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# brief 20

## Wag the Dog:

*The Mobilization and  
Demobilization of the Kosovo  
Liberation Army*

Die Stiftung für liberale Politik

Friedrich Naumann  
*Stiftung*

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KLA fighter in Kosovo, 13 January 1999. An armed member of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in front of the ruins of a house near the KLA's headquarters in Likovac (Kosovo).  
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# Preface

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation is currently working in a number of countries which have been through armed struggles involving armies of liberation. In all cases it has been proved that peace and stability can only come about when all the military forces in a country have been subordinated to a legitimate monopoly of power. In Kosovo, it is widely assumed that some former KLA structures have somehow remained intact and are not, or not completely, under UNMIK's control. But instead of facts, one only hears rumors—sometimes even accompanied by the advice: Better not to touch on that issue.

In order to obtain a more reliable picture, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation's office in Skopje, which is responsible for the subregion that includes Kosovo, asked the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) to analyze the situation of the former KLA in Kosovo. Only by knowing the reasons for these alleged parallel structures might it become possible to design additional instruments, i.e. incentives, training programs for the civil (re-)integration of former fighters etc., and to contribute to the debate on changes in the political framework of Kosovo. It was on this basis that a first project entitled "What happened to the fighters" was formulated in December 2000. As BICC carried out its field research in Kosovo in April/May 2001, the fighting in Macedonia, and before that in southern Serbia, made it very obvious that what is happening—or not happening—in Kosovo has an impact on neighboring countries in the region.

The study entitled *Mobilization and Demobilization of the Kosovo Liberation Army* clearly shows that the important insights which have been gained in Kosovo should be taken into account during the planned disarmament of the Albanian guerrilla army in Macedonia. The paper not only confirms the above-mentioned universal truth about the necessity of a state monopoly of power, it also teaches us that the task of demobilizing guerrillas cannot be completed by military (NATO) efforts alone. Without good reason to believe that the problems behind the fighting can and will be solved peacefully, fighters will hardly be prepared to leave the battlefield. And finally, carefully designed, planned and implemented civil reintegration programs are needed for those former fighters who have been granted amnesty. Charges must be brought against the others.

Hope and trust in the civil society are of course essential—not only for former fighters. If we take a look at Macedonia, we see a dramatic rise in pessimism: 88% of the population view the general situation negatively, only 4% feel positively. Even worse, 90.7% see the economy negatively, only 2.6% positively. (the rest gave no reply). As a result more than half—53%—could imagine leaving the country. These are the findings of an opinion poll which was commissioned by our office (available at [www.fnst.org/ausland/regional/msoe.phtml](http://www.fnst.org/ausland/regional/msoe.phtml)). Together with BICC's study on Kosovo, these findings will guide our next steps in this complicated area.

Thanks to the Stability Pact, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation is able to contribute towards democratic transformation in the Balkans. We are aware that joint efforts are needed in order to achieve sustainable changes, and in presenting this material, we hope that it will be helpful and of interest to all those who are working for peace and progress.

Rainer Willert  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation,  
Head of Project  
Skopje, 20 August 2001

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation, with its headquarter in Potsdam, Germany, supports democratic transformation processes in more than sixty countries around the globe. Working with parliamentarians, academics and members of civil society, the foundation aims at building liberal democracies by organizing conferences and exchange programs on topics ranging from human rights to economic freedom. Since 2000, the office in Skopje has been coordinating project activities in Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Macedonia and Kosovo.

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*Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Wolf-Christian Paes*  
Bonn International Center for  
Conversion (BICC)

# Zusammenfassung

## German Summary

Der vorliegende *brief* beschäftigt sich mit der Entstehung der albanischen *Kosovo Befreiungsarmee* (UCK, engl.: KLA) in den neunziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts sowie mit der „Auflösung“ der Guerillatruppe nach der Errichtung eines Protektorats unter der Schirmherrschaft der Vereinten Nationen und der NATO im Sommer 1999.

Mehr als zwei Jahre später ist dieses Thema immer noch hochaktuell, obwohl oder vielleicht gerade weil sich mit dem Sturz des Milosevic-Regimes in Belgrad die strategischen Parameter auf dem Balkan verschoben haben. Galt der bewaffnete Kampf eines Teils der albanischen Bevölkerung im Kosovo noch vor zwei Jahren als Ausdruck eines legitimen Selbstbestimmungswillens, werden heute vergleichbare Konflikte zwischen albanischen Separatisten und Ordnungskräften im südserbischen Presevo-Tal und in Mazedonien als Bedrohung für die regionale Stabilität bewertet.

Die Konflikte in diesen beiden an das Kosovo angrenzenden Regionen weisen deutliche Parallelen zum Kosovokonflikt auf, und es gibt Hinweise auf enge Verbindungen zwischen den Hintermännern der „alten UCK“ und den bewaffneten Albanergruppen in den Nachbarstaaten. Vor diesem aktuellen Hintergrund beschäftigt sich der vorliegende Text mit der Entstehung der UCK und ihrer Entwaffnung und Demobilisierung seit September 1999.

Die Entwaffnung der UCK durch die internationale *Kosovo Protection Force* (KFOR) hatte, im Gegensatz etwa zu den bescheideneren Ansprüchen der NATO in Mazedonien im September 2001, die Einsammlung aller UCK-Waffen zum Ziel. Allerdings wurden nur etwa 10.000 Waffen sichergestellt, angesichts von 18.000 bis 20.000 UCK-Kämpfern eine recht niedrige Zahl. Substantielle Waffenfunde in den vergangenen zwei Jahren beweisen, dass die UCK – ebenso wie die serbische Minderheit im Kosovo – immer noch über verdeckte Waffenlager verfügt. Es ist anzunehmen, dass ein Teil dieser Waffen seinen Weg über die Grenzen in die Nachbarregionen gefunden hat.

Von den etwa 20.000 ehemaligen Kämpfern der UCK haben etwa 5.000 eine Stellung im *Kosovoschutzcorps* (engl.: *Kosovo Protection Corps – KPC*) gefunden, einer paramilitärischen Einheit, deren offizieller Auftrag im Katastrophenschutz liegt, die sich jedoch selbst als Kern einer zukünftigen Kosovo Armee versteht. Diese Truppe, deren Oberbefehl formal bei der KFOR liegt, trägt am deutlichsten die Züge der aufgelösten UCK, bis hin zu Details der Uniformen und Organisationsstrukturen. Im Jahr 2001 wurden Mitglieder dieser Einheit mit gewaltsamen Übergriffen auf Kosovo Serben, aber auch mit den bewaffneten Albanergruppen in den Nachbarstaaten in Zusammenhang gebracht.

Auch der neugegründete *Kosovo Polizeidienst* (engl.: *Kosovo Police Service – KPS*) besteht etwa zur Hälfte aus ehemaligen Mitgliedern der UCK: ein schwieriges Erbe für die multiethnische Polizeitruppe, die explizit mit dem Ziel aufgebaut wurde, eine vertrauensbildende Funktion zwischen den unterschiedlichen Bevölkerungsgruppen auszuüben.

Die politische Landschaft des Kosovos wird durch den Konflikt und durch das Erbe der UCK geprägt. Die politischen Parteien zerfallen in zwei Lager, einerseits die moderaten Parteien um den „Schattenpräsidenten“ und Schriftsteller Ibrahim Rugova und andererseits die Nachfolgeparteien der UCK, die von den ehemaligen Kommandanten Thaci und Haradinaj angeführt werden. Die Niederlage der UCK-Nachfolgeparteien im Rahmen der Kommunalwahlen im Oktober 2000 scheint einen schleichenden Bedeutungsverlust der ehemaligen UCK-Kommandeure in der Öffentlichkeit zu signalisieren. Trotzdem bestehen Kontakte zu den Separatisten und zur organisierten Kriminalität inner- und außerhalb des Kosovo fort.

Zusammenfassend kann man feststellen, dass sich die UCK seit Anfang der neunziger Jahre von einer radikalen Splittergruppe zu einer populären Befreiungsbewegung entwickelt hat, deren Kämpfer sich seit der Errichtung des UN-Protectorates entweder in die zivile Gesellschaft des Kosovos integrierten oder Positionen im entstehenden Sicherheitsapparat bzw. in der Politik des Territoriums anstrebten. Dabei nutzte eine Reihe von Kämpfern die Umbruchphase im zweiten Halbjahr 1999 nicht nur zur persönlichen Bereicherung, sondern auch zu gewaltsamen Racheakten. Seit der Etablierung der UN-Übergangsverwaltung scheint sich der harte Kern der ehemaligen UCK gespalten zu haben. Während ein Teil der Kämpfer bereit scheint sich in die zivilen Strukturen zu integrieren, hängt eine radikale Minderheit „großalbanischen“ Vorstellungen an.

Die ungelöste Frage der völkerrechtlichen Zukunft des Kosovos dominiert das politische Bewusstsein der Kosovo-Albaner und verhindert eine nachhaltige Befriedung der Region. Während die internationale Gemeinschaft an der Resolution 1244 (1999) des UN-Sicherheitsrates festhält, der eine Rückkehr der Provinz zur Bundesrepublik Jugoslawien vorsieht, wird diese Option von nahezu allen Albanern im Kosovo abgelehnt. Eine große Mehrzahl der im Rahmen dieser Studie befragten UCK-Kämpfer gab an, im Falle der Verwirklichung der Resolution wieder zu den Waffen greifen zu wollen. Dies zeigt die Notwendigkeit einer politischen Lösung für die „albanische Frage“, nicht zuletzt mit Blick auf die Unruhen in den Nachbarstaaten des Kosovo.

# Introduction

Two years have passed since the Kosovo Forces (KFOR) and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) took over governance of Kosovo (UN Security Council Resolution 1244; Military Technical Agreement, 10 June 1999), establishing what amounts to an international protectorate with a dual military and civilian leadership and limited political participation by the local population (Yannis, 2001; Wagner, 2000). It is now time to assess the demobilization of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, or in Albanian, *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës* (UCK)) as part of the overall security mission. After the end of the war in June 1999, one of the key tasks of the NATO-led Kosovo Forces consisted of demilitarizing the Kosovo-Albanian guerilla army, KLA, and transforming it into a civilian and KFOR-controlled security force. The legitimate monopoly of violence was to rest with the protectorate, at least in theory. It was assumed that with the former Serbian military and police presence ousted and a robust protectorate to be erected, ethnic violence would come to rest.

On 20 June 1999, KFOR and the KLA signed an ‘undertaking’ (see Appendix II) providing for the disarmament, transformation, and monitoring of personnel under KLA-control as well as the cessation of cross-border activities. On 20 September 1999, it was additionally agreed between the KLA and KFOR to demilitarize the KLA and to transform it into a uniformed, but unarmed, disaster relief organization, the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). Demilitarizing the KLA presented two quandaries. Why should the KLA, as a *de facto* ally of NATO and a victorious power of the war, agree to disarm before reaching its goal of full independence? And how could the KLA, lacking legitimate political control and intermingled with organized crime, turn into a reliable partner for Kosovo’s security politics?

The demilitarization of the KLA was initially often described as an accomplishment, until KLA splinter groups started to emerge in Southern Serbia (*Ushtria Çlirimtare Presheve, Medvegje e Bijanovac* (UCPMB)) and Macedonia (the National Liberation Army (NLA)). However, the projected image of UNMIK and KFOR keeping Kosovo under tight control was premature (Mintchev, 2000). The demilitarization of the KLA proved more difficult than initially assumed by most representatives of the international community. It is part of a larger unresolved problem—the security situation in Kosovo and in its border areas, which in turn is closely related to the ‘Albanian Question’ (Reuter, 2000; Judah, 2001). Nonetheless, General Klaus Reinhardt, the German commander of KFOR from October 1999 to March 2000, sees the demilitarization as a success. Among the main lessons which Reinhardt extracts from the KFOR mission, not one refers to the treatment of the KLA (Reinhardt, 2001). NATO’s lessons from the Kosovo seem to be confined to the improvement of military performance (Naumann, 1999).

The Kosovo Liberation Army is also known under its Albanian name *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës* (UCK). In order to avoid confusion with the Albanian-Macedonian insurgency group *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kombëtare* (National Liberation Army), which uses the same acronym, we shall refer in this text to the original Kosovo Liberation Army as KLA, while using the acronym NLA for the Macedonian-based National Liberation Army.

The aim of this report is to draw lessons for demobilization and reintegration from the engagement of KFOR, UNMIK and international organizations, as well as from nascent law enforcement structures in Kosovo. It is not our intention to reconstruct the history of the Kosovo conflict, the war, or post-war Kosovo politics. Neither do we intend to cover more

general questions pertaining to the genesis and consequences of NATO’s intervention. We do not offer an all-encompassing menu of panaceas for Kosovo’s post-war security situation. We specifically address a set of questions related to the post-war demobilization and demilitarization of the KLA. First, in order to understand the tasks involved in demobilizing the KLA, we have to understand its nature. What were the KLA’s internal structure, recruitment basis, and method of conducting the war? Second, how effectively was the KLA disarmed and its structures dissolved after June 1999? Third, how successfully did KFOR and UNMIK demilitarize the KLA? Fourth, what are the major re-training and reintegration support measures? Fifth, how do former KLA combatants identify their political views and social role? Sixth, what role do the political parties, which emanated from the KLA, play in post-war politics? Seventh, how are the extremist Albanian groups in Serbia and Macedonia linked to the KLA? And finally, what are the major lessons to be learned by intervening international organizations? The report is based on interviews conducted by the authors in Kosovo in April/May 2001 with representatives of the former KLA, the Kosovo Protection Corps, the Kosovo Police Service, UNMIK, OSCE, KFOR, the International Organisation for Migration, and Kosovo political parties (a full list of the interviewees is included below).

Demilitarization is not confined to the transformation of the KLA into the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) or the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). Kosovo is a heavily militarized society: the possession of weapons is part of Kosovo’s everyday culture (Saferworld, 2001). This ‘weapons culture’ seems grounded in the history of the Albanian people, who were ruled by foreign powers for most of their recent history, as well as in the perceived security needs of a population living a semi-sedentary life in remote and

inaccessible territory. Until recently, social relations were governed by a medieval set of rules, the *Kanun*, which has contributed to the image of Albanians as ‘savage’ and ‘backward’. Weapons still play an important role in social relations. Weddings, for example, are celebrated by firing guns into the air. Most Albanian households are thought to have at least one ‘family gun’—until 1997 most likely a hunting rifle or World War II-vintage bolt-action rifle. As a result of the conflict and the improved supply of modern weaponry, these old-fashioned guns have most likely been replaced with modern automatic weapons (Saferworld, 2001).

Weapons originally acquired and controlled by the KLA remain a major foundation of ethnic violence in Kosovo. The militarization of Kosovo’s society also pertains to non-Albanian groups in Kosovo. While the Yugoslav armed forces and the police withdrew from Kosovo, members of the remaining Serb population retain an unknown number of weapons (Saferworld, 2001, p. 42). Given the fears of Serbs living in Kosovo and the distrust of KFOR and UNMIK’s capacity for law enforcement, Serb paramilitary self-defense remains an option to be reckoned with. However, we do not intend to cover the security situation of Serbs in Kosovo in this report.

The demobilization and disarmament of non-legal military formations following armed conflicts represents a crucial prerequisite for the formation of a law-based society and democratic state-society relations. The emergence of new violent secessionist movements in Serbia and Macedonia demonstrates that the demilitarization of the KLA has to be seen in the wider context of regional security. Ethnic violence in Kosovo against non-Albanian, mainly Serbian and Roma, minorities, the violent uprising in the Albanian-populated Presevo valley in Serbia proper—along the Ground Security Zone (GSZ)—and in Albanian-populated parts of Macedonia do not only put a strain on NATO’s 40,000

KFOR troops, but amply illustrate the continuing urgency of post-war demobilization and disarmament measures. The reintegration of former combatants into civilian life and the reestablishment of a state monopoly of violence are essential for preventing a relapse into the violent pursuit of interests. Given the record of post-war violence emanating from former combatants, it is of key importance to transform paramilitaries into legally bound and controlled security structures, or to dismantle these organizations and facilitate their reintegration into civilian life—professional, economic, and social.

The principal problems involved in the demobilization of paramilitary forces are known from other post-war zones: disarming, retraining, job creation, housing, social reintegration, raising funds to restructure the economy, and the long-term task of re-socializing people used to violent conflict behavior (Kingma and Pauwels, 2000). Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration are interlocking processes, involving legal, institutional, social, and economic spheres of post-war societies. The case of Kosovo bears similarities to other post-war areas, most notably to Bosnia following the Dayton Accord.

Kosovo demonstrates that demobilization might be seen by insurgents as a halfway compromise or as an unjust restraint prior to gaining full state independence. On the one hand therefore, the rewards of demobilization must compensate for compromising on the ultimate aim of independence. On the other hand, sanctions for not demobilizing must be a credible deterrent. Lessons learnt from Kosovo may prove valuable beyond its confines, because post-war Kosovo belongs to a growing number of entities stuck between secession from the former ‘motherland’ and full independence.

# What was the KLA?

The status of Kosovo has been contested between the Albanian and the Serb population within its borders for most of the last century. While the Serbs consider Kosovo to be the heartland of the medieval Kingdom of Serbia from approximately 1200 to the start of the Ottoman rule in 1455, as well as the home of many important religious sites of the Serb Orthodox Church, the Albanians argue that the majority of the Kosovo population has always been ethnic Albanian, regardless of the ethnic background of their overlords (Reuter and Clewing, 2000; Malcolm, 2000). While we will not revisit the ethnographic and historical argument, it is important to remember that the conflict between the Albanian struggle for self-rule and the role of Kosovo in the Serb national consciousness looms large in the minds of most inhabitants of the region.

The accession of Slobodan Milosevic to power in Serbia in 1987 led to a new escalation of the Kosovo conflict. Milosevic's government implemented measures to change the status of the province, making Serbian the only official language and subsequently purging ethnic Albanians from state institutions and publicly owned enterprises. Kosovo's Albanian elite reacted by forming a parallel system of government, the Republic of Kosovo, under the leadership of 'President' Ibrahim Rugova. This system—financed largely from the Diaspora—functioned alongside the official structures. The parallel administration operated hospitals and schools, while following a policy of peaceful resistance against the Serb authorities. The number of Kosovo Albanians living in Western Europe (mainly Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia) is estimated to exceed 600,000, while

another 300,000 Kosovo Albanians live in North America. Funds sent home from the Diaspora form the backbone of the Kosovo economy, while labor migration serves as a 'safety valve' for the explosive population growth of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

On 2 July 1990, 114 ethnic Albanian delegates of the Kosovo Assembly met in secret and declared Kosovo an "independent and equal entity within the framework of the Yugoslav federation and an equal subject with its counterparts in Yugoslavia" (Troebst, 1999a). Clearly, the majority of Kosovo Albanians were then in favor of secession from Serbia, but not from Yugoslavia. For most of the 1990s, Rugova's government followed this moderate line, only to find the 'Kosovo Question' sidelined in international negotiations. It was against the backdrop of non-recognition of the Republic of Kosovo and increased repression against ethnic Albanians that military units were formed in Kosovo, ultimately leading to the foundation of two competing military wings—the FARK and the KLA.

