

Kosovo “Prime Minister” a Mobster Trafficking in Drugs, Body Parts

By [Nebojsa Malic](#)

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Hashim Thaci had exactly one day to bask in the glory of winning an election so shamelessly stolen, it would have made Hamid Karzai blush. On Monday came the news that Richard Holbrooke, that embodiment of Imperial “diplomacy” in the Balkans over the past two decades, passed away after aortic rupture. Holbrooke had been “a friend... a voice that protected the interest of the Republic of Kosovo,” Thaci wrote in the condolences telegram to Emperor Obama.

On Tuesday morning, the Guardian published excerpts from a Council of Europe report, claiming that Thaci and his “Kosovo Liberation Army” are a “mafia-like” organization involved in narcotics and arms trafficking and human organ trade.

The report, published by Dick Marty, a Swiss member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), was a result of a two-year investigation into allegations first mentioned in the memoirs of former ICTY prosecutor Carla Del Ponte. After retiring from her job as NATO’s Vyshinsky in January 2008, Del Ponte was free to reveal that she had considerable evidence of KLA’s macabre atrocities: murder of captive civilians in a house in northern Albania, and the sale of their body parts on the illegal organ market. The claim caused a firestorm in Imperial circles; Del Ponte was silenced and sent off to Latin America. Thaci and the KLA — now calling itself the “government of the Republic of Kosovo” — had dismissed the claims as “Serbian propaganda,” as if Del Ponte had not spent years persecuting the Serbs. The ICTY conducted a half-hearted investigation, destroyed the physical evidence, and shrugged the whole thing off. It appeared as if the story was dead and buried, just like the witnesses against Ramush Haradinaj.

Until now.

The Suppressed Truth

Before she was gagged by her government, Del Ponte did manage to get the Council of Europe, a continental parliamentary body (independent of the EU), to commission an inquiry with Marty, Del Ponte’s fellow Swiss, in charge. For the next two years, he struggled to talk to potential witnesses and informants, hampered by the “genuine terror” of KLA’s retribution. He pored over classified intelligence documents, FBI and Interpol records. In the end, he came to the conclusion that was known to some back in 1999, but suppressed in the interest of Imperial policy ever since: Hashim Thaci and the KLA weren’t just terrorists, they were an organized crime syndicate.

Worse yet, the law enforcement and intelligence services of NATO countries — which had

brought Thaci to power in 1999, after occupying the Serbian province — had known about this all along. Thaci and the KLA were Empire's chosen allies in the region, and detaching Kosovo from Serbia was a policy priority; anything that interfered with their designated role as virtuous victims of evil Serbs was to be suppressed. And so it was — until now.

Marty's report not only exposed the long-buried truth, but revealed details about the cover-up. This is why its impact in Europe has been far greater than the WikiLeaks cables. Del Ponte has already told the media she felt "vindicated" by the findings.

Media Soul-Searching

The British press in particular has been all over Marty's report. The Labor-friendly Guardian, usually stolidly pro-Albanian, broke the story. On its website, leftist commentator Neil Clark blasted the hypocrisy of liberal interventionism, pointing out that Kosovo 1999 was as immoral as Iraq 2003.

The Conservative Daily Mail called Thaci a "monster" – language it normally reserves for Serbs — and cited as proof of former PM Tony Blair's depravity that he accepted a "Gold Medal of Freedom" from Thaci earlier this year. A Sky News foreign affairs blogger called Kosovo a "black hole."

Granted, even the harshest criticism of Blair's Kosovo adventure and Thaci's organ-harvesting ways still operates within the confines of conventional wisdom: the "Kosovars" (i.e. the KLA) were "oppressed" by the "brutal" regime of Slobodan Milosevic, who engaged in "ethnic cleansing." Fictitious figures of "10,000 Albanian civilians" killed in the war are referenced, while KLA's eviscerations are described as "revenge attacks," much like their 1999 campaign of terror that saw the very real ethnic cleansing of most Serbs and other non-Albanians from the province. As one might recall, the Anglophone press similarly spun the 2004 Kristallnacht-like pogrom as "ethnic clashes."

On this side of the Atlantic, the response has been more subdued. The current administration is staffed by Clinton veterans, who very much insist that their Balkans adventures of the 1990s were brilliant successes. Support for the KLA runs strong in both parties.

It may only be a matter of time, however, before someone begins to wonder whether those who have lied about and covered up the KLA atrocities for years may have lied about other things as well. Sooner or later, a reporter may put the two and two together and conclude that Thaci was not named "Snake" by his KLA compatriots for an excess of humanitarianism. This does not bode well for the narrative that underpins the self-proclaimed "Republic of Kosovo."

Snake Bites Back

Thaci's first response was the same as two years ago: he dismissed the report as "scandalous... filled with defamation and lies and is recycling propaganda from certain people that do not want the best for Kosovo." The allegations, he told the press, were "construed to damage the image of Kosovo and the war of the KLA." By Thursday, when the report was adopted by PACE, he was threatening legal action against Marty and the Council of Europe, accusing them of libel.

KLA's Imperial patrons have also awakened to the danger of the report to their reputations, and are already pressuring Marty to "provide evidence." Never mind that the evidence was contained in the actual report, or that they hardly offered any evidence for their claims against Milosevic, or Saddam Hussein, or Julian Assange... The EU bureaucracy is waffling on the issue, since they stand to lose the most. After all, it is their "law and order" mission currently supervising the "independent" Kosovo.

A Ready Replacement?

This does not mean Thaci should rest easy and believe the Empire still has his back. If there is one constant in Washington's dealings around the world, it is that its "allies" are ultimately expendable.

Last week, the Guardian confirmed reports that former U.S. diplomat William Walker had endorsed Vetevendosje, a party belonging to the bloc agitating for the establishment of "Natural Albania." Walker headed the OSCE observer mission in 1999, was instrumental in the "Racak massacre" hoax, and subsequently became a staunch supporter of the KLA. Now he has thrown in his lot with the people who consider Thaci and the KLA too soft, and the U.S. establishment — which usually reacts forcefully when one of its former diplomats goes "off the reservation" — has remained entirely silent. Reports on the sham election indicate that "Vetevendosje" actually outpolled the party of Ramush Haradinaj, former "Prime Minister" of Kosovo and a long-time Washington favorite.

Walker reappeared this week with a quote in a Reuters analysis of the organ trade scandal. "There's a lot of thugs around, a lot of criminal activity," Reuters quotes Walker as saying. "I fault the international community as much as the Albanians. They feel that the PDK [Thaci's party] represents stability." Reuters speculates that the furor over Marty's report may eventually amount to nothing, since the Empire has invested too much in Kosovo "independence" to reverse course now.

It is indeed extremely unlikely that Washington will abandon Holbrooke's legacy. Part of the problem with the failed satrapies in the Balkans is that they are woven into the very foundations of present-day Atlantic Empire, and that abandoning or dismantling them would unravel the Empire itself. Though entropy is already taking care of that, the Imperial establishment persists in the illusion it can somehow freeze history in a moment of its supposed ultimate triumph.

However, while the Empire is unlikely to abandon its client state, it may still decide its support for the "Republic of Kosovo" would become easier if Hashim Thaci, mob boss and dealer in weapons and human body parts, were no longer in charge.

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