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Mr. President, thank you for convening this session of the Security Council.
Since our last meeting devoted to Serbia's southern province of Kosovo and Metohija, a new Government in Belgrade was confirmed by our National Assembly.
It represents a more hopeful Serbia, confident in its engagement with the world; ready to

accelerate our progress toward full European Union membership; willing to actively contribute to building up regional peace; and firmly committed to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country.
In short, it represents a Serbia that is a proud, European democracy whose well-known position on the UDI of our southern province remains unchanged. We continue to hold that its attempt at secession contravenes the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and other cornerstone treaties of the contemporary international and European order.
We maintain that UDI has also brought the explicit <i>meaning</i> of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) into serious question, for 1244 clearly places a <i>binding</i> , Chapter VII obligation on all member-states to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country.
A great majority of the world organization's 192 member-States have continued to abide by these principles. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, I want to express my profound appreciation to them for their strict commitment to the rule of international law, and state clearly my country's unbroken dedication to those same precepts.
Questioning the principle of sovereignty anywhere in the world is a dangerous game fraught with precedent and political consequence. As a result, international law and the region's

strategic priorities are in danger of being sacrificed on the altar of political expediency. As a result, we find ourselves facing a perilous impasse today.
Mr. President,
Serbia cannot accept—and will continue to oppose—its own forcible partition.
I strongly believe that no country represented in this room would do otherwise.
I don't think there can be any serious doubt about that.
And I want to emphasize something else about which there should be no doubt: the Republic of

Serbia believes that coming together in compromise is the <i>sine qua non</i> of a more profoundly integrated Europe and a more prosperous, interdependent world.
We believe in peaceful and consensual resolution of disputes, including the one we are here today to discuss. Such an approach is the only one that stands a chance to achieve a sustainable solution to Kosovo acceptable to all stakeholders.
With this in mind, I now turn to a consideration of the Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in our province of Kosovo, dated 15 July 2008.
I do notice that its overall tone has improved over previous ones, and the criticism of the Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade has subsided—a welcome development.
And yet, I must express regret at the Report's tendency to downplay the fundamental distinction between positions that aim to uphold the primacy of the rule of international law and those that aim to side-step its basic tenets.

I also regret that the United Nations has still not released the findings reached by Mr. Ssekandi on allegations that senior UNMIK officials ordered the excessive use of force on March 17 th against Kosovo Serb demonstrators in the town of Kosovska Mitrovica, as is plain from paragraph 7 of the Report.
In addition, I must highlight the fact that nowhere does the Secretary-General's Report explicitly condemn the illegitimate adoption of a—quote—constitution—end quote—by the Kosovo Albanian authorities that attempts to eliminate any role or function of the United Nations in our southern province. This so-called "constitution" makes reference to implementing the Ahtisaari Proposal, a document that has no legal standing with the Security Council—much less with the Republic of Serbia.
Ladies and Gentlemen,
A grave violation of resolution 1244 has been committed. It should have been addressed directly. Instead, the Report merely asserts the existence of a "profoundly new reality in which UNMIK can no longer perform [] its tasks as an interim administration."

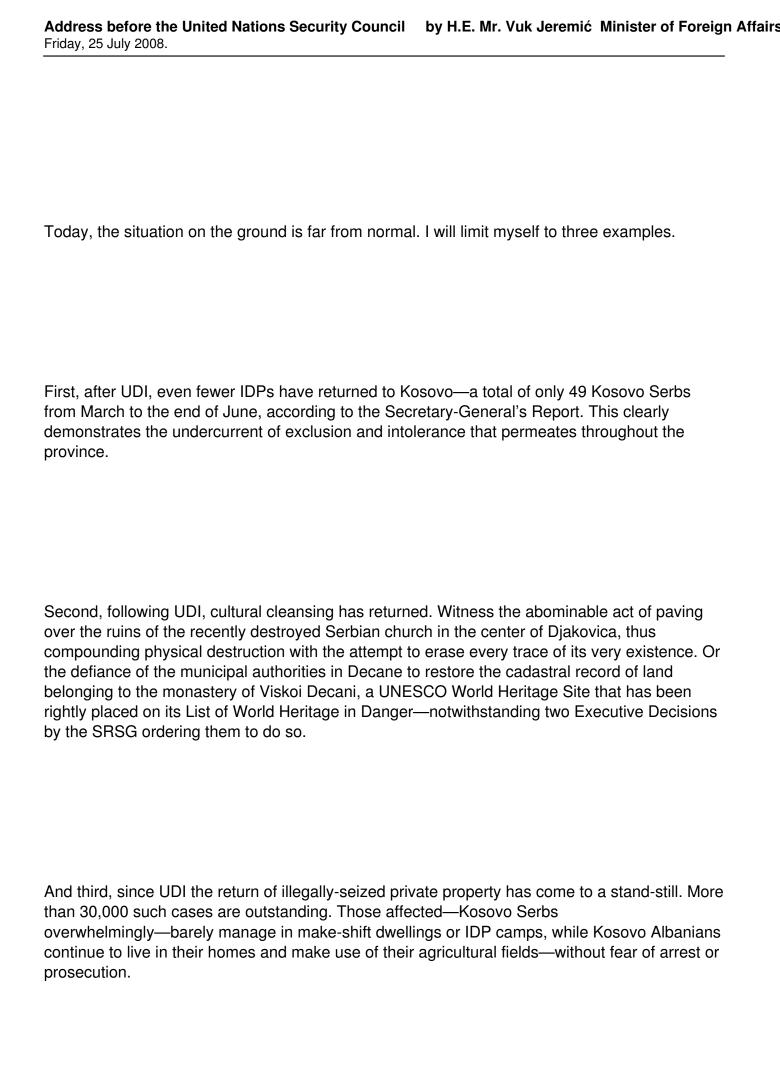
Would it again be appropriate to move ahead without the Security Council's approval?