## ***Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo (FARK)***

The build-up of armed forces in Kosovo goes back to the supposedly pacifist government under Rugova. From its onset, the Rugova government expected a confrontation with Serb forces and wanted to be prepared in case of major atrocities (Interview with Caim Berisha, 7 May 2001). The illegal 'Defense Ministry' under Rugova worked from 1990 to 1993 on the build-up of a Kosovar territorial defense system, though its plan to achieve a mobilization capacity of 40,000 reservists never materialized. Hajzer Hajzeraj was Kosovo's first 'Defense Minister', appointed by Bujar Bukoshi, the Kosovar prime minister in exile. Hajzeraj's main task consisted in

the build-up of Kosovar police and military units—the Armed Forces of Kosovo (FARK). After his arrest in 1993, Hajzeraj was replaced by Ahmet Krasniqui, an ethnic Albanian who had served in the Yugoslav army. The emerging FARK troops consisted mainly of former Albanian officers of the Yugoslavian army with only few rank and file soldiers (Lipsius, 1999, p. 365). Apart from enrolling combatants, the FARK faced huge difficulties in acquiring weaponry. Some weapons came from a Serb ammunitions plant in Kosovo (Skenderaj), others from the Albanian military. Bulgaria and Montenegro were contacted too, but it is not clear whether weaponry was actually delivered.

The formation of a territorial defense system came to a sudden halt in 1993. Following the 'physical interrogation' of a member of the 'Defense Ministry', Serb forces were able to arrest almost all members of the FARK general staff. Remaining FARK associates left for Albania, where they regrouped and received military training. After the downfall of President Sali Berisha in 1997, the FARK's situation also deteriorated in Albania (Lani, 1999). During the autumn of 1998, several FARK members were arrested in Albania for involvement in the coup attempt staged by supporters of the Albanian Democratic Party against the government of Fatos Nano, who had replaced Sali Berisha. Bukoshi repeatedly denied involvement in the attempted coup. Nonetheless, FARK's relations with Nano's socialist government of Albania were much more strained than those of the KLA (Frefel, 1999). The killing of Ahmet Krasniqui, leader of the FARK, in Tirana on 21 September 1998 has at times been attributed to the KLA, but it could also have been related to the coup attempt. After the killing of Krasniqui in Tirana, Bukoshi named the former officer Halil Bicaj as acting 'Defense Minister'.

Faced with the growing strength of the rival KLA, the Bukoshi government decided in late March/early April 1998 to join the military actions in Kosovo (Interview with Ahmet Alishani, 9 May 2001). At the end of June 1998, three FARK brigades, consisting of some 300 combatants, entered Kosovo, fighting two battles against Serb forces in the Kosovo villages of Lodja and Junik. Some 3,000 fighters joined the FARK combatants in Kosovo. From 1998 onwards, the FARK attempted to get all armed units under its control, but local KLA commanders refuted this idea. The FARK units entering Kosovo asked local KLA commanders to submit to FARK command. Instead of submitting, the KLA units arrested and disarmed those FARK soldiers they could get hold of.

In November 1998, another FARK brigade entered Kosovo, joining the Operative Zone of Pashtri. The FARK and KLA cooperated more closely after this, with the KLA ensuring that it controlled command positions (Interview with Ahmet Alishani, 9 May 2001). It has been reported that, in November 1998, parts of the FARK under its new 'Defense Minister', Halil Bicaj, joined ranks with the KLA (Lipsius, 1999, p. 366). Although this information could not be confirmed, it was evident that the KLA was able to consolidate its power as the predominant military wing of the violent movement. The FARK, for example, dropped the use of its original name by calling itself part of the overall KLA (Katulis, 2000, p. 5; Lipsius, 1999, p. 367). Yet, even after this step, FARK members under Bukoshi's command were arrested and beaten up by the KLA (Lipsius, 1999). The relationship between the KLA and the 'Defense Ministry' of the Bukoshi government again came under serious strain during the air war.

The KLA never accepted the legitimacy of the elected Rugova government. Rugova's desperate calls to the KLA, in June 1998, to submit to political control were simply ignored

(Schmidt-Häuer, 1998). The conflict between the FARK and the KLA was not only about political and military leadership by the Rugova/Bukoshi government, but about deliberately putting civilians at risk by embarking on guerilla tactics. Whereas the FARK opted for a 'regular' type of armed resistance, KLA commanders chose guerilla tactics. The signal for the end of the FARK came when KFOR troops entered Kosovo and the KLA's 'Political Directorate' under Hashim Thaci took over the government in Kosovo.

### ***The Emergence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)***

The KLA represented a guerilla movement whose aim was to achieve, by means of violence, Kosovo's secession from Serbia and the creation of either an independent state of Kosovo or a Greater Albania. The beginnings of the Kosovo Liberation Army are obscure, but they have little connection with the FARK. Some authors trace the KLA's emergence to Macedonia in 1992, others hold that it is a product of the Popular Movement for Kosovo (LPK). Kosovo Albanians in Germany founded the LPK on 17 February 1982 in the wake of the violent clashes between Albanian protesters and Serb policemen in Pristina in March and April 1981 (Lipsius, 1998, p. 75). The LPK, unlike Rugova's more moderate LDK, advocated an armed struggle against Serb forces from the outset. During the 1980s, the LPK received some support from communist Albania, but remained a marginal, radical party with little support within Kosovo until the mid-1990s (Reuter, 2000a, p. 171). According to some sources, the LPK began to combat Serb police after the abolition of Kosovo's autonomy in 1989 (Vaknin, 2000). Earliest mention of Kosovar military training in Albania

was in 1991, though the numbers were reportedly symbolic and confined to a few regions (Zejnnullahu, 2001, p. 21). Different military movements existed as of 1991, which resulted in the formation of the 'Front' (Albanian: *Frontit*) (Hamzaj, 2000, p. 14).

The National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo (LKCK), founded as a splinter group of the LDK in Pristina on 25 May 1993 and active among exiles in Germany, formed a military wing of its own. Yet, specific LKCK guerilla forces never became apparent and it is therefore doubtful that the KLA emerged from the LKCK. The more radical LPK and LKCK appealed to a younger generation of Albanian 'ethnic entrepreneurs' both within Kosovo and in the Diaspora, while Rugova was supported by members of the old Albanian political elite socialized in the Yugoslavia of the 1960s and 1970s. The connections between the emerging KLA structures and political parties and emigrant circles were kept clandestine. Even operational zone commanders in the early KLA did not know the full extent of these networks. It is therefore impossible at this time to establish the degree of political guidance in the formation of the KLA (Zejnnullahu, 2001, p. 37 ff).

The core group of the KLA supposedly consisted of former Marxist-Leninist Enverists, who were already active in the 1970s and 1980s. Chris Hedges, New York Times' Balkans bureau chief from 1995 to 1998, identified two factions within the KLA—radical rightists with traditions going back to World War II fascist militias, the Skanderbeg volunteer SS division, and the *kuçak* rebels who fought Serbs during World War I, as well as radical leftists displaying xenophobia and Stalinism à la Enver Hoxha (Hedges, 1999b). SONER

Since the expected international backing did not materialize in the period from 1992–95, Kosovar Albanians in the Diaspora, former

Yugoslav officers, and other individuals and groups who had fought against the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, decided to join the KLA's core Enverist group (Cohen, 2001). It is estimated that over 5,000 ethnic Albanians fought together with Croat and Muslim military formations against Yugoslavian or Serbian forces in the Croatian and Bosnian wars—some of these joined the KLA. The bulk of KLA fighters was allegedly drawn from ethnic Albanians who had fought for the Muslim-Croat Federation against the Serbs in Bosnia (Hedges, 1999b, p. 34).

Evidently, several armed groups acted independently of each other until 1994. Ramush Haradinaj, former KLA commander and current head of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), asserts that diverse illegal units joined ranks in 1994 to form the KLA (Hamzaj, 2000, p. 22). Coordinated KLA activities started in 1994, including systematic training and weapons acquisition across the Albanian border. But regular training of KLA members by the Albanian military evidently only began in 1996 (Hamzaj, 2000, pp. 15, 26 ff.). The KLA actions could count on growing support from the local populace; its military strength consisted in its intermingling with the local populace and the ensuing difficulties in locating KLA forces precisely. The early KLA groups did not for the most part attack Yugoslav Army facilities, but concentrated rather on ambushing police patrols and attacking Albanians who collaborated with the Serbian authorities. The strongholds of the early KLA were the Drenica and the Llapi regions.

Whereas the ideology and early structure of the KLA remain to a certain extent obscure, its main activities are known to have consisted in attacking Serbian police forces. A shift occurred when some 10,000 refugee Serbs from the Krajina were resettled in Kosovo. From spring 1998

onwards, the KLA increasingly attacked Serb settlements in Klina, Decani, and Dakovica, as well as a refugee camp in Baboloc, thus unleashing a cycle of excessive Serbian crackdowns on ethnic Albanians blamed for belonging to the KLA or hosting KLA combatants (Vaknin, 2000). In response to KLA attacks, the FRY government cracked down indiscriminately on ethnic Albanians. In January 1997, Serb forces arrested more than 60 suspected KLA members, declaring that terrorism had been cut to its roots (Katulis, 2000).

### ***Tipping the Balance from Politics to Violence***

The first public appearance of the KLA in Drenica on 28 November 1997 (at the funeral of a teacher killed by Serb forces) did not mark the beginning of the KLA, but rather signaled the initiation of a national uprising, not confined to a few guerillas. It is often claimed that the position of president Rugova began to be undermined when the Kosovo issue was left off the agenda at the Dayton Peace talks on Bosnia in November 1995. Whatever the direct impact of the Dayton Accord might have been, Rugova clearly could no longer monopolize the political landscape in Kosovo. Young, mostly unemployed, men from rural areas, students with affinities to the ideas of the Maoist Albanian president Enver Hoxha, or Kosovo Albanian exiles in Albania proper, Switzerland or Germany joined the KLA. The emergence of the KLA marked a generation shift and sea-change in Kosovo politics. The influx of rural Kosovars into the towns, often following the shelling of their villages by Serb forces, led to a radicalization of the urban population, contributing to the decline of the LDK.

When the policy of non-violent resistance sponsored by Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo failed to provide gains, disappointed younger Kosovars turned to a violent fight for secession. The break-away of Adem Demaci, Sakharov Prize Winner and head of the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms, from the Rugova-led LDK, and his subsequent switch to the Parliamentary Party of Kosovo (PPK) in 1996 may have contributed to the disenchantment of younger LDK members with Rugova's non-confrontational course. According to a report by the International Crisis Group, the LDK's influence on the KLA was further undermined by the fact that a significant number of KLA commanders originated from Tetovo in Macedonia (ICG, 1999a).

From 1996, the KLA openly competed with the non-violent LDK under Rugova (Federation of American Scientists, [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/kla.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/kla.htm)). The Serbian government insisted that Rugova's government should drop its demand for secession and denounce the KLA before negotiations could resume (*Economist*, 14 March 1998). In June 1998, Jakup Krasniqi, former village leader of Rugova's LDK, who eventually became a KLA spokesman, in return requested that Rugova should either align himself with the KLA or step aside (*Economist*, 20 June 1998). Despite the rapid growth of the KLA in 1998 and the criticism of his moderate approach, Rugova ran unchallenged in the underground election for the presidency of the Republic of Kosovo on 22 March 1998. Ten political parties had participated in the election campaign. In democratic terms, the KLA could never credibly claim to represent the majority of Kosovo Albanians.

## ***The KLA's Arsenal***

A key element in the KLA's ascendance was the disintegration of Albania after the breakdown of its pyramid schemes in December 1996. Armories were looted and about 600,000 small arms ended up in the hands of civilians. Only a fraction of these guns were recovered by the Albanian authorities and it is estimated that half a million weapons remain at large (Small Arms Survey, 2001, pp. 176/177). A number of these guns ended up on the regional arms market, where the sudden surge in supply saw prices tumbling as low as DM 15 for an automatic gun, rising later to DM 250 (Reuter, 2000a, p. 172). The KLA was therefore able to equip itself with Chinese and Russian-made small arms at a low price, considerably increasing its firepower. Estimates of the number of weapons available vary widely. While Reuter (2000a, p. 172) puts the number at 100,000 weapons, others argue that the KLA's armament "remained poor and insufficient" (Troebst, 1999, p. 167). The latter position is supported by the accounts of former fighters and by General Agim Ceku, the KLA's chief-of-staff from May 1999 (Kusovac, 1999). Besides small arms (mostly AK-47s), the KLA had a small arsenal of rocket-propelled grenades, shoulder-fired anti-tank rocket launchers, mortars and anti-aircraft guns (Troebst, 1999, p. 167). Furthermore, the KLA's equipment included weapons from World War II, such as PPS-41 automatic rifles and the MP-40, although the inventory of modern arms, ammunition, telecommunications equipment, and other supplies was much larger. The KLA obtained weapons used by the former Yugoslav People's Army, as well as weapons produced in China, Singapore, and the former Soviet Union. Apart from armory from Albania and NATO countries, weapons produced in Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have also been found in the KLA's arsenal (Thaci, *Guardian*, 31 May 1999; Vaknin, 2000).

In summer 1998, the KLA still had problems in properly arming all its volunteers—some of the weaponry was evidently bought from Serbs who traded with Albanians (Zejnnullahu, 2001, p. 75). Most of the latter weapons came from an ill-conceived plan of the Serb authorities to arm pro-Belgrade Serb militias in Kosovo with 75,000 AK-47s (Ripley, 2000, p. 22). In early February 1999, the Yugoslavian government stated that they had seized US \$500,000 worth of weapons, ammunition and uniforms intended for the KLA that had been smuggled in from Croatia (Hedges, 1999b, p. 39). The Croatian government confirmed that several of its generals took leave to "work" with the KLA.

## ***Financing the Struggle***

Details of the KLA's finances are not known, but it certainly received donations from exiles, and probably from drug lords—and possibly funds from trading weapons, too. As Rrustem Ibraj, president of the New York City chapter of the Kosovo Democratic League, reported, KLA representatives raised more than US \$500,000 in a few months among expatriate Albanians in the United States (Katulis, 2000). It has been firmly established that the KLA collected significant sums among emigrants in the US and Western Europe, particularly Germany. A 3% 'War Tax' was levied on Kosovars working abroad, channeled through the Swiss-based 'Homeland Calls' fund (Dohnanyi, 2001). At a later stage, the KLA also received funds from Bukoshi's 'Republic of Kosovo' government. The Islamic Community of Kosovo additionally helped by providing the KLA with material support (Zejnnullahu, 2001, pp. 75 ff.).

The exact nature of the KLA's links to organized crime abroad is not known, even though there are persistent rumors linking ethnic Albanian gangs in Western Europe to the war effort. Given the fact that Albanian mobsters control the drug trade in key German

(Munich, Hanover) and Central European (Budapest) markets (Reuter, 2000a, pp. 182/183), it would be naive to assume that no 'drug money' was spent on the Kosovo war. Chris Hedges writes with regard to the KLA: "Thaci controls, after a year as the leader of the rebel movement, a vast network of weapons smugglers, contract killers, soldiers and former criminals, which is closely related to the incompetent and notoriously corrupt government in Tirana" (Hedges, 1999a). Schmidt-Eenboom (1999, p. 17), citing secret service reports, claims that the KLA received DM 500 million from both the Diaspora and from criminal sources up to March 1999. Serbian estimates are closer to DM 900 million.

Media outlets often conveyed the picture of the KLA as a criminal organization, reporting internal killings of rivals, executions of 'collaborators', the financing of weapons acquisition by drug smuggling and by prostitution rings, and the expulsion of Kosovars who did not intend to flee during the war in March–May 1999 ([www.flakmag.com/politics/thaci.html](http://www.flakmag.com/politics/thaci.html); Malcolm, 2000, p. xxx; [www.emperors-clothes.com/interviews/alban.htm](http://www.emperors-clothes.com/interviews/alban.htm); [www.decani.yunet.com/kla3.html](http://www.decani.yunet.com/kla3.html)). The impression of a criminal KLA command was additionally fed by the Rugova/Bukoshi government. Bukoshi, for example, went so far as to note that "cadaver have never been an obstacle to Thaci's career" (*New York Times*, 25 June 1999). Western governments, including the German government, usually declined to confirm such allegations, as did authors supportive of the KLA (Lange, 1999). The German government, for example, denied knowing 'specifics' about the KLA's criminal connections (Bundestagsdrucksache 14/753).

## Recruitment

The KLA's strength swelled from an estimated 500 active members at the beginning of 1998 to a force of at least twenty thousand by June 1999. This included those who only temporarily supported the KLA by providing logistical assistance. It is estimated that the KLA's full-time force consisted of approximately 8,000 to 12,000 fighters (Stavljanić, 1998, p. 64). Prospective KLA members underwent reliability checks before being accepted. The International Crisis Group reported 11,000 recruits "from other countries", but the figure seems to be hugely exaggerated (ICG, 1999d). The KLA included several hundred foreign volunteers and some mercenaries from Albania, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia—mainly devout Moslem veterans of the wars in Afghanistan, Lebanon and Bosnia. A group of about 400 Albanian Americans volunteered for the so-called 'Atlantic Brigade', and most of them returned to the US after the war. Three of the Atlantic Brigade disappeared after the end of the NATO bombing; their bodies were found two years later, in mid-July 2001, in a Serb mass grave (Smith and Finn, 2001).

In the summer of 1998, the KLA supposedly consisted of 165 'brigades', with a total strength of about 12,000 fighters, most of whom had little or no prior military training or experience. However, these numbers are very shaky as identification with the KLA rose and fell in the course of the war. Many units fought without much contact with KLA headquarters or other units. Commanded by local warlords, civilians joined the fight only at specific times. Numbers for the second armed group—the FARK—are even less reliable and range from 600 to 3,000. During the war, Bukoshi even claimed 4,000 FARK troops under arms (ICG, 1999g, p. 13), though many FARK members fought under

KLA command. Numbers for the FARK are furthermore obscured by the fact that this force shed its own uniforms at some stage, preferring to operate under the KLA label. However, the fact that in 2001 an 'Association of FARK Veterans' claims to represent 1,200 members provides some idea of troop numbers.

As far as the 'real' KLA is concerned, it is impossible to give a definite troop strength at the end of the conflict in June 1999. Most observers, including Agim Ceku, estimated the number of KLA fighters to have been about 20,000. However, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) received 25,723 applications for reintegration assistance, when it started to register KLA combatants later in 1999. This gap has never been fully explained.

## Training and Structure of the KLA

KLA training in Northern Albanian camps was assisted by unofficial British and German military instructors. After the war, some CIA officers admitted to having developed close ties with the KLA under the guise of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission in fall 1998 and spring 1999. The CIA officers provided the KLA with American military training manuals and field advice on fighting the Yugoslav army and Serbian police. There are still open questions with respect to the extent of CIA/KLA cooperation before the air bombing (Walker and Laverty, 2000).

In preparation for the war, the KLA set up directorates, codes, procedures, radio and electronic communication systems, as well as a military general

staff, headed by Sulejman ('Sultan') Selimi from February 1999 and divided into seven operational zones (Vaknin 2000; Interview with Azem Sylja, general commander of the KLA, 2000). The Political Directorate under Hashim Thaci was not formed until the aftermath of the Rambouillet talks in February 1999, and its influence on the military command of the KLA seems to have been quite limited (Zejnullahu, 2001, p. 99). Before the Rambouillet talks, there existed no general command structure in the KLA. 'Sultan' Sulejman became the first general commander at KLA headquarters. He was replaced by Agim Ceku on 1 May 2001. It was not possible to establish whether the creation of a general command resulted from joint war preparations with NATO.

