

## Appendix 11

<http://www.kosovo.com/jzimm.html>

### PHOTO

A Serb woman with her child, Pristina Kosovo, summer 1999

## **Why minority rights go unprotected- the international community's tacit approval of reverse-ethnic cleansing in Kosovo**

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### **Preface and Acknowledgments;**

Within the auspicious academic environment of the School for International Training (SIT), the author has incorporated copious advising sessions and institutional contacts in shaping her thesis. It is prudent to acknowledge SIT's invaluable allotment of time, without which this research would lack integral fieldwork. The resulting Independent Study Project strives toward a number of interrelated objectives:

1. To raise awareness of the insufficient attention awarded minority rights in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).
2. To clarify the link between Western geo-strategic objectives and the mal-protection of minority rights.
3. To clarify the implications of the current international presence and policy in Kosovo, FRY.
4. To offer a set of proposals to increase the protection of minority rights.
5. To explain the benefits (outcome) of the afore-mentioned proposals

I would like to extend my profound appreciation to several persons within UNMIK, KFOR and certain (I)NGOs for their essential role in furthering my study on minority rights in Kosovo. Through their invaluable assistance, I have conducted numerous field visits to K-Serbian enclaves, to minority beneficiaries of (I)NGO projects, to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) camps, to collective centers for IDPs, and to Osojane Valley, the designated site for the first "large-scale," organized return of K-Serbians to Western Kosovo. However, due to the institutional bias against certain minorities, I am requested to refrain from any identification or direct quotation that may imperil the jobs of these minority rights advocating individuals. In a province struggling to recover from decades of xenophobic entrenchment, I have unearthed a truth at which I could never have guessed. To my bewilderment, I have found the afore-mentioned colleagues to constitute an anomaly within the ambit of an otherwise tendentious institutional atmosphere.

Having borne witness to their obdurate struggle against the prevalent anti-Serb sentiments of their

cohorts, I have come to realize the difficulty of channeling funds in a democratic manner within Kosovo. The very fact that such institutional bias towards ethnic Albanians disparages the rights of non-Albanians ought to be an insufferable outcome of the UN and NATO's presence. So unsettling is this observation, that I have taken it upon myself to unravel the conundrum of the undemocratic workings of UNMIK's international body. By clarifying the geo-strategic context within which international aid is constrained, I hope to break the pernicious "consensus culture" amongst internationals in Kosovo. The following independent study project thus aims to encourage the increased engagement of relevant actors in the equal promotion and protection of human rights for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, within the province of Kosovo, FRY.

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## Why minority rights go unprotected

### I. Introduction- a brief synopsis of the current quagmire

Following NATO's controversial bombing campaign, the United Nations swept into the volatile Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) province of Kosovo to hoist its flag, the hailed banner of democratic principles. By this point, NATO claimed to have bombed the term "ethnic cleansing" off the Kosovo slate, which was subsequently to be kept clean by the presence of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Implementation Force (KFOR). In the meantime, a CNN public enraged over what they saw as the unfounded oppression of one ethnicity by another, were quick to befriend xenophobic terrorists within the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), otherwise known as the UCK in Albanian.

What the average "world" citizen does not know, is that the very same Yugoslav "offensive" it so avidly decried, had been intentionally instigated by the KLA against its own people in order to legitimize their call for NATO's intervention<sup>1</sup>. In one typical method of instigating retaliation, "the KLA [would] often simply round up all the Serbs of a particular village, murder or maim the able bodied males and send them walking through the war zone toward the nearest Yugoslav military position"<sup>1</sup> In their ignorance of KLA atrocities, the Western public's blind confidence in what was to become UNMIK and KFOR was sorely misplaced. For the KLA banner coupled with that of Western geo-strategic goals has moved in quickly to join and sully the UN's symbol of peace and democracy.

At this point it is important to highlight the vastly different rates of return to Kosovo according to ethnicity. With the entry of NATO forces into the province, 90 percent of the 800,000 people displaced from Kosovo, the majority of which were ethnic Albanian, were able to return home within a mere six weeks<sup>2</sup>. While a legitimate cause for applause, this accomplishment must be viewed within the more sobering context of simultaneous and ongoing displacement. Despite the arrival of 38,000 peacekeepers, by October 15, 1999, an estimated 230,884 people had fled Kosovo, nearly all of which have yet to return<sup>3</sup>. The Transnational Foundation for Future Research (TFF) notes "with perhaps 90 percent of all non-Albanians now driven out, the Kosovo-Albanian leadership is responsible for the proportionately largest ethnic cleansing in the Balkans since the wars started in 1991,"<sup>4</sup>. It may be cogently argued that NATO's alliance ought well to have been prepared for such a brutal reverse-ethnic cleansing in light of accusations released against the KLA only two months prior to the Rambouillet accords.