Friday, 25 July 2008.
Two days ago SRSG Lamberto Zannier traveled to Belgrade for talks on the six topics of "practical mutual concern", in the language of the Report—namely police, judiciary, customs, transportation and infrastructure, boundaries, and patrimony.
This first meeting was an important first step toward protecting the well-being of Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo.
As the SRSG remarked to me, "to solve problems together we must reach decisions together." We agree fully. And so it is in that constructive frame of mind that my colleague, the Minister for Kosovo and Metohija, Mr. Goran Bogdanovic, will meet with Mr. Zannier early next week for talks on judiciary and police in Serb-dominated areas
The hard work of compromise is about to begin.

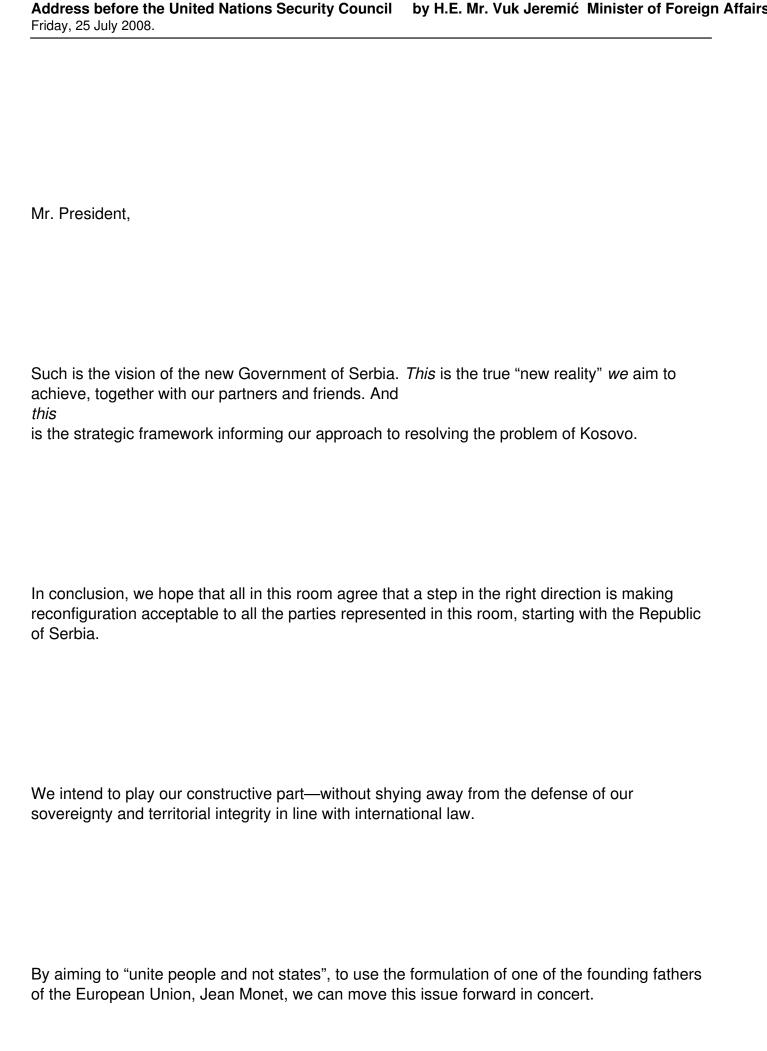
Address before the United Nations Security Council by H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić Minister of Foreign Affairs

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In short, life for the most troubled community in Europe has become almost unbearable. For many of them in the enclaves, their fate depends on how they feel they can survive despite the hostility of their immediate surroundings. For others, we are talking about a community that is inseparable from the rest of Serbia.
False frontiers can create flashpoints—and so can imposed the so-called reality. We must be very frank about this.
Mr. President,
The only prosperous destiny for the Western Balkans manifestly lies in the European Union.

Serbia is very serious about rapidly securing its membership in the EU. We have unmistakably demonstrated this fundamental commitment in recent days by the decisive steps taken to reaffirm our full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former-Yugoslavia in The Hague.
And Serbia strongly believes in the power of the 21 st -century values of Europe and their ability to reconcile former adversaries.
Consistent with these beliefs, I say: It is time to turn the page on the divisions of the recent past.
By pursuing a policy of peace through compromise, the Western Balkans can truly be transformed into a region that submits to the rule of law, while embracing the promise of Europe and the principles that stand at its foundation.
So I see the present as a historic moment—as important for us as it is for the European Union. Together we can create a region that looks to the future with optimism, proud of its many identities, and secure of its prospects.



Friday, 25 July 2	UUO.					
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Affairs