The KLA was organized in small, compartmentalized cells rather than as a single large rebel movement. The KLA's strength was apparently divided between a maneuverable strike nucleus of a few hundred trained commandos, and the much larger number of locally organized members (territorial militias) active throughout the region. The KLA typically performed acts of violence in smaller groups, at times with as few as three to five men. Permanent members of KLA units had been professionally trained in Albania since 1996. One particular branch included former Yugoslav army soldiers. Some of its leaders were former members of the Yugoslavian Internal State Security Service, the Yugoslavian army and the police. The KLA remained a loosely coordinated organization until the allied bombing began on 24 March 1999, with independent regional groups competing for influence and often not sharing information among each other. After the war, the disunity of rival KLA factions recurred (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000, p. 71).

## ***Mixed Messages from US Diplomacy***

In February 1998, Robert Gelbard, the US president's special envoy to the Balkans in charge of the Dayton agreement, characterized the KLA as follows:

“The great majority of this violence we attribute to the (Serbian) police, but we are tremendously disturbed and also condemn very strongly the unacceptable violence done by terrorist groups in Kosovo and particularly the UCK—the Kosovo Liberation Army. This is without any question a terrorist group ... you strip away the rhetoric and just look at actions. And the actions of this group speak for themselves” ([www.state.gov/policy\\_remarks/1998/980223\\_gelbard\\_belgrade](http://www.state.gov/policy_remarks/1998/980223_gelbard_belgrade)).

Regardless of these initial negative statements, the US government found that the KLA was a factor to reckon with since it controlled an estimated 30 percent of the Kosovo province. The US initiated high-level contacts with the KLA in May 1998. On 24 June 1998, Richard Holbrooke, then US special envoy for the Balkans, met with KLA fighters in a Kosovo village. This was followed by a meeting between Gelbard and KLA officials in Geneva (Katulis, 2000). The KLA was “a reality on the ground”, Gelbard explained before the House of Representatives International Relations Committee on 23 July 1998.

There is no unequivocal rationale for the shift in US policy. Was the US diplomacy trying to convince the KLA to give up its fight for independence or were the contacts with the KLA intended to pave the way for a joint military effort against Milosevic's Serbia? Actually, both conflicting options may have co-existed for some time. The KLA had clearly reached a major intermediate goal—recognition as a legitimate party to the conflict by

the most important Western power. The turnabout in the US commitment from supporting Rugova to fostering the KLA is probably best explained by a mix of general beliefs and perceptions such as: “No second Bosnia”; “Bombs paved the way to the Dayton Accord”; and “Threatening words have to be followed by deeds”. Circumstantial evidence hints at an ever-growing verbal willingness on the US side to use military intervention since September 1998. Given NATO's reluctance to commit its own ground troops, the KLA provided just these.

## ***The Ground War in 1998***

The dramatic growth of the KLA from summer 1998 onwards is usually attributed to Milosevic's escalation of attacks on Kosovo villages accused of hosting KLA guerillas, leading, according to UN relief agencies, to some 50,000 to 60,000 displaced Kosovars in early June 1998. The Kosovo war on the ground, lasting from late February to mid-October 1998, involved some 13,000 Serb police forces, 6,500 Yugoslavian Army troops, and 400 Serb para-militaries (*Tigrovi*—Tigers) (Troebst, 1999a). By June 1998, the KLA had launched a major offensive, controlling one-third of Kosovo by early July 1998. The KLA's own calculus seems to have been that conflict escalation would raise the likelihood of turning NATO's warnings of military intervention into real action (Zejnnullahu, 2001, p. 59). Yet, from August 1998 onwards, the KLA faced serious losses once the Serb forces succeeded in taking back most of the territory the KLA had seized in the previous months (Troebst, 1999b).

In September and October 1998, NATO increased its pressure on Serbia to compromise on Kosovo, threatening it with air strikes. On 13 October 1998, after negotiations with Richard Holbrooke, Milosevic agreed to reduce Serb troops in Kosovo and to observe

a ceasefire (Loquai, 2000, pp. 95–105). The OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission in charge of monitoring the implementation of the October agreement had no mandate for controlling KLA activities (Eiff, 1999, p. 327). The Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement had not included any provisions for disarming the KLA. In the meantime, the KLA used the ceasefire to regroup and build-up its strength (Zejnnullahu, 2001, p. 79). The KLA had been asked by US Secretary of State, Madelaine Albright, not to take advantage of the Serb pullback, but uninhibited by the OSCE mission, the KLA continued with its attacks on Serb forces (Perlez, 1998; Smith, 1998).

The local populace was asked to support the KLA's war in no uncertain terms. Commander Remi recalls a meeting in the Podujeja municipality in December 1998 where the local people were told by KLA commanders: “A war is ongoing, we are in war. You will not be able to stop this war, but you will also not be allowed to do it. We will eliminate all the hindrances on our way” (Zejnnullahu, 2001, p. 80). Commander Remi leaves no doubt that it was a deliberate strategy of the KLA to launch, conduct, and win a war. In contrast to the international media, which concentrated on the civilian victims of the Serb-Kosovar escalation, the KLA's main idea was not to protect Kosovo's populace against Serb attacks, but to fight a war for independence. The fragile ceasefire brokered by Richard Holbrooke in October 1998 therefore lasted only a few weeks.

## The KLA and NATO

Stepping up its military operations, the KLA was actually able to ensure a leading position at the Rambouillet talks from 6–23 February 1999 and from 15–18 March 1999. At the behest of the United States, the KLA under Hashim Thaci headed the Kosovar team at the Rambouillet negotiations in February 1999, sidelining the Rugova government. The Kosovar delegation signed the Rambouillet document foreseeing the KLA's disarmament, though obviously in anticipation that Milosevic would not sign at all. During the Rambouillet talks, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright asked the Albanian Foreign Minister, Pascal Milo, to exert his influence on the Kosovar delegation to accept the agreement. According to Milo, the US guaranteed NATO presence in Kosovo, direct aid, and also that the KLA would be assisted in its professionalization and in becoming part of Kosovo's new military forces (Cohen, 2001, p. 266). In order to obtain the Kosovars' signature, Rambouillet's official quest for the KLA's disarmament had obviously become negotiable.

Contrary to Rambouillet's request for the KLA's disarmament, some US Congressmen (Senators Joseph Lieberman, Democrat, Connecticut; Mitch McConnell, Republican, Kentucky) advocated legislation allowing the KLA to be armed in the course of the NATO bombing. The White House officially resisted the idea because it might have furthered Kosovo's quest for independence (Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000, p. 135). Some KLA representatives suggested that the US had already secretly armed the KLA before the start of the war, though there is only limited information available about direct military support from NATO countries before the war (Katulis, 2000). The Albanian government evidently played an essential role in channeling NATO's military support to the KLA. Thaci was probably right in saying in May 1999 that "NATO has not supported us with arms, but has not impeded the process of arming us" (Lani, 1999, p. 32). A private US firm, the Virginia-based Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI)—a company consisting of former US marines, helicopter pilots, and special forces

teams—provided training for the KLA from 1998 onwards, as did some German private security firms. MPRI sub-contracted some of the KLA training program to two British security companies, ensuring, as Christian Jennings writes, "that between 1998 and June 1999, the KLA was being armed, trained and assisted in Italy, Turkey, Kosovo and Germany by the Americans, the German external intelligence service and former and serving members of Britain's 22 SAS Regiment" (Jennings, 2001). In contrast, US Defense Secretary William Cohen had emphasized before the war that the US had no intention of becoming the KLA's airforce—a statement probably intended to clarify lines of subordination.

During the war, NATO was constantly in communication with KLA guerillas regarding Serb targets. NATO assisted in one of the KLA's major offensives of the war in May 1999 (Cohen, 2001, p. 290). The White House's 'official' rejection of KLA support was mainly intended to keep up the semblance of a neutral stance in the conflict. NATO's collaboration with the KLA nonetheless grew in preparation for the war. Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon write in their account of US Kosovo policy that, in order to defeat Serbia, or at least Milosevic:

"...a reasonable degree of KLA/NATO coordination was only sensible... Using intermediaries such as the Albanian military, and possibly working through the CIA rather than direct military channels, the alliance knew what the KLA's general patterns of operations were by war's end" (Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000, p. 152).

*Jane's Defence Weekly* reported that special units from Britain, the United States, France "and other NATO groups" were working undercover in Kosovo (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 April 1999). Additionally, a unit of British Special Forces was reportedly running two KLA training camps near Tirana, the Albanian capital (*Sunday Telegraph*, 18 April 1999). The KLA units trained



KFOR Commander General Michael Jackson (left), Ramush Hajredinaj (center), local KLA commander in the Dukagjini region, and General Chief of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Agim Ceku (right), inspect mortars during a visit to a KLA arms depot in Irzniq, 20 July 1999. Foto: dpa

by the SAS were infiltrating Kosovo, using satellite and cellular telephones, and communication devices supplied by NATO to help guide NATO bombing missions. Given the KLA/NATO cooperation, calls to disarm the KLA before the war should not be taken all too seriously.

### ***From Military to Political Power—the Kosovo Provisional Government***

During the war, the KLA's news agency Kosovapress announced, on 2 April 1999, that a provisional government had been formed, with the Chief of the 'Political Directory' of the KLA, Hashim Thaci, as its 'Prime Minister' (Lipsius, 1999). Immediately after the war, Hashim Thaci became the head of the self-proclaimed Kosovo Provisional Government. The rift between the Rugova-led LDK and the KLA reappeared immediately after the war, particularly in connection with positions in the Interim Government. While the KLA leadership had invited the LDK to join the Provisional Government, the four cabinet posts (plus the post of deputy prime minister) set aside for LDK representatives remained vacant because the LDK under Bukoshi did not recognize the KLA's political dominance (Lipsius, 1999).

By recognizing the Thaci government as the legitimate one in place, NATO rewarded the KLA for its role during the war. The Albanian government followed the same line by ordering the dissolution of the eight FARK camps in Albania, the subordination of FARK officers to the KLA 'defense minister', Azem Syla, the disarmament of the FARK, and its subsequent relocation to Kosovo (Lipsius, 1999; Lani, 1999, pp. 34/35). With Albanian and NATO

assistance, Thaci could make sure that neither the FARK, which was outnumbered by the KLA anyway, nor the LDK could represent an immediate challenge to his government.

As Serb forces withdrew from Kosovo, followed by most of the Serb administrative elite, UNMIK was, according to UN Security Council Resolution 1244, supposed to organize Kosovo's civil administration. However, the KLA took over local administrations in 27 of Kosovo's 29 municipalities (those where Albanians formed the majority of the population) even before UNMIK could establish its presence. Disappointed over the peace agreement's provision of autonomy inside Yugoslavia, the KLA aimed at securing its exclusive hold on power instead of the LDK-dominated 'Government of the Republic of Kosovo'. As Kosovo's self-proclaimed provisional government, the KLA took over the administration in many towns and municipalities, in parallel to or even replacing the shadow government under Rugova which officially still existed.

The Thaci government, which formally included fifteen political parties, was dominated by the KLA and the Popular Movement for Kosovo (LPK). The Thaci government evidently hoped to benefit exclusively from the money collected by the Homeland Call fund—a sum estimated by some at around DM 300–400 million, by others at around DM 60–100 million (ICG, 1999e). The KLA was supposed to cooperate closely with KFOR and UNMIK, the UN Mission in Kosovo headed by Bernard Kouchner, but relations remained strained. The Provisional Government issued decrees over-stretching the UN mandate and interfering in UNMIK competencies (ICG, 1999f). The KLA-appointed local administrators could barely control public security. Moreover, it seems that some KLA commanders used the power vacuum to benefit materially, establishing effective

economic control over public and private businesses, most notably petrol stations (Kosova Petrol), restaurants and retail outlets (Reuter, 2000a, p. 185). The initial confusion about the ownership of property and businesses, aided by the absence of administrative records and UN guidelines on economic policy, allowed former fighters to turn their military victory into economic gain (ICG, 2001).

From the moment of Serb withdrawal until the early months of 2000, three administrations co-existed in the Albanian parts of Kosovo—the Thaci interim government, the remnants of the LDK shadow structures, and the nascent UN administration. Unlike the KFOR troops, UNMIK was less prepared to implement a civilian administration, having neither the funds nor the personnel to deploy quickly. UNMIK was very slow in deploying the multi-national police force, forcing KFOR to assume limited policing and judicial functions during the first months of the protectorate. To this day, law enforcement remains a weak point in the UN's handling of Kosovo. This vacuum in the sphere of law and order was used by extremists within the KLA to crack down on perceived political enemies, collaborators and members of the Serb and Roma minorities (Reuter, 2000a, p. 185; *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 2000, p. 4). It is disputed whether there was a coordinated strategy of 'purging' Kosovo by the KLA leadership. Thaci and other KLA leaders have repeatedly pointed out that "anyone can get a KLA uniform" (ICG, 2000, p. 15). Nevertheless, incidents such as the burning of 300 houses in Prizren (ICG, 2000, p. 16), or the organized inter-ethnic violence in Mitrovica (Reuter, 2000a, pp. 185/186) could not have happened without the knowledge of the local KLA leadership.



KLA fighters awaiting the withdrawal of the Yugoslavian/Serbian troops in a suburb of the provincial capital Pristina. Large numbers of KLA fighters entered the province behind the KFOR troops. Contrary to UN resolutions, they also tried to gain political control. Foto: dpa

The reign of terror against political adversaries certainly played a role in alienating moderate Kosovars from the KLA leadership. The KLA used its own military police—the black-shirted *Policia Ushtarake* (PU)—as well as its war-time intelligence service *Zbulim-Kunderzbulim* (ZKZ)—to enforce its grip on Kosovo’s institutions, at least during the first six to nine months of the protectorate (ICG, 2000, pp. 11–14). LDK politicians and independent journalists were threatened and occasionally killed by unidentified people, assumed to stem from the KLA. In one prominent incident, Baton Haxhiu, a journalist with the *Koha Ditore* newspaper, was attacked by the Thaci-controlled *Kosovapress* agency in a thinly-veiled death threat for

criticizing the interim government (Reuter, 2000a, p. 185; ICG, 2000, p. 5). In other instances, critical journalists were called in for ‘information talks’ by representatives of the Provisional Government.

In December 1999, Ibrahim Rugova (LDK), Rexhep Qosja (LBD), and Hashim Thaci (UCK, PDK) ultimately signed an agreement with UNMIK on the abolition of all parallel structures of the Provisional Government and the creation of a Kosovo Transitional Council (KTC), as well as an Interim Administrative Council (IAC) under the auspices of UNMIK’s 20 main departments (Wittkowsky, 2000). Administrations headed by UNMIK Municipal Administrators were to govern locally, although Thaci’s Provisional Government and the KLA, acting as Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC—more details below) could still proceed to exercise local authority for several months.

With its military intervention, NATO had turned into a *de facto* ally in the KLA’s quest for independence. Once the intervention had started, the return to former autonomy was never an option. A protectorate remained the only viable alternative to independence. The war alliance made NATO partisan in the conflict, at the expense of its originally stated intention of restoring autonomy as part of Serbia. The *de facto* recognition of the self-proclaimed Provisional Government in June 1999 meant a power boost for the Political Directorate of the KLA. The underlying assumption that the KLA had inherited the legitimacy of Rugova’s government was based on the war effort rather than on democratically legitimized support. Most of the KLA combatants saw the KLA as a people’s army, not the representation of particular political groupings.

It could be argued that KFOR and UNMIK bought the KLA leaders’ agreement to disarm, compensating them with politico-economic influence. This calculus obviously backfired later on. In an account of two years KFOR and UNMIK administration, Ylber Hysa extracts a general conclusion:

“A policy of favoring one political element rather than another for short-term interests has complicated the transition process. ... the international community in Kosovo has considered it expedient to back individuals rather than institutions” (Hysa, 2001, p. 55).

KFOR and UNMIK’s autonomy in decision-making largely suffered from the early compromising over Thaci’s Provisional Government. Given the minor military role of the KLA in the victory over Milosevic, KFOR could have embraced a less partisan approach. Only after six months of its mandate, did UNMIK adopt a power-sharing formula with a representative set of local political forces. The Interim Administrative Council (IAC) and the Kosova Transitional Council (KTC) were created as consultative bodies. The coexistence of the Thaci Government, which oversaw the make-up of the Kosovo Protection Corps and controlled local administrations, and UNMIK’s slowly emerging administration are largely responsible for the initial lack of administrative accountability, control, and security.

# The Disarmament of the KLA

The demobilization and disarmament of the KLA were widely seen as fundamental elements for any future peace, autonomy or protectorate agreement. After NATO-led KFOR troops entered Kosovo on 12 June 1999, a key question for reinstalling public order concerned the KLA's willingness to disband. As the KLA was not a disciplined army with clear cut command structures and a guiding political leadership, it could not be taken for granted that it would actually disarm. While the majority of former KLA combatants, especially those who had only been loosely attached to the KLA, were happy to return to civilian life, a number of hard-liners stuck to the political aims of the original KLA—political independence for Kosovo—and tried to turn their military victory into political clout.

NATO urged the KLA to disarm following armed attacks by KLA fighters on retreating Serbs, the imprisonment, expulsion and beating of Roma by KLA rebels, as well as attacks on suspected collaborators (ICG, 1999c). UN Security Council Resolution 1244 obliged the international presence in Kosovo to disarm the KLA. Even before a formal agreement was reached, US Marines disarmed some 200 KLA fighters under threat of force in the village of Vladovo. On 21 June, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson, the commander of KFOR, and Hashim Thaci signed the "Undertaking of Demilitarisation and Transformation" (see Appendix), committing the KLA to hand over all

weapons other than pistols and hunting rifles to the KFOR forces within 90 days. The KLA agreed not to carry weapons of any type within a mile of Yugoslav security forces, on main roads, or in areas outside the borders of the Kosovo province. Furthermore, it was agreed to close all fighting positions and checkpoints as well as to mark minefields and booby traps. The core of the KLA was to be transformed into the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), a uniformed but unarmed disaster relief organization.

On 30 August 1999, the KLA's military commander Agim Ceku assured US special envoy Richard Holbrooke that the former guerrillas would honor a demilitarization agreement with NATO and hand over their arms by 19 September 1999. In contrast, Ceku also said the KLA would become a "Kosovo army"—an entity not provided for in the June demilitarization agreement. The KLA would transform in several directions, not just into a military guard, Ceku declared. "One part will become part of the police, one part will become civil administration, one part will become the Army of Kosovo, as a defense force. And another part will form a political party" (Eddy, 1999).

## *Disarmament*

By September 1999, the KLA had handed over to KFOR some 9,000 small arms, 800 machine guns, 300 anti-tank mines, 178 mortars, 27,000 hand grenades, 1,200 mines, 1,000 kg of explosives and over five million rounds of ammunition (Ripley, 2000, p. 23). This number, which seems impressive at a first glance, is surprisingly low when compared with the strength of the KLA, estimated to be roughly 20,000 fighters at the end of the war. KLA commander Ceku explains that:

"At the end of the bombing campaign, we had 20,000 soldiers, but many of those, maybe even 50%, were drafted and had no arms. They had to share one weapon. We were never short of fighters, but had the problem of weapons—both in quantity and in quality" (Kusovac, 1999).