Alluding to the terrorist tactics of its new wartime ally, the US State Department warned that "...the KLA harass or kidnap anyone who comes to the police, KLA representatives had threatened to kill villagers and burn their homes if they did not join the KLA..."<sup>5</sup>. A group prepared to exact abuses against people of its own ethnicity can hardly be expected to withhold from attacking its purported "enemy." One may ponder over why KFOR was not ordered to do more in terms of protecting non-Albanian minorities against the very probable repercussions of allowing a fully armed KLA to return. Such consternation is compounded by the lack of explanation from NATO as to why reverse-ethnic cleansing still continues today. The following analysis will therefore, endeavor to clarify this crucial link between the mal-protection of minority rights and the geopolitical objectives of the West. Before delving into the proposed explanation, it is appropriate to evaluate the resulting situation in which minorities have been encased.

### II. The Current situation of minorities in Kosovo.

The result of UNMIK and KFOR's two and a half year presence is an undeniable failure to achieve the centerpiece of its mandate, namely, the protection of human rights. According to UN Security Resolution 1244 (June 1999), on which UNMIK's presence is based, the multinational body is to ensure the equal protection of human rights irrespective of ethnicity. Having objected with bombs to

the "ethnic cleansing" of the Albanian minority in FRY, the international body has now done little to stem the reverse-ethnic cleansing of non-Albanian minorities from the province of Kosovo. The inability of KFOR to protect minorities from the KLA's onslaught is compounded by the tendentious dispensation of international assistance.

Through their politically infused channels, international agencies have pumped billions of US dollars into this province, yet next to nothing have gone to non-Albanian minorities. While numerous NGO workers have admitted that most K-Albanians are now arguably better off than they were prior to 1999, Kosovo Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Gorani, and Turks are living a vastly different fate. The Serbs and Roma, in particular, have been effectively evicted off their land and many now sit restless in the squalor of IDP camps and collective centers, with little to no prospects for returning home. Add to this their sense of non-existence created in part by the paucity of financial and personal attention paid minorities.

Numerous IDPS have complained of being treated with indifference by both host and receiving communities. A woman residing in the Djerdap refugee camp in Serbia proper said "I live in Serbia but no one will acknowledge I exist"<sup>6</sup>. In Belgrade's dismal economic situation, there is little material sympathy to spare. Yet, in the midst of Kosovo's multi-billion dollar reconstruction scheme aid agencies are responding to return requests with shallow echoes. As for those fortunate enough to remain on their property, internationals claim they are subject to a limited amount of freedom unknown in Europe since the concentration camps of World War II. Indeed, the Serbian enclaves resemble "Warsaw ghettos" and isolated KFOR fortresses<sup>7</sup>.

Barbed wire, military checkpoints, and armed soldiers encircle the narrow confines of a dispirited people. The disappearance of internationally financed building supplies marks the crossing into a minority community, as does the disconnection of electrical lines. On occasion, one may see the sullen face of a Serb peering out the window of a KFOR escort or UNHCR-run bus line as they bemoan a scarred countryside. As to why such captives within their own home have not been joined by their displaced counterparts, the dismal record of the past two and a half years speaks for itself.

"Since the war, 1,300 Serbs, Roma and other minorities have disappeared, and are feared dead...One hundred churches and monasteries have been destroyed,...Kosovo's Croat and Jewish communities have... removed themselves,...while girls from Kosovo and Albania have been kidnapped and forced into prostitution in Western Europe"<sup>8</sup>. "Ex"-KLA marauders and hard-line Albanians have continued an "organized and systematic" campaign of murders, arson, forced evictions, strategic buying, harassment, intimidation, rapes and kidnappings. Moreover, the expulsion of Kosovo's Serbs has been done regardless of whether or not those individuals had previously attacked the KLA or supported the Milosovic regime<sup>9</sup>. This ethno-nationalist campaign has two purposes: to discourage the return of minorities, and to encourage their continual displacement from Kosovo. The ultimate goal is to present the international community with a fait accompli, whereby a Serb-less province will be seen as warranting independence.

Without an urgent shift in focus towards the active recreation of a multi-ethnic Kosovo, the remaining minorities will not only be "ethnically cleansed" by the KLA, but will arguably be "economically cleansed" by the international aid community. Besides trampling on the rights of minorities, an intolerant and independent Kosovo would emit a shockwave of legitimized separatist sentiment across all areas of the Balkans with a significant Albanian population. The resulting instability could eliminate any potential for the Balkans to demonstrate their worthiness of joining the European Union and profiting from the Stability Pact. In order to comprehend the status quo in Kosovo, it is imperative to analyze the underlying complexities of international objectives.

### **III. The True objectives of the international presence, democratic or economic?**

Are foreign interests as objectively removed from the disintegration of Yugoslavia as purported by Western media? This is a question burning on the minds of numerous scholars, peace activists and even western congressmen and parliamentary figures. The quagmire in which UNMIK currently

stands, may be contributed in large part to Western geo-strategic aspirations. These range from the ongoing fight over natural resources, to the desire by some to reorganize the Balkans to the likes of Western capitalist interests. In analyzing these geo-strategic concerns, the question should be borne in mind as to whether such economic interests are determining the fate of minority rights. And if so, what is the potential for incorporating human rights into the complex political-economic strategies of Western powers?

