

# Welcome to Kosovo! The World's Newest Narco State

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*The unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, former warlord/commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), heralds the birth of a new European narco state.*

The illegal dismemberment of Serbia, completing the U.S./EU/NATO destruction of Yugoslavia, is proclaimed by ruling elites and their sycophants as an exemplary means to bring "peace and stability" to the region. This provocative move, outside the framework of international law, threatens any sovereign state with similar treatment should they deviate from the "Washington consensus."

Far from bringing "peace" let alone "stability," an "independent" Kosovo will serve as a militarized outpost for Western capitalist powers intent on spreading their tentacles East, further encircling Russia by penetrating the former spheres of influence of the Soviet Union.

Led by dodgy characters and war criminals such as Hashim Thaci and Agim Ceku, "independent" Kosovo is a gangster state governed by thugs with ties to Albanian drug trafficking syndicates and al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda, the KLA and Western Intelligence

Al-Qaeda's service to the CIA and other Western intelligence services is well-documented. Beginning in 1998 and perhaps earlier, the London-based cleric Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed, the "emir" of the al-Qaeda-linked Islamist group al-Muhajiroun began a recruitment drive for aspiring mujahideen for the "holy war" in Kosovo at London's notorious Finsbury Park Mosque.

On Friday, March 13, 1998 a London rally for the jihad was backed by some 50 local Islamist organizations. According to Christopher Deliso,

...the Albanian Islamic Society of London, headed by Kosovar Sheik Muhammed Stubla, was lobbying and raising money for the KLA's campaign. ... In contradiction to the KLA leadership's claims about secularism, the Kosovar sheik specifically defined the militant group as "an Albanian Islamic organisation which is determined to defend itself, its people, its homeland, and its religion with all its capabilities and by all means." ... The chief bank account for fundraising was in the London branch of terrorist-linked Habibsons Bank of Pakistan. (The Coming Balkan Caliphate, Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007, p. 43)

In 2005, in the wake of the July 7, 2005 terrorist attacks in London, it was revealed that Bakri, a probable asset of Britain's MI6, was the "spiritual" force behind the deadly attacks.

[Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed](#) reports that,

The reluctance to take decisive action against the leadership of the extremist network in the UK has a long history. According to John Loftus, a former Justice Department prosecutor, Omar Bakri and Abu Hamza, as well as the suspected mastermind of the London bombings Haroon Aswat, were all recruited by MI6 in the mid-1990s to draft up British Muslims to fight in Kosovo. American and French security sources corroborate the revelation. The MI6 connection raises questions about Bakri's relationship with British authorities today. Exiled to Lebanon and outside British jurisdiction, he is effectively immune to prosecution. ("Sources: August terror plot is a 'fiction' underscoring police failures," The Raw Story, Monday, September 18, 2006)

Before fleeing, Bakri defended the actions of his young dupes by proclaiming, "We don't make a distinction between civilians and non-civilians, innocents and non-innocents. Only between Muslims and unbelievers. And the life of an unbeliever has no value. It has no sanctity."

The current "secular" Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, when he served as KLA warlord was identified in media reports as having operational links to the al-Qaeda network. Such reports are not surprising when one considers that for earlier U.S./NATO "service" in Bosnia, bin Laden himself was rewarded a Bosnian passport by the "democratic" government of former Nazi and Islamist ideologue, [Alija Izetbegovic](#).

As the Afghan-Arab database of disposable intelligence assets streamed into Kosovo, often from Albania with the active assistance of narcotrafficking gangsters under NATO supervision, they replenished the ranks of Thaci's terrorist army.

[Michel Chossudovsky](#) writes,

Mercenaries financed by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had been fighting in Bosnia. And the Bosnian pattern was replicated in Kosovo: Mujahadeen mercenaries from various Islamic countries are reported to be fighting alongside the KLA in Kosovo. German, Turkish and Afghan instructors were reported to be training the KLA in guerrilla and diversion tactics. ... According to a Deutsche Press-Agentur report, financial support from Islamic countries to the KLA had been channelled through the former Albanian chief of the National Information Service (NIS), Bashkim Gazidede. "Gazidede, reportedly a devout Moslem who fled Albania in March of last year [1997], is presently [1998] being investigated for his contacts with Islamic terrorist organizations." ("Kosovo 'freedom fighters' financed by organised crime," World Socialist Web Site, 10 April 1999)

These links are hardly casual. On the contrary, as Peter Dale Scott avers,

The closeness of the KLA to al-Qaeda was acknowledged again in the Western press, after Afghan-connected KLA guerrillas proceeded in 2001 to conduct guerrilla warfare in Macedonia. Press accounts included an Interpol report containing the allegation that one of bin Laden's senior lieutenants was the commander of an elite KLA unit operating in Kosovo in 1999. This was probably Mohammed al-Zawahiri. (The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire, and the Future of

Agim Ceku another “Prime Minister,” committed massive war crimes in the Croatian region of Krajina when employed by the Croatian army as a brigadier general. As a key planner of [Operation Storm](#), Ceku’s forces massacred Serbs and presided over the largest ethnic cleansing during NATO’s Yugoslavian destabilization campaign. Some 250,000 Serbs fled for their lives as Ceku’s black-uniformed shock troops, many adorned with symbols of the Nazi Ustasha puppet regime during World War II were driven from Croatia.