This statement is in marked contrast to reports that the KLA had been on an arms shopping spree since mid-1998, using the funds collected in the Diaspora to buy weapons in Eastern Europe and as far afield as Iran (Ripley, 2000, p. 22). These weapons were smuggled via Croatia to Albania, and then carried on mule trails into Kosovo. Weapon caches had been established both in Kosovo, as well as in neighboring Albania and Macedonia. Ripley argues that the end of the conflict in June 1999 caught the KLA by surprise. The rapid occupation of Kosovo by KFOR troops meant that much of the newly acquired arsenal could not be transported into the province. As a result, most of the weapons collected by KFOR during the initial disarmament came from KLA units "that had been isolated behind Serb lines inside Kosovo during the war, rather than the new weapons bought during the war and stockpiled in Albania" (Ripley, 2000, p. 23).

The 10,000 weapons surrendered by the KLA in the summer of 1999 allowed both KFOR and the KLA leadership to save face, but it was probably more a gesture of goodwill, rather than the effective disarmament of the KLA. KFOR officers admitted—in an interview with one of authors—that the complete disarmament of KLA combatants was not seen as a priority during the first year of the protectorate, as "the KLA was not considered to be a problem" at that time.

Weapon caches continue to be found by KFOR patrols, the largest consisting of 60 tons of arms and ammunition found in the Drenica Valley in June 2000. KFOR estimated that this cache alone was sufficient “to fully outfit two heavy-infantry companies, eliminate the entire population of Pristina and destroy 900–1,000 tanks” (Ripley, 2000, p. 22). However, this is probably just a fraction of the armory available to the KLA leadership in times of need. In the six months leading to September 2000, KFOR troops seized an additional 4,000 assault rifles at vehicle checkpoints and during house searches (Ripley, 2000, p. 22). A number of these ‘hidden’ weapons, originally from KLA sources, have found their way to the insurgents in Southern Serbia and Macedonia, or are being used by Albanian militants for political and other crimes.

In addition to the weapon stocks still hidden in various locations in the region, as well as the alleged illegal weapon holdings under KPC control, individual combatants are also likely to have retained some personal weaponry. As there was no organized disarmament of KLA units by KFOR, the business of ensuring disarmament was left to individual KLA commanders. Given the tradition of private gun ownership in Kosovo, it seems likely that some fighters simply left their unit, taking their personal arms with them. While most of these weapons are probably still in private possession, it can be assumed that some have ended up in the hands of criminals or radical political elements abroad.

The 10,000 weapons handed over in 1999 were ‘decommissioned’ rather than destroyed. KFOR is keeping the weapons in storage, pending a final decision on their fate. 2,000 of the weapons are being “held in trust” by KFOR for the KPC, while the KPC is only allowed to keep 200 weapons for guarding installations and providing security for its units. The additional 1,800 weapons held on behalf of the KPC are stored in secure weapons facilities, jointly controlled by KFOR and authorized KPC members (The Kosovo Protection Corps Commander, Kosovo Force’s Statement of Principles, 1999, [http://www.kforonline.com/resources/kpc/stmt\\_principles.htm](http://www.kforonline.com/resources/kpc/stmt_principles.htm)). Even if the ‘decommissioned’ weapons seem to be stored securely, only a weapons destruction program can prevent future use of weapons caches, be they ‘decommissioned’ or newly found ones.

The lack of an all-encompassing weapons destruction program allowed, for example, some German soldiers stationed in Kosovo to steal and illegally transport to Germany an arms arsenal seized at the Yugoslav army’s abandoned barracks in Prizren. Truckloads of guns, mortar shells, hand grenades, mines and other explosives were allegedly smuggled into Germany, some of which could have found their way to terrorists and criminal gangs (Karacs, 2001).

### ***Deficiencies of Disarmament***

Regardless of the KLA’s official commitment to hand over heavy weapons, throughout the first year of its Kosovo presence, KFOR found weapons caches which the KLA formally denied ever owning. Despite claims to the contrary, the KLA still maintains clandestine arms depots and its command structure might still be functional (Vaknin, 2000). KFOR

troops found numerous weapons caches after September 1999. Former KLA commanders denied that these had been withheld (Interview with Rrustem Mustafa, Pristina, 6 May 2001).

KFOR officials did not know what the penalty for hoarding arsenals might be, but Serbs violating weapons laws on a much lesser scale have spent one year in jail. Later in the year, in early November 2000, a group of Ukrainian and Polish KFOR troops discovered one of the biggest illegal weapons caches with 43 mortar rounds, 38 D40 rockets, 2 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 38 grenades, 25 mines, nine boxes of machine gun ammunition, 170 blocks of dynamite and a few guns (*European Stars and Stripes*, 9 November 2000).

The bulk of the KLA’s arsenal is believed to be still stored in Albania. In December 2000, American and British KFOR soldiers patrolling the border to Serbia arrested 13 people and seized a cache of weapons, including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, hand grenades as well as military uniforms and maps (NATO Peacekeepers Detain 13 Kosovars Transporting Arms, *Associated Press*, 21 December 2000). The group was about to enter the Ground Security Zone (GSZ) in Serbia, originally established as a five-kilometer buffer zone along the Yugoslavian border in order to prevent Serb forces threatening KFOR.

Despite the efforts of the international community to disarm the citizens of Kosovo, a number of factors conspire against their success. Most notably, there is a feeling of insecurity among both Kosovo Albanians and Serbs alike with regard to the future of the territory. As long as the final status issue has not been resolved, there is little incentive to hand-in substantial

numbers of weapons. It seems plausible, that parts of the KLA's armory are being kept in preparation for a worst case scenario, which would include any form of reunification with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Secondly, the KLA weapons were 'privatized' immediately after the conflict. While the majority of these weapons are probably still privately held, others have certainly found their way to criminal groups. Thirdly, a strong 'gun culture' exists in Kosovo, which— together with the distrust of foreign

authorities—makes comprehensive disarmament difficult. Fourthly, until early 2001, the old Yugoslav gun law was in force in Kosovo, offering very limited legal means to combat the proliferation of guns in the territory. This has changed with the adoption of a UNMIK regulation (UNMIK Regulation 17/2001), which punishes illegal gun ownership with jail terms of up to three years and a fine of up to DM 10,000. Under the new legislation, weapon permits will only be issued to members of the KPC, the judiciary, as well as to selected journalists and politicians considered under threat. While the legal situation has been rectified, it remains to be seen whether

the embattled Kosovo law enforcement authorities are able to implement it on the street.

The difficult geography of Kosovo, bordering both the trouble spots of Southern Serbia and Macedonia, as well as the smuggling centers of Albania and Montenegro, poses additional problems for the enforcement of a strict gun control policy. In the past, cooperation between KFOR and UNMIK on this issue has been less than satisfactory.



A KLA soldier hands his AK-47 weapon over to a unidentified Italian KFOR soldier at the Italian base in Djakovica, 21 June 1999. Foto: dpa

# Demobilization by Transformation— The Kosovo Protection Corps

Instead of complete demobilization, the KLA was amenable to a transformation into the Kosovo Protection Corps, modeled on the French *sécurité civile*. In the eyes of the Western powers, the KPC represents a humanitarian organization, whereas for the Kosovars it is the “nucleus of a future Kosovo army”. The formation of the KPC signifies a compromise agreed between KFOR and the KLA leadership—a reward in exchange for disbanding the KLA as a fighting force.

Immediately after the war, a commission for transforming the KLA was set up, including representatives of KFOR, UNMIK, the KLA, and the FARK. The commission met approximately 40 times in order to determine the details of transforming the KLA. Three variants were discussed: the transformation of the KLA a) into a National Guard with 14,000 men; b) into a territorial defense with an active reserve, modeled on the old Yugoslavian pattern; and c) a combination of a) and b). KFOR and UNMIK rejected the Kosovar ideas since it was feared they could be a precedent for independence. As a result, the KPC model was actually dictated by the protectorate powers. The ambiguity with regard to the future role of the KPC was accepted by both sides. It is no coincidence that the Albanian name of the organization—*Trupat Mbrojtëse të Kosovës (TMK)*—can also be translated as Kosovo Defense Corps. The question of why KFOR accepted the creation

of a thinly veiled KLA successor organization remains open. Some possible answers include the emotional attachment NATO officers felt for the professionalism of their KLA counterparts (German General Reinhardt has, on occasion, noted that KLA commander Hashim Thaci was “like a son” to him). The hope that the KPC might play a useful ‘proxy’ role in combating violent acts by Yugoslav or Kosovo Serb forces may have played a role too. According to a statement repeatedly heard by the authors in Kosovo in early 2001, KFOR was simply interested in retaining some degree of control over the more radical firebrands within the KLA structures—“better in the KPC and under control, than in the hills and on the loose”.

KLA leaders, particularly Agim Ceku, KPC commander and former chief-of-staff of the KLA, continue to stress the paramilitary role of the KPC. In an interview in October 1999, Ceku is quoted as saying:

“The main concern of the international community was how to demilitarize the KLA, while our main goal was to transform it. We played our part and demilitarized, but we asked the international community to accept our argument that Kosovo needs a defensive structure, which in the end they did. The transformation is proof that the international community realized the KLA was not a problem, but an organization they could co-operate with” (Kusovac, 1999).

The view that the KPC is really a Kosovo ‘army in-waiting’ is shared by most international observers in Kosovo and by the vast majority of Kosovo Albanians. Despite the Western rhetoric about a purely civilian mandate, KPC commander Ceku has always been frank about his ultimate aims: “We see the KPC as a bridge towards the future, from the KLA as a wartime organization towards a regular, modern army of Kosovo” (Kusovac, 1999). Ceku echoed this view in an interview with one of the authors in December 2000. The continuity of KLA traditions can be seen in both uniforms and badges—which closely resemble KLA ones—as well as, more importantly, in the organizational structures. In addition to Ceku, the core of the KPC is made up of 56 officers taken straight into the KPC—without any screening or application procedure. At the operational level, the continuity of old KLA command structures in the KPC is striking, with former zone commanders now serving as Regional Task Group (RTG) commanders (ICG, 2000, p. 7):

- RTG 1: Drenica (Srbica)—Sami Lushtaku;
- RTG 2: Pashtrik (Prizren)—Sali Veseli;
- RTG 3: Dukagjin (Pec)—Gezim Ostremi;
- RTG 4: Shala (Kosovska Mitrovica)—Rahman Rama;
- RTG 5: Llap (Pristina)—Rrustem Mustafa (Remi);
- RTG 6: Karadak (Gnjilane)—Shaban Shala.

The one notable exception is Ramush Haradinaj, the former commander of the KLA’s 3rd operational zone (Dukagjin), who left the KPC and formed his own political party, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), in April 2000.

The task of screening applications for rank and file membership of the KPC was awarded to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which was also responsible for the reintegration of former fighters into civilian life. The number of posts within the KPC is limited to about 5,000—of which some 2,000 are to be reservists. The general requirements for service with the KPC included age between 18 and 55, physical fitness, and a minimum of three years secondary education (Reuter, 2000a, p. 184). Access to the KPC was basically open to all citizens of Kosovo, not only former KLA fighters. Ten percent of all posts were set aside for minority candidates.

Altogether some 18,000 people applied for KPC service, 17,348 of whom were former KLA combatants and 2,923 civilians. 11,908 applicants were actually tested for KPC purposes by the IOM, which also managed the application process. The testing was done in cooperation with KFOR (IOM, 2001, p. 1). The final selection of a candidate into the ranks of the KPC followed a “bargaining process” between KFOR and the KPC leadership (Interview with Carl Jenkins, IOM, 14 April 2001).

The demobilization and integration of FARK members into the KPC became at times a tense issue because recruitment for the KPC gave preference to KLA members at the expense of those coming from the FARK. Some 200 FARK members were recruited for the KPC, but higher ranking FARK officers were successfully kept at bay by the KPC leadership (Interview Caim Berisha in Pristina, 7 May 2001).

The training of the KPC is organized by the IOM in conjunction with KFOR. Some training courses were offered at the ‘School for Civil Protection’ established at Pristina University. Training courses are limited to the ‘official’ mandate of the KPC—disaster relief, fire-fighting, first aid,

etc. During the establishment of the KPC, Ceku repeatedly said that his aim was to train more than 5,000 cadets allocated to the KPC by UNMIK and KFOR. However, his plan to use the KPC as a military school for larger numbers of reservists has not yet materialized. Only a small number of cadets resign after successful training in order to make room for new cadets.

Funding for the KPC comes from the consolidated Kosovo budget, which allocates some DM 20 million to the force, as well as from bilateral donations from Western governments. The bulk of the KPC’s finances are spent on the maintenance of infrastructure and on construction work. The KPC is constantly complaining about lack of financial resources, pointing out that its limited funding would not allow efficient deployment in the case of an emergency. Vehicles, for example, are very scarce (Interview with Agim Ceku, KPC, 23 December 2000). Additional funds come from private sources, such as the Kosovo-based “Friends of the KPC” and from the Diaspora. As far as the former are concerned, voluntary contributions are said to be the source of the money. However, some international experts working in Kosovo and interviewed for this report claim that coercion might be a tool in fundraising. As far as donations from the Kosovo Diaspora are concerned, KPC commander Rrustem Mustafa claimed they were in fact miserable (Interview with Rrustem Mustafa, 6 May 2001). The total amount of private, i.e. extra-budgetary, KPC funding is unknown.

As a result of both its unclear mandate and lack of funding, KPC personnel seem to remain in their barracks most of the time, with the exception of public relations events such as so-called ‘waste clearing’ and ‘environmental awareness’ days. Low salaries are another problem for the KPC leadership. KPC salaries range from DM 170 to DM 670, barely enough to

sustain a family in an urban area. This is cause for concern, as both criminal activity and—since the outbreak of the Macedonia conflict—fighting for the Albanian cause abroad provide better economic opportunities. Fighters in the Macedonian NLA are reportedly being paid DM 1,000 per month. The KPC’s adherence to democratic principles and its confinement to civil duties therefore depends to a significant extent on the proper funding of salaries; otherwise the incentive to misuse power for illegal purposes, or to join paramilitary groups such as the Macedonian NLA remains high (Dorschner, 2000). In April 2001, KFOR reacted to the movement of KPC members to the UCPMB and the NLA by introducing a ‘roll-call’ system and ID checks to control the presence of KPC members in the barracks.

Whereas relations between the KPC and KFOR/UNMIK remained cordial during the first year of the protectorate, they have deteriorated considerably since the summer of 2000. In theory, the KPC answers to the KFOR commander, who is represented by liaison officers in each RTG and at KPC headquarters. However, the International Crisis Group reports that the chain of command has been blurred in the past, quoting an unnamed liaison officer at KPC headquarters with the words: “I am employed by [KFOR Commander General] Reinhardt, but Ceku is my boss” (ICG, 2000, p. 7).

Rumors persist that KPC officers have used their position to gain political or material benefits, with allegations ranging from smuggling and extortion, to violent acts against Kosovo Serbs and the support of radical Albanian movements in neighboring countries. A member of the KPC was arrested, for example, in connection with the Nis express bombing, which killed eleven and wounded 35 Kosovo Serbs in mid-February 2001, but managed to escape under unclear circumstances ([www.un.org/peace/kosovo/briefing/pressbrief14may01.html](http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/briefing/pressbrief14may01.html)).

Some well-known KPC commanders were accused of participating in killing rival leaders. In early May 2001, three high-ranking KPC members were arrested by UNMIK for their involvement in killing the former KLA commander Ekrem Rexha ('Commandant Drini'), who was seen as "too independent from the KLA's general staff" (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 2000) and a potential threat to some in Kosovo politics. On 6 July 2001, UNMIK suspended another five KPC commanders from service on the grounds of threatening international stability and under suspicion of having committed war crimes. The five KPC leaders belonged to a group of 20 Kosovar leaders, denied immigration to the US on the grounds of extremist activities (*Berliner Zeitung*, 7/8 July 2001). For almost two years KFOR and UNMIK had turned a blind eye to the suspicious past and current crime record of some leading KPC leaders.

Even Agim Ceku, the commander of the KPC, and acclaimed for his professionalism by Western counterparts, has come under closer scrutiny. Ceku, who had joined the Croat Army during the Balkan wars of the 1990s, was long on the records for his participation in ethnic cleansing in the Krajina region of Croatia. The International War Tribunal in The Hague collected evidence on atrocities against Serbs in the Krajina. Ceku was reportedly one of the key planners of the Croatian Army's 'Operation Storm' against Serbs in 1995 (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 10 June 1999). According to the Croatian Helsinki Committee, at least 410 Serbs were killed during the 'Operation Storm' massacres. An internal report of the Hague Tribunal in March 1999 did not explicitly mention Agim Ceku's involvement and a formal prosecution has never been launched (*New York Times*, 21 March 1999). Asked about possible involvement of their KPC counterparts in ethnic cleansing, a high-ranking officer at KFOR headquarters dealing with the KPC

replied: "We do not look into the past of the KPC commanders" (Interview at NATO-HQ in Pristina, May 2001). Former KLA and KPC involvement in organized violence and crime has long been treated as somehow regrettable and attributed to isolated rogue elements. It needed the escalating crisis in Macedonia for UNMIK to take law enforcement vis-à-vis the KPC seriously.

Demilitarizing the KLA touches upon a larger issue which is typical for post-conflict politics—immunity for past criminal offenses. Post-war amnesty involves complex legal issues we cannot conclusively resolve in this report (Burke-White, 2000). Given the urgency of the amnesty issue in Kosovo and with respect to the NLA in Macedonia, we will nonetheless attempt to formulate some general guiding principles. In post-war situations, two policy goals are typically in conflict: reintegration and justice. Reintegration prioritizes the dangers of resumed violence whereas the justice argument holds that a democratic and legally bound state cannot be erected on the basis of forgiving violations of victims' rights.

The argument for a blanket amnesty has usually been made by outgoing dictatorships with respect to crimes committed by servants of these regimes. It has been additionally argued from a 'democratic consolidation' perspective that post-conflict reconciliation and assimilation of military and police servants as well as paramilitaries may warrant the immunity of agents of the state for crimes they have committed during authoritarian rule (Huntington, 1991/92). Granting post-authoritarian immunity nonetheless varies according to the scope of the anti-humanitarian acts involved and the degree of domestic and international legitimacy. Blanket amnesties represent the most inclusive and usually the least legitimate form of immunity—to put it concisely, perpetrators can get away with murder. In recent years, international law has increasingly restricted general immunity by exempting serious and systematic crimes against human life, such as

genocide, torture, terrorism, systematic rape and other crimes against humanity, from impunity.

Post-war amnesty for insurgents such as the KLA represents a different, but nonetheless quite common case—consider, for example, the IRA in Northern Ireland or the PLO in Palestine. First, their actions were not committed under a state authority, but self-authorized. Who, apart from individuals, can be held responsible? Second, there is usually no democratically elected parliament which could legitimately grant immunity. Who is then entitled to grant immunity? Third, in the absence of domestic legislation on an amnesty, which law should apply? Fourth, international treaties oblige states to prosecute serious and systematic crimes against human life. In the case of absent statehood, it is not evident which bearer of sovereignty is responsible for complying with international treaties.