As the perennial increase in industrial output forces a squeeze on existing natural resources, 1999 U.S. Trade and Development Agency's (TDA) Director J. Joseph Grandmaison acknowledged "the competition is fierce to tap energy resources in the Caspian region"<sup>10</sup>. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has been an intricate struggle to befriend and enjoin Central Asian nations in their exploitation of Caspian Sea oil. The United States had its eye on a proposal for several interlinked pipelines ultimately ending at the Vlore port in Albania. However, Russia and Iran were the first to secure needed funds, thus foreclosing the implementation of US-sponsored Caspian initiatives. Having emerged the loser in this rivalry for "Caspian" pipelines, Washington has stepped up efforts to win the second leg of "Eurasia's energy race."

Here the obstacle course between the Black and Mediterranean Sea involves bypassing the overcrowded Bosphorus Straits. The stakes have been raised with the recent reopening of the Danube River. Such additional traffic, may force Turkey to abrogate the international waters Treaty of Montreux (1936) and begin taxing the transit<sup>11</sup>. This embellishes US and EU proposals to construct their oil pipelines across the Balkans. Yet Washington's favored route traverses the politically volatile Balkans, gravely threatening investment prospects. In order to thus guarantee a "stable" access route to Western markets, politicians and businessmen alike have understood the need maintain some form of indirect rule, whether that be through friendly allies, or a "humanitarian" presence. This predicament may explain "the parallel development of commercial exploitation in the Caspian Sea region and the movement of NATO into the Balkans"<sup>12</sup>.

Having conducted a number of feasibility studies, the TDA and the Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil (AMBO) Pipeline Corporation concluded that a pipeline traversing the three highlighted states would be the most financially propitious<sup>13</sup>. Upon receiving these results, this US company AMBO moved quickly to establish exclusive construction rights. Drawing a crucial connection to NATO's Balkan presence, the Guardian explains "that the former Yugoslavia, especially Serbia, was a serious problem for the realization of the plan. The intervention in Kosovo and Metohija was carried out in order to please Albania, whose port of Vlore is the ultimate destination of the pipeline"<sup>14</sup>.

However, despite NATO's peacekeeping intervention in the Balkans, AMBO's project is still compromised by ethnic instability. This is unsurprising, given KFOR's inability to reign in the terrorist activities of its wartime ally. Thus, one year into it's Kosovo mission, UNMIK and NATO's policy of appeasing separatist Albanian aspirations was insufficient to bring calm for the construction of the American company's pipeline. Cross-border incursions by the UCK (the author deems it unnecessary to employ the acronym NLA, which, translated into Albanian brings her back to UCK), have exported Kosovo's instability to Macedonia. Indeed, "fundraising for the [pipeline] project was to begin in July 2000, with construction scheduled to start in 2001 and completion by 2005. However, luring foreign investment to the troubled region has been difficult, and ethnic violence erupted in Macedonia in February 2001 near the proposed route, further thwarting efforts to fund the pipeline construction"<sup>15</sup>. Here, it would seem beneficial to reign in Kosovo's rump terrorist group and its Macedonian counterparts. However, along these same geo-strategic waves of thought, it is feared that stronger efforts to confront the terrorist guerrillas could push the latter into the arms of former Albanian president Sari Berisha. With Berisha as "a vocal proponent of a greater Albania" back in power, Kosovo Albanian separatists would stand a far greater chance of liberating the province from what would be perceived as a "colonizing" force<sup>16</sup>. Such political instability would augur poorly for Western oil and construction companies. In their efforts to ensure stability for foreign investment, UNMIK and NATO member-states have thus continued their tacit policy of appeasing ethnic Albanian extremists.

In addition to constructing a trans-Balkan pipeline, the international community has a capitalist interest

in the Yugoslav economy. Yet, the previous existence of numerous State Owned Enterprises(SOEs) compromised Western investment in the region. Frustrated by Milosevic's iron grasp over Communism's socialist vestige, certain Western capitals were conniving on ways to pry open the country's market. Several prominent intellectuals have revealed that since the early 1990s, the US and Germany have "deliberately continued to destabilize and then dismantle the country" of Yugoslavia in order to then "forge a new Balkan order...based on the market organization of economies and parliamentary democracy"<sup>17</sup>. This would enable Western capitalist firms to plant their feet into a more propitious environment than was the previous socialist system of governance. The forging of this new Balkan order was to come at the trivial cost of "temporary" chaos.