According to [Gregory Elich](#),

The invasion of Krajina was preceded by a thorough CIA and DIA analysis of the region. According to Balkan specialist Ivo Banac, this “tactical and intelligence support” was furnished to the Croatian Army at the beginning of its offensive. ... Two months earlier, the Pentagon contracted Military Professional Resources, Inc (MPRI) to train the Croatian military. According to a Croatian officer, MPRI advisors “lecture us on tactics and big war operations on the level of brigades, which is why we needed them for Operation Storm when we took the Krajina.” Croatian sources claim that U.S. satellite intelligence was furnished to the Croatian military. Following the invasion of Krajina, the U.S. rewarded Croatia with an agreement “broadening existing cooperation” between MPRI and the Croatian military. U.S. advisors assisted in the reorganization of the Croatian Army. Referring to this reorganization in an interview with the newspaper Vecernji List, Croatian General Tihomir Blaskic said, “We are building the foundations of our organization on the traditions of the Croatian home guard” — pro-Nazi troops in World War II. (“The Invasion of Serbian Krajina,” Emperors Clothes, no date)

Following on the heels of this sterling “victory,” Ceku became KLA commander in 1999 and “Prime Minister” in 2006. There is an outstanding Interpol warrant for his arrest according to [Michel Chossudovsky](#).

The KLA: “Trained-up fierce” by Germany’s KSK

As in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia, the Kosovo Liberation Army was secretly armed by America and Germany and remains what it has always been, a creature of Western intelligence services.

Christopher Deliso observes,

In 1996, Germany’s BND established a major station in Tirana...and another in Rome to select and train future KLA fighters. According to Le Monde Diplomatique, “special forces in Berlin provided the operational training and supplied arms and transmission equipment from ex-East German Stasi stocks as well as Black uniforms.” The Italian headquarters recruited Albanian immigrants passing through ports such as Brindisi and Trieste, while German military intelligence, the Militäramtschirmdienst, and the Kommando Spezialkräfte Special Forces (KSK), offered military training and provisions to the KLA in the remote Mirdita Mountains of northern Albania controlled by the deposed president, Sali Berisha.

In 1996, BND Chief Geiger’s deputy, Rainer Kesselring, the son of the Nazi Luftwaffe general responsible for the bombing of Belgrade in 1941 that left

17,000 dead, oversaw KSK training of Albanian recruits at a Turkish military base near Izmir. (The Coming Balkan Caliphate, Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007, pp. 37-38)

Hypocritically, while Washington had officially designated the KLA a “terrorist organization” funded by the heroin trade, the Clinton administration was complicit with their German allies in the division of the Serb province along ethnic and religious lines.

By 1998, the KLA took control of between 25 to 40 percent of the province before Serb forces wrested the KLA-held areas back. Facing imminent defeat, the Kosovo Liberation Army and allied mujahideen fighters appealed to Washington, citing the imminent danger of “ethnic cleansing” by the Serbs. Laughable on the face of it, Albanians constitute fully 90 percent of Kosovo’s population, and in fact, it was the [Serbs](#), [Roma](#) and [Jews](#) who were being brutalized by KLA hit squads, their homes torched, their churches and synagogues sacked. It was the dismantling of the KLA’s terrorist infrastructure by the Yugoslav People’s Army that was the trigger that prompted direct military intervention by NATO in 1999.

As in Iraq, the 78 day U.S. bombing campaign targeted critical civilian infrastructure in [Serbia](#): bridges, factories, power plants, electrical transmission hubs, communications centers. Throughout Serbia and Kosovo itself, the U.S. scattered tons of radioactive [depleted uranium](#) munitions and tens of thousands of [cluster bombs](#). The U.S. attack, ostensibly to “protect” Kosovo’s population from Serb depredations caused some 800,000 civilians to flee NATO’s devastating raids.

For Washington, drunk on the illusion that its policies had hastened the collapse of a bureaucratized and rotten Soviet system, the dismemberment of Yugoslavia would again represent the triumph of the so-called “free market” and “democracy” under the umbrella of a new international order administered by World Bank/IMF “reforms”: Francis Fukuyama’s short-lived “end of history.” While on the opposite pole of the same ideological dead end, political Islam’s tactical alliance with the West was a means to establish a bridgehead for penetration into Europe via dodgy Saudi, Kuwaiti and Gulf “charities” in pursuit of their quixotic quest of establishing a “divine” (Islamicized) capitalist order rising from the ashes of a decadent West.

Two heads, same poisonous snake.

#### The KLA’s Links to the International Heroin Trade

In Kosovo, Hashim Thaci’s KLA served as the militarized vanguard for the Albanian mafia whose “15 Families” control virtually every facet of the Balkan heroin trade. Kosovar traffickers ship heroin originating exclusively from Asia’s [Golden Crescent](#). At one end lies Afghanistan where poppy is harvested for transshipment through Iran and Turkey; as morphine base it is then refined into “product” for worldwide consumption. From there it passes into the hands of the Albanian syndicates who control the Balkan Route.