Without any discernable deliberation on these four accounts, KFOR and UNMIK swapped an amnesty for the KLA for post-war reintegration. Acts of violence by KLA insurgents were treated as acts committed in the furtherance of legitimate political objectives. By implication, the KLA was treated as a legitimate war party and their military actions as legitimized by the joint war effort. Given the framing of the KLA as a war party, the only likely accountability would have been for war crimes. By treating the KLA as a legitimate national liberation force against Serb oppression, KFOR and UNMIK did not even raise the question of crimes and human rights abuses that may have been committed by KLA members in the course of the war. After the war, KFOR and UNMIK's only concern was control over and transformation of the KLA, without addressing the issue of legal accountability for acts of violence.

# Demobilization and Reintegration

The job of demobilizing KLA fighters and preparing them for reintegration into civilian society was assigned by KFOR and UNMIK to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which at the same time handled selection and training for the newly created KPC. For this purpose, the IOM set up two separate programs, the Information Counseling and Referral Service (ICRS) and the Kosovo Protection Corps Training (KPCT) program. Both programs operated at the same time, putting some strain on the limited resources of the IOM in Kosovo.

The first step of the demobilization program started immediately after the occupation of Kosovo by KFOR troops and lasted from 23 July to 30 November, 1999. During this period, IOM officials registered the former KLA combatants, initially in 49 designated KLA Assembly Areas, later in seven IOM sub-offices (IOM, 2001, p. 1). A database of KLA fighters was created, which offers a rare glimpse into the socio-demographics of a guerrilla force. The biggest surprise during this period, however, was the total number of KLA fighters registering with the IOM. Instead of the roughly 20,000 combatants expected, 25,723 persons registered, raising doubts about whether all these people were really with the KLA.

IOM officials concede that a number of their demobilization cases were probably not combatants. However, during the chaotic early days of the UN-administered Kosovo, IOM resources did not allow a thorough background check of all applicants. On the other hand, it is well known that a number of former KLA fighters preferred—for one reason or another—not to register with the IOM (Interview with Carl Jenkins, IOM, 14 April 2001).

The vast majority of KLA combatants were male (96.7%), 857 combatants were female, and 88.06% of the registered combatants were younger than 39 years of age. The IOM notes that “in addition to being young, the majority of former KLA combatants are highly educated, with only one-fourth (24.52%) having less than high school education. Of the remaining groups, 34.18% are high school graduates, 18.53% are trade school graduates, 11.81% have not finished university studies, and 5.96% are university graduates.” (IOM, 2000, p.3).

About a third (32.09%) of the respondents stated a career in the security sector (armed forces and police) as their first choice for post-KLA employment—a number that is significantly lower than the number of applications for KPC service from the database (17,348). This might imply that KPC membership was seen as a more secure form of employment, given the volatile Kosovo job market. Before joining the KLA, 26.9% of former combatants had been unemployed.

The IOM database provides some insight into another disputed aspect of the KLA’s history—force strength during the various phases of the war. Only 2% of the combatants were associated with the KLA before 1998, while the bulk of respondents joined in the first and second half of 1998 (36% and 21% respectively). Accordingly, the remainder of some 40% only joined the KLA in 1999. Looking at these numbers, it is quite clear that only a small minority belonged to the radical pre-1998 KLA, while the vast majority joined during the time of the popular uprising and intensified Serb repression in 1998 and 1999.

It is remarkable that there was no mechanism providing cash pay-outs to former combatants after the end of the Kosovo conflict, even though KLA combatants were supporting a little over 200,000 dependants, according to IOM statistics (IOM, 2000, p. 14). As the reintegration assistance was stalled for several months in 1999, due to the screening process simultaneously undertaken for the KPC, former fighters were largely left to their own devices until the beginning of the year 2000. The majority of former fighters found work on their own during this period or were supported by their families—in the absence of a public social security network. The mixed economy of Kosovo, which is based on small-scale agriculture, retail trade and Diaspora money (ICG, 2001), the strength of traditional family structures, as well as the comparatively short service time with the KLA helped to ease the reintegration of KLA fighters.

The IOM’s reintegration programs are driven by the need to create income for former fighters by offering assistance in the areas of skill training and the development of micro-enterprises. IOM offers vocational training in cooperation with 11 training centers throughout Kosovo, teaching the following skills:

- Arc & Gas Welding
- Auto-Electrician
- Auto-Mechanic
- Carpentry
- Computers
- Civil Construction
- Electrical Installation
- Hairdressing
- Locksmith
- Machinist

- Plumbing
- Post Mounting & Telephone Connections
- Rewinding
- Servicing of Home Appliances
- Sheet Metal Work & Painting
- Tailoring
- TV & Video Repair
- Vulcanizing (IOM, 2000, p. 4).

These skills are taught within the framework of three month courses, followed by a one-week workshop in either career development or business planning, depending on whether self-employment or salaried employment is being sought. During the training courses, the IOM provides the beneficiaries with both the necessary equipment as well as with a stipend to cover living expenses.

While the IOM makes use of existing facilities from pre-war times as well as of local staff, there is comparatively little information on whether the skills taught are in demand on the Kosovo job market. While one would assume that construction and basic technical skills are sought after in any post-war society, no ‘market research’ is undertaken by or on behalf of the IOM. Information on the nature of the Kosovo job market is lacking as a result of the secretive nature of the current Kosovo society and because reliable economic data for Kosovo does not exist. Another problem with the vocational training program is the number of places available, currently limited to 1,654, of which 20% have been set aside for the retraining of KPC reservists, a program that started in the second quarter of 2001. The reservist component of the KPC is eligible for retraining in civilian skills after demobilization from active KPC service, and the first group of KPC reservists was discharged in May 2001.

Another IOM program offers agricultural vocational training, taking into account the continuing importance of agriculture in the Kosovo economy. This program offers 450 places in three locations (IOM, 2001, p. 10). Yet another IOM program offers ‘on-the-job-training’ in existing enterprises, this training lasts three to six months and is tailor-made to suit the needs of the former combatant. The IOM provides financial incentives to businesses offering full-time employment to beneficiaries, as well as an individual tool kit to the former combatant, when he is offered employment.

Facing the realities of the Kosovo job market, where employment in the formal sector probably accounts for only 20–30% of all jobs, the focus of the IOM has shifted from job referral to self-employment. Combatants who have completed one of the courses are assisted in setting up their own businesses. However, access to credit is difficult in Kosovo and IOM officials admit that their own experience in the management of micro-enterprises is limited. Furthermore, the lack of information on the Kosovo economy makes the drafting of a business plan very difficult. As one IOM official put it: “Kosovars made bad experiences with authorities in the past. Walking into his shop and asking him about his business leads nowhere in this society.”

Specialized IOM programs are offered to particular groups of former combatants. One of these—a program supporting 44 cases as of March 2001—offers psycho-social assistance to traumatized veterans. Another program supports fighters who have resumed their university studies, while a special program assists female ex-combatants. So far the latter program has provided assistance to 214 women, about 25% of the total female caseload.

By the end of March 2001, the IOM had provided support of one kind or the other to 11,279 former fighters, 44% of the registered caseload. The majority (58%) had benefited from training programs, while 42% received support for self-employment. 14,444 former combatants had received no assistance. Expenditure per beneficiary averaged US \$1,157 (DM 2,083), with total funds pledged standing at US \$14,210,555. Funds are coming from donations to the IOM by member states. Among the largest donors are the USA, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

### ***Policing Kosovo—The Kosovo Police Service (KPS)***

The creation of an indigenous police force in Kosovo—separate from the Yugoslav authorities and responsible to the local authorities—has long been seen as a key element in the restoration of law and order. Whereas the old regime had purged most Albanians from the police force during the 1990s, the new force was meant to be inclusive and multi-ethnic. Since the summer of 1999, the responsibility for law enforcement had rested with the United Nations. A multi-national corps of about 4,000 policemen had the task of policing Kosovo. However, the UNMIK police was rife with problems. Unlike KFOR, the UNMIK police were deployed slowly, creating a vacuum during the first months of the protectorate which was used for criminal and political violence. Furthermore, UN member states were unwilling to commit funds and policemen to the force, UNMIK never reached its full strength. On the ground, cooperation between policemen from different countries (and cultures of policing) proved difficult and there were no established procedures for multi-national police work. It could be argued that the fact



Kosovo Police Service School student practices marksmanship at the firing range. October 1999. Foto: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

that KFOR has been comparatively more successful than the UNMIK police is due to (a) KFOR operates in national units; and (b) there are established procedures for international cooperation within NATO and Partnership for Peace countries. Last but not least, the secretive nature of the Kosovo society—aided by distrust of any kind of foreign authority—makes police work in Kosovo very difficult.

With these factors in mind, the creation of the KPS was seen as an important step forward. KPS operates under the control of UNMIK, with most of the training undertaken by the OSCE pillar. The basic requirements for admission to the KPS are similar to the KPC criteria—a secondary education, physical fitness, and age between 21 and 55. Given the stated preference of KLA combatants for a career in law enforcement, it should come as no surprise that a number of former fighters applied for a job with the newly created Kosovo Police Service (KPS).

While the KPS—unlike the KPC—was not meant to be a KLA successor organization, a set of quotas was negotiated to ease the access of former KLA fighters into the new police force. According to international police officers involved in the selection process, 50% of training places were set aside for KLA veterans, another 20% for former Yugoslav policemen, of which 20% were allotted to minorities and 20% to women. It is widely assumed that the quota for KLA members was accepted by KFOR and UNMIK to get Thaci's consent to the demobilization of the KLA.

Nevertheless, the quota system poses a number of challenges for the international community, both professionally and politically. As a result of the quotas for KLA veterans and former Yugoslav policemen, there is virtually no space for 'ordinary Albanian males'. The average entry age currently stands at 32 years—at least seven years older than in 'normal' countries.

More than 29,000 people applied for the 4,000 positions in the KPS. The Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS) established a procedure for screening and testing applicants that involves background checks to avoid the

recruitment of criminals (KPSS, 2001). Basic training lasting eight weeks and covering subjects ranging from investigations to firearms operations and criminal law is undertaken at the KPSS, which is located in Vushtri. A special emphasis is placed on 'democratic policing'. Members of the KPSS teaching staff repeatedly mentioned the need to change the culture of policing in Kosovo.

The basic training course is followed by 19 weeks of on-the-job training supervised by UNMIK police. In April 2001, the KPS had just about reached the mandated strength of 4,000 officers. According to the OSCE, the ethnic makeup of the KPS is 83% Albanian, 9% Serb and 8% "others", whereby the latter category includes Roma, Turks, Gorans, Bosniaks and Muslim Slavs. Ethnic relations remain an issue for the KPS—as for Kosovo as a whole. While training is undertaken jointly, Serb KPS officers are currently deployed exclusively in Serb-dominated areas of Kosovo. Even the graduation ceremony is held separately—as witnessed by the authors—for Serb KPS officers in Vushtri, while the majority of KPS members graduate in Pristina. The reason given for this is the fact that even the KPS cannot guarantee the security of Serb officers in Albanian-dominated areas. The gender makeup is 81% male and 19% female (OSCE, 2001). The precise number of KLA members within the KPS is not known, but sources within KPSS confirm that their number is close to 50% of the total number of cadets. While there is no continuity of KLA hierarchies in the KPS—as is the case in the KPC—the heavy presence of ex-KLA combatants in the KPS is nevertheless problematic because former KLA membership is often perceived as ethnic and political partisanship.

The International Crisis Group (ICG, 2000, pp. 11/12) reports rivalries between KLA cadets and former Yugoslav police officers, who joined

the force under a different quota. Former Yugoslav officers represent the largest non-KLA group within the KPS. According to the ICG report, KLA veterans regard the former Yugoslav policemen as “collaborators”, “ex-communists”, and “old-LDK” sympathizers. Apart from this report, there is comparatively little information available on conflicts within the police force. KPSS sources confirm that former KLA members are in no way different from other members of the force. There are no reports of disciplinary problems related to KLA veterans.

The lasting influence of KLA structures causes concern, though its extent is difficult for outsiders to measure. KPSS instructors are worried that a dual loyalty to both the old KLA leadership and to the UN administration could develop within the ranks of cadets coming from the KLA. It is striking that 2/3 of the ‘course commanders’ elected by KPS recruits as class representatives came from the ranks of the KLA, indicating either the greater leadership potential of the former guerillas or a continuity of power structures unknown to the international instructors. The practice of electing ‘course commanders’—an office which was considered by some as a fast-track to promotion—has been recently stopped, precisely because KPSS personnel were afraid of creating the impression that these class representatives enjoyed a higher status than their classmates.

The KPS reached its strength of 4,000 policemen in the summer of 2001. From now on the KPSS will focus on offering specialized training. The international community seems

determined to abandon the quota system with regard to future recruitment and internal promotion, thereby diluting the influence of KLA structures within the force.

Another problem for the KPS is the lack of funding. Salaries are very low—at about DM 350 per month, and there are no benefits packages. In the two-tier economy of Kosovo, where an UN driver easily earns three times as much, the low salaries of law enforcement personnel might serve as an incentive for corruption. Equally difficult is the equipment situation of the KPS. The total budget for the Kosovo police stands at DM 28 million for the year

2001, barely enough to maintain the existing infrastructure and pay salaries. There are only 150 vehicles at the disposal of the KPS, a very low number compared with a troop strength of 4,000 (and the abundance of seemingly unused UN vehicles). The international community should clearly invest more money in the welfare and equipment of the KPS, given the crucial role the force plays in guaranteeing law and order.

Despite the problems mentioned above, the creation of the KPS is widely seen as a success story. The recruits are motivated and the existence of indigenous policemen—with their greater understanding of local culture and terrain—has improved policing. Furthermore, unlike the KPC, KPS officers have not been implicated in crimes or political violence.



A friend congratulates a Kosovo Police Service School graduate upon completion of the training course, 2 May 2000. Foto: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

# Behavioral Patterns of Former KLA Members

Post-war society in Kosovo is divided between active participants in the military campaign and non-combatants. Former members of the KLA strive for public recognition as war heroes. War memorials and mass publications celebrate the heroism of KLA commanders, individual fighters, and ‘martyrs’. Former membership of the KLA is thus a source of social prestige, particularly if the person served in a leading position. Reintegration into the post-war society is certainly different from the collective self-doubt of veterans returning from a lost war—take for example German World War II soldiers returning from protracted periods in prisoner of war camps.

Thirty standardized interviews with former KLA combatants were conducted in Kosovo in April 2001. The aim of these interviews consisted mainly in identifying post-war reintegration patterns and political outlooks. The sample was too small to allow a statistically significant analysis.

The overwhelming majority of the 30 former KLA members we interviewed in late April 2001 had joined the KLA between March and October 1998, with June to September 1998 being the peak time for enrollment. One KLA commander—now director of staff in the KPC—claimed to have already joined the KLA in September 1992. One member of the KLA’s general staff reported to have joined in 1994,

another member of the KLA’s general staff declared that he had joined in 1996. All the others interviewed had joined the KLA in 1998. In terms of age, the combatants interviewed were 20 to 40 years old. Seven out of 30 were former commanders or officers of the KLA, the rest had been regular privates. A little more than one third were at least temporarily unemployed after the end of the war. The younger ex-combatants in particular often claimed to be students at Pristina university. With few exceptions, the regular KLA members had not undergone military training before joining the KLA. Regulars joined the KLA for a limited period, not as a long-term professional occupation. In contrast, the KLA officers and commanders had either served in the Yugoslavian army or had received training in military camps in Albania.

Asked whether certain qualifications acquired as a KLA member were beneficial or disadvantageous for post-war reintegration, the interviewees mentioned responsibility, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, organizational capabilities, strategic and tactical thinking, and control of stress as positive experiences and as advantageous. A writer among the former KLA members felt that the war provided material for new novels. Few explicitly mentioned war experiences that had proved disadvantageous in civil life, such as solving problems by means of violence, intolerance, and hatred against people holding different views. A minority report that they are haunted by memories of war cruelties or feel

nervous. The most frequently related difficulties after war pertain to financial shortcomings and housing problems, often resulting from destruction during the war. No regular reported to have benefited materially from belonging to the KLA. Based on these interviews, it seems that the reported economic advantages enjoyed by former KLA members under the Thaci provisional administration were confined to certain commanders and did not extend to regular soldiers.

Of the regular privates interviewed, not a single one applied for service with the KPC or KPS; only former officers or policemen applied. If this finding stands for the larger picture, it was primarily former KLA officers and commanders who became members of the KPC and KPS. Those who joined the KPC or KPS received training by KFOR, the IOM or the KPSS, others usually did not undergo any vocational training, with a few language courses marking the exception. Students were at times supported by international stipends. International assistance from NGOs proved crucial in rebuilding houses destroyed during the war, yet the overwhelming majority of those interviewed had not received any international assistance at all.

According to our interviews, belonging to the KLA did not represent a specific advantage on the post-war job market, jobs in the KPC or the KPS being the exceptions.

All the interviewees take pride in having belonged to the KLA. It is seen as a national liberation army of the Kosovar people as a whole. The KLA is not just viewed as a reactive self-defense organization, but as an active liberation army which deliberately started a war against Serbian military presence. Former KLA membership generates respect and prestige in the post-war society, particularly compared with non-combatants. In contrast to officers and commanders, very few

privates could make use of their military experience in post-war economic or political positions or to improve their social status. The image of the KLA is better than the image of the KPC or KPS, even if few respondents criticize the latter. After all, in the eyes of the interviewees, the KLA represented not just an institution, but a people's army. The KLA is perceived as the army of the Kosovar people, not of a particular grouping. Few are critical of the influence of political parties on KLA commanders during the war. Confirming this line of reasoning, most think that no single political party can claim to be the inheritor of the KLA. Among the parties, the PDK and AAK are mentioned, but not the LKCK or LDK. Given the variety of answers on political inheritors to the KLA, we tend to conclude that former KLA membership did not result in a coherent post-war political stand. Former KLA members do not represent a politically homogenous group, they seem rather to reflect the divisions existing in society at large.

Slightly more than half of those interviewed are optimistic about the future and expect life to be better in five years time, the rest keep hoping or remain undecided. The overall absence of pessimism—not to speak of nostalgic sentiments—may provide a temporary source of forward-looking legitimacy for the UNMIK and KFOR protectorate. Yet, the positive assessment of the present and future, compared to the past, may wear off over time. Positive evaluations of the current situation are only based on retrospect. There is only limited concrete support for the current regime. The assessment of KFOR is generally more positive because it provides external security, which the Kosovars could not guarantee on their own.

According to the interviews, former KLA members maintain regular contact to former combatants on an individual basis, but not in an organized fashion. The majority of regular KLA members interviewed were indeed demilitarized. Asked about their views of UNMIK and KFOR, an overall positive view of KFOR contrasts with frequent complaints about the slow, bureaucratic, unprofessional performance of UNMIK. UNMIK, it was said, did not count on local experience and lacked a long-term strategy. Former combatants are almost evenly divided with respect to the dissolution of the KLA after the war. Whereas half of those interviewed think it was a mistake to dissolve the KLA, the other half holds that it was a necessary compromise in 1999. Many in the latter group add that the KPC should become the future army of Kosovo.