During the 1990s, "Bonn and Washington's 'hidden agenda' consisted in triggering nationalist liberation movements in Bosnia and Kosovo with the ultimate purpose of destabilizing Yugoslavia..." and as a result, Germany and the US were to have "joined hands in establishing their respective spheres of influence in the Balkans"<sup>18</sup>. Despite the tendency for intelligence agencies to keep their congressional and parliamentary cohorts in the dark on such geopolitical adventures, one high-security ranked government official in Bonn opted to unveil the truth "for reasons of conscience"<sup>19</sup>. In addition to informing the German parliament of NATO and the German army's joint logistical support and training of the KLA, the official also disclosed the following information on a CIA covert operation code named "Roots"<sup>20</sup>:

"Under the 'Roots' operations, the USA has since the beginning of the first term of Clinton's Administration been working - in close collaboration with Germany - on this covert action of the CIA and the DIA, and supported by the German secret service. The objective of 'Roots' is the military and ethnic destabilization of Yugoslavia, the last bastion of resistance in the Balkans.

The objective of 'Roots' is the dissociation of Kosovo as the principal source of raw materials for Yugoslavia through a comprehensive autonomy, by Albanian annexation or total independence; the secession of Montenegro, it's the only remaining access to the Adriatic, and the dislocation of Vojvodina the 'bread basket,' and another source of raw materials for Yugoslavia leading to the total collapse of Yugoslavia as a viable, industrial state.

Behind this action is Germany's and the USA's fear that Yugoslavia will ally itself with Russia and other former Soviet states once Yeltsin is replaced by communist and nationalist forces in the near future..."

Such reports are not isolated blurbs in the media stream. Similar information has been disclosed by intelligence analyst John Whitley, according to whom "covert support to the Kosovo rebel army was established as a joint endeavor between the CIA and Germany's Bundes Nachrichten Dienst (BND)...the CIA was instrumental in training and equipping the KLA in Albania"<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, according to Geopolitical Drug Watch, a "Greater Albania" incorporating Albania, Kosovo and sections of Macedonia was unofficially the current fashion among German and American warmongers <sup>22</sup>. One American congressman writes of his dismay over the means by which his government actively encouraged the KLA's separatist goals. He was appalled upon reading "a recent Executive Order that hands the CIA a black bag in the Balkans for engineering a military coup in Serbia...and training the KLA in terrorist tactics, such as how to blow up buildings"<sup>23</sup>. On the ground such CIA lessons translated into the bombing of Yugoslav police stations with the intention of provoking exaggerated retaliation against the K-Albanian civilians amongst which they hid. Just how these geo-strategic considerations and covert operations tie into the tacit approval of reverse-ethnic cleansing in Kosovo is perhaps less direct, but nonetheless significant.

If one gives Western governments the benefit of the doubt, then he may assume they were insufficiently aware of the KLA's true intentions. For, contrary to the Western conception of nationalism, "the unique nature of Albanian nationalism...did not find its basis in cultural unity or liberal principles but instead was based almost exclusively upon ethnicity"<sup>24</sup>. The KLA has proven to have an insatiable appetite for nationalist expansion. Thus, despite the group's continuous metamorphosis into the NLA, ANA, or UCPMB, it's destabilizing aim of an ethnically homogenous "Greater Albania" remains blatantly identifiable. Having established this insidious link between Western geo-strategic

objectives and the unhindered actions of the "ex"-KLA, this report will now evaluate how NATO's tacit alliance constrains the protection of minority rights in Kosovo.

### **III. How Western geo-strategic objectives constrain the promotion of minority rights**

Due to the afore-mentioned ulterior motives, the multinational body in Kosovo has been confined to working with the political baggage of a pernicious "consensus culture" and a "no casualty syndrome." Faced with the West's economic need to maintain a "politically stable" and allied Balkan province, the plethora of aid agencies feel left with little choice but to go along with the unstated policy of appeasing ethnic Albanians. This is carried out in two manners, through the treatment of staff and that of project proposals.

While it is understandable to be cautious hiring minorities in insecure circumstances, once employed they should be afforded equal treatment. However, having interviewed several Serbian and Bosniac staff, as well as their co-workers, the writer has found institutional bias to be far from uncommon. Reports of internationals bullying their Serbian staff and having them work longer hours are unfortunate. After working under UNMIK for two years, one Serbian woman is still kept on the apprentice SSA contract. While normally this contract would be upgraded after three months to that of S 3000, which signifies full employee benefits, this has not been the case for minorities.

On the occasion that an international staff moves to break the institutional mold by hiring a minority, her decision is often second-guessed in a derisive tone by cohorts. Another instance of intolerance was reported whereby a Spanish KFOR Major was reprimanded for having referred to his municipality in both its Albanian and Serbian name. Having been asked by regional headquarters to conduct a weekly radio show, the Major was told to avoid using the Serbian translation of village names. Such institutional conduct contradicts the respect for minority languages called for in Resolution 1244 (SC 1999). Where language is not the issue, religion takes its place as the bone of contention.

