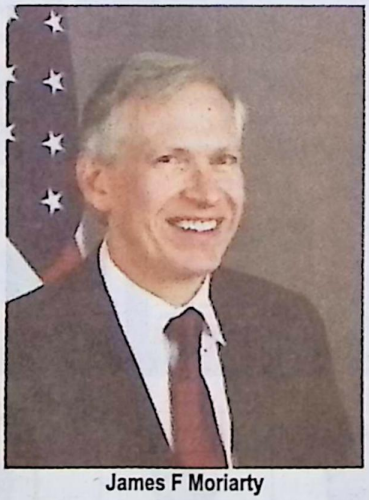
Kosovo is waiting for Bangladesh's recognition.

AHMEDE HUSSAIN

Tiny Balkan republic of Kosovo hit the newspaper headlines of the country last week when Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes told the press that Dhaka was not yet ready to give recognition to Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

Even though 62 countries have so far recognised Kosovo, of which include some big guns of the Muslim world, Bangladesh has been flip-flopping on the issue for the last 18 months. In June last year, the then Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed said that Bangladesh would recognise the "new European country"; he also went on to say that Bangladesh would lobby with fellow Asian Muslim countries so that Kosovo got international recognition. More than a year after that, Muslim capitals such as Riyadh, Kuala Lumpur and Abu Dhabi have exchanged emissaries with Pristina and Bangladesh, as Mijarul has put it, still does not "feel the necessity to recognise Kosovo at this moment".

It is clear from Mijarul's comment that Bangladesh does not want to anger Russia, with which it has signed a $1.5 billion deal to set up a nuclear power plant. Mijarul does not name Russia, yet the allusion to the former super-power is more than obvious: "We will consider many factors before making a decision. If we recognise Kosovo, we are certainly taking a side. But if we don't, we are not leaning to any side," he says. .



James F Moriarty

Because it does not want to see a US-Nato foothold in the Balkans, Russia has been the biggest backer of Serbia during the bloody Balkan War and the support has some Soviet-era nostalgia associated with it. Former communist Yugoslavia had its fair share of ethnic tensions, some of which got exposed badly and bloodily when the country was disintegrated in 1992. In fact, Russia's love affair with Slobodan Miloševic, the former President of Yugoslavia, dates back to the cold war. Miloševic, who was later tried for war crimes in The Hague, quite openly advocated mass murder and genocide against the ethnic Albanian population of Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo. With Russia on his side, nothing could hold the butcher of the Balkans back. One of the most gruesome genocides in European history since the World War II took place in Raèak, central Kosovo, when 45 unarmed Kosovar Albanians were butchered on one single day. In fact, Kosovo's struggle for independence eerily resembles Bangladesh's Independence War--a tiny nation of 2,100,000 freeing itself from the clutches of a hegemonic power; freedom, however, has come at a cost: 10,000 Kosovar Albanians died, 3,000 are still missing.

US Ambassador James F Moriarty thinks Bangladesh should recognise Kosovo. In an exclusive interview with The Star he says: "I think if you look at what has happened recently, the number of countries recognising Kosovo has increased to 62, which include very prominent Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and the UAE. If you look at the fact that the World Bank