There has been criticism of the KLA following the war, particularly by some of the Kosovar media. Asked whether criticism of the KLA was justified, three quarters agree in general, with certain qualifications added at times (e.g. if facts confirm the criticism). Approximately one quarter think that the KLA should not be criticized at all. Asked whether KLA officers should play a leading role in politics, less than a quarter think that KLA officers are better suited than civilian politicians. The overwhelming majority of those interviewed think political roles should depend on personality or qualifications rather than on KLA command experiences. Some outrightly dismiss the idea of a special qualification for politics on the grounds of a KLA background.

Given these findings, the overwhelming majority of those interviewed do not question civilian and democratic prerogatives in Kosovo politics. Asked about the future of Kosovo, all those interviewed opt for future independence for Kosovo. Only

two out of the 30 interviewed want to see Kosovo as part of a larger Albania. Asked whether Albanians residing outside Kosovo and Albania should live in one state or have the right to secede and join Kosovo, or enjoy autonomy in the given state, two thirds think that autonomy in a given state (for example, in Macedonia) would be fine. The rest favor a right to secede and to join Kosovo. We can thus conclude that any ideas of a 'Greater Albania' or strivings for unification of all ethnic Albanians are only shared by a minority of former KLA members. The individual's former rank in the KLA—regular or commander—does not make a difference on this account. The overwhelming majority hold that Serbs in Kosovo should have the same rights as Kosovars. Only two of the interviewed opted for a "return" of Serbs to Serbia proper.

Most think that a new war of liberation would be necessary if Kosovo were re-included in Serbia or Yugoslavia. The independence of Kosovo is the ultimate aim, and most are prepared to take up arms again, if necessary. Asked about the lessons learnt from the war, most claim that only the willingness to fight resulted in freedom and attracted the international community's attention to their fate. The former KLA members are a highly homogenous group in this respect. There is no retrospective skepticism voiced with regard to launching a war of liberation. Few recall the horrors of war, most mention their pride in military success.

Some suggestions concerning reintegration policy seem appropriate on the basis of the results of the interviews. Some of the former KLA combatants would benefit from psychological assistance in coping with the war experience and behavioral patterns learned in the course of the fighting. A significant segment of those interviewed resumed their pre-war occupations, particularly university studies. Given that employment prospects for graduates are bleak, professional reintegration is currently being delayed. Tensions may grow in the same way as the unrest among unemployed Kosovar graduates in the early 1990s—this time targeting the UNMIK administration.

Former KLA members do not understand the long-term intentions of the UNMIK protectorate and are therefore highly critical of its inadequate performance. UNMIK is obviously not capable of conveying its policy to former KLA members.

Communication between the governors and the governed has been disturbed or even disrupted. UNMIK is mostly perceived as an alien, non-transparent, non-accountable form of governance, and this may cause problems for law obedience. The dissolution of the KLA is only accepted as far as the KPC turns into a future army of Kosovo. Delays in determining the final status of the KPC may thus contribute to further frustration. The option of resuming violent action in order to gain full independence is being kept open. To prevent such a scenario, political clarity over the terms of Kosovar self-rule would greatly help in foreclosing the war-prone option of a return to Serbian or Yugoslavian rule.

# Turning Military into Political Power—KLA Successor Parties

At the end of the hostilities, it became clear that influential KLA leaders, most notably Hashim Thaci, were interested in a continuing political role in Kosovo. After the end of his interim provisional government in December 1999, Thaci and other KLA leaders turned to party politics within the framework of the UN's plan of limited power-sharing. In this sphere, the KLA successor parties continue to compete with Ibrahim Rugova's LDK, which experienced a remarkable comeback after the war.

The most important party claiming the KLA's heritage is Thaci's Party for the Democratic Progress of Kosovo (PPDK), later renamed the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). This party traces its political origins back to the Popular Movement for Kosovo (LPK), which played an important role in the set-up of the KLA in the early 1990s. While the LDK was dissolved on 27 June 1999—a decision which was not accepted by parts of its membership in the Diaspora—most of its members in Kosovo joined Bardhyl Mahmuti's Party of the Democratic Union (PBD). On 10 October 1999, the PBD and Hashim Thaci's 'Political Directorate of the KLA' formed the PPDK (Lipsius, 2001, p. 5). The LPK heritage within the new party remains strong, fourteen out of 21 members of the PDK's Presidency come directly from the LDK (ICG, 2000, p. 4).

The PDK is widely seen as a vehicle for Thaci's personal political ambitions and represents a substantial part of the 'inner circle' of the KLA's political and military leadership. *Jane's Intelligence Review* writes:

"The PPDK failed to present itself as a genuine political party, being seen rather as a facade for the powerful and influential 'Drenica group'. [...] Traditionally scorned by Kosovars as 'hillbillies', the Drenica Albanians avenged themselves and earned a new reputation after UCK actions in the winter of 1997/98 brought the problem to the attention of the international community" (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 2000).

Information on the political aims of the PDK remains sketchy—a fact which is true for most other parties in Kosovo as well—its membership representing the ideological mix of the KLA, encompassing both radical right and left wing ideas. However, it could be argued that politics take the backseat compared with the desire for political power. The PDK has established a reputation for "political and economic heavy-handedness" in dealing with competing politicians and the independent media (ICG, 2000, p. 5). Without doubt, the party has lost the support of ordinary Kosovars as a result of this.

The other significant political party claiming KLA heritage is the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) led by Ramush Haradinaj, the former commander of the KLA's third operational zone. This party was founded on 25 April 2000 as an alliance of six smaller political parties, among them the National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo (LKCK), a radical nationalist group that broke away from the LPK in the early 1990s. The LKCK left the AAK on 1 January, 2001, after the municipal elections and following a dispute between Haradinaj and the party.

Haradinaj, who had been one of the deputies of Agim Ceku in the KPC, left the paramilitary force to concentrate on politics. In contrast to Ceku, the charismatic Haradinaj is seen as a moderate in international circles and his personal integrity has not been attacked. Lipsius (2001, p. 8) finds "communitarian" tendencies in Haradinaj's political platform, as well as a focus on individual freedom and responsibility. During the election campaign, the AAK suffered from a lack of funding—seemingly not an issue for the PDK. However, Haradinaj dealt himself a critical blow. On 16 October 2000, a few days before the elections, he spoke highly of his rival Ibrahim Rugova in an interview with *Bota Sot* newspaper. It is widely assumed that this interview cost the party substantial support and strained Haradinaj's relationship with the AAK-member party LKCK.

The municipal election on 28 October 2000, was the first test of political standing for the political parties of Kosovo since the end of the conflict. As a result, the poll was seen not as a local election but rather as a national contest. Ibrahim Rugova's LDK won 58% of the votes and 504 seats,

winning the majority in 21 out of 30 municipalities. Thaci's PDK scored 27.3% and 267 seats, winning in six municipalities. Haradinaj's AAK received 7.7% and 71 seats. Among the smaller parties that gained some parliamentary representation were the Albanian Christian Democratic Party (PSHDK) with 1.2% (8 seats) and the Liberal Center Party of Kosovo (PQLK) formed by former KLA commander Naim Maloku with 0.8% (3 seats) (election results under [www.osce.org/kosovo/elections/results\\_parties.php3](http://www.osce.org/kosovo/elections/results_parties.php3)).

The victory of the LDK over the KLA successor parties came as a shock—especially for the PDK, which had touted itself as the dominant political force in Kosovo. While PDK members blamed manipulation of the polls by sinister forces for the result, the election results were celebrated by the international community as proof of the maturity of Kosovars, preferring moderation to extreme positions. Widespread violence—anticipated by some in the case of a LDK victory—did not occur.



Polling Station in Kosovo during the municipal elections, October 2000. Foto: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

# Offspring of the KLA—Crime and Violence

Criminal activities, smuggling, and attacks on non-Albanians in Kosovo have continued since summer 1999. Some former KLA members retained their light weapons and joined the urban crime scene, especially in Pristina (Sedlarevic, 1999). Links between the KLA and Albanian drug-trafficking networks certainly did exist during the conflict (Schmidt-Eenboom, 1999, p. 17). Whether these links are still in place remains anybody's guess as there is very little solid evidence on this complex in the public domain. International agencies fighting the drug trade state that Kosovo in general became a smugglers' paradise supplying up to 40% of the heroin sold in Europe and North America (O'Kane, 2000). According to some authors, Kosovo is about to become Europe's Colombia, a society where narco-traffic, politics and violence are closely related to each other.

The recent history of Kosovo is another factor influencing the outlook of Kosovars in relation to (foreign) authorities. Having witnessed Serb repression, Kosovars have been socialized not to trust the authorities, but rather to regulate conflicts among themselves. Talking to the police—who were previously an instrument of oppression—does not come easily. At the same time, the informal economy on which most Kosovars rely has led to a blurred distinction between legal and illegal business.

The control of local administrations by the provisional Thaci government in the second half of 1999 allowed some

KLA commanders to extract substantial economic benefits. KLA veterans were quick in establishing their niche after the end of the war, a substantial number of them joined 'security companies' in the cities, which provide 'security services' to local businesses. The line between legitimate services and extortion is reportedly thin at times. Only recently has UNMIK begun to crack down on these companies by denying their applications for weapon licenses.

Since the middle of 2000, a number of monuments to the KLA have been erected—financed by 'donations' from businessmen and shopkeepers in Kosovo, who are 'asked' to donate sums of between DM 300 and DM 3,000 per month by organizations linked to the old KLA, such as the 'Friends of the KPC' (ICG, 2001, p. 16/17). It seems reasonable to assume that a part of these funds goes to the—notoriously cash-strapped—KPC and possibly to underground structures as well.

Likewise, some observers have linked a string of break-ins, targeted at international organizations in the months leading up to the municipal elections, to the need of some political parties to refill their campaign coffers. The international community could not definitively establish whether harassment, arson, expulsions, and killings of minorities were random or part of a KLA strategy of ethnic

cleansing (ICG, 2000). Kosovo Serb leaders commonly attribute post-war violence against non-Albanian minorities to the former KLA. In protest over the formation of the KPC, Kosovo Serb leaders cancelled their cooperation with the Transitional Council under UNMIK auspices (ICG, 1999g).

The US-based Human Rights Watch released a report in August 1999 documenting an apparently coordinated campaign of abductions, beatings, house burning, and murders of Serbs and Roma by the KLA ([www.hrw.org/reports/1999/kosov2/](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/kosov2/)). A report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, written for Kofi Annan, charged the KPC with criminal activities, killings, ill-treatment and torture, illegal policing, abuse of authority, intimidation, breaches of political neutrality, and hate-speeches (UNHCR's Background Note, 2000). The report claims that KPC members have been running protection rackets across Kosovo, particularly in Pristina, Suva Reka, Dragash, Istok and Prizren, possibly engaging in prostitution as well (Sweeney and Holsoe, 2000; Smith, 2000).

KPC members performed arbitrary policing, using torture, mostly directed against presumed 'collaborators' and ethnic minorities such as Serbs, Gorani and Roma. According to its statute, the KPC never had a role in law enforcement or the maintenance of law and order. When the liberal publisher of the daily *Kosovar Koba Ditore*, Veton Surroi, wrote a commentary in August 1999, labeling the intimidation of Serbs as fascist, the KLA-funded *Kosovapress* launched a thinly-veiled death threat against Surroi, claiming that "such criminals and enslaved minds (meaning: Surroi—AHG/WCP) should not have a place in the free Kosovo" (ICG, 1999g).

The murder of the former commander of the KLA's 5th operational zone, Ekrem Rexha, a.k.a. 'Commandant Drini', who was gunned down in front of his house in Prizren on 8 May 2000, has been linked to rivalries among former KLA commanders, as have the deaths of other political opponents (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 2000). Given that an increasing number of Albanians have become targets of violence, it has been surmised that, in some cases at least, criminals penetrating Kosovo from Albania might be responsible. It cannot be excluded that some former KLA commanders retain relations with Albanian organized crime resulting from the arms deals conducted during the war. Trying to distance himself from attacks on Serbs, Agim Ceku claimed that former KLA commanders and the KPC cannot control the use of KLA uniforms and insignia. Indeed, they are widely available on the open market.

Due to its dependent position, the KPC leadership is not interested in being linked to attacks on Serbs or other minorities (ICG, 1999g). Yet, it cannot be excluded that former KLA leaders are only paying lip service to a multi-ethnic Kosovo. Hashim Thaci, for example, strongly condemned violence against minorities in Kosovo (Dokumentation, Südosteuropa, 1/2, 2000, pp. 105–114). No doubt, a number of KLA combatants took revenge on Serbs, and some KLA fighters retained their arms and turned to crime. It is noteworthy that the KLA absorbed criminals during the war who were never 're-socialized'. Against the backdrop of our own interviews, it is nonetheless questionable whether there is a coherent strategy on the part of the former KLA to ethnically 'cleanse' Kosovo.

### ***Extremist Albanian Groups outside Kosovo***

While the Southern Balkans region seemed to be peaceful after the end of the bombing raids against Serbia and the establishment of the Kosovo protectorate, events since October 2000 suggest that this is no longer the case. The 'liberation' of Kosovo has triggered a dangerous revival of ethnic Albanian nationalism both in Serbia and Macedonia, and even in Greece. It seems that the success of the KLA has opened a Pandora's Box, bringing the 'Albanian Question' back into the limelight.

### ***Southern Serbia—the UCPMB***

The emergence of a 'Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedija, and Bujanovac-UCPMB' (three cities in the Albanian-dominated Presevo Valley of Southern Serbia) in 2000 with the red, black and yellow KLA colors is seen by some observers as proof that the former military infrastructure continues to exist. The Presevo Valley—a strategically important corridor leading from Serbia to Macedonia, straddling Kosovo—has long been a bone of contention between Serbs and Albanians. A veritable 'mini-Kosovo' in ethnic makeup, Kosovars refer to the region as 'Eastern Kosovo'. Compared to Kosovo, inter-ethnic relations have been comparatively cordial—even during the reign of Milosevic—with Albanian politicians participating in Serb politics and controlling the municipal governments of the region.

The UCPMB first appeared in public on 26 January 2000 at the burial in Dubrosin of two Albanians killed by the Serb police. Uniformed men vowed to fight until the Albanians of the Presevo valley were free. According to Serbian and Albanian sources around 1,500 to 1,700 members of the UCPMB were active in the demilitarized Ground Security Zone in

Serbia. Whereas KFOR verified the withdrawal of Yugoslavian forces from the GSZ, in accordance with the Kumanovo Agreement of 9 June 1999, it noticeably failed in enforcing another obligation of the same agreement—securing the border with Kosovo.

The relative security of the GSZ was abused by the UCPMB who fought the lightly-armed Serb police forces, with Kosovo being both supply base and safe haven. The political aim of the movement—supported by radical political parties in Kosovo—is the secession of the area from Serbia and its unification with Kosovo. To achieve that goal, the UCPMB used the same tactics previously employed by the KLA. It aimed at provoking a harsh reaction from the Serb side—violating the GSZ—and obviously counted on the international community for support. It comes as no surprise that the UCPMB's first public appearance coincided closely with the end of the Milosevic regime in Belgrade, indicating that radical political groups were bent on a new escalation in order to use a rapidly closing window of opportunity.

The relationship between the UCPMB and the old KLA remains unclear—combatants were mainly recruited in the south-eastern part of Kosovo (the town of Vitina). Albanian sources in Kosovo reported in February 2001 that a large number of towns in Kosovo were plastered with posters in which the purportedly disbanded KLA ordered all Albanians between 18 and 48 years of age to join their compatriots in the UCPMB, while threatening draft dodgers with reprisals ("Increasing Strain among Albanian Extremists in South Serbia", FBIS-EEU-2001-0222). The Yugoslav Army asserted in February 2001 that some 60 members of the Kosovo Protection Corps crossed the border into the



Weapons seized from UCPMB combatants in the Presevo Valley, May 2001.  
Foto: Wolf-Christian Peas (BICC)

Ground Security Zone, harassing civilians in a south Serbian village (*Tanjung*, 9 February 2001). Officially, Thaci claimed to be opposed to all armed confrontation. It is therefore not clear to what extent the former KLA and the KPC deliberately participated in forming the UCPMB.

Against the backdrop of the emergence of the UCPMB, there have been several reports about CIA-training for the KLA under the outgoing Clinton administration in order to conduct sabotage acts in Milosevic's Serbia (Beaumont et al, 2001). Highly placed sources in Pristina confirmed that the US KFOR troops were at least well informed about the UCPMB activities in the Presevo valley. Christopher Dell, US Chief of Mission in Kosovo, denied any US support of the UCPMB—they would “deceive themselves”, believing that the USA in some way supports what they are doing. “They say that: ‘Since American Forces are located at the border and do not get in our way, it means that they support us’” (*Koha Ditore*, 8 December 2000).

The UCPMB was confronted with surveillance by KFOR, but not seriously inhibited. The guerilla army continued to transfer weapons from and to Kosovo, at times using the Macedonian-Kosovo border for transit (*Free B92 News*, 15 December 2000). Most members of the KLA splinter groups acting in Serbia while using Kosovo for logistics were usually released after a few hours of interrogation. The same holds true for KPC members bearing non-licensed arms found by KFOR or UNMIK police. KFOR spokesmen initially played down incidents of illegal border crossings by Albanian extremists. More robust action was only taken once the

UCPMB insurgents began to shoot at American and Russian border patrols in January 2001. The British soldiers brought in in early 2001 used tactics adopted from their hunt of the Irish Republican Army and were more willing to risk their lives in fighting Albanian guerillas than their US counterparts in the Eastern sector along the border to Serbia.

In striving for the inclusion of the GSZ into Kosovo, the UCPMB received mixed messages from NATO which might have been interpreted as encouragement. Asked about possible changes in the status of the GSZ, NATO chief George Robertson said in mid-February 2001 that NATO was “prepared to consider such changes” to the buffer zone, but only “if it will not create a vacuum or lead to new fighting. Premature changes ... carry the risk of only making matters worse” (FBIS-EEU-2001-0215). Even without an extension of the KFOR mandate to the southern Serbian Presevo valley, the UCPMB could hope to reach at least one goal—recognition by NATO as a negotiating partner.

However, the gamble did not pay off—the new Serb government under Zoran Djindjic managed to restrain the army from violating the GSZ, taking utmost care not to hurt civilians in order to avoid an outcry from the international community. The international community at the same time changed its attitude towards Serbia—while relations with Serbia warmed, Albanians were seen increasingly as a trouble factor in the region.

KFOR agreed to allow Yugoslav forces to re-enter the GSZ, forcing the UCPMB to retreat to its fortified strongholds. Cut off from Kosovo and under military pressure from Belgrade,

the anticipated end game did not take place. The UCPMB surrendered on 20 May 2001, handing in their weapons and retreating to Kosovo, where their fighters were offered an amnesty. As part of the agreement, the Serb side agreed to improve inter-ethnic relations in the Presevo Valley by creating a special multi-ethnic police force, trained by the OSCE along the lines of the KPS in neighboring Kosovo. An important element in the resolution of the crisis was the role played by local Albanian politicians, who acted as peace-brokers in the negotiations. In retrospect, it seems that the creation of the UCPMB was not so much an indigenous movement, but rather imported violence from radical forces in Kosovo. These were initially tolerated by some Western powers interested in destabilizing the Milosevic regime.

