

## U.S. envoy: Independence best for Kosovo

by UPI

BELGRADE, Serbia -- A U.S. envoy in Belgrade said Kosovo's independence from Serbia is the best solution for a future status of the predominantly ethnic-Albanian province. Outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Michael Polt Thursday said a new round of talks between the Belgrade government and Kosovo's ethnic-Albanian leaders won't solve the problem of who would govern Kosovo. In an interview with the Serbian news agency Beta, Polt said Serbia and its Slavic ally Russia are responsible for the fact that the Kosovo issue hasn't been resolved. The Kosovo issue was removed last week from the U.N. Security Council after Russia threatened to veto any solution Serbia opposes. The six-nation Contact group, made up of the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and Italy, in coming weeks is expected to reach a decision on what would be an agenda for the new round of Serb-ethnic Albanian talks, Polt said. Kosovo, formally still part of Serbia, has been U.N.-administered since 1999 when NATO forces were deployed to prevent ethnic conflicts. Ethnic-Albanian leaders insist Kosovo should be independent of Serbia while Belgrade says Kosovo will always be an integral part of Serbia.

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