As the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) reported,

Until the war intervened, Kosovars were the acknowledged masters of the trade, credited with shoving aside the Turkish gangs that had long dominated narcotics trafficking along the Balkan Route, and effectively directing the ethnic Albanian network.

Kosovar bosses “orchestrated the traffic, regulated the rate and set the prices,” according to journalist Leonardo Coen, who covers racketeering and organized crime in the Balkans for the Italian daily La Repubblica.

“The Kosovars had a 10-year head start on their cousins across the border, simply because their Yugoslav passports allowed them to travel earlier and much more widely than someone from communist Albania,” said Michel Koutouzis, a senior researcher at Geopolitical Drug Watch who is regarded as Europe’s leading expert on the Balkan Route.

“That allowed them to establish very efficient overseas networks through the worldwide Albanian diaspora — and in the process, to forge ties with other underworld groups involved in the heroin trade, such as Chinese triads in Vancouver and Vietnamese in Australia,” Koutouzis told The Chronicle. (Frank Viviano, “KLA Linked to Enormous Heroin Trade,” Wednesday, May 5, 1999, Page A-1)

It is hardly an accident that the meteoric rise of the Kosovar families to the top of the narcotrafficking hierarchy coincided with the KLA’s sudden appearance in the area in 1997.

As [Peter Klebnikov](#) observed,

As the war in Kosovo heated up, the drug traffickers began supplying the KLA with weapons procured from Eastern European and Italian crime groups in exchange for heroin. The 15 Families also lent their private armies to fight alongside the KLA. Clad in new Swiss uniforms and equipped with modern weaponry, these troops stood out among the ragtag irregulars of the KLA. In all, this was a formidable aid package. It’s therefore not surprising, say European law enforcement officials, that the faction that ultimately seized power in Kosovo — the KLA under Hashim Thaci — was the group that maintained the closest links to traffickers. “As the biggest contributors, the drug traffickers may have gotten the most influence in running the country,” says Koutouzis. (“Heroin Heroes,” Mother Jones, January/February 2000)

As is well-known, U.S. destabilization programs and covert operations rely on far-right provocateurs and drug lords (often [interchangeable players](#)) to facilitate the dirty work. Throughout its Balkan operations the CIA made liberal use of these preexisting narcotics networks to arm the KLA and provide them with targets.

The rest is history, as they say.

## Kosovo Today

Has anything changed in the intervening years? Hardly. In fact, the vise-like grip of the Albanian mafia over narcotics, [human trafficking](#) and arms smuggling has cemented the “15 Families” place atop Europe’s hierarchy of crime, an essential arm of the capitalist deep state.

Considering NATO and the UN’s lofty mandate to bring “peace and stability” to the region through “democracy promotion” and “institution building,” what does the balance sheet reveal?

According to regional experts the outlook for Kosovo is grim. The [economy](#) is in shambles, unemployment hovers near 50 percent, a population of young people with “criminality as

the sole career choice" populate a society tottering on the brink of collapse where the state is dominated by organized crime.

According to former New York Times reporter [David Binder](#), citing a 124-page investigation by the Institute for European Policy commissioned by the German Bundeswehr,

"It is a Mafia society" based on "capture of the state" by criminal elements. ("State capture" is a term coined in 2000 by a group of World Bank analysts to describe countries where government structures have been seized by corrupt financial oligarchies. This study applied the term to Montenegro's Milo Djukanovic, by way of his cigarette smuggling and to Slovenia, with the arms smuggling conducted by Janez Jansa). In Kosovo, it says, "There is a need for thorough change of the elite."

Fat chance that happening anytime soon! Binder reports:

In the authors' definition, Kosovan organized crime "consists of multimillion-Euro organizations with guerrilla experience and espionage expertise." They quote a German intelligence service report of "closest ties between leading political decision makers and the dominant criminal class" and name Ramush Haradinaj, Hashim Thaci and Xhavit Haliti as compromised leaders who are "internally protected by parliamentary immunity and abroad by international law." They scornfully quote the UNMIK chief from 2004-2006, Soeren Jessen Petersen, calling Haradinaj "a close and personal friend." UNMIK, they add "is in many respects an element of the local problem scene."

The study sharply criticizes the United States for "abetting the escape of criminals" in Kosovo as well as "preventing European investigators from working." This has made Americans "vulnerable to blackmail." It notes "secret CIA detention centers" at Camp Bondsteel and assails American military training for Kosovo (Albanian) police by Dyncorp, authorized by the Pentagon. ("Kosovo Auf Deutsch," Balkan Analysis, November 18, 2007)

As we can readily observe in other climes, the interpenetration of the state by criminal elites serve as the preferred mechanism to cement a "public-private partnership" founded on corruption, maintained by brute force solely for purposes of resource extraction, pipeline politics, military bases and the geopolitical advantage gained over "market" rivals.

As the U.S. Embassy [burns](#) in Belgrade, all in all, its another "Mission Accomplished" moment for the United States.

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