Despite working within the ambit of an international structure, Orthodox Christians have been forbidden to don their Cross. For example, Serbian and foreign Orthodox Christians were told not to outwardly express their religion while employed under UNMIK's regional body in North Mitrovica municipality. Not until the arrival of the current Regional Administrator in October, 2001 has this disparaging policy been retracted. In surveying the salaries of various UNMIK employees, there are cases of uneven wage distribution. In certain offices, K-Albanians have been paid up to 700DM/month more than their Serbian colleagues.

The psychological backdrop against which such tendentious behavior unfolds is of critical importance. Amongst numerous internationals there tends to be a dearth of knowledge on what really took place in the 1990s, both on the ground and behind political doors. It is common knowledge that Kosovo Albanians were oppressed and abused by the Milosovic regime, however there is very little understanding of the KLA's vitriolic and physical instigations. Moreover, since the Western media portrayed NATO's intervention as one of purely humanitarian intent, international staff now envision themselves as protectorates against a repeat of Yugoslavian oppression. If these internationals are aware of the K-Albanians current intra-ethnic intimidation against co-existence they believe it to have started after the 1999 conflict. In this light it may seem perversely justified for previously violated Albanians to threaten their neighbor against inter-ethnic dialogue. Unfortunately the media has not highlighted the fact that such intimidation by hard-line Albanians has been carried out for almost a decade. Instead, "the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo have been primarily described as ...completely blameless and innocent,"<sup>25</sup> and their expulsion of minorities "dismissed as 'justifiable acts of revenge'"<sup>26</sup>. Such historical ignorance and institutional bias not only denigrates the UN's reputation and that of its Charter, but also sets an unjustified example of intolerance. By exuding the wrong message to their national staff, aid agencies indirectly hinder efforts at minority reintegration.

UNMIK's "consensus culture" on maintaining the tendentious status quo extends to its project implementation as well. First of all, it should be clarified that the damage assessment currently used

for the distribution of housing reconstruction is anachronistic in a situation where the majority of damage down to minority property occurred post-assessment. Awarding assistance on the basis of a comprehensive assessment completed in June 1999, inherently neglects minority needs. Yet, this unjust fact seems not to unsettle those agency heads denying requests for the completion of a 2nd comprehensive assessment. Such institutional bias feeds into the "totally permissive environment" in which reverse-ethnic cleansing occurs.

Project proposals are moreover rewarded for their ability to mitigate institutional friction. Yet, those attempting to creatively resolve pressing problems are punished with minimal funding, if any at all. In this manner, the author has seen numerous attempts to address the dearth of minority assistance go unsupported by purportedly democratic aid agencies. In their efforts to secure dwindling funds, (I)NGOs award "economically viable" initiatives over those "socially viable" and imperative for a multiethnic Kosovo. Internationals are remarkably hesitant to "rock the boat" lest such economic objection to the status quo should preclude their consideration by the Western donor club. Add to this, the explicit bias woven into certain government funds. The Swiss government recently ordered for its latest donation not to be used towards Serbian needs. Within this geo-strategic context thrives an

unjust cycle of institutional neglect towards minorities. Unless challenged in the near future, the Western public will witness what the author refers to as the "economic cleansing" of non-Albanian minorities. Such "economic cleansing" is abetted by the unofficial policy of appeasing the former KLA, now conveniently transformed into a "civilian protection corps," called the KPC.

It is noteworthy to recall that the KPC was construed by the KFOR and UNMIK without a legal mandate. The Lawyers Committee on Human Rights complains "such a force is not even mentioned in Security Resolution 1244 which talks only about demilitarization"<sup>27</sup>. Having interviewed several internationals entrusted with training the KPC, the author became aware of further irregularities. One interviewee said UNMIK had decided from the very beginning to compromise their mandate by not fully disarming the KLA. In so doing, they have issued weapon authorization cards to the very criminals who continue to participate in "ethnically cleansing" the province of its minorities. What's more, these "permit cards are being copied and distributed to other former guerillas, according to an international police source"<sup>28</sup>. Millions of dollars from the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) are going towards further KPC "equipment" even as EAR staff are denied a mere one million for the "reconstruction" of Serbian livelihoods.

No matter says UNMIK, for training courses run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Finnish Human Rights Group and the Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI is a private American mercenary outfit led by high ranking former US military officers), are to have miraculously mutated these terrorists into a law-abiding civilian corps. However, sources that conducted the training recount a different story. Off the record, they will admit that very little has been accomplished as far as nurturing a respect for human rights or the rule of law. Owing to their trainees' passive resistance, in the form of no-shows and non-attentive behavior, no more than 50 percent of the intended curricula could ever have been transmitted or retained.