### ***Macedonia—The National Liberation Army (NLA)***

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was remarkably peaceful during the breakup of the old Yugoslavia. The only republic to break away peacefully from Belgrade, the country was seen as stable and as a secure supply base for KFOR troops in Kosovo. However, Macedonia has its own inter-ethnic crisis, simmering below the surface, and largely unnoticed by the international community. According to the 1994 census, 22.7% of the Macedonian population are ethnic Albanians, living mostly in the northwest of the country, bordering Kosovo and Albania, as well as in the capital. These numbers are disputed by Albanian politicians who claim that their ethnic group forms 40% of the population. International observers tend to put the number at one-third (Judah, 2001, p. 12).

While Albanians play an important role in politics—one of their two parties has continuously been a member of different coalition governments in

Skopje (Troebst, 2000, pp. 234–238), the status of Albanians as an ethnic group has been contentious. Despite the large number of Albanians in the country, the constitution relegates them in their own opinion to ‘second-class citizens’ (Dokumentation, *Südosteuropa*, 1/3, 2001, pp. 134–149). Albanians are underrepresented in the public services, especially in the police and in the military. Education in the Albanian language has been an issue ever since the dissolution of the old Yugoslavia, as Macedonian Albanians traditionally went to Pristina University for tertiary education, something that became impossible from the early 1990s onwards. In the meantime, Macedonian authorities have not recognized the private Albanian University in Tetovo (Macedonia).

Relations between Slav and Albanian Macedonians became increasingly strained in 2000 after a small Albanian group, the Albanian National Army (*Armata Kombetare Shqiptare*—AKSh), started to attack police posts in Macedonia (Schindler, 2000). From humble beginnings, the crisis inflated to international dimensions in the early months of 2001 when a small group of AKSh occupied the village of Tanushec on the border with Kosovo and declared it a ‘liberated area’. Since then, the conflict has spread to other regions of the country and has displaced several thousands of civilians on both sides. The poorly-equipped Macedonian Army was not able to contain the threat, giving the AKSh time to fortify their positions.

The spark that triggered the conflict is widely seen in the border agreement between Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, signed in Skopje on 23 February 2001. This treaty—which also delineates the Kosovo border with Macedonia—was negotiated without consulting Kosovo

Albanians, an open provocation to the radical forces aiming for an independent Kosovo (Lipsius, 2001, p. 3). In their political statements, the AKSh, renamed National Liberation Army (NLA) in December 2000, demand the federalization of Macedonia and an improved status for both Albanians and the Albanian language. However, the ultimate goal of the NLA seems to be the 'internationalization' of the conflict. Knowing full well that a victory against the Macedonian forces is impossible, they put their hopes on the international community for securing greater political rights. Having learnt from the experience in Kosovo that peaceful lobbying does not work, radicals turned to violence, hoping that a harsh reaction from the Macedonian authorities would increase their support in the Albanian population and push the international community into action. So far, this strategy seems to have worked.

The extent of the relations between Kosovo-based remnants of the old KLA and the Macedonian NLA is ambiguous—both organizations are known by the same Albanian acronym—UCK—and use similar uniforms and symbols. The political representative of the NLA—Ali Ahmeti—has long been a factor in radical Albanian politics, having been linked to both the LPK and the KLA (Lipsius, 2001, p. 4). The NLA seems, at least partly, to be a spin-off of the largely defunct UCPMB in the Presevo Valley. Once Yugoslav forces were allowed to enter the 5 kilometer wide GSZ, UCPMB combatants joined the NLA in large numbers. The NLA, with an estimated 800 fighters under arms in the spring of 2001, additionally recruited young Kosovars. Most of these freshly recruited NLA fighters are poorly trained, but have an intimate knowledge of the mountainous area and know how to secure logistical support, including food, shelter and intelligence, from the local ethnic Albanian population on both sides of

the border. Despite denials by KPC leaders in Kosovo, the NLA has been supplied with weapons from Kosovo. *Jane's Intelligence Review* (May 2001, p. 21) reports that the NLA's armory includes AK-47s, Draganov sniper rifles, mines, grenades, and Browning Light 50 long-range rifles. Support for the NLA from Kosovo was confirmed in April 2001 by a Polish-Ukrainian KFOR patrol which found a vacated NLA training camp inside Kosovo, near the village of Krivenik. The patrol found hundreds of small arms, rocket propelled grenades as well as AT-3 Sagger wire-guided anti-tank missiles.

KPC commander Rustem Mustafa denied 'official' KPC relations with the UCPMB and the Macedonian NLA, though admitted 'individual' contacts. The KPC, Rustem Mustafa claimed, could not directly assist the NLA (Interview with Rustem Mustafa, Pristina, 6 May 2001). Gani Sheku, assistant to Agim Ceku in the KPC, asserted in early May 2001 that the KPC dismisses all KPC members who are known to have joined the Macedonian NLA (Interview with Gani Sheku, former KLA commander, Pristina, 8 May 2001). Given these—'official'—statements by KPC commanders, we are inclined to conclude that the KPC command is not the mastermind behind the NLA's activities, though regular flows of information can be assumed.

KFOR has come under criticism from the Macedonian government for its perceived slowness in combating the cross-border movements of weapons and fighters. Echoing earlier Serb sentiments, KFOR and the Western powers are seen as supporters of Albanian nationalists, intent on the destabilization of Macedonia. KFOR did not prevent Kosovo becoming a 'safe haven' for Albanian insurgents, operating in Macedonia and Serbia. Reacting to this criticism and alarmed by the escalation of the conflict in Macedonia, the US and German brigades started to strengthen their border patrols in March 2001. A

special UK-Czech-Scandinavian battalion was dispatched to the Kacanik region, bordering Macedonia (Ripley, 2001, pp. 2/3). From May 2001 onwards, unmanned aerial vehicles were dispatched to control illegal cross-border movements, and some 1,000 additional troops were ordered to guard the Kosovo-Macedonian border in March 2001. KFOR arrested some 150 NLA insurgents crossing the border to Macedonia, but they were usually released after 72 hours detention. As Tim Ripley from *Jane's Intelligence Review* contends: "Frustrated NATO officers complain that no matter how many suspects it detains, they are soon 'back on the street' because UNMIK has no judges or jails in which to hold them" (Ibid. p. 2).

Despite the efforts of international peace-brokers, the Macedonian crisis is still unresolved. The EU's mediation efforts and NATO's preparations for intervention are perceived, at least by the Macedonian government, to be rewarding and indirectly stimulating the violent pursuit of ethnic interests. Offering an unqualified amnesty for insurgents in advance, as was the case with the KLA and the UCPMB, *de facto* legitimizes the NLA as an equal party to the conflict. The conflict is straining relations between the Western powers, the Macedonian government, and Albanians in both Kosovo and Macedonia. Conversely, the Macedonian war directly contributes to Kosovo's destabilization due its mobilization as a hinterland and due to the influx of refugees. In late July 2001, it was estimated by UNHCR that some 62,000 Albanian refugees from Macedonia had found refuge in Kosovo.

# Conclusions— Lessons of the KLA Demobilization

- 1) The majority of the fighters have been successfully reintegrated into civilian life, with the IOM program being a success after all—even if its vocational training sometimes seems to be far ahead of economic recovery. There is evidently a need for job creation programs, particularly the formation of small and medium-sized enterprises where the international community could play a more important role in making credit available to entrepreneurs. By the same token, a clear economic policy for Kosovo has just begun to emerge, being hampered by conflicts among the donors about the economic future of the territory.
- 2) Of an estimated group of 20,000 KLA combatants, roughly half immediately returned to their prior positions. Some 5,000 ex-KLA fighters ended up in the KPC and some 2,500 in the KPS. This leaves a group of roughly 2,500 unaccounted for—the potential recruiting basis for UCPMB and NLA insurgents in Serbia and Macedonia. The operational basis of a KLA hardcore group ‘on the loose’ could be narrowed by credibly sanctioning illegal weapons and illegal border crossings, a centralized and coordinated pool of data on suspect persons, the build-up of detention centers, and coordinated efforts on the part of KFOR, UNMIK, the international police, KPC and KPS, and Kosovo political parties in fighting ethnic terrorism.
- 3) The funding of reintegration programs is an unresolved issue—the budgets of the IOM, KPC and KPS combined are a mere fraction of the cost of the UN’s administration of Kosovo, costing less than a single day of bomb warfare against Yugoslavia. It seems evident that more funds should be set aside for this purpose, as the successful reintegration of former fighters is a necessary prerequisite to calm the region.
- 4) In terms of the reintegration of the former KLA, one of the key issues is job placement following vocational training. Planning and assessment of retraining by the IOM could be improved by cooperation with potential employers, such as large enterprises, local administrations, and the agricultural sector. UNMIK provides legal frameworks, decides upon locations of KPC garrisons, and provides finances, but it is far less engaged in training and placing former KLA members in employment. Regular cooperation between the IOM and the Labor Department of UNMIK could increase the efficiency of job searches and placement.
- 5) Whilst sharing the general assumption that amnesty might be a necessary compromise in order to successfully demilitarize and reintegrate, we think that amnesty has to be more specifically defined. In view of the lack of amnesty legislation, the expectation of a blanket amnesty is very likely to stimulate insurgents to relapse into a violent or criminal pursuit of interests. The promise of amnesty may even make the protectorate powers appear to be aiding and abetting. Blanket amnesties as practiced with respect to the KLA do not only cast a lasting doubt on the democratic credentials of paramilitaries transformed into security agencies such as the KPC or KPS, but also inhibit their control by the international protectorate. Evaluation of personnel for post-war security agencies has therefore to cover all potential candidates, including commanders. Flagrant violations of humanitarian law, including genocide, war crimes, torture, terrorism, rape, and hostage-taking, should be exempted from any amnesty.
- 6) An international protectorate acts *de facto* as the legitimate sovereign, and is therefore bound by international humanitarian law. By implication, protectorates assume internal and external sovereignty in place of a democratically defined popular sovereign or the prior state sovereignty. Claiming lack of domestic democratic legitimacy would be equal to an evasion of responsibility. Wherever there are grounds for suspicion, the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, namely “Genocide”, “Crimes Against Humanity”, and “Violations of the Laws and Customs of War”, has to be applied to the KLA, too (Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, 1993). The international protectorate cannot wait for an authority which is legitimized to grant amnesty to emerge in the unknown future. The scope of acts, time period, and group of perpetrators covered by immunity, as well as the legal basis of amnesty have to be regulated as early as possible.

- 7) Given the wide array of acts of violence committed by KLA members against civilians of different ethnic origin as well as Kosovar Albanians, the reintegration and reassimilation of the KLA additionally warrants a pro-active reconciliation policy launched by the protectorate powers. The credibility of the protectorate powers would greatly benefit from installing transparent and publicly accountable ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ with a mandate to investigate and document all gross violations of human rights, the identity of those involved in such violations, and to enforce judicial accountability for any such violation.
- 8) With regard to the KPC, the status question needs to be resolved quickly in order to avoid a further deterioration of relations between KFOR, UNMIK and the KPC. Whereas most Kosovars are convinced that the KPC will form the nucleus of a future army, UNMIK cannot allow the establishment of such a force under the terms of regulation 1244.
- 9) The KPS seems to be a success, contributing to a substantial improvement in policing. However, the lasting influence of the old KLA structures within the force is a cause of concern. Nevertheless, the KPS could serve as a model for the creation of a new multi-ethnic police force in Macedonia.
- 10) Kosovo lacks an all-encompassing weapons collection program encouraging the turn-in of small weapons. With respect to the disarmament of the KLA, KFOR never seriously questioned the symbolic nature of the hand-over of some 10,000 weapons in 1999. A weapon collection program linking collection targets to development aid, along the lines of a similar UNDP project in Albania, could contribute to ridding Kosovo of surplus weapons.
- 11) KFOR could not rely on systematic intelligence gathering by its member states. The sharing of information on illegal weapons and trafficking is still of crucial importance. KFOR has no special units for weapons collection; illegal weapons caches were mostly found by chance and have fuelled the violence in Southern Serbia and in Macedonia.
- 12) It seems that the KLA, which started out as a violent secessionist movement in the early 1990s and broadened its base in the late 1990s by becoming a popular movement, has in part reverted to its roots in 2001. While parts of the old KLA have been integrated into the self-governing and paramilitary structures of UN-administered Kosovo, the more radical forces have taken the torch of revolt to their Albanian brethren abroad. The impression, fuelled by the similarity in name, that Macedonia’s NLA is the old KLA is nonetheless misguided. It seems rather that the NLA has adopted the Kosovo model of escalation, foreign intervention and an internationally-brokered peace agreement, leading to substantial autonomy. The NLA is trying to repeat the Kosovo scenario, with the important qualification that Macedonia—unlike Milosevic’s Serbia—is not seen as an enemy of the West. With regard to the demobilization of the KLA in Kosovo, there is no doubt that some radical and criminal members of the old structures have survived the transformation intact.
- 13) The lack of law enforcement and unclear legal situations allowed KLA elites to create economic and political niches during the first six months of the protectorate. While the situation has improved, both policing and the judiciary remain weak spots in UNMIK’s administration.
- 14) There is a need to unify civil and military aspects of the protectorate administration and to create accountable and transparent chains of an administrative division of labor as well as subordination—a lesson one could have learned from post-Dayton experiences in Bosnia (ICG, 1999b, p. 23). KFOR’s control over the implementation of the Thaci-Jackson Agreement suffered from lack of coordination between the individual KFOR zones (Jurekovic and Feichtinger, 2000). At times the central command chain of KFOR was undermined by specific country regulations. Furthermore, control of the KPC as well as illegal activities on the part of former KLA members require policing and investigation skills largely missing among militarily trained officers.
- 15) Regardless of statements to the opposite, KFOR failed in controlling Kosovo’s borders with Albania, Serbia, and Macedonia. Prevention of casualties among KFOR troops was made the highest priority, leading to the impression that illegal border crossing, including weapons transfers, can be committed with impunity. Persons arrested for illegally crossing borders or holding unlicensed weapons are usually released after hours. There is no credible enforcement of the provisions against the illegal possession of weapons. NATO has become the hostage of its own philosophy of running a risk-free military intervention. Erecting a protectorate means the assumption of responsibility for public security, law enforcement, and border control, or, to put it concisely, the state monopoly of violence. Intervention involves the takeover of external and internal sovereignty, otherwise it means irresponsible governance.

- 16) KFOR needs to be more resolute in enforcing laws, sanctioning the possession of illegal weapons and prosecuting criminal undertakings by former KLA members. Given the widely reported failings of the UN International Police, the military has to perform police work, especially in the border regions. This requires training and specialized military police units, particularly anti-terrorist units, as well as the build-up of detention centers (ICG, 1999g, pp. 17 ff.). The KFOR mandate needs a more credible interpretation in this respect.
- 17) In practical terms, the frequent turnover of KFOR and UNMIK personnel leads to a loss of institutional knowledge. It seems more reasonable to rotate personnel in a way that secures continuity. Furthermore, some KFOR sectors are understaffed with respect to KPC control—in the German sector, for example, only one person was assigned to this task. This is of particular importance if KPC units or individual members do not comply with regulations.
- 18) The most important lesson learned with regard to future interventions relates to planning. NATO and its political leaders had no idea what to do after the military defeat of the Serb forces. There was neither an entry strategy nor an exit strategy. Wars of intervention are always likely to lead to unplanned, unexpected, and unintended results, but this cannot justify laxity. Some authors have labeled the absence of a discernable vision as “constructive ambiguity”. But intervention is like pregnancy—it is unambiguous and you cannot escape full responsibility. Dayton-Bosnia had already demonstrated that winning a war does not make sense if the political goal and the terms of the post-war international governance are not spelled out. Bureaucratic sluggishness, competing national agendas, budgetary problems and an unclear division of labor between UNMIK and KFOR result, after all, from political negligence.
- 19) Interventions aimed at ending ethnic wars need to avoid the impression that they favor one nationalism over the other, as was clearly the case in Kosovo. This has fuelled the hope of Albanian extremists in other countries of recreating a Kosovo-like scenario, thereby alienating Slav political leaders in Serbia and Macedonia. The UN—and NATO—should act as honest brokers, instead of using one party—as was the case with the KLA in 1998/99—to foster their own strategic aims.
- 20) The largest obstacle to a resolution of the ongoing crisis in the Southern Balkans region is the unresolved status of Kosovo. While the UN and the Western powers maintain the fiction that the eventual outcome will be dictated by UN resolution 1244, i.e. substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, it is clear that this will not be accepted even by the most moderate Kosovo Albanians. The open status question prevents a complete demobilization and disarmament of Kosovo, as former combatants retain their weapons in case resolution 1244 is implemented—a scenario that would certainly lead to renewed fighting. Even ‘civilian’ institutions such as the KPC are preparing for such a scenario.
- 21) The unresolved status of Kosovo has sparked Albanian nationalism in the neighboring states. From a socio-economic point of view, foreign investment will not be attracted, thus preventing economic recovery. The status of Kosovo cannot be defined by KFOR or UNMIK; it requires political guidance from the UN Security Council. It is highly recommended that measures should be taken to definitely rule out at least the extreme options such as a return to Yugoslavia, a Greater Albania, an inclusion into Kosovo of Albanian-populated parts of Serbia and Macedonia, as well as an independent Kosovo with full external and internal sovereignty. This would foreclose the option of gaining independence for Kosovo by building an unfettered army.

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# Appendix

## **I. Resolution 1244 (1999), Adopted by the Security Council at its 4011th meeting, on 10 June 1999**

### **The Security Council**

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, Recalling its resolutions 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998, 1199 (1998) of 23 September 1998, 1203 (1998) of 24 October 1998 and 1239 (1999) of 14 May 1999,

Regretting that there has not been full compliance with the requirements of these resolutions,

Determined to resolve the grave humanitarian situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to provide for the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes,

Condemning all acts of violence against the Kosovo population as well as all terrorist acts by any party,

Recalling the statement made by the Secretary-General on 9 April 1999, expressing concern at the humanitarian tragedy taking place in Kosovo,

Reaffirming the right of all refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in safety,

Recalling the jurisdiction and the mandate of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,

Welcoming the general principles on a political solution to the Kosovo crisis adopted on 6 May 1999 (S/1999/516, annex 1 to this resolution) and welcoming also the acceptance by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles set forth in points 1 to 9 of the paper presented in Belgrade on 2 June 1999 (S/1999/649, annex 2 to this resolution), and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's agreement to that paper,

Reaffirming the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other States of the region, as set out in the Helsinki Final Act and annex 2,

Reaffirming the call in previous resolutions for substantial autonomy and meaningful self-administration for Kosovo,

Determining that the situation in the region continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Determined to ensure the safety and security of international personnel and the implementation by all concerned of their responsibilities under the present resolution, and acting for these purposes under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Decides that a political solution to the Kosovo crisis shall be based on the general principles in annex 1 and as further elaborated in the principles and other required elements in annex 2;
2. Welcomes the acceptance by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles and other required elements referred to in paragraph 1 above, and demands the full cooperation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in their rapid implementation;
3. Demands in particular that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia put an immediate and verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo, and begin and complete verifiable phased withdrawal from Kosovo of all military, police and paramilitary forces according to a rapid timetable, with which the deployment of the international security presence in Kosovo will be synchronized;
4. Confirms that after the withdrawal an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel will be permitted to return to Kosovo to perform the functions in accordance with annex 2;

5. Decides on the deployment in Kosovo, under United Nations auspices, of international civil and security presences, with appropriate equipment and personnel as required, and welcomes the agreement of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to such presences;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to appoint, in consultation with the Security Council, a Special Representative to control the implementation of the international civil presence, and further requests the Secretary-General to instruct his Special Representative to coordinate closely with the international security presence to ensure that both presences operate towards the same goals and in a mutually supportive manner;
7. Authorizes Member States and relevant international organizations to establish the international security presence in Kosovo as set out in point 4 of annex 2 with all necessary means to fulfil its responsibilities under paragraph 9 below;
8. Affirms the need for the rapid early deployment of effective international civil and security presences to Kosovo, and demands that the parties cooperate fully in their deployment;
9. Decides that the responsibilities of the international security presence to be deployed and acting in Kosovo will include:
  - a. Deterring renewed hostilities, maintaining and where necessary enforcing a ceasefire, and ensuring the withdrawal and preventing the return into Kosovo of Federal and Republic military, police and paramilitary forces, except as provided in point 6 of annex 2;
  - b. Demilitarizing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups as required in paragraph 15 below;
  - c. Establishing a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety, the international civil presence can operate, a transitional administration can be established, and humanitarian aid can be delivered;
  - d. Ensuring public safety and order until the international civil presence can take responsibility for this task;
  - e. Supervising demining until the international civil presence can, as appropriate, take over responsibility for this task;
  - f. Supporting, as appropriate, and coordinating closely with the work of the international civil presence;
  - g. Conducting border monitoring duties as required;
  - h. Ensuring the protection and freedom of movement of itself, the international civil presence, and other international organizations;
10. Authorizes the Secretary-General, with the assistance of relevant international organizations, to establish an international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which will provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo;
11. Decides that the main responsibilities of the international civil presence will include:
  - a. Promoting the establishment, pending a final settlement, of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, taking full account of annex 2 and of the Rambouillet accords (S/1999/648);
  - b. Performing basic civilian administrative functions where and as long as required;
  - c. Organizing and overseeing the development of provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government pending a political settlement, including the holding of elections;
  - d. Transferring, as these institutions are established, its administrative responsibilities while overseeing and supporting the consolidation of Kosovo's local provisional institutions and other peace-building activities;

- e. Facilitating a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet accords (S/1999/648);
  - f. In a final stage, overseeing the transfer of authority from Kosovo's provisional institutions to institutions established under a political settlement;
  - g. Supporting the reconstruction of key infrastructure and other economic reconstruction;
  - h. Supporting, in coordination with international humanitarian organizations, humanitarian and disaster relief aid;
  - i. Maintaining civil law and order, including establishing local police forces and meanwhile through the deployment of international police personnel to serve in Kosovo;
  - j. Protecting and promoting human rights;
  - k. Assuring the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo;
12. Emphasizes the need for coordinated humanitarian relief operations, and for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to allow unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations and to cooperate with such organizations so as to ensure the fast and effective delivery of international aid;
13. Encourages all Member States and international organizations to contribute to economic and social reconstruction as well as to the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, and emphasizes in this context the importance of convening an international donors' conference, particularly for the purposes set out in paragraph 11 (g) above, at the earliest possible date;
14. Demands full cooperation by all concerned, including the international security presence, with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia;
15. Demands that the KLA and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups end immediately all offensive actions and comply with the requirements for demilitarization as laid down by the head of the international security presence in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General;
16. Decides that the prohibitions imposed by paragraph 8 of resolution 1160 (1998) shall not apply to arms and related matériel for the use of the international civil and security presences;
17. Welcomes the work in hand in the European Union and other international organizations to develop a comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilization of the region affected by the Kosovo crisis, including the implementation of a Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe with broad international participation in order to further the promotion of democracy, economic prosperity, stability and regional cooperation;
18. Demands that all States in the region cooperate fully in the implementation of all aspects of this resolution;
19. Decides that the international civil and security presences are established for an initial period of 12 months, to continue thereafter unless the Security Council decides otherwise;
20. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council at regular intervals on the implementation of this resolution, including reports from the leaderships of the international civil and security presences, the first reports to be submitted within 30 days of the adoption of this resolution;
21. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

#### **Annex 1**

Statement by the Chairman on the conclusion of the meeting of the G-8 Foreign Ministers held at the Petersberg Centre on 6 May 1999. The G-8 Foreign Ministers adopted the following general principles on the political solution to the Kosovo crisis:

Immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo; Withdrawal from Kosovo of military, police and paramilitary forces; Deployment in Kosovo of effective international civil and security presences, endorsed and adopted by the United Nations, capable of guaranteeing the achievement of the common objectives; Establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo to be decided by the Security Council of the United Nations to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo; The safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations; A political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of the KLA; Comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilization of the crisis region.

## **Annex 2**

Agreement should be reached on the following principles to move towards a resolution of the Kosovo crisis:

1. An immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo.
2. Verifiable withdrawal from Kosovo of all military, police and paramilitary forces according to a rapid timetable.
3. Deployment in Kosovo under United Nations auspices of effective international civil and security presences, acting as may be decided under Chapter VII of the Charter, capable of guaranteeing the achievement of common objectives.
4. The international security presence with substantial North Atlantic Treaty Organization participation must be deployed under unified command and control and authorized to establish a safe environment for all people in Kosovo and to facilitate the safe return to their homes of all displaced persons and refugees.
5. Establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo as a part of the international civil presence under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to be decided by the Security Council of the United Nations. The interim administration to provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo.
6. After withdrawal, an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serbian personnel will be permitted to return to perform the following functions: Liaison with the international civil mission and the international security presence; Marking/clearing minefields; Maintaining a presence at Serb patrimonial sites; Maintaining a presence at key border crossings.
7. Safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons under the supervision of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations.
8. A political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of UCK. Negotiations between the parties for a settlement should not delay or disrupt the establishment of democratic self-governing institutions.
9. A comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilization of the crisis region. This will include the implementation of a stability pact for South-Eastern Europe with broad international participation in order to further promotion of democracy, economic prosperity, stability and regional cooperation.
10. Suspension of military activity will require acceptance of the principles set forth above in addition to agreement to the, previously identified, required elements, which are specified in the footnote below. (1) A military-technical agreement will then be rapidly concluded that would, among other things, specify additional modalities, including the roles and functions of Yugoslav/Serb personnel in Kosovo: Withdrawal Procedures for withdrawals, including the phased, detailed schedule and delineation of a buffer area in Serbia beyond which forces will be withdrawn; Returning Personnel Equipment associated with returning personnel; Terms of reference for their functional responsibilities; Timetable for their return; Delineation of their geographical areas of operation; Rules governing their relationship to the international security presence and the international civil mission.

## Notes

1. Other required elements: A rapid and precise timetable for withdrawals, meaning, e.g., seven days to complete withdrawal and air defence weapons withdrawn outside a 25 kilometre mutual safety zone within 48 hours; Return of personnel for the four functions specified above will be under the supervision of the international security presence and will be limited to a small agreed number (hundreds, not thousands); Suspension of military activity will occur after the beginning of verifiable withdrawals; The discussion and achievement of a military-technical agreement shall not extend the previously determined time for completion of withdrawals.

## II. Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK, Signed on 20 June 1999

1. This Undertaking provides for a ceasefire by the UCK, their disengagement from the zones of conflict, subsequent demilitarisation and reintegration into civil society. In accordance with the terms of UNSCR 1244 and taking account of the obligations agreed to at Rambouillet and the public commitments made by the Kosovar Albanian Rambouillet delegation.
2. The UCK undertake to renounce the use of force to comply with the directions of the Commander of the international security force in Kosovo (COMKFOR), and where applicable the head of the interim civil administration for Kosovo, and to resolve peacefully any questions relating to the implementation of this undertaking.
3. The UCK agree that the International Security Presence (KFOR) and the international civil presence will continue to deploy and operate without hindrance within Kosovo and that KFOR has the authority to take all necessary action to establish and maintain a secure environment for all citizens of Kosovo and otherwise carry out its mission.
4. The UCK agrees to comply with all of the obligations of this Undertaking and to ensure that with immediate effect all UCK forces in Kosovo and in neighbouring countries will observe the provisions of this Undertaking, will refrain from all hostile or provocative acts, hostile intent and freeze military movement in either direction across International borders or the boundary between Kosovo and other parts of the FRY, or any other actions inconsistent with the spirit of UNSCR 1244. The UCK in Kosovo agree to commit themselves publicly to demilitarise in accordance with paragraphs 22 and 23, refrain from activities which jeopardise the safety of international governmental and non-governmental personnel including KFOR, and to facilitate the deployment and operation of KFOR.
5. For purposes of this Undertaking, the following expressions shall have the meanings as described below: a. The UCK includes all personnel and organisations within Kosovo, currently under UCK control, with a military or paramilitary capability and any other groups or individuals so designated by Commander KFOR (COMKFOR) b. «FRY Forces» includes all of the FRY and Republic of Serbia personnel and organisations with a military capability. This includes regular army and naval forces, armed civilian groups, associated paramilitary groups, air forces, national guards, border police, army reserves, military police, intelligence services, Ministry of Internal Affairs, local, special, riot and anti-terrorist police, and any other groups or individuals so designated by Commander KFOR (COMKFOR). c. The Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) is defined as a 5-kilometre zone that extends beyond the Kosovo province border into the rest of FRY territory. It includes the terrain within that 5-kilometre zone. d. Prohibited weapons are any weapon 12.7mm or larger, any anti-tank or anti-aircraft weapons, grenades, mines or explosives, automatic and long barreled weapons.
6. The purpose of this Undertaking are as follows: a. To establish a durable cessation of hostilities. b. To provide for the support and authorisation of the KFOR and in particular to authorise the KFOR to take such actions as are required, including the use of necessary force in accordance with KFOR's rules of engagement, to ensure compliance with this Undertaking and protection of the KFOR, and to contribute to a secure environment for the international civil implementation presence, and other international organisations, agencies, and non-governmental organisations and the civil populace.
7. The actions of the UCK shall be in accordance with this Undertaking. «The KFOR» commander in consultation, where appropriate, with the interim civil administrator will be the final authority regarding the interpretation of this Undertaking and the security aspects of the peace settlement it supports. His determinations will be binding on all parties and persons.

### **Cessation of Hostilities**

8. With immediate effect on signature the UCK agrees to comply with this Undertaking and with the directions of COMKFOR. Any forces which fail to comply with this Undertaking or with the directions of COMKFOR will be liable to military action as deemed appropriate by COMKFOR.
9. With immediate effect on signature of this Undertaking all hostile acts by the UCK will cease. The UCK Chief of General Staff undertakes to issue clear and precise instructions to all units and personnel under his command, to ensure contact with the FRY force is avoided and to comply fully with the arrangements for bringing this Undertaking into effect. He will make announcements immediately following final signature of this Undertaking, which will be broadcast regularly through all appropriate channels to assist in ensuring that instructions to maintain this Undertaking reach all the forces under his command and are understood by the public in general.
10. The UCK undertakes and agrees in particular: a. To cease the firing of all weapons and use of explosive devices. b. Not to place any mines, barriers or checkpoints, nor maintain any observation posts or protective obstacles. c. The destruction of buildings, facilities or structures is not permitted. It shall not engage in any military, security, or training related activities, including ground or air defence operations, in or over Kosovo or GSZ, without the prior express approval of COMKFOR. d. Not to attack, detain or intimidate any civilians in Kosovo, nor shall they attack, confiscate or violate the property of civilians in Kosovo.
11. The UCK agrees not to conduct any reprisals, counter-attacks, or any unilateral actions in response to violations of the UNSCR 1244 and other extant agreements relating to Kosovo. This in no way denies the right of self-defence.
12. The UCK agrees not to interfere with those FRY personnel that return to Kosovo to conduct specific tasks as authorised and directed by COMKFOR.
13. Except as approved by COMKFOR, the UCK agrees that its personnel in Kosovo will not carry weapons of any type: a. Within 2 kilometres of VJ and MUP assembly areas; b. Within 2 kilometres of the main roads and the towns upon them listed at Appendix A; c. Within 2 kilometres of external borders of Kosovo; d. In any other areas designated by COMKFOR
14. Within 4 days of signature of this Undertaking: a. The UCK will close all fighting positions, entrenchments, and checkpoints on roads, and mark their minefields and booby traps. b. The UCK Chief of General Staff shall report in writing completion of the above requirement to COMKFOR and continue to provide weekly detailed written status reports until demilitarisation, as detailed in the following paragraphs, is complete.

### **Cross-Border Activity**

15. With immediate effect the UCK will cease the movement of armed bodies into neighbouring countries. All movement of armed bodies into Kosovo will be subject to the prior approval of COMKFOR.

### **Monitoring the Cessation of Hostilities**

16. The authority for dealing with breaches of this Undertaking rests with COMKFOR. He will monitor and maintain and if necessary enforce the cessation of hostilities.
17. The UCK agrees to co-operate fully with KFOR and the interim civil administration for Kosovo. The chief of the General Staff of the UCK will ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to deal with any breaches of this Undertaking by his forces as directed by COMKFOR.
18. Elements of KFOR will be assigned to maintain contact with the UCK and will be deployed to its command structure and bases.
19. KFOR will establish appropriate control at designated crossing points into Albania and the FYROM.

### **Joint Implementation Commission (JIC)**

20. A JIC will be established in Pristina within 4 days of the signature of this Undertaking. The JIC will be chaired by COMKFOR and will comprise the senior commanders of KFOR and the UCK, and a representative from the interim civil administration for Kosovo.
21. The JIC will meet as often as required by COMKFOR throughout the implementation of this Undertaking. It may be called without prior notice and representation by the UCK is expected at a level appropriate with the rank of the KFOR chairman. Its functions will include: a. Ensuring compliance with agreed arrangements for the security and activities of all forces; b. The investigation of actual or threatened breaches of his Undertaking; c. Such other tasks as may be assigned to it by COMKFOR in the interests of maintaining the cessation of hostilities.

### **Demilitarisation and Transformation**

22. The UCK will follow the procedures established by COMKFOR for the phased demilitarisation, transformation and monitoring of UCK forces in Kosovo and for further regulation of their activities. They will not train or organise parades without the authority of COMKFOR.
23. The UCK agrees to the following timetable which will commence from the signature of this Undertaking: a. Within 7 days, the UCK shall establish secure weapons storage sites, which shall be registered with and verified by the KFOR; b. Within 7 days the UCK will clear their minefields and booby traps, vacate their fighting positions and transfer to assembly areas as agreed with COMKFOR at the JIC. Thereafter only personnel authorised by COMKFOR and senior Officers of the UCK with their close protection personnel not exceeding 3, carrying side arms only, will be allowed outside the assembly areas. c. After 7 days automatic small arms weapons not stored in the registered weapons storage sites can only be held inside the authorised assembly areas. d. After 29 days, the retention of any non-automatic long barreled weapons shall be subject to authorisation by COMKFOR. e. Within 30 days, subject to arrangements by COMKFOR, if necessary, all UCK personnel, who are not of local origin, whether or not they are legally within Kosovo, including individual advisors, freedom fighters, trainers, volunteers, and personnel from neighbouring and other States, shall be withdrawn from Kosovo. f. Arrangements for control of weapons are as follows: i. Within 30 days the UCK shall store in the registered weapons storage sites all prohibited weapons with the exception of automatic small arms. 30 per cent of their total holdings of automatic small arms weapons will also be stored in these sites at this stage. Ammunition for the remaining weapons should be withdrawn and stored at an approved site authorised by COMKFOR separate from the assembly areas at the same time. ii. At 30 days it shall be illegal for UCK personnel to possess prohibited weapons, with the exception of automatic small arms within assembly areas, and unauthorised long barreled weapons. Such weapons shall be subject to confiscation by the KFOR. iii. Within 60 days a further 30 per cent of automatic small arms, giving a total of 60 per cent of the UCK holdings, will be stored in the registered weapons storage sites. iv. Within 90 days all automatic small arms weapons will be stored in the registered weapons storage sites. Thereafter their possession by UCK personnel will be prohibited and such weapons will be subject to confiscation by KFOR. g. From 30 days until 90 days the weapons storage sites will be under joint control of the UCK and KFOR under procedures approved by COMKFOR at the JIC. After 90 days KFOR will assume full control of these sites. h. Within 90 days all UCK forces will have completed the processes for their demilitarisation and are to cease wearing either military uniforms or insignia of the UCK. i. Within 90 days the Chief of General Staff UCK shall confirm compliance with the above restrictions in writing to COMKFOR.
24. The provisions of this Undertaking enter into force with immediate effect of its signature by the Kosovar Albanian representative(s).
25. The UCK intends to comply with the terms of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, and in this context that the international community should take due and full account of the contribution of the UCK during the Kosovo crisis and accordingly give due consideration to: a. Recognition that, while the UCK and its structures are in the process of transformation, it is committed to propose individual current members to participate in the administration and police forces of Kosovo, enjoying special consideration in view of the expertise they have developed. b. The formation of an Army in Kosovo on the lines of the US National Guard in due course as part of a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet Accord.
26. This Undertaking is provided in English and Albanian and if there is any doubt as to the meaning of the text the English version has precedence.

# The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)

an independent non-profit organization  
dedicated to promoting the transfer  
of former military resources and assets  
to alternative civilian purposes

The transfer of resources from the military to the civilian sector represents both a social and an economic challenge, as well as offering an opportunity for the states concerned. The sustained process of disarmament during the decade following the end of the Cold War has made defense conversion an important issue in many countries today. This process has now slowed down considerably, but the problems faced by those affected are far from solved. BICC's main objective is to make use of the chances offered by disarmament, whilst at the same time helping to avoid—or lessen—the negative effects.

This issue concerns a number of areas: What can scientists and engineers who were formerly employed in weapons labs do today? What is the fate of the roughly eight million employees who lost their jobs in the defense factories? Why are so many defense companies faring better today than they did ten years ago? Will all demobilized soldiers or former combatants find a future in civilian society? What action must communities take when suddenly faced with the closure of a huge military base? How does one solve the problem of the ready availability of small arms and light weapons?

It is BICC's task to tackle these questions, to analyze them on the basis of scientific research, to convey the necessary information, and to give advice to those involved—in short, to **manage disarmament**.

**International think tank.** BICC conducts research and makes policy recommendations. In-house and external experts contribute comparative analyses and background studies

**Project management and consulting services.** BICC provides practical support to public and private organizations. For instance, BICC staff advise local governments confronted with the difficult task of redeveloping former military installations. BICC also combines development assistance with practical conversion work by helping in the fields of demobilization, reintegration and peace-building.

**Clearinghouse.** In its capacity as an independent organization, BICC supports and assists international organizations, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, companies and the media, as well as private individuals. It hereby mediates and facilitates the conversion process at all levels—local, national and global. BICC collects and disseminates data and information on conversion to practitioners in a wide range of fields and institutions. BICC strives to reach researchers and practitioners as well as parliamentarians, the media, and the general public by means of a variety of tools including its library, its extensive on-line documentation services and its internet service ([www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de)). Furthermore, the Center documents the course of disarmament and conversion in its annual *conversion surveys* and produces a variety of publications.

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