Needless to say, the armed presence of an insincere Kosovo Protection Corps is a significant deterrent to any confidence-building measures amongst minorities. However, the insecurity wrought by the KPC also affects the operations of UNMIK and KFOR. In the midst of a "nominally controlled" former insurgency group, with other ex-KLA members working as UNMIK staff or municipal administrators, it is not surprising that Vietnam's "no casualty" syndrome has reemerged to stifle international efforts at promoting a multiethnic Kosovo. KFOR soldiers are all too aware of the political contradiction with which they're faced. For if NATO confronts the KLA in order to fulfill its protection mandate it will be "risking more violence and a public relations nightmare"<sup>29</sup>. Hence, the arrival at today's "totally permissive environment" for the constant violation of minority rights<sup>30</sup>.

Coupled with an institutional "consensus culture," this "no casualty syndrome" results in the unabashed appeasement of ethnic Albanian interests. If the author is overly lenient, she may suppose that having secured their "humanitarian" presence, the US and Germany are now looking to curb the malicious behavior of their former ally. For this would be in the obvious interest of those minorities

currently victimized by the wave of reverse-ethnic cleansing. Such anti-terrorist efforts may indeed be on NATO's agenda. Yet as a senior European commander in Kosovo has recently pointed out, while "the CIA has been allowed to run riot in Kosovo with a private army designed to overthrow Slobodan Milosevic...Now he's gone and the US State Department seems incapable of reining in its bastard army"<sup>31</sup>.

In conclusion, minority rights are seemingly seconded to a number of factors; the West's geo-strategic agenda, a "consensus culture," the "no casualty syndrome," and KFOR's lack of intent, or lack of ability, to confront "ex"-KLA terrorists. And yet, UNMIK and relevant partners tend to go about looking at the issue of minority returns merely as a logistical and technical problem. How this strategy may affect regional stability and future Balkan generations is increasingly apparent.

#### **IV. Implications for a future without change**

The current deprivation of minority rights in Kosovo may have a dire impact on inter-ethnic relations throughout the Balkans. Owing to its inaction in the midst of the "ex"-KLA's ethnic cleansing campaign, UNMIK and KFOR will be perceived as legitimising a pernicious type of nationalism, both exclusive and undemocratic in character. Such a perception could encourage the mosaic of Balkan ethnicities to evolve towards the same pattern of mutually exclusive ethno-nationalist identities. If this were to

become the case, it would be the precise victory for which ethnic Albanian separatists have been striving, and in a terrorist manner. The result would be regional instability and the inexorable disintegration of the latter into ever-smaller and economically unviable entities. While this outcome may give certain Western powers extended scope for manipulating the geopolitical landscape to their economic likings, it would not be propitious to the sowing of democratic principles. Never before in Europe's history has there been a completely mono-ethnic state. While George Bush and Tony Blair proclaim their campaign to be against terrorism and not Islam, would it not be appropriate to promote Kosovo as the antipathy of Samuel Huntington's dreaded "clash of civilizations?" If not, is Kosovo truly the example of inter-ethnic division the world desires to display for future generations? If so, this would seem anachronistic in a time when the outreach of globalisation enjoins disparate nations to work within the same neo-liberal paradigm.

Leaving the wider world aside, the exportation of the KLA's inter-ethnic hatred and violence would preclude any attempts at regional cooperation. This not only foreshadows discouraging economic growth patterns, but also the impossibility of joining the European Union. However, it seems that during the 1990s, certain EU member-states felt confident that an eastward expansion of their elite bloc could be accomplished while simultaneously excluding Serbia<sup>32</sup>. It appears slightly over-zealous to imagine a stable wider Europe without the participation of the Balkans' most populous state. However inconvenient for Western map-drawers, Yugoslavia remains nonetheless located in the middle of seven Balkan Stability Pact signatories. There are several examples of Europe's past efforts to exclude Serbia from its geo-strategic planning.

Prior to the Kosovo conflict, Western Europe and the Southern Balkans were territorially linked solely by means of Serbian bridges across the Danube River. Yet, many of these bridges were ironically destroyed under NATO's 78-day bombing campaign. And the EU's Corridor IV project aims to re-link itself with Greece by constructing the Vidin-Calafat bridge between the Bulgarian and Romanian banks of the Danube. Another EU infrastructure project, Corridor VIII, also excludes Serbia from its transportation network. This chain of events left Strategic Forecasting with the conclusion that "the EU plan envisions a prosperous tolerant and vibrant Balkan Peninsula - with a black hole in the center"<sup>33</sup>.

In its aim of isolating Yugoslavia, the EU was accompanied by the American "Corridor Eight" project. The afore-mentioned AMBO pipeline route "outflanks...the Danube occlusion...and screws Yugoslavia"<sup>34</sup>. Even more troublesome, is that the project "puts the western terminus in the hands of Albania's lunatic mix of gangsters...and bandit warlords"<sup>35</sup>. By excluding Yugoslavia, not only were these strategies "doomed to failure" economically, but politically and socially as well<sup>36</sup>. For one cannot set about weaving together an extended European fabric conveniently cutting out certain people and reknitting the political yarn at the next geo-social sphere. A wildfire of frustration, resentment and

heightened insecurity would eliminate the prospect before it could materially manifest. This strategy also naively assumed that Kosovo's current inter-ethnic tensions were not contagious. A mere glance at Macedonia, Montenegro or southern Serbia would tell one otherwise.

With President Kostunica's replacement of Milosovic, Yugoslavia appears to have been somewhat reincorporated into EU geo-economics. However, the nation's previous exclusion from financial investment and planning has influenced not only the way Kosovo-Albanians perceive Yugoslavia, but also the conceptual framework in which UNMIK's strategy was conceived. In addition to precluding any incipient movements towards regional cooperation and European integration, the international policy on Kosovo will ultimately discredit the United Nations.

The entry of an international body on the basis of promoting human rights should be reconsidered upon ample evidence of the latter's failure in achieving its mandate. Despite the barrage of minority assessments presented to the public by the UNHCR, OSCE and other relevant actors, the reality on the ground will not rest unheard. It is only fair to acknowledge that there have been numerous small-scale spontaneous returns to existing enclaves. Yet, it may come as a surprise to the reader that under the aegis of a 45,000 strong international force, only 86 Kosovo Serbs have been able to return home to Western Kosovo in an "organized" manner. For all those donors who wish to see the results of their funds earmarked for K-Serbs, Osojane Valley extends its humble invitation. This is the dismal site of one of UNHCR's two "large-scale organized returns," with the other being Leshtar in Eastern Kosovo. If Osojane Valley is any allusion to what the future holds for remaining IDPS, then it seems appropriate to evaluate the returnees' status within the larger context of minority rights.

Having just returned herself from Osojane, the author wishes to promulgate the insufferable conditions in which these people must endure the oncoming winter. Several interviewed returnees have admitted that were it not for the Spanish CIMIC Team's generous offer to impart a portion of their medical supplies and daily food rations, these people would not be living with the "dignity" that they do (the highlighted term is a criteria for UNHCR organized returns). During the author's visit, a young woman was medically treated by a Spanish CIMIC doctor while UNHCR's hired doctor was in Belgrade. The latter's prolonged absence is not unusual, with medical supplies in nearby Pec/Peje, currently unattainable for security and discriminatory purposes. As for the slow pace of housing reconstruction, one returnee claimed much could be traced to UNHCR's untimely planning.

The return to Osojane was originally to take place in March 2001, which would have allotted the needed time for housing reconstruction and public service reinstatement. However, the return was postponed until August 13, 2001, leaving little time for adjustments before Kosovo's first snowfall. Furthermore, upon their arrival, the returnees "were handed a pile of bricks with the expectation that they all knew how to reconstruct a house" (interview with and Osojane aid). Upon realizing the futility of donating materials without labour (Albanian construction companies refused all offers), UNHCR, THW, and Movimondo began transporting outside K-Serbian construction workers on a weekly basis to complete the work. This contributed to speeding up the reconstruction process, although as of the first snowfall on Nov. 23, not one returnee had moved into his house.

The gloomy disposition of Osojane returnees is an unfortunate consequence of institutional delay. Yet, there is hope that valuable lessons learned could be applied to future return programs. However, before UNMIK's blue flag, the incentive to return may be receding in a wave of "ethnic" and "economic" cleansing. A shift in focus towards the needs of minority communities could do a lot to dampen these diminishing prospects for return. In light of such situational projections, this study will proceed to offer a series of proposals for furthering the protection of minority rights.

## **V. Proposals for the heightened protection of minority rights**

It must be understood that the current predicament of minorities cannot be dealt with on an isolated basis. No matter how tenacious the efforts for minority advocacy, the fact remains that they will not suffice to override the political weight of Western geo-strategic concerns. Nor will a written allocation of increased funds for minorities be fairly distributed unless the "consensus culture" is tackled. Hence, on behalf of those minorities caught in no-mans land between the KLA's terrorism and Western

complicity, the author calls upon the United Nations Security Council to demand the incorporation of human rights into UNMIK and KFOR's underlying objectives.

UNMIK could start by ensuring the temporary employment of the thousands of retrenched Trepca workers, many of which are minorities. A current meager stipend per month is clearly insufficient. Until the privatization and restructuring of Kosovo's largest mining industry is accomplished, there should be an interim plan for retrenched workers. Furthermore, having borne the responsibility for training and arming certain KLA gangs, the relevant governments should now step up to the challenge of curbing their proxy's extralegal activities. To name but a few, this would mean cracking down on weapons and drug laundering, prostitution and organized crime. KFOR should also abide by Resolution 1244 and fully disarm the KPC if they are to truly represent a civilian corps.

Finally, if Western powers insist on turning a blind eye to the separatist intentions of ethnic Albanians, then they must demand the improved treatment of minorities. Only when Kosovo is prepared to be a multi-ethnic and democratic state, should its independence be considered. There has never been a totally mono-ethnic state in Europe and UNMIK should not tacitly accept the creation of a precedent. Sovereignty is a privilege granted to a people, not a single ethnicity, and as such it must be earned by demonstrating adequate respect for all citizens, irrespective of ethnicity.

The international presence should encourage Kosovo's evolution towards co-existence by reevaluating the tendentious environment it facilitates. This means addressing the gap between mandate and methods of implementation. Internationals should display the democratic nature of Resolution 1244 in their treatment of staff and conflict resolution. Seeing as how "KFOR and UNMIK spell further disaster in the region...members of the missions who are skeptical and deeply concerned should be encouraged to voice that concern publicly and be rewarded, not punished, for doing so"<sup>37</sup>.

This would imply tackling the "consensus culture" from within by field staff and from without by Western policy makers.

For, only when human rights dictate economic objectives and not vice-versa, will the protection of Kosovo's non-Albanian minorities be achieved. In the meantime, there rest a number of good examples on how (I)NGOs can abate the exclusion of minority needs. An auspicious place to start would be a second comprehensive assessment of property damaged after the 1999 conflict. This would force the current proportioning of financial assistance to include the reconstruction needs of property destructed by the KLA after NATO's arrival. Furthermore, if the international community is sincere in its intention to promote returns, then it should make this manifest through further financial assistance to minority enclaves and mixed villages. For, absent substantial proof of economic rejuvenation within minority communities, IDPs have insufficient incentive to return.

A Spanish KFOR member once nudged my shoulder and sarcastically asked how UNMIK or UNHCR could expect reintegration and reconciliation to occur between ethnicities while minorities rest economically unarmed. With nothing to offer their former neighbors, Osojane returnees stand little chance of re-starting dialogue. In a climate of mutual distrust, only through trade will co-existence flourish. The Norwegian Refugee Council's Civil Rights Project manager finds "ordinary people to be tired of inter-ethnic separation". Aid agencies should thus provide ample neutral space in which common economic interests could be identified and paths for their attainment converged. The outcome may be the victory of survival instincts over lingering prejudice. In order to provide beneficiaries with neutral space for dialogue, more enterprise and infrastructure projects should be designed to foster interdependence amongst ethnicities.

In communities unprepared to assume this level of cooperation, programs such as IOM's Micro-Grant/Micro-Credit initiative (MGC) could help bolster the economic position of minorities otherwise excluded from mainstream financial lending institutions. By placing disadvantaged minorities at par with their K-Albanian counterparts, UNMIK could achieve two goals: the encouragement of minority returns, and the promotion of inter-ethnic reconciliation. Such institutional efforts should take place within the larger framework of a central fund for minority assistance. UNMIK could promulgate this

proposal as the "Race for tolerance," and ultimately towards the multi-ethnic Kosovo called for in Resolution 1244 (SC 1999).

## VI. Conclusion- outcome of proposals

The outcome of any internal adjustment to UNMIK's "consensus culture" ultimately depends on the nature of external pressures. Institutional efforts to create interdependence among aid recipients will only be beneficial for short-term reconciliation. For, given the historic fragility of inter-ethnic bonds in the Balkans, the exportation of separatist violence could toss the entire region back into a mosaic of poisoned sentiments. It is therefore up to Western powers to reevaluate the basis on which they rest their Balkan presence. Within the wider context of regional stability, inter-ethnic tolerance and coexistence depends on the compatibility between Western objectives and the implementation of Resolution 1244.

If the means of achieving certain geo-strategic objectives contradict the principles embedded within the UN Charter, then perhaps they should not be pursued under the aegis of the UN flag. For such a geo-political adventure risks disparaging the reputation of the test case for global democracy. Furthermore, the current policy of placating a terrorist body while conducting a worldwide campaign against terrorism could easily backfire. Russian roulette, anyone? If the Balkans are to receive the opportunity they deserve for building peace and stability, the KLA's symbol of mono-ethnic existence must be promptly dismantled. Only once the guns have been silenced will the moderate K-Albanian feel safe to mend his ethnic fence. Yet this will not happen until Western powers are enlightened by these "two key facts about the KLA. First, it is not committed to a democratic future for Kosovo. Second, the KLA's vision of Kosovo is not of a multiethnic state: Its goal is a Kosovo from which Serbs have been ethnically cleansed"<sup>38</sup>.

In the unfortunate case that Western powers are both aware and indifferent to the KLA's undemocratic traits, then one must seek to combat indifference through the promulgation of the very principles on which UNMIK now stands. With the UN Charter in hand, the author exhorts all internationals on the

field to oppose the creation of "a 'new Kosovo' that is the polar opposite of the alliance's stated goals"<sup>39</sup>. The incipient exportation of inter-ethnic intolerance is of primary concern to regional stability. If minorities' rights go unprotected within the Balkans' smallest province, to whom will they turn once the wildfire has spread?

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